

To whom it may concern,

I am writing with my views on the acquisition of Smartbox by Tobii Dynavox, both as the parent of an AAC user and in my capacity as Trustee for communication for AngelmanUK.

My daughter is a PODD user, this is a very popular AAC system within the Angelman community due to it's flexibility of both the books and the app. For those with motor and visual difficulties it also offers a good range of access methods. However, the Compass app that is the current platform for PODD for many users is now old and due for update. Tobii Dynavox had been planning on updating the software to another platform for some time now. PODD is also currently available on The Grid by Smartbox, this is less popular for people with Angelman Syndrome due to the price, however, it is a good option for the few eye gaze users we have.

This whole process has become a source of frustration for me and has lead to many people being confused about what is the best choice for the AAC user, with many considering changing language system. This is never something that should be taken lightly and we would always advice against it. Nonetheless, with the uncertainty caused by the inquiry it is understandable that people are left with little choice.

Tobii Dynavox has promised to bring down prices and as many of our families are funding AAC systems privately, this is most welcome. As Snap and Core First is one of the cheapest robust AAC systems there is no reason to think that wouldn't have continued. Smartbox by contrast have always had a reputation for excellent costumer service and I had hoped that this could have been taken forward by Tobii Dynavox, as an improvement for their service.

I welcomed the merger when I first heard of it and would still wish it to go ahead now, not least because I am concerned about where Smartbox would end up. There are no obvious buyers for the company, meaning they would be unable to use the technology and software for innovation without a considerable period of convalescence. This would add to the continuing period of uncertainty, rather than being beneficial to the user.

For me, my daughter and the many people I support I would really hope that Tobii Dynavox could keep Smartbox and we could move on to the innovation that AAC users so desperately need. If Tobii Dynavox use the opportunity to lower prices whilst improving costumer service that would be in the best interests of all.

Kind regards,