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This document was translated from English by machine and may contain mistakes. The English original is at https://www.novaracg.com/2026/10/08/silence-speaks-built-for-the-moment-of-access-not-yet-for-the-moment-of-failure/.

无声诉说：为触及之刻而生，尚未为失灵之刻而备

Heather Grizzle · October 8, 2026

*Silence Speaks*的*Transit Assist*让手语播报变得触手可及。但其文档几乎没有说明播报出错时会发生什么。

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7 October 2026 · Heather M. Grizzle, Novara Consulting Group · Working record, pending Silence Speaks′ response

一款交通产品,在聋人乘客需要它的那一刻确实用心打造,但在它出错的那一刻却几乎不予理会

摘要

- Silence Speaks′ Transit Assist is designed around the passenger: scan a QR code, no app or account, signed language detected automatically, captions for Deaf people who do not sign, and offline use for tunnels. The company has a Deaf chief operating officer and says it hired Deaf engineers from the start.
- Coverage and the company′s own news page say it is working with Transport for London across more than 250 stations. Its transport page names no network, and NCG located nothing from TfL. Whether anything is in public service is the first open question.
- 管理该产品的唯一已发布文件是一份隐私政策。其中未提及视频、位置信息、Transit Assist或模型训练，并声明该公司不收集任何特殊类别数据，包括生物识别数据。未找到服务条款。
- 针对一款用于交通公告、医疗保健、银行业务和考试的虚拟形象，未找到任何准确率数据、评估、审核人员、回退机制或事故处理途径。

本记录是如何形成的

This record rests only on what Silence Speaks and others have published, as retrieved on 7 October 2026: the company′s homepage, solutions, transport, about and news pages and its privacy policy at silencespeaks.io; the Companies House register; and press coverage from Wired, MultiLingual, Positive News and others, some of which the company republishes on its own site. It updates NCG′s public-evidence Snapshot of 1 August 2026. Before publication, NCG put seven questions to the company in writing, and its answers will be published here in full. Where something is described as not located, that means not found in the places searched on that date, not that it does not exist.

站台上的四秒钟

一位Deaf女士站在伦敦的一个站台上，显示屏闪烁，她等待的那趟列车的信息随之消失。广播正在播放。她听不见。站台指示牌旁有一个二维码，她扫描了它。网页随即打开，无需下载任何东西，也无需注册账户。它已经判断出她所在的车站，以及她使用的是英国手语。几秒钟后，她手机上的数字手语员告诉她，列车已经改到了另一个站台。

She is not a real person. She is a composite, built from how Silence Speaks describes its Transit Assist product, and she is here because the product was clearly designed by people who thought hard about her. What this record asks is the question the product's pages do not answer: what happens to her when the signer gets it wrong.

一扇由懂得问题所在的人所建造的大门

Silence Speaks Ltd is a British company, incorporated in December 2021 as Kinesics Meets Ltd and renamed in February 2025[1]. Its founder and chief executive is Pavan Madduru, a former AI leader at Vodafone[11]. Its product turns text, voice and video into signed language through an avatar, in photorealistic or animated styles, and its homepage offers British, Irish, Polish, American and Indian sign languages, with more to come[2]. It markets the avatar to nine sectors under separate product names, from Transit Assist for transport to Care Connect for healthcare, Secure Sign for banking and Class Connect, which promises to turn "course materials, exams, and key information into sign language"[3].

The transport product is where the design shows most. A passenger scans a QR code "at any station or onboard; no app needed." The web app "opens instantly, auto-detecting your location and preferred sign language," and delivers platform changes, disruption alerts and wayfinding "within seconds of the original announcements." It supports up to three hours of offline use for tunnels and poor coverage[4]. The company says captioning is built in for Deaf people who prefer or rely on text[5].

The people behind it matter too. The company's about page names Robert Tiffert as its Deaf chief operating officer, fluent in six sign languages[6]. The founder told Wired he hired three full-stack engineers at the outset, all Deaf sign language users[7]. The company describes itself as "built by & for the Deaf Community"[2] and says it is "co-designing algorithms with deaf communities and linguists"[5]. It has also been candid

about limits: the current system runs in the cloud and takes time to generate signing, real-time on-device translation is "at least a year away," and the team abandoned its first goal, translating sign language into text, because it "proved trickier than expected." Those are things a company says when it is being straight about what it has built.

它究竟在哪里运行?

