Quality and Customer Service

Management Approach

Materiality Rationale
In recent years, customers and other stakeholders have become increasingly concerned about the protection of consumer rights. Product safety, security, and accessibility are very important in this respect. Sony is expected to provide products and customer services that are high in quality from its customers’ viewpoints.

Basic Approach
True to its philosophy and policy for product quality and customer service, Sony is wholeheartedly committed to improving product and service quality from its customers’ viewpoints in order to maintain and enhance satisfaction, confidence, and trust. In particular, Sony is working to ensure product quality and improve usability and accessibility, in the conviction that its most important goal is to remain a highly trusted partner to all customers.

Philosophy and Policy
Since the start of its operations, Sony has been firmly committed across all of its businesses to providing customer-oriented, high-quality products and services. This philosophy is set forth in the Founding Prospectus drafted in 1946 by Sony’s co-founder, Masaru Ibuka.

The Sony Group Code of Conduct mandates that Sony continuously strive to comply with or exceed legally mandated standards in all business activities to ensure the safety of its products and services. Sony has established the Sony Pledge of Quality, which lays out its basic policy on product and customer service quality. This is aimed at reinforcing awareness of Sony’s commitment to ensuring that the quality of its products and customer services exceeds the expectations of its customers around the world.

Looking to the Future
Sony remains committed to a fundamental policy of ensuring product safety, security, and accessibility, taking its customers’ viewpoints into consideration in order to deliver product quality and customer service that exceed expectations. It will continue leveraging its worldwide network to collect and analyze information which can then be reflected in the next releases of products and customer services.

Milestones

- 2001: Sony CS Charter established
- 2004: Corporate quality standards established from the customer’s perspective
- 2006: Corporate executive in charge of product quality and safety appointed, and rules enhanced for rapid reporting of product incidents to management
- 2007: Sony Pledge of Quality established (revised in 2012), and quality officers established for each electronics affiliate and region
- 2009: Product security system enhanced, and Quality and Reliability Lab opened
- 2014: Secure@Sony program established, allowing anyone to report security issues relating to Sony products, network services, or websites
- 2017: Sony Product Security Incident Response Team (PSIRT) launched and external initiatives enhanced
- 2019: Systematic operation of teams responsible for promoting accessibility
- 2020: Boosted the hiring and training of employees with human-centered design (HCD) skills. Incorporated requirements for AI ethics into the electronics business commercialization process
- 2021: Launched a certification system for HCD experts

Strengthened Results

- Implemented inclusive design and reflected it in products and services
- Exhibited at CSUN, the world’s largest international showcase for accessibility

Fiscal Year 2021 Results

- Strengthened systems to improve accessibility
Highlight

CSUN Assistive Technology Conference 2022

The Sony Group exhibited at the 37th CSUN Assistive Technology Conference (CSUN)* in Anaheim California from March 14 to 18, 2022. By exhibiting at CSUN, Sony is promoting efforts to improve accessibility by making more customers aware of accessibility-friendly products and services, and listening to the voices of various customers.

The 2022 CSUN was an in-person event and the Sony Group booth had measures in place against COVID-19. BRAVIA™, PlayStation®5, SRS-NS7, LinkBuds and the Alpha 7 IV were among the products on display. People of all ages with diverse needs and backgrounds visited the Sony Group booth and provided a lot of new perspectives and valuable feedback.

Sony will continue to provide opportunities for customers to experience products and services for themselves, and to reflect the feedback it receives in its initiatives to improve products and services.

* The world’s largest international conference focused on “Accessibility,” which introduces the latest products, services and initiatives in this field.

Product and Network Service Security:
Evolutions in the Sony Security Development Life Cycle

Sony recognizes that ensuring the security of the products and network services it provides is a key quality requirement (security quality) and strengthens it every year. The prevention of product security issues is an ongoing initiative to maintain and enhance safe and reliable security quality so that vulnerabilities in shipped products and network services cannot be exploited to cause problems.

In 2012, the Sony Security Development Life Cycle was formulated as measures and rules to enhance security quality throughout each phase, from product development and network service planning right up to the time the product becomes waste or the network service is terminated. Those measures and rules are in place for all Sony products and network services.

