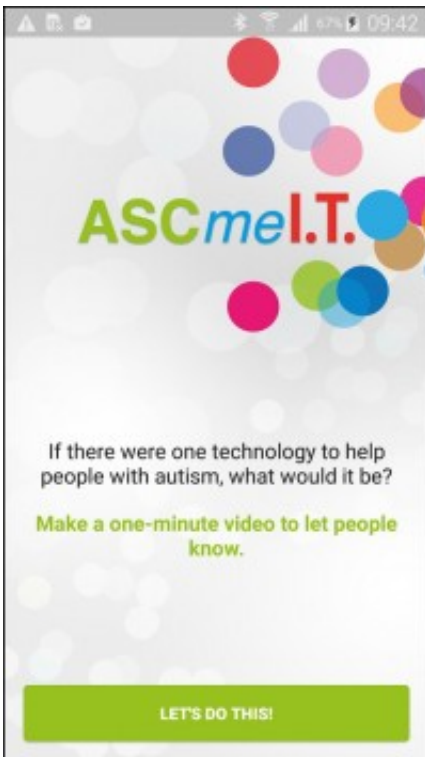


# New app will help people with autism influence tech developments

October 1 2015

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A new mobile app will launch today hoping to tap into the creative juices of people with autism to find new tech solutions to some of the everyday challenges they face.

['ASCmeI.T.'](#), a free mobile app available on Android and Apple, has

been developed by a consortium of researchers from our University and the Universities of Southampton and Sussex with the simple aim of involving people with [autism](#) in the development of new technologies that could help them.

## **What kind of technologies would help?**

It enables people with Autism Spectrum Conditions – as well as families, teachers, professionals, and anyone who supports someone with autism – to share their ideas on what kind of new technology would best help.

Through the app, users upload a one minute video explaining their idea which will be shared with researchers so that new developments in digital technologies for autism can be matched to support the needs of users.

Despite there being more than half a million people living with autism in the UK (around 1 in every 100), this is the first time such an initiative has been piloted. The researchers now hope it will lead to new developments - anything from technologies to support transitions, service delivery or inclusion through to bullying, learning or employment - that will be uniquely attuned to the needs of those with autism.

This project builds on another, led by Lisa Austin within the Department for Health at the University of Bath, 'ifOnly' which crowdsourced ideas for assistive technology that could help the elderly and people living with disabilities. This initiative was cited in a recent Parliamentary Report.

## **Helping to get voices heard**

Co-Investigator on the project, Dr Mark Brosnan from the Department of Psychology, explains: "This project is totally unique and encourages

'citizen science'. ASCmeI.T is a simple yet highly effective way to enable people with autism to get their voices heard and to allow the creativity of a previously neglected group to be realised."

Collaborator Dr Sarah Parsons, Reader in Education at the University of Southampton added: "If you've ever had a moment where you wished there was a useful technology out there to help you, or someone else, with something related to autism, this is the chance to get your idea heard. We want to use this new app to crowdsource ideas which we can blend with latest research and development."

Commenting on the potentials for the new App, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Sussex Dr Nicola Yuill said: "Getting developers to listen to the people on the ground is really going to make a difference for people with autism."

Everyone associated with autism is invited to submit a video. In addition there is a competition being run for schools, entries for which will be entered into a prize draw to win one of 30 Raspberry Pi computers. The deadline for submissions for the school competition is midnight on Monday 30 November, although the larger project is on-going and videos are always welcome.

**More information:** To find out more about the project, see [ascme-it.org.uk](http://ascme-it.org.uk)

Provided by University of Bath

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