



WORLD

Technology News and Commentary for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People



Building Partnerships for Future Generations

Story begins on page 10

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TDI'S MISSION

"TDI provides leadership in achieving equal access to telecommunications, media, and information technologies for deaf and hard of hearing people."

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Editor-in-Chief: Claude Stout

Managing Editor: James House

Advertising: Chad Metcalf

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northeastrep@tdi-online.org

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CEPIN PROGRAM OUTREACH MANAGER

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ADVERTISING MANAGER

& MEMBER SERVICES OFFICER

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BUSINESS MANAGER

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Gloria Carter • execsecy@tdi-online.org

TDI

8630 Fenton Street - Suite 604

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3822

www.tdi-online.org - www.cepintdi.org

TELEPHONES:

Voice: 301-589-3786

Video: 71.166.174.51 or 301-563-9112

TTY: Toll Free 888-202-1120

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Board Views



BY DR. ROY MILLER
TDI President

Like many people
with hearing loss,
especially those
who are deaf,
most standard
emergency alerting
mechanisms and
cues are totally
inaccessible to me.

We Are Especially Vulnerable

Since I became deaf almost twenty-three years ago, I have learned a lot about living in America as a person who cannot hear. It took me awhile to learn about such things as alarm clocks that shake you awake in the morning, doorbells that flash lights all over your house, closed captions that enable you to understand the dialogue of a TV show, and how to communicate using your eyes and hands rather than your ears and voice. I'm still not very good at the latter (conversing in sign language), but I'm no longer afraid to try and "talk" with a Deaf person, and it generally works out alright regardless of my facial paralysis, limited sign vocabulary, and rather rudimentary understanding of ASL grammar.

In addition to learning new things, I had to overcome various fears and anxieties that seemed to accompany becoming a late-deafened adult. For example, I remember how long it took me to get over the fear of driving when I could not hear the traffic sounds around me. And I still remember the anxiety that I faced as a pedestrian every time I had to cross a busy city street. My head would act like a rotating radar dish, and I would first look one way and then the other, and then I would do it over and over again, as I was always afraid that I would get crushed by a car that I could not hear that came speeding out of nowhere from the direction that I had just looked. Yes, there were a lot of things that I had to learn and fears that I had to conquer after becoming deaf. And some folks who have known me for a long time, and are old enough to remember the vintage commercial for Virginia Slims cigarettes, might even say "You've come a long way, baby!"

While it is true that I long ago adjusted to my deafness and conquered most

of my fears about going through life as a person who cannot hear, there is still one situation that causes me extreme anxiety from time to time. In particular, I fully realize that as a deaf person I am "especially vulnerable" in most emergency situations. Like many people with hearing loss, especially those who are deaf, most standard emergency alerting mechanisms and cues are totally inaccessible to me.

For example, if I lived in Kansas and a tornado was headed toward my town, I could not hear the siren that was supposed to warn me of impending danger. If I lived in California and a wildfire was headed towards my town, I could not hear the emergency announcements that were broadcast on radio. If I lived in a beautiful mountain canyon in Colorado several miles below a reservoir and the dam burst, I could not hear the awesome noise made by the flash flood water as it roared down the canyon destroying everything in its path. And if I were driving in a city that had an enormous natural gas storage facility that exploded, I could not hear the siren of an emergency vehicle as it came screaming into the intersection in front of me and almost hit me.

Deaf and hard of hearing people are not only "especially vulnerable" in situations where a major disaster is about to happen, but many other emergency situations where they might be the only person affected. For example, if I were hiking with a buddy in the Cascades in Washington, I could not hear the scream of my friend behind me telling me to "Stop, there is a bear with a cub coming through the brush." If I were sleeping in a small motel with no visual fire alarm (which most of them don't have), and there

BOARD VIEWS Continued from page 2

was a fire, I could not hear the warning emitted by the standard fire alarm no matter how loud it was. If I happened to be an innocent bystander to a street crime, and turned and walked away, I could not hear the policeman who mistakenly thought I was involved yell “Stop, or I will shoot.”

Unfortunately, the “special vulnerability” of people with hearing loss does not end once they have been alerted to an emergency. Rather, their nightmares may just be beginning once they realize that they are in danger. Why? Their life threatening emergency may become a real possibility because of the severe communication difficulties that they often encounter with emergency responders.

For example, a deaf person who does not speechread well (like me) may not clearly understand instructions from first responders concerning how to extricate themselves from an emergency situation. A person who wears a hearing aid or uses a cochlear implant may be injured and lose all or part of their assistive listening device in the struggle to free themselves from being buried under a pile of rubble due to a hurricane demolishing their home. And without their electronic aid, they can’t understand the potentially life-saving questions they are being asked by a paramedic. A hard of hearing person who relies on speechreading and is trapped in a hotel with smoke and fire all around cannot understand the directions to escape the blaze given by a fireman whose face is covered with a mask. A deaf person may risk death by attempting to drive across a low-water bridge during a flash flood because they misunderstood the State Trooper a few miles back who was directing them to a safe crossing. In



TIP: Even if you cannot hear well enough to understand the radio, there may be others nearby without a radio and can translate emergency information if necessary. Battery-operated radios make good noisemakers to help people find you if you become separated from others.

these, and many other life threatening emergency situations, deaf and hard of hearing people would definitely be “especially vulnerable,” and the chances of their being injured or killed would be much greater than those of a hearing person.

Because of this “special vulnerability” people with hearing loss must take every precaution that they can to ensure that they do not needlessly suffer harm in emergency situations. It is precisely because we are “especially vulnerable” that we have to be “especially careful” and learn all we can about emergency preparedness, and then put into practice the things that we have learned. To hopefully mitigate some of the risks resulting from our “special vulnerability,” *TDI* applied for and received a multi-year grant in 2004 from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop the Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network

(CEPIN). The CEPIN project’s primary goals were to help deaf and hard of hearing people develop a clearer understanding of the priorities and procedures of first responders, and to help first responders better understand the needs of people with hearing loss. In order to learn more about how to prepare for emergencies, you are invited to review materials on the CEPIN website (www.cepintdi.org).

