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Signapse: no roteiro, ainda não implementado

Heather Grizzle · September 26, 2026

Análise do Signapse sign language AI: o que os seus documentos de governação mostram, sete compromissos datados, como as suas respostas mudaram e o que os compradores devem exigir.

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26 de setembro de 2026 · Heather M. Grizzle, Novara Consulting Group

EM RESUMO

A Signapse publica políticas de governação de IA mais robustas do que a maioria dos fornecedores de IA para língua gestual, respondeu a todas as sete perguntas da NCG, retirou um valor de precisão de 95% sem suporte e comprometeu-se com sete correções datadas. Os contratos, registos e divulgações que tornariam essas políticas aplicáveis ainda não são públicos, pelo que os compradores devem contratualizar os documentos em vez de confiar na correspondência.

Porque existe este registo

Em agosto de 2026, a Novara Consulting Group perguntou publicamente à Signapse como esta define os limites de utilização apropriada para a IA de língua gestual, particularmente em contextos educativos que envolvem crianças Deaf. A Diretora Executiva Sally Chalk concordou com a premissa e foi mais além. Acrescentou tribunais, esquadras de polícia, hospitais, serviços sociais e reuniões de proteção de crianças à lista, e argumentou que, à medida que o risco aumenta e o tempo de preparação diminui, um serviço deve envolver mais supervisão humana e menos IA, ou nenhuma. É essa a posição que um comprador espera ouvir de um fornecedor. Este registo coloca a pergunta que se segue: se os documentos que sustentam a empresa confirmam essa posição.

No papel, a Signapse parte de uma posição mais forte do que a maioria do mercado. O seu AI Governance Framework publicado inclui uma Use Policy que organiza o trabalho, sector a sector, entre o que um humano deve fazer e o que a IA pode fazer. Onde as decisões afetam a saúde, a liberdade, os direitos legais ou a proteção, a política exige um intérprete ou tradutor qualificado e declara que, na maioria dos casos, a Signapse recomendará outra empresa. A proteção é reservada aos humanos sem exceção. O framework nomeia um Deaf Advisory Board e um Deaf Impact Officer, e enumera organizações Deaf que a empresa consulta, incluindo a RAD, a BDA e a Action Deafness. Poucos fornecedores de IA para língua gestual publicam algo comparável. Um framework, contudo, estabelece como uma empresa pretende comportar-se. Um comprador também precisa dos instrumentos que tornam esse comportamento exequível. Estes incluem os acordos com as pessoas Deaf cujos gestos e feedback moldam o produto, as regras que regem administradores que também lideram organizações parceiras, e uma política de privacidade que aborde vídeo em língua gestual, imagem e dados de treino. O comprador também precisa de uma fonte publicada para cada valor de desempenho citado pela empresa. Essa lacuna entre a intenção declarada e o documento vinculativo é para onde a NCG direcionou as suas perguntas.

NCG reviewed Signapse's AI Governance Framework, Terms of Service, privacy policy and ASL product page, and put seven questions to the company. Before publishing, NCG sent Signapse its understanding of the answers and invited corrections. Ms Chalk replied on 17 September 2026 and twice on 24 September 2026, the second time with what she described as Signapse's final comments on the evaluation. Signapse answered all seven questions. It conceded several gaps in writing, withdrew an ac-

curacy figure it could not source, and attached dates to the fixes it proposed. Its first reply on 24 September changed three of the answers it had given a week earlier. When NCG asked which account was accurate, the company clarified all three the same day. Its final answers largely returned to what it had said on 17 September.

Essa mudança não é um ponto negativo para a Signapse, e este registo não a apresenta como tal. Mostra por que motivo um comprador não deve basear uma decisão de aquisição em correspondência. As cartas são privadas, podem ser revistas, e são escritas para um consultor e não para a instituição que suportará o risco de uma implementação. Um organismo público que compre IA de língua gestual para uso com pessoas Deaf precisa de documentos que possa ler, citar e usar para responsabilizar um fornecedor. Este registo apresenta, por isso, o que existe hoje, aquilo a que a empresa se comprometeu a mudar e até quando, e como as suas respostas mudaram entre cartas. Cada afirmação é atribuída à data em que foi feita. As respostas são citadas apenas onde a formulação exata é relevante. Onde a NCG verificou uma página web pública, é indicada a data em que foi consultada.

