

Queen's develops new brain training app for research into aging minds

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Researchers at Queen's University Belfast are taking the first step towards discovering the true effectiveness of brain training exercises with the release of their own app aimed at those over 50.

The Brain Jog application is available to download free for [iPhone](#), iPod or iPad. It is the product of 18 months of work by researchers at Queen's School of Music and Sonic Arts to find out what the over 50's are looking for in a [brain training app](#).

Queen's researchers are encouraging as many people as possible to download and use the application. During the process, users will be asked to give feedback on their experience of playing the game. Using this information to determine what makes a good puzzle experience, the research team will continuously improve and adapt the games to make them as user friendly as possible – thereby maximising the number of people who play on a regular, long-term basis.

In the next stage of the project, the researchers hope to track the experience and performance of these long-term players to help clarify the effects of regular brain training on ageing minds.

The research is led by Donal O'Brien, a PhD student at Queen's Sonic Arts Research Centre. He said: "Brain Jog consists of four enjoyable mini games specifically designed to test and improve four areas – spatial ability, memory, mathematical ability and verbal fluency.

"This is achieved through problem solving, puzzles and reverse arithmetic, allowing users to be challenged in an engaging manner, and improve their performance with regular practice.

"Brain Jog is unique among similar apps in that it has come to fruition after extensive research and collaboration with the target audience to find out exactly what appeals to them.

"By downloading this app, you can help us create a fantastic game experience for those over 50 and bring us one step closer to finding out whether or not brain training can help prevent cognitive decline and dementia.

"To participate, simply download the application for free from iTunes, answer a few questions and then play the games. There are no obligations – you can play as often as you like and stop whenever you choose.

"Plans are in place for a future study on dementia prevention using the app; but before that can happen, people of all ages are encouraged to get downloading and have fun while providing vital information to our researchers and keeping their brain active."

More information: Brain Jog is available to download from iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/brain-jog/id414035111?mt=8&ls=1>

Provided by Queen's University Belfast

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