

UbiNews - September 27th, 2011

Communication rights for deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing people – Jason Curry, CEO

As some of you might not know, I was born profoundly deaf and I have learned something new. I have met with many people all over the country, and one thing I hear over and over is that both people who are deaf *and* hearing complain that their communication rights are denied. That's right – I said hearing people complain about their communications rights as well! In one case, the federal government had a UbiDuo available for an employee who is deaf, but that employee refused to use it and instead prefers an interpreter. The interpreter is only available once a week for one hour for that deaf employee. What about the other 39 hours in the week where the hearing co-workers and managers want to communicate with that deaf employee? That person doesn't understand that they are putting the work of everyone else in the office on hold for 39 hours. By doing that, the employee who is deaf is also taking away the hearing employees' rights to communicate.



Why do I bring this issue up? Because in the deaf and hard of hearing world, it has always been about *our* rights wherever *we* go, but sometimes we forget that hearing people have the right to communicate with us.

I'm not saying people who are hard of hearing or deaf should stop using interpreters. It's ok to prefer an interpreter, if that's what you're used to.

But if it will be literally *days* before an interpreter is available for you to communicate with a hearing co-worker, waiting is neither practical nor productive. If a person who is deaf or hard of hearing refuses to use the UbiDuo because they prefer an interpreter, then they are holding up the interaction. If the hearing person is willing to communicate on the UbiDuo and the deaf person is not willing, then the hearing person's right to communicate is also being denied. To ensure that the rights of deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing users are being met, everyone has to be willing to use the UbiDuo to communicate.

UbiDuo Success Story – Ryan Marcopulos

1) How does the UbiDuo help you in your job at the Independent Living Center?

Being the only Deaf person working for Independent Living Center, everyone is pretty much going in and out asking questions and share information that we find at the meeting, workshops or on the road. My UbiDuo is always on my desk and open ready for everyone to come in and sit and type to me. The staff doesn't have to rely on the email every time and waiting to receive answer. Sometime we

have last minute staff meeting in the office, and all I needed to do is get my UbiDuo and find someone that is willing to sit with me and type for me. Sometime I have consumers that come in with their parents or family members, as most of us know that parents usually don't know sign language very well if their child are deaf. it is great tools for us to use to communicate.



2) What is your all time favorite UbiDuo experience?

My favorite thing is when it's on my desk – the co-worker can just walk in and sit and have a chat with me. Not necessary to be just “work-related” thing. I can make more friends through this.

3) What situations have you used the UbiDuo in such as meetings?

I've used UbiDuo in many different situation. In the staff Meeting, One to one meeting, college tour to our center (Special Ed classes) I show them different options of communicating with Deaf people. Sometime they want to take over the note taker position to get experience of communicating with me in the meeting room. I bring it to Social Security Office, IRS office, and other business places. I make few trips to nursing home where Deaf person is residing and they often have few questions to ask nurse. I use it to communicate with the nurses for them.

4) What other comments would you want to share with people who are deaf or hard of hearing who yet don't have the UbiDuo?

Grab the opportunity of experiencing different technology and options out in the world. UbiDuo is a great tool to use if you are working in hearing world. You will be able to connect with them and you'll be surprised what you may learn about your peers!

Krae Steffenhofer – Department of Fish and Wildlife Service

Krae Steffenhofer, a deaf employee with the Department of Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), shares his own story about how the UbiDuo is making a impact with his job. Krae works in the IT department with FWS and interacts with his co-workers, managers, and clients freely without face-to-face barriers. The UbiDuo is allowing Krae to be much more productive on the job.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)



sComm is Growing!

sComm is proud to announce that we have two new Deaf & Hard of Hearing Communication Managers to our team!



Danny Lucero is a Gallaudet alumni. Danny brings strong knowledge of the Deaf Culture and sales to the sComm team. You can reach him on VP at 317-565-2278 or dlucero@scomm.com



Christopher Kurz is a Rochester Institute of Technology alumni. Chris brings strong knowledge of assistive devices technology and communication technology to the sComm team. You can reach him on VP at 816-527-8339. or chris@scomm.com

Danny and Chris are both deaf and fluent in ASL. They are working closely with the Deaf Community to provide education, support, and training for the new and current UbiDuo users. Please give them the warmest welcome to our team!

UbiDuo Map – UbiDuo locations

The UbiDuo is in all 50 states in schools, universities, federal/state/local agencies, corporations, police stations, hospitals, vocational rehabilitation, and other entities or organizations. Thousands of people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing are using the UbiDuo to interact face-to-face never like before. The UbiDuo is empowering deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing people to carry on conversations on the go, on the spot, instantly at any time. Check out the map that shows everywhere the UbiDuo is in America!

[Click here to see the map.](#)



Click the link below to sign up for sComm's next Webinar on Wednesday, October 5th at 3 p.m. Central time. We will cover more about why it is not just about deaf and hard of hearing people's rights but also about hearing people's rights to communication. If you want to learn more about ensuring equal communication rights for deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing people. this Webinar is the session to participate!

[REGISTER NOW](#)

If you as a deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing person want to have the power like Ryan, me, or other UbiDuo users to converse with anyone, you can have it by ordering the UbiDuo. Learn more about the UbiDuo by going to www.sComm.com, or contact the sales team at sales@scomm.com.

Contact Us

sComm

6238 Hadley Street
Raytown, Missouri 64133
info@scomm.com
www.scomm.com
(816) 350-7008
(816) 527- 8339 VP

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