

Accessibility Help Guide: Video captions and transcripts



What it does: ...

Explains legal accessibility regulations on video transcripts and captions. Provides best practice guidance on what to include in transcripts and captioning

What it helps with: Pre-recorded video, live video capture available after recording, audio only recording.

What are the legal requirements to provide video captions or a transcript?

When the guidelines take effect from Sept 23rd 2020 to meet **WCAG 2.1 Principle 1: Perceivable** you need to make sure users can recognise and use your service with the senses that are available to them. One of these requirements is to provide transcripts for audio and video

Any “pre-recorded time-based media **published before** 23rd September 2020” is exempt under of the regulations.

In short if you record a live session and make it available for students after the recording you should provide a transcript or captions of the audio / video as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after publishing the live session.

Full interpretation of regulations follow:

“Live time-based media” will continue to be exempt.

Time-based media should be considered media that is:

- Audio-only
- Video-only (no sound) or animation
- A combination audio/video
- Audio and or video combined with an interaction.

However, the EU directive says “Live time-based media that are kept online or republished after the live broadcast should be considered as pre- recorded time-based media without undue delay from the date of the initial broadcast or republishing of the time-based media, not exceeding the time strictly necessary to make time-based media accessible with priority being given to essential information relating to the health, welfare and safety of the public. **That necessary period of time should in principle be no longer than 14 days.** In justified cases, such as when it is impossible to procure the relevant services in due time, that period might exceptionally be extended to the shortest time necessary to make the content accessible.”

Government guidelines on Understanding WCAG 2.1
<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/understanding-wcag>

Transcript or Captions?

A transcript is a text version of the media content. This is helpful to those that can't see or hear the video/audio but also for people who are unable to stream or watch the entire recording due to time or web access constraints. A transcript is also searchable so users can look for key terms rather than reading all of the content.

If your video includes physical demonstrations of techniques or information presented through a graph or diagram, the transcript should include descriptions of key visual information that are not accessible other than viewing the video.

A transcript differs from captions in that it is not time coded and should be understandable without viewing or hearing the video. Transcripts are provided as text alternatives to audio only material (for example a podcast).

Captions are direct text versions of the audio content, synchronized in time with the video.

Things to consider about captions before you create your video

Whatever the type of recording you are going to produce, it is always good planning to start with a script. This doesn't have to be a word for word preparation of your delivery but the main points and facts you intend to present in order. As well as ensuring that your captions contain all of these points later, it will cut down on the time it takes to edit your captions.

Although you may start with captioning in mind, it is the final step in creating your recording. If you are going to edit your video do this before creating or editing captions. Whichever technology you are going to use to create your recording, captioning will be your final step in the process but should be considered from the start.

Captioning Best Practice

Identify speakers - usually for pre-recorded video this will just mean introducing yourself but if your video includes a discussion between two or more speakers your captions should indicate who is speaking.

Your captions will probably be auto generated so will follow these rules but bear these guidelines in mind when editing your caption:

- Caption frames are typically no more than two lines, with no more than 32 characters per line.
- Captions must be time-synchronized and last for at least half a second on the screen in order to give viewers enough time to read them.
- Visually impaired students will be using a screen reader to read your captions so they should be as accurate as possible in both grammar and spelling in order for these technologies to function well.

More information:

**Understanding WCAG 2.1 - Service Manual -
GOV.UK**

<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/understanding-wcag>

This document has been checked for accessibility on 18th August 2020.