



## **Real-Time Text Taskforce (R3TF) Foundation CHARTER**

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This document describes the purpose and structure and how the R3TF will operate.

This Charter is work in progress and will be updated frequently.

The latest version of the Charter can be found on the R3TF website:

<http://www.realtimetext.org/>

### **Introduction**

#### **What is Real-Time Text (RTT)?**

Real-Time text is conversational text that is sent and received on a character-by-character basis. The characters are sent immediately (in a fraction of a second) once typed and are displayed immediately to the receiving person(s). The receiving person can actually see what the sending person is typing. This allows text to be used in the same conversational way as voice, where the receiving person can hear what the sending person is talking about.

That is what makes RTT a natural extension for other Real-Time, conversational services such as voice and video telephony.

RTT can be used simultaneously with voice and video (this is what we call Total Conversation) or, depending on the communication needs, used only with voice or video. RTT can also be used as a stand-alone service to chat with other persons. For example, RTT (alone, or combined with video) can be used in noisy environments, when you want to communicate during a meeting when voice is not appropriate. Or RTT combined with voice when it is easier to type names and addresses instead of spelling them during a voice call. Including RTT in any call will also allow people with a hearing or speech disability to fully participate in the conversation.

#### **Why is the R3TF needed?**

Despite the advantages that RTT offers it has a significant problem that hinders its acceptance and mainstream implementation. RTT is not well known as a communication feature whilst voice and video are well known by many users, and many systems and services use these features. For text communication, most use Instant Messaging or the texting (SMS) feature on mobile telephones.

As a consequence, Instant Messaging is often incorrectly seen as Real-Time communication with the result that most people consider anything with text communication 'similar to Instant Messaging'. This leads to many misunderstandings about why RTT is needed as well as why and how to implement it. So, it is essential that the implementers understand the technology and together with the users fully understand the potential and benefits of RTT and services using RTT.

RTT needs to be publicized to a wide audience to explain its benefits and to promote its introduction in public and private networks.



## **Introducing the R3TF Foundation**

### **Mission Statement**

The R3TF has a goal to ensure that harmonized, interoperable real-time text (RTT) communication solutions are as readily available as conversational voice in all IP environments.

To reach that goal, the R3TF will act as a centre for advocacy and knowledge exchange in the field of real-time text. It will contribute to the promotion, design and implementation of interoperable real-time text solutions and encourage adoption of real-time text in mainstream products and services.

The R3TF supports the use of different real-time text technologies as long as they adhere to a common interoperability standard. The R3TF will help to achieve this by providing expertise and tools to promote and support the development of such interoperability.

The R3TF will act in the best interest of RTT and its users; we fully believe in working together as a Taskforce with full compliance with Internet and telecommunication standards using mainstream technology to ensure RTT becomes and will remain a mainstream technology for all to use.

The R3TF supports the use of open source and open standards. But also encourages commercial services and deployment of RTT.

Since RTT allows users to have a conversation with the same immediacy and interactivity as a voice conversation, RTT can be used to replace voice in a telephone or VoIP communication if desired by the user(s). The R3TF recognizes that RTT allows people with a hearing or speech disability to communicate without hurdles by being able to “talk using text”. The R3TF also sees its role to improve accessibility in Internet and telecommunication for people with disabilities.

### **Tasks of the R3TF**

Task 1: to advocate and promote the use of Real-Time Text as a mainstream service including use by people with disabilities.

Task 2: to identify user and network needs to ensure a fully functional RTT service.

Task 3: to promote and facilitate the interworking of different RTT technologies

Task 4: to act as a source of information about RTT and the standards

Task 5: to encourage appropriate RTT developments and implementations including new services using RTT.



Task 6: to promote RTT also in combination with audio and video, which is called Total Conversation.

Task 7: act as a driving force to ensure proper standardization and development of RTT in future networks and systems.

Task 8: act as technical advisor for projects and organizations on RTT and Total Conversation

### **Who is the R3TF for?**

The R3TF operates as an open forum for all stakeholders who share its vision, including engineers, designers, solution architects, companies and organisations and users.

### **Who are the stakeholders?**

- Network providers who need to support national Universal Service regulations.
- Companies and equipment suppliers who seek to provide solutions for their customers or improve their current hardware with RTT capabilities. For example adding RTT to their video conferencing products.
- Entrepreneurs who are seeking opportunities using RTT, creating new services, software and hardware.
- Service providers who want to offer RTT and related services.
- Disability groups who seek a good communication using text with the same conversational freedom as voice over the Internet. This includes replacing Text-telephones (TTY's) with RTT.
- Governments and (global) organizations and NGO's who want to offer equal access and equal right to Internet and communication.
- Research centers and universities on Internet and communication technology to learn and improve and develop/standardize RTT and to create new systems and services.
- Standardization bodies and organizations that strive to have full inclusive and accessible standards and are open to improve communication standards.
- RTT Users of all types.



