

PROCESS DIGITIZATION SERVICE PERFORMED BY PEOPLE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT



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ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

PROCESS DIGITIZATION SERVICE PERFORMED BY PEOPLE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

This document addresses social inclusion. But, what is social inclusion? In a simple search, we will find various concepts, all converging towards the same meaning. Researcher Romeu Kasumi Sasaki, known as the “father of inclusion,” defines “social inclusion” as the process by which society adapts to include people with special needs in its general social systems, while simultaneously preparing them to assume their roles in society.

The Superior Court of Justice is nicknamed the “Court of Citizenship,” and based on this premise, it understood that all members of this Court should be attentive to the contemporary world. This is because we are living in times of change. Change is not a new fact, it is a permanent phenomenon. What challenges today is the way it confronts us. What was once incremental and predictable has become discontinuous, fast-paced, and unpredictable. Its pace demands continuous learning and requires constant attention.

In this context, the Superior Court of Justice understood that it was the moment to adapt its role in the Brazilian society, which is increasingly focused on inclusive and transformative actions aimed to improve the reality of those who have long been relegated to near oblivion.

The society invests in its Judiciary branch on the trust, indispensability, and responses it expects from it. Thus, we must be driven to act in a way that preserves and enhances them, and this is only possible if the Court of Citizenship performs its tasks beyond its core activities. And adapting for social inclusion is one of them!

“I thought it would be the same as other places, but here it’s different. I feel respected. I really like working here. I like my boss a lot because of this accessibility. He knows Brazilian Sign Language, so our interaction is good. When I have any questions, I can call him, he helps me with my work, and I get to learn in the process.”

Otávio Valentim (hearing impaired)



BACKGROUND

In **2009**, the Superior Court of Justice began the implementation of electronic processes internally, aiming to comply with the Law 11.419/2006, which pertains to the computerization of judicial processes.

A pioneering initiative represented a significant advancement for the Superior Court of Justice, making an important contribution to the preparation, analysis, and judgment of cases, in addition to providing substantial savings in resources such as paper, transportation, printing, time, among others.

To achieve this purpose, the Court mobilized efforts to digitize not only the physical cases submitted after the implementation of the measure but also all other cases that were already in progress at the Court, which led to the need for formulating an efficient strategy to recruit collaborators to carry out this important task.

After analyzing the situation, the **digitization activity** was entrusted **to hearing-impaired employees**, and the management of their work was assigned to the **Judicial Secretariat**, as it is the unit responsible for carrying out the first stage of the procedural process. This includes the initial processing of cases, from their submission to the Court until their conclusion by the Ministers of the Court.

“I have been working here for ten years, and I feel very good because there has always been great interaction with my colleagues, with the people around me. We feel united. For example, among us, we get along very well, and we help each other. This way, each person manages to do their job well and deliver quality work. We all learn together.”

Rejane de Paula (hearing impaired)

The decision to rely on deaf employees, although considered unusual at the time, proved to be a **great strategic success**. The task of meticulously digitizing each page of the physical case files requires a high level of concentration from the operators. Additionally, there was a need to adapt to the challenges of working in a noisy environment due to the operation of scanners and other devices used in the digitization process.

The practice showed that **the structural and functional characteristics of the deaf operators became an aptitude and special advantage in performing this task**, providing them with a **competitive edge**. This allowed them to achieve **high levels of productivity and accuracy in the digitization work**.





THE TRAINING

The team's training has been conducted, since the beginning of the project, in the so-called training on-the-job format, with the participation of all hired employees. Each stage of the daily tasks is trained until a level of excellence is achieved, enabling the Court to ensure the secure execution of the work.

It is important to highlight that each recently hired employee receives the same training, as there is no available course in the job market that provides the necessary qualifications for this type of position. Thus, a multiplier strategy is used, enabling continuous and collaborative learning within the team.

The employees in training also have the support of Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS) translators and interpreters.



 **TEAM**

At the beginning of the project in 2009, the team of deaf employees consisted of approximately 320 people. As the digitization process increased in numbers and reached other branches of the Judiciary branch, the team was gradually reduced.