Unfortunately, emergency preparedness is something that is all too easy to overlook. It’s too easy to say to oneself, “Why should I spend time, energy and money preparing for an event that will probably never happen?” The answer is, “Because it may save your life or the lives of your loved ones!” And because as a deaf or hard of hearing person you are “especially vulnerable” in emergency situations!

Capitol Commentary



BY CLAUDE STOUT
TDI Executive Director

Home accidents happen more often than disasters that affect a whole town, county or region, so we need to prepare for both types of situations.

Emergency Preparedness Begins At Home!

I hope all of you enjoy this *TDI World* issue on emergency preparedness. For more than five years, *TDI* has had two federal projects to provide training on this very important topic to first responders, government officials and consumers with disabilities. The projects have been crucial for local community awareness in addressing the needs of consumers with disabilities when preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters that affect a neighborhood, a town or a city.

When we mention emergency preparedness, some of us might think back to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Others might think of the Hurricane Katrina disaster New Orleans, Louisiana. In addition, some might even think of the recent Christmas Day bombing attempt on a plane from Amsterdam to Detroit. Today, we are more conscious of the need to prepare for man-made and natural disasters. However, many of us do not realize that in our own residences we also need to be as prepared to prevent accidents as well as to cope with unexpected emergencies. Home accidents happen more often than disasters that affect a whole town, county or region, so we need to prepare for both types of situations.

Here is a list of twenty precautions that you can take in your home in order to prevent accidents and be prepared for emergencies:

1. Have a good number of fire and smoke alarms in your residence and be sure to get the kind with strobe lights. If you own your home, check with your local fire department to see if they can give you a visual fire alarm, or if you rent, ask your property owner to install one. Remember to change batteries for them on a regular basis such as when you set your clocks an hour forward or backward twice a year.
2. Have baking soda near your stove and your microwave. This would come in handy if you have a fire in the kitchen, for example, from deep frying French fries or fried chicken. Do not cook or microwave your food unattended.
3. When winter comes, and you experience freezing temperatures, be sure to close the water valves inside the house that control the water to the outside faucets. Then leave the outside faucets open throughout the winter.
4. Keep a number of candles and a set of matches in stock. In the event of an electrical outage, you might need them in order to have some light in the house.
5. Stock your pantry adequately with some dried and canned foods. In the event of an electrical outage or an ice storm, you would have something to eat that would not require cooking or thawing. Be sure to have a manual can opener or some other way to open your food containers.
6. Keep a flashlight easily accessible. Check the flashlight and make sure it is in good working order. Change batteries in it if necessary.
7. Have blankets and warm clothing ready in case you are without heat for a while.

Continued on page 6

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CAPITOL COMMENTARY Continued from page 4

8. Discuss exit plans with members of your household. Suppose a fire occurs on the first floor, and you cannot get down to the first floor from the second floor. What would you do? Among a number of options, one is that you can create a makeshift rope using bed sheets and fasten them to the bed. Make sure that the sheets are long enough to reach from the bed, through the second floor window to the ground outside the house.
9. Always have a pair of shoes next to your bed so you will not have to evacuate in bare feet in the dark.
10. Keep your important documents in a fireproof box. If you have a fire and need to escape fast from the house, retrieve that box. Alternatively, you could scan your family's important financial/legal documents on a password-protected CD and leave the CD with a trusted friend or family member.
11. Before you go to bed at night, check and see if you have all of your car keys in one place. If one is not with you, it may be in the car that you have left running in your garage. This can help you avoid having a carbon monoxide

accident.

12. Before you go to bed at night, or go on an extended vacation from home, check the showers, bathtubs, sinks and commodes to make sure that the water is not running.
13. Check the stove and ovens to make sure that they are off before you go to bed or leave the home.
14. Set aside three jugs or a large tank of water for emergencies. Sometimes an emergency may cause problems with the water system, and the tap water is unsafe for drinking and cooking. If you have well water, an electrical outage often means no water.
15. Be sure you know how to shut off all utilities such as gas, water and electricity in your home if necessary.
16. Check and make sure caulking is applied as necessary to secure the commodes, tubs or shower areas to prevent leaks.
17. When you experience an electrical outage at home, try not to open your refrigerator or freezer too often. Let them stay shut to keep the food cool or frozen until the electricity comes back on.
18. There may be a time when you

and your family members need to evacuate due to a hurricane or a terrorist attack. Be sure to have an emergency bag with essentials left in your car.

19. Duct tape should be on hand for when you need it. It will be helpful if you need to seal the doors and windows of the house or to hold things together.
20. Be sure to have a good first aid kit accessible to treat any injuries.

This list is not comprehensive. We strongly recommend that you review various websites, or subscribe to key listservs that would keep you updated on how best to prepare for emergencies at home. You will find some good resources on the following websites:

- CEPIN website (www.cepintdi.org)
- American Red Cross (www.redcross.org)
- Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (www.nvrc.org).

The Boy Scout motto says "Be Prepared." The more prepared you and your family are, there is a greater likelihood that in the event of an emergency you and others will suffer less injury and property damage as a result. Good luck and be safe at home!



The Inclusive Hurricane Preparedness Conference will bring together emergency management and disability stakeholders from states throughout the Gulf Coast and the Eastern Seaboard to discuss the latest issues in preparing and responding to vulnerable populations during hurricanes.

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- Developing Demographic Pictures of Disability Communities
- Accessible Sheltering & Evacuation Planning for Disability Communities
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For more information and registration details, please visit www.cepintdi.org or www.enableus.org.

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Accessible Tech



BY JAMES HOUSE
TDI World Editor

For about 20 years, *TDI* has made emergency communications and notifications an utmost priority in its advocacy work.

Emergency!

