



COMITÉ POUR LES
SERVICES
SANS FIL DES
SOURDS DU
CANADA

Canadian
Association of the Deaf



Association
des Sourds du Canada



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April 23, 2019

Mr. Claude Doucet
Secretary-General
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)
Ottawa, ON K1A 0N2

Re: CAD-ASC et al.'s Final Submission for [CRTC TNC 2018-422](#) - Proceeding to establish a mandatory code for Internet services

Dear Secretary-General,

Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (**CAD-ASC**), Deaf Wireless Canada Consultative Committee-Comité pour les Services Sans fil des Sourds du Canada (**DWCC-CSSSC**), Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind (**CNSDB**), and Deafness Advocacy Association Nova Scotia (**DAANS**) -- collectively, "**CAD-ASC et al.**" -- are jointly submitting the final submission to the [CRTC TNC 2018-422](#) proceeding.

As CAD-ASC et al. stated earlier in its Intervention, the Internet Code must ensure that Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing (**DDBHH**) Canadians are not left behind and to provide a functional equivalence by provisions of accessible services and solutions. Our closing responses will have several portions in the final submission to support our continued positions, which has been outlined throughout the proceeding.

SURVEY SUMMARY

1. CAD-ASC et al. submitted a report to the Commission on March 4, 2019 based on a Canada-wide survey¹ with 135 DDBHH respondents CAD-ASC et al. revisited the totals and wishes to correct some errors contained therein. The following issues are outstanding and problematic for at least **51%** of the DDBHH respondents:

- getting a written copy of ISP contracts.
- understanding ISP contracts because of the technical / legal language contained therein.
- obtaining ISP contracts and related documents in alternative formats.
- buying service bundles including internet services proves to be a confusing experience.
- bill shock from internet service data overage.

¹ CAD-ASC et al.'s survey report: [An Accessible Canada Internet Code for Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Canadians](#), March 4, 2019

- lack of awareness / knowledge concerning monitoring data usage let alone understanding the underlying data management concept itself.
- lack of awareness / knowledge of how / where to file complaints related to their ISP contracts.
- lack of awareness / knowledge of CCTS.
- a significant number of the DDBHH respondents faced barriers when cancelling or changing their ISP contracts.

2. CAD-ASC et al. presents the Commission with more information to clarify some concepts such as enhancing the level of understanding of the common contract terminology of internet services to provide a rationale of why ASL and LSQ videos are needed for specific internet service terms.

UNDERSTANDING TERMINOLOGIES FROM INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS (ISPs)

3. Internet services vary between various ISPs. One member of CAD-ASC et al looked up ISPs' websites and directly contacted them via IP relay services and live chat. Members of the team learned that Bell, Sasktel, Telus, and Securnet provided DSL. In addition, Cogeco, Rogers, Shaw, and Videotron provides service through cable. Lastly, Eastlink, TekSavvy, City Wide Communication, Worldline, and Storm Internet provides services in both DSL and Cable in various regions. CAD-ASC et al. is still unable to confirm what type(s) of internet services Connect, Freedom, and Alanac ISPs provide.

4. For example, Shaw provides internet services through cable in the Western provinces and Shaw also provides internet services through DSL or satellite through their [partnership](#) with other internet service providers in Eastern provinces and Northern territories. In addition, Shaw also partnered to provide services through Oricom in Montreal, which provides both cable and DSL options, and other internet service provider, Xplornet who also provides satellite options. This is a perfect example how DDBHH customers may be confused about their internet services through various different internet providers across Canada.

5. To give another specific example, there are two internet terminologies are "fibre" or "fibe" that are still mentioned on the ISP websites, which may be difficult for DDBHH customers to understand the difference between these two terms. CAD-ASC et al. would like to mention that [Videotron](#), is also using its own internet terminologies, which is called "internet fibre hybrid," while [Bell Canada](#) are using its own internet terminology brand "Fibe." Both terms are actually the same but many DDBHH customers may not realize that.

6. Thus, many DDBHH customers do not understand what these types of internet services are being provided from these internet services providers, which are DSL, cable and fibre which clearly demonstrates the necessity to have ASL and LSQ educational learning opportunities for enhanced understanding about internet terminologies. One such method is with ASL and LSQ videos along with visual aids, images, graphics, illustrations or animations that illustrate and describe different internet service terminologies. These videos will facilitate DDBHH Canadians' understanding of these types of internet services. As a side note, the illustrations in the videos would also benefit the general public with visual descriptions along with simple English and French. These same videos can serve as all inclusive and multi-purpose for multiple audiences.

