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The ACAT User Interface is designed to be used without the need for a keyboard or a mouse. The User Interface is made up of ‘scanners’. A scanner is a window with User Interface elements such as the alphabet button keys for typing. The User Interface elements are iteratively highlighted one after another allowing the user to make a selection. The user selects an element by activating a switch when the element is highlighted. ACAT will then execute the action associated with the element. If it is an alphabet button for instance, it would type the letter. If an action such as “display the main menu” is associated with the element, ACAT will execute the action. Because user needs vary greatly there are many ways a user can activate a switch and ACAT supports a range of input mechanisms.

a. **Keyboard**: You can use F12 key on the keyboard as a trigger.

b. **ACAT Vision**: ACAT vision uses a webcam to detect facial gestures and translates them into trigger events.

c. **Off-the-shelf switches**: An off-the-self switch works by sending a keystroke to the computer whenever you activate the switch. You can configure the switch to send an F12 keystroke and ACAT will recognize that as a trigger.

d. **ACAT Proximity switch**: This switch is currently under development. It attaches to the user’s glasses and can detect check movement, which is then translated into trigger events.

**Note**: Out of the box, ACAT supports keyboard and ACAT vision as input switch mechanisms. You can also use the mouse interact with the UI by pointing and clicking. ACAT is bundled with a number of variations of applications (see section 1.1.1) and you can pick the ones that suit your needs. Before you can use these applications, you should familiarize yourself with how the user interface works and how to trigger it with your input sensor.

The recommended sequence for getting up and running quickly on ACAT is:

1. **Vision Tryout** To get familiar with ACAT Vision switch mechanism (see section 1.2).

2. **ACAT Tryout** Type short words using the ACAT Vision switch mechanism (see section 1.4). You can also try out different scanning speeds and find the one that suits you.
3. **ACAT Talk**  
Communicate by typing sentences using a keyboard and by picking words from a word prediction list. Convert text to speech. (see section 1.6)

4. **ACAT App**  
Use the full-blown app to interact with applications such as email, web browser, Notepad, MS Word etc. (see section 1.7)

### 1.1 ACAT Dashboard

The ACAT installer creates a shortcut to the ACAT Dashboard application on your desktop. You can use the Dashboard to launch any of the ACAT applications. Try out the different versions and find the ones that you prefer. You can then create shortcuts to your preferred apps on the desktop by right clicking on their icons in the Dashboard window and selecting “Create Desktop Shortcut”.

![ACAT Dashboard](image)
If the “**Minimize to systray on close**” checkbox is checked, ACAT Dashboard will minimize to the systray when you launch an application, or if you close the window. When you exit the ACAT application that you launched, the Dashboard will automatically display.

If the Dashboard is minimized to the systray, you can exit it by right-clicking on the ACAT icon in the systray and selecting “Exit”.

### 1.1.1 Dashboard Shortcuts

The application shortcuts listed in the Dashboard broadly fall under two categories – **Talk** and **App**. In each of the categories, the shortcuts point to applications with different variations of the layout of the Alphabet scanner. For instance, Talk (QWERTY) is the Talk application with a QWERTY keyboard and Talk (ABC) is the Talk application with a layout in alphabetical order.

**“Talk” shortcuts:** Talk apps is to enable the user to communicate and are scaled down versions of the full User Interface. The different “talk” versions are just different keyboard layouts. They have a Talk window into which the user types text from an Alphabet keyboard. The user can then convert the text to speech. The apps also contain list predefined phrases that are stored for quick access to convert to speech.

**“App” shortcuts:** These are shortcuts to the fully-featured ACAT applications which enable you to perform tasks such as email, browsing the web, writing documents, viewing photos/videos and to interact with applications on your desktop.

