



WORLD

Technology News and Commentary for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



FCC's Ten-Digit Telephone Numbering Order

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The Accessible Enterprise
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18th Biennial TDI
Conference Registration
See Page 23



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
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Board Views



BY DR. ROY MILLER
TDI President

With the birth of the Internet during the latter part of the last century deaf and hard of hearing people gained a level playing field for world-wide telecommunications. Why? Because it was all text!

Seems Like There's Always Another Wall

I recently gave a workshop concerning the history of telecommunications technology in which I briefly traced how we communicate over great distances from the use of smoke signals, letters carried on horse back, and signal fires to such things as cell phones, pagers and videophones. And while I was developing my presentation I was struck by the fact that every advance in telecommunications technology seemed to carry with it a new challenge or barrier for deaf and hard of hearing people – another wall that had to be overcome.

The Wall of Illiteracy

For example, let's look at two of the oldest telecommunication technologies — fires and horses. In the beginning, smoke signals produced by fires were used to communicate only a few basic ideas, such as "Danger," "Come here," or "All is well." It is said that in ancient China soldiers stationed on the Great Wall used smoke signals sent from tower to tower to warn of impending attacks, and that a warning could be sent 300 miles in as little as six hours. But Polybius in ancient Greece (around 150 BC) developed a complex system of alphabetical smoke signals. This represented a step forward in the amount of information that could be communicated over long distances.

Persia (now Iran) had the first real postal system (around 550 BC) using riders on horseback. And China had postal relay stations as far back as

the Han dynasty (206 BC). It is said that under Kublai Khan China had about 1,400 postal stations. Carrying letters on horseback extended the distance that messages could be sent and increased the speed with which messages were delivered.

However, like the development of alphabetic smoke signals, at the time putting mailmen on horses provided no telecommunication benefits to deaf people. Why not? Because deaf people were uneducated and did not know how to read or write. The wall of illiteracy was too high for either horses to leap over or alphabetical smoke signals to rise above.

The middle ages saw the invention of the printing press and the development of new telecommunication forms utilizing that technology. The invention of the printing press enabled the mass distribution of printed pamphlets in Germany as early as the mid-1400's, and later the development and distribution of newspapers. The first true newspaper printed in English was the *London Gazette* in 1666. And the first newspaper in America appeared in Boston in 1690 (*Publick Occurrences*). Newspapers presented a tremendous advancement in telecommunications, but they were again of no benefit to deaf people because of the wall of illiteracy.

Samuel Morse constructed the first telegraph line from Baltimore to Washington, DC in 1844, and

BOARD VIEWS

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within 10 years about 23,000 miles of telegraph wire criss-crossed the country. This new technology, like the horse, expanded the distance over which people could telecommunicate, and increased the speed of delivery to where it was in effect instantaneous. The telegraph grew in importance, and effectively put the horse and rider out of the telecommunications business (the Pony Express ran from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California and ended operations in October, 1861). But the telegraph was another technology that relied on a coded form of the alphabet. Thus it provided little or no direct benefit to deaf people as they were not educated at the time. The wall of illiteracy was still there!

The wall of illiteracy was a total barrier to telecommunications by deaf people until the latter part of the 19th century, at which time significant numbers of deaf people started to become educated. Thomas H. Gallaudet had brought Laurent Clerc from France and the American School for the Deaf was opened in Hartford, Connecticut in 1817. Later, the Columbia Institute for the Deaf (now Gallaudet University) was opened in Washington, DC in 1864. These events signaled the beginning of the destruction of the wall of illiteracy for deaf people.

The Wall of Silence

Not long after the telegraph became the dominant telecommunications technology, a new gadget appeared on the scene. In particular, Alexander Graham Bell was issued a patent for the telephone in 1876, and the first commercial telephone system was established by Bell in Boston in 1877. The telephone eventually became ubiquitous, being in about 97 percent of American households. And although it was the primary

telecommunications technology used by Americans, it provided a new wall for deaf and hard of hearing people. The use of the telephone required a person to be able to hear, and that was an impossible wall of silence for deaf people and many hard of hearing people to climb over.

After the turn of the century another technology appeared on the telecommunications scene, namely radio. Many people contributed to the development of radio, but Tesla was issued a patent for it in 1900. The patent was later awarded to Marconi in 1904, and then re-awarded to Tesla after his death by the US Supreme Court in 1943. The first licensed commercial public radio station in the US is commonly thought to be KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which went on the air in October, 1920. But radio was another telecommunications technology that required a person to be able to hear to benefit from its use, and so folks with hearing loss were again unable to climb over that wall of silence.

Shortly after radio emerged on the scene, a new telecommunications technology was born. It was a technology that was destined to become the main source of news and entertainment for most Americans, namely, television. TV was invented by Philo T. Farnsworth in 1924, and it added a new dimension to the broadcast industry. In particular, it added video to the audio component of radio. It was a gigantic step forward for the telecommunications industry! Yet, with the exception of a few pantomime characters portrayed by TV giants like Red Skelton and Jackie Gleason, a person still had to be able to hear to maximally benefit from the technology. The wall of silence was still there.

But the wall of silence was not to remain forever. Just as “education” destroyed the wall of illiteracy, “text” tore apart the wall of silence. But,

unfortunately, other walls sprung up.

More Walls

When Robert Weitbrecht developed the acoustic coupler in 1964 it allowed deaf and hard of hearing people with an appropriately modified teletypewriter (TTY) to access the public telephone network for the first time since the telephone was invented nearly a century earlier. The coupler (otherwise known as the Weitbrecht modem) basically allowed text to be sent over the telephone network. That was an earth shattering step forward in telecommunications for deaf people. However, it carried with it a new challenge, namely obtaining, modifying and distributing used teletypewriters for use by deaf people. In effect, a new **wall of availability** was erected.

Later, the teletypewriter was replaced by a smaller, lighter, electronic TTY, and it was commercially available to the deaf and hard of hearing community. And this increased availability was another step forward for accessible telecommunications for people with hearing loss. But the people who considered obtaining a TTY encountered another wall, namely the **wall of affordability**. It was not uncommon for a top-of-the-line TTY to cost as much as \$500, a price wall that was much too high for many folks to climb.

With the birth of the Internet during the latter part of the last century deaf and hard of hearing people gained a level playing field for world-wide telecommunications. Why? Because it was all text! And that was also the situation with the development of two-way alphanumeric pagers and Instant Messaging (IM). Telecommunicating in strictly text made everyone equal – until creative innovators developed the ability to send video over the Internet and

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Capitol Commentary



BY CLAUDE STOUT
TDI Executive Director

Our accomplishments would not be possible without your support. I invite you to consider one more way of demonstrating the spirit of giving (and joining) during this Holiday Season.

'Tis the Season of Joining and Giving

I know everyone is getting excited about the upcoming 2008 Holiday Season. This is a great time for all of us to celebrate end-of-the year festivities with our families and special friends.

This is also a good time to reflect on TDI's achievements for 2008. TDI has much to be proud of concerning its accomplishments as a leading national consumer advocacy organization during the past year. Some successes were the result of TDI acting alone, while others were achieved in partnership with other national organizations and coalitions. Here are some results of our work here in Washington.

After many proceedings between TDI and other consumer groups and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), our request was officially approved for a real ten-digit telephone numbering system for our videophones, both stand alone units and those operating with a computer, as well as computers using Internet Protocol Relay (IP Relay). Although they look like real telephone numbers, the numbers given to us in the past by some VRS providers are proxy numbers, and they will not connect you to the real telephone network. Instead in the near future, each of us may request real ten-digit telephone numbers for our videophones and computers. These numbers will allow us to make direct calls to other videophones and to call voice users via our preferred Video Relay Service (VRS) or IP Relay provider. Our hearing contacts will benefit too, as they will be able to call us by simply dialing our real ten-digit number, which will then automatically connect them with our preferred relay provider. An added benefit, and perhaps more important than anything else, is the fact that we

will be able to make emergency calls through a VRS or IP Relay to the most appropriate 9-1-1 center.

All of us value very much having captions on many of our favorite TV programs. TDI remains vigilant for petitions filed with the FCC by video program producers that ask for an exemption from captioning their TV programs. If there is no evidence that providing captions would impose an undue burden based on our analysis of their financial resources and length of operation, we will oppose their requests and try to ensure that they comply with all applicable captioning regulations.

Just last week the FCC announced that, as we move from analog to digital TV programs, whatever obligations a broadcaster currently has regarding captioning analog TV programming the same obligations will apply as they transition to digital TV networks. There are no special exemptions for digital programming.

In response to the captioning quality petition filed four years ago by TDI and other organizations, the FCC has streamlined the complaint process concerning captioning. There will be two different complaint procedures that viewers may pursue.

The first procedure is for quick notifications, with the goal of expedited resolution, when a consumer notices a problem with the captioning and notifies the distributor or broadcaster while the program is still airing on TV. The second procedure is similar to the current process where a consumer files a written complaint after the fact noting there was a problem with captioning. The broadcaster or distributor will now be required to respond within 90 days instead of 145



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CAPITOL COMMENTARY

Continued from page 4

days allowed under the old rules. The consumer will be able to file the written complaint with either the distributor or the FCC.

In response to one other item on the captioning quality petition filed by TDI, the FCC is requiring TV stations and distributors to post contact information on their website, and on other promotional and billing materials. Hopefully this will facilitate consumers filing access complaints or other comments directly with them. This is similar to current practices regarding Section 255, which deals with access to telecommunications products and services. The FCC will also post contact information for all broadcasters and distributors on its website.

Outside the Beltway, TDI has provided training and outreach with our constituents. This fall we conducting consumer advocacy trainings sponsored by Hamilton Relay in three cities, those being Boston, Massachusetts, Madison, Wisconsin, and Sacramento, California. At press time, we will have had two Town Hall meetings this year, one in Clearwater Beach, Florida and one in Tucson, Arizona. TDI collaborated with HLAA (Hearing Loss Association of America) to assist the FCC with a special workshop on the transition to digital television. That workshop was held in Wilmington, North Carolina, which shut off analog TV broadcasting on September 8, 2008 in anticipation of the nationwide shutdown on February 17, 2009.

TDI also assisted Dr. Bob Segalman and other consumer advocates with speech disabilities in filing comments with the FCC asking the Commission to approve IP Speech-to-Speech TRS as reimbursable from the NECA Interstate TRS Fund.

