Technologies for the d/Deaf

There have been extensive advancements in proliferation, access, and types of communication technologies available to the general public. Technologies for the d/Deaf can be considered in one of 3 categories:

1. Hearing Assistive Technology
2. Deaf Adaptive Technology
3. Deaf-friendly Technology

This burst of technological progress has had both a beneficial and detrimental impact upon sign languages. Below is a brief explanation of each category, its impact on Auslan or the Deaf community, and examples of such technologies.

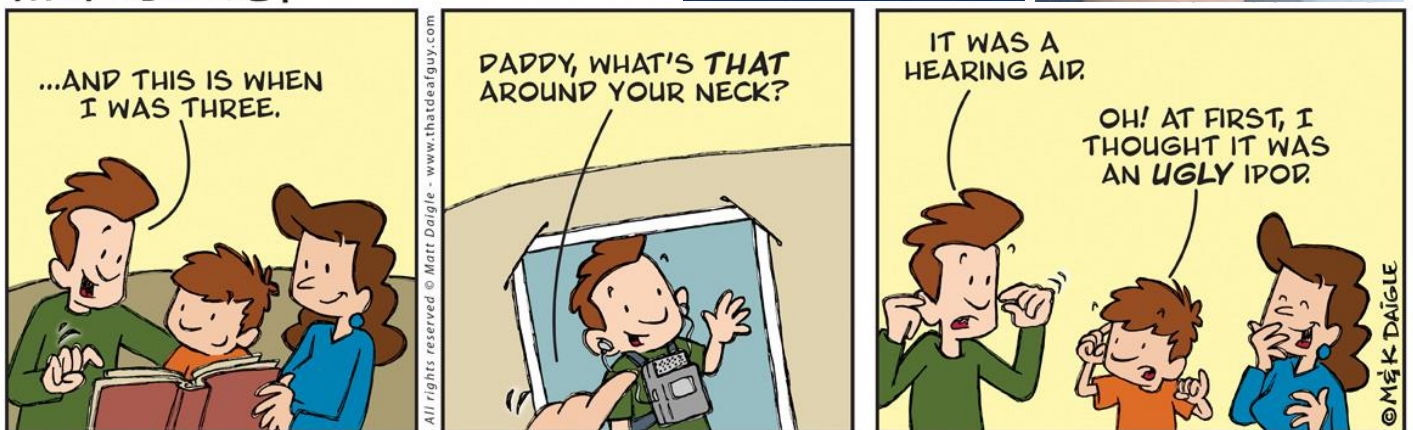## 1. Hearing Assistive Technologies

Technology designed to help deaf people 'hear' and enhance listening using FM systems, Infrared systems, Audio Induction Loop systems, and other accessories to couple hearing aids to media such as phones, music players, computers, and tablet devices.

Unfortunately the emergence of hearing assistive technologies, often results in an increase in oral based education and a reduction of the use of signed languages in the classroom context. It has also resulted in many deaf children being forced to remain in the hearing world and limited their exposure to signed languages.

Examples of hearing assistive technologies include: hearing aids, cochlear implants, FM systems, easyTek, miniTek, hearing loops, etc

Induction Loop System
Please switch your hearing aid to "T"
Sound Induction Systems 01686 628012

THAT DEAF GUY

...AND THIS IS WHEN I WAS THREE.

DADDY, WHAT'S *THAT* AROUND YOUR NECK?

IT WAS A HEARING AID.

OH! AT FIRST, I THOUGHT IT WAS AN *UGLY* IPOD.

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2. Deaf Adaptive Technology

Technology designed to make living as a d/Deaf person in a predominantly hearing and speaking culture more comfortable and convenient.

Within this category, there are 3 sub categories.

a. Visual Alerting Devices
b. Auditory to Text Conversion
c. English/Auslan Translation/Interpreting.

