

## The Evolution of a Viral Video

Written by Ginny Grimsley

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### Mom of 5-Year-Old Who Sings & Signs Shares Her Story

The video of a blonde 5-year-old exuberantly singing “Santa was his name-O!” during a kindergarten holiday concert while simultaneously translating in American Sign Language captured hearts around the world.

It made headlines and news broadcasts from the New York Daily News and the United Kingdom’s Daily Mail to ABC News and network affiliates coast to coast.

Claire Koch’s mother, Lori Koch, says she posted the video on YouTube because she thought it was “share worthy.” Claire, who is not hearing impaired, has grown up with sign language because her mom and dad, Tom, are deaf. Still, her parents were surprised to see her signing every song for them.

“We don’t use Claire to interpret for us – she did it because that’s how she communicates with us,” says Koch. “Fortunately, the days of parents having to rely on their children to interpret are gone. There’s so much great technology available now for the deaf.”

Koch works at Stratus Video/ZVRS, [www.stratusvideo.com](http://www.stratusvideo.com), the video relay services provider for the deaf and hard-of-hearing that’s developing a lot of that technology.

“Video relay service allows people to make phone calls without relying on friends and family.

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Video Remote Interpretation opens up whole new worlds of communication possibilities.”

So, how did little Claire’s video go viral? Lori deconstructs the evolution:

- She uploaded her video to YouTube because it seemed “share worthy.” Music videos are by far the most popular on YouTube – “Gangnam Style” by PSY is the all-time No. 1 most-viewed; Justin Bieber’s “Baby” is No. 2. Humor does well, as do videos with incredibly unusual content. Super cute kids and animals can also attract attention. Lori’s video combines almost all of those elements: The kids are singing holiday songs; little Claire hams it up with a humorous performance; and she’s adorable. Seeing such a young child who is not deaf signing away so expertly may also qualify as incredibly unusual.

- A major world news event involving sign language broke. “The story about the fake fiasco at Nelson Mandela’s funeral came up,” Koch says, referring to the deaf “interpreter” who signed gibberish as he stood alongside global leaders. “That gave me the opportunity to get attention for my story. ... Claire’s video put a positive highlight on a bad experience.

- Using the funeral interpreter as a news hook, Lori shared her video with influential people via social media. “I sent the video to some famous people, like Piers Morgan, and news outlets, via Twitter,” she says. That significantly ramped up her exposure, which included a retweet by Academy Award-winning deaf actress Marlee Matlin, who commented, “This is too cute. Can you spot the child who has deaf parents?”

Lori says Claire was a bit overwhelmed by her 15 minutes-plus of fame, but enjoyed it.

“At school, some fifth-graders came up to her and introduced themselves by finger-spelling their names in sign language,” Lori says. “She was really inspired by that.”

As for her daughter’s potential future as an interpreter for the deaf, Lori says, “I’d rather see her on the stage.

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“She can be whatever she wants to be.”

### About Lori Koch and Stratus Video/ZVRS

Lori Koch is a business analyst for Stratus Video/ZVRS, which provide On-Demand Interpreting and video phone service for the deaf. The Z was the first to offer 24/7 availability and is utilized in government agencies and businesses across the country, including the Social Security Administration, Boeing Corp. and Wal-Mart. More than two-thirds of Stratus Video's non interpreters are deaf or hard of hearing, all of its 250-plus contractors across the country are deaf, as are three of its eight company vice presidents.