

Assistive Technology (AT) service design and procurement evaluation 2024 25

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Introducing the problem

- AT team support students with a disability (SWD). AT Team Lead manages design, purchase and rollout AT Software across campus and online.
- Problem identified for students who require AT support but choose not to disclose a disability.
- AT team plan to deliver support to diverse groups of learners (HEA, 2023).
- Crawley and Marsh (2022) measured uptake of AT by mainstream students in an English institution yet current lack of empirical evidence from qualitative studies in this field.

Purpose statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the needs of a diverse group of students who choose not to or are unable to disclose a disability and targeting AT support to these groups.

Questions

Q 1 What are the popular accessibility apps students available for students for academic engagement?

Q 2 How do students describe their experience of using available institutional AT software for academic engagement?

Methodology

6 semi structured interviews conducted. This group of diverse learners chose to engage with AT
Secondary data gathered from Jisc Insights Survey 2022/23

Number of participants	Gender	Method of course delivery	Programme	Disability declared
6	Female (4)	Part time (4)	PGT (3)	No (4)
	Male (2)	Full time (2)	UG (2) PGR (1)	Yes (2)



Results

- Motivations for participants were beyond disability which implies a gap exists in supporting diverse learners
- Figure 1 word cloud reveal popular apps
- Learners desire training and support in the use of institutional AT
- Design of AT should consider the voices of students, made available on campus and personal devices
- AT necessary for academic tasks particularly writing (Figure 2)