In order to enhance security quality, since 2017 each business unit has been conducting annual inspections to ensure these security quality measures are being properly implemented for all products and services. Such inspections enable Sony to swiftly identify new challenges, such as the need to respond to vulnerabilities in the supply chain, and to formulate, add and implement improvement strategies in order to maintain and improve security quality.

Sony has included requirements for conformance to the IoT security regulations in the Sony Security Development Life Cycle, and is establishing operations that observe the relevant laws in individual countries/regions.

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The Sony booth
Product Quality and Quality Management

The Sony Pledge of Quality declares that "Sony employees will always respect our customers’ viewpoints in striving to deliver product quality and customer service that exceed their expectations." To this end, Sony makes continuous, decisive efforts to enhance product quality and to reinforce its quality management system.

Sony’s Quality Management System Framework

Sony has configured its quality management system by defining quality management mechanisms across all processes, from product planning, development, design and manufacturing to sales and customer service. This has included defining the roles, responsibilities and authority of those responsible for product and customer service. Based on this quality management system, Sony is implementing measures on an ongoing basis to improve the quality of its products and services. Examples of such measures are given below.

Framework of Sony’s Quality Management System

Senior Executive in charge of Quality Management
Senior Vice President in charge of Quality Management
Head of product quality department at headquarters
Business Unit
Regional HQ
Head Quality officer
Head CS officer
Manufacturing Sites
Sales Company

Senior Vice President in charge of Quality Management

- The Senior Vice President in charge of Quality Management is appointed with the task of coordinating efforts to improve product and customer service quality and ensuring timely responses to problems.
- Rules worldwide have been strengthened to ensure prompt reporting to the Senior Vice President in charge of Quality Management when Sony receives information about an incident involving a Sony product that affects customer safety or has the potential to do so. Based on the reports received, the corporate executive in charge of product quality provides the necessary follow-up and instructs the relevant divisions to investigate the incidents and respond appropriately to the customer. Under a similar system, Sony has been addressing software security issues found in products and managing potential security issues.

Quality Officers and CS Officers

- Sony has appointed quality officers within each business unit and tasked them with promoting activities to improve product quality and spearheading initiatives to enhance the quality of products and services in specific business areas under the direction and supervision of the Senior Vice President in charge of Quality Management and the head of the relevant business unit.
- Regular meetings of quality officers from business units are held to evaluate the progress of quality-oriented business plans, promote initiatives aimed at achieving targets, and debate specific activities and responses to quality-related issues and common challenges.
- Sony has appointed CS officers responsible for improving the quality of customer service in markets around the world where Sony products are sold and has tasked them with spearheading a network of global-level initiatives under the supervision of the Senior Vice President in charge of Quality Management and the individual in charge of the relevant regional headquarters.
- Meetings of business unit quality officers and regional CS officers are held to evaluate the progress of quality and customer service business plans and promote initiatives aimed at achieving targets, and to share information on customer service and product quality activities and common challenges, thereby contributing to global efforts to improve product quality and customer service.
- Sony has created a framework for promoting business unit- and region-specific initiatives to ensure its products comply with pertinent laws and regulations.

Quality Management

- Sony has obtained certification under ISO 9001 for all sites manufacturing electronics products.
- It has formulated mid-term plan and fiscal year targets for Sony product quality and customer service initiatives, as well as key quality-related indicators for business plans, with the aim of fulfilling the Sony Pledge of Quality. Business units and regional headquarters subsequently devise their own quality and customer service targets and business plans for the fiscal year, in line with which they continue to promote quality improvement initiatives.
- Sony holds meetings of top managers of the electronics business to deliberate and decide on key strategies related to product quality and customer service.
- It formulates and administers quality standards applicable to Sony’s electronics products and related customer service, which focus on such criteria as product safety and performance, labeling, customer service, usability and accessibility. These standards are updated continuously to reflect technological advances, changes in applicable legal and regulatory requirements, and social changes, with the aim of ensuring Sony’s ability to deliver quality and services that exceed the expectations of customers.
**Responding to the Customer**

Sony makes active use of customer feedback to improve its products and customer service. Sony customer information centers promptly and accurately evaluate customer opinions, reports of malfunctions after purchase, questions regarding use, and other feedback. These feedbacks are aggregated in the database for the planning, design and product quality groups to work together to improve product quality and strengthen product performance, reporting progress to top management on an as-needed basis.

