

Proceeding: IN THE MATTER OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICES AND SPE Record 1 of 1

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In the Matter of
Telecommunications Relay Services
and Speech-to-Speech Services for CC Docket No.98-67
Individuals with Hearing and Speech
Disabilities

I would like to make a few comments on TRS quality assurance parameters

Quality Assurance Parameters

I am a deaf consumer and also a research scientist at the Univ. of Texas.
I use Relay Texas on a daily basis for professional and personal business.

I feel that the FCC should consider expanding the Quality Assurance Parameters that are used to evaluate the performance of a TRS. At present there is only one: the average speed of answer. I believe that it is not possible to assure a quality TRS system with that single parameter, which only gives a very vague indication of consumer satisfaction and TRS performance. The number of parameters can easily be expanded and they can easily be measured in an automated manner. This step will make great strides in assuring uniform service across TRS providers.

A necessary part of this quality assurance should entail actual test calls made by an independent quality assurance organization. These test calls are the only way to insure that the TRS providers are actually providing quality service and would provide the FCC with a quantitative measure of performance. Relying on hearsay and anecdote, is not sufficient.

I do not have the background to make a comprehensive list of suggested quality assurance parameters but I would like to mention one informal one that we tested in Texas that led to **some** positive changes. Several deaf consumers had complained for some time that when they requested VCO during a call that it took too long for the agent to switch and respond to the consumer, 'Voice now, please', which is what the Sprint protocol calls for. In addition, some agents responded with different comments (some quite lengthy), others just said 'GA', and others NEVER responded. I suggested to Sprint that they do a set of 20 test calls measuring the **time** between the request for VCO and the response. I also made 20 test calls to measure the same parameter. To make a long story short, my results and Sprint's results agreed: the response time varied tremendously from 1 sec to as long as 20 sec, the average was far higher than what Sprint expected, and the response text varied from one agent to the next. As a result of this, Sprint implemented several training changes and redid the test. The retest showed substantial improvement and Sprint has agreed to redo the test periodically to insure this performance. Sprint also agreed to set up a separate 800 number for incoming VCO calls to address this problem (and other related VCO problems). The point of the story is that these changes were not made until we had **QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE** that the problem existed. VCO consumers had complained for several years before this with anecdotes of poor performance but the impetus for change came from this test.

There are a number of other parameters that can be measured that can lead to this, type of improvement.