Video Captioning

This guide will provide an overview of the tools available for video captioning in order to make learning material more accessible, particularly in the light of legal obligations. There are several options available to staff to do this, including importing automatically generated captions and editing captions manually.

Colleagues may find it useful to consider this guide alongside the material on the Accessibility StaffNet page.

Common Terminology

**Closed Captions (CC)** – Often referred to simply as captions, these help make videos more accessible by providing an option to show (or hide) text captions for speech on or under the video. These captions can be generated automatically and subsequently edited.

**Open Captions** – These captions are hard coded into a video and cannot be switched off.

**Subtitles** – These are options to provide language translation, but the term is often used to refer to captions.

**Transcriptions** – These are text document alternatives to an audio recording (or podcast) without timestamps.

**Audio descriptions** – These explain what is happening on screen for users who perhaps cannot see the video and may be required for some specialist videos.

**ASR** – Automatic Speech Recognition (also referred to as auto captioning).

**Auto captioning** – captions are generated using speech recognition software. These can be used as a starting point and edited manually later.

**MP4** – a common video file type.

**VTT or SRT** – video captions file type that contains the captions text and timestamps.

Adding Video Captions

**Panopto** – ASR captions have around 90-95% accuracy and can be added when editing your video by selecting Captions, Import Automatic Captions. There is also a facility to edit the captions later. If the captions are not quality assured/edited, students should be made aware that the captions are automatically generated and that these will contain errors. Note that Panopto can also caption video files that are recorded elsewhere and subsequently uploaded to Panopto.

**Collaborate (Live Sessions)** – There is currently no legal requirement to caption live video streams, but some students might require captions. For Collaborate sessions a captioner can be designated. Captioners type captions in real time. Disabled students may be able to receive individual captioning support arranged through the University's Student Advice & Support team; the team can be contacted at student.support@abdn.ac.uk. The PowerPoint subtitling function might be an option too (see below).

**Collaborate Recording** – If recordings are made available for more than two weeks, then under legal obligations captioning should be provided. By downloading the MP4 video file, this can be uploaded into Panopto and auto captioning applied (see above). Once captions are available on Panopto, the Panopto video can be shared with students.
**PowerPoint Subtitling** – Options are available within the Slide Show menu. Staff can select the spoken language and caption language used separately. Automatically generated subtitles are displayed when presenting in slideshow view. Please note there may be a delay of up to 5 minutes the first time you present while the software learns and translates the content on your slides. This slideshow could be shared in a live Collaborate session or recorded as a screencast on Panopto, but staff should note these would be “open captions” that cannot be edited later. See below for further consideration regarding languages.

**MS Stream** – Recordings from MS Teams hosted on MS Stream can include a transcript. Please refer to the Teams guidance on sharing recordings on Toolkit.

**YouTube** – There are several ways to create captions on a YouTube video including auto captions or uploading a transcript. Please refer to the YouTube captioning guide on Toolkit.

**Third Party Content** – Staff providing third party learning material have a responsibility to ensure that it is accessible. Staff should select video content that already has captions available, or request captions from the supplier.

**Other Considerations**

For some subjects in particular, such as languages, music, medical and STEM subjects, the quality of unedited automatic captions may not be good enough. In these circumstances academic staff may decide that the quality of these automatic captions is detrimental to students’ learning and thus automatic captions may not be provided. In these circumstances accessible alternative materials will be made available while the issues with automatic captions are addressed.

**Multi-Lingual Video Content** – Automatic captions are currently only available in one language. This poses problems for video content recorded in more than one language. Options that staff could try, if they have time to do so, is to apply auto captions in English and then manually add/edit the captions for a second language. Alternatively, staff could try using the PowerPoint subtitling option (see above) and pause the recording whilst changing the spoken and captioning language, before resuming the recording and continuing the presentation.

**STEM Subjects** – Auto captions may struggle with some subject specific terminology. Staff, if they have time to do so, may wish to apply auto captions in English and manually edit the captions.

**Accessibility Statement** – Available on the public website, the Accessibility Statement outlines the university’s commitment to providing learning material in an accessible format and details where this is not always be possible.

**Support with Captioning**

For 2020, support with video captioning may be available from the Centre for Academic Development by submitting requests to this form (subject to availability).

**Useful Links**

- [Toolkit: Accessibility for Authors/Creators](#)
- [Toolkit: Panopto](#)
- [Toolkit: Recording a Talking Head Video](#)
- [Toolkit: Collaborate](#)
- [Toolkit: MS Teams](#)
- [Course Design Guidelines](#)
- [www.abdn.ac.uk/elearning](#)