Currently, there are **134 people** in the team, being **65 men** and **69 women**, that work six hours a day in two shifts.

This activity is carried out under a Service Provision Contract between the Superior Court of Justice (STJ) and the Association of the Special Physical Education Training Center (CNPJ no. 26.444.635/0001-53), a non-profit civil association of a socio-assistance nature, with the goal of developing actions to support people with disabilities.

The project for the utilization of the labor force of deaf employees at the STJ is celebrating **15 years of existence (2009–2024)** and has become a national and international benchmark for social inclusion in the public sector.

“

“Before, when I worked in other companies, communication was very difficult because no one knew sign language, and nobody knew anything about the Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS). I worked and communicated through gestures, and people saw and thought it was strange. I felt bad because I was the only one gesturing. Then I moved to Brasília, came to the STJ, and saw how the work environment was. I was amazed at the number of deaf people. Before, I felt bad, now I feel free. I would call the supervisor to explain things to me, and he would speak to me in LIBRAS. I was moved and happy.”

Katherine Fontes (hearing impaired)

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EFFECT 1: SOCIAL INCLUSION

In addition to the mentioned operational benefits, the choice to employ deaf individuals represented a measure of significant social impact, contributing to the inclusion of a segment of workers who were marginalized in the job market. The characteristic of hearing impairment often distances these individuals from those who can hear. The employment opportunities provided by the STJ created a chance for social inclusion, leading to the acquisition of new work skills.

Thanks to this set of positive aspects, the digitization work at the STJ, carried out by hearing-impaired individuals, has become a national benchmark in the public sector. It has been followed by other organizations that have replicated the strategies developed here, such as the Federal Regional Court of the 1st Region and the Court of Justice of the Federal District.

Not by chance, the Judicial Secretariat has been frequently requested by various branches of the Judiciary, and the Executive Branch itself, to share its experiences and work model. Not by chance, the Judicial Secretariat has been frequently requested by various branches of the Judiciary and the Executive Branch itself to share its experiences and work model.



EFFECT 2: PROJECT EXPANSION

Due to the success achieved with the digitization project, the STJ decided to increase the participation of deaf collaborators in the Court's activities, entrusting them with four more important work fronts:

- a) **Digitization of the judicial and administrative case files of the Federal Regional Court of the 1st Region**, carried out through a Technical Cooperation Agreement signed with that institution (completed activity);
- b) **Digitization of the judicial case files of the Federal Regional Court of the 6th Region**, carried out through a Technical Cooperation Agreement signed with that institution (completed activity);
- c) **Digitization of the document collection of the STJ Library** - Minister Oscar Saraiva, which includes books, periodicals, and historical works, contributing to the improvement of the Court's document management and to the digital transformation plan of the Judiciary Branch advocated by the CNJ.
- d) **Transcription of the indicative summary of cases**, which consists of transcribing the indexing of the summaries of judgments appealed through special appeals (REsp), interlocutory appeals in special appeals (AREsp), ordinary appeal in writ of mandamus (RMS), and ordinary appeal in habeas corpus appeals (RHC). The objective is to complement the classification data of matters set by the CNJ, thereby facilitating the identification of the controversy discussed in the appeal, as well as enabling research and the grouping of similar cases within the service's workflow without the need to open the electronic case files.

» NEXT STEPS:

With the substantial reduction of digitization activities within the STJ and the conclusion of institutional partnerships for the virtualization of the collections of the Federal Regional Courts of the 1st and 6th Regions, resulting from the completion of the digital transformation cycle of the Judiciary Branch, a new and important area of engagement for deaf collaborators is emerging.

The new mission entrusted to this work team is the virtualization of the Justice Journals that comprise the collection of the STJ Library. This activity will involve the digitization of the journals published from 1949 to 1989 and will contribute to the preservation of the memory of the Judiciary Branch, a goal outlined in CNJ Resolution No. 324/2020.

