

## GLOSSARY OF COMMUNICATION TERMS<sup>23</sup>

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**ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY:** Products or devices that provide access to a computer that is otherwise inaccessible to an individual with a disability including hardware or software.

**ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES (ALDs), ASSISTIVE LISTENING SYSTEMS:** Devices or systems that increase the volume and clarity of a desired sound such as the soundtrack of a movie or the voice of a tour guide without increasing the loudness of background noises. Assistive listening systems are made up of two parts: the transmitter, which picks up the sound, converts it to a signal and sends the signal, and the receiver (or ALD), which picks up a signal and transmits it to the user. Several receivers can pick up the signal from a signal transmitter. There are several types of assistive listening systems including infrared and FM systems.

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY:** Any item, piece of equipment or product system used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capacities of individuals with disabilities such as a wheelchair, hand splints or computer-based equipment.

**AUDIO DESCRIPTION:** See VIDEO DESCRIPTION.

**AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES:** Devices, services and other methods used to ensure effective communication with people with disabilities. They include sign language and oral interpreters, note-takers, assistive listening devices, captioning, TTYs, readers, Braille materials and large-print materials.

**BRILLE:** A series of raised dots that can be read with the fingers by people who are blind or have low vision.

**CAPTIONING:** The transcription and subsequent text display of the audio portion of a video presentation, broadcast or other on-screen presentation including dialogue and other auditory information such as on- and off-screen sound effects, music and laughter. Captioning enables people with hearing disabilities to have access to the audio portion of the material, but also helps others who may have difficulty understanding or following aural material. There are two categories of captions:

- > **CLOSED CAPTIONING:** Video signals hidden within a movie, DVD, TV program or similar visual presentation, making text visible (usually across the bottom of the screen) when the captioning is turned on through televisions equipped with decoders, which includes all televisions built after July 1, 1993, or other equipment.
- > **OPEN CAPTIONING:** Captioning that is encoded as an integral part of a movie, videotape or TV show and cannot be turned off, similar to subtitles on foreign films.

**CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation or Computer-Assisted Real Time captioning):** A word-by-word translation of spoken English onto a laptop or notebook computer by use of real-time software and a steno machine. CART is similar to captioning but displayed on a laptop or screen simultaneously with the spoken word and can be used in such settings as meetings or performances.

**COMMUNICATION BOARD:** A manual or electronic board that displays letters, pictures and/or words. Individuals communicate by pointing to the images or words.

**INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLITERATORS:** Individuals who are trained to facilitate communication by and with people who have disabilities relating to hearing, speech and/or vision and who use sign language, cued speech or speech-reading. Interpreters and transliterators fall into several categories:

- > **CUED SPEECH TRANSLITERATORS:** Translitterators who use eight hand shapes in four different locations around the face and neck to represent sounds used in spoken language. Cued speech is a phonetically based visual communication system. It is not a form of language. It is generally used as an adjunct to speech reading.
- > **ORAL INTERPRETERS/TRANSLITERATORS:** Interpreters who mouth a speaker's words silently to give

higher visibility on the lips for added comprehension or people who are deaf or hard of hearing and use speech reading (usually people who were raised orally and do not know sign language). Oral interpreters are skilled at pronouncing words clearly by the lips and may also use facial expressions and gestures. They are also skilled in quickly substituting words that are hard to lip-read while keeping the content and emotion of the speaker's statement intact.

- > **RE-VOICER:** A person who listens to what an individual with a speech disability says, and then repeats the information in clear speech.
- > **SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS:** These interpreters facilitate communication between people who use sign language and those who do not. When a hearing person speaks, an interpreter will render the speaker's meaning into the sign language used by the person who is deaf. When a person who is deaf signs, an interpreter will render the meaning expressed in the signs into the spoken language for the hearing person, which is sometimes referred to as voice interpreting or voicing. This may be performed either as simultaneous or consecutive interpreting. See SIGN LANGUAGE below.
- > **TACTILE INTERPRETERS:** These interpreters convey information using various methods, but always in a way that relies on touch to people who are deaf and blind and generally receive information tactilely such as through touch. Tactile interpreters use sign language with the person who is deaf-blind, resting one or both hands on the interpreter's hands or wrists; use fingers to trace the letters of words in the palm of the person who is deaf-blind; and use the manual alphabet to spell words into the hand of the person who is deaf-blind.

