



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

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Commission for Communications Regulation

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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.
5. Additionally, the ITRS website was also refreshed in July 2021, this was an initial step in the current ongoing process undertaken by the Undertakings to improve the ITRS website accessibility alongside making the content and information on the web site more accessible to end-users.
6. The following Charts set out the usage and service levels of ITRS for the period from July 2021 to 31 December 2021.

Where “Abandoned ITRS calls” is referred to, this means the rate at which end-users of ITRS cancel an attempt to make an ITRS call via the ITRS service. The

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

² URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator. 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.

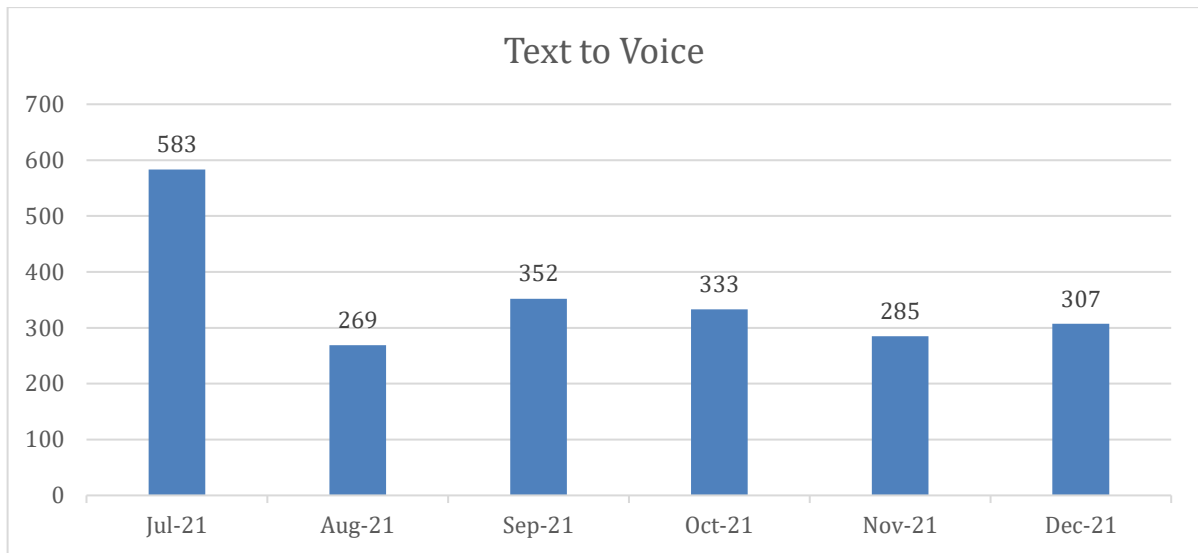
recommended rate of abandon calls for ITRS calls (both TTV and VTT calls) is less than 5% of calls per calendar month, as set out in ComReg Decision 09/15⁴.

Additionally, the Service Level is measured by 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 VVT calls) is 80%, as set out in ComReg Decision 09/15.

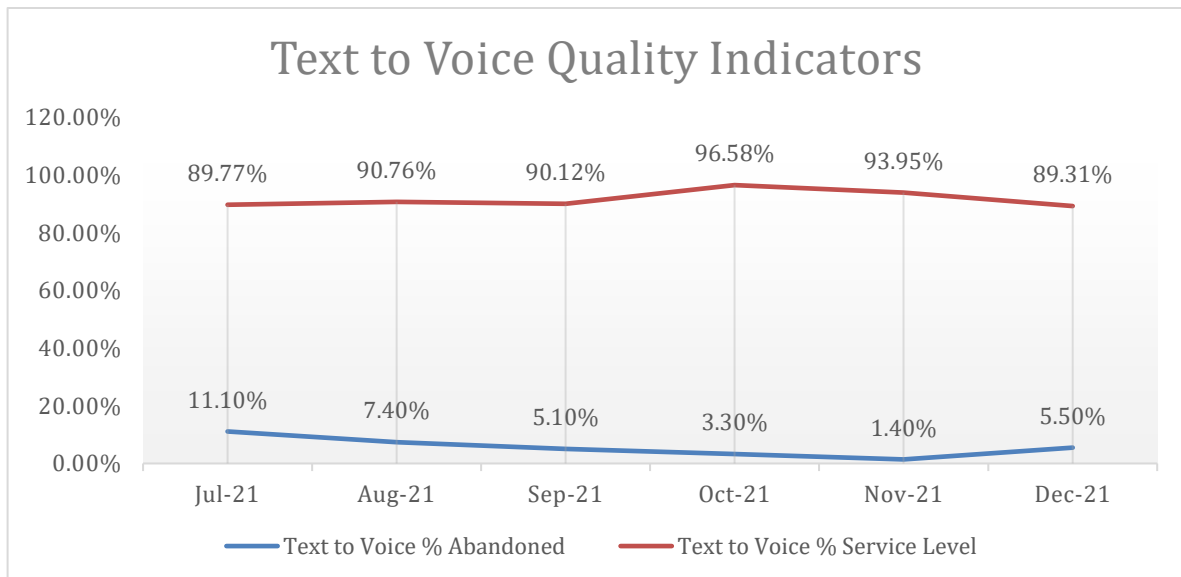
⁴ <https://www.comreg.ie/publication/provision-of-access-to-a-text-relay-service>

Usage and Service Levels of ITRS

7. Chart 1 indicates that the number of TTV calls via ITRS reached 583 in July 2021. Eir has advised that, in the period prior to the migration to the www.ITRS.ie facility, on 1 July 2021, the ITRS system was subject to test TTV calls. As such the data is inclusive of the test calls in July 2021.

