

Glossary: Introduction to Access

Term	Definition
Access	Ability to obtain or make use of something.
Access Method	The way or means of providing AAC users with the freedom or ability to control a communication tool or device.
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)	Any method (device, system, or technique) that helps a person with significant communication challenges communicate more effectively.
Automatic Scanning (Autoscan)	The scanning indicator moves automatically in a preset pattern. Item selection occurs when the user hits a switch.
Direct Access/Selection	Individuals use their body parts or pointing devices to point directly at an object to make a selection without additional tools and steps.
Dwell	Make a selection by fixating the eye gaze on an object for a set amount of time (dwell time).
Eye Tracking (Eye Gaze, or Gaze Interaction)	A direct access method that automatically tracks the point of an individual's gaze while that person views or interacts with a visual image on the screen.
Head Mouse	An alternative mouse control tool that translates natural movements of a user's head into direct mouse pointer movements for hands-free access to AAC devices.
Hold Time	The minimum amount of time needed to select and press/hold on an object in order to activate it.
Indirect Access/ Selection	Additional tools and steps are required before the individual makes a selection.
Joystick	An alternative selection tool for mouse control.
Keyguard	A piece of clear plastic that covers the screen of a communication device with cutouts for the areas that need to be touched to activate a command or generate speech.
Mouse	A direct access method where individuals use a mouse or a mousing tool to access their communication device.

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Mouse Dwell	Selection occurs by allowing the mouse to dwell/pause on a target for a set amount of time.
Partner Assisted Scanning	The facilitation partner verbally lists or scans through the possible choices and the individual using AAC will indicate by gesture, action, or vocalization to stop the scan.
Release Time	The window of time between an object is released and activated during which a new selection is not allowed.
Scanning	An indirect access method that requires a user to follow a pattern to navigate through the options, indicate the desired object, then use a switch or a keyboard key to make a selection.
Scan Pattern	The way items in the selection set are presented to the user, for example, by row/column, column/row, linear, or group.
Step Scan	The user controls each movement (or step) of the scanning indicator by hitting a switch.
Switch	An input-output device that allows the AAC users to activate a selection on their communication device.
Touch	A direct access method where Individuals use their finger, other part of their hand or body, or a pointing device to access their communication devices.
Touch Enter	Activate an object on the screen by physically touching and holding on it for a minimum amount of time or, when using a mouse, by clicking and holding on the object for a minimum amount of time.
Touch Exit	Activate an object when the selection is released. This means that the user may slide a finger or a pointing device across the touch screen, or hold down on a mouse button while moving the cursor. A selection will not be made until the finger or pointing device moves away from the button, or when the mouse button is released.
Trackball	An alternative selection tool that consists of a ball in a socket with sensors to detect rotation of the ball to emulate a mouse.