


Current Telecommunications Issues Matrix

	<p>Able Australia – We support people with deafblindness in achieving self fulfillment and connection with the greater community. We believe in creating a community where people who are deafblind are seen heard respected valued and connected.</p> <p>Head Office: PO Box 1213, 616 Riversdale Road, Camerwell, 3124</p> <p>Email: ablelink@ableaustralia.org.au</p> <p>Website: www.ableaustralia.org.au</p>
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Fixed Line Telephony			
Current issues	Action to date	Suggested solutions	Further Reference
Current braille access to fixed line telephone via access to TTY is outdated and unreliable	Have reported many faults to Telstra Disability and have consulted with industry experts to resolve ongoing issues	Research and update braille access to TTY, incorporating improvements to braille technology in the past ten years. Testing with the user group during the development phase	Research into the actual usage of TTY by the deaf Community and its viability in the future
Current access to fixed line telephone via large visual display is unsatisfactory as the display is a fixed size and colour and not customizable	Have reported this limitation to Telstra Disability	Research and improvement on current large visual display. Testing with the user group during the development phase	
Reduction in the use of TTY in the deaf community marginalizes the dependence on this technology for deafblind people.		Reduce the monthly cost of fixed line telephony for TTY	
Dependence on Telstra as the Carrier Service Provider as the provider of specialist disability equipment.		The Disability Equipment Program to be made independent.	
Fixed line telephony not the best mode of communication for people with deafblindness, due the the skill required to read text in braille or large print in “real time”.		Provide telecommunication in non real time for example mobile phones SMS or via computer.	
The Internet			
Current issues	Action to date	Suggested solutions	Further Reference

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Affordability of the monthly fees of broadband plans	TadAust has been established to provide affordable access to broadband but TadAust does not provide significant savings and restricts choice in ISP provider.	Subsidied access to broadband plans for people with deafblindness.	People with deafblindness are not able to benefit from “bundled” plans as they are tied to Telstra with their landline. This can be compensated with subsidies.
ISP support is difficult and sometimes impossible for a deafblind person. Some ISP will insist on the deafblind person “registering” one other person as their advocate but this is impractical and difficult in itself.	ISP Technical support regularly refuse to speak to an interpreter about technical issues and insist on only speaking to the deafblind person.	ISP technical support should be satisfied speaking to the deafblind person via an interpreter.	
Ensure inbuilt accessibility of Internet communication protocols	Extensive Liasion with ACE in the development of Internet Relay	Testing in the development stage of Internet protocols for braille and low vision accessibility.	
Ensure inbuilt accessibility of Video Relay			
Provide options for Video relay to include a combination of Auslan and typing text conversations.			
Mobile Telephony			
Current issues	Action to date	Suggested solutions	Further Reference
Current handsets are not required to provide inbuilt magnification, speech nor braille access.	A small number of handsets have provided accessibility.	All handsets provide magnification of text, speech and braille output.	
The Disability Equipment Program does not include mobile telephony	Mobile telephony has been excluded from the term “Telecommunications”	Mobile telephony be included in the definition of “Telecommunications” and supported by the DEP.	
Affordability of a mobile phone and plan.	People who are deafblind need to purchase expensive handsets that are compatible with accessibility software and also have the added expense of purchasing a braille display.	Subsidise the cost of the handset and the cost of the additional magnification and speech software and the braille Display (if necessary)	
There is no research for braille	A person who is deafblind	Ongoing research and testing of	

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access to a mobile phone for a deafblind person.	currently has to “hope” that a handset from Finland, software from Spain, a braille display from Germany with all be compatible and work as a mobile phone.	the wide range of emerging mobile technologies specific for the deafblind community.	
The market for a Braille solution for mobile phone access is too small therefore no commercial supplier is able to provide this solution.			
Other			
Current issues	Action to date	Suggested solutions	Further Reference
As new technologies emerge there is a significant time lag before it is acknowledged as a legitimate form of communication and an even longer time lag before the accessibility issues are addressed.	The government has “legislated” to ensure web accessibility but this does not seem to be working.	There needs to be an ongoing commitment to research and finding solutions for accessibility of emerging technologies	Social Networking is the current “new innovation” in communication but there is a significant time lag before its acceptance as a valid form of “telecommunication”. <i>“Social networking sites lock out disabled users”</i> is found at http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/enation85
New technologies should work “off the shelf” with assistive technologies	There is no attempt to increase the awareness of the incorporating the necessary protocols to ensure accessibility.	Legislation and awareness of how to incorporate greater accessibility in new technologies.	