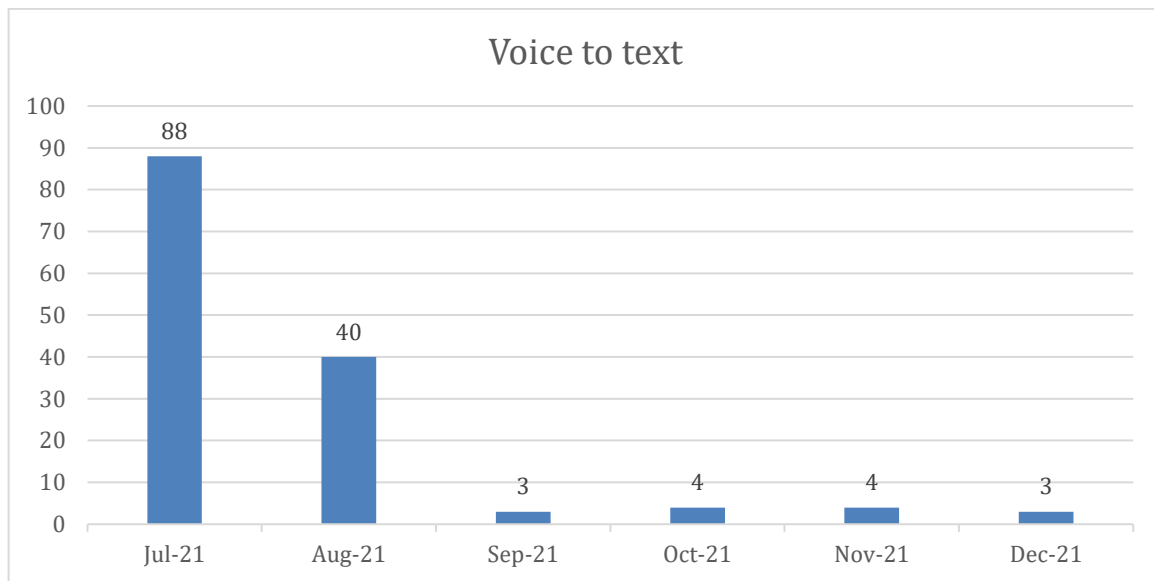


8. Chart 2 below reflects the Quality of ITRS Text to Voice (TTV) calls by month.

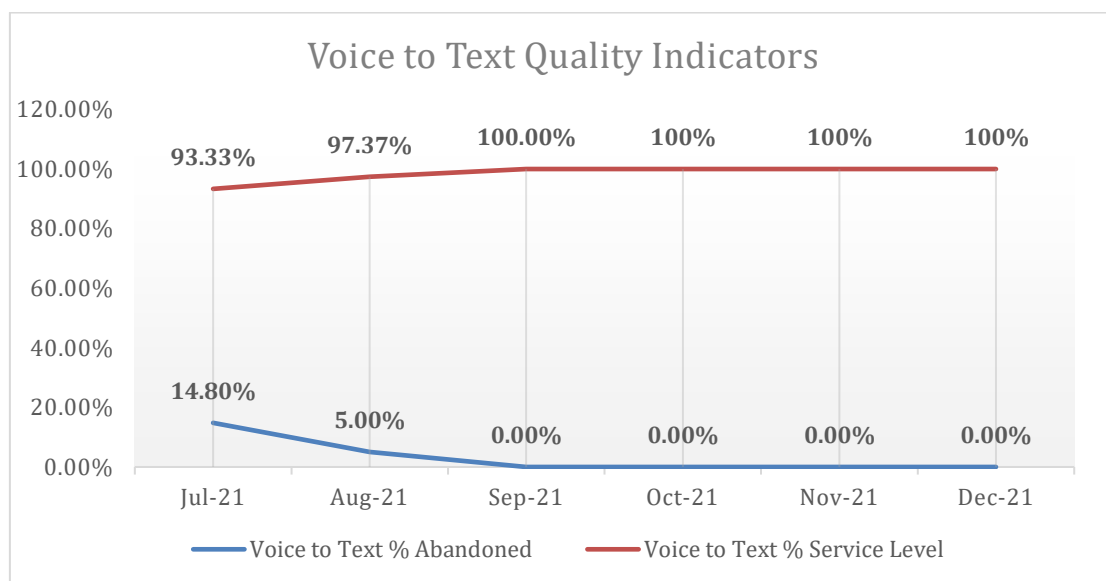


NOTE: Towards the end of 2021 there was an increase in the TTV abandonment rate, ComReg understands that this is because of technical difficulties experienced because of a poor mobile signal.

- Chart 3, notes that in the same period, the VTT calls by ITRS end users continue to remain lower than TTV calls, peaking at 88⁵ in July 2021. Between September and December 2021 a total of 14 VTT call were made.



- Chart 4 below reflects the Quality of ITRS voice to text calls (VTT) by month.



⁵ 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.