VOLUME 41, NO. 1 ■ WINTER 2010

TDI WORLD

Technology News and Commentary for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

Apps on the Go!

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

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Board Views

BY DR. ROY MILLER
TDI President

Access Required for Total Liberty

On July 4, 1776 the founding fathers of this country issued the Declaration of Independence, a document that set forth one of the fundamental tenets of this nation when it declared "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

A few years later, this fundamental principle of "liberty" was again placed front and center when the preamble to our Constitution declared "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Almost a hundred years later, Abraham Lincoln reminded us of our quest for liberty when he began his famous Gettysburg Address by saying "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." And ever since the Civil War our nation has gradually, and often with much resistance, been involved in trying to secure the "Blessings of Liberty" to all segments of our population. But indeed, that process has been extremely slow and frequently riddled with turmoil and civil unrest.

But exactly what is this elusive quality of "liberty" to which our nation has aspired for over 200 years? Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Tenth Edition) reminds us that liberty is (1) the quality or state of being free and (2) the enjoyment of various social, political, or economic rights and privileges. In sort, liberty and freedom are effectively synonymous.

While the Civil War was the greatest bloodbath in our nation's history, it failed to resolve the issue of liberty and freedom for all. Women still did not enjoy the liberty that comes with having basic political rights — they could not vote until 55 years later (1920) when the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed. African-Americans were still not free to go to the same schools as white children – they could not do that until 1954 when Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka finally opened those doors, almost 100 years after the Civil War had ended. People with disabilities were still not free — they could legally be discriminated against until the passage of the Americans

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Just as water and oxygen are necessary for humans to live, communications access is necessary for people to enjoy total liberty.

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with Disabilities Act of 1990, nearly 150 years after the end of the Civil War. And gays and lesbians are still not allowed to enjoy all the privileges of society – in most states they do not have the same legal rights as married couples. Our nation may have traveled far along the freedom trail, but we still have a long ways to go.

With the continuing implementation of the ADA one might all too quickly think that deaf and hard of hearing people can now completely enjoy the fruits of the tree of liberty. However, I would suggest that this would be a far too naïve perspective of the current situation. Rather, to me, the lack of communications access severely limits the freedom of deaf and hard of hearing people. For example, the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution specifies several basic freedoms that all citizens are to enjoy. It says:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

But freedom of religion has little meaning if one cannot understand the words that are spoken in your church or synagogue. And freedom of speech is of limited importance, if one cannot speak. In this day of electronic communications, freedom of the press means very little without captioned access to all TV news programs regardless of where one lives. And freedom of assembly is of little value if a person cannot understand what the various speakers are saying. The bottom line is that there can be no total freedom without total communications access. In order to completely enjoy the economic, political and social life of one's community, people who are deaf or hard of hearing simply have to have communications access or their liberty is limited.

So, while TDI is actively engaged in "shaping an accessible world," it is also pursuing a larger and more important goal– working to secure the blessings of liberty that were promised to everyone, including deaf and hard of hearing people, in the Declaration of Independence some 234 years ago..

So, while TDI is actively engaged in "shaping an accessible world," it can be said that at the same time it is pursuing a larger and more important goal. In particular, it is working to secure the blessings of liberty that were promised to everyone, including deaf and hard of hearing people, in the Declaration of Independence some 234 years ago.

When thinking about the relationship between freedom and communications access, I am reminded of the famous "I Have a Dream" speech of Rev. Martin Luther King. That speech was given on August 28, 1963, and was the culmination of the March on Washington, which was a critical event in securing final passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Although King's speech was focused on (in his words) the "manacles of segregation" that had historically been worn by African Americans, if one merely substitutes the words "deaf or hard of hearing person" for the term "Negro" in various places in his speech it gives a vivid picture of the current status of people with hearing loss in modern society.

"…the deaf or hard of hearing person still is not free. … the life of the deaf or hard of hearing person is still sadly crippled by … the chains of discrimination. … the deaf or hard of hearing person lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. … the deaf or hard of hearing person is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. … When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men … would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Just as water and oxygen are necessary for humans to live, communications access is necessary for people to enjoy total liberty. And today, unfortunately, there are still many, many communication barriers facing people with hearing loss. Given that, by TDI continually advocating to remove communication barriers and increase the accessibility of the world about us, it too is hastening the day when deaf and hard of hearing people can shout (in the words of Rev. King) "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Capitol Commentary

BY CLAUDE STOUT
TDI Executive Director

Making the Case for Real Time Text Technology (RTT)

What is RTT? It is Real Time Text technology. This is something that will have a huge impact on our ability to communicate over the telephone. For some of us, it would be a nice option on our wireless phones. For others, it will become a "must-have," something that we will not be able to live without.

Do you remember the TTY? It was the great granddaddy of all breakthroughs. Before that came along, deaf people had no access to the telephone at all, unless they had someone around who could make calls for them. Asking someone to make important calls can be as awkward as asking your mother to call your date's father, and for them to discuss plans for the prom. We generally preferred to just somehow get to our friend's house and gamble that they were home. If not, we just left a note and hoped for a good response, even if it took days.

The reason why the TTY was such a big breakthrough in 1964, was that we could reach out and talk to someone. For many years until relay services were established, most calls would be on those clunky green machines just to another deaf person with a TTY. TDI was formed in 1968 to collect TTY machines from corporations, distribute them and connect deaf people around the country. Its first Blue Book had only 174 listings, now it has about 30,000. The growth of the Blue Book parallels the evolution of TDI. Today's Blue Book still lists TTY numbers but also video phone numbers, captioned telephone numbers, email addresses and other contact information.

Today we hear that the TTY is 'dying' and that the Internet is the way to go. Today, we are using email and instant messaging. If we have a wireless device like a cell phone or pager, some of us also use SMS or short messaging to send quick text messages. Nevertheless, as we realized over the years, some of us do miss the humble analog TTY. Despite its shortcomings, the TTY allows you to:

- Dial a business number, type with the receptionist, and then be transferred to another phone within that same office without worrying about losing your connection.
- Talk on the TTY to your deaf friend, and then give the phone to your hearing son in your home so he could talk using voice to your friend's hearing daughter on the same call.
- Type "OMG" instead of saying, "Oh my goodness" using abbreviations that save time on a call, especially long distance calls. Some of these shortcuts now survive in instant messaging (e.g. LOL = laughing out loud).

Even with all of these positive aspects, many of us just stopped using the TTY. As we migrated to new technologies, quite a few people hung on to their cherished but dusty electronic "TDD"machines, just in case for emergency calls. Hard of hearing people came to love captioned telephones because they allow those who cannot hear but speak well enough to be understood on the phone to converse at a normal pace and read replies from the other party within a couple of seconds. Video phones allow deaf people to express themselves in a visual language that they are most comfortable using — all in real-time so that the hearing person will feel it is pretty much like any other call they get from other hearing people.

Yet there are situations where many of

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RTT combines the good features of the TTY and blends those features with the digital Internet protocol technologies.

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As of 1/1/2009, VRS and IP Relay users are required to register their address and to obtain a ten digit telephone number. Users can change providers at any time and retain the same number. Users should keep their address information updated for emergency 911 calls. For more details, please visit www.att.com/relay. ©2009 AT&T Intellectual Property. All rights reserved.

CAPITOL COMMENTARY Continued from page 4

us may prefer to type out our responses. Not every one of us know sign language, nor can some of us speak well enough to be understood on the phone. If you are in a meeting, you could discreetly look at an urgent email and type a brief response. Many of us take advantage of the vibration setting on our pagers that alert us quietly to an incoming call. If you want to communicate with teenagers in your family, they may already be comfortable texting as one of many communication options that are available. However, today's texting do have its shortcomings too. Messages are sent out a block at a time – each time you hit the <Enter> key. Then you wait anxiously to see if you get a response while the other party types back. If he were a slow typist, you would be waiting a very long time before you see anything from him.

