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Creating Accessible Video for the Online Classroom

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Creating Accessible Video for the Online Classroom

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Videos are being integrated more and more into the online classroom. However, they can create barriers for learners with hearing problems. If a student asks for an ADA accommodation for a video, you will be scrambling at the last minute to create a text supplement. That's why it's good practice to create a text supplement at the same time that you create a video.

Many faculty use separate transcripts to add text for hearing-impaired students. But this makes it challenging for a deaf or hard-of-hearing student to absorb the visual and auditory information simultaneously, as they need to shift back and forth between the images and text. The better way to create accessible video is with captions that appear within the video itself, allowing learners to read the text with the images. While captioning takes time, the steps are not difficult to master, and there are a variety of options for adding captions to online videos.

A common way to caption videos is to do it yourself, either in two steps, creating the transcript and then adding it to the video, or in one step with software that creates the captions automatically from the video. While the former process sounds more time-consuming, automated systems often make a lot of mistakes and require editing the results later on. This is why some people prefer making the transcript manually. Below is a description of each process.

Two-step process

Step one: Create the transcript

- **Manual creation:** Type a script before you create the video and then read from it when recording your video narration. This option can work well, but it can be very challenging for faculty using video in a less scripted manner (e.g., instructional screencasts of software).

- **Desktop software:** Speak into speech-to-text software like Dragon NaturallySpeaking for PC to translate your words into written text. The quality has come a long way from the early days of speech recognition, but the results will still need to be edited for errors.

Step two: Sync the transcript to video

- **Web-based software:** Upload your video to YouTube and then upload the transcript file afterwards. The system will read the transcript and sync the two by determining when the text needs to appear on the screen.
- **Commercial provider:** You can pay a commercial provider a fee to take your video and transcript and sync the two. These providers use human or computer efforts to ensure the captions show at the appropriate time.

One-step process

Another option is to use software that creates captions right off the audio in the video, thus avoiding the two-step process outlined above. However, the features, methodology, and capabilities of each software program vary widely.

- **Web-based software:** YouTube is a popular video application that has built-in speech recognition to create automated captions. Again, the results will need to be edited for accuracy.
- **Desktop software:** Some lecture-capture or presentation-creation software have a built-in captioning feature. Captivate allows you to (a) create a presentation, create a transcript separately, and then sync the words with the video to create captions or (b) create a presentation, export audio, submit audio to a vendor for captioning with speech-to-text software to have the computer create a transcript, then sync the words with the video to create captions. Camtasia Studio is another popular option. You can add captions manually with Camtasia Studio or use its speech-to-text tool to create the transcript. (Please note the captioning feature is currently available only for the PC version; the Mac version of Camtasia does not have this capability.) In our experience, some faculty find using Camtasia Studio easier than others do.

Pay for it: Commercial providers

Given the time it takes to create captions yourself, many colleges and universities use commercial providers to caption online-course videos. Commercial providers can (a) create or edit a transcript only, (b) sync or merge

the transcript to a video, or (c) create an interactive transcript that is searchable by word. Some providers can also translate videos and even add captions to videos that you didn't create and do not own. Rev.com is a popular option. Receive captions in 24 to 48 hours for as little as \$1 a minute.

Pay for it: Freelancers

One last option is to pay a freelancer to create a transcript for you. Fiverr.com lists dozens of freelancers who will caption 15 minutes of video for \$5 (often more for multiple speakers or quick turnaround). If you have flexibility, freelancers might be the cheapest way to get a transcript created, and therefore, extremely useful if you are paying for these services out of your own pocket.

Additional resources:

Still looking for more support? Check out these two websites:

- University of Washington: Caption your own video for free
<http://www.washington.edu/accessibility/videos/free-captioning/>

This website covers topics including captioning your own video for free, how to add caption files to video, adding captions to YouTube videos, and adding captions to videos on web pages.

- DCMP: Caption it yourself
<https://www.dcmp.org/ciy/>

This website includes sections on: Web-Based Captioning/Subtitling Tools, Desktop Captioning/Subtitling Software, Caption-Ready Video Hosting Providers, How to Caption It Yourself, and Guidelines for Captions.

Video captioning is not difficult and is a critical component for creating an accessible online course.

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