

## ACCAN media release

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### ACCAN demonstrates the value of Real-Time Text conversation at Parliament House

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is demonstrating exciting technology that could be called “SMS on steroids” to Members of Parliament and Senators at Parliament House today.

ACCAN's Manager of Disability Policy and Research, Gunela Astbrink said that Real-Time Text conversation is not currently available in Australia but is very popular overseas. The demonstration is a unique opportunity to see how this technology works through an Internet server in the Netherlands. Real-Time Text conversation uses Text over IP, a version of Voice over IP.

Real-Time Text is conversational text that is sent and received on a character by character basis. The characters are sent 'immediately' (in practice, within a fraction of a second) once typed over the network to the other person in the conversation and immediately displayed to that person. This allows text to be used in the same conversational mode as voice.

Real-Time Text (RTT) has been designed for Deaf people and people with hearing or speech impairments. But it also is a *natural extension of voice telephony*. For instance, RTT can be used in noisy environments, or when you want to communicate during a meeting when voice is not appropriate. It is also very useful for conveying information where exact spelling is important during a voice call.

Allan Asher, the CEO of ACCAN stressed the need for real-time text conversation to be introduced in Australia as soon as possible. The current analogue TTYs do not work on IP-based networks and are considered an “analogue island in a digital world”. The time for change is now.

ACCAN is highlighting the value of Real-Time Text as part of the Technology Expo organised by Deafness Forum of Australia and supported by Australian Greens Health & Disabilities spokesperson Senator Rachel Siewert; Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, Bill Shorten MP and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary Sector, Mitch Fifield.

#### **About ACCAN**

ACCAN is the peak body that represents all consumers on communications issues including telecommunications, broadband and emerging new services. ACCAN provides a strong unified voice to industry and government as consumers work towards availability, accessibility and affordability of communications services for all Australians.

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