RTT combines the good features of the TTY and blends those features with the digital Internet protocol technologies. In today's IP world, the limitations of the old TTY are gone. You no longer have to hunt for a creaky old TTY. RTT works on today's telephones, computers, iPods, iPads, iPhones, BlackBerrys, any Internet device with a keyboard and a screen will be able to use RTT. Equally important, this would give us one more option to make emergency calls directly with 911 centers.

Even relay services are using RTT. When you use AT&T Relay on AIM, press Ctrl+R to see realtime text with <ATTRelay>. (You will need to register and obtain a ten-digit number from AT&T Relay.) Here is their screen shot.

We believe that RTT is a viable replacement for a TTY. RTT works equal or better than a TTY and there are no extra costs to the user. It is open-source so anyone can use the RTT codes on any website or wireless device that transmits and receives text.

According to Dr. Gregg Vanderheiden, director of the TRACE Center at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, real-time text also has benefits for everyone, not just people with hearing

Real-Time is a feature that allows text to flow to and from the CA as it is typed. You will see what the CA types, word for word, as they type it. And they will see what you type, word for word, as you type it. There are no delays while waiting for complete sentences to transmit.

or speech disabilities. Here is an excerpt from his Twelve Frequent Questions on Real-time Text, Its Need, Role and Proposed Requirements at **HTTP://TRACE.WISC.EDU/DOCS/2010-FREQUENT-QUESTIONS-ON-RTT/**

In addition …, real-time text also has a number of advantages to mainstream users. Some of these include:

- A person wants to call their boss or other important person – but doesn't want to disturb them if they are busy or presenting. So they begin the call by just making a text call and asking "you there?" or "you busy?" or "can you talk – or chat ?" The other person can then just add voice and open up a voice interaction – or respond in real-time text if they are busy or in a meeting and can chat but not talk. (This is a common technique used by people on Skype today).
- A person is in a meeting or conference presentation but wants to participate in a teleconf call as much as they can. They could listen to the phone call with earbud or Bluetooth headset and respond silently in text.
- A person is in a very noisy environment and has others use text for things they cannot understand.
- A person is on a telconf call from an airport – and doesn't want to go off mute because of the loud background noise. They can listen and contribute in text.
- A person needs to pass on a URL or phone number or credit card number or complex password. They can avoiding arduous spelling routines (alpha 4 bravo backslash etc) yet reliably transmit numbers or unusual names while on a call.
- People can use text to type words that are not understood when spoken, in communication with people with different mother tongues.
- People can type details regarding an emergency situation to the emergency service (911, 112 etc.). (e.g. address details, medicine names, phone numbers)
- In an emergency if it is too loud for people to hear the 9-1-1 operator (or for the operator to make out what the other person is saying) they can use text to be clear.
- If a person hiding from abuse or home invader, they can call and communicate with 9-1-1 operator without talking.
- People can have quicker and more secure text communication than IM and it works with all phones not just ones that have the same IM

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Accessible Tech

BY JAMES HOUSE
TDI World Editor

Is E-mail Here to Stay?

When did you first learn about email? Many of us who are younger tech wonks began using email when we were in school and took it for granted. Some of us fondly, or maybe not so fondly remember the days before email. In the 1980s, as we discovered e-mail, we began to use it as a way around the telephone without having to deal with the rising cost of postage stamps. In 1981, the cost to mail a first class letter went up twice from 15 cents up to 18 cents and up again to 20 cents just in time for the Christmas card season. Since then, the postal rate has doubled, but mail volume has decreased dramatically - all because of our growing dependence on email and the Internet.

Because of the immediacy of email, some people are questioning the relevancy of the United States Postal Service. In the early years of our country, as the population continually expanded westward across the plains and through the mountains, new mail delivery services came and went. One well-known example is the U.S. Pony Express. Within a brief span of eighteen months, the mail was delivered across the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains in ten days by carriers on horseback from Missouri to California.

An important chapter in the Westward Expansion was the invention of the telephone and the onset of "Ma Bell" telecommunications industry during the late 1800s. As the new cross-country railroad network arose, trains replaced stagecoaches and could deliver letters and packages quickly and safely. Then just a few short years later, telegraph wires were strung up

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Despite recent attempts by social media companies to "redo" email, several recent articles give me hope that email will continue to be available for a long time to come.

On May 10, 1869, railroad dignitaries mingled with a few hundred workers and onlookers to create one of the most well-known railroad photographs in history. At Promontory Summit, Utah, the transcontinental Pacific Railroad has just been completed.

photo: Union Pacific Railroad Museum Collection

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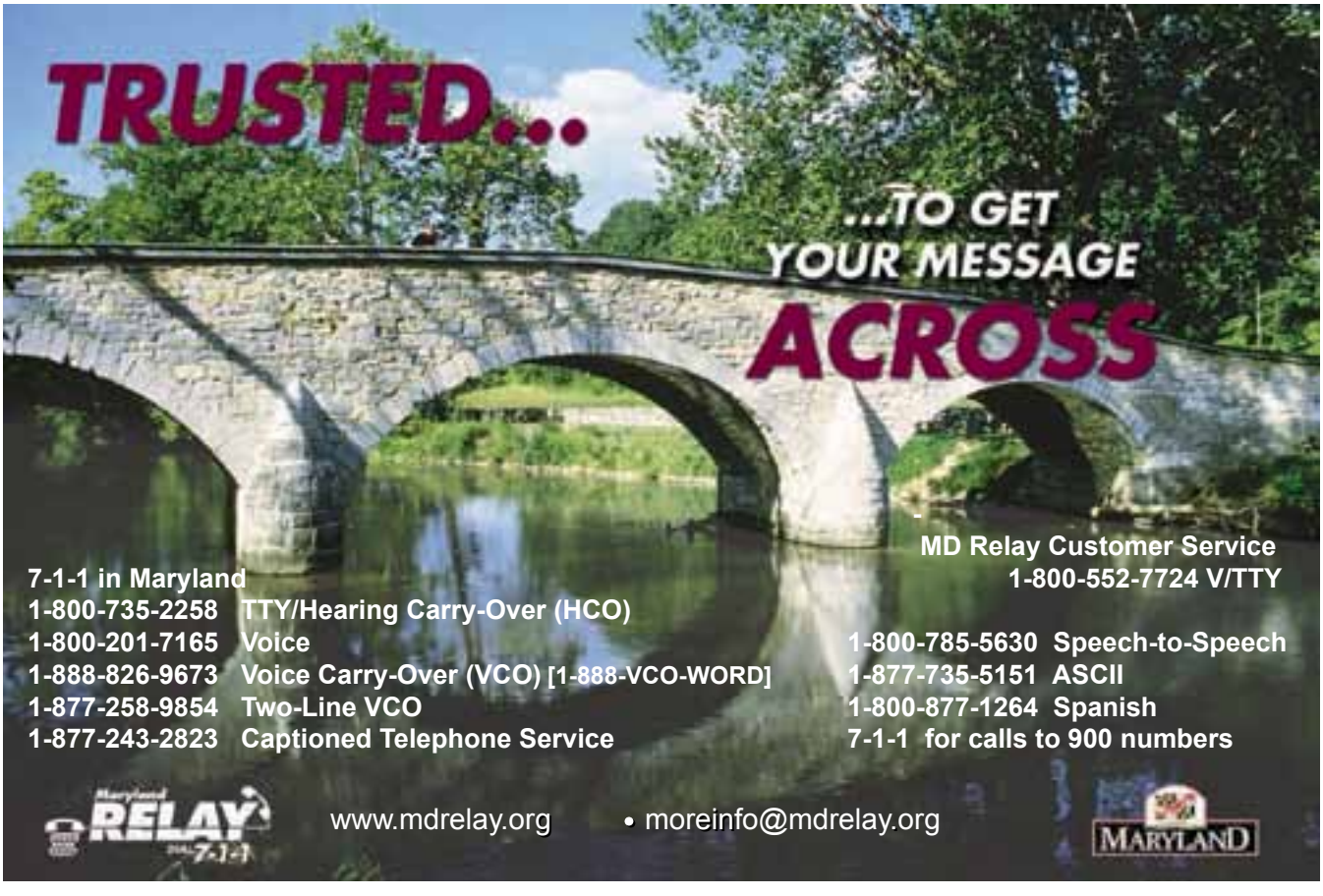

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on poles. The train depot became a town hub of communications as many short and terse telegrams came and went in minutes. Then computers came along and the world became a global village linked with fiber optics in an ever-expanding telecommunications industry where anyone can zip a zillion bytes of information in seconds over the Internet.

