Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

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In the Matter of	)	
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Telecommunications Relay Services And Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities	)	CG Docket No. 03-123
	)	
To: The Commission	)	

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF MANDATORY REGISTRATION DATE FOR IP TEXT RELAY SERVICE

Purple Communications, Inc. ("Purple") hereby requests an extension of the November 12, 2009 mandatory registration date for the IP Text Relay Service. As shown herein, although providers have been largely successful in registering video relay service users, there remains a majority of IP Relay users who have not registered despite aggressive efforts to convince them to register. More time is needed and more effort is required to educate IP Text Relay users of the need to register. An extension of the registration deadline for IP Text relay is thus requested to April 12, 2010. In support the following is shown:

Pursuant to the Commission's numbering rules, relay users must be registered after November 12, 2009, to make any relay calls, with the sole exception being 911 calls. This deadline was extended from the previous date of June 30, 2009.[1]

Since the June 30, 2009 extension, efforts to register the bulk of VRS users have been largely successful. Industry estimates, confirmed by Purple's own experience, is that more than

[1] See *Telecommunications Relay Services*, DA 09-1323 (June 15, 2009).

90 percent of VRS users are registered. For VRS, the November 12, 2009 registration requirement should not impose a serious hardship on users or providers and the registration effort can be considered a success.[2]

The situation with IP Text Relay, however, is a far different story altogether. Despite constant proactive efforts to register IP Relay users, a majority of such users as of the date of this submission are still not registered. This fact was convincingly shown at the Commission's recent consumer workshop on relay numbering where it was reported that fewer than 20 percent of IP Relay users had registered. There are a number of reasons for the disparity between VRS and IP Text Relay Registration.

Video relay equipment is largely received by customers from providers, meaning there is already an existing relationship between at least one provider and the VRS user which serves to facilitate registration of the user. Users of IP Text Relay, however, do not need any special equipment, and in fact use equipment not at all associated with or provided by a relay provider. They have never had to build any type of relationship with a provider to enjoy free access and free provider choice via IP Text Relay. The step to formally register for a "real" 10-digit number for VRS users is thus a short one. Text users, however, are not accustomed to having to have any kind of interaction with providers. So registering for them is not such a short step.

In addition, while VRS users have traditionally signed up for some type of number with providers, either a proxy number, an 800 number, or an extension number, in order to receive

[2] We note that we nevertheless expect substantial disruption of service associated with the November 12, 2009 VRS registration requirement. We expect those consumers who either neglected to register, who are still unaware of the requirement, or who mistakenly believe that a previously provided proxy number is a 10 digit number, to be frustrated when their calls are intercepted and they are redirected to Customer Care representatives for registration. We expect long waits for Customer Care despite our plans to increase staffing. The possibility of answer speed issues as VIs experience increases session times is also likely. We expect these dislocations to last for several days and possibly for several weeks. Nevertheless, we expect this will be a manageable situation.

calls from the PSTN, IP Text Relay users rarely receive incoming calls and thus likely see little or no need for a telephone number.

As recounted at the recent FCC workshop on relay registration, there are several other reasons why consumers have been reluctant to register and obtain a 10 digit number for IP Text Relay service. These include: (1) persons with VRS 10 digit numbers for their videophone do not know why they would also need another telephone number for Internet based text relay for their PC, Apple MacIntosh computers, or Personal Digital Assistants; (2) consumers thought they have registered when they received their videophones or when they registered for VRS; (3) consumers who use IP Text Relay do not feel they need a telephone number because they already have a telephone number with their Blackberry, pager or similar text device; (4) they may also mistakenly believe that their AIM (America Online Instant Messaging) handle is sufficient for registration purposes; (5) text users traditionally tend to be more isolated than VRS users and have thus been harder to reach for the purpose of registration; and (6) text users in particular have concerns about their privacy. *See, e.g.*, Comments of NAD Director of Law & Advocacy, Rosaline Crawford, available in video from the FCC web site at http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/trs.html.

The traditional isolation of text relay users should not be underestimated. As noted by consumer groups and commenter at the September FCC forum, these "grass roots" text users, may not belong to any Deaf clubs or organizations, nor subscribe to any publications that are designed to reach the Deaf community. Along with these "grass roots" Deaf consumers are those who are hard of hearing or late-deafened who also do not have or utilize access to the Deaf community. Rural residents are particularly implicated as they generally have not had access to the more efficient "up close and personal" outreach efforts. *See* Comments of Sharon Hayes.

