

NZSL Online Dictionary Project 2008-2011

User Requirements Survey Report

Aim

To survey potential users to determine what will be included in the NZSL Online Dictionary.

Potential Users of the Dictionary

The following potential users of the online dictionary were identified:

1. NZSL tutors/teachers
2. NZSL learners
3. NZSL Interpreters
4. Deaf community
5. Deaf students
6. Deaf education staff
7. Mainstream schools
8. Parents/families of Deaf children/adults

Sampling Method

We selected a representative sample using the following method:

1. **NZSL tutors/teachers:** At the NZ Sign Language Teachers Association conference in July 2008, NZSL tutors/teachers from around the country (from Whangarei to Dunedin) were put in small groups and asked to note down the number of responses to each question.
2. **NZSL learners:** Programme Coordinators and NZSL teachers/tutors at tertiary education and community night classes were asked to distribute surveys to NZSL learners at Victoria University of Wellington (32), Auckland University of Technology (31) and community classes in Wellington (23).
3. **NZSL interpreters:** Surveys were completed by 1) interpreters working in Deaf education (surveys were given by KDEC and VADEC); and 2) interpreters attending a Wellington Interpreters Network meeting.
4. **Deaf community:** A meeting was organised for the Wellington Deaf community to fill in the survey forms. The survey was also given to Deaf people who attended the DEAF 805 course in Wellington. These people came from different parts of New Zealand: Whangarei, Auckland, Palmerston North, Levin, Wellington and Christchurch.

5. **Deaf students:** Deaf education centres (KDEC and VADEC) handed out the surveys to high school and transition Deaf students.
6. **Parents/families of Deaf child/adult:** Parents and families of Deaf children/adults filled in the surveys at Sign Sunday in Wellington - NZSL classes for families organised by Wellington Association of Deaf Children. A few respondents were also received from parents and families attending other NZSL courses and also by email.
7. **Deaf education staff:** KDEC and VADEC distributed the survey to Teachers of the Deaf and other educational staff i.e., Teacher Aide. The majority of respondents were Teachers of the Deaf.
8. **Unknown:** Respondents placed under this category did not circle which user group they belonged to.

Respondents Profile

	Respondents	No.
1	NZSL tutors/teachers	38
2	NZSL learners	86
3	NZSL interpreters	16
4	Deaf community	22
5	Deaf students	15
6	Deaf education staff	98
7	Mainstream teachers	5
8	Parents/family of Deaf child/adult	19
9	Unknown	2
	Total number of respondents	301

The survey did not ask if the respondent was Deaf or hearing. It is estimated there are more than 80 respondents are Deaf (i.e. NZSL tutors/teachers, Deaf community, Deaf students, few Deaf education staff).

Information Requirements

The information requested in the survey falls into the following broad categories:

1. **Media:** What type of media preferred i.e., drawings, video clips.
2. **Search options:** How the entries would be searched i.e., English word, features of a sign, by topic.
3. **Entry contents:** What information should be given about each sign (meanings, synonyms, grammatical class, example of signs used in NZSL sentence on video, example of word used in English sentence, variation info).
4. **DVD:** Will respondents buy a DVD in addition to using an online dictionary.
5. **Other uses:** Vocabulary save and print.
6. **Extra learning:** 'Extension' of dictionary (lessons, games).
7. **Feedback:** Feasibility of Deaf people giving feedback online about use of signs.
8. **Internet:** Respondents access to broadband/dial up.
9. **Comments:** Any other comments provided by respondents.

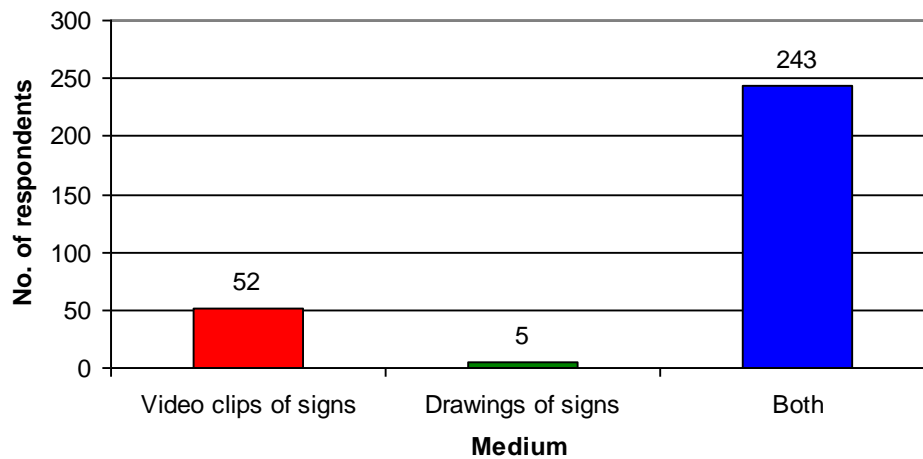
A sample survey form appears as Appendix 1.