In recent years, the communication tools used by customers have become more diverse. In order to meet broader customer expectations, Sony has started to analyze customer feedback on social media as well.

**Quality Hotline**

It is vital to detect product quality-related problems at the earliest stage possible. To that end, Sony has established the Quality Hotline to gather product quality-related information, including reports of problems, as well as opinions from Sony Group employees.

Group employees can use the Quality Hotline, an in-house website, to send messages regarding matters that are too difficult to handle at their workplace, such as certain product quality issues. They can also share findings identified during customer use of products and any problems with the quality of product-related customer service as perceived by customers who have made use of those services. Upon investigating a problem to ascertain the veracity of the information received, the Quality Hotline office proposes and introduces measures to prevent previous problems from recurring and precluding potential new problems.

**Market Quality Improvements**

Sony has established dedicated quality management organizations in each of its business areas that are responsible for improving the quality of pertinent products in each market. At Sony headquarters, information related to quality issues arising in the marketplace is relayed to Design Departments and Others to improve quality and strengthen product performance, reporting progress to top management on an as-needed basis.

Inquiries about repairs, complaints and product quality issues are aggregated in the database for the planning, design and product quality groups to work together to investigate facts and take appropriate action on a global scale. When such an issue arises, Sony decides upon the need for public announcements and market action for customers, and implements any needed steps after undertaking various studies of the issue, following a process common to all Sony products.

This process starts with the gathering of information from customer service centers worldwide and collaboration with concerned local parties to ensure an accurate grasp of the issue. Based on information collected, Sony then works to determine the correct response by identifying the cause of the issue, implementing countermeasures and promptly verifying the effectiveness thereof, and reviewing the issue from the customer’s perspective. Sony also cooperates with CS officers at sites in each region to ensure the same level of service is provided to customers the world over.

With regard to methods and media for issuing public announcements of product quality-related issues, Sony examines the effectiveness of the various means at its disposal, including the Internet, e-mail, notification via app, or other media.

**Responses to Quality Issues**

Sony recognizes that ensuring its customers’ satisfaction, confidence and trust is one of its most important management tasks and strives to prevent quality-related problems through the systems and efforts described above.

Sony responds swiftly in the event of a quality-related issue, with the relevant departments working together to investigate facts and take appropriate action on a global scale. When such an issue arises, Sony decides upon the need for public announcements and market action for customers, and implements any needed steps after undertaking various studies of the issue, following a process common to all Sony products.

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Improving the Quality, Safety and Long-Term Reliability of Products

Improving the Quality of Products

Sony strives to maximize product quality by improving design, manufacturing, and parts.

Design-Related Quality Initiatives

In the initial stages of the design process, the individual in charge of a particular business unit verifies new technologies and new parts and, from the user's perspective, determines how a product is to be used. At the conclusion of the design process, the individual in charge confirms the degree to which the intended levels of product quality and reliability have been realized. In addition, to ensure that customers are provided with products of a quality worthy of the Sony brand, Sony requires relevant departments including original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and original design manufacturer (ODM) companies to comply with group-wide quality standards. Compliance with these standards is also tested at the end of the design process. Such approaches prevent the occurrence of problems pertaining to new technologies and new product parts, while also ensuring that product designs incorporate consideration of user convenience.

Production-Related Quality Initiatives

In the effort to ensure that Sony does not receive, manufacture or ship anything with quality-related problems, Sony adheres to a policy of workmanship at all of its manufacturing sites that ensure customers can use Sony products with confidence. Initiatives include setting important targets at each manufacturing site and implementing PDCA processes, thereby facilitating the achievement of such targets and the continuous improvement of product quality. Sony has also established standard product quality rules to ensure Sony products manufactured by OEM/ODM companies are of the same high quality as those manufactured at Sony production sites.