Throughout the year, we have worked with Gallaudet University and the Coalition of Organizations

for Accessible Technology (COAT) concerning the benefits of IP real-time text technology. With this technology, we would be able to process text communication that is transmitted character by character on a pager, with instant messaging (IM) or with short message service (SMS) on wireless devices. This would be extremely helpful in event of emergencies where a quick answer is crucial. TDI sent letters to several battery manufacturers to see if they can extend the life and durability of their batteries. We know that people want to change the batteries less frequently in their hearing aids, portable TVs and other devices.

While we have accomplished many things this year, our plate remains full for the upcoming 2009 year. We will actively support the COAT coalition in meetings with the 111th U.S. Congress and hopefully facilitate the passage of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act. Among a number of items in this proposed legislation is a call for regulations to ensure that we have captioning of commercial videos delivered over the Internet. We hope to see the FCC certify more companies to provide captioned telephone services. You will be extremely pleased with TDI's newly revamped website when we unveil it early next year.

TDI's Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network (CEPIN) is into its fifth year, with funding for two more years from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. With our latest three-year grant we will be developing online training for government officials, first responders, and emergency managers to better understand how they can meet the needs of special needs populations before, during, and after emergencies.

We have five full-time and two part-time staff members working on your behalf, and we are deeply grateful for their hard work, unique commitment, and unparalleled passion for equal

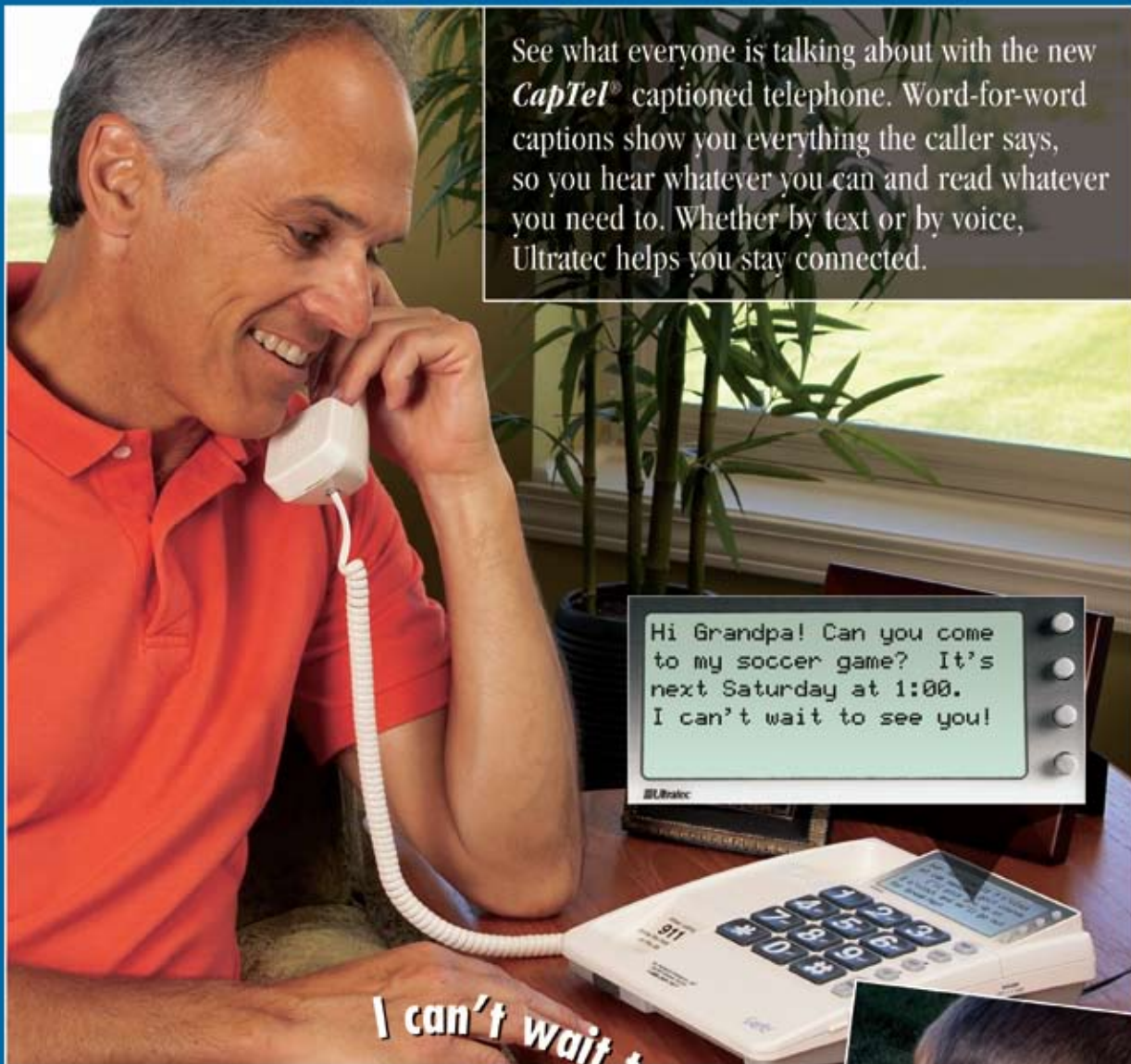
access for all. We are equally thankful for the pro-bono legal services provided by Bingham-McCutchen. With their support, we submit 75 to 100 filings per year with the FCC and other federal agencies. We have actively collaborated on many access topics with our sister consumer organizations and coalitions by, for, and of deaf and hard of hearing people, such as Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN), National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA), American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB), American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), and the California Coalition of Agencies Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCASDHH). As the saying goes, "When the tide rises high, all boats rise high together."

While we seek to represent you well in Washington, we continue to be challenged to stay "in the black" with our daily operations. While we benefit from the second CEPIN grant, we must depend on sufficient levels of advertising, contributions, and membership dues for our other programs and services. As with any other business or organization, we continue to experience cost increases for rent, printing, supplies, travel, communication support services, and others.

Our accomplishments would not be possible without your support. I invite you to consider one more way of demonstrating the spirit of giving (and joining) during this Holiday Season. We humbly appreciate your financial help for TDI with its never-ending advocacy work in Washington, DC! If you are not a member of TDI, we encourage you to join or to renew your membership with us. All it will take is for you to fill out a form, and pay by check or credit card. Invite your friends. To join TDI as a member and

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Accessible Tech



BY JAMES HOUSE
TDI World Editor

With digital television, its really an all-or-nothing proposition.

The Other Digital Television Transition

Americans are undergoing many changes in their television viewing habits. Technology is changing the shape of television sets – from big bulky boxes to flat screens that can be hung on the wall. Programs are transmitted increasingly in a digital format. The digital data stream of “ones” and “zeros” zooms out at the speed of light from the transmitter to the receiver. It is so complete, and the result lies in a bright clear sharp video that brings out intricate details of the picture.

The most important change is the fact that broadcasters across the country will cease providing analog television programming over the air. The 20 percent of American households that do not subscribe to cable, satellite or any type of pay television service will find that their old trusty rabbit-ear television no longer works unless they have digital-to-analog converter box. TDI is one of the major nongovernment organizations participating in outreach efforts to educate viewers across the country about the converter box and helping people obtain a converter box by applying for \$40 coupons from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration within the U.S. Department of Commerce. So far, we have been in about a dozen states and written several articles. Yet, the February 17, 2009 deadline is fast approaching and according to the National Association of Broadcasters, nine million homes are still not yet ready!

If you live where over-the-air reception is poor, you may not get a signal at all unless you have a strong antenna. With analog television, the signal degrades over a distance, but you could still see a picture. However, with digital television, its really an all-or-nothing

proposition. So if you have a new converter box already, but can no longer get a picture at all, check your antenna.

Another new venue for television broadcasting is over the Internet. The World Wide Web is what most people would call a final frontier. In the early days, many of the regulators and visionaries alike compared the “World Wide Web” with the “Wild Wild West” where government oversight was minimal to encourage innovation and free thinking. While those were good goals, it often meant that access for users with disabilities was left behind.

To give you an example, the traditional telephone network provided reliable telephone services for more than one hundred years. Toward the end of its first century, people with hearing loss began to recognize telecommunications as a viable civil right, as we had the right to access the same information in the same manner and at the same time as everyone else. But within the laws, everything pointed to the telephone networks because that’s how we assumed that technology would carry our conversations.

Along came the Internet, and a new way of transmitting phone calls. Since the federal government adopted a hands-off approach on regulating Internet based activities, providers were able to minimize their obligations to provide access. They would like to see first if the marketplace would spur accessibility features on its own.

When it comes to making products accessible, the historical record does not look good. However, as we look back, the overall historical trend points to shorter waiting periods between the time the original product

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was developed and when deaf or hard of hearing people could begin to benefit from it. A few examples: The telephone was invented in 1876; the TTY modem came into the market in 1964, 88 years later. The first talking movie, *The Jazz Singer*, premiered in 1927, snuffing out silent films as a source of visual entertainment for deaf and hard of hearing moviegoers. Thanks to US Department of Education grants, captioned movies became available 21 years later, but it took another 35 years before captioning became available on television. Captioned television is now seen almost everywhere.

There is another digital TV transition. Several popular network prime-time shows have made the jump from the television set in the living room to a computer with a high-speed connection. For years, people's lives used to revolve around "appointment TV."

In the mid-1980's life went on as usual for many deaf and hard of hearing people except for one hour on Wednesday nights. For the first time, *Dynasty*, a prime-time soap opera became accessible to deaf and hard of hearing viewers. Because CBS did not begin captioning shows until several years after ABC and other networks began captioning, the original prime-time soap opera, *Dallas*, did not have the same appeal. That was our "appointment TV" for several years.

Now, for the last one or two years, major television networks have offered streaming videos on their websites of prime time TV shows. As a result, we can watch TV anytime we want – anyplace as long as we have a high speed Internet connection. As expected, at first none of them were captioned. Captioning online uses different technologies than what we have seen on TV for years.

But we have some good news! This fall, with the new TV season, things are beginning to look up. There are four major networks offering webisodes (TV episodes shown on the web):

PBS – www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline



The pioneer due to the influence of The Caption Center at WGBH and

the National Center for Accessible Media, PBS led the efforts in online captioning. Their popular TV show, *Frontline* is closed captioned online. During my research, I have not found other shows on PBS that are captioned although they do a great job with making sure DVDs are fully accessible.

