

Study Group on Broadcasting for People with Visual and Hearing Disabilities in the
Digital Broadcasting Era
Summary of Minutes (2nd Meeting)

1. Date

Thursday, November 16, 2006, 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

2. Location

Conference Room 2, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

3. Attendees

(1) Committee members (honorifics omitted)

Shigeo Asahara, Kiyomi Arai, Masahiko Ooto, Yoshihiro Oto, Koji Kurano, Noriko Kondo, Yoshihiko Sasagawa, Tadashi Sashikawa, Tadashi Takaoka, Hiroshi Takahashi, Satoru Tada, Yasuyoshi Tsutsumi, Tetsuo Tsurubuchi, Tsunehiko Hatakeyama, Kazufumi Fujiwara, Ryuuko Furukawa, Ichiro Miyamoto

(2) Presenters

Suzuki (producer), Ito (General Manager (People and Information) NHK Science and Technical Research Laboratories), Kihara (Assistant Director, Japanese Center, NHK Communications Training Institute), Shibata (President and CEO, Speed-WP, Inc.), Asano (Director, Data Vision Services Division, TV Asahi), Tanaka (CEO, LSI Japan Co., Ltd.)

(3) Observers

Aoki (Special Officer for Information Assistance, Regional Living Support Office, Planning Department, Welfare Division for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Health and Welfare for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

(4) MIC representatives

Terasaki (Director-General for Policy Planning), Matsukawa (Director, Accessibility Division), Takada (Deputy Director, Accessibility Division)

4. Outline of proceedings

(1) Call to order

(2) Agenda

Presentations on narrated broadcast initiatives

Mr. Hatakeyama presented Reference 2-1, and Mr. Oota and Mr. Suzuki presented Reference 2-2. This was followed by a question-and-answer session.

Details of questions and answers

- Why hasn't the amount of narrated broadcasts increased even though it's written in the *Broadcast Law* that narrated broadcasts must be provided wherever possible? Is it because supplying a second audio channel for narration means that stereo analog broadcasts must be made in mono, or is it because the program producers' intentions are not communicated well?
- With analog broadcasts, stereo broadcasts are often given priority over narrated broadcasts for the many programs where stereo broadcasts are in demand. But even with these programs, narrated broadcasts can be implemented in simulcast digital broadcasts. The decision to broadcast a narration or to broadcast in stereo because there is a lot of demand for stereo is made on a program-by-program basis. It is not an easy decision to make. There have been efforts to enrich narrated broadcasts.

Presentations on R&D that looks at production technologies for broadcast programs aimed at people with visual and hearing disabilities

Ito (General Manager (People and Information) NHK Science and Technical Research Laboratories) presented Reference 2-3, Kihara (Assistant Director, Japanese Center, NHK Communications Training Institute) presented Reference 2-4, Shibata (President and CEO, Speed-WP, Inc.) presented Reference 2-5, and Asano (Director, Data Vision Services Division, TV Asahi) and Tanaka (CEO, LSI Japan Co., Ltd.) presented Reference 2-6.

Demands from the user's perspective

Mr. Sasagawa presented Reference 2-7. Due to time limitations, Mr. Kondo's presentation of Reference 2-8 will be held at the next (third) meeting.

Details of questions and answers

- We should first settle on a scope for the targeted audience because it is naturally difficult to evaluate issues taking the entire audience into account. We should divide the visually handicapped into those with reduced vision and those who are totally blind, and we should divide the hearing disabled into those who read subtitles and those who use sign language.
- If developing technology for signing is difficult, there must be a way to place a sign-language interpreter in the bottom right of the screen using a wipe effect. At the same time, new technology for signing should be developed.
- It's important to have specific goals in mind before undertaking initiatives. I also sense there needs to be a standing organization where the stakeholders can meet to share opinions on new technical development and do preliminary monitoring.
- I think it's very important to accurately assess each initiative and discuss whether each is effective or not.

(3) Future proceedings

The date for the third meeting was set for December 11.

(4) Meeting adjourned