Parts-Related Quality Initiatives

Recognizing the importance of parts and determined to manufacture products built for long-term use, Sony carefully selects key parts independently for each of its major product categories and is pursuing focused efforts aimed at increasing the reliability of the parts it uses through cooperation among relevant departments.

Improving Product Safety

Providing reliable products that customers can use safely is a top priority for Sony. Accordingly, at every stage of its business activities, including product planning, development, design, manufacturing, marketing, and after-sales service for all products and services, Sony takes steps to comply with safety standards based on laws and regulations while constantly striving to surpass those standards in order to maintain the safety of its products. As part of these efforts, Sony has established a team in charge of product safety assessment from a medical perspective. When developing products employing new technologies and using new technologies at events, Sony also seeks advice on product safety from a medical perspective from outside experts in order to ensure products do not affect customer health, and this advice is then incorporated into technology assessment, product development, design and engineering. When deemed necessary, Sony also conducts evaluation tests to assess safety with the assistance of a specialized organization. If a safety-related problem involving a Sony product is reported, Sony immediately collects information and examines the facts, and then takes the steps necessary to rectify the problem.

Improving the Long-Term Reliability of Products

Sony has established a Quality Reliability Lab supporting Sony's commitment to deliver safe, durable and reliable products to customers. The Quality Reliability Lab has assigned specialists to work full time on improving technologies essential to product reliability and continues working to ensure the long-term reliability of products by developing elementary technologies for preventing age-related deterioration and corrosion of materials and parts, as well as technologies necessary to ensure the reliability of new technologies and functions required for new products and to analyze and evaluate such technologies and functions. These technologies and the information obtained through these activities are utilized to improve design and parts selection processes and increased reliability of products. Sony also presents some of its own knowledge of evaluation technologies at academic meetings and industry conferences and gatherings, seeking to go beyond its own walls and contribute to the industry.

Efforts to Improve Quality of Product Security

With more products connecting to networks, there is a heightened danger of personal information leaks, falsification or destruction of data, product hacking and other such security issues. As a consequence, it is very important to improve the quality of the security of products and network services. Sony has a function for collecting security risk-related information from outside experts, researchers and other individuals. Sony assigns managers responsible for the software security of products and has a dedicated department for it. The department coordinates with business units to address issues with the security of products. Based on the information received, the department assesses the impact of risk on customers from a software security perspective and implements appropriate measures. To deliver products that customers can use with confidence, Sony has security design and response systems that ensure the security of products over their entire life cycle – from planning and shipment to disposal – such as conducting security risk assessments, using product security vulnerability detection tools, and security inspections prior to product shipment. Sony has also established internal guidelines pertaining to the security of products and continues to implement employee training programs to strengthen product security. Due to growing concern over security issues with Internet of Things (IoT) devices, regulators in countries/regions are developing new laws and regulations concerning IoT security. Sony is establishing internal frameworks for gathering and responding to regulatory information in order to secure regulatory compliance.

Responsible AI

In accordance with the Sony Group AI Ethics Guidelines, Sony established an internal document stipulating requirements to be complied with in the commercialization process of electronics products and services, and in July 2021 started to include AI ethics assessments in the product development life cycle.

→ Responsible AI
Customer Service

In addition to continuously improving product quality, Sony is taking various steps to improve its responsiveness and its customer service capabilities, in line with its commitment, set forth in the Sony Pledge of Quality: “Sony employees will always respect our customers’ viewpoints in striving to deliver product quality and customer service that exceed their expectations.” In customer service, this includes responding to changing customer needs, and in repair services, building organizations designed to ensure the best possible repair service quality.

System

Sony has assigned CS officers responsible for improving the quality of customer service in markets around the world where Sony products are sold. Under the guidance and supervision of the Senior Vice President in charge of Quality Management and of regional headquarters, Sony has also introduced a set of key performance indicators to enhance customer service quality on a global level. Sony has also established a network of bases through which it provides services tailored to the needs of customers in each region.