NBC – www.nbc.com/heroes



Captioning was not an obvious feature on this channel. This was really a hit and miss endeavor as I could not

tell which shows were captioned. I saw *Heroes* was captioned, but not *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* – although the caption button was "alive" in both instances.

FOX – fox.com/bones



Their online viewer shows a caption button, so

I knew the capability is there. Not all programs are captioned and I had to hunt. After several misses, I found that *Bones* is captioned. Clearly, there needs to be better labeling.

ABC – abc.go.com



When you go by the numbers, ABC is by far the leader of the pack. Virtually all of their prime time shows are

captioned online. This feature continues to show ABC's ongoing commitment to captioning for more than thirty years. Kudos to the ABC network for taking the lead in quantity and commitment.

Two more things: I find that the captions are optimized and will display on current versions of Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Mozilla's Firefox browsers. In all cases, the captions do not work when watching videos using the full-screen mode.

TDI urges all of the other television networks to join this trend. We have made great strides in making analog TV accessibility good, but it is dying. We need to "fast-forward" now and make all digital AND online television programming more accessible to every viewer with captioning and video description.

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Brian Rosen from Neustar

The FCC has ordered VRS and IP relay providers to provide real telephone numbers to deaf and hard of hearing VRS and IP relay users by the end of 2008.

10-Digit Telephone Numbers: What, Why, How and Why Now?

BY BRIAN ROSEN, NEUSTAR

Video and IP relay are tremendous advances from the days of key stroking on TTY machines. Unfortunately deaf and hard of hearing users of these services have not had real telephone numbers and instead use a confusing system of 800 numbers, screen names and proxy numbers to give to callers. In no way does the current system approximate the way hearing people communicate over a telephone - by simply dialing a telephone number and having a conversation.

By December 31 of this year, however, the situation will change dramatically for the better. Deaf and hard of hearing consumers will be able to obtain what everyone else can: a real 10-digit telephone number to use with their Internet-based relay services. Because of a recent FCC order, VRS and IP Relay providers must provide 10-digit numbers to their customers by the end of the year. If you use VRS or IP Relay, this change WILL affect you.

Why is this change happening?

Congress and the FCC recognized that the current solution was not functionally equivalent and that there were simple solutions that would make it more functionally equivalent. The FCC has ordered VRS and IP relay providers to provide real telephone numbers to deaf and hard of hearing VRS and IP relay users by the end of 2008. While some VRS and IP Relay providers were starting to offer services that looked like real telephone numbers, in reality they were not ("proxy" numbers for example). Also of great concern to policy makers,

emergency "9-1-1" services offered through these providers were not capable of automatically providing first responders with the caller's location information in the same manner that is available to hearing persons.

Technology advances pioneered by the Voice over IP (VoIP) carriers made providing real telephone numbers to VRS and IP Relay consumers possible. Guided by discussions led by the experts in telephone numbers, workshops, and comments from industry and consumers, the FCC in June, 2008 issued an Order requiring the assignment of 10-digit telephone numbers to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

What is a 10-digit telephone number? Telephone numbers throughout the United States are 10 digits, broken into three components: the "area code" (a three-digit number also known as the "NPA"); the "Exchange" (the middle three digits) and the "Line" (the final four digits that identify a particular subscriber's line). The complete number, NPA-NXX-YYYY, is unique within the U.S., Canada, and several Caribbean countries. Adding the "country code", which for the U.S. is "1", creates a globally unique telephone number.

The FCC's 10-digit numbering plan for the deaf community requires that you register with a "default" Internet-based TRS provider. This is a VRS or IP Relay provider who will handle your calls (incoming and outgoing) by default. If a hearing consumer calls your 10-digit telephone number directly, a relay session will be established automatically using your chosen default provider. If a

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deaf or hard of hearing consumer calls your number using their text or video device, they will reach your text or video device directly. And you can finally hand out your 10-digit telephone number to all of your friends, family and anyone else -- hearing, deaf, or hard of hearing. And they can now call you at your number, just like everyone else.

How does it all work? When a hearing consumer calls you directly using your 10-digit telephone number, the call will be answered by your default provider. The provider will know, automatically, that it's a call to you, and they will automatically connect to your video phone or text device. You do not have to explain how to use relay; it's automatic. Your deaf and hard of hearing friends can call you using their video phone or text device by dialing your 10-digit telephone numbers.

In turn, you can now "dial" a 10-digit number of either a hearing or a deaf/hard of hearing consumer and your default provider will automatically connect you. If you call another deaf/hard of hearing consumer using your video phone, the call will be a direct VP to VP, using the telephone number as the address. No more IP addresses to gather and type in!

Of course, 10-digit telephone numbers don't fix the problem of providers making communication assistants available when you or your caller places a call. The FCC's 10-digit telephone number order provides that the caller has to be able to choose the provider on a call-by-call basis. If a hearing consumer wants to call you using a provider of her choice, she can dial an 800 number of the provider she wishes to use and provide your 10-digit telephone number. The "alternate" provider will be able to connect to you.

Similarly, if you want to call a hearing person using an alternate provider,



Public Safety Answering Point dispatcher responds to a 9-1-1 call. Photo by National Emergency Numbering Association (NENA)

you can do that much as you do now, connect your device to the alternate provider, give them the telephone number you are calling, and your call will be connected.

All deaf and hard of hearing consumers will have to register with their chosen default provider. If, after you try them out, you are unsatisfied with your default provider, you can change to another provider. The process is exactly the same as changing a landline telephone number from one provider to another; you contact the new provider, and ask them to "port" your 10-digit telephone number. Although the time period will vary, your new provider will soon be serving your telephone number. While it is possible to port your number at any time after the new numbering system begins, you should give your current provider some time to see if they can meet your expectations before you give up on them and ask another provider to port your 10-digit telephone number.

When you register, you will be asked

to provide your address. This will be used so emergency authorities can find you if you ever need to call 9-1-1. One of the major benefits of the 10-digit telephone number plan is that you get the same enhanced 9-1-1 service as a VoIP consumer would; when you call 9-1-1, your call goes in the "front door" of your local 9-1-1 call center (PSAP), and your registered address is automatically provided to the 9-1-1 call taker. Please note that if you move your VP or text device, you need to update your registered address with your current default provider. However, when you get your 10-digit telephone number, you get the same 9-1-1 service as everyone else. You dial 9-1-1, your call is routed to the right PSAP, your address is supplied automatically, and the PSAP can call you back if they need to, using your 10-digit telephone number. VP and IP Relay providers are required to give priority treatment to 9-1-1 calls.

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Here's some more information about 9-1-1.

If you just call 9-1-1, your default provider will handle your emergency call. For the moment, you are better off if you use your default provider. You can decide to use another (alternate) provider to handle your emergency call. You can connect to an alternate provider much as you do now and ask them to place an emergency call for you. When you use an alternate provider, under the current rules, your registered location may not be automatically provided to 9-1-1, and the alternate provider may have to ask you for your address to correctly route your call to the right PSAP and manually provide your location to 9-1-1. The FCC is aware of this limitation, and improvements to the system are likely soon.

1 0-Digit Numbering FAQs

Do I have to register?

Yes. The FCC has decided that ALL deaf and hard of hearing consumers who use VRS and IP Relay must register, get a 10-digit telephone number and provide an address for 9-1-1. The FCC has also ordered that special "proxy" numbers be discontinued.

Do I need new equipment?

No. Your current system can be used. Some VPs will have software upgrades to take advantage of all of the features

By now you are thinking, "Sounds great, where can I get my 10-digit telephone number?" You get one from the first default provider you choose. They will assign you your number.

of the 10-digit numbering system.

Do my callers pay long distance (LD) rates to call me?

Yes, they do, just as they would pay LD rates to call any other phone in your home or office. These are real 10-digit numbers. Of course, many callers have "all you can eat" plans that won't incur LD charges. It's also possible for your caller to call the 800 number of your default provider and give them your 10 digit telephone number to avoid LD charges.

Am I locked into the provider from whom I obtained my VP?

No, any provider can be your default provider no matter how you obtained your VP.

Then it's yours to keep; forever if you want. If you have an existing 10-digit telephone number that you want to use, and it's not going to be used for

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any other service, you can ask your initial default provider to “port” that number to the 10-digit system. Please note however that once the number is ported to the initial default provider, it can’t be used for anything else. It’s just like any other telephone number; one number, one service at a time. Some consumers in rural areas may find that existing numbers cannot be ported into the system. If the number is portable to any other service, then it will be portable to the VRS and IP Relay 10-digit number service.

When does all this happen? Some providers are starting to hand out 10-digit telephone numbers now. Not all the features described above are available now; specifically not yet available are the ability to have alternate providers handle a hearing to deaf/hard of hearing call, the ability to dial from a deaf/hard of hearing person to another deaf/hard of hearing person directly, and the ability to port a number from one relay provider to another mechanism. All providers will be registering consumers and handing out 10-digit numbers by the end of the year. All the features described above will be available by the end of the year.

There are tens of thousands of deaf and hard of hearing consumers that need to be registered, given 10-digit telephone numbers, trained on the new procedures, and possibly have their devices upgraded. It will be quite some time before ALL deaf and hard of hearing consumers who use VRS or IP Relay have their 10-digit telephone numbers. Consumers need to be patient while this process is underway. So, contact your provider now. Ask them when you can get your 10 digit telephone number.

Brian Rosen is Senior Director at NeuStar and is the technical lead for the central database that has established the 10-digit numbering system. Rosen is also a subject matter expert on 9-1-1 issues as well as a system architect for IP based communications systems.

Memorandum from FCC Concerning Ten-Digit Numbering for Internet-based TRS Services

COMPILED BY ELIOT J. GREENWALD, BINGHAM MCCUTCHEN, LLP

REPORT AND ORDER

Ten Digit Numbering. In the *TRS Numbering Order*, the FCC concluded that the utilization of ten-digit North American Numbering Plan (“NANP”) numbers will best achieve the goal of making Internet-based TRS functionally equivalent to traditional circuit switched telephony. The FCC ordered that no later than December 31, 2008, Internet-based TRS providers stop issuing “proxy” or “alias” numbers and begin assigning NANP numbers to Internet-based TRS users.