Senior citizens are another particular group where the lack of outreach has resulted in the failure to register for text relay. *See* Comments of Rosaline Crawford; Comments of Karen Peltz Strauss. It is these already more "disconnected" groups that will be most adversely affected by the November 12th text registration deadline.

It was thus abundantly clear from the comments voiced at the FCC's registration workshop that there is a great deal of confusion about the local 10 digit relay numbers among consumers, some of it unfortunately spread by providers. This led consumer representatives at the workshop to support FCC flexibility in connection with the registration deadline for IP Text Relay, while opposing any extension of the deadline for VRS. Purple fully supports this position.

Based on these facts and the anemic state of IP Registration, Purple requests the Commission to extend the registration deadline for IP text Relay. In its order extending the Internet based relay registration deadline from June 30, 2009 to November 12, 2009, at the request of several relay providers, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau recited the four "milestones" the petitioners "believe should be achieved before the permissive calling period is allowed to end: (1) implementation of a reverse look-up function that would automatically verify whether a caller is registered; (2) implementation of "an extensive public education and outreach campaign;" (3) resolution of concerns about the assignment of geographically appropriate phone numbers; and (4) resolution of equipment portability issues.[3]"

In granting the registration extension to November 12, 2009, the Bureau explained, "[i]n particular, we are concerned that, despite the outreach and consumer education efforts already undertaken by the Commission and the Internet-based TRS providers, many users may remain

[3] *Telecommunications Relay Services*, DA 09-1323, at ¶6, citing *See* Petition to Extend Relay Registration Deadline, CG Docket No. 03-123 and WC Docket No. 05-196 (filed April 29, 2009) (Joint Petition) at 10-11.

uncertain about how the ten-digit numbering and E911 requirements[4] will affect their use of Internet-based TRS services and their rights and responsibilities under the new rules.[5]" In addition, the Bureau explained that it had received data from providers indicating that a majority of calls being handled were not being made via 10 digit numbers.[6] The Bureau concluded that "extending the end of the permissive calling period until November 12, 2009, will enable the Commission, as well as the providers, to conduct additional outreach and education addressing particular consumer concerns associated with the transition to ten-digit numbering for Internet-based TRS. And to the extent that there are technical concerns, as petitioners suggest, this additional time will allow them to be addressed."[7]

Although NeuStar recently implemented the reverse lookup feature -- milestone 1 discussed in the Joint Petition -- and although equipment portability concerns -- milestone 4 -- are not directly relevant to IP Text Relay -- milestones 2 and 3 discussed in the Joint Petition are still operative and relevant to IP Text Relay. There still needs to be more extensive public education and outreach on the part of the Commission and providers in order to achieve success in the registration efforts, and there are several 10 digit numbering issues that remain to be resolved. And as the evidence adduced at the registration workshop shows, although most VRS users are now registered with 10 digit numbers, that is far from the case with IP Relay text users.

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[4] As consumer group representatives noted at the FCC registration workshop, not only do grass roots text users not understand the registration process, but even this term has caused confusion with customers attempting to reach emergency services by dialing, literally: "E 9 1 1."

[5] *Id.*, at ¶9, citing, Joint Petition at 6-9 (discussing several areas of customer confusion concerning the use of toll-free numbers, equipment and number porting, and misconceptions about the use of a single number for multiple services).

[6] *Id., citing* CSDVRS *Ex parte* letter, CG Docket No. 03-123 (June 11, 2009); Hamilton Relay, Inc. *Ex parte* letter, CG Docket No. 03-123, WC Docket No. 05-196 (June 11, 2009).

[7] *Id.*

Additional time is necessary to allow providers and the Commission to conduct the outreach and education necessary to register the bulk of Internet based text relay users, especially the one to one outreach efforts that consumer representatives reported are the most successful at reaching the grass roots deaf and hard of hearing text relay users.

