

Visio-interpretation in sign language for PRM information at interchanges



Development of a sign language reception service intended for hearing-impaired PRM customers, using sign language, for a multimodal interchange through a video-interpretation system, working through a call centre employing qualified sign language interpreters and qualified/trained reception staff.

This is a service for organisations that receive deaf members of the public who express themselves in sign language. It allows the deaf person and the hearing agent receiving them to exchange freely, via a sign language video-interpretation system.

This service is accessible by the Internet from a computer equipped with a webcam, a microphone and a loudspeaker.

During the opening hours of the service, the agent at reception can connect with the online reception area through a software application and get in touch with a sign language interpreter. The conversation can then start and be pursued normally.

Receiving users is possible within a time slot agreed between the service-provider and the point of reception at the interchange or the public transport network agency concerned. This time must be consistent with the opening hours of those points of reception. The waiting period may ideally not exceed 10 minutes.

This service is intended to be implemented on request from the deaf user, or proposed by the Customer Adviser who considers it necessary.

The sign language interpreter holds a specific diploma and is submitted to strict rules of professional conduct ensuring the confidentiality of interventions, neutrality and professional confidentiality.

This tool is generally easy to use, both for the user and the service manager. However, a preparatory phase lasting several months is to be considered in order to take questions of technical conformance, the need to train staff and the procedure relating to government contracts into account.

Good practice

SNCF, Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français (French railways)

Sign language video-interpretation service “JADE: DES MOTS PLEINS LES MAINS!” (Jade: handfuls of words)

Within the scope of its national action plan for accessibility, SNCF is developing display solutions intended for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Screens installed at numerous locations on station platforms will disseminate welcome messages and information through the Jade system, a real “virtual hostess”, speaking in French sign language.

Now in place at the Gare de l’Est in Paris, Jade communicates prepared messages. At a later date, she will be able to translate current information, especially messages on incidents as put out by the station public announcement sound system. The translated text will also be reproduced on the screen.

City of Toulouse (France)

Video-interpretation service in sign language.

To improve accessibility for the hard-of-hearing, the City of Toulouse has set up innovative devices, as with telephone relays at the José-Cabanis media library and in citizenship houses (municipal information centres).

RATP (France)

Telephone information service via a sign language video-interpretation system.

Caisse d’Allocations Familiales (France)

French sign language (LSF) reception service for the deaf and hard-of-hearing via video-interpretation at the French family allowance centres

Crédit Agricole (France)

Sign language video-interpretation service

To offer the deaf and hard-of-hearing conditions for access to the bank equivalent to those offered all other people.

Potential interchange performance improvement

Sign language video-interpretation services for information relating to interchanges contribute to making interchanges more efficient, because they allow intermodality, accessibility and liveability of the interchange to be improved. Indeed, a form of information service adapted to the deaf and hard-of-hearing and a physical service for accompaniment of those users allow for the better orientation of travellers in the interchange, a reduction in the anxiety felt when moving around the interchange and help in reaching their point of destination reliably, comfortably and safely.

As a general rule, setting up such a service fully fits in with an approach for greater accessibility of multimodal interchanges. This issue requires guidelines to be established that, to be efficient, must not only allow the convergence of different forms of disability to be addressed, but also be a source of progress for all.

As far as deaf members of the population are more specifically concerned, it is to be noted that they are now the last section to be able to benefit from dedicated arrangements. Indeed, for the hard-of-hearing, magnetic loop type devices have already been implemented in a sustained manner (whether in bank branches or in lifts, for example).

The specific features for helping and receiving deaf people meanwhile, in human and relational terms, are fully catered for and have been taken on by the existing structures.

However, faced with possible communication difficulties, the implementation of a dedicated service of the sign language video-interpretation reception type provides huge advantages, both for the deaf traveller and the agent receiving them.

Furthermore, it is a clear sign of extending services to a section of the population that has for long been marginalised due especially to its linguistic practices (note: in France, using sign language has only been authorised since 1981: having been banned for more than 100 years, it is now used by 300,000 to 600,000 deaf people).

Finally, more fluid circulation of passengers and greater traveller satisfaction contribute to better quality of service being provided by the manager, and thus a more efficient interchange.

Resources

Indications of costs relating to use of the tool

– The cost for one year's use of the tool at the agency is approximately 5 000€, not including V.A.T. This price includes installation of the necessary application by the service provider, annual subscription to the video-interpretation service, including maintenance of the application and the annual fixed price for 15 hours of communication to the platform of interpreters and initial training.

Other resources needed to use the tool

- Setting up an in-house training process for Customer Advisers (redeployment of the initial training and such training being maintained regularly)
- Setting up of procedures aimed at checking and maintaining good quality of service
- Exchanges with users of the service, either directly or via deaf people's associations, to evaluate how the service is perceived
- Regular exchanges, both internally and with the service-provider, in order to evaluate the service's efficiency

- Raising awareness internally regarding the issue of accessibility in general, and deafness in particular

Additional costs generated by using the tool

- Technical upgrading of the existing telephony installation and pre-requirements for the service provider (taking into account the service user internal security policy)
- Opening a dedicated ADSL line
- Subscription to the associated telecom provider's fixed-price service
- Purchase of IT hardware dedicated to use of this service
- Expenses to promote the service (provision relating for example to producing a short film during a consultation workshop with PRM associations)
- Training and raising awareness in relation to deaf people's cultural issues for all agents (700€ for 8 agents to be implemented for all Customer Advisers)
- Additional dedicated training in sign language for agents volunteering to take part (2,755€: 4 agents, 3 days in 2014)
- Interview to assess knowledge following such training

Allocation of costs between stakeholders

- Mainly at Sales Management level.

References

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<http://ca-toulouse31.elision-services.com/>

NODES strategic objective	Contribution
Enhance accessibility and integration	++
Enhance intermodality	++
Enhance liveability	+
Increase safety and security conditions	+
Increase economic viability and costs efficiency	0
Stimulate local economy	0
Increase environmental efficiency	0
Increase energy efficiency	0