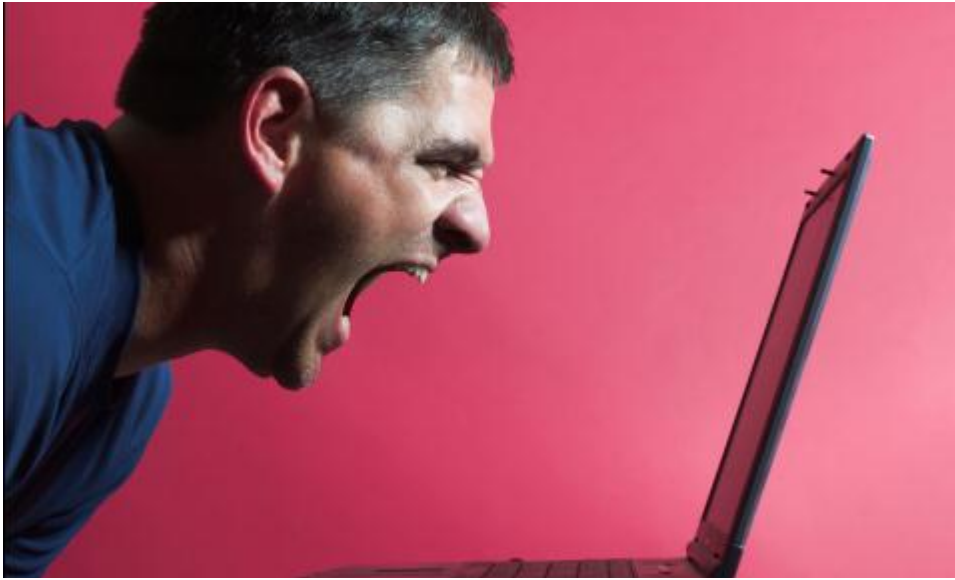# Technology & Interpreters

Friends or Foes ?

ESFLI 2013
Ljubljana, Slovenia

Len Roberson & Sherry Shaw
University of North Florida

Skill Development

Academic & Professional Development

Technology Benefits

Provision of Services

Engagement with Deaf Community

Technology Benefits

- Access
- Operations
- Preparation
- Delivery of Work Product
- Research

Academic / Professional Development

- Professional Development
- Online / Distance Academic programs
- Access to Evidence-Based Practices
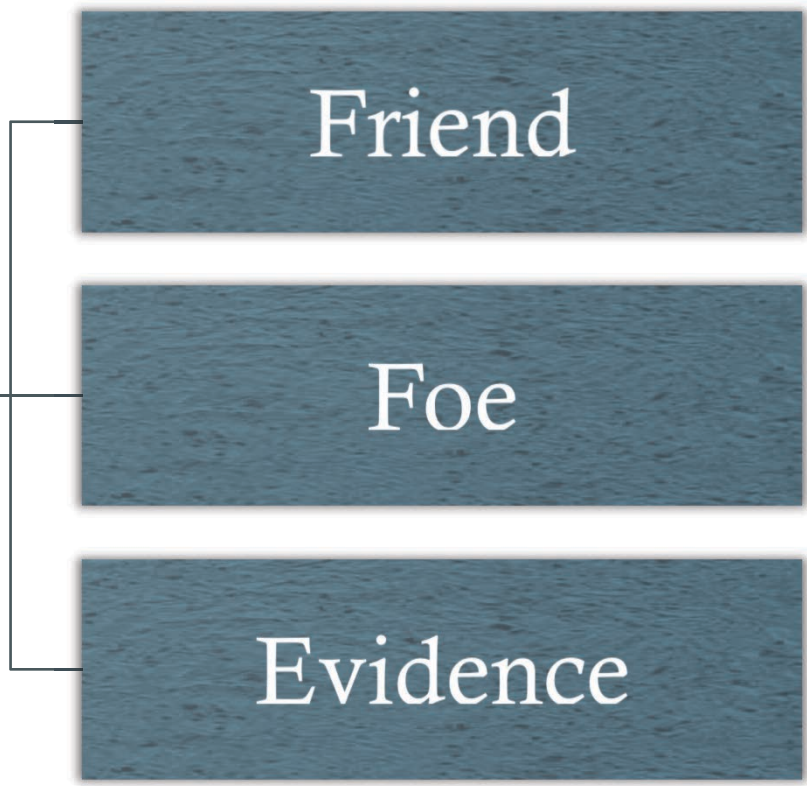
Engagement with Deaf Community

- Language
- Video / Distance Mentoring
- Video Conferencing / Instructor

Provision of Interpreting Services

- Friend
- Foe
- Evidence

RID Standard Practice Paper VRI

- Fee-based, video conferencing, separate locations

- On-demand, by appointment

- Unregulated

- Several benefits (faster access, quality services, fiscally resourceful)

- Several limitations (not for all situations – high interactivity, complex; dependent on technology)

- Readiness, content, technical, environmental

RID Standard Practice Paper VRS

- Free, telephone relay service, video technology, Allowing Deaf/HH to use ASL to make calls.