A Signapse é um dos vários fornecedores de IA para língua gestual que a NCG está a analisar segundo o mesmo método, estabelecido no framework do SLAT Index (https://www.slatindex.org/framework/).

O que existe hoje

Esta secção regista a posição tal como se encontra, documento a documento. Para cada item, indica o que o registo público mostra, o que a Signapse disse sobre isso e quando, e porque motivo o ponto é relevante para uma instituição que decide se compra ou não.

Terms of Service. Deaf feedback is not incidental to Signapse's product. It is how the product gets corrected. The company's Translation Quality Assurance Policy describes monthly user-group meetings in which Deaf participants review generated translations, and it lists consultation with Deaf organisations among its external checks. The terms that govern that feedback therefore matter. The published Terms of Service (https://www.signapse.ai/terms-of-service), last updated 1 October 2023 and unchanged as retrieved on 24 and 26 September 2026, provide that anyone who directly sends Signapse "any question, comment, suggestion, idea, feedback, or other information about the Services" assigns all intellectual property in it to the company, which may then use it "without acknowledgment or compensation." A separate provision



waives moral rights in the same material. Read against the company's own Ethos, which says captured signing must respect "fair recompense and transparent terms," the clause sits badly. Signapse has given three accounts of it. On 17 September it described the clause as standard boilerplate drafted for commercial customers that "does not reflect how we work with Deaf community contributors," and said paid participants were not yet on a separate written agreement. On 24 September it said the Terms apply only to paying customers, that feedback sessions run off-platform, and that contributors never create accounts or accept the Terms, so the clause has never applied to them. Its final letter the same day said the customer Terms are unaffected by the October work, which instead creates a standard written agreement for feedback session participants. NCG offers no view on whether the clause could bind someone who never accepted the Terms. The point for a buyer is narrower. On the company's own account, what governs Deaf contributors today is not a published document but a series of individual emails, and the agreement meant to replace them does not yet exist.

Contributor compensation. Signapse reports two arrangements. Signers whose own likeness appears in a product are covered by its Reward and Remuneration Policy, which pays 1% of the monthly value of each contract or licence using their image, quarterly in arrears, for the full contract term, split equally where more than one signer appears. Feedback session participants receive $25 per session for attendance, regardless of the content of their feedback. The royalty is the stronger of the two. It ties a signer's income to the commercial life of their likeness, and few providers in this market disclose any comparable arrangement. The company's Use Policy also commits that where recorded human signers are used, "informed consent and appropriate compensation must apply." The difficulty lies in the paperwork rather than the principle. Signapse states there is no standalone contributor contract: the $25 payment is agreed by email with each participant, that correspondence is the written record, and payments are recorded in its payment records. It says this has been the practice since the sessions began. Those records are private and NCG has not seen them. A buyer who wants to confirm either arrangement will need to ask for the policy and the records directly.

Conflicts of interest. Mark Wheatley is a Signapse director and chief executive of RAD, one of the partners named in Signapse's governance framework. Craig Crowley was a Signapse director from August 2022 to March 2024 while leading Action Deafness, another named partner, and is not a current director. The relationships matter becau-

se of where those organisations sit in Signapse's own quality process. Its Translation Quality Assurance Policy lists consultation with RAD and Action Deafness under external review. A buyer reading that list would reasonably assume the organisations are independent of the company they are reviewing. For RAD, that assumption holds only if the connection is disclosed and managed. Signapse states that Article 30 of its Articles of Association has governed director conflicts since 2024, requiring declaration and allowing the board to set conditions or exclude a director from discussion and voting, and that Mr Wheatley's RAD role has been declared under it. A conflicts provision in company articles is not a conflicts register. Signapse confirmed on 17 September that it does not maintain one, and that neither relationship is disclosed in its Quality Assurance Policy.

