



SUBMISSION

Review of Access to Telecommunications Services by people with disability, older Australians and people experiencing illness

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Submission

Ai-Media welcomes the Review of Access to Telecommunications Services by people with disability, older Australians and people experiencing illness.

Founded in 2003, Ai-Media is a social enterprise, dedicated to ending the experience of exclusion that people with disability face. Our focus has been on developing technology-enabled solutions for people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Over the last five years in particular, enhancements in technology have significantly improved potential access to telecommunications services for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment by permitting real time word-accurate speech-to-text.

Ai-Media urges the Australian Government to adopt regulatory settings for the National Relay Service (NRS) that ensure Australians with disability (and those with whom they communicate) benefit from recent and future improvements in technology, including the National Broadband Network.

Regulatory settings should immediately catch up with recent advances in technology by including within the NRS framework:

- Captioned telephony (such as CapTel)
- Web-based captioning (such as Web CapTel)
- Auslan interpreting (Video Relay)

Any privacy and interception issues preventing the adoption of new technologies should be addressed directly through legislative change, preferably by defining the relay officer (or captioner) as part of the telecommunications equipment.

(refer Appendix – as follows)

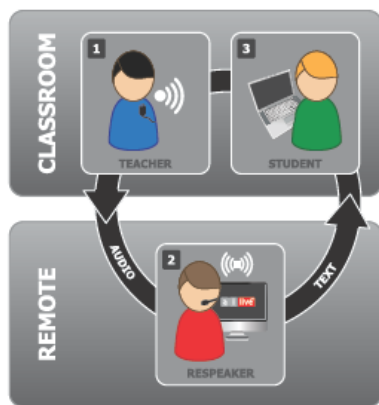
APPENDIX: Ai-Live™

Ai-Live™ is a solution developed by Ai-Media, to allow deaf and hearing impaired kids effective participation in mainstream classrooms, and improve their literacy.

Ai-Live™ is an innovative technology solution that delivers word-accurate text of classroom conversation direct to the laptop or iPad of a deaf or hearing impaired student within seconds, with a cost-base comparable to existing supports.

Ai-Live™ is powered by a remote “respeaker” who listens to the audio delivered from the classroom, and re-speaks the text (with punctuation) into trained speech recognition software. This text (which is word-accurate) is then streamed back over the internet to the student’s device, allowing the student to follow the classroom conversation with ease.

HOW Ai-Live™WORKS



Ai-Live™ was piloted successfully at Robert Townson High School in Western Sydney from September 2009 with contributory funding support from the NSW Department of Education and Communities.

By December 2009, it was clear that the solution was effective at enhancing educational outcomes. Both pilot users experienced significant improvements in school performance with one student moving from the bottom of the class to coming first in the yearly exam in less than 10 weeks.

Our experience demonstrates the power of real-time word-accurate speech-to-text solutions to transform the lives of people with hearing impairment.