Number Acquisition and Assignment.

The FCC found that Internet-based TRS users should obtain NANP numbers directly from their Internet-based TRS providers. Internet-based TRS providers could obtain the numbers directly from the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (“NANPA”) if they are certificated as carriers. Otherwise, the TRS providers can obtain the numbers through commercial arrangements with carriers (“numbering partners”) in the same way as voice over Internet protocol (“VoIP”) providers obtain numbers today. The FCC declined to appoint a neutral third party to obtain numbers from NANPA or from numbering partners for distribution to Internet-based TRS providers or users.

Local Number Portability. The FCC expanded the local number portability (“LNP”) obligations to include Internet-based TRS providers as of December 31, 2008. This means that consumers will be able to port numbers between Internet-based TRS providers as well as among Internet-based TRS providers, telecommunications carriers, and interconnected VoIP providers. TRS providers will not be required to contribute to meet the shared LNP costs, because such expense would be covered by the TRS Fund, which receives its money from telecommunications carriers. Instead, the contributions to the LNP costs paid by telecommunications carriers will directly cover the cost of Internet-based TRS LNP.

Geographic Numbers. The FCC ruled that Internet-based TRS users should be assigned geographically appropriate NANP numbers, as is the case for hearing users.

Registration. Every Internet-based TRS user will be able to register with an Internet-based TRS provider as its default provider. The provider must provide or port for that user a ten-digit NANP number. Such registration is required to:

Allow the Internet-based TRS provider to take steps to associate the user’s telephone number with the user’s IP address for the purpose of routing and completion of calls;

Facilitate the provision of 911 service; and

Facilitate the implementation of appropriate network security measures.

All inbound and outbound calls will be routed through the default provider unless the caller uses a dial around procedure to reach an alternate provider. Internet-based TRS users may select and register with a new default provider at any time and have his or her number ported to the new provider.

Centralized Database. The centralized database will be provisioned with Uniform Resource Identifiers (“URIs”) as proposed by NeuStar. For Internet Protocol Relay (“IP Relay”), the URIs will contain domain names and user names. For Video Relay Service (“VRS”) the URIs will contain IP addresses. The use of URIs will eliminate the need to query an Internet-based TRS user’s default provider before completing every call.

Provisioning the Central Database. The FCC declined to adopt the NeuStar proposal that would insert a third party such as a carrier that is an authorized Number Plan Administration Company (“NPAC”) user into the process of provisioning the central database. Instead, Internet-based default TRS providers will provision the URI information to the central database as proposed by the GO/HOVR/AT&T coalition. Conversely, the providers must cease to acquire information from users who have ported their numbers to new default providers. In particular, Internet-based TRS providers must ensure that for all customer premises equipment (“CPE”) that they have issued, that routing and other information be delivered only to the user’s default provider (except in the case of dial around calls).

Access to the Central Database. The FCC ruled that, to maintain the security of the central database, access shall be limited to the Internet-based TRS providers and the database administrator.

Database Architecture. The neutral third party administrator will determine the appropriate database architecture.

Neutral Administrator. The neutral administrator must be a non-governmental entity that is impartial and not an affiliate of any Internet-based TRS provider. The administrator may not issue a majority of debt to or derive a majority of its revenues from any Internet-based TRS provider. The neutral administrator may not be subject to undue influence by parties with a vested interest in the outcome of TRS-related numbering administration and activities.

E911. As of December 31, 2008, each Internet-based TRS provider must:

Prior to the initiation of service, obtain from the user the physical location where service will be provided (“Registered Location”);

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Provide Registered Internet-based TRS users one or more methods to update the user's Registered Location, including at least one option where this can be done by means of the CPE;

Not charge users for updating the Registered Location; and

Transmit all 911 and E911 calls, as well as a call back number, the name of the relay provider, the Communications Assistant's ("CA's") identification number, and the caller's Registered Location to the Public Safety Answering Point ("PSAP"), designated statewide default answering point, or appropriate local emergency authority. The calls must be routed through the use of Automatic Number Identification ("ANI") and, if necessary pseudo-ANI, via the dedicated Wireline E911 Network, and the Registered Location must be available from or through the Automatic Location Information ("ALI") Database.

In recognition of the competitive market for the provision of E911 infrastructure, the FCC declined to require that all Internet-based TRS providers be required to use a single provider of 911 related services or to require that Registered Location information be stored in the central database.

Internet-based TRS providers must prioritize and answer emergency calls and ensure adequate staffing so that CAs are not required to disconnect non-emergency calls in order to process emergency calls.

Consumer Outreach and Education.

Internet-based TRS providers must expand upon the consumer advisory required by the *Interim Emergency Call Handling Order* to include the assignment of ten-digit numbers and the registration of location information. The advisory must address:

The process for obtaining ten-digit telephone numbers;

The portability of ten-digit telephone numbers;

The process by which users may submit, update and confirm receipt by the provider of their Registered Location information; and

An explanation emphasizing the importance of maintaining accurate, up-to-date Registered Location information with the default provider in the event of the need to place an emergency call.

Internet-based TRS providers must also keep a record of affirmative acknowledgement by every user assigned a ten-digit telephone number of

having received and understood the consumer advisory. This record must be made available to the FCC upon request.

In addition, the Commission directed the Consumer & Government Affairs Bureau ("CGB") to issue a consumer advisory to TRS users summarizing the requirements and obligations set forth in the *TRS Numbering Order* and to disseminate the information through the FCC's Consumer Information Registry.

IP Relay Fraud. The FCC acknowledged that the registration requirements adopted for the purpose of number administration and E911 calling should help reduce IP Relay fraud and the need to have a separate registration system for reducing IP Relay fraud is now moot.

Cost Recovery. The FCC ruled that actual reasonable costs of complying with the new requirements are exogenous costs compensable from the TRS Fund.

Timeline and Benchmarks. The FCC directed the Managing Director of the FCC to establish benchmarks in the third party administrator contract to ensure compliance with the December 31, 2008 deadline.

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NexTalk CEO Todd Wakefield

“There is all this talent in the deaf community that is not being tapped and it is a problem that hurts individuals and businesses alike.”

The Accessible Enterprise

Everywhere he went, NexTalk CEO, Todd Wakefield, was noticing curb cuts and ramps, Braille numbering on elevators, and other signs of organizations starting to make themselves more physically accessible to their customers and employees with disabilities. “But in modern life telecommunications accessibility is every bit as important as physical accessibility - maybe more important,” explains Wakefield. He started looking into what these same businesses and government agencies were doing to ensure telecommunications accessibility for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. “What I found was they were doing very little and that was puzzling,” says Wakefield. “It made no sense that there was essentially no telecommunications accessibility in these same organizations that were so good about providing wheelchair ramps.”

The dismal statistics of nearly 60 percent unemployment for the deaf, a shrinking labor pool and an

aging population also motivated Wakefield. “There is all this talent in the deaf community that is not being tapped and it is a problem that hurts individuals and businesses alike,” Wakefield explains. “Better telecommunications accessibility and accommodation is a key to solving it.”

The other thing Wakefield saw that made no sense was the willingness of business and government to accept chronic under-employment in the deaf community. Convinced that organizations

needed new telecommunications accessibility tools and skills, Wakefield put on his entrepreneur’s hat and jumped in. He worked with Salt Lake City based NXi Communications, a research and development company with a background in accessible telecommunications. Together they formed a new company focused on equipping organizations to work more effectively with the deaf and hard-of-hearing. With a significant technological head start, expanded



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resources, and new marketing and sales expertise, NexTalk was created and launched into the communications marketplace.

Getting Down to Business

The new NexTalk team quickly realized that the challenge it had taken on actually encompassed two problems that, although related, were different from each other in important ways. First was accessibility, which Wakefield describes as the problem of enabling deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals on the outside to reach into an organization and receive the same type of service that hearing individuals expect when they call the front desk or the call center.

Most organizations have no way for deaf customers to contact them other than through a relay service. "Relay has been a wonderful advancement," Wakefield says, "but it has some real limitations that get magnified in certain environments." He contends that even with the best interpreters, comments are changed or lost in translation. "Many times that's not a problem," he says, "but there are times when it can be a major problem. Picture a situation where someone is the victim of an identity theft. With the complexity of the issues, the detail of the information and privacy concerns, given the choice, many deaf individuals would opt for a direct text-to-text conversation." Wakefield says that effectiveness and choice are the core issues. "Hearing customers can have a direct conversation and feel confident about privacy and accuracy, and deaf customers should have the same opportunity," he argues. "Worse, hard-of-hearing customers who don't sign don't even have the option of using VRS services, and traditional text relay can be terribly slow and clunky."

To address that problem, the company has released a product called NexTalk

Direct that effectively puts a high-end text phone on every desktop where there is personal computer. In the same way a traditional office voice telephone system can take calls in a central switchboard and transfer, forward and conference them, NexTalk Direct enables text calls to be handled the same way. It also provides full messaging capabilities for text callers including automated attendant, interactive voice response (IVR), and message delivery options. According to Wakefield, "Soon, we'll be looking to do all of that with text communications that come in from Blackberrys, Sidekicks and other portable devices as well." The company's goal is to ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing customers are able to do business with all types of organizations (including their call centers) on an equal footing with hearing customers if they choose.

The second problem the company went after was accommodation of deaf employees inside of an organization. Wakefield's goal is to put deaf employees on an equal footing with co-workers in terms of communications flowing through the organization. "This is one of the biggest obstacles for organizations that are trying to become truly inclusive," he says. "Putting a video phone in your office is better than nothing, but it certainly doesn't integrate you into the organization. A videophone is an island unto itself."

Wakefield describes a common call-flow scenario to illustrate the problem. Picture a call that comes in through the front desk and is transferred to John's office, who is hearing. A few minutes into the conversation, it becomes clear that the person the caller really needs is Jane, who is deaf. The process would then require telling the caller to either hang up and try the number of Jane's relay service or wait for Jane to call back through relay. "No hearing employee would tolerate that situation

NexTalk Direct Features:

- Accept and place TTY text calls from any networked PC
- Interactive telephone menu services for text callers
- Text call routing and forwarding
- Transfer text calls to any individual or department
- Text call conferencing with up to 9 participants simultaneously
- Advanced call messaging for missed text calls
- Configurable message routing & notification, including forward to email, pager and third party or other offsite TTY or device
- Automated information services for text callers
- National and international network calling
- Controls for long distance and international calling

NexTalk Workplace Features:

- Automated information services for text callers
- National and international network calling
- Controls for long distance and international calling
- Text, video and voice call routing and forwarding
- Accept and place video and text calls from any PC
- Interactive telephone menu services for text callers
- Transfer text and calls to any individual or department
- Text, video and voice call conferencing with up to 9 participants simultaneously
- Advanced call messaging for missed text calls

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at work," says Wakefield. "The caller could just give up on doing business with Jane and the organization entirely."

