

AT&T Petitions FCC to Replace TTY with Real-Time Text for Hearing Impaired Communications

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On Friday, AT&T submitted a [Petition for Rulemaking](#) to the FCC, requesting that the Commission update its rules requiring support for text telephone (TTY) technology. The petition asks the FCC to launch a proceeding to recognize real-time text (RTT) as an acceptable alternative to TTY under the Commission's accessibility rules and, in the interim, AT&T is seeking a waiver to allow it to deploy IP (Internet protocol)-based voice services without support for TTY.

TTY technology has long been used to enable individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate by typing messages on TTY devices that are transmitted over telephone lines to TTY devices at the receiving end. Currently, TTY compatibility is required for a variety of communications services under the FCC's accessibility rules. The petition argues that TTY technology is outdated and incompatible with increasingly prevalent Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology. Newer RTT communication has the advantages of interoperability with IP networks and instantaneous transmission that allows for interactive conversations.

By developing RTT so that it is interoperable with TTY, and permitting RTT to be used as an acceptable alternative to TTY, the petition argues that service providers and device manufacturers would be able to choose the accessibility method that works best for their service. The petition posits that ultimately, RTT will fully replace the use TTY.