The day began as a routine summer day. A few friends were helping a deaf person move out. Let us call him Mitch. When some of them went back inside the house after rearranging boxes in his car, they found Mitch lying on the floor unable to get up. He had collapsed inside the house while carrying boxes. He asked his friends to call 9-1-1. He had already disconnected his videophone. It had been many years since any one of them had used a TTY. They realized that options for calling 9-1-1 were very limited until “Sandy” pulled out her SideKick pager and called 9-1-1 for an ambulance. She called indirectly through an Internet protocol (IP) relay service using AOL Instant Messaging on her SideKick. Thanks to her quick action, Mitch received prompt treatment and went home to his new place after a few days rest.

Even though this indirect method was not perfect, it would have been worse for David if there weren’t a relatively quick way to reach help in an emergency. It should be pointed out that the most reliable way to have direct access to 9-1-1 is to use a TTY on a landline phone. Many of us do retain a portable TTY for emergencies when the Internet is down, even if we discontinue using a traditional phone normally.

According to Wikipedia, in order to define an incident as an emergency the incident should be one of the following:

- Immediately threatening to life, health, property or environment.
- Have already caused loss of life, health detriments, property damage or environmental damage.
- Have a high probability of

escalating to cause immediate danger to life, health, property or environment.

The Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines emergency as

- An unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action.
- An urgent need for assistance or relief, e.g. *The governor declared a state of emergency after the flood.*

Putting these two definitions together, an emergency is an unforeseen incident that threatens life, health, property or environment and calls for immediate action or relief.

For about 20 years, *TDI* has made emergency communications and notifications an utmost priority in its advocacy work. We can break down the different areas in which we have worked over the years and cite different examples.

Access to 9-1-1 by TTY

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local governments to be accessible in all services that they provide, including 9-1-1 access and other related emergency services.

Shortly after the ADA became effective, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) awarded *TDI* a grant to train emergency dispatchers in 9-1-1 centers or public safety answering points (PSAPs) on how to recognize and respond to incoming TTY calls.

In response to regulations issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), *TDI* and other consumer groups collaborated with the engineers at the Alliance of Telecommunication Industry

ACCESSIBLE TECH Continued from page 8

Solutions to make wireless handsets compatible with TTYs and hearing aids so that deaf and hard of hearing people can contact 9-1-1 while away from home or workplace.

Access to 9-1-1 by Newer Technologies

In 2005, *TDI* formed the E-911 Stakeholders Council to work with the FCC and the US Department of Transportation (DOT) in developing the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG-911) services.

TDI worked with the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) to develop procedures for dispatchers to follow when receiving a call from a deaf or hard of hearing caller using video relay or IP-relay.

The ten-digit numbering plan went into effect at the beginning of this year, primarily to give video relay users and IP relay users a way to contact the most appropriate 9-1-1 center and to receive a call back in the event the call was disconnected.

Access to Community Emergency Notification

TDI participates in government and industry meetings to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing people have a voice in developing protocols for the next generation emergency notification systems, such as the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and the Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS). The FCC has just adopted the design specifications for the development of a gateway interface that will enable wireless carriers to provide its customers with timely and accurate emergency alerts and warnings via their cell phones and other mobile devices, which means improved emergency alerts and warnings in most parts of the country.

TDI works closely with the FCC to ensure the implementation and enforcement of access to televised emergency broadcasts by people with hearing and vision disabilities.

TDI has worked with the US Access Board in setting standards for interior and exterior emergency notification systems, such as visual fire alarms and evacuation protocols in public places and on seagoing vessels.



In 2004, *TDI* participated in drafting a report for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network by Cheryl Heppner on the communication gaps encountered by deaf and hard of hearing people nationwide in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Sometimes referred to as “our” 9/11 report, this document was widely circulated among government officials, emergency responders and consumers alike, and led to several reforms in disaster preparedness and emergency notification. You may find this report online at www.tdi-online.org/pdfs/DHHCAN_9_11_Report.pdf



In 2005, *TDI* through its emergency preparedness program, also helped gathered data for the Report on Special Needs Assessment for Katrina Evacuees of the Emergency Preparedness Initiative under the National Organization on Disability, which can be found at www.tdi-online.org/pdfs/SNAKE_Report.pdf. This document is rich with anecdotal information on the difficulties by

deaf and hard of hearing people as one of the worst underserved group of people with disabilities because of inadequate information from various sources prior to, during and after a disaster.

Emergency Preparedness

In 2004, the US Department of Homeland Security awarded *TDI* a \$1.5 million competitive grant to develop the first disability related training program putting emergency responders with deaf and hard of hearing consumers. More than 1,000 individuals in over 25 cities and towns across the country participated in this course offered by the Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network (CEPIN).

In 2007, the Federal Emergency Management Agency awarded *TDI* a \$1.3 million grant to have CEPIN develop a second training program online to educate emergency planners and shelter management personnel on meeting the diverse requirements of the special needs population. This course is still under development.

Some say, “Information is power,” but we like to say, “Access to information is ‘empowering!’” With access to information at any time, options open up to us and we can do many more things. We have accomplished many steps toward full and equal access, but we are not there yet. There is much more work left to do. Please join us at *TDI* and support our continuing efforts to shape an accessible world and make this country a safer place for all of us.

The *TDI* membership form is near the end of this *TDI World* on page 24 and the Contribution Form for tax deductible donations is on page 18.

Building Partnerships for Future Generations: *An Emergency Preparedness Essential*

BY BRUCE A. MCFARLANE, SR.

We live in a world of constant change, from evolving technologies and communication systems to reacting and recovering from catastrophic events ranging from automobile accidents to regional disasters. One thing remains constant: human resiliency and the drive to make our world a better, safer place to live for the next generation.

As a society, we cannot be so caught up with the technology explosion that we forget the basic essentials to emergency planning: hoping for the best while planning for the worse. Certainly, telecommunication innovations have expanded the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency alerts and messaging, especially for people with disabilities. Ms. Edwina Julliet wrote, in 1978, that people with disabilities best know their abilities in times of emergencies. Therefore, timely and accurate information is critically important to this community. We must continue to petition for better, faster and more accurate emergency alert systems for our disability community.