Deaf Adaptive Technology cont.

a. **Visual Alerting Devices:** Specifically designed devices or devices adapted or connected to existing equipment to help alert deaf people to sound using visual support, usually through flashing lights or vibrations. This is available for door bells, home phones, smoke alarms, baby monitors, alarm clocks, timers, etc. Often multiple devices can be connected to a single pager which alerts the wearer to which device has been activated.
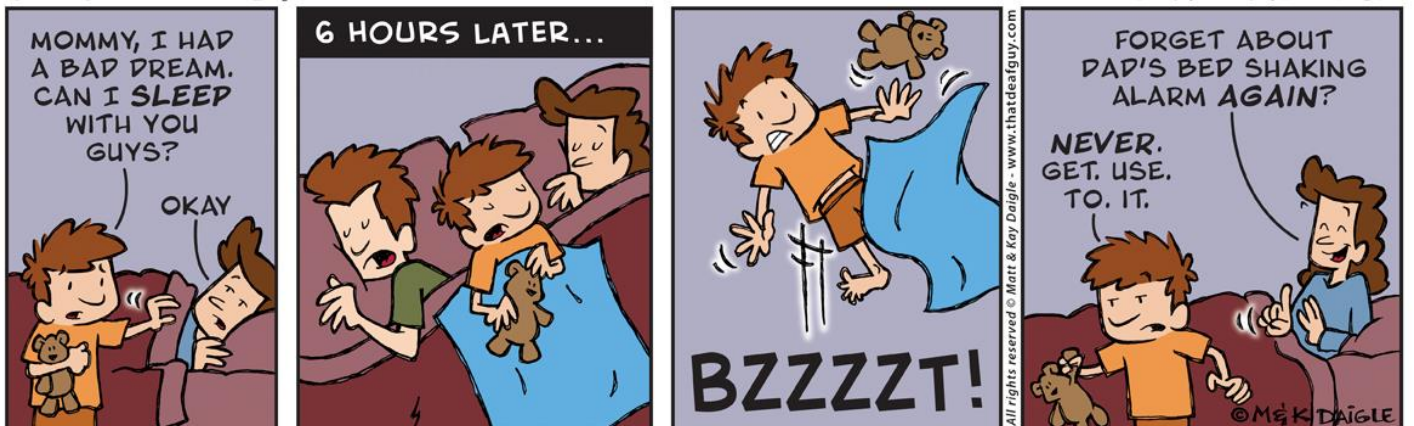

IN DEAF CULTURE... BY MATT DAIGLE

KNOCK, KNOCK!

Bob, the deaf moth tends to be attracted to the flashing light instead of answering the door.

IN DEAF CULTURE... BY MATT DAIGLE

DADDY, IT'S BOTTLE-FEEDING TIME!

THAT DEAF GUY BY MATT & KAY DAIGLE

MOMMY, I HAD A BAD DREAM. CAN I *SLEEP* WITH YOU GUYS?

OKAY

6 HOURS LATER...

BZZZZT!

FORGET ABOUT DAD'S BED SHAKING ALARM *AGAIN*?

NEVER. GET. USE. TO. IT.

b. **Auditory to Text Conversion:** Technologies which convert spoken language to text and support telecommunication. Deaf communities living within a hearing dominated world, have had to adapt and learn the language of the hearing. Although unable to 'hear' English for example, they have learnt to interact with hearing people using the written word. This does however, often rely upon the proficiency of English to communicate. Examples of technologies used to convert spoken English to written English include: TTY, fax, CapTel (captioned telephones), stenography (instant translation of the spoken word into English text using real-time transcription systems either remotely or onsite), email, sms, messenger, closed captioning, closed captioning devices, open captioning, and traditional relay services (the deaf person types to a relay officer who then voices what has been typed to the other party on the phone, and vice versa).


THAT DEAF GUY BY MATT & KAY DAIGLE

...AND SHE *SCORED* A GOAL!

...AND SHE SCOURED A GOAT!

LOOK, THE CLOSED CAPTIONS ARE WRONG!

SHE *SCOURED* A GOAT!?

HA! HA! HA! HA!