以下所有内容都取决于一个NCG无法确定的事实：Transit Assist是否已在任何地方投入公共服务，如果是，具体在哪里。

关于Transport for London，已有哪些说法，分别出自何处

来源	日期	关于Transport for London的说法
Wired，转载于 silencespeaks.io	2025	TfL "plans to roll out" the avatar; TfL is responsible for more than 250 stations
MultiLingual	2025年5月	A partnership with Transport for London that will bring signed announcements to over 250 stations
Silence Speaks, "Breaking Barriers" (company's own site)	未注明日期	Silence Speaks is "collaborating with Transport for London (TfL)"
Nimdzi语言技术雷达	未注明日期	Silence Speaks与TfL合作，提供无障碍公共信息
Silence Speaks交通页面	2026年10月7日实时信息	Early pilots with major networks; no network, operator or station named
Transport for London	2026年10月7日检索	未找到TfL发布的任何关于Silence Speaks或Transit Assist的声明

来源：如上所列各来源；均于2026年10月7日检索

The accounts move between a plan, a partnership and a collaboration, and the company's own current transport page says only "early pilots with major networks," without naming one. TfL is a public body with its own publications and freedom of information obligations, and NCG located nothing from it about the product. If Transit Assist is live on TfL stations, it is national public infrastructure serving people with a statutory right of access, and the questions below become urgent. If it is a plan, the record should say so plainly, and so should the company's marketing. NCG has asked.

文件所涵盖的内容

The only published document governing Silence Speaks' products is its privacy policy[8]. It names Silence Speaks Ltd as data controller, gives its company number and an address at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Harwell, and offers a complaint route to the Information Commissioner's Office. Those are the basics, and they are there. The policy carries no date, and the mirror copy NCG recorded at a second address in August now returns an error.

What the policy does not cover is the product. It does not mention video, signing, location, Transit Assist or QR codes. Its section on what data is collected promises a list and gives none. It says the company may share personal data "in connection with the licensing of our technology" and on a change of control, may store it outside the UK, and keeps it "as long as reasonably necessary." It says nothing about whether anything a user submits trains the company's models. And it states: "We do not collect any Special Categories of Personal Data about you," a category the policy itself defines to include health and biometric data.

Set that sentence beside the transport product. A Deaf passenger who scans the code is identified as someone who needs signed language, at a known station, at a known time. Information that reveals a disability can be health data under UK data protection law. The app detects location automatically. The company's other products take video as input. The policy may be right about what the company stores; it may be describing an older website rather than the product. But as written, it does not describe Transit Assist at all, and no other document does.

未找到任何服务条款。NCG 检查了 silencespeaks.io 上的常规路径,结果全部返回错误。无论是交通运营商、购买该虚拟形象的医院或银行,还是使用它的乘客,适用于他们的条款都不公开。

它是用什么训练的

The company describes its training data in one phrase, repeated across its own news page and the coverage it republishes: datasets covering "regional dialects, contextual language, and emotional tone"[5,7]. No corpus is named. Nothing says whether the signing was recorded by the company or drawn from elsewhere, who the signers were, what they agreed to, whether they were paid, or which regional varieties of BSL are

covered. This is the same Corpus Question NCG has put to every company on its roster[9], and for an avatar that speaks for public bodies, the answer belongs in writing.

没有人衡量过的事情

No accuracy figure of any kind was located. The company's own news page describes "remarkable accuracy"; Wired reports that the team has "set high standards for accuracy." Neither is a measurement. No evaluation method, sample or definition of a correct rendering is published, and no evaluation by anyone other than the company was found. The company's site lists membership badges for the National Deaf Children's Society and RNID and support from three universities[2], but none of these is described as having examined the output.

当它出错时

回到站台这个场景。她手机上的手语形象告诉这位乘客,她的列车已改到4号站台。而实际上它改到了14号站台。又或者,广播实际上是要求离开车站的指示,而该虚拟形象却呈现成了“晚点”。

实时呈现意味着在乘客看到那句话之前,没有人能对其进行核查。这是该架构本身的一个事实,而非缺陷,也是每一个实时系统共有的特点。关键在于,什么机制取代了这种核查。NCG 未发现任何此类机制:没有审核人员,没有事后对实时输出进行的抽样检查,没有就紧急或疏散广播是否在覆盖范围内给出明确立场,没有为没有智能手机的乘客提供的应对方案,也没有让她能够报告手语有误或查明责任方的途径。

在接入的那一刻	在失效的那一刻
在车站或车上扫描二维码	手语出错时没有转接人工的渠道
无需应用程序,无需账户,无需设置	未发现针对没有智能手机乘客的应对方案
自动检测位置和首选手语	隐私政策中未提及位置信息处理
广播发出后数秒内即完成手语呈现	实时输出在乘客看到之前无法被审核
为不会手语的聋人提供字幕	没有公开的报告错误呈现的途径
可离线使用长达三小时,适用于隧道场景	对紧急或疏散相关内容没有明确立场

The transport page also tells operators that the European Accessibility Act deadline of 28 June 2025 is approaching and cites fines of up to £425,000, with no source[4]. The site's code declares WCAG 2.1 AA conformance, but no accessibility statement was located, which a UK public-sector deployment would ordinarily require.