During the 1970s, as the Internet was being developed, Vinton Cerf, a hard of hearing engineer, chaired an Internetwork Working Group to establish protocols for transmitting electronic messages to their intended destination. This group eventually came up with a protocol for email addresses using a name, the @ symbol, then the domain name, and finally, a suffix like .com, .org, .net, or even .info. About thirty years later in 2001, TDI honored Mr. Cerf with the prestigious Andrew Saks Engineering Award for his role in developing what some may call a monumental breakthrough for those who had no other real alternatives to using a TTY.

In the late-1980s, I began to see for myself how email was a viable way to stay in touch, especially on the job. At that time, I was working for one of the major television stations in Washington, D.C. Around 1986, I used email to ask my boss and the news director for a numerical pager. My job frequently took me out in the field around town assisting reporters on their assignments such as covering local angles on the Children of a Lesser God movie shortly after it premiered, and the week-long Deaf President Now protests at Gallaudet University. I also used email to write newsletters preparing the station staff for the upcoming debut of local news captioning in the Washington, D.C. market. There are more stories of how email helped me on the job, but in those early days, I felt that it gave me an equal chance of being part of the team at work. Thanks to TDI, I have met many others who felt the same way back then.

Now it is much easier to send and keep track of our emails. Today, we see FaceBook, Twitter and other social media companies attempting to "redo" email, so that we can keep all of our friends up-to-date with pictures, video and God knows what else - all at the same time. Several recent articles give me hope that email will continue to be available for a long time to come. Last July on VentureBeat.com, readers were asked in a poll, "What do you think of email's future?" Nearly 84% of the respondents replied that "Email will continue evolving to keep up with new collaborative needs." Twelve percent gave email two to five years left to live, while another four percent saw its life span ending within two years because... "By then decision-makers will have moved on to new kinds of communication tools." It seems to me that even though email will change, it is here to stay.

As you see all these changes happening, we at TDI want to let you know that email is a prominent part of our advocacy work here in the nation's capitol. We exchange dozens of emails a day with members asking technology questions. We also collaborate in groups with other advocates from our own individual offices without the expense of travelling to meet at one location. In the past year, TDI has developed new pages at FaceBook, Twitter and YouTube. If you know of more places that might possibly aid us in staying in contact with various stakeholders, feel free to let us know.

TDI will continue to watch new developments and take advantage of any improvements to email, texting and other message delivery systems that use text or video, such as instant messaging or multi-media messaging. We will continue to try out new things, just as we have shared/tweeted on popular social media outlets within the past year. We will continue to do vlogs and surveys as news developments warrant the use of these tools. But for now, email will continue to be an important communications tool for the TDI staff. Yes, at TDI email is definitely "Here to stay" - at least for now (smile).

CAPITOL COMMENTARY Continued from page 6

format. Transmission starts as you start typing. Transmission is direct to other phoneso it is more secure since it doesn't pass through another server. And it works with all phones — not just the ones that have the same IM service/format as the caller.

- People can have instant communication with all phones. Like SMS it would work with basically all phones. Unlike SMS there are no unknown delays or dropped messages You know if your message is getting through and it is instant.

Even though we sense that the end is near for the TTY, we can still enjoy the good functions that we once knew when everyone else also had TTYs. Now that many of us have the option of texting, it almost seems as if the TTY is still here. TDI is currently working with the FCC, industry players, particularly the Telecommunications Industry Association, Microsoft, BlackBerry, Nokia, Panasonic, Gallaudet's Technology Access Program, the Trace Center at the University of Wisconsin, and other consumer and industry groups to deploy this technology soon here in America.

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Apps On the Go

For the past few years, we have witnessed an amazing transformation in telecommunications. Whether you like it or not, all of us are in the midst of an ongoing migration from POTS (Plain Old-fashioned Telephone System) to Internet Protocol telephony. Veterans of the struggle for telephone access will recall the passing of the TTY, which some of us look at as the beginning of a revolution and more integration with society. Internet Protocol was able to achieve many things that the analog telephone cannot do.

When the TTY came onto the scene in 1964, telephones had rotary dials and could only provide analog voice service. During a TTY call, the typed characters were converted into audible tones through the acoustic coupler (an old word for modem), and then converted back to text for the other party. Although the Baudot system was sturdy, it was very limited. Only one person could type at a time and TTY machines were fast becoming obsolete.

> In 1964 the cost for a three-minute video call on an analog network was $21 ($120 in today's dollars.)

As telephony evolved, the push button phones allowed data to be transmitted on the phone lines. This led to an explosion of fax machines, credit card readers, monitoring systems, and it paved the way for ASCII computer modems. As the telephone continued to evolve, the rising demand necessitated a change in protocol. Back then, anytime you were on a call, the line between your phone and the other party was kept open for both sides until one party hung up. The Internet protocol uses packet technology; information is transmitted in a series of many packets. The packets go out in a particular order, but they all take different routes using the path of least resistance (wires that are not transmitting data) to their destination and displayed in one piece as intended by the caller.

In other words, analog service is like sending your recipe book to a friend through the mail — it stays intact in one piece through its entire journey. With packet technology, the individual recipes go different ways between the originating point and the ending point, and they are reassembled at the end so that they look to the reader as if they were sent intact, almost like pages of a fax - they arrive one by one at the

destination even though they came through different routes. Because information is sent in packets, the capacity of the phone lines can expand so that other conversations can go through the lines formerly reserved for one conversation. All of this happens in seconds over the Internet.

In the same year that the TTY was introduced, AT&T made big news at the 1964 New York World's Fair by unveiling its new futuristic PicturePhone. Back then, the cost for a three-minute video call on an analog network was $21, or $120 in today's dollars. With the advent of fiber optics and other digital transmission technologies, the typical bandwidth has expanded where now it is possible to have hours of live two-way video calls for a fraction of 1964 prices, even without wires. It has been reported that a single streaming video occupies as much bandwidth as about 100 phone calls. Some estimate that 2GB is equivalent to watching more than 100 two-minute videos in a month. Fearing wireless congestion and deteriorating services, wireless providers are looking at replacing unlimited plans with tiered pricing plans. In view of this trend, the FCC is considering a requirement for wireless providers to send out voice and email alerts when a customer nears the upper limit of his or her monthly plan.

Relay service providers are taking advantage of more bandwidth. The transition to newer generations of wireless networks promises a burgeoning growth in mobile communication options. Just a short time ago, the three types of data (voice, text and video) ran on distinct streams and functioned on their own. Now, we are seeing a convergence of all three types of data, and soon, if not now, we will be able to switch from one type of data to another without disconnecting from the other party. For example, if you want to call a friend who is in town at a hotel but you do not have his direct phone number, you could call an operator through the relay and get his number, then be transferred to his room and switch to a video call. On the other hand, you could speak to someone and read his or her responses in text on your cell phone.

There is a relay application for almost everyone. Below are detailed descriptions of each product and service based on the information that respective vendors send to us in a brief questionnaire that was sent to all known relay providers. TDI has a non-endorsement policy and has no financial arrangements with

Continued on page 14

APS FOR ON THE GO Continued from page 13

any vendor in connection with this particular article. If you are wondering why a specific product is not featured here, it is because that vendor chose not to respond to the questionnaire. At the end of this article is a chart of mobile web applications. Some of these applications were recently introduced while others have been around for more than a few months.