NexTalk Workplace is the company's answer to that problem. It enables an organization to take, transfer, conference and manage video and text calls in tandem with the PBX that already handles its voice calls. The idea is that a call can come into the organization in any form be it voice, video or text and can then easily be moved around. As it moves to different employees in the organization, if a VRS interpreter or text relay operator is needed anywhere in the chain, the system will automatically connect that interpreter into the call. Similarly, if an interpreter has been on a call but is no longer needed because the call is moving to a hearing employee, then the VRS service gets disconnected.

Since its products are all software based, NexTalk only works where there is a standard PC. However, according to Wakefield, in organizations today most desktops will already have a phone and a PC sitting side-by-side. Both NexTalk systems run in the background on the PC, with a screen pop-up announcing incoming calls and presenting users with options to take their calls as voice, video or text, depending on their preferences. They also can set up their desktops to automatically forward voice or text calls, the idea being that users can receive calls on their portable devices when they are away from their desks. The systems are designed to "bolt on" to most existing PBX based office phone systems, and are offered as a hosted solution for organizations that would prefer not to install new server hardware and software onsite.

Spreading the Word

Both NexTalk Direct and NexTalk Workplace can be installed in smaller organizations for a few thousand dollars a year, and pricing scales from there

Experience Speaks:

Meet Alana Beal, NexTalk Vice President of Business Development

Vice President of Business Development for NexTalk, Alana Beal, is not only an executive at the company; she is a deaf user of its products. She explains that she used some of the older, free "beta test" versions of the software before NexTalk became a stand-alone company. However, earlier versions were mostly text-based. "The system has evolved to where it now includes video communications, which really brings NexTalk to where it should be in the marketplace," explains Beal, Vice President of Business Development. "With the current changing environment in the telecommunications industry, NexTalk enables deaf professionals, like me, to be much more effective and independent when it comes to communicating with colleagues and contacts."



Beal has learned from experience that when it comes to functional equivalence there is nothing else like it. "NexTalk really shines in organizational environments because it's a very flexible solution where you can easily download it on any PC and connect as simple as 1, 2, 3." Beal says, "My job is a lot more fun with NexTalk because everywhere I go to discuss the solution and the company, I am received enthusiastically." Beal uses NexTalk Workplace often for business communications, but also notes that a scaled-down personal version is still offered to individual consumers as a freeware solution but it is restricted for home and personal use.

for larger companies and agencies. Beal notes that the cost of a NexTalk solution typically is a fraction of what the organization pays for telephone lines and bandwidth. "With NexTalk Direct organizations that used to have TTYs find they can get a lot more coverage for less than what they used to spend on the analog phone lines for the older devices," explains Alana Beal, Vice President of Business Development.

The vision of improving communications among organizations, deaf employees and their deaf and hard-of-hearing customers is no longer a wishful possibility, but a reality for NexTalk. The company is now growing rapidly, continues to expand its list of worldwide customers and is currently the largest provider of deaf and hard-of-

hearing telecommunication solutions worldwide. To date there are more than 200 federal, state and local government agencies using their products including: Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, Department of Education, Department of the Interior, Department of Labor, HUD, IRS, Library of Congress, NIH, NIMA, SEC, Treasury Department and the USDA. With the further expansion of NexTalk and their communications systems, the deaf and hard-of-hearing members of the community will be empowered as they experience an ease in communications.

C.J. Johnson is a freelance writer who lives in Park City, Utah and is a regular contributor to the Salt Lake and Park City magazines.



WASHINGTON: WHERE ACCESS BEGINS 18TH BIENNIAL TDI CONFERENCE

TDI needs your help. It is almost time for people to nominate individuals and companies to be considered to receive the prestigious TDI Awards for 2009. The six awards are:

- H. Latham Breunig Humanitarian Award
- James C. Marsters Promotion Award
- Karen Peltz Strauss Public Policy Award
- Andrew Saks Engineering Award
- Robert H. Weitbrecht Telecommunications Access Award
- I. Lee Brody Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Call for
Nominations
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It is also almost time for TDI members who live in the Midwest Region and the Central Region to vote for the person to represent them on the TDI Board. The Midwest Region covers the states of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee and Wisconsin. The Central Region covers the states of Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming. Nominees must be residents of the region that they would represent and be paid-up members of TDI.

Forms to nominate possible award recipients and Board candidates will appear in the next issue of TDI World.

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*In order to qualify for the above "consumer" rates, you must be attending the Conference with your personal funds.

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More information will be posted on www.tdi-online.org as details are finalized. Persons interested in participating on the Conference program are encouraged to contact Conference Program Co-Chairs Joe Duarte (vicepresident@tdi-online.org) and Fred Weiner (southeastregion@tdi-online.org).



Membership Application Form

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 Main/Home Phone: (____) _____ ☐ Video ☐ TTY ☐ Voice
 Alternate Phone: (____) _____ ☐ Video ☐ TTY ☐ Voice
 Fax Number: (____) _____ Mobile (cell phone or pager) : (____) _____
 Video Mail/CapTel#: (____) _____ IM Service: _____ IM User ID: _____
 Web Site: _____
 Description of Business: _____

Check one for your listing ☐ List All ☐ Address Only ☐ E-mail/www/IM Only ☐ Phones Only*
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☐ Address & E-mail/www/IM * = Includes Video/TTY/Voice/FAX/Mobile

May TDI send email from third parties for commercial and informational purposes? ☐ YES ☐ NO
 May TDI send you eNotes, a free e-mail newsletter with news and action alerts? ☐ YES ☐ NO

- Changes mailed to TDI will be processed in the eBlue Book by staff within 30 days.
- **Alternate Formats Available (Contact TDI)**



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Signature: _____ Date: _____



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Jason Curry

One of the great difficulties for anyone with communication barriers - deaf, hard of hearing, or inability to speak - is having on the spot, simultaneous communication without needing a third person to facilitate.

From Napkin to Reality

BY JASON CURRY

As a man who is deaf, the greatest problem in my life is simply walking up to anyone who is hearing and striking up a conversation. That is the most powerful tool - just being able to strike up a conversation on the spot. Although I use sign language, the reality is that most of the world does not sign. And I do want to communicate with many people in the world. Until now, that has been extremely difficult.

One of the great difficulties for anyone with communication barriers - deaf, hard of hearing, or inability to speak - is having on the spot, simultaneous communication without needing a third person to facilitate. In general, a person who is deaf finds it is not easy to even have a simple cup of

coffee with a neighbor let alone go to the doctor or talk to an attorney independently. A person who is hard of hearing finds many conversations impossible to follow even in small family settings. And a person with no speech has great frustration in having conversation even though he can hear. For many years, there was not a solution other than having a third

party to facilitate conversation.

That many times is both inconvenient and expensive. Now

there is a solution! The UbiDuo makes face-to-face communication possible without a third person. That is what is unique about the UbiDuo.

The UbiDuo is a "draw it on a napkin" story. It was developed by a man who is deaf and his father in response to the need for face-to-face communication in simultaneous real-time without

Continued on page 27

sCOMM's
Freedom Through Communication



sComm's Ubi Duo makes face-to-face conversations a possible without a third party translator.



Continued from page 26

a third party to facilitate. Sitting at breakfast one morning, David Curry, the father said to his son Jason, who is deaf, "I have an idea for something that would make our communication smoother and faster than signing and finger spelling and lip reading." He drew a sketch on the white board in their kitchen and said, "If we had that setting in the middle of the table, things would be a lot easier." Jason responded: "Dad, if I had that, it would change my whole life. I could go anywhere I wanted without needing anyone with me." David said, "If you feel that way about it, why don't we get a patent and try to build it." And as they say: the rest is history.

The design of the UbiDuo is entirely new. It is a one-of-a-kind communication device. Using 2 keyboards and 2 screens, simultaneous real-time communication is enabled

between 2 people. This simultaneous real-time communication is a first in communication devices for people who are deaf or hard of hearing or with communication barriers. Two identical units each with a screen and a keyboard attach to each other with a patented hinge technology making the UbiDuo portable. The units detach from each other to make any seating arrangement possible for communication. The units communicate wirelessly.

Office employees who are deaf find the UbiDuo to be life changing in their work environments. As one employer said: "We had no idea what all this employee knew until we got a UbiDuo. Now that we can communicate all day long, we realize he has so much knowledge. We have promoted him already."

Because of the wireless capability, one person can be in the back of the

room. One in the front of the room as in the case of students. One person can be at one end of the table. One at the other end in the case of meetings. In a work environment, one side of the UbiDuo is placed next to the computer of the employee who is deaf. The other side faces out so that any co-worker or supervisor can come by and quickly talk about the work. In a construction site, a worker can merely put the UbiDuo on a piece of plywood. A worker can go into a meeting on a moment's notice. Anyone in the meeting can "write" on one side of the UbiDuo for the person who has communication barriers.

It is clear that the UbiDuo is a valuable device for people who are deaf or who have hearing loss. It is also valuable for people who cannot speak. In a tragic story, the UbiDuo has helped there be a positive ending. A young 18-year-old girl was working at a

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convenience store during the summer to make money for college. A robber came into the store; slashed her throat; and threw her into the cooler of the store and left her to die. She regained consciousness and crawled out of the cooler to call 9-1-1. The robber was still in the store. He slashed her throat

than waiting for someone to come to facilitate the communication. Erica commented that having the UbiDuo changed everything for her with her comfort level of being in the hospital.

A mother and father in their 80's bought a UbiDuo to communicate with their son who is in his 50's. The members of the family were

definite places where nothing other than the UbiDuo will make it possible for a person who is deaf to have adequate phone capability. Those places are:

- 1) Areas where a cell tower does not make pagers/blackberries possible
- 2) For people who cannot afford to have a pager or a blackberry and pay the monthly fee
- 3) For people who cannot afford the monthly amount for high speed internet which is required for a video phone.