The following table describes the apps in the ACAT Dashboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shortcut</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vision Tryout</td>
<td>A utility to get you familiar with using ACAT Vision which uses a webcam to detect facial gestures to trigger ACAT (see section 1.2). This is a standalone utility, not meant to be used as a trigger for the ACAT applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortcut</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACAT Tryout</td>
<td>This is a simple application to get you started, exposing you to the “scanners” and how they function. It also lets you try your switch with the User Interface (see section 1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phrases</td>
<td>The ACAT Phrases application that displays a list of phrases that can be converted to speech (see section 1.5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk (QWERTY)</td>
<td>The ACAT Talk application with a QWERTY keyboard layout (see section 1.6.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk (ABC)</td>
<td>The ACAT Talk application with a keyboard in which the letters are arranged in Alphabetical order (see section 1.6.2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk (Alt)</td>
<td>The ACAT Talk application with a alternate keyboard layout and scanning sequence optimized for text entry (see section 1.6.3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk (Alt ABC)</td>
<td>The Talk (ABC) application with an alphabetically ordered keyboard and an alternate scanning sequence optimized for text entry. (see section 1.6.4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>App (QWERTY)</td>
<td>The fully-featured ACAT application with a QWERTY keyboard layout (see section 1.7.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortcut</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>App (ABC)</strong></td>
<td>The fully-featured ACAT application with an alphabetically arranged keyboard layout (see section 1.7.2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>App(Alt)</strong></td>
<td>The fully-featured ACAT application with an alternate keyboard and scanning sequence optimized for text entry (see section 1.7.3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>App (Alt ABC)</strong></td>
<td>The fully-featured ACAT application with an alphabetically arranged keyboard and an alternate scanning sequence optimized for text entry. (see section 1.7.4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ACAT (Config)</strong></td>
<td>A utility to configure the various settings in ACAT. This is not an assistive application and will typically be used by helpers to configure ACAT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remaining sections in this chapter will guide you step-by-step on getting started with ACAT.

### 1.2 Vision Tryout

Skip this section if you are not going to use ACAT Vision as your switch. To disable/enable ACAT Vision, you can use the “Actuators” option in the ACAT Config utility.

ACAT vision analyzes the video stream from the camera on your system, senses facial gestures such as a cheek twitch, and translates them into trigger events to actuate the UI. If your system does not have a built-in camera, you can plug in a webcam.

Start with the Vision Tryout app to get used to trigger with facial gestures. ACAT Vision depends on a number of parameters such as:

- Distance of your face from the camera,
- Facial posture,
- Lighting,
• Facial gestures

The Vision Tryout application will help you get familiar with how it works so you can trigger the UI consistently.

From the ACAT Dashboard (see section 1.1), select Vision Tryout. If it detects multiple cameras it will display following dialog with a list of cameras from which you can select the one you want to use.

![Camera selection](image1.png)

Figure 2: Camera selection

After you select the camera, you will see the following window at the bottom right corner of your display.

![Vision Tryout window](image2.png)

Figure 3: Vision Tryout window

Press the “Start” button. After a few seconds, the video window will appear at the top left corner of your display. ACAT Vision will initialize the camera and then calibrate it (see Figure 4). It tries to detect your face and if it does so successfully, it looks for landmarks such as your eyebrows, cheeks and mouth. You must keep your head perfectly still and ensure that the camera is tracking your face and is able to recognize facial gestures. You will see blue rectangles around the eyebrows, cheeks and the mouth.
The calibration should normally take a few seconds. When the “Please wait... Calibration in Progress” message goes away in the video window, it is ready.
To trigger, twitch your cheek by pulling the cheek muscle and quickly releasing it. You can also quickly open your mouth and close it. ACAT Vision will recognize the facial gestures and in the video window, you will see a green rectangle around your cheek (or your mouth) with a “Cheek Gesture Detected” message (see figure below).

![Cheek Gesture Detected](image)

**Figure 5: Cheek Gesture Detection**

Practice this by repeating it a few times and ensure that it detects your gesture consistently.

You can also use your eyebrows. Raise and lower your eyebrows quickly and you will see an “Eyebrow Raise Detected” message in the video window.