While the people behind Convo have many combined years of experience in the relay industry, this company is a newcomer. Their product, **CONVO ANYWHERE** is a web based video relay service. Thanks to "cloud computing", unlike hunting for a scarce TTY machine, all you have to do is simply log in at **WWW.CONVORELAY.COM** on any PC, Mac or Linux computer or wireless device, and make the call from its secure website. There is nothing to download and after the call is completed, you just close the browser. Convo claims that you are in control of the entire call with them. You decide who to call, what to discuss and when to hang-up. The role of the video relay interpreter becomes more minimal to just interpreting the call and less like a telephone operator. CEO Robin Horwitz points out the significance of Convo Anywhere. "The deaf callers have total control, for a totally equivalent call experience. "

There are no downloads. Just go to the Convo website on any computer or a mobile device that can handle video calls. Log in and you will find your own ten-digit number, text chat, contact list, 9-1-1 access, VCO option, and other features you expect from a high quality VRS provider. Most of the people responsible for the development of this website are deaf themselves who understand the need for functional equivalency.

Sprint, one of the oldest relay providers, offers two wireless devices, **HTC EVO 4G** and the **SAMSUNG EPIC 4G**, which are among the few phones that work on the 4G network, which can run up to ten times faster than 3G allowing for real-time video conversations. The HTC EVO 4G has its own wireless WiFi service that goes everywhere you go. For these two devices, Sprint offers two mobile video chat software programs that are available. These mobile apps allow you to make point-to-point video calls from any WiFi hotspot. At this time, both apps are not compatible with video relay services. Users are alerted to incoming calls on either software through flashing screens. Current and potential Sprint Relay customers can get more information at **WWW.SPRINTRELAY.COM**

Convo Anywhere sports a simple user interface you can use anywhere. Nothing to download and nothing is left behind.

Fring is a software application that runs on Sprint's 4G network. It allows you to send and receive mobile video calls.

FRING

This application is available for devices with Android, Google's mobile operating system, such as the HTC EVO and the Samsung Epic.. Both parties must have the same program to call each other. After downloading the app, you can create your own profile, and even announce your "mood" for others to see. If you are in an area where 4G is not available, your device will either down shift to 3G or switch to WiFi, meaning you can make calls even if you are not near a WiFi hotspot.

QIK

The Qik application on Sprint's HTC EVO 4G has recently been acquired

Continued on page 21

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verizon

Verizon FiOS available in select areas only. Speed and uninterrupted service not guaranteed. Voice service for FiOS customers is provisioned over fiber. A battery unit will supply back-up power for standard voice service (but not Voice Over IP services), including E-911, for up to eight hours. ©2008 Verizon.

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who are deaf,
d, deaf-blind
of hearing.

Area Sites and Activities

- Texas State Capitol
- LBJ Library and Museum
- Texas School for the Deaf
- Austin & Blanton Museums of Art
- Texas State History Museum
- Largest US colony of Mexican Free-Tailed Bats
- Mexi-Arte Museum
- Austin Zoo
- O-Henry House
- Long Center for the Performing Arts
- IMAX theater
- Enjoy the "Live Music Capitol of the World"

• **http://austin.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp**
ails, visit the TDI website! **www.TDIForAccess.org**

The 19th Biennial TDI International Conference

June 2-4, 2011 • Austin, Texas

The 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act: Challenges and Opportunities

Call for Presentation Proposals

TDI invites proposals for presentations, forums, workshops, and discussions at the 19th Biennial TDI International Conference, June 2 - June 4, 2011, in Austin, Texas.

Join us as we explore the exciting new "Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act". The full text of this new law can be found at

www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ260/pdf/PLAW-111publ260.pdf

Proposals related to other access issues such as telecommunications relay services, TV and movie captioning, broadband access, and Titles I, II, and III of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act are also welcome.

TARGET AUDIENCES:

Business, industry; government and regulatory staff; and consumers who are deaf, hard of hearing, late- deafened or deaf-blind.

Track 1A

Overview of the Act for Consumers

We want to present answers and invoke discussion to questions such as:

- What does the rulemaking processes and timelines look like?
- What advisory committees are under the Act and what are they charged to do?
- What opportunities exist for consumers to participate in the rulemaking process?
- What in general is the Act and how will it impact consumers who are deaf, late-deafened, deaf-blind and hard of hearing?

Track 1B

Orientation to Targeted Consumer Markets for Business and Industry

Any newcomer to making products and services accessible will benefit from an overview of communication and cultural considerations of the consumers this Act affects. In this track, we'll share information about the diverse segments of consumers the Act is designed to assist. For example:

- What are considered "best practices" for this market?
- What unique customer care may be necessary to service these consumers?
- What market research is available regarding these groups?
- What are examples of best practices utilized by accessibility innovators?
- How can businesses best approach marketing and outreach to those interested in their products and services?

NOTE: Opportunities for market research and focus groups can be arranged.

Track 2

What's in Title I? (Communications Access)

- How will the new Act change how deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened and deaf-blind consumers use accessible browsers on mobile phones?
- What needed regulatory changes are proposed related to: hearing aid compatibility, relay services, NG9-1-1 interoperability and ease of reliable access?
- How will equipment (and its distribution) for people who are deaf-blind be made more accessible?
- What is the new FCC Accessibility Clearinghouse and how will it benefit consumers, business and industry?

Track 3

What's in Title II? (Video Programming)

- How can TV programming content be appropriately captioned for Internet viewing?

- What can be expected regarding captioning standards?
- What can be expected or required for access to video devices including recording devices?
- How can captioning quality and dependability be improved, and access to closed captioning functions be made simpler?

Track 4

What Else is New? (Other Access Issues)

- What are the most pressing issues in telecommunications relay services? How best do we address them?
- What are the updates related to the FCC's recent "refresh proceeding" on TV captioning issues and the petition for universal television captioning submitted by consumer groups?
- What new ideas/approaches should we consider for consumers, industry and the FCC to work together to make TV captioning universal for all?
- What are our thoughts on the recommendations made to DOJ in the recent advance notice of proposed rule making (ANPRM) on movie captioning, web accessibility, and NG9-1-1?
- What steps have been taken to ensure broadband is available, accessible and affordable to people who are deaf, late-deafened, hard of hearing or deaf-blind?
- What are some accomplishments and/or challenges consumers have experienced related to Titles I, II, or III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (now in force for 20 years)?
- What emerging technologies (video, telecommunications, and others) should we be aware of that will address our access needs?
- Is there any other new public policy issue or concern related to telecommunications, media, or information technology that we should review?
- Are there new updates on Speech-to-Text or other voice recognition applications/software?

SUBMISSION SPECIFICATIONS:

Presenter(s) Information:

Name _____

Corporate or Organizational Affiliation (If Any) _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail Address _____

Brief Bio (500 Word Maximum) _____

_____

_____

_____

PROPOSAL:

A description of your proposed presentation (1,000 Word Max), and a short 50-word abstract for publication in the conference program book (if your proposal is selected). Please include details concerning objectives, content, importance, target audience, choice of format (lecture, workshop, panel, forum, or demonstration) as well as which track it best fits in. If your proposal is accepted, TDI will make every effort to follow the format you've requested, however we do reserve the right to request alterations in order to make the program cohesive.

The program activities will be supported by sign language interpretation/transliteration and CART (computer-assisted real-time translation).

❒ A/V Equipment Needed for Presentation:

❒ Video Projector, Flip Chart, White Board, DVD Player, Video Monitor, Other?

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS:

Friday, April 15, 2011, via email to Claude Stout, TDI Executive Director, at execdir@TDIforAccess.org Proposals that are selected will require the following additional submissions:

By May 1, 2011:

Photo(s) - head and shoulder picture(s) of presenter(s) and any Company logo(s) for Conference Program Book.

By May 15, 2011:

Presentation materials, PowerPoint, or applicable visual aids and a release allowing your presentation to be videotaped and photographed for TDI purposes.