All of these cases require a landline phone. A landline phone allows phone capability whether there is a cell tower or whether someone is connected to the Internet. The UbiDuo is the only device that will protect people who do not have the Internet or a wireless device. That is a serious situation that is starting to develop-- the idea that everyone is automatically online. That is totally not true. An entire group of people is being left out and most likely the low-income people. They deserve to have a phone capability that allows 21st century phone conversation. The Ubi4Tel is an alternative for a certain niche of people.

The development of the UbiDuo was originally supported by funding from the National Institutes of Health/Deafness and Other Communication Disorders Division. Currently sComm is developing other products which will be unfolding within the next year.

Jason Curry is the CEO and President of sComm, Inc. He is a graduate of Central Missouri University with a degree in Business Administration. Previously he worked for the General Services Administration as a financial analyst.

A mother and father in their 80's bought a UbiDuo to communicate with their son who is in his 50's. The members of the family were able to have long conversations for the first time independently with each other during the holidays.

again and threw her back in the cooler. Some people driving up to the store saw the man and called the police. With the fast work of the police, the young girl lived but all of her vocal cords were cut. She is using a UbiDuo to communicate with the team of doctors she works with and with her family. From the beginning of this tragic ordeal, she has been able to communicate. That story can be seen on the internet at: <http://www.kctv5.com/news/16921083/detail.html>.

Recently a young woman who is deaf was admitted to the hospital ready to have her first child. As she was placed in her hospital room, a nurse brought a UbiDuo in to her room and set it on the tray table. The nurse explained that the patient would now be able to communicate with anyone who came into the room at any time rather

able to have long conversations for the first time independently with each other during the holidays. The communication was meaningful and dynamic.

sComm is the sole source for the UbiDuo. sComm is the developer of the UbiDuo in partnership with the National Institutes of Health/Deafness and Communication Disorders Division. The UbiDuo is listed on the GSA approved equipment list as: FS35F0033V and is also an approved Computer Accommodations Program (CAP) device. To purchase a UbiDuo, contact sComm at info@scommonline.com or by calling 816 350 7008 (voice) or 816 350 7001 (Ubi4Tel phone or TTY).

The UbiDuo also has a phone capability. There are some very



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UbiDuo

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The **UbiDuo** is a communication device that enables people who are deaf/hard of hearing to communicate instantly with anyone, face-to-face, without any barriers. Imagine the freedom of direct communication - your own words, your own thoughts, and no barriers. The **UbiDuo** is the ultimate solution for anyone with communication barriers.

Freedom through communication.

sCOMM

In Memory of ...



JEAN MARIE MAC WILLIAMS SAKS
1920 - 2008

Wife of Andrew Saks, one of the first pioneers in telecommunications for deaf and hard of hearing, and one of TDI's Top 30 Movers and Shakers in Telecommunications and Media Access, Jean Marie Mac Williams Saks died February 15, 2008 in St. Helena, California after a short illness. She would have celebrated her 88th birthday in May.

Jean was born May 25, 1920, in Los Angeles California but at a young age the family moved to Great Britain where her father was cinematographer in the movie industry at Pinewood Studios. There she attended Mary Hare School for the Deaf at Burgess Hill and later was trained in art and fashion design in London. The family left Great Britain and returned to southern California a few months before the outbreak of World War II. There she met Andrew Saks in 1943. They were married on the 19th of March in 1944, and resided in California. Together they raised two children, Andrea Jean Saks, and William Andrew Saks.

Andrew Saks was the grandson of one of the founding brothers of Saks Fifth Avenue and later became one the three founders of the first successful deaf telecommunications TTY network. Businesses that were moving ahead to computers were disposing of surplus teletypewriters (TTY), which were reconditioned by TDI. These TTYs were used with special modems called Phonotypes that Andrew manufactured with his co founders Dr. Robert Weitbrecht and Dr Jim Marsters in the early 1960's. Jean was the first deaf woman to use the TTY and became a leading advocate of deaf telecommunications for her former school mates in Great Britain. She along with her husband encouraged their daughter, Andrea to set up the British TTY network.

After many years involvement with the deaf community in the San Francisco



Jean with Mary Hare

area, Andrew and Jean moved to Bellevue, Washington in 1982 where they were active in the local deaf community. She was a member of the Alexander Graham Bell Association's Oral Deaf Adult Society (ODAS) and promoted speech among deaf children. After Andrew Saks died May 6th 1989, Jean continued to live in Clyde Hill until the spring of 2007 when she moved to St. Helena, California to be near her son and her grandchildren Melissa Marie Saks and Andrew Saks.

Jean was also a founding member along with her husband of TDI, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc, which was then called "Teletypewriters for the Deaf". It was through TDI that old teletypewriters donated by industry to TDI were distributed to the deaf. They all had to be reconditioned and the deaf community did it themselves and she often found her garage full of parts and machinery while everyone else parked their cars outside. She also used to hide the paper from the TTY from her husband as she didn't want him to know how much and how long she talked on the telephone via the TTY. He always found it and teased her that she was a chatter box.

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The new Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Saks with wedding cake.



Andrew and Jean Saks in their later years

Continued from page 30

Throughout her life Jean maintained an avid interest in deaf telecommunications as it grew and developed into the age of computers

and text messaging telephones. She continued to support the efforts of Andrea who had originally assisted her father and the other co-founders of the TTY system, to continue as an advisor to the United States State Department

at the International Telecommunication Union in Geneva on the development of international standards for deaf communications and to promote accessibility for other disabilities.

Jean also spent many years developing her skills as chef. She enjoyed her kitchen, and her collection of cookbooks and recipes. She was an eager and enjoyable companion among her friends in visiting and critiquing both new and established restaurants in the Seattle-Bellevue area.

Jean is survived by her daughter Andrea, her son William, and his children Melissa and Andrew. She is fondly remembered by her ex-daughters in law Amy Shearer and Kristin Merrill Saks. Remembrances may be made to TDI and the Alexander Graham Bell Association in her memory. She would want the work of TDI and the work of her husband to continue into the 21st century and beyond.

Andrea Saks Receives World Telecommunication and Information Society Award 2008 Laureate

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) World Telecommunication and Information Society Award is presented to Ms. Andrea Saks by ITU Secretary-General Dr Hamadoun Touré during the Ceremony of the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2008 in Cairo, Egypt.

Her father, Andrew Saks, together with James C. Marsters and Robert Weitbrecht were pioneers of deaf telecommunications using surplus teletypewriters and modems - the precursors of textphones and today's real-time text messaging. She grew in a family of two deaf parents and assisted them from an early age as



Andrea Saks

their interface with the hearing world: getting doctors' appointments, arranging guests' visits, etc.

Ms. Saks took that role to the next level when she relocated from the US to the UK in 1972 to promote the use of textphones internationally. She was able to successfully lobby the British Government Post Office (the then-regulator of telecommunications) to allow the first transatlantic textphone conversation in 1975, and to grant a license for connection of text telephones on the regular telephone network.

Andrea's first involvement with ITU

standardization activity started in 1991 and has ever since increased in scope. Self-funded, she currently attends many ITU-T study group and focus group meetings promoting the inclusion of accessibility functionality in systems being standardized by ITU, such as multimedia conferencing, cable, IPTV and NGN. After the recent creation of ITU-D Q20/1 on accessibility matters by WTDC-06, she also started attending that group and now performs as a bridge between the two sectors on the issue.

Ms. Saks has been a key person in the creation of all accessibility events in ITU, and currently is the convener of the recently formed joint coordination activity on accessibility and human factors, as well as the coordinator of the Internet Governance Forum's Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability.



TDI In Action

April - June 2008

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS

- The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN), of which TDI is a member, filed ex-parte comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) supporting American Association of the Deaf Blind's (AADB) position that all Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) providers be capable of providing relay services in some form for callers who are both deaf and blind. Furthermore, the letter encouraged the FCC to consider a summit focused on the needs of the deaf-blind population.



- The efforts of TDI's E-911 Stakeholder Council have begun to bear fruit. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is now testing for proof of concept for the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG-911) services. The testing sites are in Rochester, New York, Seattle, Washington and St. Paul, Minnesota, as well as the states of Indiana and Montana. Among other things, the goals of the test include determining the ability of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to accept voice, data, video and text via Instant Messaging (IM) and Short Messaging Service (SMS), and thus improve 9-1-1 access for deaf and hard of hearing people. TDI drafted and filed comments in the FCC's Wireless E-911 Location Accuracy Requirements proceeding to ensure that the

E-911 system is designed to include users that are deaf or hard of hearing.

- DHHCAN filed ex parte comments with the FCC on the topic of Paragraphs 95-96 of the 2007 TRS Cost Recovery Declaratory Ruling. These two paragraphs restrict the ability of TRS providers to disseminate promotional materials and lobbying letters supporting or opposing an upcoming FCC decision. A case in point occurred in the past when a provider sent out postcards and emails asking users to write to the FCC in protest of impending reimbursement rate cuts. Some consumers objected because they had not consented to receive such mailings. TDI and other consumer organizations asked for an "opt-in" arrangement where users can choose to receive such emails, while some providers prefer "opt-out" systems.
- TDI signed on to a petition by Sorenson Video Relay encouraging the FCC to take steps to make broadband more affordable to deaf, hard of hearing and speech-disabled people by allowing them to use existing Low Income Programs (Lifeline and Link Up) for broadband Internet access service with moneys from the Universal Service Fund (USF).

MEDIA ACCESS

- TDI, along with National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and DHHCAN filed comments opposing the National Association of Broadcasters' (NAB) petition that argued that the industry did not need to be subjected to additional reporting requirements. Their petition seeks action on whether or not the industry needs to disclose if it has complied with all applicable captioning regulations in place since January, 2006.



- Dr. Roy Miller and Claude Stout met for lunch with officials from Towson University and National Public Radio (NPR). Those officials made a presentation on captioned radio technology later that afternoon at the DHHCAN meeting on the Gallaudet University campus.
- TDI participated in several Digital TV (DTV) Transition summits and special workshops at the FCC. Jim House gave a presentation concerning the DTV Transition as well as captioning issues to thirty people from the Virginia Association of the Deaf in Fairfax, Virginia.



