



MINNESOTA
HANDS &
VOICES™

FOCUS

supporting families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing

Real-Time Speech-to-Text Translation Software & CART

Real-time speech-to-text translation software can be an appropriate accommodation for students who are DHH. There are many different real-time speech-to-text translation software programs school districts can choose with slightly different features. In general, these computer programs function similarly in how the information is accessed through captioning and the kind of equipment that is used. Teachers wear a microphone when giving classroom instruction and the students use a computer or tablet at their desk to display the captions from the lecture. The software applies a probability algorithm for best accuracy in word selection, adjusts for different accents, and then displays the results within seconds as a computer caption. Then it generates a transcript file for students to reference as notes for studying.

During a lecture the real-time speech-to-text translation captions follow within 1-2 seconds of the speaker's voice, giving the student time to glance down to read, before visually returning to the lecture. Making it possible for students to see any visual aids on the related topic along with the class. For students who in the past missed parts of lectures, real-time speech-to-text translation software can have a positive impact on their education.

Real-Time Speech-to-Text Translation Software & CART continued on page 2

Consider Investing in Our MNH&V Community

Minnesota Hands & Voices (MNH&V) is a community of families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH). We learn from our shared experience of having children who are DHH and through all the diverse ways we choose to raise them.

"MNH&V is built upon the premise that 'what works for your child is what makes the choice right'. MNH&V supports families in all the choices they make to ensure they feel empowered by the gifts their children bring them," shared Laura Godfrey, MNH&V Guide by Your Side Coordinator.

Laura along with the MNH&V team are longtime advocates for children who are DHH and their families. Every family with a newly identified child who is DHH receives one-on-one contact from a specially trained MNH&V Parent Guide offering support and information. Their outreach includes every region of the state and within the rich cultural communities who call Minnesota home.

MNH&V receives direct support from Hands & Voices Headquarters (H&V HQ). H&V HQ has chapters throughout the US and Canada, as well as several chapters overseas. They provide MNH&V staff and families with a wide network of families, professionals, state and federal resources, educational institutions, service providers, and adults who are DHH. In addition, H&V HQ provides the specialized training that is necessary for all the MNH&V Regional and Cultural Parent Guides.

"From the bottom up and the top down, H&V is working on a local and national level to achieve one goal: to improve educational and social outcomes for children who are DHH," excerpt from the H&V Story found on their website, www.handsandvoices.org/about/story.htm.

MNH&V provides specialized support for families with a child who is DHH in order to reach their full potential. Our ASTra webinar helps parents gain advocacy skills and the confidence needed to work collaboratively with their child's educational team. <http://www.mnhandsandvoices.org/resources-information/ASTra.aspx>

MNH&V promotes a strong self-identity in children who are DHH by infusing adult role models at all MNH&V events. This underscores the critical role adults who are DHH can have in the lives of children and their families.

MNH&V was made possible 15 years ago when Lifetrack committed to the program. Since then families have benefited from support received by Lifetrack through MNH&V. Since 1948, Lifetrack, has committed to families and individuals to help them become strong, healthy and productive members of the community.

MNH&V is a program of Lifetrack, a Minnesota non-profit. Make a donation or donate in honor of someone today at https://lifetrackmn.formstack.com/forms/general_donation_form__copy_2

Real-Time Speech-to-Text Translation Software & CART
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Fast Facts About Speech-to-Text

- People generally talk at 125 words per minute and 100 words per minute in front of an audience, like a classroom teacher.
- People normally think at 400-600 words per minute and the average high-school student processes speech at a rate of about 140-145 words per minute.

“This means that a student listening to a teacher has time to glance down, read a few words, and return to watching/listening and still will have the cognitive resources to process what was said and think about it’s meaning,” according to Supporting Children with Hearing Loss (SSCHL), <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com/interact-as>. SSCHL

The software’s speech-to-text translation is not always perfect. The transcript punctuation may not be correct depending on how the program interprets the pauses of the speaker. The set up of the computer and the need to read the captioning from the screen can limit a student’s ability to fully participate in interactive classroom activities. But the main issue with real-time speech-to-text translation software is it does not address expressive communication needs of students who are DHH with difficult to understand speech articulation. However, like any accommodation, there is no way to judge the level of success until the student has an opportunity to give it a try it.

Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) is a system that also provides captioning. This system has proven useful through the test of time. How it works is the CART specialist sets up a stenographic machine and a laptop computer. Then the CART specialist

listens to what is said, and transcribes every word so that it can be viewed on the computer display. Transcribing what the teacher says through CART can take up to 7 seconds for the teacher’s words to appear on the computer, but the text is generally accurate with correct punctuation.

The CART system has the same or similar drawbacks as the real-time speech-to-text translation software. It does not address expressive communication needs of students who are DHH with difficult to understand speech articulation. Also, the set up of the equipment and the need to read the captioning from the screen can limit a student’s ability to fully participate in interactive classroom activities. For some school districts the downfall with CART is the added expense and organization issues of hiring someone to type the captions.

Recently new ADA laws have passed which will increase the prevalence of captions streaming on screens in public places. Along with user-friendly speech-to-text apps for portable devices, access for people who are DHH is becoming easier to come by and mainstream.

For educational access its important to first assess the student’s reading level and other educational needs before considering using either real-time speech-to-text translation software or CART. For some students who are DHH and have language and learning delays, real-time speech-to-text translation may not be an appropriate accommodation. The IEP team can fully assess what accommodation might be a better fit for the student.

New Gallaudet University President Bobbi Cordano

Effective January 1, 2016, Roberta “Bobbi” Cordano, will be the next president of Gallaudet University. Gallaudet is the only four-year, Liberal Arts University where all of its programs and services are designed for students who are DHH. Gallaudet’s current president, T. Alan Hurwitz, whose term began January 2010, is retiring at the end of this year.

Board of Trustees Chair Heather Harker said, “We are delighted to have selected Ms. Cordano to become the 11th President of Gallaudet. As our students are connecting with our vibrant community, discovering their academic and career aspirations, and influencing conversations and their futures, Ms. Cordano will be the kind of president to lead transformational change at the university. She’s the right person at the right time for Gallaudet.”

Cordano, who is deaf, currently serves as the vice president of programs for the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation in St. Paul, MN. In this role, she oversees community-based programs in early childhood, community mental health, family supportive housing, aging and caregiver services, school reform, and food access.

Cordano has held several leadership roles in health care and higher education. She is a founding member of Metro Deaf School and a founding board member of Minnesota North Star Academy.

“The goal for the presidential selection process was to select someone who would be described as a transformational leader; someone who will work to establish a vision that is shared by the entire campus community and inspire the community toward positive change,” said Harker.

In Your Corner



For years, Hands & Voices HQ has been committed to preventing abuse, neglect and bullying of our children who are DHH. Children with special needs experience these issues at a higher rate than the general population, and children who are deaf and hard of hearing are no exception. Under the leadership of Dr. Harold Johnson, HQ Board Member and retired DHH Educator, a group of H&V members from all over the country have met as part of O.U.R. (Observe, Understand and Respond).

At the 2014 H&V HQ Leadership conference, Dr. Johnson called for several chapters to participate in a new initiative: creating quilts to visually represent the work of the O.U.R. project. With the tradition of quilt-making as a community of people working collaboratively on products that evoke warmth, friendship, and security; quilts would be a beautiful expression of O.U.R.'s concern for children's safety. MNH&V Metro Parent

The Story behind the Minnesota O.U.R. Quilt

Guide, Anne Barlow, jumped at the chance to get involved. Over the next year, Anne helped the group make a plan for the project and then led MNH&V's Metro staff through crafting four unique squares. She also coordinated the silk screening of other squares, compiled the Minnesota quilt, as well as an accompanying "storybook" of how it was created.

Minnesota's quilt incorporates O.U.R. themes of "surprises not secrets" and "speak out on behalf of someone who can't". Guide By Your Side Coordinator, Laura Godfrey brought the quilt and book to the 2015 Leadership conference where I joined up with other O.U.R. members to present the project to the group and ask for other chapters to create their own quilts.

In attendance at the O.U.R. presentation and the entire Leadership conference were two of the teachers from the Yinchuan Rehab Center in Yinchuan, China, where

I traveled last May. Ever since leaving China, I was determined to bring parents and teachers to the US to learn about our best practices in identifying and providing necessary follow-up services and intervention to all children who are deaf and hard of hearing. With little time to prepare Visa's and make plans, two teachers were able to come this year, with the hope that two parents who showed leadership skills will be able to come next year with two new teachers. The teachers at this year's conference so appreciated all the information they learned, as well as benefited from the tour of Colorado hospitals, therapy centers and schools following the conference. I am so looking forward to their development of parent-to-parent support in China.