Training for Customer Support Staff

Committed to providing high-quality services to customers around the world, Sony provides ongoing training for employees and the staff of service partners. In addition to focusing on the acquisition of new service technologies and the sharing of solutions to ensure issues are swiftly and effectively addressed, staff are trained to help customers get the greatest possible enjoyment from their Sony products.

Customer Information Centers and Customer Service Improvements

Sony established its first customer information center in 1963 in Japan to respond to customer inquiries. Today, Sony has customer information centers worldwide, enabling it to provide prompt responses to customer needs that reflect customers’ perspectives, thereby helping Sony to improve the quality of its customer service. In addition to support via telephone and e-mail, in several regions Sony provides customer support via such means as live Internet chat sessions, support using social media and messaging apps, and online community forums where customers can share information to help each other find solutions. In these ways, Sony tailors its support to meet the increasingly diverse needs of its customers in every region of the world.

In addition, Sony conducts surveys to determine customer satisfaction at various touchpoints, and makes improvements based on the survey results in its efforts to continually improve customer satisfaction.

More Convenient, Eco-Friendly Instruction Manuals

To provide better explanations on how to use its products, Sony is bolstering its online support and providing online instruction manuals for improved searchability and greater convenience so that users are able to quickly find what they are looking for. The Sony website has a support section that offers not only information on software upgrades and network service updates. This is designed to help users better understand Sony products, software, and services, as well as to enable them, when needed, to troubleshoot as quickly as possible. To accommodate a variety of user environments, Sony also provides support information on software upgrades and network service updates. This is designed to help users better understand Sony products, software, and services, as well as to enable them, when needed, to troubleshoot as quickly as possible. To accommodate a variety of user environments, Sony also provides support information on software upgrades and network service updates. This is designed to help users better understand Sony products, software, and services, as well as to enable them, when needed, to troubleshoot as quickly as possible. To accommodate a variety of user environments, Sony also provides support information on software upgrades and network service updates.

Repair and Service Network

Currently, there are 3,458 Sony repair service locations worldwide. To enhance customer satisfaction, Sony is working to meet customer needs by performing immediate problem diagnosis at the repair reception desk, improving repair quality and reducing the number of days required for repairs, among other efforts. In addition, Sony is continuously enhancing its service network to ensure that it can respond appropriately to repair requests in each region for each product. By strengthening the feedback mechanism for product quality based on repair information, Sony also aims to keep enhancing quality.

Consumer AV Product Service Locations (Fiscal Year 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Repair Service Locations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Japan</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States/Canada</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainland China and Hong Kong Region</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia Pacific*</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Areas**</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 Southeast Asia, Oceania, India, South Korea and Taiwan Region
*2 Middle East, Latin America and Africa

For some products sold globally, Sony has developed instruction manuals with minimal text and more extensive visuals, making it possible to include multiple languages in a single manual, which is expected to contribute to environmental protection by reducing paper consumption.
Improving the User Experience

User experience is an essential aspect of quality at Sony. In order to gain an accurate understanding of the increasingly diverse needs of customers and to deliver a superior user experience, Sony has adopted Human-Centered Design (HCD) processes and ensures that its design efforts always take the customer’s perspective.

System

Sony is promoting HCD via collaboration between relevant departments and business groups. The initiative is driven by a team that promotes activities across the Group and is overseen by the corporate executive officer in charge of product quality. Products and services are becoming more multi-functional all the time, and their user interfaces also tend to be more complex with the advance of technology. Sony employs intradepartmental cooperation on development to deliver products and services that people can use with ease and comfort.

Using Human-Centered Design in Product and Service Development

Sony is working to improve product usability and create experiences that meet the core needs of customers. It conducts worldwide user research including home visits and user interviews. These efforts are part of a continuing cycle of issue identification and product improvement, which includes prototyping and usability testing in the upstream stage of design. Employees also conduct long-term usage surveys, including interviews with customers, both before and after product release. In addition, Sony analyzes how customers feel and behave when they use a service, and then works to improve the user experience by sharing customer feedback with relevant personnel.