NOTE:

Regretfully, TDI is unable to offer honorariums and/or reimbursement for travel expenses. Presenters are responsible for all of their expenses including the required conference registration fee and the cost of any special events during the Conference.

The 19th Biennial TDI International Conference

June 2-4, 2011 • Austin, Texas

The 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act: Challenges and Opportunities

REGISTRATION FORM

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Company/Organization: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Country: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone: (____)_____ ❑ Video ❑ TTY ❑ CapTel ❑ Voice

Fax: (____) _____ Email address: _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____ Phone: _____

Sign Language/Voice interpreters and CART will be available for all Conference activities. Requested additional accommodations:
❑ Assistive Listening ❑ Tactile ❑ Other: _____

4 EASY WAYS TO REGISTER!

MAIL FORM TO:
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Silver Spring, MD 20190

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PHONE US AT:
(301) 589-3786 VOICE
(301) 563-9112 VP
(888) 202-1120 TTY

ONLINE AT:
www.TDIforAccess.org

2011 TDI Conference Registration Fees:

(All fees include name tag, program book, and admission to workshops and exhibits)

	Consumer – TDI Member*	Consumer – Non TDI Member	Company/Organization
3-Day Registration	$125 x ____ = $_____	$150 x ____ = $_____	$400 x ____ = $_____
One-Day Registration (June 2/3)	$ 75 x ____ = $_____	$100 x ____ = $_____	$250 x ____ = $_____
President's Reception (June 2)	$ 60 x ____ = $_____	$ 60 x ____ = $_____	$ 60 x ____ = $_____
Professional Luncheon (June 3)	$ 50 x ____ = $_____	$ 50 x ____ = $_____	$ 50 x ____ = $_____
Riverboat Dinner Cruise (June 3)	$ 50 x ____ = $_____	$ 50 x ____ = $_____	$ 50 x ____ = $_____
Awards Luncheon (June 4)	$ 50 x ____ = $_____	$ 50 x ____ = $_____	$ 50 x ____ = $_____
Entertainment Show (June 4)	$ 50 x ____ = $_____	$ 50 x ____ = $_____	$ 50 x ____ = $_____
Total	$_____	$_____	$_____
Special Combo Price**	$300 x ____ = $_____	$360 x ____ = $_____	$575 x ____ = $_____
Consumer – TDI Member Early Bird Combo Price	$280 x ____ = $_____ If paid by 4/1/11 $260 x ____ = $_____ If paid by 3/1/11		

** Includes full 3 day registration and all five special events mentioned above.

*In order to qualify for the above "consumer " rates, you must pay registration fees with personal funds. If you are currently a "Non TDI Member" you can easily become a member and be eligible for the discounted "TDI Member" rates. Simply go to www.TDIforAccess.org, complete the membership application, pay the annual membership fee of $40 and you are done!

PAYMENT:

❑ USA check or money order included
❑ By credit card (information to the right):
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Card No. _____ Expiration Date: _____

Printed Name: _____CCV:_____

Cardholder's Signature: _____Date: _____

More information will be posted on www.TDIforAccess.org as details are finalized.

APS FOR ON THE GO Continued from page 14

QIK is available exclusively on Sprint's HTC EVO 4G phone.

by Skype. Features on this video chat application range from recording and sending video mail, streaming live videos, sharing videos on social networks and creating your own address book. You will be able to see yourself while you see the other person. Although the photo shows the opening screen in portrait mode, callers can use Qik in the wider landscape mode.

ZVRS presents a smorgasbord of mobile relay software. Since its introduction in early 2010, the **Z4** has gone mobile. Different versions of this widely used software replicate the functional equivalency found on the Z-150, Z-340 and the Z-Ojo. All of these offerings are available at **WWW.ZVRS.COM**

Some of us have already used the Z4 software on our PC or MAC computer. There are three different mobile versions of the Z4. One works with **IPHONE 4** and **IPOD** only when

ZVRS's Z4 application runs on the iPhone 4 and uses Apple's FaceTime technology.

both parties use FaceTime on WiFi. Another version works with phones that use Google's Android operating system such as **HTC MYTOUCH® 4G** and **SAMSUNG EPIC™ 4G** available through various providers that works through WiFi and the 4G network. There's also a different version for **GALAXY TAB™** that works only with WiFi. The Z4 software comes from **MIRIAL**, a practice used by two other VRS providers so the software may look a little familiar to some people and work the same way, except for the interface and the video interpreters.

Once you have a profile set up with

The Z Dial application allows users to use their contacts to place point-to-point calls from any video phone..

ZVRS, you can access your contact list through any type of Z-Phone or Z4 software. ZVRS, formerly CSDVRS has a long history of being in the video relay service. The software offers high video quality over the Internet and through WiFi plus the 3G and 4G networks. Z4 alllows you to place and receive VRS calls using VCO, Spanish (via HolaVRS) and point-to-point calls with any other videophone.

RELAY HAMILTON
That's what I'm talking about

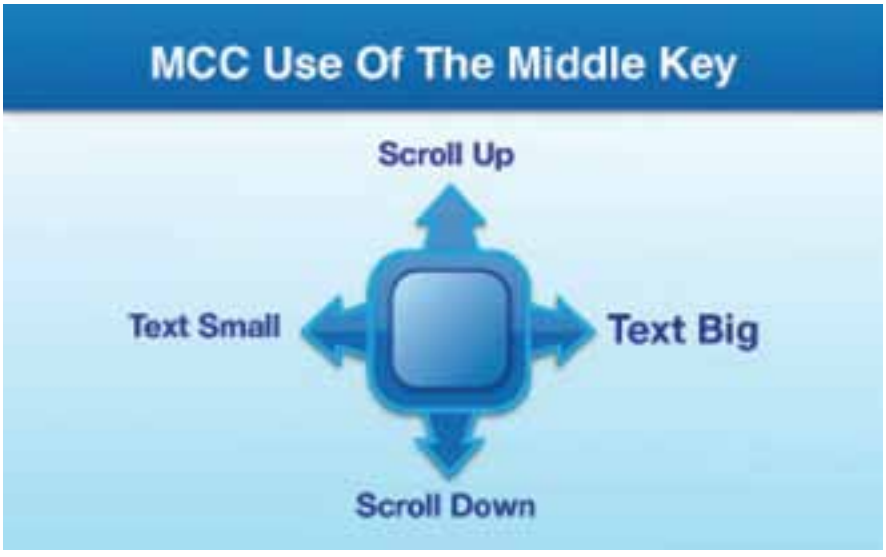
Consumer Cellular
We're Simply Different.

For hard of hearing people on the go, Hamilton Relay and Consumer Cellular, the exclusive wireless provider for the American Association of Retired Persons present a unique solution, **MOBILE CAPTIONS SERVICE™** (MCS). This is an enhanced voice carryover service for hard of hearing residents living in states that have contracted with Hamilton Relay for their traditional relay services. Consumer Cellular and Hamilton Relay have teamed together to form the Mobile Captions Company and offer a Nokia E5 wireless phone preloaded with the Mobile Captions Service (MCS) software. An MCS-enabled phone comes with a large 2.4 inch display screen and a full QWERTY keyboard that allows you to call any hearing party through Hamilton Relay and read responses on your screen. If you are out of range with the phone carrier, you can use a WiFi connection to make your calls. The text size is easily adjustable and the caller can scroll back and refer to something previously said by the other party, save sessions and use voice mail. Wired headsets or BlueTooth earpieces will work with the Nokia E5, which is also hearing-aid compatible with an M3/T3 rating. This service is only available to hard of hearing and deafened individuals in states served

Continued on page 22

APS FOR ON THE GO Continued from page 21

MCS is available on Nokia E5 phones through Consumer Cellular in states managed by Hamiton Relay.



