

## Improving Deaf-hearing communication through a multi-lingual avatar: first steps

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Imagine a world where everyone used a language you didn't understand. This would make simple things like grabbing a burger or dropping off a package a time-consuming process. In serious situations, the communication barrier could become highly stressful or even life-threatening. This is what Deaf people experience every day. This is not just a barrier of sound – it's a barrier of language. Their first language is a signed language. Signed languages are different in grammar and vocabulary from spoken languages. For Deaf communities, written languages are always second languages.

Unfortunately, few Deaf people are involved in setting priorities for using technology to bridge this communication gap. As part of my Fulbright, I'm meeting with Deaf communities to learn their concerns and to help expand the network of Deaf involvement. The presentation concludes with a current state of the project and ideas for possible future collaborations.