- Jim House provided a reporter from TV Technology with stories of consumer experiences regarding digital television captioning. He also provided information to a Gallaudet student concerning issues related to airline movie accessibility.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

- TDI presented two awards to U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) in a special ceremony on Capitol Hill. Dr. Roy Miller presented him with the framed painting Colors by Chuck Baird in recognition of his special contributions to TV closed captioning. He was one of the fourteen individuals and companies honored during the 25th Celebration of Closed

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TDI In Action

April - June 2008

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Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) receives honors from Dr. Roy Miller (left) and Karen Peltz-Strauss during the 2005 TDIU Conference in New Orleans, LA.



Ivan Seidenberg, CEO - Verizon at the Consumer Electronics Association annual Digital Patriots event.

Captioning at the 2005 TDI Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. Ms. Karen Peltz-Strauss then presented him with the inaugural TDI Public Policy Award, which was named in honor of Ms. Peltz-Strauss. The award was presented to Senator Harkin in recognition of his contributions to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other key telecommunications legislation affecting people with disabilities. The ceremony took place during a continental breakfast that Senator Harkin hosts weekly for his Iowa constituents and other visitors.

- TDI joined the Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT) in its comments responding to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking initiating its Third Periodic Review of its rules and policies affecting the transition of the nation's broadcast television system from analog to digital television. This is the result of the FCC Consumer Advisory Committee recommendation that FCC leadership was needed to resolve closed captioning problems related to the transition. TDI has also been participating in COAT's activities related to the 21st Century Communications

and Video Accessibility Act, which has been favorably accepted by industry except for the proposed complaint procedures.

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

- The Air Travel Access Committee listserv from the inaugural TDI Consumer Advocacy Training Seminar is up and running. Graduates from the November, 2007 training in Northern Virginia have made many postings and comments on this listserv. Brenda Kelly-Frey is the spokesperson for the listserv, and she will help carry the group's concerns about airline accessibility to the DOT.
- TDI joined DHHCAN and other organizations in filing comments with DOT in response to their Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) governing access to passenger vessels, such as ferries and cruise ships.

INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

- TDI attended the Consumer Electronics Association's (CEA) annual Digital Patriots awards event at the JW Marriott Hotel in

downtown Washington, DC. Three individuals were honored with the CEA Digital Patriots awards - Ivan Seidenberg, CEO - Verizon, U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont), and U.S. Representative Tom Davis (R-Virginia). TDI was featured in the video tribute to Mr. Seidenberg.

- TDI was represented on AT&T's Advisory Panel on Access and Aging (AAPAA) where AT&T shared their best practices concerning disability awareness. Members of AAPAA had the opportunity to learn about the efforts of COAT and the US Access Board's activities in revamping Section 508 regulations under the Telecommunications and Electronic Information Technology Advisory Committee (TEITAC). TDI was also represented on AT&T's Consumer Advisory Panel where participants took a tour of AT&T's futuristic Human Factors Lab at its Innovation Center where they viewed the latest AT&T projects, such as the next generation iPhone. The AT&T Consumer Advisory Board (formerly a Cingular advisory group) has been disbanded and its members continue to serve on AAPAA.

- On May 8, TDI sent out an eNote announcing new services by several companies. AT&T began offering a text only plan for its

Continued on page 36

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TDI In Action

Continued from page 34



popular iPhone. Verizon Wireless introduced nationwide messaging plans. AOL Instant Messaging opened up a new chat room for deaf users. Apple's iTunes store added additional search capabilities to its online database to help users find captioned online movies.

TDI IN THE NEWS

- Jim House was interviewed by a reporter from *Consumers Digest*. The article was about the best methods of alerting deaf and
- The e-mail news publication HOH-LD News by Larry Sivertson recognized TDI and Hamilton Relay in its Hall of Fame for the second time. This honor was for promoting social justice for folks with hearing loss who prefer oral communications. TDI was honored for clearly specifying in its May 15th eNote that TDI would evaluate applicant organizations willing to host the TDI Consumer Advocacy Training Seminars based on whether or not they had a balanced commitment of services and resources for individuals who are either deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, or deaf-blind.
- Jim House assisted Lisa Goldstein of i711.com with her article comparing the various text/data-only plans offered by the major wireless carriers with that offered by AT&T with its iPhone.

hard of hearing people day or night. Visual alerting devices have been around for a long time, but recent research has revealed that vibrating and tactile alarms are more effective. Also, Consumer Digest reported that a Japanese inventor has developed an alarm that emits a horseradish odor.

TDI OUTREACH

- Claude Stout gave the keynote speech "Setting the Stage for a Better World of Technology (Access)" at Sprint's Taste of Technology Conference in Seattle, Washington. He also gave a similar presentation at a workshop during the second bi-annual Eastern Regional Conference of the Black Deaf Advocates in Washington, DC..
- The TDI Board of Directors hosted a Town Hall Meeting in Clearwater Beach, Florida. About 20 people attended and provided feedback to the Board on TDI's operation and advocacy work.
- On June 20, TDI mailed out another eNote out urging support for the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act and funding for captioners and CART writers under a general college funding bill. TDI also announced a CEPIN emergency preparedness course to be held in Frederick, Maryland.

Roseman Joins TDI as CEPIN Outreach Coordinator

Michele Roseman is the new Outreach Coordinator for the Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network (CEPIN) project. Mrs. Roseman comes to CEPIN from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc. (CBCF), where she provided editorial and media support services. Before joining CBCF, she worked on behalf of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) to bring attention about CRCL's mission within the Arab-Muslim community. Her efforts resulted in CRCL receiving a strong increase in media attention from Arab-Muslim, national and local news outlets.

Mrs. Roseman will be responsible for letting the special needs and emergency management communities know about the Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network's (CEPIN) self-paced training. The Web based training, scheduled for a Fall 2009 release, is being designed to: increase public awareness about challenges that people with special needs face during disasters; examine gaps in emergency plans that serve the special needs population; and start the dialogue needed to develop mutual understanding and respect between the special needs and emergency management communities.

She is excited about taking on the new position with the CEPIN Project. "It has been my life goal to help people communicate more effectively with each other. I believe in the mission of the CEPIN

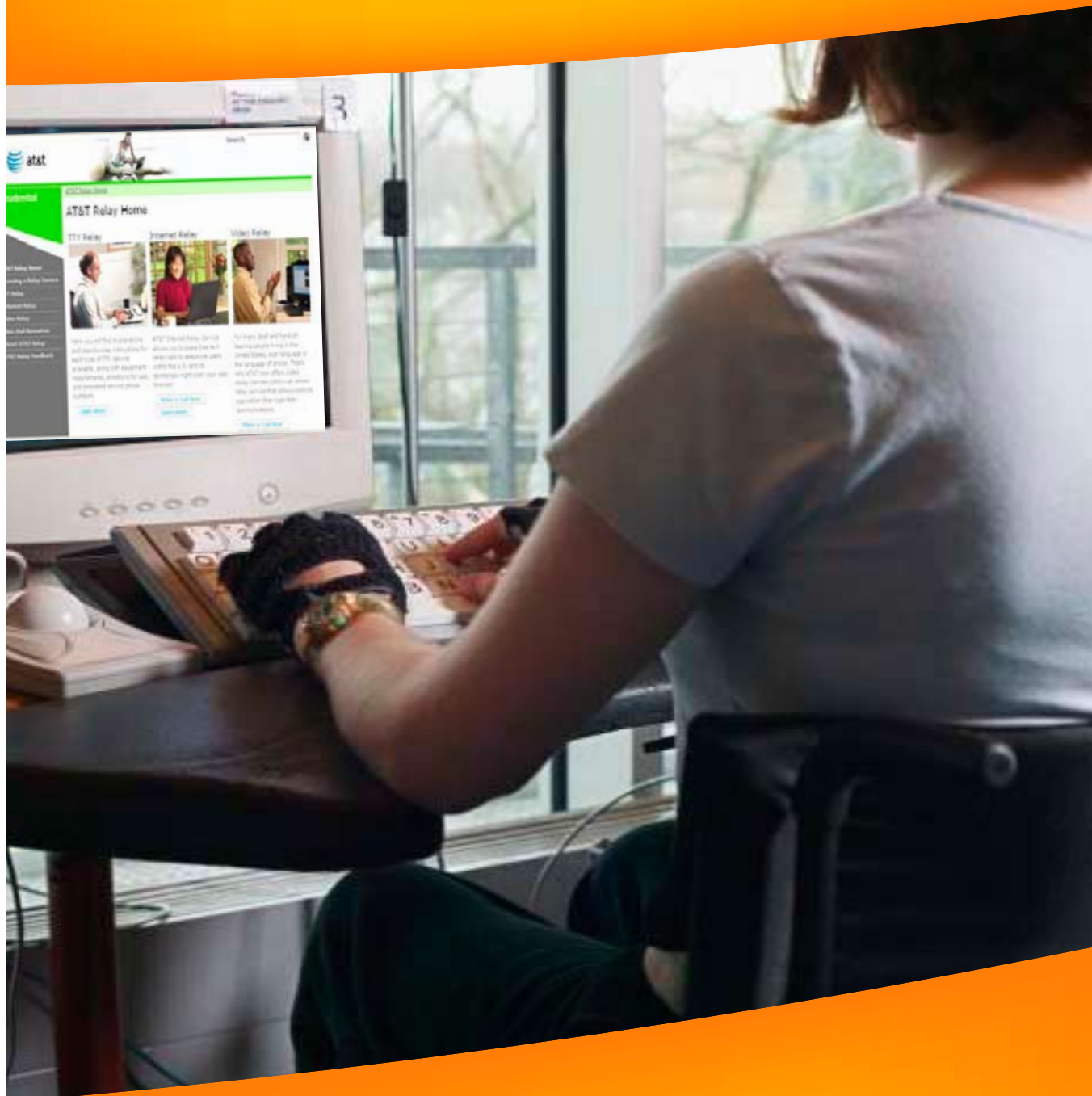


Michell Roseman

project and am looking forward to making a positive impact in the lives of people within the special needs and the emergency responder communities," Mrs. Roseman said. "Working to empower people who may have been overlooked is very fulfilling to me. I am pleased to work with the CEPIN/TDI team and make efforts to provide some certainty during the uncertain times of disaster."

