

# THE WCR LEARNING COMMUNITY

This project is made possible through funding from the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.



WelcomeBC



Apes are being taught to communicate on donated iPads like the one pictured.  
Photo credit: Robert Scoble, Wikipedia



An adult orangutan  
Photo: Public domain

## Apps for Apes

Adapted from *The Vancouver Sun*

Level 3

The apes at a park in Florida  
are just like people.

The twins, age eight, love their iPad.  
The teenagers like it, too.  
The seniors are not interested.  
The park is letting six **orangutans**  
use an iPad to "talk".  
Orangutans belong to the ape family.  
Some trainers have also used iPads  
with **dolphins**.



Dolphins use iPads too.  
Photo: Public domain

### How does it work?

The screen shows pictures  
of different things. The trainer names  
one of the pictures. Apes use their hands  
because they cannot talk.  
The apes press the correct button  
for the name. They can also show  
what they want or need.

( . . . continued on page 2)

( . . . continued from page 1)

Push a button for water.

Push another button for food.

### Apps for apes

Richard Zimmerman works with orangutans. And he is building an "Apps for Apes" program for the iPad. He uses old, donated iPads. Orangutans are very intelligent, says Zimmerman. They must stay active. Apes get depressed if they are not active. A thinking activity using the iPad keeps them happy.

### Problems with iPads

The iPad screen is small. The apes sometimes hit the wrong buttons. Sometimes the apes use their fingernails. Then the touch screen on the iPad won't work. The trainers must hold the computers. This way, the apes won't break them.

### Future plans

The staff want to build a larger, stronger iPad screen for the apes in the zoo. The public would have another screen to use. People could ask the orangutans questions. Then the apes could answer. Imagine "talking" to an orangutan!

### Vocabulary:

- **orangutan:** (o-RANG-uh-tang, or "tan")  
an ape with long red hair, very long arms



Baby orangutans  
Photo: Public domain

- **dolphins:** a small intelligent whale with a hooked nose

### Learn a new expression:

- **to go ape over (someone or something)**  
to become very excited about something.

*I just go ape over chocolate. I love to eat it.*

*Sam likes Mary so much. We think  
he has gone ape over her.*

### Links:

About orangutans:

[http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/Primates/  
Facts/FactSheets/Orangutans/default.cfm](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/Primates/Facts/FactSheets/Orangutans/default.cfm)

About dolphins:

[http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/ani  
mals/creaturefeature/bottlenose-dolphin/](http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/bottlenose-dolphin/)