Results

1. Media

Respondents were asked if video clip or drawing of signs were useful in an online dictionary. Four in five respondents (80.7%) favoured both video clips and drawings of signs. Almost one-fifth of respondents (17.3%) preferred video clips and five people selected drawings. One person did not comment.

Figure 1 Media Preferences



Respondents' recommendations

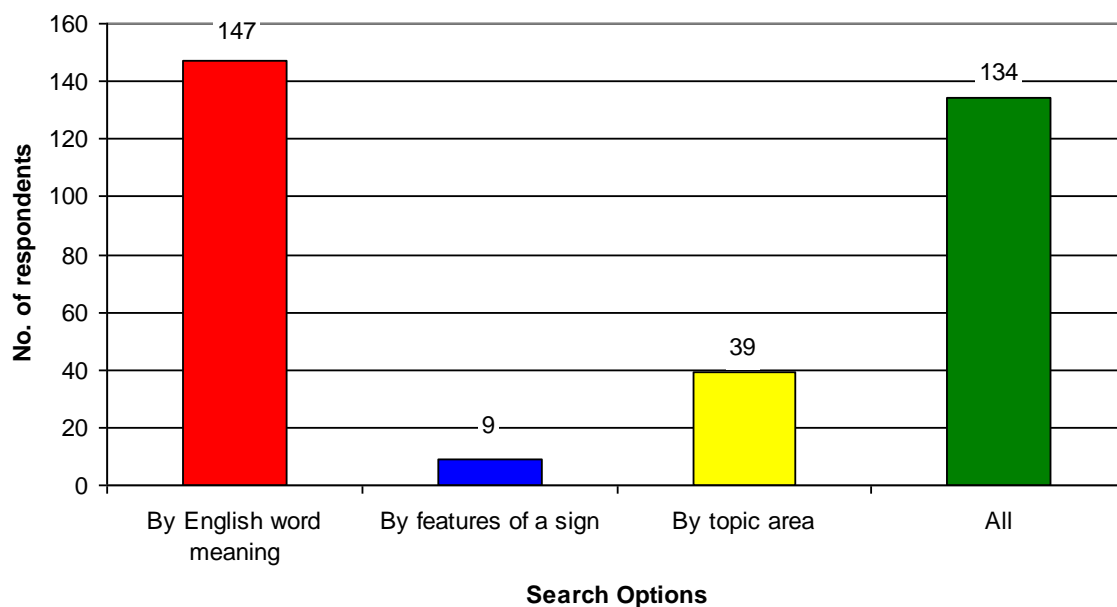
- Video clips can be shown in slow motion if needed to view complicated signs.
- Different views of signs are needed i.e., face-on and profile view.

2. Search Options

Question 2 asked respondents how they would mostly search for a sign. Four search options were given: 1) English word meaning; 2) Features of a sign, eg., handshape, location; 3) By topic area, e.g. food and 4) All [options].

Almost half of respondents (49%) said they would search for a sign by the English word meaning, followed by 44.5% of respondents who would use all search options, 13% would search by topic area and 9 people by features of a sign. Results showed Deaf people (e.g., Deaf community, NZSL tutors/teachers, Deaf students) are more likely to use the features of a sign option, in comparison with other user groups (see appendix 2). Overall, findings indicated respondents would use the English word meaning search option more, followed by topic area and then features of a sign.

