Guidance for captioning rich media

Institutional approaches to supporting disabled learners

Mike Wald

Media & Learning

About this guidance

- Not legal advice

- Best practices with current technologies, resources and workflows

- Endorsed by the Digital Accessibility Working Group

- Published by Disabled Students' Commission

https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/guidance-captioning-rich-media

Opportunity or risk

- The Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations may make risk averse (or resource-poor) organisations reduce digital investments to achieve regulatory compliance

- This guidance identifies minimum achievable standards and effective plans for ongoing improvement

The uphill struggle

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 (AA) compliance requires 100% accurate captioning and audio description.

- Prohibitively expensive for all content at commercial rates

- Unintended consequence could be Disproportionate Burden claim and no compliance or improvement

Compliance vs good practice

- The suggestions represent a spectrum of good practices

- Improve the experience of disabled learners

- Provide a pathway towards more achievable compliance

Minimum practice

- Automated speech recognition captions and transcripts clearly labelled if verified by humans for accuracy
- Narrator describes important visual content in rich media
- Summarise relevance of video to users' learning
- Provide glossary of specific terms, names or unusual spellings (especially those that will be a part of assessments)
- Encourage students to offer constructive feedback to ensure effective and constant improvement
- Provide guidance and quality assurance to staff

Moving beyond the minimum

- Improving accuracy
  - Script content
  - Improve microphones and recording hardware
  - Speech recognition software with subject-specific lexicons
  - Collaborative captioning tools that allow staff and students to correct captions in an authenticated, crowd-sourced manner
  - Human Checking: Since humans will always be required to ensure the accuracy of speech recognition generated captions, use incentives for students to help ensure the accuracy of speech recognition generated captions in their own classes

Training and quality assurance

- Pedagogy: identifying best practices for variety of teaching and learning delivery methods

- Technology: providing practical guides and resources to ensure effective use of video editing and captioning tools

- Presentation techniques: supporting staff with techniques to maximise audio accuracy, support lip readers, and reduce post-delivery audio description

Commercial services

- Audio description: only required when narrator does not describe important information on screen

- Speech to text reporter services: useful for live-streamed content, providing human checked, accurate captions and transcripts

- Commercial captioning: human based services can improve accuracy and could be used for high traffic/high stakes videos. For example, student support welcome videos, chancellor's address or to support specific student needs

- Sign Language Interpreters: not required for PSBAR compliance but it valuable on high traffic/high value videos and for specific students

Conclusion

- Ask your lecture capture (and other software) companies to provide easy to use caption editing tools that enable your staff or students to efficiently correct errors. Such technology already exists but is not always part of existing software packages

- Ensure you have clearly advertised processes in place to achieve the higher levels of compliance needed for students with sensory impairments.

- Review your approach annually as technological advances and pedagogical approaches could make 100% accurate captions and audio description feasible, noting that human checking will always be required