Captioned Media for Educational Use

Compiled for: Disability Services (DS) Articulation 2014 Transcribing Sub-Committee

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1. Summary

In order to ensure a consistent, quality product for captioning consumers, free captioning software is inadvisable due to a lack of ability to adhere to CRTC standards as well as the limitation in acceptable video formats.

Low cost software, such as CC MovieMaker may work for short clips under 20 minutes in length, but has been reported on by George Brown College in Toronto, Ontario and many online users to not be user friendly or technically supported. It could potentially offer a stop-gap solution while funding is being sought for a more long-term solution.

CPC CaptionMaker provides professional captioning software from an established and reputable company. They provide substantial training and ongoing technical support and the software is well reported on by CPC clients. Though the initial investment is substantial, it is comparable to outsourcing just five hour length videos.

Transcribers chosen to complete the video transcripts are at the discretion of the employer. CART offers a faster verbatim service at a higher cost, but TypeWell offers a somewhat slower service at a lower cost.

Obtaining funding for captioning software/hardware through a local bank, the HRDC Enabling Accessibility Fund or another community resource is a viable option and has been sought by George Brown College in Toronto, ON.

2. Fast Facts

- Adherence to CRTC captioning standards will provide quality and consistency in appearance of captions.

- Software chosen should allow for adherence to CRTC standards, offer training, be user-friendly and provide ongoing technical support.

- Open captions appear automatically when the video is turned on eliminating the need for instructions to enable captions.

- Pop-on captions offer the most flexibility in positioning and speaker identification.

- The average outsourcing captioning rates are $12 per minute for transcription and captioning services. A professional in-house captioning system like CPC CaptionMaker will cost you a one-time fee of $3,995 which is equivalent to outsourcing just five, hour length videos.
• Captioned video titles should be stored in a database and potentially shared on a Canada-wide college database to avoid duplicating materials

• HRDC offers funding to increase accessibility to people across Canada. http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/eaf/index.shtml

• Most banks offer funding to organizations desirous of improving accessibility within their communities.

3. Canadian Captioning Standards

In a major decision on "New Media" (May 1999), the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) held that under the Broadcasting Act, the CRTC had jurisdiction over certain content communicated over the internet including audio and video. In 2007, the (CRTC) issued a notice that stated: “The Commission is of the view that a first and very important step in improving the quality of captioning in Canada is the development and implementation of universal standards.” To this end, the Commission called upon the industry to establish working groups to develop universal standards in captioning. The result was the Closed Captioning Standards and Protocol for Canadian English Language Television Programming Services.

These standards are based on the four principles of captioning:

**Accuracy:** Accurately presented verbatim transcription is always the goal.

**Responsibility:** Even when editing, it is essential to preserve the meaning and intent of the program.

**Consistency:** Strive for uniformity of style, format, placement, description, speaker designation, rate of display, and so on, within each program.

**Clarity:** Give a complete and true rendering of program audio: identify who is speaking, include non-speech information, and keep descriptions simple.

These standards include, but are not limited to the use of case, colour, italics, underlining, punctuation, type of captions, presentation rate, handling profanity and slang and speaker identification. For more information on these standards, please find a link to the Closed Captioning Standards and Protocol for Canadian English Language Television Programming Services.

Although these standards are directed to the broadcasting industry, it is advisable to approach captioning with a set of standards that can be adhered to in order to provide a high standard of quality and consistency.

4. Captioning Terminology

There are numerous terms that are unique to captioning. For the purpose of this document, we will limit the use of the terms to those that apply to offline captioning.

i) Offline Captions: Captions prepared after the production of the video

ii) Open Captions: Captions that appear automatically once the video is started

iii) Closed Captions: Captions that appear only when turned on

iv) Roll-up Captions: Roll-up captions roll onto and off the screen in a continuous motion; usually two or three lines of text appear at one time; roll-up captions are best for lecture-based material when there are few speakers to identify.

v) Pop-on Captions: Pop-on captions “pop” onto the screen all at once rather than line by line. They appear for a few seconds and then disappear. They are placed on a location on the screen that will help identify the speakers. This type of caption is useful when there are many speakers to identify.

5. Steps Involved in Creating Captions

Communications with instructors prior to the commencement of each course should include the request for a list of videos that will be shown as part of the course curriculum. This will allow every effort to be made to obtain the video with open captions if available. Instructors sourcing their own videos should be made aware of the need to order this material with open captions if available.

If the video cannot be obtained with captions, the following steps may be taken:

i) Copyright: Approval must be received from the video’s copyright holder before adding captions. (Sample Attached)

ii) Transcription: According to 3PlayMedia, a provider of captioning services in the United States, it takes a trained transcriber an average of four to five hours to transcribe one hour of normal audio or video content. The amount of time required is influenced by
the complexity of the subject, the transcriber’s familiarity with the subject as well as the pace of the speaker.

iii) VideoFormatting: Captioning software will only accept certain video formats. Prior to the next step, video may need to be converted to meet these requirements. For web-based media, free conversion software is available for most formats.

