

Video sign language interpretation for bank customers

United Kingdom – Barclays Bank: Sign Video Interpretation Services

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

SignVideo is an app that can be downloaded for free from the Apple iTunes online store and can be used on Apple iPads. Using technology similar to Skype, the app enables Barclays Bank staff to connect to a qualified interpreter in seconds and gives them and customers who are deaf or hard of hearing the possibility to speak with each other without actually having an interpreter physically present. The service is currently offered in more than 1,400 branches of Barclays Bank throughout the United Kingdom.

“SignVideo helps us to instantly and seamlessly serve our deaf customers using sign language so that they may enjoy equal access to banking in any of our 1,400+ branches across the United Kingdom.”

- Ms. Kathryn Townsend, Barclays Bank

FACTS & FIGURES

- The service is available across the United Kingdom in all units of Barclays Bank, and over 10,000 iPads have been supplied to bank staff members.
- Over a period of seven months the branches have used SignVideo for 124 conferences with a sign interpreter and their customers.
- As of 2015, approximately 30,000 employees of Barclays Bank have received information about this service.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

People who are deaf or have hearing loss often face barriers when communicating with various organizations, such as a bank, and are dependent on family members, friends, technological solutions, or pre-arranged interpreters. Before the development of the SignVideo, Barclay’s customers sometimes had to wait several weeks for an interpreter to be available to attend branch appointments.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

Before developing the current solution, Barclays Bank offered the deaf and hard of hearing an interpretation service for their telephone banking, which gave customers instant access to an interpreted call via their computer or tablet from the comfort of their home. The solution now developed is a free application, which the Barclays staff members download to their iPads. When the customer arrives for an appointment, the Barclays colleague uses the app to connect to the service. The SignVideo interpreters work remotely in a call centre and receive incoming video calls from the Barclays branches via the iPad. Customers speak in sign language while facing the iPad camera and an interpreter relays this communication audibly to the employees. The service is currently offered from Monday to Friday (8 a.m. to 6 p.m.).

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

Barclays will continue to promote these services through the media and by staff members so that all customers will become aware of them. The iTunes App is now available for other service providers, and Barclays is working with SignVideo to promote and encourage wider adoption to help remove the barriers that users experience in face-to-face environments. The application is free for all businesses to download, but a contract with SignVideo is required.



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tags: deaf and hearing impaired, ICT, products and services, marketing, corporate and business strategies