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Start-up Neuro Hero launches speech and language therapy apps

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Technology start-up Neuro Hero has launched a new set of apps for iOS and Android aimed at families whose loved ones have communications difficulties arising from strokes, brain injuries and other conditions.

The four Talk Around IT apps have been launched by Minister of State for Research and Innovation, Sean Sherlock, TD, and Neuro Hero founder Dr Aviva Cohen.

The word-finding technology was inspired when Cohen's husband, Steve, survived a stroke that left him with severe expressive aphasia.

Also launched today was a free version of the app focusing on natural objects: Talk Around IT Nature 'light'.

The Talk Around IT apps have been in development for more than two years and are designed in conjunction with speech and language therapists. The apps provide speech and language therapy that people can use in the comfort of their homes, without the cost of expensive therapy.

They are designed to help those with word-finding difficulties relearn everyday words. Each of the four word-finding apps has 50 pictures to name within a specific theme, such as common personal objects, animals and natural objects, masculine objects and household objects.

Making life better

There are around 30,000 people in Ireland living with the effects of stroke and conditions that can lead to speech and language difficulties.

Neuro Hero was one of 10 projects selected in 2011 for support from Diageo's Arthur Guinness Fund and received €50,000 along with business mentoring in order to advance this project further.

"These apps are the culmination of an enormous effort by the entire Neuro Hero team and many people who have helped us along the way," Aviva Cohen said.

"I know firsthand how stroke, brain injury and other illnesses can lead to isolation and despair. I am determined to find practical, cost-effective ways to help families by creating effective home-based therapies and useful tools like our short videos.

"We are committed to bringing these solutions to those who need them in Ireland and all over the world. I am confident that these apps will improve the quality of life of those living with communication difficulties. We will continue to find new ways to make life better for those living with chronic illness and their loved ones," Cohen said.