Systems for User Research and Testing

Sony has built an environment and established systems that ensure user research and testing can be carried out quickly and efficiently via group-wide collaboration spanning sites in Japan, North America, Europe, India, and China. Via steps such as the introduction of online systems, it ensures that the necessary user research and testing can be carried out in spite of the physical constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is also an internal monitor program through which employees and their families participate in questionnaire surveys, interviews, and usability tests. These systems and programs enable Sony to deliver a superior user experience and keep creating products that are easy to use.

Human Resource Development and Awareness-raising Activities on HCD

In order to continue delivering a superior user experience, Sony launched a system in 2021 to certify employees with a high level of expertise and experience as HCD experts. These experts will play a leading role in the workplace. Eight HCD experts were certified in the first phase, and Sony is working to ensure that HCD becomes further entrenched in development departments.

Formulating Internal Standards and Applying Acquired Expertise

Product and service designers from across the Sony Group meet to formulate standards for interactions, use of words and icons on devices and screens, and so on. The knowledge gained through user research and testing, the expertise of the product development departments, and case studies of the application of UX (user experience) design are shared across the Group as well. These standards and expertise are posted on Sony’s internal portal site to ensure that everyone at the Sony Group has access to them. This information is used in product and service development as Sony continues to work to enhance usability for customers.
**Accessibility**

With the purpose of “filling the world with emotion, through the power of creativity and technology,” Sony continues to pursue accessibility initiatives in order to contribute to a future where everyone can equally share “Kando” (emotion).

**System**

Under the Senior Vice President in charge of Quality Management, a team that promotes accessibility and inclusive design* across the group stands at the core of efforts involving cooperation with the people responsible for promoting accessibility in the business units. Having established a globally consistent set of standards and systems, we are using them as the basis for continuous improvements. We provide comprehensive support for the Sony Group’s accessibility-related activities, including employee training, company-wide lectures, surveys and evaluation tools designed to improve accessibility, and the introduction of inclusive design.

* Inclusive design is an approach that obtains new insights into designs for all by ensuring that the needs of a wide range of users are understood and included.

**Ensuring That as Many People as Possible Can Enjoy Sony Products and Services**

In December 2019, Sony joined The Valuable 500, an international initiative to help promote participation by individuals with disabilities, to enjoy its products and services, Sony employs inclusive design. Sony incorporates feedback gained through the participation of employees with disabilities in the planning and development process, interviews with people with disabilities, and usability tests. For example, in developing televisions, Sony asks users with visual impairments to try the products for a designated period of time, participate in hands-on experience and provide feedback on how to improve product design. Sony also releases the PSS™ software Ratchet & Clank: Rift Apart in 2021 which features a great set of accessibility improvements.

**Employee Education**

Sony Group holds forums and seminars led by experts to increase employee understanding of accessibility. E-learning training is offered at the principal Sony Group companies to foster a general understanding of accessibility, and around 28,500* employees took the course in 2021. Every year on Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD)*, Sony Group companies host lectures and events to enhance employee understanding of accessibility. For example, Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) held a lecture for its employees to coincide with GAAD. In addition, SPE held “family-friendly sensory screenings” with adjusted lighting and sound setting for persons with hypersensitivity, such as autism, which were offered at offices in the US. The aim was to boost employee awareness and understanding of hyperesthesia while enjoying a movie with employees and their family members and those who have this condition.

* The number of participants in Japan.

**Inclusive Design Initiatives**

To enhance accessibility and enable more people, including people with disabilities, to enjoy its products and services, Sony employs inclusive design. Sony incorporates feedback gained through the participation of employees with disabilities in the planning and development process, interviews with people with disabilities, and usability tests. For example, in developing televisions, Sony asks users with visual impairments to try the products for a designated period of time, participate in hands-on experience and provide feedback on how to improve product design. Sony also releases the PSS™ software Ratchet & Clank: Rift Apart in 2021 which features a great set of accessibility improvements.

