

Biography

Andrea Saks has been involved in deaf telecommunications since the mid 1960s and is the daughter of one of the deaf founders of the US TDD/TTY system. The United States was the first country to have deaf telecommunications. The deaf community was in fact the first group to embrace text communications for personal communication over the telephone network, long before the Internet.

When other countries began developing and using devices that were incompatible with the US system, Ms. Saks began her vocation of advising as many organizations, government bodies and businesses as possible on issues related to deaf telecommunications, worldwide telecommunication compatibility and civil rights issues for the disabled. Her involvement promoting equal access in telecommunications has spanned over 40 years.

Since 1991 Ms Saks has been a delegate on US delegations to various ITU-T study groups, advising on accessibility. As the SG groups and ITU-T changed and evolved, so did the work of Ms. Saks to include many issues and aspects other than those affecting the deaf community with regard to equal access to ICT.

Both her parents were deaf and she was the “deaf telephone” for her family from the age of two until the TDD/TTY liberated her. Her strong interest is not only inspired by those who need to have access but by those who have in the past given and still give access to telecommunications without recompense or recognition. They are the children, family members and friends of those who need the access to ICT.