The digitization will bring benefits not only to the STJ but also to all institutions of the Judiciary Branch and researchers in general, who, through this new service, will be able to retrieve historical information related to administrative acts and judicial decisions of the STF, TFR, TST, TSE, and STM published during that period.

“I was unemployed for a very long time because I am deaf. Here, I felt much more at ease. The salary is important, it’s good because it helps me take care of my home, my studies, invest in higher education, and things like that.”

Elevânio Souza (hearing impaired)



WORK ACTIVITIES DETAILS

The third clause of the contract outlines all the responsibilities of the job positions hired for the digitization service at the STJ. It is important to mention that, for the service to be effectively executed, it is necessary to hire supervisors, assistant supervisors, document preparers, and digitizers and data capturers. The first two positions must be capable of translating Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS) when needed.



For the Supervisor position, the following activities are carried out:

- a) monitoring and guiding the services performed by Assistant Supervisors, following the directions and objectives set by the representative of the CONTRACTOR;
- b) monitoring and verifying the efficiency in fulfilling the established tasks;
- c) supervising the distribution of tasks and checking the quality of the services performed under the contract;
- d) maintaining communication, receiving, and transmitting messages to Assistant Supervisors and employees, using LIBRAS (Brazilian Sign Language) to ensure clear understanding and smooth workflow.
- e) immediately report to the Contract Manager any irregularities found in the execution of services and, as soon as possible, put the verbal communication in writing, including all necessary data and circumstances to clarify the facts;
- f) prepare reports and documents;
- g) monitor deadlines and work schedules;
- h) operate a personal computer (Windows/Word/Excel);
- i) receive and send emails; and
- j) provide translation for hearing-impaired employees whenever they participate in an event.

The professionals assigned to the Assistant Supervisor positions must carry out activities according to the following description:

- a) monitor and guide the services performed in the Document Preparation and Digitization positions, following the directions and objectives set by the Supervisor;

- b) verify the efficiency in completing the established tasks;
- c) distribute tasks and check the quality of the services performed under the contract;
- d) assist with other functions related to the provision of services;
- e) communicate with employees using LIBRAS (Brazilian Sign Language) to ensure clear understanding and workflow;
- f) identify and organize the documents to be prepared and digitized;
- g) control and monitor the intake and output of cases and documents in their work area;
- h) search for data and information on the internet;
- i) monitor deadlines and work schedules;
- j) operate a personal computer (Windows/Word/Excel);
- k) reproduce documents using scanners and photocopiers; and
- l) receive and send emails.

The professionals assigned to the Document Preparation positions must carry out the following activities:

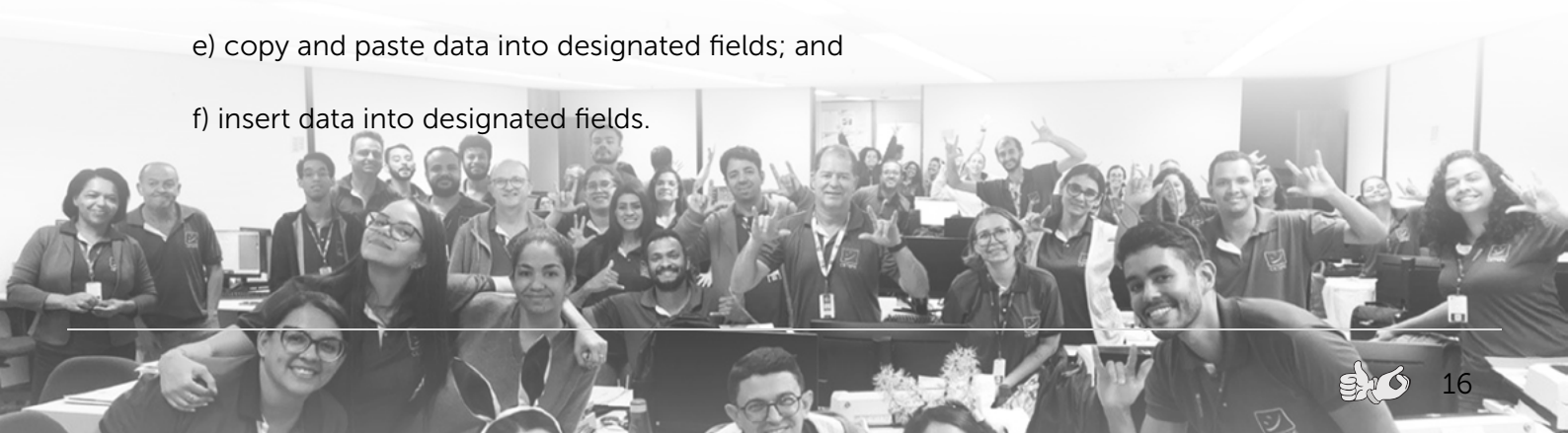
- a) record the intake and output of documents;
- b) prepare the documents to be digitized, including photos, images, letters, and official documents in formats such as "executive," A4, A3, and other weights;
- c) remove staples, clips, paper fasteners, folds, and creases from the documents;
- d) organize the files;



