

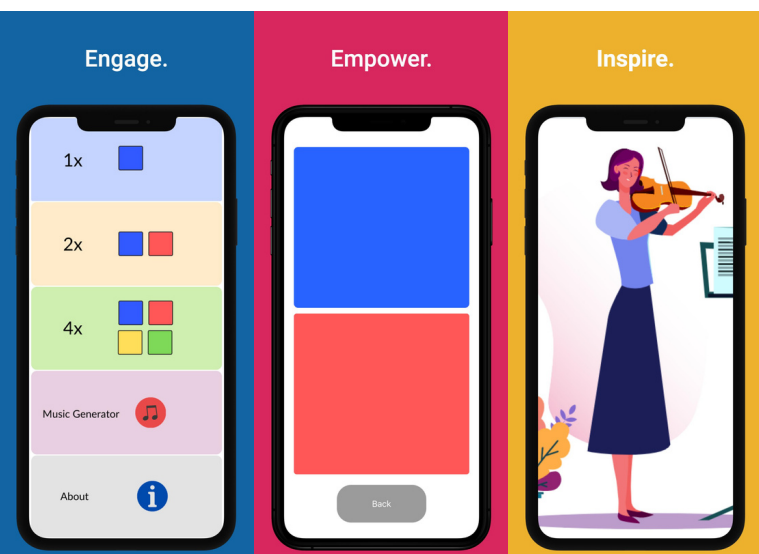
# How One Music Therapist is Making Apps More Inclusive and Accessible for All



Australia-based music therapist Carlin McLellan was frustrated by the lack of apps designed for people with different ability levels.

McClellan explained, "A lot of apps that are available, they've got so many flashy buttons. They're really complicated, and they're not accessible for people with disabilities."

After spending time searching for an accessible app he could use in session with clients and finding nothing, McLellan decided to build something himself, stating, "I noticed that there was a big gap in apps that just weren't accessible or inclusive. I thought, 'We really need to create something here.'"



McClellan began researching options. He had experience app building on another no code platform but needed a technology that wouldn't charge him per project. He found Thinkable.

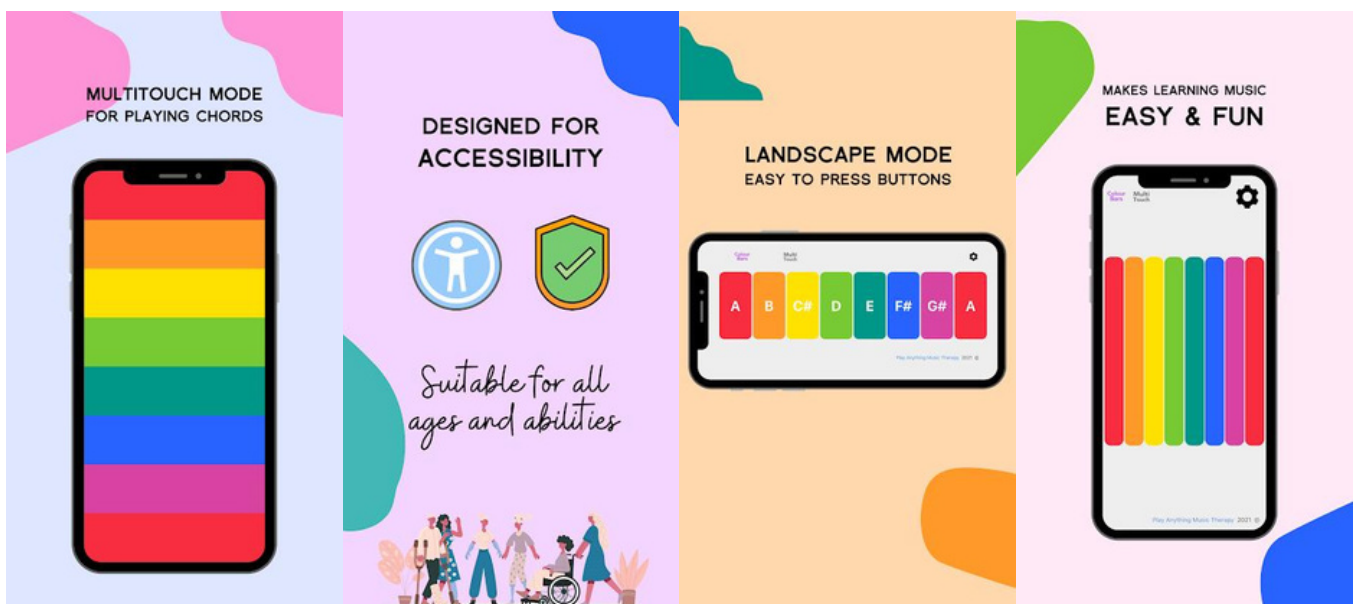
"When I realized Thinkable existed, I was like, 'Oh, this is a lot easier, a lot more streamlined,'" McLellan said. "I quickly switched over to Thinkable."

## BUILDING ACCESSIBLE APPS

McLellan quickly got to work and built his first app, Pentatonic Piano. McLellan explained, "It's super simple. It's five piano notes that are color-coded, and you tap on the note to play. Very easy to code. It's very straightforward. Like when you press the button, play a sound kind of thing. Obviously, like, you have to think about the concept of how that works, but very easy coding."

As McLellan's coding skills improved, he began building more complex apps, still with accessibility and inclusivity in mind. "As I got better at coding, it opens up more and more possibilities," McLellan said. "How can I connect blank spreadsheets? How can I do all these things? After I was coding for about a year with Thunkable, I started to make apps that started getting quite complex, and I was trying to figure out stored variables and all those kinds of things."

From finding no inclusive apps to publishing eight himself, McLellan feels grateful, "I'm really grateful, thankful Thunkable exists. I don't mean to be, like, fawning over Thunkable too much, but, like, I'm really grateful it exists. Because I couldn't — I literally couldn't — have made all the apps without it. It's been a great journey for me and for the people that I work with."



## APP INSPIRATION

So, how does McLellan find inspiration for his apps? He shared, "A lot of ideas come out of my clinical work with clients. How can we help them work towards their goals? [Clients have] an interest in the iPad. How can we use this interest to help them engage in more social interaction with other people to work on their communication goals?"

Below are a few of McLellan's available apps:



### **Pentatonic Piano**

Pentatonic Piano is a fun and easy way to play melodies, using the five notes of the pentatonic scale.



### **Old MacDonald**

Old MacDonald is an engaging, inclusive educational music app. The interface is simple, intuitive, and easy to navigate. Simply click on an image to play the animal sound. It's great for encouraging vocalization and joint attention.



### **Visual Schedule Pro**

Visual Schedule Pro features an easy-to-use interface, making it quick and easy to create visual schedules for a range of settings.



### **Trace Numbers and Letters**

An accessible app to assist with learning numbers and letters. Suitable for children, adults, and people learning English as a second language.



### **RAMSR Intro**

RAMSR is a program for young children that aims to support their attentional and emotional regulation skills, as well as mental flexibility, inhibition, and working memory (the executive functions).



### **Easy Play Piano**

Easy Play Piano features eight color-coded bars which can be tapped or pressed to play the eight notes of the musical scale. The piano can be set to any key of the diatonic scale.



### **TOOCAN MUSIC**

Carlin McLellan (developer name: Toocan Music) is a change-maker at the intersection of music, health, and technology. He develops music learning apps for web and mobile for people of all abilities. His mission is to meet the individual learning needs of people with disabilities and help create a society that is inclusive and inspiring for all.