Figure 2 Search Options



Respondents' recommendations

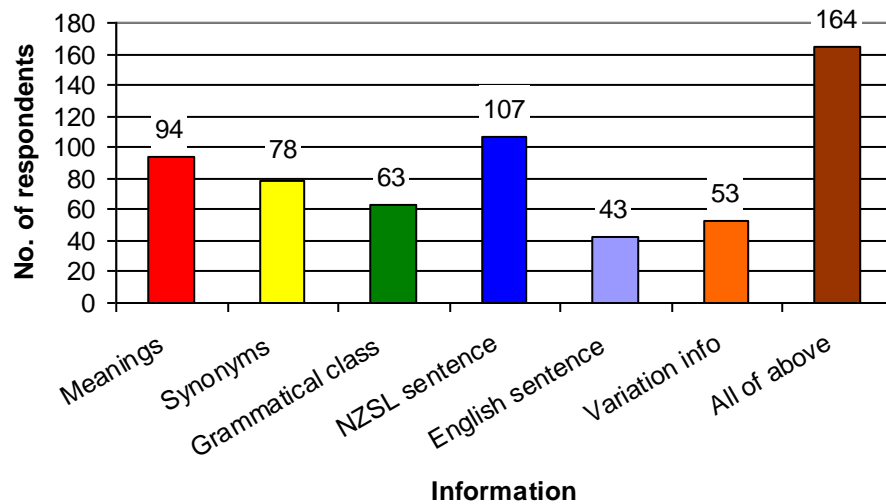
- Search engine is required to find English meaning of a sign.
- Incorporate "Ajax", a drop-down list of suggestions. If a user types the wrong spelling, it will be prompted.
- If a sign shows synonyms, then there should be links to them so users can click.
- Search options need to include instructions for finding multi-channel signs.
- Features of a sign option will be useful for quiz and storytelling activities [if online dictionary has extra learning materials].

3. Entry Contents

The respondents were asked to state what kind of information they want for each sign and they could circle more than one of the following categories: meanings, synonyms, grammatical class, example of sign used in NZSL sentence on video, example of word used in English sentence, variation information or all. More than half of respondents (54.5%) wanted all information for each sign. The priorities are ranked in order below:

- 1) Example of sign used in NZSL sentence
- 2) Meanings
- 3) Synonyms
- 4) Grammatical class
- 5) Variation information
- 6) Example of word used in English sentence.

Figure 3 Entry Contents



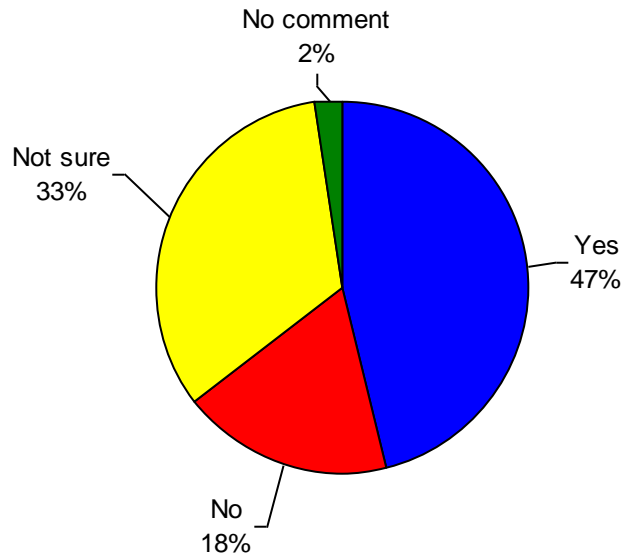
Respondents' recommendations

- If there is a sentence in NZSL, then the same sentence in English translation will be helpful.
- A respondent suggested having trilingual website i.e., providing definitions in Māori as well.

4. DVD

This category asked respondents if would buy a DVD as well as use free internet access to the online dictionary. Almost half of respondents (46.2%) said they would buy a DVD as well as use free internet access. Nearly one-fifth (18.3%) indicated they would not buy a DVD, while approximately one-third (33.2%) were uncertain.

Figure 4 Purchase of DVD



Respondents provided reasons for purchasing the DVD - it could be used in places where there is no internet access i.e. teaching NZSL in the classroom and there is no need to rely on internet costs. Three respondents said they would buy a CD-Rom that can be loaded onto the computer as a permanent feature.

People said they would not buy the DVD because they assume the online version would be updated and the DVD had a limited time period due to the continued development of NZSL. One respondent suggested VADEC would purchase resources like this for the library, so it can be loaned. As for other people who were not sure (33%), a few said it would depend on the price and providing the DVD is of good quality. One person said s/he would be interested if DVD supported rather than replicated the online dictionary.