For more information about Candace's trip to China, visit: <http://guidedbychina.tumblr.com/>



Just a few of the MNH&V staff who created the Minnesota O.U.R. Quilt



Cheers! Here's to a Happy Inclusive

Many of us look forward to the holiday season and all the memory-making activities that go along with family gatherings. Whether your tradition is to gather as a big group with extended family and friends combined, or a smaller intimate group; there are ways to create an inclusive and accessible environment for children and guests who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH).

Many parents who have a child who is DHH have watched them struggle to track the conversations at family gatherings. We trust relationships will develop naturally over time, but in that moment it can be heart breaking. Communication modalities such as: listening and spoken language, manual communication (cued speech or sign language), bi-lingual approach using American Sign Language (ASL), or a mix of all of the above, does not lessen the impact of these experiences. Holiday gatherings are a call to action for parents to help bridge the communication gap between our child who is growing up with the unique experience of being DHH and other individuals who are part of our traditional group.

There are many creative ways to make holiday gatherings feel more inclusive and accessible to people who are DHH. Listed here are just a few ideas you can try or adapt for your own family's needs.

Before the Gathering

- Ask your child or guest who is DHH for ideas on how to make the holiday gathering more accessible. Many accommodations can be arranged before the event.
- Share the guest list with your child or guest who is DHH. For young children draw a simple family tree to show which guests are related and which are friends. If possible label photos of the guests with their names and relation.
- If your child uses hearing gear make sure to have back-up batteries with you ready to use for longer holiday gatherings. Even if their gear has a long battery life it is always good to have back-up batteries.
- Electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets, and laptops can facilitate communication between guests who are DHH and hearing guests. Set up a charging station in a convenient area or remember to bring your device chargers to the gathering.
Parents: BEFORE the event discuss with your child who is DHH your rules of etiquette about using devices at events.
- Captioning please! If a TV is on during a gathering make sure the captioning is on, too. Whether your guest who is DHH is watching or not they will appreciate having access without needing to ask.

Set the Stage

- Nametags and place cards at the table are a great way to make the connection between a person's face and their name.
- Turn down the noise! Background music, televisions, appliances, pets, plus multiple conversations at once, all make it difficult to pick up the sounds of speech even with the latest hearing technology. Minimize as much of the "extra" sounds as possible.
- Keep plenty of note pads and pens handy for anyone who wants to communicate through writing or drawing. Save on paper and make it fun by keeping Magna Doodles near by!
- Natural light can shadow a speaker's face if their back is facing the window. Position guests, furniture and window treatments to optimize lighting on individual's faces as well as avoid seating guests who are DHH where they would be facing bright windows.

- Turn up the lights! Dim lighting can make it difficult for individuals who are DHH to communicate. Good lighting is essential to read lips, see body language, facial expressions, signs, cues, interpreters, or transliterors. Try to illuminate areas of your home that are too dark to communicate.

Set the Stage for Listening

- For children who are DHH and use an FM system, strategically place the microphone on the table as close to the center as possible. Then at mealtime it will be easy to position the microphone in an optimal spot to pick up speech.
- Have a set of "conversation starters" cards at the table for your guests and your child who is DHH to chat about a topic your child is more familiar with.
- Many children who are DHH can be responsible to ask speakers to wear the FM system for better access. Before the gathering role-play how to make a request to wear the FM system and ways to advocate for themselves.

Set the Stage for ASL

- For children who are DHH and use ASL place a few American Sign Language books out on the coffee table and around the house. Make it easy for your guests who are intrigued and want to learn more about the language.

Set the Stage for Cued English

- For children who are DHH and use Cued English leave a handful of Cued English charts set out around the house for any guests interested in trying the visual system of English phonemes.

During the Gathering

- People who are DHH understand the need to get their attention to communicate. Polite ways to do this is to tap their shoulder or give a quick hand wave to catch their eye. To make an announcement from across the room quickly flick the light switch.

& Accessible Holiday to You & Yours!