- Began in 2000, 4000+ interpreters, millions of minutes per month of service. Growth inevitable.

- Regulated by Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
  - Speed of Answer, 24/7, D/HH – H separate locations

- Historical → Interpreters + large corporations + Federal Government = interpreting services

RID Standard Practice Paper VRS

- Diversity – situations, language, etc.

- Issues for Consideration
  - Credentials
  - Preparation
  - Teaming
  - Working Conditions
  - Training
  - Cultural Competence
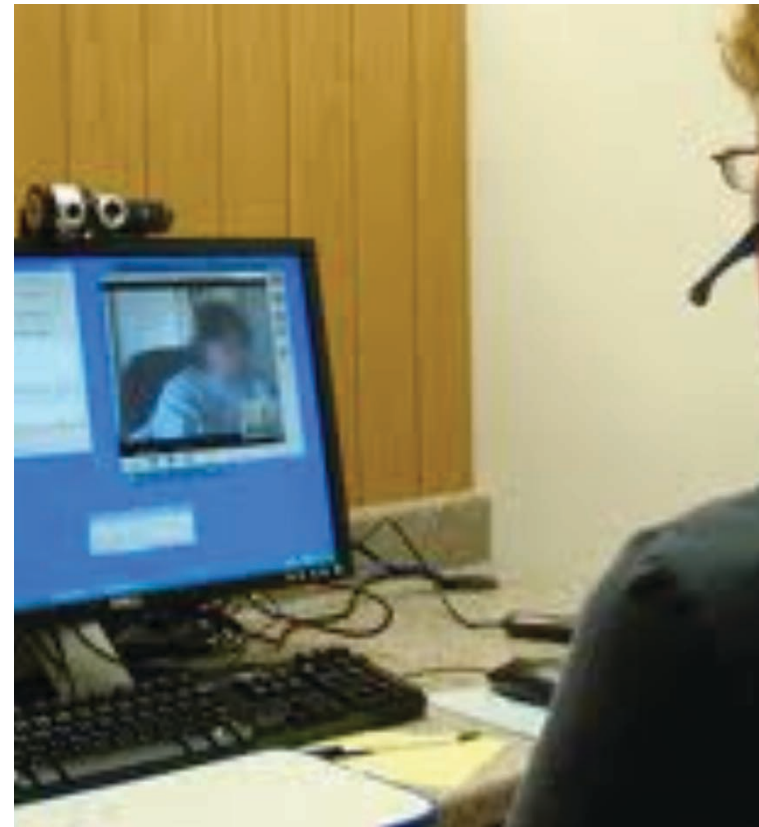
National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers Report on VRI/VRS 2010

- <u>Interpreter Training Needs</u>: Business practices, laws, interpersonal relations, role & boundaries, technology, environmental management, conversation turn-taking

- <u>Conditions Impacting VI Work</u>: video quality, audio quality, connection stability, ease with hardware and software, technology training, technical support, advance preparation and debriefing

- <u>Business Practices</u>: laws and ethical considerations, working conditions, billing considerations, customer service

National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers Report on VRI/VRS 2010

- <u>VRI Frequency</u>: hospital/medical (70%); business or work (46%); community interpreting (32%); Conference (32%); Personal (28%)

- <u>Deaf Perceptions of Interpreter Skill Sets</u>: Interpreting (73%), language (53%), conversation management (40%), cultural competency (33%)

- <u>Future Research Needs</u>: skill sets and cultural competency needed for VRI/VRS, perspective of non-deaf consumers, trilingual interpreters,, input from consumers who are Deaf-Blind, confidentiality

http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/VRIStepsReportApril2010_FINAL1.pdf

NAD Position Paper

- Technology can provide an interim solution to the need for immediate access.

- VRI is a "**<u>fill the gap</u>**" solution.

- On site interpreters are more likely to lead to effective communication, have more physical flexibility, have greater access to cues.
  - "In short, on-site interpreter services are not subject to many of the limitations experienced by VRI services."