- e) affix labels;
- f) assist in controlling documents and cases;
- g) verify the numbering of pages and documents within the files;
- h) clean the files;
- i) remove excess materials from the files;
- j) take notes and send messages; and
- k) assist with other related activities.

The professionals assigned to the Digitization and Data Capture positions must carry out the following activities:

- a) record the intake and output of documents;
- b) capture and digitize documents provided by the Document Preparer, including photos, images, letters, and official documents in formats such as "executive," A4, A3, and other weights;
- c) operate scanning, fax, and photocopying equipment;
- d) take notes and send messages;
- e) copy and paste data into designated fields; and
- f) insert data into designated fields.



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“I started working in digitization and stayed there for a long time. I bound cases, learned to organize various things in spreadsheets, organize the numbering of cases, and also helped the supervisors. With that, I gained experience and began handling case filing work. Then I was chosen to be a supervisor. I went home, talked to my mom and dad, and my dad said, ‘Wow, you’re very young to be a supervisor.’ I asked what I should do, and he said that being a supervisor requires great responsibility, that I would need to help others and have a lot of patience. So I studied, researched about the role of a supervisor, and understood. I returned and said yes, and everyone was happy. I’m still here as a supervisor to this day.”

Pedro Henrique de Camargos (hearing impaired)

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PRODUCTIVITY STATISTICS

The numbers reflect the success of this strategy and the valuable work of the hearing-impaired individuals. Since the start of activities in 2009, over **1 million cases** have been digitized by the team, totaling approximately **384 million pages digitized**.

These figures show that, on average, about 27 million pages were digitized per year over 15 years of work, which means 2,240,000 pages per month or 74,700 pages per day.

Historical records also indicate that, at the peak of digitizing physical cases, the productivity of the hearing-impaired collaborators reached up to 1,800 cases per day.

Currently, with the shift to electronic judicial processes, there is a change in institutional needs, leading to the migration from digitizing processes to new partnerships. These agreements have been undertaken with the goal of contributing to the modernization of public services and maintaining the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor market.





EXPLANATORY VIDEOS

Some videos showcasing homage previously given to the team of collaborators can be accessed at any time for analysis. They include:



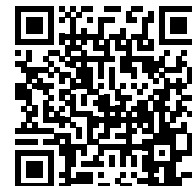
National Deaf Day 2023

[Click here](#) to watch or point your camera at the QR Code on the right.



STJ Honors Hearing-Impaired Collaborators 2019 - Speech by Minister Nancy and Senator Zenaide

[Click here](#) to watch or point your camera at the QR Code on the right.



STJ Honors Team of 137 Hearing-Impaired Collaborators 2023 with Minister Maria Thereza

[Click here](#) to watch or point your camera at the QR Code on the right.



National Deaf Day 2021 – Testimonies of Hearing-Impaired Colleagues about Working at STJ ‘I love working here at the STJ’

[Click here](#) to watch or point your camera at the QR Code on the right.



TEAM PHOTOS

Below are some photos of the team from the Petitions and Cases Digitization Section:



