

Could technology improve the lives of people living with dementia?

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Credit: University of Queensland

Being able to tell your family you love them, order a meal at a cafe, and talk to friends are all things most people take for granted— but for people living with dementia, communication difficulties can lead to isolation.

Researchers from The University of Queensland and Bond University are setting out to find ways to bridge the communication gap using new technologies.

UQ's Professor Janet Wiles is leading the community research Florence Project, which is supported by the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language.

"Researchers from diverse disciplines, including engineers, technology experts, speech pathologists and [occupational therapists](#), are involved," she said.

"But no one knows the ins and outs of living with [dementia](#) better than those with the condition and those who care for them, so we are seeking volunteers.

"We think it is extremely important to embed the perspectives of [people](#) who live with dementia in this project from the beginning, and we want to be guided by them and their families and friends," Professor Wiles said.

Occupational therapist and UQ researcher Dr Jacki Liddle said the volunteers would have an understanding of the problems people living with dementia faced, and would know what could help improve communication in their daily lives.

"Some people have figured out their own solutions, but they may have tried lots of things that didn't work before getting to that point," Dr Liddle said.

"We'd like to tap into that knowledge and use it to develop technologies together.

"It could be a robot, an app, something you wear or something we haven't even dreamed of yet."

Volunteers are invited to participate face-to-face at the UQ St Lucia

campus or by phone or online.

Reference group members will be asked to share their experiences of living with dementia and provide feedback on the research, and could get the chance to test out any new technology.

Provided by University of Queensland

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