Mrs. Roseman earned her bachelor's degree from Bucknell University and her master's degree from American University. She has provided outreach services on a Native American Indian Reservation (Flagstaff, AZ) and is conversationally fluent in Spanish. The native New Yorker resides in the Washington, DC metropolitan area with her husband, Kyle.

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CAPITOL COMMENTARY

Continued from page 6

receive this newsletter, TDI World, please complete the TDI membership application form found on page 24 in this issue, and return to TDI with payment. In this issue of ***TDI World***, the consumer membership form is on page 24. If you are already a member, please ask your friends to join us. If you want to contribute at this time, please fill out the form below and send it with a check or credit card information to TDI.

If you join for a year and pay \$25 for a household membership, this comes to around \$2.08 a month. Or, if you contribute \$100, this will average out to \$8.33 a month. Your return on investment in TDI continues to be high as technology becomes more accessible, and a donation to TDI may be the best deal that you have ever made. You continue to enjoy captions on your favorite TV programs, and rejoice in having some meaningful, real-time conversation with your family members and friends in the way you choose to telecommunicate with them. Not too long ago, we were still dreaming of video relay, Internet Protocol (IP) relay,

captioned telephone, wireless relay and other forms of telecommunication. Today, all of those are realities, and we now understand better what it takes to prepare for emergencies, as well as how to exercise our rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws.

We thank you for making an extra effort to be our partners in shaping an accessible world. Dr. Roy E. Miller, Board President, the other seven members of the TDI Board of Directors, and our seven-member staff strongly believe that by advocating for accessible telecommunications, media and information technology we are maximizing the opportunities for every deaf or hard of hearing individual to experience the best there is in American life. Let our long list of accomplishments and clear, forward-looking mission be the guide for your support to TDI.

Again, we invite you to join or renew your membership with TDI. We also welcome any amount of contributions from you. All contributions to TDI of \$500 or more will entitle you to a copy of Karen Peltz Strauss' book from Gallaudet



Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

– Helen Keller

University Press, ***A NEW CIVIL RIGHT Telecommunications Equality for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Americans***. TDI needs your support because we work for you in the nation's capital.

*TDI wishes you and your families
Happy Holidays and a
Prosperous New Year!*

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EASY SETUP: Simply plug into a broadband connection and your Ojo is ready to place and receive calls.



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BUILT-IN VIDEO MAIL & PHOTO CALLER ID: Ojo stores up to 20 minutes of video mail within the phone so you never miss an important message – and always know who is calling.

IT'S FREE! Deaf and hard-of-hearing customers receive a free Ojo – including free unlimited VRS calls in the U.S. 24x7.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

www.snapvrs.com



BOARD VIEWS

Continued from page 3

provide VoIP applications (Voice over the Internet Protocol). And now we are beginning to see a variety of television shows, news broadcasts, and movies streamed over the Internet — but mostly without captions. So even though the Internet has tremendously enhanced our ability to telecommunicate, the **wall of “no captions”** has begun to rear its ugly head.

With the passage of Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act, a whole new sector was added to the telecommunications industry, namely, Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). The use of TRS provided another important step forward for deaf and hard of hearing people. In particular, it provided a technology whereby people with hearing loss could use the phone to contact hearing people (and vice versa). No longer were they relegated to having conversations only with other TTY users. Now they could call and order a pizza or make a doctor's appointment all by themselves. With the advocacy of TDI and other consumer organizations, traditional TRS grew to include, VCO, HCO, Spanish to Spanish, IP Relay, CapTel Relay, Web CapTel and VRS. But all along the way the **wall of “who pays?”** had to be dismantled—one step at a time. For every new enhancement of TRS the FCC had to be convinced to reimburse vendors for providing that service.

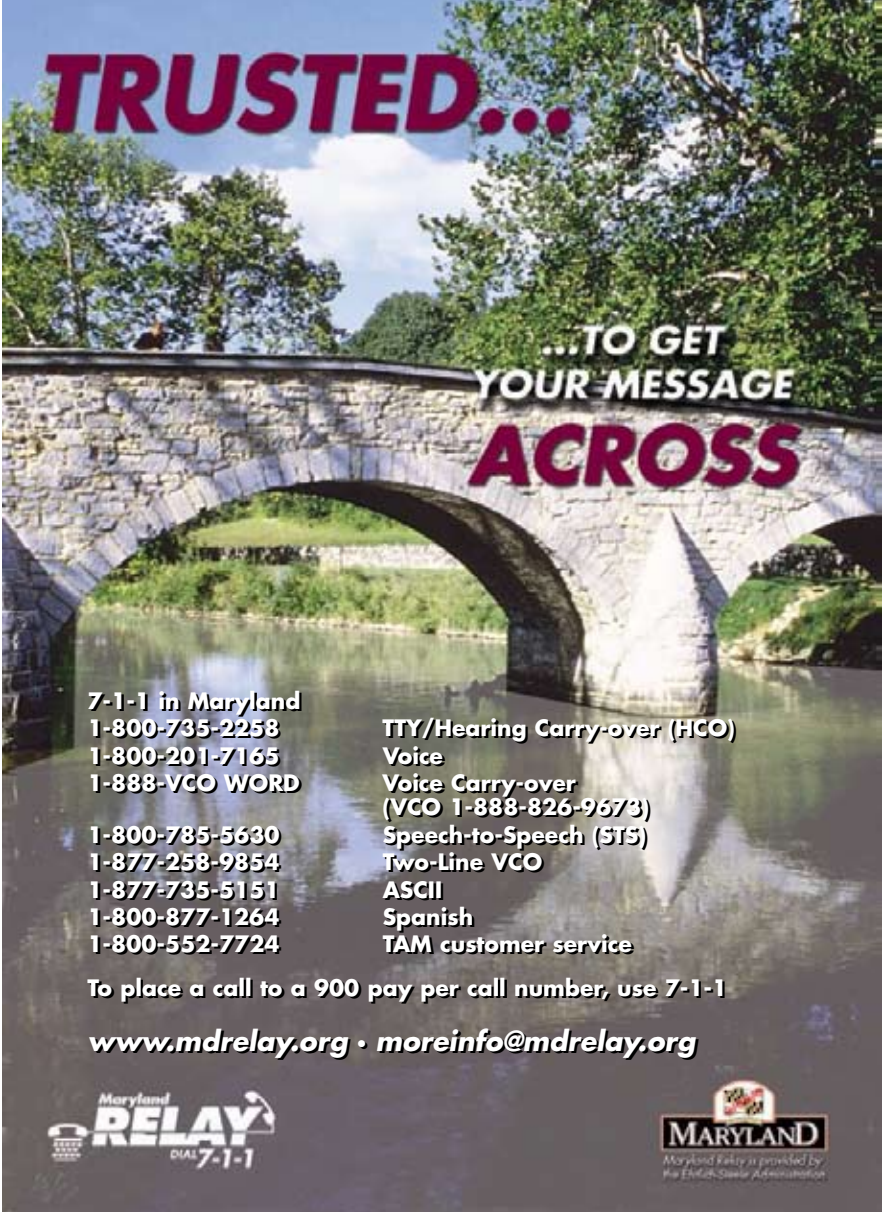
And for some, like CapTel Relay, the decision as to whether or not the service is provided is still left up to the individual states. Thus a hard of hearing consumer in one state may desperately need CapTel Relay but not have it available because the Public Service Commission (PSC) in that state chose not to provide that service — while consumers in the adjoining state have free use of the service. This

wall of “optionality” still remains and needs to be destroyed.

Well, I could go on and on, but hopefully the point is made. All through history there have been a series of improvements in telecommunications technology. But every step of the way deaf and hard of hearing people have encountered one wall or another. Although in this era of pagers, cell phones, PDAs, videophones, laptop computers,

Web CapTel and VRS we seemingly have the ability to telecommunicate with almost anyone, instantaneously, anywhere in the world, let us not forget that with every advance in technology it seems like there's always another wall to be climbed or gotten around in some way.

Please consider joining TDI and lend your support to our efforts to break through those walls, and help shape an accessible world.



TRUSTED...

**...TO GET
YOUR MESSAGE
ACROSS**

7-1-1 in Maryland	TTY/Hearing Carry-over (HCO)
1-800-735-2258	Voice
1-800-201-7165	Voice Carry-over
1-888-VCO WORD	(VCO 1-888-826-9673)
1-800-785-5630	Speech-to-Speech (STS)
1-877-258-9854	Two-Line VCO
1-877-735-5151	ASCII
1-800-877-1264	Spanish
1-800-552-7724	TAM customer service

To place a call to a 900 pay per call number, use 7-1-1

www.mdrelay.org • moreinfo@mdrelay.org

Maryland RELAY
DIAL 7-1-1

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Maryland Relay is provided by
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www.sprintcaptel.com

Sprint
Relay

- Captioned Telephone's next generation is here!
- No special equipment needed – just a phone and a computer with internet access.
- Captions everything spoken to the CapTel* user, which is displayed prominently on their computer screen.
- Ability to print and save conversations.

* CapTel is an acronym for
Captioned Telephone.

The image shows a woman with short blonde hair sitting at a dark wooden desk. She is holding a white mobile phone to her ear. In front of her is a laptop displaying a web browser. The browser window has a title bar that says "CapTel - Place a Call Via the Web" and a URL bar with "www.sprintcaptel.com". The main content of the browser window is a large text area displaying a conversation transcript. The transcript reads: "I am finalizing our proposal which I think is our top priority. Yes, that's correct. What I need from you is to collect monthly sales reports asap. Excellent suggestion! By the way, I received call". Below the text area, there are controls for "Text Color" (set to Black) and "Font Color" (set to Black). A small potted plant with white flowers sits on the desk next to the laptop. A white mouse is also visible on the desk.

For more information:
www.sprintrelay.com/webcaptel.htm
www.sprintcaptel.com

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Get Connected.

Sorenson VRS connects you quickly through easy to use features and free services that empower you. Communicate in ASL with anyone, whenever you want.



Enhanced 911 Services

We've handled more 911 emergency calls than all other VRS providers combined.



Choice of Real Numbers

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Highest-Quality Professional Interpreters

Sorenson invests heavily in our customized interpreter training and mentoring programs.



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When you select Sorenson you get the best services and features delivered through your Sorenson videophone.



To find out more, go to www.sorensonvrs.com/connected

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Get Connected.

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