



HSL's SMS Gateway is used by STAGETEXT to Enable SMS Communication with Deaf Arts Attendees

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HSL has been selected by STAGETEXT, a charity organisation which delivers captioned performances and promotes the use of captioning in cultural venues throughout the UK, to assist with their SMS messaging requirements.

STAGETEXT was established in May 2000 with a determination to improve access to the performing arts for all deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people through the provision of captioning in theatres and any venue where the spoken or sung word is performed. This service is of immense benefit to the deaf and hard of hearing community in the UK, and captioning is particularly useful for the 698,000 people who are severely or profoundly deaf. There are estimated to be around 9 million deaf and hard of hearing people in the UK, and this number continues to rise as the number of people over 60 increases.

In recognition of the increasing demand for their service, STAGETEXT identified SMS as an extremely useful way of communicating with their audiences. Discussions with HSL identified that the EmailSMS solution would be ideal in providing a simple and effective method of sending and receiving SMS messages, and this is now being used by STAGETEXT to improve communications in a number of different ways.

Outbound SMS messages sent from STAGETEXT alert deaf arts attendees to upcoming captioned performances, ticket availability and special offers. In addition, the dedicated Virtual Mobile Number allocated to STAGETEXT allows them to receive incoming SMS containing feedback about the performances and the number is also promoted on the website to allow incoming SMS to be received on any subject. This is a much more immediate way for people to contact STAGETEXT than previous methods such as email, minicom or TypeTalk.

Tabitha Allum, Chief Executive of STAGETEXT, is quoted as saying: "SMS communication is proving to be extremely popular amongst deaf and hard of hearing people in the UK, and in particular initial explorations show that SMS is the preferred method of communication for many young deaf people. We are delighted to be working with HSL on this project and are looking forward to seeing this SMS project grow and develop in the coming months and achieving more effective communication with our audiences as a result."