



An Coimisiún um
Rialáil Cumarsáide
Commission for
Communications Regulation

Irish Text Relay Service

Measures for disabled end-users Take up and usage statistics

Information Notice

Reference: 21/113
Version: Final
Date: 05/11/2021

Irish Text Relay Service (“ITRS”)

1. One of ComReg’s objectives is to ensure that disabled end-users have access to electronic communications services equivalent to that enjoyed by the majority of end-users. In order to achieve this objective, on 30 December 2015, following a public consultation, ComReg, in ComReg Decision D09/15¹ (“D09/15”), decided that service providers with more than 100,000 subscribers must provide disabled end-users access to a Text Relay Service.
2. ITRS translates text into voice and, voice into text, to facilitate deaf and hard of hearing people and those with speaking difficulties in making and receiving calls, including when using mobile devices, in the Republic of Ireland. Calls are relayed through ITRS agents who perform this translation. ITRS can be used with smartphones, tablets, computers and textphones. ITRS is a pathway for end-users with a disability to access services (e.g., banking, utilities, travel, etc.,) by phone or online. Since 2017, the ITRS is available to end-users and full information on how to access and use the service is found on the official ITRS web site, www.itrs.ie.
3. The ITRS service is operated by Eircom limited (‘Eir’) acting as the host of the ITRS, and serving the customers of Three, Eir, Sky, Tesco Mobile, Virgin Media and Vodafone and, is funded by each of these operators.
4. Eir and the relevant operators have carried out certain changes to the ITRS, notably, the introduction of a link (“URL”)² to access and use ITRS instead of an application. Since 1 July 2021, the ITRS can be accessed only from the ITRS.ie URL.³ The dependency on a parallel voice call and text session is removed by providing access to and use of ITRS over a URL. Therefore, it is envisaged that the service will be less susceptible to dropped calls and have improved quality. Additionally, the ITRS website has been refreshed, improving the ITRS website accessibility alongside making the content and information on the web site more accessible to end-users.

¹ ‘Provision of Access to a Text Relay Service’, Ref ComReg 15/143, Decision No. D09/15.

² A URL is a webpage address, such as www.itrs.ie

³ Previously, ITRS end users could make and receive text relay calls through downloading the ITRS Application from the Google Play Store or the iOS App Store.

5. The following Tables set out the usage⁴ and service levels of ITRS for the period from July 2020 to 31 August 2021.⁵

Usage and Service Levels of ITRS

6. Table 1 below reflects the monthly usage by ITRS end-users of (i) Text to Voice (TTV) calls and (ii) voice to text calls (VTT). There were more TTV calls than VTT calls, indicating that ITRS end-users are more likely to use the ITRS for making calls rather than receiving text calls.
7. The usage data indicates that the average number of TTV calls via ITRS between January 2021 and August 2021 was 311, with a peaking at 583⁶ in July 2021.
8. In the period, the VTT calls by ITRS end users continue to remain lower than TTV calls, peaking at 88⁷ in July 2021. However, it is noted that VTT calls increased since the refresh of the ITRS in July 2021. In August 2021, there were 40 VTT calls compared to 4 VTT calls in August 2020.

Table 1- Monthly ITRS Call volumes July 2020 – August 2021

ITRS Calls	Text to Voice Calls Offered	Voice to Text Calls Offered
Jul-20	302	11
Aug-20	400	4
Sep-20	260	7
Oct-20	438	6
Nov-20	428	1
Dec-20	267	4
Jan-21	267	4
Feb-21	193	3
Mar-21	262	9
Apr-21	439	31

⁴ Previous Take-Up and usage documents: ComReg 18/83 <https://www.comreg.ie/publication/comreg-publishes-irish-text-relay-service-itrs-take-up-and-usage-statistics>

ComReg 20/53 <https://www.comreg.ie/publication/irish-text-relay-service-measures-for-disabled-end-users-take-up-and-usage-statistics>

⁵ See ComReg Information Notices, 'Text Relay Service Measures for disabled end-users Take up and usage statistics' Ref, ComReg 18/83 and ComReg 20/53 for previous take up and usage periods.

⁶ Eir has advised that in the period prior to the migration to the ITRS.ie URL on 1 July 2021, the system was subject to test TTV calls, as such the data is inclusive of the test calls.

⁷ Eir has advised in the period prior to the migration to the ITRS.ie URL on 1 July 2021 the system was subject to test VTT calls, as such the data is inclusive of the test calls.

May-21	263	21
Jun-21	219	30
Jul-21	583	88
Aug-21	269	40

9. Table 2 shows the quality of the ITRS service delivered each month during the period; call abandoned rates⁸ and call answer speed.⁹ Both the TTV and VTT calls are handled by the same ITRS agent as part of the relay or translation service.

Table 2: Monthly Figures for Quality of Service of the ITRS

	Text to Voice (TTV)			Voice to Text (VTT)		
	Offered	% Abandoned	% Service Level	Offered	% Abandoned	% Service Level
Aug-20	302	0.00%	94.70%	11	0.00%	100.00%
Sep-20	400	0.00%	97.25%	4	33.33%	75.00%
Oct-20	260	0.00%	97.69%	7	16.67%	85.71%
Nov-20	438	1.15%	95.89%	6	0.00%	100.00%
Dec-20	428	0.47%	92.99%	1	0.00%	100.00%
Jan-21	267	0.38%	98.88%	4	0.00%	100.00%
Jan-21	267	0.38%	99.25%	4	0.00%	100.00%
Feb-21	193	1.59%	85.94%	3	0.00%	100.00%
Mar-21	262	0.38%	98.08%	9	0.00%	100.00%
Apr-21	439	0.23%	97.03%	31	0.00%	100.00%
May-21	263	0.38%	95.80%	21	3.00%	85.00%
Jun-21	219	0.46%	97.71%	30	1.00%	100.00%
Jul-21	583	11.10%	89.77%	88	14.80%	93.33%

⁸ % Abandoned ITRS calls refers to the rate at which end-users of ITRS abandon an attempt to make an ITRS call via the ITRS service. The recommended rate of abandon calls for ITRS calls (both TTV and VTT calls) is less than 5% of calls, as set out in D09/15.

⁹ Refers to the percentage of calls answered by the ITRS agent within 20 seconds of the call being made to them, the recommended % for ITRS calls (both TTV and VTT calls) as set out in D09/15.

Aug-21	269	7.40%	90.76%	40	5.00%	97.37%
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ComReg Communications and Engagement

10. An ongoing ComReg Communications and Engagement programme is underway to inform the public about ITRS and its benefits, including the publication of ITRS information during Covid-19 restrictions. ComReg has published a consumer news item¹⁰ on ComReg's website and engages on a regular basis with stakeholders.
11. During this period (2020-2021), ComReg continued attended several Departmental Consultative Committee meetings held by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) on matters relating to accessibility of products and services for disabled end-users.

¹⁰ www.comreg.ie/irish-text-relay-service-itrs