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PHONE CHATS BETWEEN DEAF AND NON-DEAF MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH SERVICE

 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Royal Dutch phone company KPN has launched its Tele Interpreter service, which translates speech into text or sign language — and vice versa — remotely, and in real time.

We've already seen a form of digital sign language recognition through the [Enable Talk](#) smart gloves set, which use gesture detection to translate [ASL](#) and other visual languages. But for deaf people wanting to have a conversation remotely, there aren't too many options. In the Netherlands, Royal Dutch phone company KPN has launched its [Tele Interpreter](#) service, which translates speech into text or sign language — and vice versa — in real time.

After registering for the service, users with hearing impairments can make a call using their computer, tablet or smartphone by installing the Total Conversation app. When they want to make a call mediated by a translator, they simply open the app, select text or sign language, and the call is put through to the KPN team before connecting to the contact. If the text option is spoken, deaf users can type the conversation which is then relayed in speech over the phone to the hearing recipient. The sign language option requires a video camera so the mediator can translate the caller's gestures into speech. Non-deaf parties then have their spoken responses translated back into either text or ASL. The text mediation service is open 24/7, while ASL mediation is available between 7am and 8pm on weekdays and 10am and 4pm on weekends.

The Tele Interpreter service uses real-life translators to make remote conversation mediation between the deaf and non-deaf more seamless. Are there other ways that technology can connect those with hearing disabilities to the wider community?

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