



Cultivating Research & Equity in Sign-related Technology (CREST) Shared Vision Statement

As emerging technologies rapidly create new possibilities for changing people's lives, certain groups are at risk of being left behind, without equitable access to information and the ability to interact with people and devices in meaningful ways. CREST Network was founded to cultivate productive cooperation and representation of deaf people* in the development of emerging technology that stands to impact their lives.

We acknowledge the benefits of sign language-related technologies, which have the potential to enhance the lives of deaf people. Development of these technologies could, for example, support language acquisition for deaf children, lead to more accessible devices and software, encourage the recognition of signed language as equal to spoken language, or make signed language interpreting more ubiquitous.

We acknowledge the inherent value in including deaf people at all stages of sign-related technology development, particularly those deaf professionals who possess relevant expertise (e.g., computer science, linguistics, animation, anthropology). Leadership roles in these projects are of particular value.

We recognize that research groups with highly-skilled deaf members often have less access to existing infrastructure support for cutting-edge technological research. At the same time, research groups developing highly-sophisticated technologies for sign-related purposes often lack the substantive involvement of deaf experts.

We recognize that there is no simple solution. Still, with a concerted effort, we hope that the CREST Network can encourage collaborations and create connections in the field to lay the foundation for more productive and equitable research and technology development.

We believe researchers who have the technological capacity to develop advanced sign-related technology but currently lack meaningful connections to the deaf community will benefit from expanding their networks and practicing inclusive allyship. Sign language users are already experts in their languages and are likely to be familiar with accessibility and the unique challenges of automated sign translation and recognition.

Researchers currently working on sign-related technologies should consider the ethical responsibility of building an inclusive team. Ethical considerations include the responsible use of sign language data.

The ultimate goal of the CREST Network is to increase contributions from deaf people and accessibility in these fields that have direct impacts upon deaf people and their communities. At the same time, we encourage and celebrate the rapidly changing technological advances which have the potential to bring an increased quality of life and opportunities for deaf people and signing communities.

*Here, this term encompasses Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, DeafBlind people, and all members of the signing community

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