Deaf Advisory Board escalation. Signapse's Use Policy gives its Deaf Advisory Board oversight of "community impact and cultural/linguistic accuracy." An advisory body is only as strong as its route to the people who decide. Mr Wheatley also sits on the Deaf Advisory Board, and the investment board he joins holds veto authority. On 17 September Signapse acknowledged that this route "depends on one individual holding both seats" with no documented rule behind it. On 24 September it added that matters have been escalated from the Advisory Board to the board on several occasions, as recorded in board minutes. Both statements can be true: escalation has happened, and no written rule yet guarantees it. If Mr Wheatley left either seat, nothing on paper would carry the Advisory Board's concerns upward.

The 95% figure. Asked for the basis of a 95% figure in its materials, Signapse could not locate a source and withdrew it, stating it would be replaced by a figure supported by Deaf user feedback sessions and evaluations. Signapse confirmed on 24 September that this description is accurate. Withdrawing the figure was the right call, and the company made it without argument. Other performance language remains. The ASL page as retrieved on 26 September says both ASL digital signers deliver translations with "an industry-leading level of comprehension," a comparative claim with no stated source or method. The accuracy figures in the Quality Assurance Policy, 60, 80 and 98 percent, are stated as roadmap targets rather than measured results. Until a source, method and denominator are published, a buyer should treat any performance figure from the company as unverified.

Jay and Max. Jay and Max, Signapse's ASL digital signers, are synthetic likenesses: the face on screen is not the face of the person whose signing underlies them, so they



fall outside the Reward and Remuneration Policy. The design has a logic of its own. The Use Policy says AI-generated output "must not imply endorsement, identity, or authorship by any individual signer," and a synthetic face keeps any one person's identity off the screen. It does not remove the people behind the signing; it moves the question of their consent and payment out of public view. Signapse states that more than one Deaf signer contributed to Jay and Max, including Certified Deaf Interpreters, under private arrangements that include equity and payment. No individual is named here.

Public pages as retrieved on 26 September 2026. Signapse reported on 24 September that its ASL page update is complete. The ASL page (https://www.signapse.ai/asl) as retrieved by NCG on 24 and again on 26 September introduces Jay and Max as "AI ASL Digital Signers," says they use "photo-realism" and credits "Deaf-led development," but does not state that they are synthetic likenesses or how the people behind them are compensated. The only statement about synthesis is a sitewide footer disclaimer, "Not all videos are synthetic videos," which does not say which videos are. The unfilled template placeholder previously found in the privacy policy (https://www.signapse.ai/privacy-policy) no longer appears. The current policy, version 2.0, now lists photographs, videos and audio recordings as identity data and disabilities as health data, but still says nothing about model training, digital likeness or biometric data.

Compromissos e datas

Signapse has committed to seven changes. Taken together, they would close most of the gaps described above: a conflicts register, a written escalation route for the Deaf Advisory Board, a written agreement for the Deaf people who give feedback, a public disclosure about Jay and Max, a US compliance mapping and a privacy policy that addresses signed video and training data. The list moved between the company's two responses. Two dates came earlier, two became less specific, one item was reported complete, and one dropped out of the final account without comment. On 24 September the company described all of them as "internal plans which may change." That caveat is fair, and it is also the reason this record exists. A plan described in a letter binds no one. The table sets out each commitment with both stated dates, so a buyer can see what was promised, when, and how the promise changed.



Compromissos e datas declarados pela Signapse

Compromisso	Declarado a 17 de set.	Declarado a 24 de set.
Registo de conflitos abrangendo administradores e membros do conselho consultivo, revisto anualmente	outubro de 2026	outubro de 2026
Estatuto do Deaf Advisory Board que atribui à presidência um direito permanente de escalonamento ao conselho de investimento sem passar pelo CEO	Ao conselho de investimento para aprovação, dezembro de 2026	outubro de 2026
Termos de Serviço: substituir a cessão de feedback por uma licença limitada, remover a renúncia a direitos morais, transferir os colaboradores para um acordo de participação	dezembro de 2026	Acordo escrito-padrão para participantes de sessões de feedback, outubro de 2026; Termos dos clientes não afetados
Página ASL a descrever as imagens sintéticas e como os colaboradores são pagos	dezembro de 2026 ou 1.º trimestre de 2027	Concluído
Mapeamento de conformidade nos EUA: ADA, Secções 504 e 508, regras estatais de acessibilidade em contratação pública, estatutos estaduais sobre biometria e imagem, FERPA, COPPA	1.º trimestre de 2027	2027
Reescrita da política de privacidade cobrindo vídeo, dados biométricos e de movimento, imagem digital e proveniência dos dados de treino	1.º trimestre de 2027	2027
	Sem data	Não mencionado