NAD Position Paper

"It is the position of the NAD that the *use of on-site interpreters should always be paramount*, and when VRI is used in the absence of any available on-site interpreter, it must be used properly in terms of policy, procedure, and technology. "

VRS Research

- Wessling & Shaw (in press, JOI-889 VRS interpreters)
  - Voice of the VRS Interpreter
  - Call content and frequency affect emotional extremes
  - Interpreters use various coping strategies (77% need external support)

VRS Research

- Wessling & Shaw (in press, JOI-889 VRS interpreters)

  "The only coping strategy I have found is to leave VRS interpreting."

  "Work less in VRS for a while; work more in the community outside of VRS to have a break from the intensity of interpreting phone calls."

  "I reduced my hours and am seeking other employment."

  "I have reduced my hours to reduce the cumulative stress and trauma that was wearing me down."

Remote Interpreting
(Roziner & Shlesinger)

- Stress and performance in remote interpreting

- RI due to inability to co-locate, "cost" needed to be examined.

- Factors
  - Clear sight line
  - Mental workload during RI (Moser-Mercer, 2003, 2005)
  - Lack of control
  - Isolation
  - lack of presence

Remote Interpreting
(Roziner & Shlesinger)

- Findings
  - No significant differences found in :
    - Environmental conditions
    - General stress factors
    - Interpreter's general health
    - Quality of interpreting
  - Finds considerable psychological effects (e.g., feelings of isolation, perceptions of quality, physical comfort)

- Recommendations offered
  - Suitable technology, appropriate work environment, reasonable working conditions.

Technology – the early years

- Describing Remote Interpreting in reference to a telephone arrangement

- "a very neat and obvious use of interpreters […] This service might easily be developed further, so that it should no more be necessary to displace interpreters for short conferences of a few hours"
  - Paneth, **1957**

Issues of VRS Conditions

Rico Peterson in Nicodemus & Swabey (2011)

- Performance targets

- Working condition standards

- Decontextualized information

- Efficient decision-making

- Regulations and Policies (management)

- Role as communication assistant, not interpreter

"One of the most addictive aspects of working in video is the capacity of this medium to surprise, delight, and humble an interpreter, sometimes in the space of a single call" (p. 222).

Technology in Court
(Napier)

- General Points
  - Interpreters don't like communicating via videoconferencing
  - Service users feel Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) is effective.
  - Advent of video technology has led to Deaf people being able to communicate at a distance via a signed language.
  - Use of Technology impacts SLI and Interpreting Process
    - Adapt signing style
    - Limited opportunity to assess language needs of Deaf person
    - Limited ability to prepare/brief with all clients
    - Challenge getting Deaf persons attention remotely

Technology in Court
(Napier)

- Findings
  - Technological Issues
    - Set-up time, equipment types/size, flexibility in views
  - Linguistic Issues
    - Accessibility of the signs, 2D vs. 3D, language adjustment, attention-getting and turn-taking
  - Environmental Issues
    - Background & audio
  - Logistical Issues
    - Preparation/briefing time, establishing cues,

Technology in Court
(Napier)

- "In sum, the data revealed that the interpretations were generally accurate, there were no communication breakdowns, and the trial scenarios were completed with all participants having their message conveyed in each language direction."

LanguageLine Solutions Launches LanguageUc – Video Interpreting Over Mobile Devices to Provide a Cost-Effective Alternative to Onsite Interpreting

LanguageLine Solutions, the global leader in language access (formerly Language Line Services), today officially launched LangaugeU(c) – a video remote interpreting (VRI) solution offering Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese and American Sign Language (ASL), with other languages being added continuously.

"For 30 years we have been the global leader in on-demand language interpreting you've heard over-the-phone. Now we are the on-demand language interpreting company you can see and hear," said Scott W. Klein, President and CEO of LanguageLine Solutions. "Tablets, iPads and smartphones with their video capabilities are everywhere, and LanguageLine's LangaugeU(c) is the best demonstration of the power that video brings, not only for the deaf, but for spoken language interpreting with new depth and capability. LangaugeU(c) enables interpreters to see firsthand the critical non-verbal gestures, body language and facial expressions of customers or patients to improve communication. The video interface even allows interpreters to pull up a white board on their screen and type out information."

Technology as FRIEND

- Adapts interpreting profession to the changing world

- Cost effective →increase in provision of services

- Provides for service where it might not be available

- Always there at your fingertips (time to service)

- Automates an interpreter's life

Technology as FOE

- Reverts us back to the conduit model we have struggled to overcome as "practice professionals"

- Removes the humanness from the interpreting process that attracted many interpreters originally

- Becomes an 'easy' solution to securing qualified interpreters when they are readily available in the community

- Increases physical and mental stress involved in interpreting

- Changes rapidly