Providers, including Purple, have been extremely aggressive in attempting to register users. Purple, for example, has implemented numerous programs to facilitate registration. Purple has placed a notice in the lead spot of the home page of its i711 web site advising that after November 12, 2009 consumers must have a 10 digit number to make IP Relay text calls. http://www.i711.com/. That notice also provides a link to so the customer may register and obtain a 10 digit local number. That link takes customers to a one page form allowing registration to be implemented in less than three minutes. All other Purple web site home pages have similar notices advising consumers of the need to register by November 12, to continue to make calls. *See* http://www.ip-relay.com/; http://www.hovrs.com/VRS_SSL/hovrs.aspx. Purple has also added pre-call messaging that checks the caller's status and messages them to register in order to continue to make calls after the November 12, 2009 deadline. Purple has implemented registration by AIM Bot to notify non-registered users they can register via AIM Session at the end of a call. Purple has implemented 24 hour "live help chat" to its registration pages on its text web sites. Purple conducted a weekly email and postal mail campaign in over a three month period to alert customers of the need to register. Purple initiated two outbound AIM one to one sessions to all anonymous AIM users, informing them of the deadline and educating them on 10 digit numbering and offering to register them real time. One was conducted in June and one in September. Purple has offered to transfer text callers at the end of their calls to a special registration hotline desk to help them register and obtain a 10 digit number. Purple has cross

referenced its VRS and text customer bases to validate multiple registrations. Additional programs are currently being formulated and implemented.

Purple has also conducted in person registration efforts, which it has found to be significantly more effective than other outreach efforts, findings confirmed by consumer representatives at the recent FCC workshop. It has promoted text registration at tradeshows, at local number workshops, and in visits to deaf schools and universities. It has also stressed text registration efforts through its network of outreach representatives.

Despite all of these efforts, now less than 30 days from the November 12, 2009 registration deadline, IP Relay registration remains anemic, with under 20 percent of IP Relay traffic.

It is to be emphasized that Purple does not believe that the basis for the anemic IP Relay registration is because these unregistered users are persons associated with "scam" text relay calls. Although these types of calls continue to be a problem, Purple has undertaken aggressive action to combat questionable traffic.[8] These include i"flagging" potential scam calls, instituting warning scripts, and implementing blocking of SOCKS proxy servers and users repeatedly showing as making "flagged" calls.

Based on Purple's efforts to combat scam traffic, Purple is convinced that the vast majority of the unregistered users are legitimate consumers who have simply not registered for one or more of the reasons discussed above. Absent extension of the registration deadline, it is a certainty that IP Text Relay users will be denied service come November 12, 2009. This service

[8] Purple has undertaken these efforts despite the lack of FCC guidance as to either its obligation to take such efforts or what efforts are permissible under the rules insofar as persons are blocked from using the service. Guidance from the Commission in this sensitive area would be appropriate. Purple welcomes an opportunity to meet with the Commission to discuss our extensive efforts in greater detail.

denial will affect not only unregistered users, but registered users as well. Providers will not be able to handle the additional customer care traffic that will be generated. They will not be able to maintain acceptable answer speed because of the increased session times as they deal with unregistered users.[9] Registered and unregistered users will be denied functionally equivalent telephone service in violation of the Commission's mandate under section 225 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, Section IV of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Commission can expect to be deluged with consumer complaints as well.[10]

To prevent this denial of service, additional time is needed to reach the substantial number of unregistered users, to educate them and to get them registered with a 10 digit IP Text Relay number. Based on the enormous difficulties in reaching the grass roots text users and the need for one to one contact, we believe that a reasonable extension of time to April 12, 2010 is necessary to conduct an effective IP Text Relay registration campaign that must involve a partnership between providers, consumers and the FCC.[11] We propose that the Commission closely monitor the effectiveness of registration efforts during this additional period by requiring providers to file monthly reports of their registration efforts and the effectiveness thereof. Such an effort will allow the various stakeholders to concentrate their outreach efforts on these IP Text Relay users and avoid a significant amount of disruption. Therefore, Purple requests the Commission to extend the IP Text Relay registration deadline to April 12, 2010.

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[9] This will also force CAs to step out of their transparent role, a violation of a basic concept of the relay service.

[10] As indicated in note 2 above, it can be expected that even with VRS, the November 12 deadline will cause substantial dislocations. Compounding those dislocations with the text relay registration deadline will create havoc.

[11] For example, the need for an FCC Relay Registration Hotline in order to serve as an authoritative source for registration information was stressed by many persons speaking at the recent FCC registration workshop.

Respectfully submitted,

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