**Movie Initiatives**

Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) is developing a process for creating audio descriptions and captions* for use when movies are screened in cinemas or released on DVD or Blu-ray. The audio description system uses audio to convey information, such as people’s movements, movie scenes, captions, and on-screen messages, primarily for people with visual impairments. Captions are primarily for people with hearing disabilities. They show the names of the people speaking and their lines as well as meaningful onscreen information on the audio, such as music, sound effects, and ambient noises. Audio description and captions enable more people to enjoy movies and videos.

**Independent Employee Initiatives**

Groups of employees (Employee Resource Groups) at Sony are taking the lead in improving accessibility. At Sony North of America and Sony Interactive Entertainment, employee networks are leading the way in supporting employees with disabilities and regularly disseminating information to raise awareness of accessibility within the company. For example, the diverse range of perspectives brought by Sony Interactive Entertainment’s employee resource group in Europe and America played a central role in the development of the ABLE@PlayStation Inclusive Language Guide. This guide helps to resolve mutual misunderstandings, improve communication, and boost awareness. It has also been made available for external use to support inclusivity for all outside of Sony.

**Collaborative Initiatives**

Sony is also accelerating collaborations with other companies to enhance accessibility and inclusion. Its truly wireless headphones LinkBuds, released in February 2022, were a collaborative project with Microsoft Soundscape to empower richer experiences for everyone to explore their surroundings using 3D spatial audio. Sony also participates in the “With My Eyes” project to bring “difficult to see” into “clearer sight” for people with low vision. QD Laser, Inc.’s laser retina projection device can be attached to Sony cameras, allowing people with low vision to shoot video and still images with their own eyes.

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Making the Most of Diverse Customer Feedback

Sony exhibits at accessibility-related events in order to gather consumer feedback and use it to improve products and services. It has been exhibiting at the CSUN Assistive Technology Conference (CSUN), the world’s largest international showcase for accessibility, since 2018. In March 2022, Sony’s accessible products such as BRAVIA™, PlayStation®5, a wireless neckband speaker and the Alpha 7 IV were on display at CSUN. At the TechShare Pro conference gathering for accessibility experts held in November 2021, Sony once again participated as a Silver Sponsor and featured its products online. Moreover, Sony sites in Europe and the United States also provide opportunities for regular dialogue with organizations of people with disabilities as part of efforts to make Sony’s products and services even easier to use.

Standardization for Accessibility Improvements

Sony has established its own evaluation standards for accessibility, based on industry standards and designed to improve the quality of accessibility in its products and services. These standards are implemented company-wide. Periodic product assessments are carried out using the standards, with a particular focus on electronics products such as BRAVIA™ and Xperia™. The results of those assessments are then leveraged in ongoing efforts to improve products and services.

Sony has also proactively involved in standardization* activities aimed at driving improvements in accessibility throughout the industry.

IEC TC 100/TA 16 Active Assisted Living (AAL), accessibility and user interfaces

IEC 62731 Text-to-speech for television; IEC 62944 Digital Television Accessibility;

Working to Enhance Sony Website Accessibility

Sony has established the Sony Group Web Accessibility Policy which sets forth the accessibility standards and compliance requirements for all Sony Group Companies’ websites. Sony Group’s web accessibility requirements are aligned with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) published by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

With the use of websites and other digital platforms continuing to rise, the Sony Group Web Accessibility Policy seeks to ensure that Sony Group companies’ websites are designed and developed in a way that is accessible to all, including members of the disabled community and the elderly.

Sony has been actively promoting the established web accessibility policy, as well as working with companies within the Sony Group in implementing the policy and conducting checks to ensure compliance. Sony has regularly conducted a web accessibility training targeting different roles in the organization and will continue to do so in the future.

Creating an Environment for Carefree Internet Use

Sony Interactive Entertainment (SIE) has continued to make games as popular as music, movies and broadcasting, and has been developing the PlayStation® business for users in all age groups. Console game industry organizations have responded to the proliferation of new game genres by introducing rating systems for customers in Japan, the United States and Europe (CERO, ESRB and PEGI, respectively), based on games’ target age groups. Sony has applied the U.S. system for more than 20 years, offering parents and guardians suggested age categories and descriptions that detail the contents of a game. PEGI is endorsed by the European Commission as a paradigm of self-regulation in the entertainment industry. In Japan, measures are being promoted to make the system more effective, including, with the cooperation of retailers, the voluntary refusal to sell software rated by CERO for ages 18 and above to underage customers.