As Deputy Director of the Emergency Preparedness Initiative for the National Organization on Disabilities, I had the privilege of personally interviewing over 30-emergency managers from around the country, including those who are charged with protecting small communities to those with oversight of major metropolitan cities. Almost all



emergency managers are still seeking guidance on how to best include people with disabilities in their emergency plans and plan development processes. In many cases, they simply don't know where or how to start.

However, there are many emergency managers that have outstanding relationships with individuals and organizations that support and advocate for people with disabilities.

The principle concept for the future is to create partnerships through collaboration. Simply stated, we have to be proactive in our approach to emergency planning, take responsibility for our own safety, and learn how our workplace and community-based emergency management system works so we can be prepared to develop and enter into the partnership relationship.

The disability world is exceptionally diverse. Many of us have lived in this diverse world for our entire lives and yet, after 50+ years of extremely intense personal experience, I still learn some pretty amazing and fascinating details from other people with different disabilities than my own.

I ask, therefore, how in the world can we expect an emergency manager to learn, on their own, how to address the emergency alerts, evacuation, transportation, sheltering, and recovery needs of such a diverse population? It is an overwhelming, constantly changing and unrealistic expectation. Emergency managers are desperate for guidance and assistance with this dilemma.

Therefore I submit that the disability

community must accept the task of learning the very defined and structured world of emergency management. It is a realistic challenge, very achievable, and our children will thank us for our diligence. We must be willing to meet emergency management half-way. We cannot expect to achieve inclusion and representation by threatening lawsuits nor by being passive resistors. Ms. Marcie Roth, Presidential Appointee and National Disability Advisor at the Department of Homeland Security raised an interesting parable at a recent conference in Philadelphia. She asked: how many of us are willing to let our children ride in our automobiles without a seatbelt? How many of us learned to drive not wearing a seatbelt, and thus had to be brought kicking and screaming into the seatbelt wearing community? Today, not wearing a seatbelt is the exception (as well as a legal violation). As a community, people with disabilities have to evolve our actions so that we are part of the emergency management community, to be concerned, respectful and participating members of an extremely important and potentially lifesaving partnership.

Eventually, the next generation will grow up knowing emergency management as a necessary and lifesaving aspect of their lives, just as automobile seatbelts are with our generation. This partnership train is already on the track and working very effectively in many communities, and we will get to that partnership commitment on a national scale. If the disability community is to be included in this movement, we need to accept our responsibilities and in fact, we need to get on that train as willing partners. I encourage people with disabilities to accept the challenge, learn the emergency management language of "incident command and risk management," and volunteer your expertise in disability diversity to your workplace and community-based emergency management organizations. The next generation will thank you.



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The Center for Public Safety Innovation and the National Terrorism Preparedness Institute Paves the Way for Learning for All:

Training with Accessibility Is a Mindset and a Goal

BY CHRIS LITTLEWOOD

The National Terrorism Preparedness Institute (NTPI), a division of the Center for Public Safety Innovation (CPSI) at St. Petersburg College (SPC), has provided training for first responders, including U.S. military personnel, in terrorism awareness and emergency preparedness, response, and recovery since 1998. NTPI continues to focus on training that is accessible to everyone. NTPI realizes that a truly inclusive training program must be designed to meet the needs of learners with varying disabilities, languages, and learning styles, and it must go beyond the legal accessibility requirements mandated by the Federal government. NTPI has been highly successful in developing and delivering effective training that is accessible to deaf and hard of hearing people, blind and visually impaired people, and people with severe motor skill disabilities, languages other than English, and cognitive or learning disabilities.

For nearly ten years, NTPI has broadcast a monthly video via the Web and satellite that has evolved into a program called "Live Response," sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Live Response focuses on terrorism and disaster preparedness awareness and training for both emergency responders and



the general public. In the summer of 2000, NTPI began to broadcast the program with closed captioning for deaf and hard of hearing people. In October 2007, due to the subject matter and target audience of the program, NTPI broadcast the program in a new video format with open captioning and an American Sign Language interpreter. In addition to these capabilities, NTPI has the ability to broadcast with second

language subtitles and with descriptive video services (DVS) for blind or visually impaired audiences.

NTPI's accessible training capabilities are not limited to accessible video. The Institute develops its Web and presentation-based training resources with several accessibility components that meet and exceed the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 1998. The components include the following:

- Web page design for navigation with a keyboard as well as a computer mouse for users with severe motor disabilities.
- Web site and document design that is compatible with screen-readers for blind and visually impaired target audiences.
- The availability of text-only content for blind and visually impaired people.
- Training curriculum written at an appropriate reading level and with



appropriate formatting for users with some learning or cognitive disabilities.

- Captioning of all video and written transcripts of audio for deaf and hard of hearing people.

NTPI utilizes several design tools to develop accessible training. One example is a fully accessible Web-based video player that stops and asks the user questions about the content. If the user answers the question correctly, the video continues to play. If the user answers incorrectly, the video rewinds to the point where the answer is given and replays the content from there. NTPI also uses fully accessible learning objects in its computer-based training. These include multiple choice, drag and drop, and scenario-based questions. Designers and developers use a standard template for Web page design that incorporates elements that ensure accessibility. NTPI is positioning itself to be a leader in emergency preparedness and response training that meets the needs of all users.

For more information about NTPI, go to <http://terrorism.spcollege.edu/>.

A Step in the Right Direction: The Digital Emergency Alert System

BY MICHELE ROSEMAN, CEPIN
OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Every few years, technology is upgraded so that information is delivered more clearly and faster. For example, typewriters were replaced with wireless laptop computers. The "Sony Walkman" -- that played cassette tapes -- was replaced with the portable MP3 player. Upgrades in technology are also needed to transmit emergency alerts to people at the time of disasters.

