

Remote speech-to-text and sign language interpretation

Germany – VerbaVoice GmbH

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The mission of VerbaVoice, a social and technology company, is to provide fully Inclusive Education and language accessibility for students with disabilities through a flexible and customizable online interpreting platform. The system focuses on persons with hearing impairments, but also provides a solution for the education of mobility impaired or hospitalized pupils of all school forms and age groups who can join a class remotely. Each platform component (original video and audio, live transcript and sign language video, as well as document upload) can be customized as needed to provide the best service possible. The system also works in multilingual contexts and facilitates foreign language learning processes.

QUOTE:

“Our vision right from the start: 100 per cent accessible education, information, and knowledge for hearing impaired people.”

—Ms. Ulrike Waltsgott, Head of Communications, VerbaVoice

FACTS & FIGURES

- VerbaVoice had 18 full-time employees in 2012, and 61 hearing and hearing-impaired employees in 2015.
- Income generated in 2015 was approximately 1.8 million Euro, compared to 600,000 Euro in 2012.
- VerbaVoice provided approximately 20,000 interpreting hours in 2015, compared to 7,000 hours in 2012.
- The company operates in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, and is currently expanding to Italy, the United Kingdom, and Spain.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

Real inclusion of hearing impaired pupils in regular school systems in Germany and other countries is still facing difficulties in terms of high costs and the availability/flexibility of sign language interpreters and qualified speech-to-text reporters. In the past, hearing impaired people have often been excluded from higher education and were thus primarily restricted to manual and technical professions that require less communication support. The local availability of sign language

interpreters and speech-to-text reporter still imposes strong financial pressure on public funding institutions, which often have to pay for their travel costs in addition to their actual working hours.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

VerbaVoice offers a custom-built, completely accessible online conferencing system that is browser-based, accessible for blind people using screen readers, and tailor-made to suit the needs of deaf and hard of hearing users. A specific app is available on mobile devices for iOS and android to display spoken content through live text and video on mobile devices. A dedicated cloud-based online booking and administration system (Adobe Life-Cycle) facilitates access to the services. The text transmission system VerbaVoice Live Text features optimized text flow and one-by-one transmission of characters, as well as the VerbaVoice Live Editor – a tool used for permanent live text correction by several speech-to-text reporters at the same time.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The cloud-based system can be easily transferred to other countries or contexts: It is software- and language-independent, easy to handle for the end user, and works for any language combination. The costs consist of the local rates for interpreters and speech-to-text reporters (about 75 Euro per hour for Germany) and a moderate platform fee. In addition, a licensing model could be an option if the system is to be introduced to a new market on a larger scale. Remote interpreting thus provides a cost-effective method to be used on a large scale.

Photo: Yes

Life story: Yes

CONTACT

VerbaVoice GmbH
Ms. Ulrike Waltsgott
Germany

www.verbavoice.de

+49 89 41615265

u.waltsgott@verbavoice.de

tags: deaf and hearing impaired, ICT (Information and Communication Technology), education