



CAMPAIGN

## Call centres and banks cannot refuse relay calls

Call centres and banks can no longer cite the Data Protection Act (DPA) as a reason for refusing calls from deaf people through RNID Tynetalk, via an interpreter or any other relay service.

After complaints from many deaf people about refused calls (see Sequel 16), TAG contacted the Information Commissioner's Office which rules on issues about the Data Protection Act.

The ICO clearly stated that users of Tynetalk or other similar services have effectively consented to giving their information.

"I am delighted with this ruling," said Ross Trotter, Secretary of TAG. "It bears out what TAG has always claimed. The Information Commissioner makes it clear that making a call using Tynetalk,



a sign language relay service or any other type of relay service effectively constitutes consent to the use of a third party as long as security questions are answered properly.

"We therefore now have clear evidence that if an organisation claims the Data Protection Act prevents them taking a call that involves a relay operator or sign language interpreter, they are incorrect."



### Excerpt from the letter to TAG from the Information Commissioner's Office

"If any individual contacts an organisation using Tynetalk or a sign language interpreter we would expect the same level of security to be in place as with any customer. This would include ensuring that adequate security questions were asked to authenticate that the customer is who they say they are before discussing any account details.

"Once the individual had been authenticated the organisation would be able to answer the enquiry for the customer through the Tynetalk operator. The customer who has contacted Tynetalk will be aware that information will be disclosed to the operator in order for this to be relayed to them.

**We would consider that the customer had effectively consented to their information being used in this way.** [our emphasis]



**TAG's** newsletter about deaf people and telecoms, broadcasting and electronic communications.

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# Subtitles: 24/7 from around the globe

Have you noticed the new scrolling live subtitling on ITV? First trialled at the end of 2004, the service has expanded to include all ITV1's live programming. But you'll never guess where it is coming from!

The subtitles are provided by ITFC stenographers who provide a near-verbatim speech-to-text service – and it just so happens that they are based around the world. There are four centres in Australia and some in the UK.

Stenography usually speeds up subtitling and the technology delivering the subtitles is fast and surprisingly simple. A high-



quality audio feed travels from London to the subtitler over the normal international telephone network. Special arrangements ensure that the delay is as small as possible (satellite hops are eliminated, for example) and the

round trip adds less than one second to the “thinking time” of the subtitler. The subtitles are sent back to ITFC in Acton, West London, where they are then routed to the ITV network (along with the subtitles for some ITV regional bulletins captioned live from Acton).

Despite the huge distances involved, the international public telephone network is very resilient, says ITFC. The connections within the UK have been enhanced to provide main and backup data links between ITFC and ITV's South Bank Transmission Centre.

In the future it will be possible to switch to an alternative delivery route between ITFC and ITV South Bank to restore the service if there is a technical fault.

## Digital TV text confusion



Are you having difficulty finding text services like information on subtitled programmes on your new set-top box or digital TV? You are not alone! On some channels text TV guides are easily accessible, but on others they seem either well-hidden or non-existent. TAG

is trying to unravel the tangle – and will report back soon. Meantime, here are handy hints for Sky.

### Finding subtitled shows on Sky

Viewers can find out which Sky programmes are subtitled by keying the “services” button, then key 3 which is “Language and Services”. Make sure subtitling is selected, then scroll down and select “highlighted”. Next time you check the programme guide, the subtitled programmes will appear as blue lettering on a white background (instead of white on blue).

## Kid's DVDs

BBC Active and Channel 4 Learning are increasing subtitling of their educational DVDs for schools. There is a full listing on the NDCS website: [www.ndcs.org/information/technology](http://www.ndcs.org/information/technology)

## Christmas disappoints

The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures which last Christmas moved to Channel Five weren't subtitled – much to the chagrin of many deaf viewers who wrote to TAG. Ruth Myers, TAG Chair, contacted Five who replied assuring her that the lectures will be subtitled next Christmas.

## Web bookmarks for accessible TV

### One-stop TV subtitling shop

[www.digiguide.com](http://www.digiguide.com)

### Signing on TV

[www.bbc.co.uk/seehear/info/programmes.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/seehear/info/programmes.shtml)

[www.channel4.com/signed\\_programmes.html](http://www.channel4.com/signed_programmes.html)

[www.signpostbsl.com/BSLTV/](http://www.signpostbsl.com/BSLTV/)

[www1.sky.com/accessibility/tvguide.htm](http://www1.sky.com/accessibility/tvguide.htm)

## Wireless prospects

Is wireless technology a friend or foe of hard-of-hearing people? Dr Jerry L Yanz writing in *Hearing Review* thinks it could be a true friend.