Compromisso	Declarado a 17 de set.	Declarado a 24 de set.
Anotar a Quality Assurance Policy com as relações com a RAD e a Action Deafness		

Fonte: Correspondência de Sally Chalk, 17 e 24 de setembro de 2026

Three of the commitments fall due in October, and they are the ones that bear most directly on governance. The conflicts register is the only item whose date held steady across both letters. It would turn Article 30 from a private rule into a record a buyer can inspect, and it would put Mr Wheatley's two roles on paper, along with any future overlap like them. The Advisory Board charter moved two months earlier and would replace an escalation route that depends on one person holding two seats with a written right that survives changes in membership. The participant agreement also moved earlier, but it shrank on the way. On 17 September Signapse proposed to change the Terms themselves, removing both the assignment and the waiver. By the final letter the Terms were staying as they are, and the commitment had become a separate agreement for feedback session participants. That is still a real improvement on arrangements made email by email, but the feedback clause remains in the published Terms. When these documents appear, a buyer should check three things: that the register names each relationship and how it is managed, that the charter gives the chair the right to escalate in terms and carries the investment board's approval, and that the participant agreement grants a licence rather than ownership, leaves contributors' moral rights intact and states what they are paid.

The ASL page is a different case. In a single week Signapse moved it from a target of December 2026 or early 2027 to complete, which would be the fastest progress on the list if the page showed it. As retrieved on 24 and 26 September, it does not. It is the one item where the company's account and the public record disagree, and NCG records it as open until they match.

The two largest items went the other way, each slipping from a named quarter to an unspecified year. Both matter more than their place at the bottom of the table suggests. A school district, university or state agency will need to know how the ASL product handles Section 508, student records under FERPA, children's data under COP-

PA and state law on biometric and likeness data before it can sign, so a US buyer should write the compliance mapping into the contract as a deliverable rather than wait for it. The privacy rewrite would give the governance framework the data layer it currently lacks. Version 2.0 of the policy has moved a little, dropping the template placeholder and listing videos as identity data, but it still says nothing about training, likeness or biometric data.

Depois há o compromisso que desapareceu. Anotar a Política de Garantia de Qualidade com as relações com a RAD e a Action Deafness não tinha data a 17 de setembro e não apareceu de todo a 24 de setembro. É a correção mais barata da lista, uma divulgação acrescentada a uma política que a Signapse já publica, e a que fala mais diretamente à questão de independência levantada acima. A sua ausência pode ser um descuido. A NCG trata-a como pendente.

A NCG registará cada item como cumprido apenas quando o próprio documento for publicado ou fornecido. Outubro é o primeiro teste.

Como as respostas mudaram

A week passed between Signapse's first reply and its second, and the second came back firmer. Several points the company had conceded on 17 September were described on 24 September as settled practice. Three answers no longer matched. A buyer who received only one of those letters would have come away with a different picture of the company depending on which one it was. Rather than choose between them, NCG put the differences back to Signapse and asked which account was accurate. The company answered within the hour. Its final answers are consistent with what it said on 17 September, and they show that the first 24 September letter had overstated two of them.

The first concerned paperwork. On 17 September, Signapse wrote that paid participants "are not currently on a separate written agreement." A week later, the $25 payment "is agreed in writing with each contributor." The distance between those sentences is small in words and large in procurement terms, because the second sounds like a contract. Asked to reconcile them, Signapse said there is no standalone contract. The agreement is made by email with each participant, and that email is the written record. In a narrow sense an email is writing. It is not, however, a standard agreement with terms a buyer could read and compare, and the company's own October commitment to create one concedes the difference.