The MCS system provides users with an easy-to-use interface that works on any MCS enabled phone.

by Hamilton Relay who prefer to speak for themselves but have a hard time hearing others speak. To see if you are eligible for this service, please go to **WWW.HAMILTONRELAY.COM**

What follows is a chart that compiles all the responses we have received from the relay providers that answered our survey. TDI sent out surveys to all known vendors and some of them have chosen not to participate. Below we listed each respondent and their product(s) as well as their websites. The Function area denotes the purpose of each product, whether it is for video-relay, video-chat or voice carry over. We also asked for the types of operating systems, compatible devices, alerting methods and networks. Other questions covered ten-digit numbers and features that we can expect from a decent and accessible telephone software.

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APPS ON THE GO: A Side-By-Side Comparison

PROVIDERS	Convo Relay	Consumer Cellular / Hamilton Relay	Sprint Relay		The Z™ ZVRS (CSDVRS, LLC)	
Product	Convo Anywhere	Mobile Captions Service™ (MCS)	Qik	Fring	ZVRS on iPhone 4	Z4
Introduced	August 2010	November 2010	June 2010	May 2010	August 2010	February 2010
Website	www.convorelay.com	www.mobilecaptions.com	http://qik.com	www.fring.com	www.zvrs.com	
FUNCTION						
Video Relay	X				X	X
Video Chat			X	X		
Voice Carry Over		X				
OS						
Windows	X					X
MacIntosh	X					X
Linux	X					
Apple					X	X
Android			X	X		
Other		X				
DEVICES						
PC laptop	X					X
Apple laptop	X					X
iPhone 4					X	
Other		Nokia E5 in TRS States via Consumer Cellular	HTC EVO 4G / Samsung Epic 4G			
NETWORK						
Voice		X	X	X		
Data	X	X	X	X		X
WiFi	X	X	X	X	X	X
4G	X		X	X		X
Ethernet	X					X
ALERT						
Vibrating / Email		X				X
Flashing light/screen		X	X	X	X	X
CALLING FEATURES						
Assigned to 10-digit #	X	X				X
Call to/from 10-digit #	X	X				X
Calls to/from IP #	X					X
Calls to/from user ID	X		X	X		X
Point-2-Point Calls	X	X	X	X	X	X
ADDITIONAL FEATURES						
Directory/Friends List		X	X		X	X
Browser Access	X	X	X	X	X	X
Recording Calls		X				X
Call-Waiting		X				X
Call History	X	X	X	X		X
Call to 9-1-1	X				X	X

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ENJOY EXCITING FEATURES

AVAILABLE ONLY FROM THE Z™

DISCOVER THE COMMUNICATION SOLUTION THAT BEST FITS YOUR NEEDS:

CHOOSE

- Z ALERT
- MY CONTACTS
- VCO *PLUS*
- HOLAVRS (ESPAÑOL)
- MY MAIL

WARNING: Please be aware that, currently, some numbering limitations of VRS cause 911 video calls may prevent automatic referral of your location information to 911 emergency authorities. The resulting need to gather this information and convey it to emergency responders manually increases the amount of time for these calls, as well as the risk of error. For this reason, if you do not have a registered 10-digit telephone number, or reside in an area where a geographically appropriate telephone number could not be readily provided to you, The Z™ recommends for you to dial 911 from a TTY or use a traditional TTY relay services to make 911 calls.

WWW.ZVRS.COM

CSDVRS

TDI In Action December 2009 - February 2010

TDI Honors FCC for Its 75 Years of Service in the Public Interest

Symbolic American Flag 3-D Artwork by Renowned Deaf Artist, Chuck Baird, Presented to Genachowski

On December 11, 2009, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI) presented a plaque in honor of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 75 years of service as the nation's regulatory watchdog over communications. In 1934, Congress enacted the Communications Act authorizing the establishment of the FCC to oversee the nation's communications infrastructure and to make decisions in the public interest. The TDI presentation took place in the Chairman's spacious office on the eighth floor of the FCC headquarters in Washington, D.C. TDI and its sister advocacy organizations took the time not only to thank the FCC for its great work, but also to recite the notable contributions of the FCC over the last quarter-century that have put the nation's 37 million deaf and hard of hearing consumers together on equal footing with others in society.

"TDI and its advocacy partners wanted to express their profound appreciation to the FCC for its significant contributions toward equal access to media and telecommunications for Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing," said Claude Stout, Executive Director of TDI. Stout added, "It is evident that the FCC has proven to be a role model federal agency as it continues its consistent commitment to equal access by initiating a number of formal proceedings to advance telecommunications access over the years. Many of these proceedings were followed up with precedent-setting acts paving the way for equal access with our hearing peers in the community. In addition to Chairman Genachowski, heartfelt thanks also go to current and past Commissioners, Bureau Chiefs, staff of the Disability Rights Office, and the rest of the FCC for their role, large or small in making access happen for people with disabilities."

Dr. Roy Miller, TDI Board President presents a 3-D American Flag artwork by Chuck Baird to Julius Genachowski, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission in honor of the agency's 75th anniversary.

DR. ROY MILLER, TDI Board President, kicked off the ceremony with a presentation of the famed Chuck Baird symbolic American Flag 3-D artwork to Julius Genachowski, Chairman of the FCC.

CLAUDE STOUT then made an analogy between the colors and the different parts of the artwork consisting of six paintbrushes dipped in red, white and blue paint. The color red represents vision, white for impartiality and blue for resolve. The flag on a black background represents the FCC's leadership guiding 37 million deaf and hard of hearing Americans out of darkness, thanks to the many accessibility breakthroughs that paint a brighter future because of their progressive policies, especially concerning television captioning and telecommunications relay services.

Other representatives from TDI and its sister advocacy organizations each made a brief statement expressing their appreciation for the FCC's contributions toward access to telecommunications and media for Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing. Representatives who attended and a summary of their

Continued on page 28

Video Relay customer can download
Sprint Video 4G Software
Absolutely free at ***www.sprintvrs.com***

Sprint Relay
www.sprintrelay.com

Sprint Video 4G software is compatible with ***Mac*** *and* ***Windows*** *PCs and laptops with high-speed internet connection including wireless network.*

Features include:

- *3-way video conferencing*
- *address book*
- *videomail*
- *text chat*
- *and much more*

Sprint Video 4G Software allows 4G wireless access in 4G markets only, when combined with a compatible mobile broadband device and data plan. Sprint 4G currently available in over 25 markets and counting, and on select devices. See ***sprint.com/4G*** *for details.*

Experience4G

To buy, go to ***www.sprintrelaystore.com***

Requirements to use Sprint Video 4G Software: High-speed internet is required to use the Sprint Video 4G software (i.e. cable, DSL, T-1). Desktop, laptop, or netbook computer with webcam or built-in cam. PC: Windows 2000/XP/2003/Vista/Windows 7 (including 64-bit versions). DirectX 9.0c or higher P4/M2.0Ghz (dual-core/high-res video cards), 1GB Ram (2GB recommended on Vista), 30Mb hard disk space. Macintosh: Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard or higher), 1GB Ram (2GB recommended on Vista), 30Mb hard disk space. Although Sprint IP, Fed IP, Sprint IP using IM, VRS and WebCap/IP can be used for emergency calling, such emergency calling may not function the same as traditional 911/E911 services. By using Sprint IP, Fed IP, Sprint IP using IM, VRS and WebCap/IP for emergency calling you agree that Sprint is not responsible for any damages resulting from errors, defects, malfunctions, interruptions or failures in accessing or attempting to access emergency services through Sprint IP, Fed IP, Sprint IP using IM, VRS and WebCap/IP whether caused by the negligence of Sprint or otherwise. ©2010 Sprint. Sprint and the logo are trademarks of Sprint. Other marks are the property of their respective owners.

TDI In Action December 2009 - February 2010

Continued from page 26

remarks are as follows:

JOE DUARTE, TDI - Thanked the FCC for setting up the Disability Rights Office (DRO). DRO has been instrumental in improving communications access to people with disabilities and making a difference in their lives. As a small business owner, he noted that he benefited tremendously from TRS and VRS services that enabled him to use the phone and help him to be more successful than would have otherwise been possible.