To select your preferred gesture for triggering ACAT, run the ACAT Config utility from ACAT Dashboard and select “Actuators”.

### 1.2.1 Vision Tips

If ACAT is not able to calibrate or detect your gestures consistently, follow these tips:

1. Make sure the face is positioned between 1-2 feet away from the camera.

2. During the calibration phase, try to keep as still as possible. Do not make any head or facial movements.

3. Face detection works well in most lighting conditions but if the room is too dark or (artificial/sun) light is shining directly on the face then face detection will work quite as well. Make sure the face is reasonably illuminated.

4. For gesture detection to work correctly, you must keep your head perfectly still and only move your cheek muscle or your mouth.
5. To force recalibration while the video window is active, click on the window and press the ‘r’ key.

To quit Vision Tryout, press the “Stop” button and then select “Exit”.

1.3 Using Vision with ACAT

When you launch any of the ACAT Apps, they activate ACAT Vision on startup. This section outlines the various stages of initialization and the prompts you will see on the display.

1.3.1 Initialization and Calibration

If you are not going to use ACAT Vision as the switch mechanism and would like to turn it off, refer to the ACAT User Guide on how to disable it. You can skip this section as well.

When you launch any of the ACAT Apps, ACAT Vision will first initialize the camera.

![ACAT Vision Window](image)

Figure 6: Camera Initialization

After initialization, it will calibrate the camera. Remain still and you will see blue rectangles in the video around the eyebrows, cheeks and mouth. If calibration is taking too long, refer to section 1.2.1 for tips on getting optimum results.
After calibration has ended, the video window will close automatically and the ACAT scanner will display.

While ACAT is running, if ACAT Vision loses track of your face at any time, it will display a message indicating that it is calibrating. After calibration has successfully completed, the message will disappear.

**Note:** You can hide or show the video window at any time by pressing the hot key Ctrl+Alt+Shift+W (in that order). This hot key acts as a toggle.

### 1.4 ACAT Tryout

ACAT Tryout is a simple application lets you use your switch mechanism for text entry. The modalities and interaction used by this application are very similar to the ones used by the fully featured ACAT application. You can also test adjust the speed of scanning, make it faster or slower depending on your reaction time.

**Note:** If you are using a webcam as your trigger mechanism, make sure you familiarize yourself with how ACAT Vision works and how to get it to detect your facial gestures. You may want to try the standalone Vision Tryout app first (see section 1.2) before proceeding any further.
From ACAT Dashboard, click on “Tryout”. This will launch the ACAT Tryout application. If ACAT Vision is enabled, ACAT initialize the camera and perform calibration. See section 1.3 for details.

1.4.1 Typing

The ACAT Tryout window is shown in Figure 8. The word in red is the one you should type using the four letters. The button is the backspace key. The button clears the text to let you start over.

Follow these steps to begin typing:

1. The buttons will be highlighted one at a time. To enter the word “tea”, wait for the letter ‘t’ to get highlighted. While it is highlighted, trigger the switch. If you are using the camera, twitch your cheek or move your mouth. If you are using the keyboard, press F12. If you are using an off-the-shelf switch, activate it.
2. Repeat step 1 for the next letter and so on until you type the entire word. The next word will display.

3. If scanning of the buttons stops, just trigger your switch and scanning will resume.

4. To quit, trigger the “Exit” button. A Yes/No dialog will be displayed. When the word “Yes” is highlighted, trigger your switch. The application will close.

1.4.2 Adjusting scan speed

If you feel the default speed of scanning is too fast or too slow, click on the “Slower” or the “Faster” button to adjust the speed. When you have found the optimal speed, click on “Save” to save the current setting. The speed will apply to all the ACAT applications.
1.5 ACAT Phrase Application

This application displays a list of phrases that you can convert to speech by selecting a phrase. If you are using a webcam as your trigger mechanism, make sure you familiarize yourself with how ACAT vision works and how to train ACAT to detect your facial gestures. See sections 1.2 and 1.3 for details on using ACAT Vision.