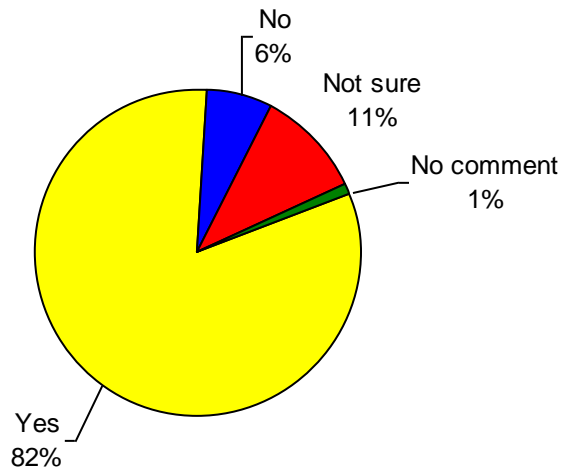
In accord with survey results, potential consumers of the DVD were ranked in order:

1. NZSL interpreters: 56.3%
2. Parents/families of Deaf: 52.6%
3. Deaf education staff: 51%
4. NZSL tutors: 47.3%
5. NZSL students: 40.7%
6. Mainstream teachers: 40%
7. Deaf students: 40%
8. Deaf community: 36.4%

5. Other Uses

This category refers to the option of saving and printing of signs from an online dictionary, which could be used to make a vocabulary or activity sheet. About four-fifths (82%) wanted to save and print pictures of signs from an online dictionary; only 19 respondents (6%) said no and 33 people (11%) were not sure.

Figure 5 Other Uses



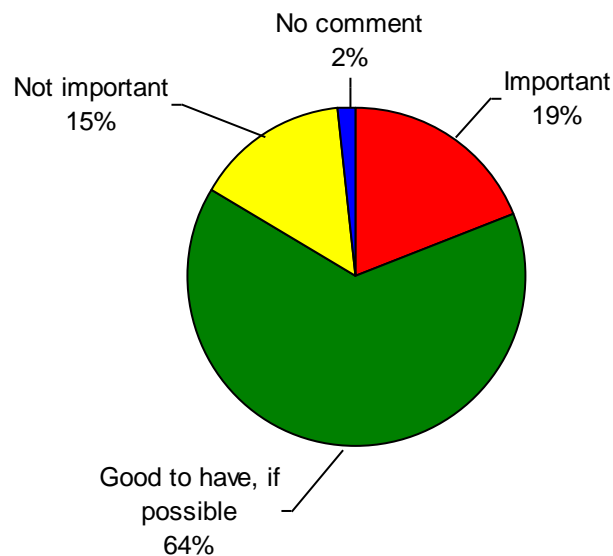
Respondents' recommendations

- Have the option of black lines around drawings to be removed for proportional sizes and printing.
- There were a number of enquiries about copyright. It is essential to give details about copyright of drawings on the website.

6. Extra Learning Materials

The idea of extra learning materials in the online dictionary was floated and examples include short lessons and vocabulary quiz. About two-thirds (64.5%) of respondents said the extra learning materials would be good to have, if possible. Approximately one-fifth of respondents (19.3%) said it is important to have extra learning materials and 14.6% of respondents stated it was not important.

Figure 6 Extra Learning Materials



Respondents' recommendations

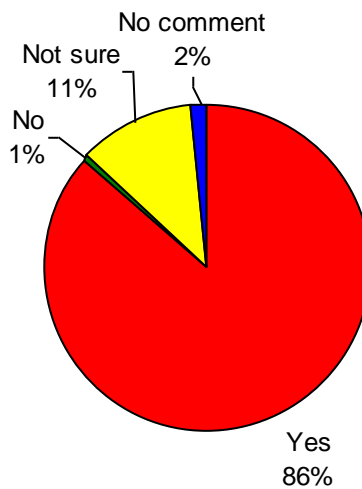
- Add extra learning materials if there is time or funding. This could be considered for second stage of online dictionary development.
- Extra learning materials should be interactive, cater for different levels and be student friendly for various users i.e. school students, adults etc.
- Revision should be built in.
- The website should emphasis on the importance of contact learning.
- Vocabulary and fingerspelling quizzes are requested.
- Extra learning materials should be included in the DVD.
- Extra learning materials will help people who do not have access to classes who suddenly find they are working with a Deaf student.

7. User Feedback

The Auslan Signbank (an online Auslan dictionary) offers a feedback service for Deaf people to help share and build the language. Respondents were asked if it is a good idea to have a way for Deaf people to give feedback online about use of signs in the dictionary.

An overwhelmingly 86.4% said yes, it is a good idea to have a way for Deaf people to give feedback online about use of signs in the dictionary. Only 11.3% was not sure (5 NZSL students, 25 Deaf education staff) and two people (Deaf education staff) said no.