The second was a contradiction inside a single letter. The first 24 September letter said the Terms of Service had never applied to feedback participants, and then listed an October update to "Terms of Service for feedback sessions." Both could not be true. Signapse's answer was that the earlier reference should have been described as a standard written agreement for participants, replacing email-by-email arrangements, and that the customer Terms are unaffected. The clarification resolves the contradiction. It also confirms what the commitments table shows: the Terms themselves are not changing.

The third turned out to be less a conflict than an incomplete first answer. On 17 September, the signing behind Jay and Max came from "a real Deaf ASL signer," and the data creators held share options. The first 24 September letter named Certified Deaf Interpreters who receive payment and equity. The two accounts seemed to describe different people. Signapse's final answer was that both are accurate, because more than one Deaf signer contributed, including Certified Deaf Interpreters, under private arrangements that include equity and payment. Nothing here was overstated. The singular version is simpler to tell, but the plural one is the accurate account, and it is the one a buyer should rely on. Because the arrangements are private, neither version can be checked from outside the company, and NCG names no one.

Cada uma destas questões foi resolvida da forma como a correspondência resolve as coisas, com mais uma carta. Uma diferença não pode ser resolvida dessa forma. A Signapse relata a atualização da página de ASL como concluída, mas a página que a NCG recuperou a 24 e 26 de setembro não traz a divulgação descrita. Qualquer pessoa pode verificar isso abrindo a página, e a NCG registará o item como cumprido quando a página o trouxer.

Avaliação

This record began with a position Sally Chalk stated in public: that as the stakes rise and preparation time falls, a service should involve more human oversight and less AI, or none at all. The question was whether Signapse's documents hold that position up. The answer is that they state it well and do not yet secure it.

A declaração é real, e em alguns pontos vai mais longe do que o resto do mercado. A Política de Utilização classifica o trabalho sector a sector, reserva a salvaguarda a humanos sem exceção, e diz aos clientes que, para trabalho que envolva saúde, liberdade ou direitos legais, a empresa irá, na maioria dos casos, encaminhá-los para outro for-

necedor. A Signapse também merece crédito pela forma como se envolveu. Respondeu às sete perguntas, nomeou as suas próprias fraquezas em termos claros a 17 de setembro, retirou um número que não conseguia sustentar, e associou datas às suas correções.

A primeira carta de 24 de setembro enfraqueceu esse registo ao reformular várias concessões como prática já estabelecida. Pressionada, a empresa recuou em duas delas para a sua versão de 17 de setembro dentro de uma hora, o que conta a seu favor. O episódio continua a ser relevante. Quando a Signapse se descreveu uma segunda vez, a descrição derivou para a versão mais forte, e só uma pergunta direta a trouxe de volta. Isso é um argumento para ancorar qualquer compra em documentos em vez de no último relato que deles é feito.

The documents are where the gap lies. Almost every protection that matters to the Deaf people behind the product currently sits out of public view. Contributor terms live in individual emails. Conflicts are managed under a provision of the company's articles and recorded in board minutes a buyer has not seen. The Advisory Board's route to the investment board depends on one person holding two seats. Article 30, the board minutes, the contributor emails and the payment records are all private or unpublished, and correspondence is not evidence a buyer can rely on. On today's evidence, Signapse's governance is a credible plan rather than a system anyone outside the company can verify.

That leaves a buyer with two practical steps. The first is to take the company at its published word where its word is strongest. An institution considering sign language AI for a courtroom, a hospital or a child protection meeting, the settings Ms Chalk herself named, already has Signapse's own Use Policy telling it to use a qualified human instead. That is a genuine strength. Few vendors put the limits of their own product in writing, and a buyer should hold Signapse to them. The second is to treat everything else as the company's account until the documents exist in public or are supplied under contract, and to ask for the following:

- The standard written agreement for feedback session participants once adopted, and the date it came into use.
- The conflicts register once adopted, and the text of Article 30.
- The adopted Deaf Advisory Board charter, with the date of board approval.
- Written confirmation, in the contract or the participant agreement, that the feedback clause in the customer Terms of Service does not apply to feedback session partici-

pants or other Deaf contributors.
- The Reward and Remuneration Policy, and confirmation of how feedback session payments are recorded.
- The public ASL disclosure describing Jay and Max and how the people behind them are compensated.
- For US deployments, the compliance mapping, written into the contract as a deliverable.
- The source, method and denominator for any replacement accuracy figure.