- When someone who is DHH asks, “What?” DO NOT dismiss their question with, “Never mind,” “Oh, nothing,” or “It’s not important.” Even if you think it is extraneous, let them be the judge. Out of respect always take the time to repeat what was missed.
- If there is some doubt in your mind whether your guest who is DHH understood you, rephrase your comment, rather than repeat. Vice versa, if you do not understand ask for clarification until you do. Communication only happens when both parties understand each other.

During the Gathering for Listening

- Make sure guests understand the importance of using the FM system to access conversations for your child who is DHH. If need be give a quick demonstration on how to properly wear or place the FM microphone.
- You and your family might feel self-conscious being the only people passing around the FM system or wearing it. Focus on optimal access to the sounds of speech and the long-term benefits for your child and it will get easier to do.

During the Gathering for Cued English

- Assign family members to take turns transliterating for your child who is DHH so they are included in the conversation. Cueing for your child who is DHH will not only provide access, but also act as a great language model. If your transliterating skills are not proficient what better way to practice!
- You and your family might feel self-conscious cueing in a room full of people who do not use the system. It is important to work through your feelings for the greater good of providing access.
- Consider hiring a transliterator for your holiday gatherings. They could provide continuous access for your child.

During the Gathering for ASL

- Assign family members to take turns interpreting for your child who is DHH so they can be included in conversations. Even if you are not an ASL interpreter do your best.. Eventually your child may be able to take the topic and join in conversations.
- You and your family might feel self-conscious if you are the only family using ASL in a room full of hearing people. It’s important to get passed how you feel for the greater good of providing language access to your child.
- Consider hiring an ASL interpreter for your holiday gatherings. As your child who is DHH becomes older, there is a need for a higher level of language. An ASL interpreter can facilitate in-depth conversations between your child and guests who do not know ASL.
- If you are just learning ASL and you are addressing a person who is fluent in ASL remember to RELAX. Be courteous, but not overly anxious about making mistakes. Allow yourself to be corrected so the individual understands the full meaning of your comments. Do not debate sign vocabulary with a person who is DHH, just except the beauty and diversity of ASL and move on.

Inclusive Activities

- Play games that encourage turn taking, which are fun for everyone! In contrast games where you need to shout out the answer first for points puts guests who are DHH at a disadvantage.
- Children of all ages and abilities can appreciate each other by doing activities with little conversation needed. Building toys, marble run, puzzles, logic games, coloring books, craft projects, and many more activities are enjoyable to work on as a group or side-by-side.

Good to Know for Hearing Folks

- No need to shout! Hearing gear is calibrated to normal voice levels; shouting will just distort the words.
- Persons who communicate well one-on-one may have a hard time with two or more speakers, especially if there are many interruptions and interjections.
- Gatherings where everyone else is hearing can be very exhausting, and especially unbearable for teens that are DHH. Discuss an appropriate backup plan when they need a break, such as reading a book, watching a movie, or playing games on a mobile phone.
- Speak in a normal manner. In general people, who are DHH or hearing, watch other’s lips for clues as they speak to help them understand. Chewing food, gum, smoking, long facial hair, or obscuring your mouth with your hands makes it difficult to understand speech.
- Not all people who are DHH read-lips. Lip-reading to the level of a reliable communication mode takes years to develop and mastery of English. Children should not be expected to lip-read before they have language. An estimated 30% of speech sounds are not distinguishable by sight.
- Not all people who are DHH use ASL. American Sign language is NOT another form of English; it is an official language and the foundation of Deaf culture with its own grammar, contexts and rules.
- Not all people who are DHH are familiar with Cued English, also known as Cued Speech. Cued English is a visual representation of all the phonemes or sounds of the English language using 7 hand shapes and 4 vowel positions.

All of MNH&V wishes you and your family a fun-filled holiday season! Please email your ideas to add to this list for next year, mnhv@lifetrack-mn.org, subject: Holiday.



Photos from the Metro Playdate and Audiology Discussion on September 27, 2015.

JOB OPENING

Spanish-Speaking Cultural Parent Guide

MNH&V is looking for a candidate to fill a Parent Guide position for the Spanish-Speaking community.

Parent Guides provide emotional support, unbiased information, and referral resources to families with children who are DHH or deafblind. They connect parents to other parents and to local community resources. They are eager to support other parents like themselves with a child who is DHH and represent MNH&V in the community they serve.