**LARGE PRINT:** Printed material enlarged for people with low vision. For large-print materials, the size of type required will vary with the needs of the reader and with the font used. Large-print items generally use a sans serif font with a minimum font size of 16 to 18 points.

**NOTE-TAKERS:** People who take notes for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing or who have physical or mental disabilities that make it difficult for the person to take notes. Note-takers may be needed because people with significant hearing loss must look at speakers or interpreters to understand what is being said. As a result, each time they look down to record a comment, they miss information being presented.

**READER:** A person who assists an individual with a disability such as someone who is blind or has a learning disability by reading printed material aloud or recording to audio tape.

**RELAY or RELAY SERVICE:** See TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE.

**SCREEN READER:** Software that reads aloud the text and/or directions on a computer screen. It is often used by people who are blind or who have visual impairments or learning disabilities. Screen readers read everything that is on the computer screen out loud so a person can hear what has been typed on the screen. Some screen readers can only read web pages, while others can read both web pages and text in a document.

**SIGN LANGUAGE:** Visual-gestural language (manual communication) commonly used by people who are deaf. The gestures or symbols in sign language are organized in a linguistic way. Each individual gesture is called a sign. Each sign has three distinct parts: the hand shape, the position of the hands and the movement of the hands. People from different countries use different sign languages. There are several types of sign language used in the United States including:

- > **AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL):** ASL is the most commonly used sign language in the United States. Developed over time through use by people who are deaf, ASL is a free-flowing, natural language that is complete in itself. It is not usually written or spoken, but can be translated, just like French or German to English and vice versa. ASL has its own syntax and grammar. A sign is not executed for every word in a sentence, and the syntax and structure of the communication is not parallel to English.
- > **SIGNED ENGLISH, SIGNED EXACT ENGLISH (SE, SEE):** The vocabulary is drawn from ASL but follows English word order. The language is expanded with words, prefixes, tenses and endings to give a clear and complete visual presentation of English. With Signed English, a sign is executed for every word in a

sentence, whereas American Sign Language seeks to convey a concept. For example, to sign “I have two sisters” in Signed English, one would make a sign for each word. In ASL, one might make the signs for “two” and “sister” and then point to herself, conveying the thought “two sisters, me.”

**SPEECH OUTPUT DEVICES WITH TEXT-TO-SPEECH SOFTWARE:** Devices that produce computer-generated speech. They vary in appearance and design, but are essentially computers with speakers that include a means such as a keyboard or touch screen/pad for selecting the words or phrases the user would like the computer to vocalize.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE (TRS):** A service that enables people who use TTYs or other telecommunication devices (generally, people who are deaf or hard of hearing or have speech disabilities) to use telephone services by having a third party transmit and translate the call. Also called RELAY or RELAY SERVICE, TRS is provided at no additional cost and mandated by title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It provides a link between callers who use assistive devices such as TTYs and callers who do not have or use such equipment. It also serves as an interface between people who have speech disabilities and those who have difficulty understanding them. A communications assistant relays information between the caller and the call recipient. There are several types of TRS calls:

- > **TTY Calls:** People who use a TTY (see page 97) can use TRS to make calls to people who do not use a TTY. Likewise, callers who use standard telephones can make calls to TTY users. When using the relay, the TTY user types a message to the communications assistant, who then reads it to the person using a standard telephone. When the person using a standard telephone responds, the communication assistant types the message to the TTY user.
- > **Voice Carry Over (VCO):** VCO allows callers who can speak intelligibly but who cannot hear conversations on the telephone (for example, people who are hard of hearing) to speak directly with a person using a standard telephone on the other end of the line. The communications assistant types the standard telephone user’s comments back to the VCO user, who reads the text display from a TTY or specially equipped telephone.
- > **Hearing Carry Over (HCO):** HCO allows people who can hear but who cannot speak clearly (for example, people who have had severe strokes) to hear conversations via a standard telephone while using a TTY to type their comments. HCO users type their comments to the communications assistant, who reads them to the person using a standard telephone on the other end of the line. The standard telephone user then speaks directly to the HCO user.
- > **Speech to Speech (STS):** STS services are used by people who have speech disabilities and are neither deaf nor hard of hearing (for example, people who have cerebral palsy). With STS, communications assistants are trained to understand people who have speech disabilities. The communications assistant listens to the caller with a speech disability and then repeats the message in clear speech to the person on the other end of the line.
- > **Spanish Relay Service:** Relay calls using TTY, VCO, HCO and IP Relay must be provided in Spanish for all interstate calls. Spanish relay is only required for calls where both parties use Spanish; it is not a translation service. Both Spanish relay users and standard telephone users can initiate and receive Spanish relay calls.
- > **Internet Protocol (IP) Relay:** IP relay calls can be made using internet-enabled computers or other internet devices. The IP relay user types a message to the communications assistant, who reads it to the person using a standard telephone. When the person using a standard telephone responds, the communications assistant types the message back to the IP relay user.
- > **Video Relay Service (VRS):** VRS allows consumers who use sign language to communicate via the telephone system. VRS callers who use American Sign Language must have the appropriate video equipment and high-speed connectivity such as a cable modem, DSL (digital subscriber line) or ISDN (integrated services digital network). The sign language user signs to a communications assistant, who is also a qualified sign language interpreter. The communications assistant interprets the message into spoken English for the standard telephone user, who then responds in spoken English. The communications assistant listens to the spoken message and interprets it into sign language for the signing caller. Video relay service is a fairly recent addition to the relay service, but it is different from traditional relay service in that either a videophone with TV or web camera with computer screen is used. Video relay service also differs from traditional relay service in that the video interpreter views

the person using sign language. The video interpreter then relays the conversation of the person using sign language to the hearing caller via voice. The video interpreter then continues to interpret the call between the two, using the phone line and video connection.

**TTY:** A type of machine that allows people with hearing or speech disabilities to communicate over the phone using a keyboard and a viewing screen. TTY was originally an acronym for TeleTYpewriter. Today these devices are sometimes also called TDDs (telecommunications devices for the deaf) or TTs (text telephones), although the preferred term is TTY. TTYs include a keyboard, which is connected to a modem; text display; and sometimes a printer. TTYs allow individuals to make and receive telephone calls in real time using typed, two-way communication. Some messages received via TTY are written in nonstandard English. This is because English is not a first language for many people who are deaf. The person using the TTY types on the keyboard and the signal is then transmitted through the phone line to a compatible device: either another TTY/TDD user, a computer with a modified modem capable of receiving the signal, or a TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SYSTEM.

**UBIDUO:** A proprietary keyboard communication device that resembles two small basic computers. It is portable, easy to set up and use, battery-operated, and wireless. The communication mimics text messaging or instant messaging. It allows a person who is deaf or hard of hearing and can use written language to communicate without an interpreter. It is especially useful in an one-on-one situation, but with two devices, up to four people can participate. The UbiDuo is available from [www.scomm.com](http://www.scomm.com).

**VIDEO DESCRIPTION (AUDIO DESCRIPTION):** An audio narration of a visual presentation including one that is on television, on a video tape or DVD, or on the internet for those who are blind or have low vision. It usually consists of oral descriptions of key visual elements of the presentation such as settings and actions not reflected in dialogue. Narrations are generally inserted into the program's natural pauses.

**VIDEO REMOTE INTERPRETING (VRI):** A means of using an interpreter (e.g., sign language) who is in a location separate from the participants in a communication. The interpreter appears via video on a computer screen or videophone through a computer or videophone connection.

**VIDEO RELAY:** See TRS.

**VIDEOPHONE (VP):** A telephone that permits callers to send and receive both audio and video signals. The VP's ability to provide direct visual contact between callers has made it especially useful for the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. Since callers can see each other, deaf and hard-of-hearing users who prefer to communicate by sign language can do so via telephone and do not need to rely on either text (e.g., TTY) or voice. VP users can also communicate with standard telephone users by using VIDEO RELAY SERVICES (see page 96 under TRS).