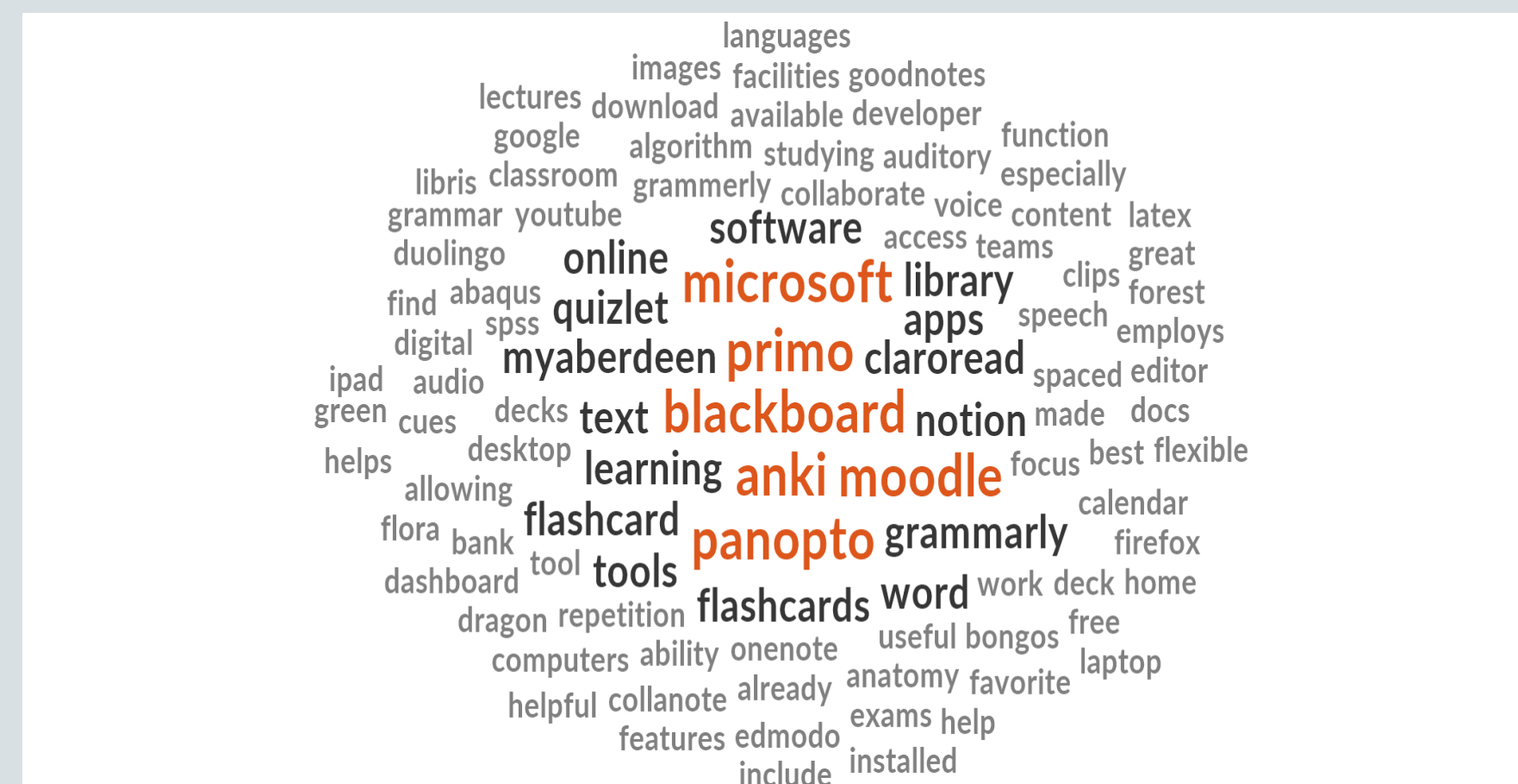


Figure 1. Word cloud most popular responses in largest fonts

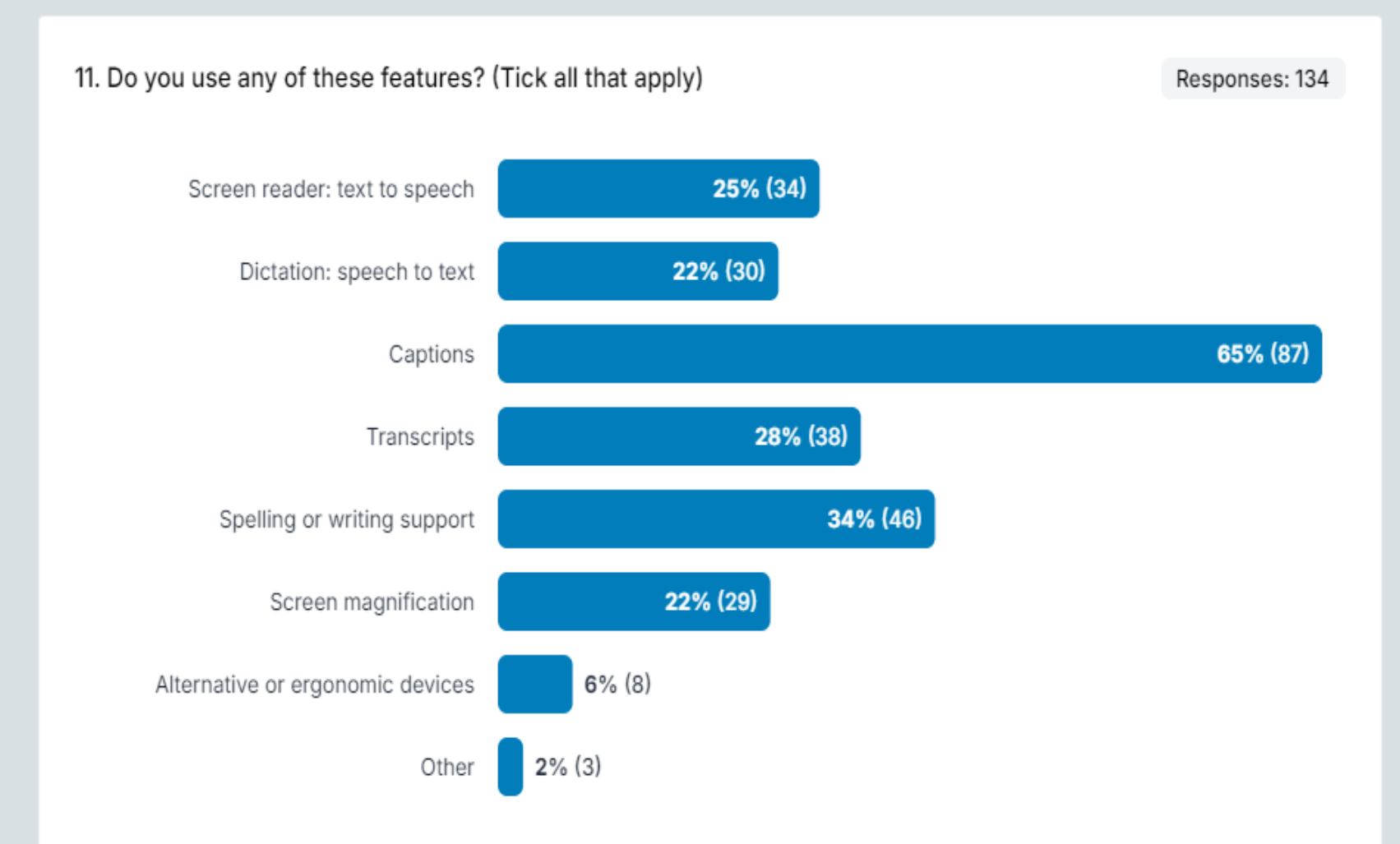


Figure 2. JISC digital insights survey Q11 displaying popular accessibility features

Conclusions

- AT staff require training to keep up to date with latest developments in accessibility apps
- Findings indicate AT staff well placed to deliver training to diverse learners
- Term AT may be synonymous with disability even in the mainstream context
- AT design and procurement should consider flexibility in how students engage with institutional AT, ability to install apps on their own devices, ensure fitness for purpose to support a variety of academic tasks

References and acknowledgements

1. CRAWLEY, S., NIND, R. and MARSH, N., (2022). <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/31113/>
2. JISC DATA ANALYTICS, (2023). Student digital experience insights survey 2022/23.
3. *Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education 2023*. (2023).
4. Jisc provides survey instruments for qualitative data and supports in its use.
5. Murat Oztok (Supervisor), the School of Education and Directorate of Information Services at UOA for their support
6. This slide checked for accessibility with Jaws Screen Reader software .