Figure 7 User Feedback



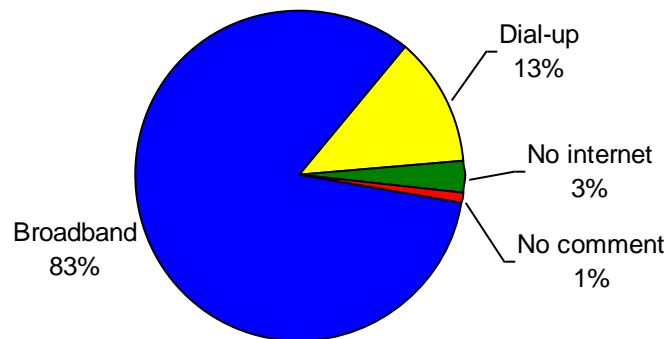
Respondents' recommendations

- Each sign should to have a number so users can give feedback on it.
- Deaf people should be able to upload signs (video clips) to give feedback in NZSL.
- Someone should check submissions.

8. Internet Access

More than four in five people have broadband internet access (83.4%), followed by 12.6% on dial-up and nine people with no have internet. Those on dial-up were most likely to be Deaf education staff (19.4%), NZSL tutors (18.4%), NZSL students (10.5%) and Deaf community (9%).

Figure 8 Users Internet Access



Respondents' recommendations

- The website needs to be accessible for both dial-up and broadband. Users could be given two options at the start of website – one for dial-up and one for broadband.
- Uploading size should be minimal and quick.
- Users should have an opportunity to resize the video clip to full screen.
- Users will need to access drawings if their computer is old, as video clips take a while to download.

9. General Comments

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to give comments.

Positive comments and best wishes

- Cool ☺
- Awesome to have. Would be great if we can use outside study use/time/hours.
- Great idea.
- I think it's a great idea.
- This would be awesome.
- This is a great idea! Would definitely make NZSL more accessible to mainstream. Very cool!
- Thanks for the opportunity to give feedback.
- Good luck – look forward to seeing this online – hopefully sometime soon.
- The online dictionary would be extremely useful, particularly for the younger generation to learn NZSL as its more interactive and accessible.
- Would be great!
- Can't wait for it to be up and running 100%.
- Good luck!
- Would be awesome for the Islands (that use or want to use NZSL) to access this.
- Awesome idea.
- I can't wait to see and use it!! ☺
- I am all for the most information possible but do not have the technological training to know if it is practical. The info is useful for teaching NZSL also.
- An exciting time! I look forward to it!!!
- Looking forward seeing it successful.
- It will be useful for tutors who maybe out of reach like isolate area but still teaching NZSL.
- Great job and know take time to solve from feedback! Well done! Looking forward.
- Sounds like it will be a great resource!
- Good on you for starting this.
- It would be great to have NZSL dictionary online means technology is growing plus save trees!!!
- About time!
- A great idea! Look forward to using it.
- Pretty exciting to have this on internet. Excellent.
- A mammoth project – my best wishes.
- Thanks for letting us to be involved with the consultation process.
- Good luck with your project. It will be a useful resource.
- We use sign language as our first language. We are lucky that we have a Deaf Resource Person based at our school. We constantly refer to the NZSL dictionary.
- Thank you for consulting us. Best of luck with the project.
- Good luck! ☺
- Thank you all for past, present and future work. A valuable resource!!!
- Great tool for teachers, parents and regular classrooms. More access for a variety of people.
- I have used the Australian sign language dictionary when teaching in Australia and found it to be a great tool to teach concepts to signing students.
- This would be so awesome – looking forward to it!

- Good luck – it’s a fantastic project!
- Having NZSL online, it’s a very useful thing.
- This is an exciting new venture – much needed – well done!
- Sounds wonderful!
- Thanks for the chance to comment.
- Awesome online and good for hearing people to learn NZSL or the world can learn more about NZSL.
- This looks an awesome project. THANKS!
- This will be great.
- Great idea. Can it be easily accessed by mainstream schools please and the National Library Service.
- All the best with the project.
- We need anything we can get!