When you launch ACAT Phrase, a list of phrases is displayed. Refer to the ACAT User Guide for details on adding phrases to the list.

![ACAT Phrases Application](image)

ACAT will begin scanning the phrases. When the desired phrase is highlighted, trigger your switch (twitch your cheek if you are using ACAT Vision) and the highlighted phrase is converted to speech.
1.6 ACAT Talk Applications

If you are using a webcam as your trigger mechanism, make sure you familiarize yourself with how ACAT vision works and how to train ACAT to detect your facial gestures. See sections 1.2 and 1.3 for details on using ACAT Vision.

If you have not tried out the ACAT Tryout application (see section 1.4), you may want to do that before you use the Talk application.

Now that you are familiar with your switch mechanism and how the UI works, you can use the ACAT Talk application to enter text by using the keyboard and by selecting words from the word prediction list. You can also convert the text you entered into speech. The ACAT Talk application is a scaled down version of the fully-featured ACAT application. It supports contextual next-word prediction through the Presage intelligent predictive text entry toolkit (http://presage.sourceforge.net).

There are four variations of ACAT Talk as described in section 1.6. Pick the one that you prefer.

1.6.1 Talk (QWERTY)

The Talk (QWERTY) application shown in Figure 10 has a box into which you type the text you want to use to communicate. It has a QWERTY keyboard for typing.
1.6.1.1 Type a sentence

Follow these steps to type a sentence into the talk window and convert it to speech.

1. To use the camera as the switch mechanism, follow the steps outlined in section 1.3. Test your facial gestures and ensure that they are recognized.

2. If you are going to use the keyboard as the switch mechanism, press F12 as the trigger. If you are using an off-the-shelf switch, activate it.

3. From the ACAT Dashboard (see section 1.1) run Talk (QWERTY). The window shown in Figure 10 will appear. It has the QWERTY keyboard, a box into which you can enter text by typing or by selecting words from a list of predicted words.

4. ACAT will begin scanning the word list, the left half of the keyboard and the right half of the keyboard.
5. To type the letter ‘h’, wait till the right half of the keyboard is highlighted.

6. Activate your switch.
7. ACAT will begin scanning the rows. Wait until the second row is highlighted.

8. Activate your switch.

9. ACAT will begin highlighting the buttons in the second row. Wait until the letter ‘h’ is highlighted.

10. Activate your trigger. The letter ‘h’ will appear in the talk window. The predicted words list will refresh and show the predicted words beginning with the letter ‘h’.
11. To select a word from the word list, wait until the word list section is highlighted. Activate your trigger.

12. ACAT will begin scanning the words in the list. When the desired word is highlighted, activate your trigger.

13. The word will appear in the talk window and ACAT will refresh the word list with a list of predicted words that will likely follow the word you just selected.

14. Continue steps 4 to 13 to add other words and complete the sentence.

15. Select the button. ACAT will convert the sentence you just typed into speech.

16. Select the button to clear the Talk window.

1.6.1.2 Convert phrases to speech

You can convert to speech by selecting a phrase from a list of predefined phrases that are stored for quick access.

1. Activate the button. A list of phrases will display. The ACAT User Guide has details on adding phrases to the list.
2. Highlighting will alternate between the button bar and the list. When the list is highlighted, activate your switch.
3. ACAT will highlight the phrases in the list one at a time. When the desired phrase is highlighted, activate your switch and the selected phrase will be converted to speech.

In the Phrases dialog, select the button to close the dialog and go back to the Talk window.

1.6.1.3 Resize the window

To adjust the size of the ACAT Talk window use the following shortcuts. The setting is automatically saved and will apply to all the ACAT scanners and applications.

- Ctrl+Alt+Comma to make the window smaller.
- Ctrl+Alt+Period to make the window larger.
- Ctrl+Alt+/ to set the window to its default size.

1.6.1.4 Exit the application

To exit the Talk application, select the button.
1.6.2 Talk (ABC)

The Talk (ABC) application shown in Figure 11 has a text box. The words you type will appear here, and you can convert the text to speech. It has a keyboard with the keys arranged alphabetically. It also includes a list of predefined phrases that can be converted to speech.