7. To summarize, CAD-ASC et al. additionally recommends that ISPs improve dissemination through their websites on what these types of internet services are and clearly providing its meaning by using simple language that will make concepts clearer for DDBHH customers to understand this including the insertion of the ASL and LSQ videos with visual aids and other accessible tools to describe what kind of internet services that these providers are offering to us on their company websites. When reading contracts in “highly technical / legalese” English and French, there are barriers, therefore it is critical to ensure that contract key terms is also being produced in simple language as well as videos in ASL and LSQ.

ASL & LSQ VIDEOS

8. For alternative formats, once again, CAD-ASC et al. reminds for our language groups, to ensure accessibility, sign language videos are the “proper way” to go. It is our recommendation that a central entity such as, or similar to the CWTA to produce these videos in consultation with CAD-ASC et al, with a new recommendation- to add supporting visual aids into the video screen so DDBHH Canadians can visually connect the new terminologies with the visual image they are seeing. It enhances the linguistic and sensory input of the DDBHH viewer of these videos², which describe evidence that DDBHH customers actually rely on visual communication of information along with Sign languages.

9. The survey that CAD-ASC et al. undertook proves the need for ASL and LSQ videos, outlined in the report submitted on March 4, 2019 to the Commission, which clearly indicates that *CAD-ASC et al. confirms its recommendation that the CRTC to include in a regulatory policy three mandated actions based on the fact that 82.2% of the respondents indicated ASL and LSQ videos to be produced for common internet contract terminology found in the ISP service contracts. Additionally an initial accessible video produced in both sign languages to focus on the Internet Code to ensure their rights and responsibilities as DDBHH customers are safeguard within the Code. As such done for the Wireless Code, mandated accessible videos for ASL and LSQ should be produced with the consultation of groups such as CAD-ASC et al.*³

10. The ASL and LSQ videos will provide accessible information for DDBHH customers with a greater understanding of contracts and terminologies that they will encounter. Additionally ASL and LSQ videos will enhance critical aspects for the understanding of the rights and responsibilities under the newly created Internet Code. Also, it must be mandated that these same ASL and LSQ videos must be displayed through a digital means besides the displayed printed copy of English and French outlines of the Internet Code at ISP retail outlets across Canada.

IN-STORE SERVICES

11. Inside ISP retail outlets, ASL and LSQ versions of the Internet Code must be displayed next to printed English and French simple language signage outlines of the Internet Code and all versions must be prominently displayed next to the point of sale (POS) devices. These ASL and LSQ videos need to be accessible on displayed iPad or computer terminal devices for DDBHH customers.

² [Perception of Sign Language and its Application to Visual Communications for Deaf People](#), The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, July 6, 2005

³ CAD-ASC et al.’s survey report: [An Accessible Canada Internet Code for Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Canadians](#), Page 19, March 4, 2019

12. In addition, the ISP retail outlet Customer Service Representatives (CSR) must receive annual accessibility training by CAD-ASC et al. consultation representatives to provide updated accessible services for DDBHH customers. The annual training will ensure that these CSRs will be able to interact with DDBHH customers without any communication barriers.

13. Once again, CAD-ASC et al. recommends, as it has in previous proceedings, that there be established designated accessibility flagship stores with knowledgeable and experienced DDBHH staff with lived experiences and awareness of the companies' accessible products and services.

14. CAD-ASC et al. recommends ISPs take the following actions:

- a) Establish and designate Accessible Centres of Excellence as ISP flagship stores to ensure barrier-free communication for DDBHH customers with in-store customer service representatives;
- b) Employ DDBHH people with ASL and LSQ fluency in the company stores;**
- c) Where options a and b above are not feasible, sign language services are provided with booked in advance or on-demand sign language interpreters;
- d) Provide in-store tablets such as iPads that play the ASL and LSQ videos; and
- e) Provide in-store appropriate lighting and displays that allow for comfortable viewing of the ASL and LSQ videos by ASL/LSQ Deaf-Blind customers. Note: there are a wide range of Deaf-Blind visual accessibility needs that need to be taken into consideration. Text and braille formats need to be made available in these accessible flagship stores and all possible formats available online including formats that produce clear output on braille displays.