A NCG atualizará este registo à medida que cada compromisso for vencendo.

Perguntas frequentes

+ **O que é a Signapse?**

  A Signapse é uma empresa britânica que produz tradução de língua gestual gerada por IA em British Sign Language e American Sign Language. Os seus produtos incluem SignStudio, SignStream, plugins para websites e APIs.

+ **A IA de língua gestual da Signapse deve ser usada em tribunais, hospitais ou contextos de proteção de crianças?**

  A própria Política de Utilização da Signapse diz que é necessário um intérprete ou tradutor qualificado onde as decisões afetem a saúde, a liberdade, os direitos legais ou a salvaguarda, e que, na maioria desses casos, a empresa recomendará outro fornecedor. O trabalho de salvaguarda é reservado a humanos sem exceção.

+ **A Signapse paga aos intérpretes Surdos por trás dos seus produtos?**

  A Signapse relata que os intérpretes cuja própria imagem aparece num produto recebem 1% do valor mensal de cada contrato que utiliza a sua imagem, pago trimestralmente, e que os participantes de sessões de feedback recebem $25 por sessão. Os registos de pagamento são privados e a NCG não os viu.

+ Jay e Max, os intérpretes digitais de ASL da Signapse, são pessoas reais?

Não. Jay e Max são imagens sintéticas. A Signapse afirma que mais do que um intérprete Surdo contribuiu para a sua criação, incluindo Intérpretes Surdos Certificados, ao abrigo de acordos privados que incluem participação acionária e pagamento. Tal como recuperada a 26 de setembro de 2026, a página do produto ASL não indicava que eram sintéticos.

+ A que é que a Signapse se comprometeu a mudar?

Sete itens: um registo de conflitos, um estatuto do Conselho Consultivo Surdo e um acordo escrito para participantes de feedback, todos previstos para outubro de 2026; uma divulgação pública de ASL que relata como concluída; um mapeamento de conformidade nos EUA e uma reescrita da política de privacidade, ambos previstos para 2027; e uma anotação sem data da sua Política de Garantia de Qualidade. A Signapse descreve-os como planos internos que podem mudar.

+ O que deve uma equipa de aquisições pedir à Signapse?

Os documentos em vez da correspondência: o acordo do participante, o registo de conflitos e o Artigo 30, o estatuto adotado do Conselho Consultivo, confirmação escrita de que a cláusula de feedback não se aplica aos contribuintes Surdos, a Política de Recompensa e Remuneração, a divulgação pública de ASL, um mapeamento de conformidade nos EUA para implementações nos EUA, e a fonte, o método e o denominador de qualquer figura de precisão.

+ O que é o SLAT Index?

O SLAT (Sign Language Access Trust) Index é o enquadramento que a Novara Consulting Group usa para avaliar fornecedores de IA de língua gestual. O seu método está publicado em https://www.slatindex.org/framework/.

Fontes

- Correspondence from Sally Chalk, Chief Executive, Signapse, to NCG, 17 September 2026 and 24 September 2026 (two letters).
- Signapse Terms of Service (https://www.signapse.ai/terms-of-service), last updated 1 October 2023, retrieved 24 and 26 September 2026.
- Signapse ASL page (https://www.signapse.ai/asl), retrieved 24 and 26 September 2026.
- Signapse Privacy and Cookies Policy (version 2.0) (https://www.signapse.ai/privacy-policy), retrieved 24 and 26 September 2026.

TIPS

Know something about a sign language AI system that the public should know? Send it to tips@novaracg.com. Every tip is read by me and kept confidential. If you work in the UK, writing to us is not by itself a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, so before you share employer information, check your options with Protect (protect-advice.org.uk), the free whistleblowing advice line.

Como citar

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