Hearing aids equipped with wireless systems, he says, will solve many common problems encountered by hearing aid wearers – hearing on the telephone, in noisy environments, and over long distances.

Some new devices that use Bluetooth with hearing aids catch his attention.

The ELI Ear Level Instrument from Starkey Labs and the SmartLink system<sup>5</sup> from Phonak deliver robust signals to the hearing aid and reduce feedback and interference from

mobile phones. At the moment both need additional, external devices to relay the signal, but in time he expects to see single unit devices.

Another tiny, digital device called BluePal, soon to be launched in the USA, should enable conversations in places like noisy restaurants through a Bluetooth link between a microphone on the speaker's clothing and a receiver on the listener's hearing aid.

Yanz even thinks that ultimately, wireless devices will lead to the convergence of the normal-hearing and hard-of-hearing markets and may transform hearing aid provision.

Full article at:  
[www.hearingreview.com](http://www.hearingreview.com)

## Know your numbers? Really?



If you buy a Nokia Communicator 9210 from Vodafone (currently the only mobile provider that allows you to use the TextDirect prefix 18001), make sure that you are told both of its telephone numbers.

The Communicator actually has one number for for data textphone calls and another for SMS and voice calls! And to complicate matters further, when you make a textphone call from a Communicator, the voice number appears on the other person's CLI, not the data number!

Unfortunately, Vodafone shops don't always tell people (or even know) that they are being allocated two numbers. One shop even told a Sequel reader that they would have to pay to find out what the second number is!

When TAG raised the issue with Vodafone, the mobile phone giant agreed that the situation was complex and that it would take steps to improve the communication of its retail outlets.

### Costly hospital calls

Ofcom has asked hospital authorities and agencies to reduce the high cost that friends and relatives currently pay to telephone hospital patients.

### Pricey international mobile calls

EU regulators want telephone companies to cut charges for making mobile calls abroad.

### VoIP and WiFi marry

It was only a matter of time: Vonage is offering a cordless phone that can make voice calls over the Internet from public wireless hotspots.

### GC15 inaction

There is still no progress to enforce some mobile network providers to enable proper access to RNID Typetalk.

### Signed film subtitled

A new US film *Universal Signs* is subtitled – for hearing people. The story, told in American Sign Language, is about a man whose life is nearly destroyed by a tragedy for which he feels responsible – because his deafness meant he could not hear the cries of a drowning child.

### TAG's sponsors

Sequel is sponsored by a

National Lottery Awards for All England grant.

TAG warmly acknowledges this support.



## Sign language video service wins eGovernment award



Significan't, the sign language and video specialist, was a finalist in the voluntary sector category at the National e-Government Awards. The Significan't service enables deaf people to access interpreters through video communications.

There was stiff competition

for the award and the Citizen's Advice Bureau was the eventual winner. But Jeff McWhinney, Director of Significan't was proud of his organisation's achievement: "As a native Deaf sign language user I am excited that our progress and technological successes have been recognised at the national level. Deaf people have benefited enormously from SignVideo Contact Centre enabling instant access to a high quality sign language interpreter through the videophones installed in London boroughs and health trusts."

## Events

### Emerging Technologies and deaf people – Seminar

17 May 2005 in Central London. Top speakers from Ofcom, IBM, BT, NTL, Digital UK and more. Organised by TAG, and hosted by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Admission only by ticket: £25.

For details, email [r.myers@merula.co.uk](mailto:r.myers@merula.co.uk)

### NDCS Technology Exhibition & Annual Conference

16 June 2006 at the Birmingham Metropole Hotel.

Contact Lisa Warner:

t 0121 234 9820 (voice & text)

email [events@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:events@ndcs.org.uk)

## Additional relay survey study

Ofcom has asked City University to study the feasibility of setting up additional relay services.

During the study, which started in January, City researchers are contacting deaf people and others to assess demand for the services along with some of the practical and financial implications.

The main focus of the study is Video Relay. A few, relatively small, video relay services already exist to enable sign language users to communicate with hearing people by phone using a relay interpreter. Sign language users and interpreters in many parts of the country are being asked for their views.

The City team will also investigate Captioned Relay for hard-of-hearing people who



might benefit from captions to clarify what they are hearing on the phone.

The possibilities for setting up a Voice Support Relay for speech-impaired people (especially those with indistinct voices) will also be evaluated.

A summary report will be available in late spring and Sequel expects to include the findings in the next issue.

For more information including a signed version of the news release see

[www.addrelay.org.uk](http://www.addrelay.org.uk)



[www.tagcomm.org.uk](http://www.tagcomm.org.uk)

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The views expressed in Sequel are those of individual authors.