1.6.2.1 Type a sentence

Follow these steps to type a sentence.

1. To use the camera as the switch mechanism, follow the steps outlined in section 1.3. Test your facial gestures and ensure that they are recognized.

2. If you are going to use the keyboard as the switch mechanism, press F12 as the trigger.

3. From ACAT Dashboard (see section 1.1), run Talk (ABC). The window shown in Figure 11 will appear. It has the alphabetic keyboard, a textbox, a list of predicted words and a list of phrases.

4. ACAT will begin scanning the word list, the phrase list and the keyboard.
5. To type the letter ‘h’, wait till the keyboard section is highlighted.

6. Activate your switch.

7. ACAT will begin scanning the rows. Wait till the third row is highlighted.

8. Activate your switch.

9. ACAT will begin highlighting the buttons in the row. Wait until the letter ‘h’ is highlighted.
10. Activate your switch.

11. The letter ‘h’ will appear in the talk window. The predicted words list will refresh and show the predicted words beginning with the letter ‘h’.

12. To select a word from the word list, wait till the word list section is highlighted. Activate your trigger.

13. ACAT will begin scanning the words in the list. When the desired word is highlighted, activate your trigger.

14. The word will appear in the talk window and ACAT will refresh the word list with a list of predicted words that will likely follow the word you just selected.

15. Continue steps 4 to 14 to add other words and complete the sentence.

16. Select the button. The sentence you just typed will be converted to speech.

17. Select the button to clear the Talk window.

1.6.2.2 Convert phrases to speech

You can also convert a list of canned phrases to speech. Activate the button. A list of phrases will be displayed. Highlighting will alternate between the button bar and the list. When the list is highlighted, activate your switch. ACAT will highlight the phrases in the list one at a time. When the desired phrase is highlighted, activate your switch and the selected phrase will be converted to speech.
In the Phrases dialog, select the button to close the dialog and go back to the Talk window.

1.6.2.3 Resize the window

To adjust the size of the ACAT Talk window use the following shortcuts. The setting will be automatically saved and will apply to all the ACAT applications.

Press **Ctrl+Alt+Comma** to make the window smaller.

Press **Ctrl+Alt+Period** to make the window larger.

Press **Ctrl+Alt+/** to set the window to its default size.

1.6.2.4 Exit the application

To exit the Talk application, select the button.

1.6.3 Talk (Alt)

This variation of the Talk application is optimized for efficient text entry through an optimized arrangement of keys and scanning sequences.

![Talk (Alt) scanner](image)

Figure 12: Talk (Alt) scanner

The keys in the keyboard are arranged in frequency order – the letters occur most frequently in the English language at the beginning of each row.

See section 1.6.2.1 for steps on how to type a sentence and convert it to speech.
The first button in the predicted word list does a quick undo of the last text-entry action. If you typed a letter, it deletes it. If you picked a word from the list, or auto-completed a word, it deletes it as well.

To access the list of canned phrases, select the button.

1.6.4 Talk (Alt ABC)

This is similar to Talk Alt (see section 1.6.3) except for the arrangement of the keys in the scanner. They are in alphabetical order.

![Figure 13: Talk (Alt ABC) scanner](image)

1.7 ACAT Application

The ACAT application is the fully featured solution to interface with your computer. With the ACAT App you can:

- Converse, with others
- Edit text,
- Interact with applications like email,
- Browse the web,
- Manage files,
- Deliver lectures

If you have not tried the Talk Apps yet, you may want to do so first before going any further (see section 1.6). The Talk Apps can get you up to speed quickly on using the Alphabet scanner and the word prediction list to type text.
There are four variations of the ACAT application. Functionally they are all identical except for the layout of the alphabet scanner. From the ACAT Dashboard, launch the ACAT app with the layout you prefer. If ACAT Vision is enabled, ACAT will initialize the camera and perform calibration. See section 1.3 for details on this.

