

Accessible Communication for Video Production

This guidance will provide information on the inclusion of American Sign Language (ASL), captioning, voiceover, transcripts and audio description to produce accessible videos for distribution.

Develop a Script

Prior to the creation of an accessible video product a brief script, using plain language, should be written. The script should be limited to a half or three-quarter page in length as this will equal approximately two minutes of video footage. This script will also serve as the transcript to be provided along with the finished video product as described at the end of this guidance.

Include ASL and Deaf Interpreters

The inclusion of ASL and Deaf interpreters provides increased accessibility to videos. Two of the most common ways to include interpreters are:

Side-by-Side

When creating a video using a narration format, an ASL interpreter or Deaf interpreter should be included in the shot. The interpreter and spokesperson should be standing side-by-side. This option is best when there are no changes in the footage being shown, often referred to as B-roll or cut-scenes, and the focus remains on the spokesperson and interpreter.

Considerations

- The benefit of this option is the use of the full screen allows for the interpreter to be seen clearly and without conflict of the captioning on the lower portion of the screen.
- The disadvantage of this option is the limitations on cut-scenes, graphics and B-roll.

Picture-In-Picture (PIP)

While side-by-side is the preferable option, there may be situations where it is not possible to have the interpreter included in the main footage. In these instances, the PIP option is acceptable. PIP is often used when the main footage contains action, was previously recorded, or has shifts in the visual focus such as cut-scenes or B-roll. In the PIP option, the interpreter is filmed using separate footage and is shown on screen at the same time as the main footage. This allows for the main footage to shift and change while the interpreter remains on screen uninterrupted.



Considerations

- Due to the visual content of this format, audio description of the video will be required in the script if the spokespersons do not describe what is visually taking place on screen.
- The PIP interpretation video must be created using the audio from the main video, so the interpretation is in sync with the main footage. This can be done by playing the prerecorded main footage while the interpretation footage is being created or piping the audio of the main footage into the studio where the interpretation video is being recorded.
- The footage of the interpreter and the main footage must then be edited to create a single video. This allows for the syncing of the interpretation to remain accurate during any transfers of the video, such as internet streaming. The interpretation footage should be placed on the lower right corner. The size of the PIP box should be no less than one-fourth of the screen so the interpreter can be seen clearly but does not interfere with the original video.
- The benefit of this option is that cut-scenes and B-roll may be played throughout the video, while allowing for accessible communication.
- The disadvantages of PIP are the interpreter is relegated to the bottom right of the screen and can create a disconnected feeling for the viewer; the captioning may overlap the interpreter in the PIP box or be hidden if not edited properly; and the possibility of visually overwhelming the viewer with the multiple things occurring on screen at the same time may make it difficult to focus.

Incorporate Captioning

Captioning is a critical step in making accessible videos. While English is the language most often provided in captioning, other languages may be provided based on community need.

Captioning can be created using YouTube with the proper knowledge and guidance. Video editing software, such as Adobe Premiere Pro Editor, also have the capability to add closed captioning or open captioning.

Considerations

- Open captioning requires a solid, contrasting background behind the captioning to ensure that it is accessible and visible to the viewer. For example, if white captioning is used, the background must be dark solid color. If black captioning is used, the background must be a solid light color.
- Captions should be shown at a maximum of 2 lines at a time. Captions should be edited to be read with ease and grammatically comprehensible explaining full concepts on screen at a time. For example, you should not break apart linking concepts or have a long sentence on one screen and then a few words on the next.
- Captioning must be embedded into the video to maintain the appropriate sync between captions and audio.
- Attention to the placement of captions must be given when using a PIP box to avoid overlap.

Include Voiceover

When videos are created with ASL as the primary language, voiceover in both English and Spanish is needed to meet the needs of spoken language users.

Insert Audio Description

Audio description is another critical part of making videos accessible for users who are unable to see the visual content.

Provide Transcript

A transcript compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act should be attached or included with the video. This allows access to the information through screen readers and other accessibility software used by individuals in order to access the video content.