Most of us are familiar with the Emergency Alert System (EAS). This public warning system is operated and maintained by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As with other forms of technology, over the years there has been a need to upgrade this system. In many instances, the public and government will not see a need for

change unless a problem occurs.

Unfortunately, during the 9/11 terrorist attack it became clear that the EAS was outdated. Emergency alerts were set to be transmitted via TV antennae that were attached to one of the Twin Towers. Once the building was destroyed, the transmission was lost. While EAS was in place in New York City, the people could not receive alerts.

Why the change?

The original system was good but not everyone was able to know when emergencies were taking place. What happened if the alert was issued over television and people were not watching? How would people with disabilities become aware of an emergency with EAS if they are not able to hear or see the alert?

The solution was to develop and use the Digital Emergency Alert System (DEAS).



A system for alerting people of disasters and emergencies is needed wherever people are. Whether people are using a cell phone while at the gym, listening to satellite or broadcast radio, surfing the Internet, or watching a captioned television show on TV, DHS's message can reach them. With DEAS, more Americans can receive the message in an instant and begin to prepare for the emergency or disaster.

While we can never foresee disasters, the 9/11 terrorist attack was a reminder that the most effective alert system still needed to work regardless of what was occurring. The solution is wrapped-up in a technology upgrade to EAS -- the Digital Emergency Alerting Systems (DEAS). With the use of DEAS, important information can be sent to emergency responders and government officials by using the local public digital television.

How DEAS Works ...

DEAS is a system created to let emergency responders and civilians know when a national emergency or disaster happens. It sends out text, voice, video and other digital messages to mobile phones, pagers, radios and televisions. When there is an emergency, the DEAS will let emergency managers and state officials know. The system is able to reach broadcast and cable television, satellite radio and other wireless networks. The new system makes it possible for more people to be reached. Because of the new system, there is a greater possibility for more positive outcomes even during the time of emergencies or disasters.

As with any new system, there are bound to be some criticisms. Specifically there is a concern that the DEAS will promise a lot but not deliver what is needed. There is the possibility that the public will expect public officials and technology companies to design a system that is flawless. While the full capability of DEAS remains to be seen, there are some obvious benefits for making the switch from EAS to DEAS. They are as follows ...

Benefits of DEAS ...

DEAS can transmit brief audio messages or "on-screen" crawls. It can also deliver live or recorded video, multiple simultaneous languages, maps, and signing for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

DEAS can transmit a warning system to general areas as well as specific individual city blocks. The system can be personalized to reach those people who most need the information and ensure that groups of people are not forgotten.

This new system improves the ability of emergency managers and public safety officials to communicate with the public during an emergency via today's

There's No Time like the Present

CEPIN: Preparing for Tomorrow's Disaster Today

BY MICHELE ROSEMAN, CEPIN
OUTREACH COORDINATOR

By now, many have already made and broken their 2010 New Year's Resolutions. Our lists of what we promised to do have ranged from changed eating habits, the willpower to exercise, and the courage to do the things we have always dreamed. What happens, however, is that some of the same resolutions appear on our "to do" list year after year. Why? The answer is simple: We rarely do everything that we can in the present. Many times, we put off things until a later date. Waiting until a better time may work in some situations. When it comes to handling all phases of emergency preparedness, there is no time like the present.

One quick glance at 2009 is a clear reminder that disasters can strike at any time. A day that starts with blue skies and calm breezes can quickly end with an upset from Mother Nature. Those who were caught in the middle of an earthquake, flood or hazardous material spill were probably caught off guard. It is in these moments of the "unexpected" that we realize that some of the things we expected to happen, did not.

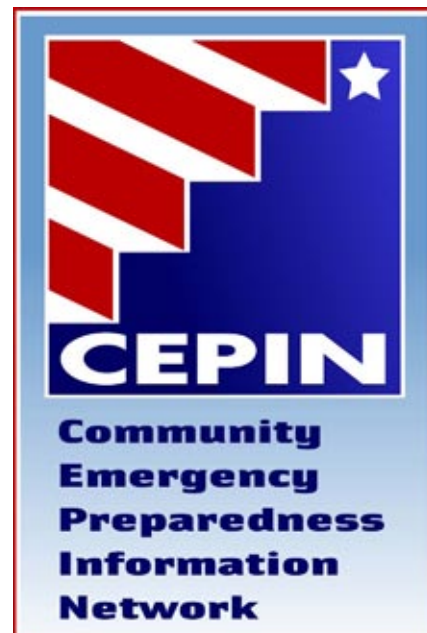
Perhaps emergency responders never expected that the people they would encounter would be deaf and hard of hearing. It is possible that people who were deaf-blind never expected that an emergency responder would not understand that evacuation without a service animal was not an option.

While no one knows what a day will bring, the Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network (CEPIN) Project is committed to

bringing emergency responders and people with special needs together during every phase of the disaster cycle. The CEPIN training reflects FEMA's current definition of the "special needs" population. The original definition only referred to people with physical or mental disabilities. FEMA's new definition is expanded to include all people whose functional needs are jeopardized during times of disaster.

CEPIN is a funded project of Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI). After CEPIN successfully developed its first training program, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) has once again awarded TDI \$1.4 million to develop a unique, web-based training for special needs populations and emergency managers. CEPIN has designed their training programs to address the four phases of disaster management, which are as follows:

- **Mitigation** - Minimizing the effects of disaster.
Examples: building codes and zoning; vulnerability analyses; public education.
- **Preparedness** - Planning how to respond.
Examples: preparedness plans; emergency exercises/training; warning systems.
- **Response** - Efforts to minimize the hazards created by a disaster.
Examples: search and rescue; emergency relief.
- **Recovery** - Returning the community to normal.
Examples: temporary housing; grants; medical care.



During 2009, CEPIN was hard at work to create a curriculum that would start the important work of collaboration between people with disabilities and emergency responders. CEPIN established partnerships with the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and the National Terrorism Preparedness Institute (NTPI) at St. Petersburg College. AAPD and NTPI have a wealth of knowledge about people with disabilities and all phases of preparation for disasters. Both groups have given CEPIN access to subject matter experts and assisted with curriculum design for the online training.

The CEPIN training is being created to address FEMA's recently modified definition of "special needs" population. Initially, FEMA's definition only included people with physical or mental disabilities. Now, according to FEMA, the special needs population includes anyone whose functional needs are jeopardized during times of disaster. The expansion of this definition automatically means that more people are considered to have a "special need" during the time of an emergency. If the following personal

Continued on page 16



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- View instructions online:
www.sprintrelaynews.com/callnow/sprintvrs/

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- View instructions online:
www.sprintrelaynews.com/callnow/sprintip/

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CEPIN Continued from page 14

abilities were compromised in any way during the phases of the disaster cycle, an individual would fit FEMA's new definition:

- Caring for one's self
- Performing manual tasks
- Walking
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Learning
- Working

The CEPIN training addresses the issues that arise for people with disabilities and emergency responders after a crisis occurs. It is designed to address the following functional areas from the perspective of the emergency responder and special needs communities: maintaining independence, communication, transportation and medical supervision.

The result promises to be an online training that will positively affect the outcomes of disasters. CEPIN realizes that trainings are most effective when both emergency responders and people with special needs are "at the table." Throughout the year, CEPIN has hosted focus groups and curriculum reviews that allowed people from both communities to convene, brainstorm and review draft versions of the online training. "These sessions were very beneficial and will allow CEPIN to make an online training that is tailored to fit the needs of real people," Neil McDevitt, the Program Director of CEPIN said. "Our interaction with community leaders, state leaders and people from various disability groups helps us to fine-tune the course. We want to make the training as realistic as possible," he shared.



Standing left to right: Neil McDevitt, CEPIN Program Director; Michele Roseman, CEPIN Outreach Coordinator; Cheryl Heppner (Fairfax, VA); Claude Stout, *TDI*/Executive Director; Chief Mike Monge (Faribault, MN); Hilary Styron (Washington, D.C.); Claudia Gordon (Washington, D.C.); Colonel Tom Tucker (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), and Dr. Roy Miller, *TDI*/Board President

CEPIN Honors Five with Chuck Baird "Wolf" Painting

Part of CEPIN's 2009 activities also included acknowledging people who have worked to improve the lives of people who are deaf and hard of hearing. In some capacity, these individuals have supported the preparation for the online training. Based on their contributions, CEPIN and *TDI* presented special mementos to five people during *TDI*'s 18th Biennial International Conference in Washington, DC in July. The honorees were:

Claudia Gordon, Staff Attorney, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Cheryl Heppner, Executive Director, Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons

Mike Monge, Fire Chief, Faribault Fire Department Faribault, Minnesota

Hilary Styron, former Director, Emergency Preparedness Initiative, National Organization on Disability

Colonel Tom Tucker, Director National Center of Biomedical Research and Training at Louisiana State University.

Poised for an unveiling in late Fall 2010, the free CEPIN self-paced course will be fully interactive and accessible to all people. Specifically, it will: 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 responder communities.

CEPIN's efforts to work with its many partners are proof positive that preparing for emergencies cannot happen with a single act or a single person. Successfully managing the process needed for disaster preparedness will take collaboration. The steps for collaboration cannot be put off until tomorrow. These steps must be taken while we have the "gift" of the present.

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Digital Emergency Alert

Continued from page 13

popular communications channels like cellular phones and personal data accessories (PDAs).

More of the general public will be aware of emergencies and disasters. Since the information is received in a timely manner, more people will be better equipped to respond.

People with disabilities will have the same access to emergency alerts as people without disabilities. As a result, there should be a decrease in the number of people with disabilities who are not properly informed about disasters and emergencies.

The efforts to implement DEAS have been widespread. In 2004, FEMA launched a DEAS pilot program in the National Capital Region. The pilot lasted six months and was designed to

show how the public alert and warning systems can be improved when using local public television's digital television broadcasts.

Working with cellular telephone service providers, television and radio broadcasters, hardware and software developers, community leaders and emergency managers, DHS used that pilot to learn more about best practices. The pilot also helped DHS to understand better how to use DEAS on a nationwide basis.

At the close of 2009, FEMA and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced that standards would be adopted for wireless carriers to receive and deliver DEAS via mobile devices. The December 2009 announcement starts the beginning of a 28-month timeframe, which has been mandated by the FCC to begin the rollout of the DEAS with commercial mobile service providers. During this time, these providers can develop, test and deploy the system and deliver

mobile alerts to the public by 2012.

More recently, DHS continues its efforts to promote awareness and usage of DEAS. It was noted in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's "Budget in Brief 2010" that has dedicated dollars into making sure that financial resources were poured into testing DEAS and ensuring that this system is implemented nationwide through FY 2011. It was noted in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's "Budget in Brief 2010" that it has dedicated dollars into making sure that financial resources were poured into testing DEAS and ensuring that this system is implemented nationwide through FY 2011.

Steps to make updates in the emergency alert system cannot be taken without some challenges. While the road to change may not be smooth, it will eventually lead to a system where everyone has equal access to life-saving information and becomes more "disaster-ready."

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TDI In Action

April - June 2009

Telecommunications Access

- *TDI* and other consumer organizations jointly filed reply comments to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and recommend that the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone service industry not alter their platforms to handle the small number of text telephone (TTY) users that call 7-1-1 in order to reach 9-1-1. Instead, *TDI* and other consumer groups advocate for educational outreach advising TTY users to call 9-1-1 directly instead of using 7-1-1 then asking the relay operator to call 9-1-1.
- On May 11, *TDI* and other consumer groups submitted joint comments to the FCC supporting part of GoAmerica's proposal that all white label relay providers obtain certification from the FCC. Such applicants would be required to reveal their company structure as part of the application process. However, the groups opposed GoAmerica's proposal to require that Internet-based relay providers disclose their financial records and prove they have the staffing and resources to maintain a minimum of 20,000 reimbursable minutes per month.
- On May 11, *TDI* and other consumer advocacy groups also jointly filed comments to the FCC in support of CSDVRS's petition to eliminate the requirement that video relay service (VRS) consumer premises equipment (CPE) be interoperable with any default provider even though the ten-digit number may be ported (transferred) to a different VRS provider. In the comments, *TDI* and others recommended that the FCC work toward wider availability of VRS equipment regardless of whether or not a vendor is affiliated with a relay service provider.
- On May 20, *TDI* filed a Motion for Protective Order in an attempt to obtain TRS cost data that providers have held under a cloak of confidentiality. It is necessary for consumers to know the cost data in order to give credible feedback regarding proposed changes in reimbursement rates. In related comments filed on May 26, *TDI* and other consumer groups supported an extended comment period on Sorenson's request to either rescind the ongoing VRS Rate Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, or extend the Comment period for at least 45 days. This was followed up by a reply to comments by Sorenson and several other VRS providers opposing *TDI*'s motion and several ex-parte filings documenting meetings and phone calls between *TDI* and the FCC.
- On May 26, *TDI* sent out an eNote alerting relay users to possible email frauds, especially those purporting to originate from a reputable VRS providers or an industry association. These emails claim that a large sum of money is forthcoming and asked the reader to provide personal and financial information.
- On May 28, *TDI* filed comments urging the FCC to extend accessibility rules for 7-1-1 access to relay services as well as 9-1-1 emergency services on inter-connected VoIP telephone systems that allow you to call or receive calls from any telephone on the network. This proposed rule will not apply to closed network where users can only call others within that company's networks. Accordingly, the FCC formally adopted an order on June 26.
- During the first week of June, *TDI* was quoted in *Communications Daily* in reaction to a reporter's inquiry regarding a court ruling that favored Sorenson

Communications Daily

Communication in their lawsuit against the FCC. The issue was whether it was legal to restrict VRS marketing activities using funds reimbursed by the FCC for relay minutes. The court ruled that since Sorenson received reimbursement in exchange for providing services, they should not be restrained on how to spend that money.

- On June 8, *TDI* and other consumer organizations filed comments with the FCC in response to one of President Obama's major priorities, A National Broadband Plan for our Future. In the comments they stressed the importance of having full nationwide access to the high speed Internet in order to perform many essential life activities, especially making video phone calls.



CapTel® 800i captioned telephone.

- On June 10, *TDI* signed on with other consumer organizations to Hearing Loss Association of America's (HLAA) Supplement on their earlier Petition asking that the FCC mandate Captioned Telephone Relay Services in all fifty states. As a result of FCC inaction since the original petition



TDI In Action

April - June 2009

Continued from page 20

three years ago, hard of hearing consumers have encountered numerous barriers to the telecommunications network that vary according to their state of residence. Having a nationwide mandate would level the playing field for a large and growing segment of the U.S. population

- On June 11, *TDI* filed reply comments with the FCC in support of a higher reimbursement rate for providers of speech-to-speech (STS) relay services due to the specialized skills of STS communication assistants.
- On June 22, *TDI* sent out an eNote announcing that the FCC had extended the deadline for video relay and IP relay consumers to register and receive ten-digit telephone numbers until November 12, 2009.

Media Access



- During the first week of May, *TDI* drafted an email letter to be sent by the Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology (COAT) to Mr. Richard E. Besser, Acting Director for the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The letter thanked CDC for distributing a captioned online video clip addressing the H1N1 influenza outbreak and pointed out that without equal access, deaf and hard of hearing people would have been at risk due to lack of critical lifesaving information.

Industry Collaboration

- In early May, *TDI* participated in AT&T's Advisory Panel on Access and Aging in Dallas, Texas. This advisory panel focused on serving customers with disabilities and senior citizens. Among the topics discussed were universal design concepts and advances in



telemedicine.

- On June 4, 2009, *TDI* also participated in AT&T's Consumer Advisory Panel, which meets several times a year. This panel offers insight and recommendations about AT&T policies that affect a wider range of consumers. The members of the panel discussed consumer usage of AT&T's new products and services in an effort to gain better understanding of the ever-changing communications technology.

Policy and Advocacy Networking

- On June 19, *TDI* Executive Director Claude Stout was one of several speakers who presented a tribute to the late Rocky Stone on HLAA's 30th Anniversary. In the tribute, Stout recalled Rocky's challenge to other advocates for deaf and hard of hearing people when it comes to accommodating people with hearing loss that "one



Rocky Stone, Founder of HLAA.

size does not fit all."

- On June 29, *TDI* sent out an eNote welcoming Julius Genachowski as the newest Chairman of the FCC. In that eNote, *TDI* also extended special gratitude to Michael J. Copps for his new initiatives while he was acting Chairman since the departure of previous Chair.



Julius Genachowski, FCC Chairman.

Social Media Provide Accessibility to Emergency Managers

BY NEIL MCDEVITT

After Tina Robinette gets up in the morning, she first checks the news and then heads to her Twitter and Facebook account to talk about the articles she's just read.



Social media.

"Social media is a new tool, particularly to the fire service," Tina wrote. "It reaches to those who wouldn't ordinarily read the local newspaper or watch the local news. Social

Media applications such as Twitter and Facebook are fun for younger audiences and are just now starting to spread to older adults."

Greg Friese, MS, NREMT-P and co-founder of PIOSocialMediaTraining.com, wrote that Twitter and other forms of social media have drastically impacted how emergency services providers have interacted with the public. During a recent spat between actual Emergency Medical Service providers and NBC-Universal regarding how EMS was depicted in the show *Trauma*, Greg noted that the Association of Air Medical Services (AAMS) had encouraged its members to use social media to try and affect change. In Greg's view, the AAMS's 222 followers were unlikely to make meaningful change. However, he said, "If a local fire department had 199 local followers that might be enough to garner support for local initiatives to improve service or prevent fires."

As it applies to deaf and hard of hearing people, we've seen an explosion in how Twitter is utilized by the deaf and hard of hearing community. Almost every major deaf and hard of hearing advocacy group has a Twitter



That probably doesn't sound very different than a lot of us but Tina takes this very seriously. In fact, she considers it to be part of her job as Assistant Fire Marshal with the Office of the State Fire Marshal in South Carolina. "Social Media applications such as Twitter and Facebook allow me the opportunity to spread tips on fire prevention instantly to anyone with a cellphone or PC", she said.

After a fire devastated a family in her area, she posted this tweet: "*If u dont have smoke alarms in ur home call the local Fire Dept & ask if they give em 4 free. Keep urself & family alive*". While it uses many of the shortcuts required to get a long message out in the infamous 140 character limit of Twitter, this message instantly got out to over 2,200 followers and was repeated (called re-tweeted) by others who were able to send the same message to their followers.

To be sure, there still is a place for the more traditional blogs that the deaf community has seen in the past decade. Tina writes more about the fire mentioned above in her blog at <http://tinafightsfire.wordpress.com/> but notes that the way people receive information has been transformed by

account or a Facebook account. In fact, the power of these social media networks enabled DeafHope, a non-profit organization dedicated to ending domestic violence and sexual assault against deaf and hard of hearing women, to win a \$25,000 award from Chase Community Giving.

TDI World asked Tina Robinette how Social Media programs like Twitter have impacted her ability to communicate with deaf and hard of hearing people. She replied, "Social Media has greatly broadened my knowledge of how people such as those who are deaf and hard of hearing think and respond in regards to fire prevention and emergencies in general."

And this captures the power of Twitter/Facebook perfectly. People are being exposed to new ideas and new individuals that they otherwise would never have had the opportunity to meet.

Greg Freise sums it up perfectly by saying, "People use the Internet to make their lives better. They do that through connecting, learning, sharing, and purchasing. We are surrounded by media messages that tell us what is wrong in the world and what individuals, organizations, and parties are doing to fix those problems."

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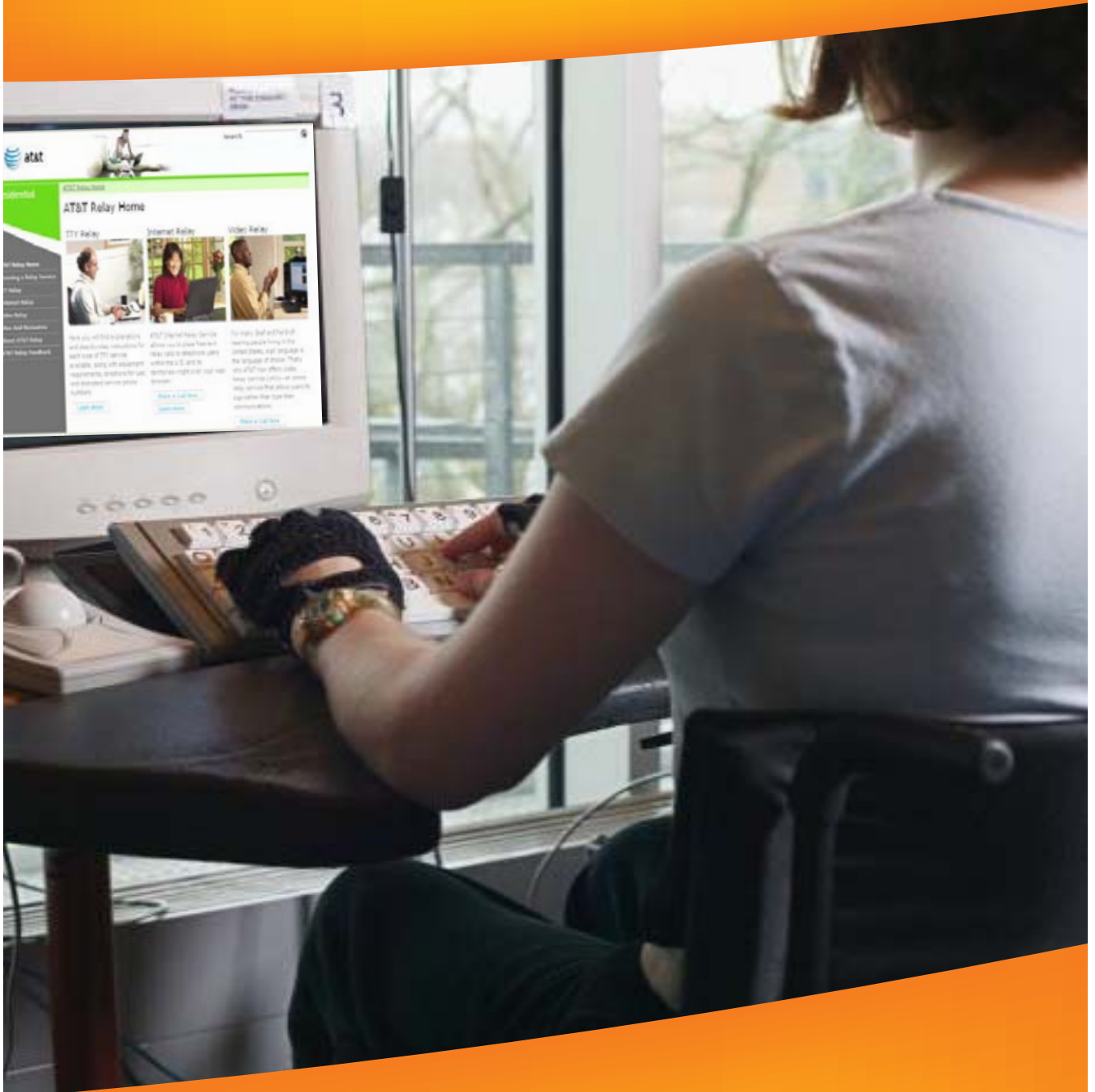
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