SHANE FELDMAN, National Association of the Deaf - Thanked the Commission on behalf of deaf and hard of hearing people who appreciate the various forms of relay services resulting from the Americans with Disabilities Act.

BRENDA BATTAT, Hearing Loss Association of America - Expressed appreciation on behalf of consumers with hearing loss who are able to use hearing aid compatible wireless devices.

DR. JUDY HARKINS, Technology Access Program, Gallaudet University - Pointed out that the FCC's accessible website opened many opportunities for democracy and allowed for increased dialogue between individuals and advocacy groups filing comments with the FCC and other government agencies.

KAREN PELTZ STRAUSS, KPS Consulting - Applauded the ongoing collaboration between consumer groups and the FCC, especially with respect to the development of the National Broadband Plan Coalition and the Consumer Advisory Committee.

CHERYL HEPPNER, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network - Cheered the FCC on its ongoing enforcement of regulations governing captioning and accessible emergency broadcasts so that television can be accessible to viewers with disabilities.

Front (L-R): Brenda Battat; Karen Peltz Strauss; Julius Genachowski, Chairman of the FCC; Jamie Pope; Cheryl Heppner and "Galaxy". Back (L-R): Sherrese Smith, Legal Adviser to the FCC Chairman for Media, Consumer and Enforcement Issues; Dr. Judy Harkins; Dr. Roy Miller; Claude Stout; Joe Duarte; Shane Feldman; and Jim House, TDI. Not pictured – Sheri Farinha, who participated via videophone.

SHERI FARINHA, (via phone) California Coalition of Agencies Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Affirmed the ongoing collaboration between the FCC and the E-911 Stakeholder Council toward implementing the 10-Digit Numbering plan and the upcoming Next-Generation-911 development.

JAMIE POPE, American Association of the Deaf-Blind - Expressed gratitude for including the needs of deaf blind consumers in all policy planning over the last several years.

For more, see blog by Sherrese Smith at **HTTP://BLOG.BROADBAND.GOV/?ENTRYID=18009**

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

ACCESS

■ On December 2 2009, TDI had an ex parte conference with the Associate Bureau Chief of the Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). At issue was the FCC's pending decision to reverse their August 11 Toll-Free Clarification Public Notice to ban the use of toll-free numbers for video phone users. TDI and other consumer groups would support a ruling that allows for legitimate use and ownership of toll-free numbers by deaf business owners and others who actually have a need for such phone numbers. Any plan must include ample time for outreach and education, and a process for transitioning from toll-free numbers to geographic local numbers as needed.

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2011 TDI INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

(If you are a business or organization, contact TDI for an Affiliate Membership Application Form.)

Check here if this is a renewal ☐ *Alternate Formats Available*

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Additional person's name desired in listing : _____
Street or Mailing Address: _____
City, State, and Zip Code: _____
(If your address is outside USA) Postal Code, Country: _____
E-Mail address *(Necessary for free TDI eNotes)*: _____
Phone: (_____) _____ ☐ Video ☐ TTY ☐ Voice ☐ CapTel®
FAX: (_____) _____ Mobile (Cell Phone): (_____) _____
Pager Address: _____
IM Service: _____ IM User ID: _____
Web Site Address: _____

Check all items that you want published in the Blue Book or eBlue Book: ☐ Address ☐ E-mail ☐ Website ☐ IM ☐ Phones*
(*Phones include Video/TTY/Voice/FAX/Mobile/CapTel®)
(If no items are checked, your contact information will be unlisted and not published.)

May TDI occasionally send you *TDI eNotes*, TDI's free email newsletter? ☐ YES ☐ NO

All new listings/updates must be received in writing before October 1 to be included in next Blue Book. Allow up to 30 days processing in eBlue Book for changes mailed to TDI.

Select one TDI Membership rate:	**1 Year**	**2 Years**	**LIFETIME**
Individual – Regular (age below 60):	☐ $40.00	☐ $75.00	☐ $1,000.00
Individual – Senior Citizen (age 60+):	☐ $30.00	☐ $55.00	☐ $1,000.00

Indicate the TDI Membership Rate that you have selected above: $_____
(Outside USA) Add additional $15.00 for International Shipping: $_____
Contribution to TDI (Fed Tax # 35-1146784): *Thank you!* $_____
GRAND TOTAL: $_____

TDI Members Receive: Listing in the Blue Book, four issues of TDI World and one Blue Book annually, occasional eNotes, and access to the eBlue Book until date of expiration.

Sorry, no refunds. Exchanges allowed for defective merchandise.

(If Paying by Check or Money Order) Make payable to "TDI".
(There is a $35 fee for checks returned due to insufficient funds.)

(If Paying by Credit or Debit Card) Issued by: ☐ American Express ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA

Account Number: _____ 3-Digit Security Code: _____

Name of cardholder: _____ Expiration Date: _____

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Phone: 301-589-3786 • Video: 301-563-9112 • TTY: 301-589-3006 • FAX: 301-589-3797
E-Mail: listings@TDIforAccess.org

SAVE TIME & POSTAGE – JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ONLINE AT www.TDIforAccess.org

(Revised (01/06/2011)

TDI In Action December 2009 - February 2010

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■ December 17 was an important day for video relay service (VRS) users. In light of recent allegations of fraud among major providers, the FCC arranged a special forum focusing on reform of the VRS industry. The three-hour workshop was broadcasted live on the web with captions. As some viewers experienced technical problems viewing the webcast, some of the workshop participants began to tweet the individual comments spoken by the panelists on Twitter. Some of the things that TDI and other consumer groups pointed out were;

- The need to expand the staff at the Disability Rights Office and to hold regular meetings with VRS providers.
- Internal calls made during the course of business at VRS provider workplaces should not be billed for reimbursement, but rather absorbed as the cost of doing business.
- Promote both brand-name marketing and generic outreach efforts.
- Promote recruiting, training and certification of interpreters.
- Interoperability of equipment and services should be encouraged to promote innovation
- Maintain vendor choice - any proposal that limits competition will hamper innovation and growth
- Reimbursement rates should be based on a combination of historical costs and projected costs and to cover several years.
- Provide consumer groups more access to cost data submitted by all providers.

■ On January 12, 2010, TDI and other consumer groups had an ex parte conference with Mark Stone, Deputy Chief of the Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau (CGB) at the FCC. Several issues were addressed at the meeting such as the ongoing discussion about toll-free numbers, VRS reform and consumer complaints about blocked VRS calls.

■ In an ***eNote*** on January 27, TDI sent out a request by the U.S. Treasury Department Inspector General who wanted to know if anyone had experienced problems calling the Internal Revenue Service toll-free number through the TTY or using a relay service.

■ Also on January 27, TDI joined with other consumer groups in filing a petition asking the FCC to clarify what types of calls may be processed through VRS in response to numerous consumer complaints that certain calls were not going through. The consumer groups were concerned that this spate of denials of video relay calls was not only an overreaction to recent fraudulent activities, but also a direct violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

■ On January 28, TDI issued an ***eNote*** congratulating Hamilton Relay for its recent contract to provide telecommunication relay services within the state of Utah. For more information about Hamilton Relay and its services, go to **WWW.HAMILTONRELAY.COM**.

■ On February 3, TDI issued another ***eNote*** announcing a new book printed by Bob Segalman, Ph.D, "*Against the Current - My Life With Cerebral* ." Dr. Segalman was one of the prime advocates for the inclusion of speech-to-speech in telecommunications relay services. For more information, go to **WWW.DRBOBSAUTOBIOGRAPHY.ORG**.

■ On February 17, advocates from TDI and other consumer groups held an ex parte meeting with the chief of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB), Joel Gurin and two of his assistants at the FCC. The consumer groups reiterated their expectation that the FCC abide by the principle of functional equivalency and showed a few examples of best practices. Other topics included staff changes at the Disability Rights Office (DRO), upcoming VRS reimbursement rates, and a request to repeal an overly restrictive ruling that outlawed certain legitimate calls on VRS. Another series of ex-parte meetings were held on February 25 with Commissioner Michael Copps and other officials at the FCC.