Candidates should be fluent in both, English and Spanish. Responsibilities include planning and implementing culturally specific programs and family support activities. In addition to developing, investigating, securing, sustaining, and reporting happenings related to these activities.

The position is based in St. Paul, but serves families throughout all of Minnesota. Hours are flexible, 10 hours a week.

For more information or to apply online go to www.lifetrack-mn.org/about/careers or email resume to HR@lifetrack-mn.org

Captioning on Every TV and Display in Airports

The United States Department of Transportation (DOT) issued a ruling that requires closed captioning on all televisions in US airports that receive federal funding and experience at least 10,000 flights annually. This DOT ruling makes it mandatory for TV screens in gate areas to display closed captioning, as well as all public facing displays at the ticket counters, security area, gates, lounges, restaurants, or airport shops. Including televisions and displays located in space leased to shops or restaurants. In addition to captioning, the ruling requires that airports provide sufficient facilities for service animals.

This ruling, went into effect on October 5, 2015, amends the Department of Transportation's compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires accessibility standards for entities receiving federal funds.

<http://www.3playmedia.com/2015/08/10/us-dot-officially-requires-closed-captioning-on-airport-tvs/#sthash.ONceBvRF.dpuf>

Amazon to Caption All Streaming Videos

National Association of the Deaf (NAD), A civil rights organization for deaf and hard of hearing, sued Netflix for captioning of all its video programming has since reached a similar deal with Amazon over its streaming video. Amazon and NAD deal was negotiated without litigation.

"The NAD is thus thrilled by Amazon's decision to make its online entertainment experience more accessible to deaf and hard of hearing customers who also look to Amazon to fulfill their needs for comprehensive goods and services," said Howard Rosenblum, CEO of the NAD.

<http://arstechnica.com/techpolicy/2015/10/amazon-reaches-deal-with-deaf-rights-group-to-caption-all-video/>

Thanks for your contribution!

We rely on your generous support to build better lives for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Make a tax-deductible donation today.

DONATE



The Northstar Chapter of the American Payroll Association, St. Paul, for hosting a blanket-making event. The company donated the fleece fabric and their staff volunteered to make blankets to be used to welcome new MNH&V families. Thank you APA Northstar Chapter!



Two welcome blanket recipients from the metro area.

Northern Voices receives 4 Stars Rating

Parent Aware rated Northern Voices a 4 Star rating. Parent Aware is a free service that measures best practices identified by research to help children succeed.

Participating programs have:

- Volunteered for extra, in-depth training
- Devoted themselves to strong, caring relationships with each child
- Adopted the latest approaches to keeping children's learning on track
- Committed to daily activities and routines that help children learn
- Focused on children's health and safety

To learn more about Northern Voices' contact Erin Loavenbruck at erinl@northernvoices or call at 651-639-2535.

Educational Interpreters

Educational Interpreters' Committee (EIC) is an online community hosted by Minnesota Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (MRID). This site was established to support the community of educational interpreters, as well as increased communication, collaboration, and transparency to advance educational interpreting services for all students who are DHH.

The site will include monthly publications authored by a variety of community members including interpreters, educators, administrators, and Deaf community members. They will provide diverse perspectives on a wide range of topics affecting educational interpreters. Also, EIC is developing an in-depth resource for educational interpreters regarding laws, regulations, and other impacting information. Membership to EIC is open to interpreters, transliterators, educators, students, community members, parents, and anyone invested in educational interpreting services.

us11.campaign-archive2.com



The View from Greater Minnesota



CONGRATULATIONS



Jennie Hasse, along with her husband Joe, their two children with bilateral, sensorineural hearing loss.



Katie Barth and Joe Rodekuhr, both are teachers of students who are DHH in Rochester, MN.

Find all the 2015 MNH&V High Five Award Recipients and their stories at <https://www.mnhandsandvoices.org/news-events/high-five-awards.aspx>

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supporting families
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Minnesota Hands & Voices is a program of Lifetrack

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MNH&V Roller Skating Event for Families with Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Let's ROLL!

Sunday,
January 31, 2016

5:00 to 7:00 pm

Roller Garden
in St. Louis Park

The Roller Garden will
be closed to the general
public so this is a great
way to test your skating
skills, socialize, and
meet new friends!

Details & RSVP at www.mnhandsandvoices.org