Comments on current NZSL dictionary/prototype

- Very useful online site that I have made much use of.
- I use the current site all the time. Look forward to the video clips, lessons, vocab quiz additions but hope it doesn’t take too long to set up. Can you include aspects of the VUW signing quiz book/dvd? It’s amazing. Thanks guys.
- Absolutely fabulous so far – can’t believe we ever taught without it – invaluable tool – can’t wait for more!
- Have started to use already – very useful but I sometimes have difficult interpreting movement in pictures.
- Already using NZSL dictionary which I find useful.
- I am trialling the use of flashcards with my students. They find synonyms very helpful. Some pictures of signs are not familiar to them so do not help them to learn the concept. For example, the word ‘effect’ is not one that is used by our students. A Deaf person told me not a lot of Auckland Deaf people had input into the dictionary and that most of them were older Deaf. Could there be an update or review of some signs particularly where the sign does not give a visual clue to meaning. Could templates be made so that flashcards could be easily made to help students learn NZSL and English? Many thanks.
- Thanks for making this NZSL dictionary available online. It has become a valuable resource used often.
- Present dictionary not quick to access, unnecessarily complicated. People of all ages should be able to use the dictionary. This one appears for 15 yrs +.
- I welcome any improvements that can be made to the online dictionary but note that it is currently still a very valuable tool that particularly us as teachers can use.
- I bought a dictionary and while finding it useful I do find my lecturer using different signs, so an online version that is kept up to date would be much better.
- I have been using the online dictionary from VUW in my work and recommending it to others. It would be great to see it developed further. I have done lots of photocopying and pasting in the past to make worksheets/resources. Having it on the computer has been a bonus. Video clips would be fantastic for seeing how the sign is actually formed!
- I found it really frustrating when using the dictionary to learn new vocab and the sign was not recognized by other signers.
- Like to see to improve on the drawing of “afternoon” itself. Outline of boxes [signs in boxes] removed if possible? Confuse “4” with “9”. Why change? Maybe you can explain better situation for using numerals, such as: time, cardinal, ordinal, age, money, calendar. “Ladder” – find this circle [for second sign] black is far too thick. Should be neutral line. The same for others if have like this
- We felt that signs with circles showing close up details (eg: Monkey Bars and Ladder) have borders that are too thick and black, perhaps the circular borders could be the same thickness as the square borders.
- The thick bold arrows inside the circle could be thinner and less bold (see same examples).
- Signs need to show all variations (eg: NINE). It also appears the current NINE (online) is really the sign NINETH.
- Please add NUMBER 21-29

- Please add NUMBER 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90.
- Also NUMBER 200 to 900.
- There needs to be more space between the columns of vocabulary when searching for a word alphabetically as it looks cluttered at the moment. The list also needs to be in full columns, not disjointed with “more below” [online prototype]
- Can the underlines be removed from all the words? [online prototype]
- When a sign is negated it needs to show the arrows on the forehead that represent head shaking (as is done for DON'T) – all NMS needs to be shown on all signs that require them.
- Needs more facial expression (include adjective signs)
- Are noun/verb pairs included? Perhaps a video clip could be included as an example: “the plane flies smoothly” or “the plane does cartwheels” or “the plane flight was rough” – as a way of showing the connection between the noun and the verb
- What does the “ADD TO VOCAB” button mean? [online prototype]

Other comments

Layout/background

- Simple pages with not much on to make viewing clear. Check colour and background of signer so easier to view.
- Have clear information for anyone to access the online dictionary than lost or don't know where to go. Try and have better service.

Signs

- Level of pre-school
- Please ensure that signs included for deaf students is education, NZSL alphabet, young actors signing.
- Need to be able to be added or altered where there are vocab changes e.g. technology words.
- Needs vocab for science.
- The corresponding signs for words in other countries sign languages would be good.
- It would be good to have a video of verbs in action eg. give or ask as well as a sign of just the verb as this is hard to understand unless it is seen.

Advertising:

- If want to generate funds or monies, could allow advertisers to advertise on webpage.
- No advertising – too distracting.

Other info on website:

- I think it would be cool if on the dictionary home page that you include background information on NZSL and NZ Deaf culture – can be brief! Just for general knowledge.
- I think you should maybe add links like useful information about Deaf community.
- Any additional information, for example a frequently queried signs questions asked would also be a helpful thing to have on the web.
- Maybe links to sites with further resources – i.e. schools for Deaf, overseas cultural info (rather than overseas sign language).

Validation

- Have you thought of a process for generating new signs as requested so that we can have consistency across the country? Maybe this would be part of A) the original process. B) a stage 2 development.

General:

- Gutted I'm not involved