### **Structure R3TF**

The R3TF is a non-profit foundation. The foundation board provides its governance. The operational board, chaired by the R3TF Director, oversees its activities. Most work is undertaken on a voluntary basis by interested people and organisations. To ensure that specific (larger) tasks are performed, the Foundation retains consultants to assist in these tasks.

#### Foundation board

The duties of the foundation board are:

- Set and maintain the R3TF vision and mission;
- Define the R3TF strategy;
- Establish and monitor the governance framework, including policies;
- Ensure accountability and compliance with the law;
- Select, support and appraise the Director;
- Oversee the activities of the Operational Board, in particular in its compliance with fiscal and other legal obligations and to ensure that its activities are in line with the vision, mission and strategy;
- Provide guidance and expertise to the Operational Board;
- Promote the R3TF and act as its public face for media activities.

#### Operational board

The Operational board will:

- Define and deliver activities in implementation of the vision, mission and strategy;
- Direct the creation, operation and closure of Task-Groups to undertake specific tasks in a timely manner;
- Report on progress to the Foundation Board;
- Where appropriate, establish line management and project management structures necessary for the carrying out of its duties;
- Undertake any other tasks commensurate with its role as set out by the Foundation Board;
- Do all of the above in compliance with all legal and fiscal obligations and with health and safety legislation and regulation.

#### Task-Groups

Task-Groups are formed for specific tasks by the Operational Board. Each Task-Group will have a Group-Leader and participants. The Group-Leader must be a member of the Operational Board, unless stated otherwise by the Foundation Board.



### Director of the R3TF

The Director is appointed by the Foundation Board for a set term. The Director will:

- Provide operational management for the R3TF and its Task-Groups;
- Be responsible for compliance of the operational activities of R3TF and its Task-Groups with legal obligations, in particular legal and health and safety legislation;
- Be responsible for compliance of the operational activities of R3TF and its Task-Groups with the vision, mission and strategy as set out by the Foundation Board;
- Be responsible for compliance of the operational activities of R3TF and its Task-Groups with the policies set out by the Foundation Board;
- Chair the Operational Board;
- Represent R3TF in its relationships and dissemination activities as per the delegated responsibility set out by the Foundation Board;
- Participate in any appropriate operational activities, including Task-Groups.

## **R3TF in Action**

### **The challenges for RTT**

- The aim is to facilitate seamless, end-to-end RTT in all IP environments.
- Right now there is no easy-to-use RTT client available to introduce users to RTT. A RTT Client must work out of the box more or less. Automated methods should be included for traversal of essentially all firewall and NAT router configurations.
- RTT is too unfamiliar; everybody keeps pushing IM including people who are Deaf/hard of Hearing. They need to EXPERIENCE the character-by-character RTT to understand its benefits.
- Manufacturers are not eager to use/implement RTT because it is new and unknown to them.
- There is no easily available hardware that supports a RTT phone.
- Some companies and organizations are starting with different solutions that are 'word-by-word' or some proprietary form of RTT that might not even perform like RTT. This leads to fragmentation of RTT with interoperability issues and varying performance of RTT.

### **Deliverables**

The R3TF wants to overcome the challenges by:

- Running a website with timely information for Stakeholders and Users about RTT and standards.
- Give presentations to organizations, companies and conferences to encourage the inclusion of RTT in specifications and products.
- Develop User and Technical Requirements for networks and Servers to support an end-to-end RTT service.



- Produce Interworking Test Specifications.
- Facilitate the combining of funding and skills in order to develop effective RTT Products.
- Create a report on the Firewall traversal problems and an assessment of their solutions.
- Develop User and Technical Requirements for an easy to install and easy-to-use RTT client.
- Participate with European and other projects to promote consistent Requirements and Usage for RTT.
- Propose a RTT Interworking Plan to allow 'non-standard' RTT solutions to support end-to-end RTT service.
- Develop RTT Testing Requirements and RTT Testing Specification

### Which will allow the creation of services and platforms using RTT:

- Broadcasting RTT to offer (remote) captioning/live transcription at conferences
- Creation of a web based RTT client that allows users to experience RTT
- Building a server/platform that supports the web based RTT client
- Building/maintaining/improving a platform that acts as an inter-working gateway between different RTT technologies.
- Build the interworking/test platform based on the inter-working gateway project to allow RTT interworking and compatibility testing. (This may lead to the creation of a test lab for product certification of RTT compatibility).

Specific projects and activities with the details will be found on the website.

## **How to Participate in, or help the R3TF?**

The R3TF is a very ambitious organization. But to be able to make this all happen, we need your help and participation.

All active work, standardization, writing of documents and building will be done in dedicated Task Groups as described above.

The participation can be direct by participating in the Task Groups. Or it can be indirect by helping the R3TF with resources or funding.