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For Immediate Release

**FCC GRANTS CONDITIONAL, FIRST-EVER CERTIFICATION FOR
IP CAPTIONED TELEPHONE SERVICE USING ONLY AUTOMATIC
SPEECH RECOGNITION**

Certification Could Open New Avenue for Accessible Communications Options

WASHINGTON, May 5, 2020—The FCC’s Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau today granted conditional certification to MachineGenius to provide Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS) using only automatic speech recognition (ASR) technology. This is the first such grant and provides an opportunity for advanced technology to meet the FCC’s high reliability standards in providing captioned telephone service for deaf and hard-of-hearing Americans. Conditional certification permits MachineGenius to receive Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) Fund compensation pending verification that its service to registered users meets or exceeds the FCC’s minimum TRS standards.

“Broadening the available options for accessible communications is essential to keeping Americans with disabilities connected to their communities,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. “So often we have found that technology can provide important solutions to the challenges of ensuring the availability and reliability of accessible communications. We’re hopeful that this new tool will help bridge the communications divide while meeting our stringent requirements.”

MachineGenius applied for certification to deliver Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service using only automatic speech recognition technology and without the aid of communications assistants normally employed in IP CTS. The company will be using an app that can be installed on existing mobile devices, including smartphones and tablets that are Wi-Fi or mobile-data enabled. In June 2018, the Commission determined that automatic speech recognition is a permissible means of delivering captioned telephone service.

MachineGenius’s app, called Olelo, includes mobile telephony features, such as call history, captioned voicemail, and speakerphone. Assistive devices and accessories may be used with Olelo. By delivering ASR-generated captions on an over-the-top smartphone app, MachineGenius says it is able to reduce the cost and increase the speed of delivery of telephone captions, while providing a degree of accuracy comparable to captioning provided by communications assistants.

Comparative performance testing by the Commission’s TRS research contractor, MITRE Corporation, found MachineGenius’s average word error rates for various call scenarios were significantly lower than IP CTS providers using communications assistants. Average caption delays for MachineGenius were also found to be significantly lower than IP CTS communications assistants in various call scenarios.

The FCC determined that MachineGenius has sufficiently established that its proposed service will meet or exceed the FCC's minimum TRS standards, including those for speed of answer, transcription speed, and accuracy and readability of captions. MachineGenius has also shown that its ASR-only IP CTS product will be capable of keeping captioned conversations confidential and handling emergency calls in accordance with applicable rules.

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