

Advocate in Speech-to-Speech TRS

Robert Segalman, Ph.D.

Speaking Up for Those Who Cannot Speak

Founder of Speech to Speech

Deaf people who have not always had TTY and relay access can imagine the increased independence that being able to make their own telephone calls would give someone who had spent their whole life being dependent on others to make calls for them. Not only do people with hearing loss benefit from telephone relay services (TRS), also people with speech impairments do benefit from a special Speech-to-Speech (STS) service offered by TRS in all states. Users who can hear but have difficulty expressing themselves vocally would use the TTY or use Hearing-Carry-Over (HCO) where they

can listen to the other party but type their own responses on a TTY. HCO is opposite from Voice-Carry-Over (VCO) where many deaf and hard of hearing people who have understandable speech speak for themselves and read responses from the other party.

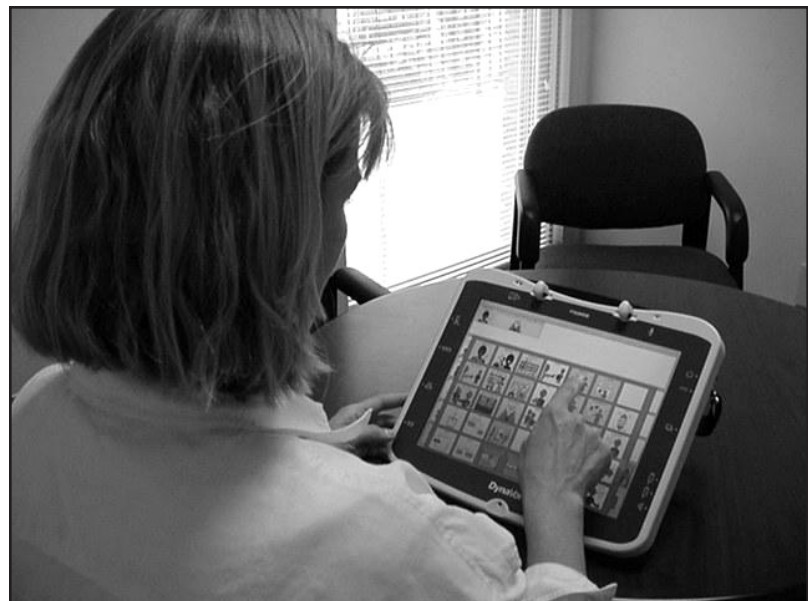


Dr. Bob Segalman wanted to go one step further to functional equivalency on TRS. Many users with speech impairments also have other

physical conditions that prevent them from typing on a TTY. In 1948, Bob was the first child with a severe disability mainstreamed in the Sioux City Iowa public schools. STS started as an idea in Bob's head about 1990 and grew out of his attempts to be understood over the



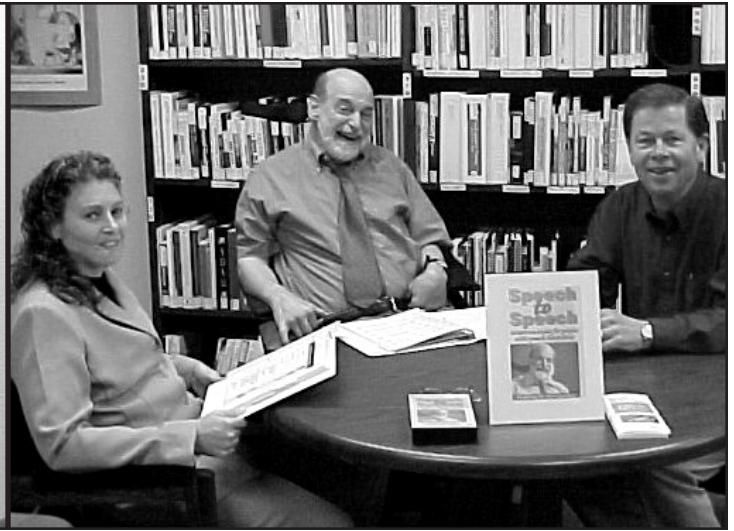
Robert Segalman, Ph.D.
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An augmentative communication device, which speaks the word each time its associated icon button is pressed by the user.



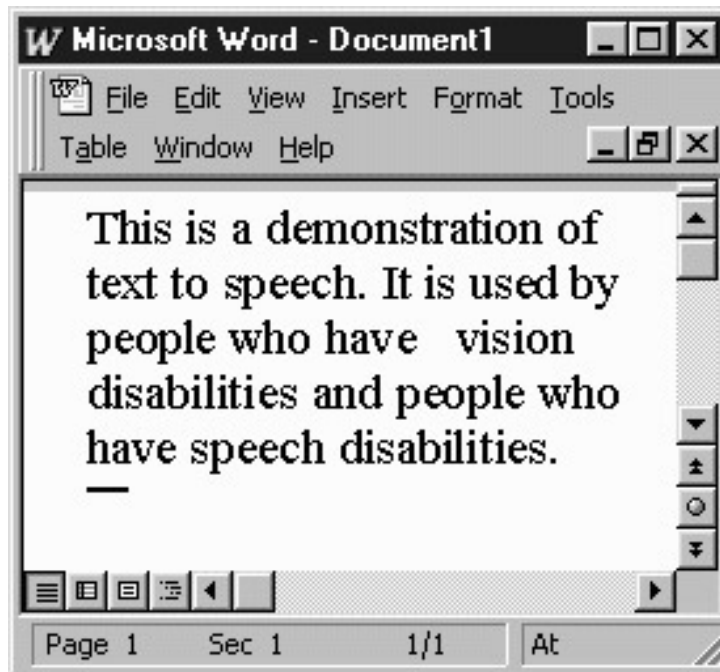
Bob Segalman & Tina Stidman



Tina Stidman, Bob Segalman, Tom Burns

telephone despite his cerebral palsied speech. Bob appreciates the enthusiastic support of Dr. Catherine Campisi, Director of the California Department of Rehabilitation, in the development of STS. He and an assistant worked as fulltime outreach staff for almost two years when STS began in California to raise the number of completed STS calls from 0 to 3,000 per month.

Bob Segalman successfully lobbied first at the California Public Utilities Commission and then at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to require that STS be added as a service of the TTY relay. He helped write the STS regulations for the FCC. For the last two years, Bob served on the FCC Consumer Advisory Committee alerting them to many STS issues.



He facilitated national consumer input from the Speech Disabled Community on FCC Notices of Inquiry, Notices of Proposed Rule-making and TRS Recertification. Bob's work has resulted in an FCC mandate that telephone service through Speech to Speech be made avail-

able nationally through the TTY relay in every state. This mandate is the result of Bob's vision for universal service.

Many people here and abroad applaud Bob's work. People in the U.S., Australia and parts of Sweden are now able to use the telephone through STS. STS will potentially provide telephone access to many thousands of people with speech disabilities worldwide who have never used the telephone before.

Bob's goal is that every American with a speech disability will have an opportunity to learn to use STS.

Several million Americans with speech disabilities could use STS if they knew that it existed. He encourages consumers in all states to advocate for STS outreach and education programs.

Advocacy Toolbox - Speech-to-Speech TRS



1. STS News: www.stsnews.com
2. FCC Speech to Speech Relay: www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/sts.html
3. Spanish STS TRS services: www.ucpa.org/ucp_channel.doc.cfm/1/14/86/86-86/1526