谁来决定

Silence Speaks has more Deaf people in senior roles than most companies on NCG's roster: a Deaf chief operating officer and, by its own account, Deaf engineers from the start. That is real, and it is credited. What the public record does not show is whether any Deaf role can stop a release, change what the avatar signs, or refuse a deployment. No advisory body, charter or documented route for the wider Deaf community was located.

其董事会是以政治和医疗背景来描述的。Companies House(英国公司注册处)列出了两名董事:创始人,以及克洛伊·史密斯(Chloe Smith)——一位前国务大臣,曾主导2022年承认英国手语在英国法律中地位的立法,于2025年6月被任命,并被《连线》杂志称为董事会主席[10,7]。《积极新闻》(Positive News)于2026年1月报道称,英国国民医疗服务体系(NHS)医生兼科技投资人约翰·李艾伦博士(Dr John LeeAllen)也在董事会任职[12];但他并未出现在 Companies House 的董事登记名单中,因此他的角色可能只是顾问性质。立法方面的地位是真实的公信力来源,但这并不等同于聋人治理,NCG 将其归类为董事会构成信息,而非聋人权威的证据。

买家应当提出的问题

对于交通运营商而言,这些问题是具体的。紧急和疏散内容是否在覆盖范围内?乘客应预期多长的延迟?当呈现失败、网络掉线或乘客没有手机时会发生什么?谁来审核实时输出,聋人乘客又该如何报告错误?对于医院、银行或考试机构而言,这些问题则更加尖锐,因为在这些场景中,一次错误的手语呈现可能造成无人能够挽回的后果。

向任何实时手语播报供应商应提出的问题

☐ 该系统今天是否正在公共服务中使用,地点在哪里?请询问运营方,而不仅仅是供应商。

☐ 是否呈现紧急或疏散内容?如果是,采取了什么保障措施?

☐ 用什么补偿性控制措施来替代对实时输出的发布前审核?

☐ 没有智能手机的乘客能获得什么服务?

☐ 该应用收集了哪些关于聋人乘客所在位置的数据?由谁保管这些数据?

☐ 是谁、用谁的手语内容训练了该模型?在什么样的同意下进行的?

☐ 谁对错误的呈现负责?乘客又该如何用手语报告这一问题?

向 Silence Speaks 提出的问题

NCG has put the following questions to Silence Speaks in writing, with this record attached. The company's answers, and any corrections to the record above, will be published with it.

1. Is Transit Assist in public service anywhere today? What is the status of the work with Transport for London: live, piloting, contracted or planned, and at which stations or lines? Which "major networks" ran the early pilots, and has any of them published results?

2. 该虚拟形象是用什么数据训练的?手语录制是由Silence Speaks完成的,还是从其他渠道获取的?使用了什么许可,来自哪些手语使用者,获得了怎样的同意与报酬,又涵盖了英国手语的哪些地区变体?

3. 除公司自身外,是否有其他人对手语输出的准确性进行过评估,采用了什么方法,结果如何?是否有聋人审核员检查输出内容,对于实时交通公告而言,又有什么机制替代了发布前的审核?

4. What data does Transit Assist collect when a passenger scans a code, including location, how long is it kept, and is it linked to any identifier? How does the privacy policy's statement that the company collects no special category data apply to a service whose use reveals that the user is Deaf? Is anything a user submits used to train models, and which terms of service govern passengers and customers?

5. 紧急、疏散或其他关乎安全的公告是否属于Transit Assist的服务范围?典型的延迟是多少?当渲染失败或网络不可用时会发生什么?没有智能手机的乘客又能获得什么?

6. Beyond employment, can any Deaf role at Silence Speaks halt a release or deployment or change what the avatar signs? Is there a Deaf advisory body or other route for the wider community? What is Dr John LeeAllen's role, given that he does not appear on the Companies House register of directors?

7. 聋人用户若要用手语举报错误的手语呈现,有什么途径可走,责任由谁承担——是Silence Speaks还是部署该服务的运营方?Transit Assist网页应用是否有无障碍声明?

Silence Speaks' response

Silence Speaks' response will appear here in full when it is received.

免责声明。
This record states matters of public record as retrieved on the dates given and identifies interpretation as such. The passenger in the opening sections is a composite drawn from Silence Speaks' published product description and does not describe any real person. This record makes no allegation of misconduct and is not legal advice. Silence Speaks has been invited to correct any statement of fact before publication and to respond to the questions above.

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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.

SUPPORT NCG

NCG does this work without vendor money, so our findings stay ours. If it has been useful to you, you can support NCG's independent work here. NCG is a for-profit company, not a charity. Contributions are not tax-deductible and buy no service or influence.

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