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Video Labs Refresher - Captioning for the Web

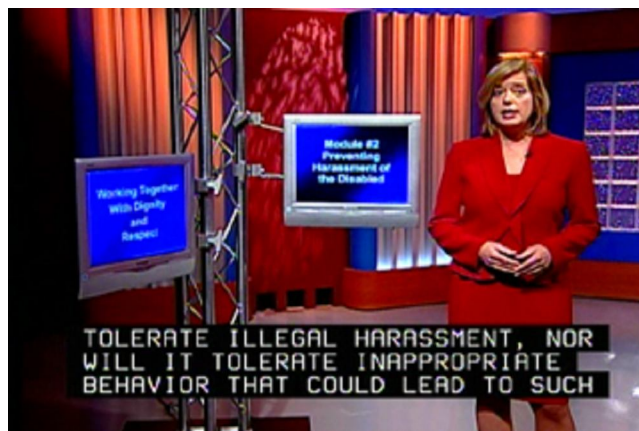


It's moving fast - very, very fast. Can you imagine the world without the web? It's easily the most important invention of our time. And, it's changed our industry for good.

But, for the hearing and vision impaired, web sites present all kinds of new challenges - consider how many times you need to click a mouse, read a monitor or listen to instructions just to navigate. And, according to the US Census, close to 20% of Americans have some form of disability that may require specialized technology for ease of use.

Video Labs can help you navigate the world of **Captioning and Alternative Media Description** so that all users have access to your video and ultimately, your message.

Closed Captioning - One "Size" Does Not Fit All



Most of us who work with the federal government are familiar with the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (Section 508) and the

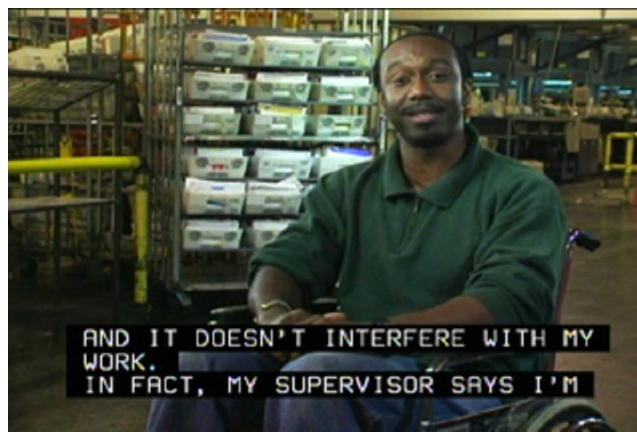
Workforce Investment Act of 1998 that requires accommodation for the hearing and vision impaired (www.section508.gov). With this legislation, the government ruled that all televisions 13" or larger be equipped with devices that capture and decode the closed captioning on Line 21 of the broadcast video signal (www.videolabs.net/multimedia/captioning.htm) and this is still the industry standard for broadcast media.

For web video, it's a whole new ballgame. Government agencies must be compliant for Section 508 for all video posted on the web, but this can get a little tricky. When planning your project, it's best to find out in advance what format best suits the needs and standards of the web site administrator.

Compression Session

Unfortunately, when you digitize and then compress from video tape with captions, the caption signal is not consistently recognized by software used for viewing (like Windows Media Player, for example). So, specific data files are used depending on multimedia programming software being utilized. Someone using Flash to create a website may need a file called .xml in pop-on style, while Windows Media video files can be closed captioned using a data file called .smi. Some prefer English subtitles or open captions that cannot be 'turned off,' ensuring ease of use. For high quality videos with a frame size of 720 x 486, it's possible to preserve standard captions from Line 21 in a Quicktime or Windows Media files for posting on some websites.

For Low Vision and Vision Impaired - Let's "Hear" it for Alternate Audio



We're receiving more requests than ever about **Alternate Audio** for web site videos - it's a sign of the times. But, how do vision impaired users navigate a computer-based environment where a mouse click is so necessary? Computers are outfitted with specialized screen reader software and refreshable Braille displays so that the users can find their way. For web programmers, it means allowing for keyboard short cuts for a Braille keyboard user. **Alternate audio** embedded in the

website can help a vision impaired user to navigate through a web site by sound. For more on this subject, Utah State University has provided an excellent website to support and explain these technical standards (www.webaim.org) for compliancy.

For video, Video Labs provides 'media description' services (aka - "alt-audio" or "audio description") so that actions on screen are included as an additional track of audio. For disc media like DVDs or CDs where a menu is used for navigation, our authoring specialists can include extra audio files that, when engaged, instruct the user on how to access the content. Alternatively, a "Read Me" file can be included so that screen reader software installed on a computer can explain needed information. For more information on these enhanced interfaces, check out the article about 'talking menus' pioneered by the Media Access Group at WGBH in Boston. (<http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/pages/mag/services/description/>).

To view samples of the different types of web videos in this newsletter - <http://www.ada.gov/videogallery.htm>

Please view our [new brochure](#) which depicts Video Labs multitude of media solutions. You may also want to follow us on [Twitter](#) as our staff has much to say and you may even find some of it valuable.

Please contact your Video Labs Account Representative for details on all our services.

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