■ TDI issued another ***eNote*** on February 25, announcing Sorenson Communications' new School-to-Work educational program for recent interpreter graduates.

MEDIA ACCESS

■ In an ***eNote*** on January 26, 2010, TDI welcomed a new captioning advocacy group, Collaborative for Communication access via Captioning (CCC). CCC is a working online community that serves people with hearing loss who require captioning and good quality speech-to-text systems in many areas of life. The CCAC project offers these benefits:

- An interactive, online, collaborative, and open exchange of timely information about any and all captioning advocacy projects going on, locally (city), state-wide, regionally, or nationally, by individuals, organizations, government departments, agencies, and others. One goal is to create useful organized data about "who is doing what and where, methods and approaches, technologies suggested and used, etc."

Continued on page 32

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TDI In Action December 2009 - February 2010

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- A place to initiate new captioning advocacy projects, and work collaboratively with national organizations for people with hearing loss, to add energies and support ongoing activities for captioning advocacy.
- A place to encourage new State projects for communication access using the group model (or similar) used in Washington State (the Waldo model).
- To offer a needed place for collaborations among individuals in the many hearing loss groups (ALDA, HLAA, NAD, TDI, CSD and others) to work together on this one theme of importance — real time captioning (or a good substitute) for full equal access in all areas.

For more information, contact Lauren E. Storck, PhD, Advocate for Accessibility Equality at: drlestorck@gmail.com

■ In an ***eNote*** distributed on February 2, In an enote distributed on February 2, TDI asked members to join the Northern Virginia Resource Center in monitoring the captioning of commercials during the upcoming Super Bowl game. The results showed an improvement in the tally over previous years, partly due to successful collaboration between NAD, the National Football League and the CBS Television network.

■ On February 26, TDI sent out an ***eNote*** announcing the new closed captioning complaint procedures implemented by the FCC. This action was in response to part of TDI's Petition for Rulemaking regarding captioning quality standards filed on July 23, 2004. Consumers may now file their captioning complaints directly with the FCC instead of waiting for a response from the video distributor or television channel. A new web page was developed that helped consumers find contact information for filing captioning complaints after submitting their zip code and video provider.

Photo credit: SigNews

Claude Stout watches Greg Hlibok of the FCC Disability Rights Office as he makes a point during the VRS Reform meeting on December 17, 2009..

NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN

■ On December 22, 2009, TDI and other consumer groups filed comments with the FCC in response to the National Broadband Plan (NBP), one of President Obama's priorities. Comments in regards to NBP Public Notice #25 will guide the FCC in the nation's migration from the old circuit switched networks to an all Internet protocol network. The comments mainly focused on the need for broadband technologies that will enable deaf and hard of hearing people to have video, text and voice connections when calling 9-1-1 services and when receiving emergency alerts.

INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

■ **TDI participated in AT&T's Consumer Advisory Panel on January 21, 2010.** There, AT&T discussed their efforts on preserving an open Internet, where TDI pointed out that our position is more focused on accessibility - it does not matter if the Internet is open or closed, it must still be accessible to people with disabilities. TDI also participated in AT&T's Advisory Panel on Access and Aging, which included a tour of AT&T's retail operations and a review of new wireless devices.

TDI IN THE NEWS

■ **Pat Graves**, winner of TDI's 2009 Robert H. Weitbrecht Telecommunications Access Award, wrote an article about the award, TDI and her life experiences in the December issue of the International Telecommunications Union magazine.

■ **In the February issue of CSD's** *SigNews* monthly newspaper, Claude Stout, TDI Executive Director was pictured on the front page observing FCC Attorney Greg Hlibok contributing to the discussion during the VRS Reform meeting in mid-December.

TDI VLOGS

■ **Just in time for the holidays, TDI** issued a vlog on December 24, where the entire staff expressed holiday wishes and shared some highlights and accomplishments of 2009.

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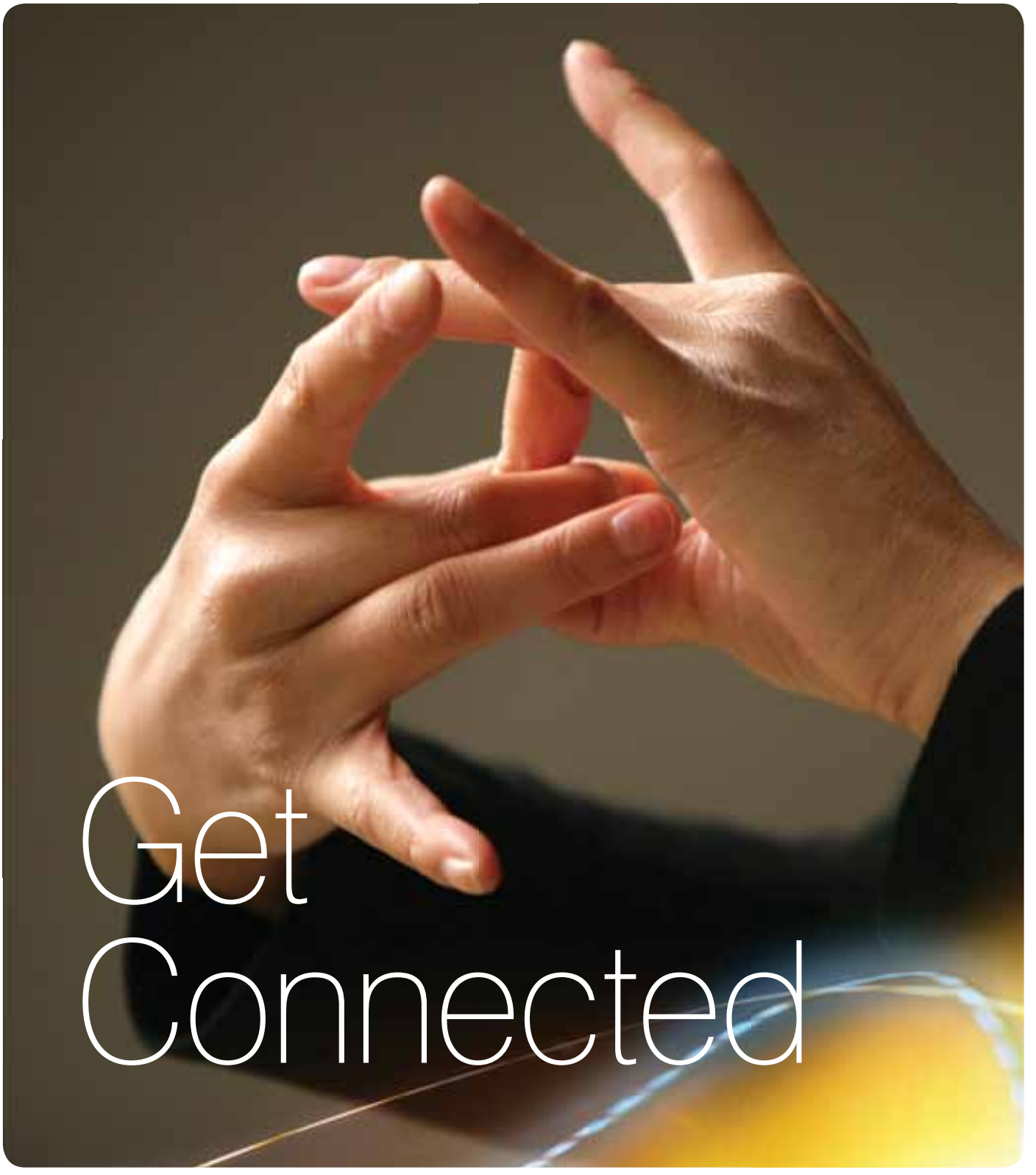

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