DEAF-BLIND ACCESSIBILITY

15. CAD-ASC et al revisited the totals and would like to correct an error contained therein. The survey also indicated that the following issues are problematic for at least **68%** of the Deaf-Blind respondents:

- Cancelling or changing ISP contracts.
- Getting a written copy of ISP contracts.
- Obtaining ISP contracts and related documents in alternative formats.
- Understanding ISP contracts because of the technical / legal language used in the ISP contracts.
- Lack of awareness / knowledge concerning the data management concept itself.
- Lack of awareness / knowledge of CCTS.

16. CNSDB comments that it is important to ensure that the accessible videos in ASL and LSQ also benefit those with low vision or Deaf-Blind users. The productions must be low vision or Deaf Blind friendly. DWCC previously consulted with a number of Deaf-Blind individuals to determine the best layouts for low vision friendly videos. Considerations to take into account include appropriate lighting, contrast, clothing, foreground and background colours, signing space and more. In conclusion, it is important to consult directly with CAD-ASC et al. regarding video accessibility during production.

17. It is very important that easy-to-find accessible text-based transcripts are made available with these ASL and LSQ videos, to ensure non-signers with extreme low vision and Braille

display users could access the same information. The transcripts need to be made available in a few different formats such as downloadable text files, MS WORD docs. The wording on the website must be available in basic HTML, following [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) standards.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

18. **84.7%** of DDBHH respondents and **80%** of Deaf-Blind respondents indicated a need for in-person educational workshops and opportunities for interactive learning. Therefore, it is now more imperative and critical that CRTC mandates another source of funds to make these such opportunities possible, and the best mechanism for doing so is through the creation of Telecommunications Accessibility Fund (TAF) .

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. The following recommendations from our survey report, which are backed by empirical, quantitative and qualitative survey results and the lived experiences of DDBHH individuals collaborating in this final submission, are once again respectfully presented to the Commission for its consideration:

- a) CRTC mandates an Internet Code to safeguard the rights of all Canadians including DDBHH Canadians.
- b) CRTC mandates in the new policy for DDBHH Canadians, simple English / French language versions and accessible ASL and LSQ videos of:
 - i) Internet Code and Your Rights
 - ii) Common Internet contract terminologies, with special attention to data management, produced by a unified group such as the CWTA.
- c) CCTS mandated to produce ASL and LSQ videos about the elevation of complaints and the process for filing complaints with the CCTS, with the direct consultation of members of CAD-ASC et al.
- d) Mandated digital displays of the Internet Code in ASL and LSQ at the point of sale (POS) terminals at the ISP retail outlets. Deaf-Blind users need the ability to access the videos on their own tablets or smartphones in order to customize the visual settings, view at the optimal distance and move to a different area of the store to find the best visual environment for viewing, There also needs to be large print, Braille and digital access to text based information for the benefit of non signers and Braille display users, again with the option to access the information on their own accessible devices if needed.
- e) ASL & LSQ community education and outreach efforts for the understanding of the Internet Code and customer's rights with mandated funding allowing CAD-ASC et al. to provide these workshops.
- f) CRTC mandates the establishment of a Telecommunications Accessibility Fund (TAF) for groups such as CAD-ASC, CNSDB, DAANS and DWCC to apply for community education project funding, and for any other accessibility groups for any other related

accessibility projects.

- g) CRTC mandates additional accessible formats be made available for those who are Deaf-Blind or Blind, such as: Grade 1 (uncontracted) Braille, Grade 2 (contracted) Braille and Unified English Braille (UEB), electronic documents in the user's preferred format, such as plain text or MS Word, with no images or graphics.

20. The recommendations listed above reflects the fact that many issues / barriers described in this particular proceeding are not new - they have already been repeatedly described and mentioned in a number of previous CRTC proceedings (either written by CAD-ASC et al. or DWCC et al.). Therefore, CAD-ASC et al. highly recommends that recommendations listed in this be adopted to finally remove long described barriers.

CONCLUSION

21. CAD-ASC et al. respectfully reminds the Commission that it is critical that accessibility and human rights lens are considered as a forethought and not as an afterthought when making any policy considerations in the decision-making process. This is supported by the FCC's former Chair, Tom Wheeler, which CAD-ASC et al. submitted an overall recommendations are presented to the Commission for policy considerations that it is critical to safeguard the rights of DDBHH Canadians with accessible solutions, and services under the Internet Code.

22. CAD-ASC et al. thanks the Commission for considering its recommendations regarding the establishment of a mandatory code for Internet services.

As always, please feel free to contact any of the undersigned should you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

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