Blappy, a new Bluetooth chat app for people with sensory disabilities

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A new Bluetooth chat app is for people with sensorial disability. Credit: UC3M

Blappy is a smartphone application that enables fluid communication between people with visual and/or auditory disabilities. Voice messages can be changed into text and vice versa; in addition, high-contrast images can be included, and the screen has a zoom feature. It is also compatible with the TalkBack accessibility service. To use the service, it is only

necessary to install the app in two terminals that are less than 30 meters apart and in a closed Bluetooth environment. Once the user is registered, there are two ways to send messages: either using voice recognition or a keyboard.

In Spain alone there are nearly 1 million visually handicapped people and nearly 1 million more with auditory impairment, according to CESyA. The application is available in four languages (Spanish, French, English and Portuguese), but its technology translates conversations into all of the languages that the Google Translator service recognizes.

Blappy is currently available for mobile phones that have the Android operating system; it is available via the Play Store. Users enable Bluetooth to connect with another smartphone that also has the app installed. Its developers are also working on a version for Apple's iOS platform.

Belén Ruiz Mezcua, associate professor of UC3M's Computer Science department and the general director of CESyA, says this initiative represents a commitment to accessibility and "is an example of technology transfer in the service of society's needs." In the same way, "it achieves the paradigm of design that is accessible for everyone," says Adrián Baeza, CESyA researcher and one of the professionals involved in the project's launch.

Provided by Carlos III University of Madrid

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