SIE has enhanced its parental controls features on its game consoles, including PlayStation®5. This enables parents to navigate the play experience of their family in a way that works best for their needs. For example, the family manager can control the setting so their children can only use the console to enjoy games that are suitable for their age group, offering added safety and peace of mind. The feature also allows a parent to limit screen time and block the ability to chat with other remote users.

Sony Life Insurance Co., Ltd. and Sony Assurance Inc. provide sign language and written communication services to facilitate inquiries from customers with hearing or speech disabilities. Operators use their sign language interpretation skills for sign language or written conversations with customers.

Processing inquiries using sign language and written communications

Sony exhibits at accessibility-related events in order to gather consumer feedback and use it to improve products and services. It has been exhibiting at the CSUN Assistive Technology Conference (CSUN), the world’s largest international showcase for accessibility, since 2018. In March 2022, Sony’s accessible products such as BRAVIA™, PlayStation®5, a wireless neckband speaker and the Alpha 7 IV were on display at CSUN. At the TechShare Pro conference gathering for accessibility experts held in November 2021, Sony once again participated as a Silver Sponsor and featured its products online. Moreover, Sony sites in Europe and the United States also provide opportunities for regular dialogue with organizations of people with disabilities as part of efforts to make Sony’s products and services even easier to use.

Standardization for Accessibility Improvements

Sony has established its own evaluation standards for accessibility, based on industry standards and designed to improve the quality of accessibility in its products and services. These standards are implemented company-wide. Periodic product assessments are carried out using the standards, with a particular focus on electronics products such as BRAVIA™ and Xperia™. The results of those assessments are then leveraged in ongoing efforts to improve products and services.

Sony has also proactively involved in standardization* activities aimed at driving improvements in accessibility throughout the industry.

IEC TC 100/TA 16 Active Assisted Living (AAL), accessibility and user interfaces

IEC 62731 Text-to-speech for television; IEC 62944 Digital Television Accessibility;

Working to Enhance Sony Website Accessibility

Sony has established the Sony Group Web Accessibility Policy which sets forth the accessibility standards and compliance requirements for all Sony Group Companies’ websites. Sony Group’s web accessibility requirements are aligned with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) published by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

With the use of websites and other digital platforms continuing to rise, the Sony Group Web Accessibility Policy seeks to ensure that Sony Group companies’ websites are designed and developed in a way that is accessible to all, including members of the disabled community and the elderly.

Sony has been actively promoting the established web accessibility policy, as well as working with companies within the Sony Group in implementing the policy and conducting checks to ensure compliance. Sony has regularly conducted a web accessibility training targeting different roles in the organization and will continue to do so in the future.

Creating an Environment for Carefree Internet Use

Sony Interactive Entertainment (SIE) has continued to make games as popular as music, movies and broadcasting, and has been developing the PlayStation® business for users in all age groups. Console game industry organizations have responded to the proliferation of new game genres by introducing rating systems for customers in Japan, the United States and Europe (CERO, ESRB and PEGI, respectively), based on games’ target age groups. Sony has applied the U.S. system for more than 20 years, offering parents and guardians suggested age categories and descriptions that detail the contents of a game. PEGI is endorsed by the European Commission as a paradigm of self-regulation in the entertainment industry. In Japan, measures are being promoted to make the system more effective, including, with the cooperation of retailers, the voluntary refusal to sell software rated by CERO for ages 18 and above to underage customers.

SIE has enhanced its parental controls features on its game consoles, including PlayStation®5. This enables parents to navigate the play experience of their family in a way that works best for their needs. For example, the family manager can control the setting so their children can only use the console to enjoy games that are suitable for their age group, offering added safety and peace of mind. The feature also allows a parent to limit screen time and block the ability to chat with other remote users.

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