1.7.1 ACAT (QWERTY)

In version of the ACAT App has the Alphabet scanner with QWERTY keyboard.

![Talk window with the Alphabet scanner (QWERTY)](image)

You can toggle the visibility of the Talk window by selecting the Talk button in the Alphabet scanner. When the Talk window is not visible, the active application that is running on the desktop gets focus. If it is one of the applications that ACAT supports, it will respond appropriately, for instance, by displaying a contextual menu customized for the application.

1.7.2 ACAT (ABC)

This has keys in the Alphabet scanner arranged in alphabetical order. The Talk window is displayed alongside the scanner. You can type sentences in the Talk window by following the steps described for the Talk app in sections 1.6.1.1 and 1.6.2.1.
You can toggle the visibility of the Talk window by selecting the Talk button in the Alphabet scanner. When the Talk window is not visible, the active application that is running on the desktop gets focus. If it is one of the applications that ACAT supports, it will respond appropriately, for instance, by displaying a contextual menu customized for the application.

The remaining chapters in this guide discuss the full list of features and functionality of the ACAT application.

1.7.3 ACAT (Alt)

This version of ACAT App is optimized for efficient text entry through an optimized arrangement of keys and scanning sequences. The keys in the keyboard are arranged in frequency order – the letters occur most frequently in the English language at the beginning of each row.
The top level scanning of the Alphabet scanner alternates between the letters and the word prediction list. To scan the bottom three rows in the scanner, choose the down-arrow button as show in Figure 16. Similarly when the bottom rows are being scanned, use the up-arrow button to go back to scanning the letters and word prediction list.

The first button in the predicted word list is a quick undo of the last text-entry action. If you typed a letter, it deletes it. If you picked a word from the list, or auto-completed a word, it deletes it as well.

1.7.4 ACAT (Alt ABC)

This is similar to ACAT Alt (see section 1.7.3) except the keys in the Alphabet scanner are arranged alphabetically.
1.7.5 Using ACAT with Notepad

You can use the ACAT Apps to edit documents with Notepad, WordPad or Microsoft Word 2010. Here are the steps to create and enter text into a text document.

1. From the Alphabet scanner, select the button to display the Tools menu.
2. Select “Create File” from the Tools menu
3. Select “Text File” to create a plain text document Files are created in your “My Documents” folder.
4. After you have made a selection, ACAT displays a dialog to enter the filename, and also the Alphabet scanner which you can use to enter the file name.
5. As you start typing, ACAT will display the name of the file in the ‘Name of File” field. At the same time, it checks to see if the file already exists. If it does, the file name is displayed in red. If the file does not already exist, the file name is displayed in green.
6. When you are done with entering the file name, select the button. ACAT will create the file and launch Notepad with the file.
7. Using the alphabet scanner enter some text into the file. Notice that as you type, ACAT tracks what you have typed and updates the word prediction list with likely words.
### 1.7.6 Resizing the scanner

To adjust the size of the scanner you can use the following shortcuts. These shortcuts work only on the Alphabet scanner. The setting is automatically saved and will apply to all the ACAT scanners and applications.

- Press `Ctrl+Alt+Comma` to make the window smaller.
- Press `Ctrl+Alt+Period` to make the window larger.
- Press `Ctrl+Alt+/` to set the window to its default size.

### 1.7.7 Exiting ACAT application

![Figure 18: Quitting ACAT](image)

To exit the application:

- Select the button on the alphabet scanner. This will bring up the main menu.
- ACAT will scan the menu options.
- Activate your switch when “Exit” is highlighted.
- ACAT will ask for confirmation to exit
- Select “Yes” to quit the application.

The remaining chapters in this document describe all the features of ACAT.
1.8 ACAT Config

ACAT Config is a non-assistive application that exposes all the ACAT settings that can be directly manipulated. It requires the use of a keyboard and mouse and can be typically used by a helper to customize ACAT according to the end-user needs.