

**CDBC.VRS-DWCC Comments to CAV’s Answers to CRTC RFI Q36:  
Topic 8: Other - The Sage Report**

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**CDBC.VRS-DWCC’s Position on The Sage Report**

**Methodology**

1. Four members of **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** participated in this section, the topic “Other,” which focused on CAV’s Answer to CRTC’s RFI requesting comments on the Sage Report. All four reviewers had the same perspective, and instead of the other formats, we summarised the Community Members' perspectives on The Sage Report in a few short paragraphs. The four separately written comments make clear statements about the topic.
2. The team leaders sent *The Sage Report* and CAV’s answer to the CRTC for Q36 to the Committee members to provide comments from their experiences and perspectives.
3. Each Committee Member (**CM**) was assigned a number, which is the quote they provide. For example, one member will be labelled and identified as "**CM#9**" The following Committee numbers participating in this Response are **CM#1, CM#9, CM#10, and CM#16.**

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4. To create a flow between the questions, one Committee member consultant pulled all the answers together and tied up the response for each question, summarizing the answers together for each question in the same numbered Response (R#).

### **Description of Report**

5. As described in the Executive Summary and the entire research document, the research personnel were non-signers who used various methods to recruit, register for the research process, and arrange interviews. These methods included written English and French for initial communications and screening questionnaires, followed by telephone contact using the VRS, interviews on a specific video-collection platform, using interpreters from one specific interpreting company - based in Ontario.

### **Initial Response to the Sage Report**

6. In the Sage Report, the total number of participants cited is 32, with 26 ASL users and 6 LSQ users, which appears to be a tiny pool of respondents to be reliable or comprehensive. The group of research participants depended on registering for the CRTC Accessibility Research Database at the time of sign-up for the VRS number and service. The CDBC.VRS-DWCC team members have not yet found the document describing this 'sign-up' process and any agreement about the option to be called for data collection interviews. One wonders about the language level in the above information and agreement documents.

### **General Comments on Deaf-Centred Research**

7. From the views of Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and hard-of-hearing signing professionals, the concerns about establishing appropriate research frameworks to use when studying a particular issue or system related to lived experiences of community members have been identified in many published and unpublished documents. A needs assessment report was done for a 2015 Project funded by Status of Women Canada<sup>1</sup>; the report quoted several researchers who emphasized that

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<sup>1</sup>Strengthening Deaf Girls' and Young Women's Economic Prosperity", Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada 2015. Project Needs Assessment & Framework Report. May 2015, unpublished, English only. Refer to page 10.

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any studies done on Deaf community members must “not harm”<sup>2</sup> and that it requires a full understanding of the population that is being surveyed.

8. Further expanding this view of Deaf-led research - in a London School of Social Care Research report by authors Alys Young and Ros Hunt, which included specific concerns on social care research with, or in contexts that concern, d/Deaf adults. Among their recommendations were:
  - a. “to establish best practices in social research of a very diverse population, taking into consideration the many variables and approaches that may be required to ensure the validity of social care research,” and
  - b. “...to include **d/Deaf professionals and consumers in determining priorities and best practices in social care research.**”<sup>3</sup>
9. The **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** team believes this Deaf-led approach is the correct one to take in ANY research of which DDBHH people are the subjects.

### **Why Sage Missed the Mark**

10. **CM#10 comments:** My immediate thought for the Sage Report is its poor quality. The main reason is that this survey was conducted by hearing non-signers. How can a quality survey be obtained if these hearing non-signers are unfamiliar with the nuances of the Canadian Deaf Community? Additionally, the research interpreters used ASL and LSQ interpreters. Why didn't CRTC hire a Deaf-centric and Sign Language-centric research organization to conduct this survey? Doing so would have provided more direct communication to SRV Canada VRS users recruited for such an important purpose. Using hearing non-signers led to a tiny pool of respondents, with just 26 ASL users and 6 LSQ users. This report was not a comprehensive and practical data survey. There needs to be more significant support for the Canadian Deaf Ecosystem where DDBHH researchers are included to generate higher quality and more comprehensive data surveys.

### **Conflict of Interest and Validity of Research Questions**

11. **CM#9 comments:** We must point out that the research process that forms the basis for the Sage Report included using communication accessibility programs, services, and personnel **that the researchers were supposed to be reviewing.** They used the VRS to connect with the service users who were to be recruited for interviews. Then in holding the interviews with consumers, the interpreting

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<sup>2</sup> Burke, T. Blankmeyer (2013). Do No Harm: research ethics in Deaf communities, workshop presented at Gallaudet University, Washington, DC.

<sup>3</sup> Young, A. and R. Hunt. (2011). [Research with d/Deaf people](#). London School of Social Care Research

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company used by the researchers is primarily based in Ontario and is one of two ASL interpreting businesses that supply the VIs for CAV. The Francophone-LSQ participants were contacted on VRS, and presumably, the LSQ interpreters were recruited from the same interpreting company as the ASL personnel.

12. I believe the scenario above is a conflict of interest since the interpreting company would benefit from providing the service to the research team. Another concern is that the Video Relay Service management should not have access to the consumers' identities or knowledge of the process. What occurred tainted the research process and could influence the decision to provide video relay services. It adds to the DDBHH community's feelings of disempowerment.

### **Disempowerment**

13. **CM#9 comments:** Deaf and Deaf-Blind people have felt disempowered when others have chosen to "do for, not with" when they can design appropriate programs and projects, gather information, and document key findings. Consumer groups and individuals can be precious allies in all aspects of researching and developing accessibility programs.

### **Indigenous Perspectives**

14. **CM#1 comments:** "In the Sage Report, only once is "Indigenous" mentioned, with the suggestion that Indigenous Sign Languages be available as an option on the website. Since the Indigenous community members have not agreed on which Indigenous Sign Languages are considered "official," what would be more beneficial is to have Indigenous Deaf Interpreters or translators provide information in ASL or LSQ on CAV's website and its social media platforms.
15. Providers of VRS and other telecommunication services should not be focused only on the cities and towns with Wi-Fi access but be considerate of Indigenous people residing in remote and rural locations. Indigenous DHH people deserve equitable communication access, including Video Relay Services."

### **Closing Comment**

16. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC's** final comment is while we appreciate the CRTC for its efforts in collecting the responses from the stakeholders and VRS users for *The Sage Report*, in retrospect to the methodology, there is room for improvement.

**\*\*END OF DOCUMENT\*\***