I'm so glad you called   are we still meeting for lunch tomorrow?   great   let's go to that new restaurant by the river I can't wait to see you

Press ▲ to Review the Conversation

Deaf Adaptive Technology cont.

c. **English/Auslan Translation/Interpreting:** Technology that enables the Deaf person to utilise Auslan while communicating with a speaking/hearing person. For example: VRS (Video Relay Service) – the Auslan user signs their side of the conversation and the relay officer, who is a certified interpreter, connects via a standard phone line or mobile to the hearing user, and relays the conversation back and forth, using Auslan with the Deaf person and voicing to the hearing person.
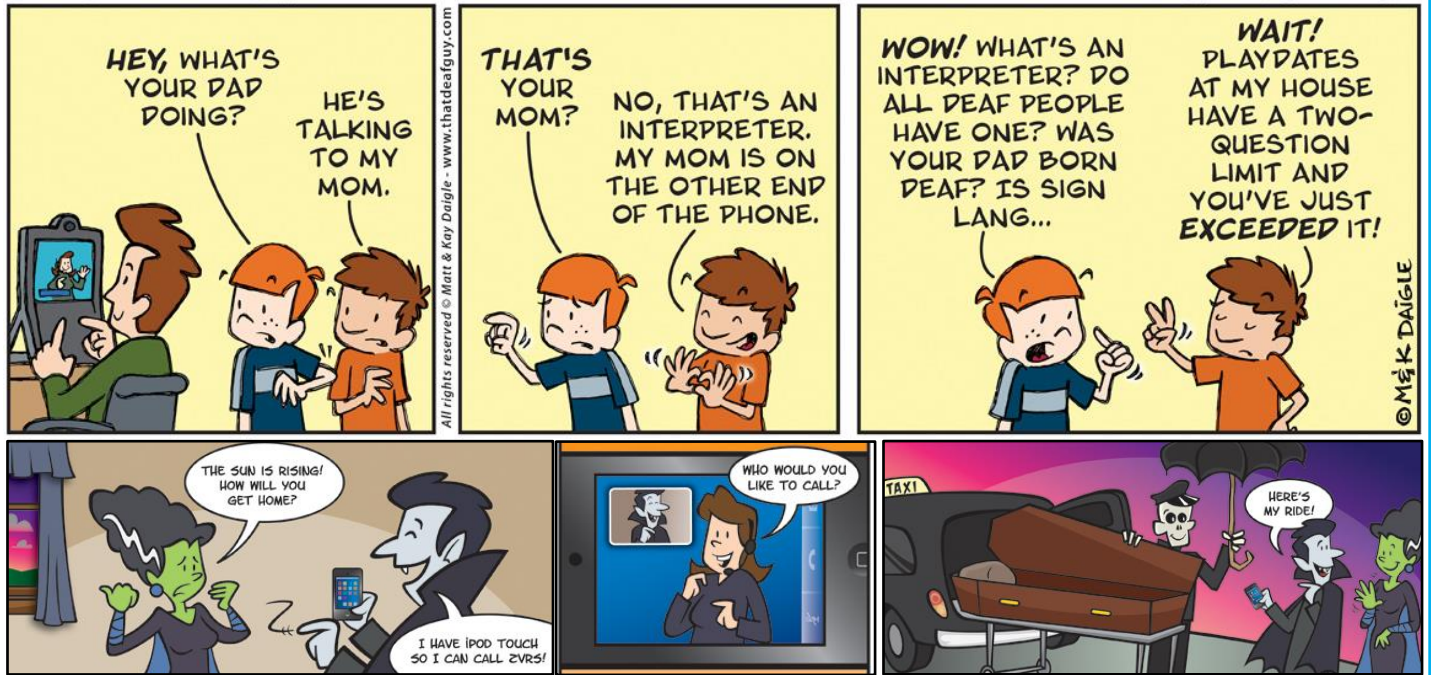
3. Deaf-Friendly Technology

Technology that is favoured by those in the Deaf community, are ones which allow the passage of visual communication from one party to another. This has been some of the latest technology invented and has improved significantly in recent times. With the creation of real time signing mobile technology, Deaf people have been increasingly able to call each other and communicate in Auslan. Furthermore, web based instant video messaging and the utilisation of webcams has enabled the proliferation of sign languages and communication with remote Deaf persons who otherwise may not have contact with other signing Deaf.

Examples of technology/apps include: webcams, videophones, Skype, video conferencing, ooVoo, Zoom, etc.