For non-web based media, additional software and/or hardware may need to be purchased to convert to the correct format. Should conversion be required, 3Play Media suggests a rough estimate of 1-2 hours, depending on the length of the video, should be added to the estimated project time.

iv) Synchronization: This involves use of captioning software to assign time codes and position codes that sync the transcript to the audio in the video. The amount of time required for this task depends on the software chosen for the task and the familiarity of the service provider with the software. On average, synchronization takes an additional 20% of the transcription time estimate. If a transcript takes 5 hours to create, the synchronization might take an additional hour.

v) Editing: The time involved in editing depends on the skill of the transcriber and on the editor’s familiarity with Canadian Captioning Standards. On average, editing takes more time than the length of the video. For a one-hour transcript, 3Play Media suggests 1.5 hours of editing time.

Based on the above estimates, creating captions for a one-hour video will take approximately 9.5 hours once those involved are familiar with the process and proficient in executing the tasks.

6. Software Options

i) Free Captioning Software

- Often created for specific video formats - i.e.: YouTube Captions
- Training is generally limited to users’ guides and online tutorials.
- No ongoing technical support
- Generally not cross-platform
- Often created by technically inclined individuals rather than established companies. No guarantee in terms of continuity limiting the likelihood of keeping pace with new technology via updates.
- Limits adherence to CRTC standards
- If students or instructors create their own captions using free software, it will be impossible to adhere to a common set of captioning standards for clarity and consistency as well as for cataloging and sharing of resources.
ii) Low Cost Captioning Software

**CC Movie Captioner - $99.00 per license**

- Online company with owner/operator as main contact
- Available for Mac and Windows
- Accepts most web based video formats
- Online tutorials available
- No ongoing technical support
- Repeats 4 seconds of video at a time until the transcriber has captured it all. Once “return” is pressed, it jumps to the next four seconds of video. This is repeated until the transcript is complete. This completes both the transcript and synchronization process.
- Adherence to CRTC standards possible
- Purchased by UBC but has not been in use for two years due to lack of requests for captioning. When originally purchased, it was used for only short video clips no longer than 20 minutes in length.
- Rejected by George Brown College due to lack of software training and support. They did not find it to be user-friendly.
- Trial version available

iii) Review - Broadcast Quality Captioning Software

**CPC CaptionMaker - $3,995.00 for software package**

- CPC has been established for over 25 years and is the recognized leader in professional captioning software.
- Available for Mac and Windows
- Enables editing and output to tape, file, disc, mobile devices and the Web
- Capable of captioning dvd/blue-ray discs
- User-friendly - One company reported they were up and running one hour after installing the software
- Video tutorials
- 1 on 1 webinar training
- Online troubleshooting
- Transcript can be completed in software of your choice and imported into CaptionMaker. Video is then uploaded and synchronized with text in a few easy steps.
- Defaults ensure adherence to CRTC standards
- Online reviews consistently report the software to be user-friendly and the company to be responsive and professional.
7. Service Providers

i) In-house Service Provision

The captioning team might include a trained transcriber, a person trained in the use of the captioning software chosen, an editor and a person on-call for technical assistance when adjusting video formats or troubleshooting software issues.

- Transcribers
  TypeWell Transcribers - TypeWell Transcribers are trained to create meaning for meaning transcripts from live or pre-recorded audio. They are skilled typists that use a standard keyboard with specialized software allowing the use of abbreviations to cut down on key strokes and increase typing speed. Verbatim transcripts can be produced for pre-recorded material by repeating the audio for content capture. Average hourly rates range from $25-$50 depending on the experience of the transcriber and the complexity of the assignment.

  Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Service Providers - CART service providers are trained using specialty hardware and software to create verbatim transcripts at a speed of 200+ words per minute with 97% accuracy. Average hourly rates range from $60-$100 per hour depending on the experience of the transcriber and the complexity of the assignment.

Both TypeWell Transcribers and CART service providers are able to create a professional, verbatim transcript. Due to the difference in hourly rates, the costs involved in creating the verbatim transcription would likely be similar as TypeWell transcribers will take longer to complete the task but at a lower hourly rate while CART providers will complete the task faster but at a higher hourly rate.

- Captioner

The Captioner is the person trained in the use of the captioning software. When considering captioning software, the provision of training, tutorials and ongoing technical support should be considered. If technically inclined, this person might be trained in the conversion of videos to the formats required in the captioning software.

- Editor

The transcriber assumes responsibility for the editing of the verbatim transcript. Editing is also required to ensure proper synchronization of the captions to the audio in the video as well as adherence to Canadian captioning standards.

- Technical Assistance
For in-house captioning, it is highly advisable to have access to the IT department or a person within the department that understands and can assist with software troubleshooting and video formatting.

ii) **Outsourcing Service Provision**

Includes estimate for:

- Conversion to acceptable web-based video format
- One hour video transcript
- Captions per Canadian captioning standards

**Line 21 Media Services** (Vancouver, BC)

- $600 - 700 for a one hour video
- Price reduction if transcript provided
- Range in price based on style of captions chosen

**West Coast Captioning** (Vancouver, BC)

- $625.00 for a one hour video
- 20% Reduction if transcript provided

**Vendors recommended by George Brown College** (Toronto, Ontario)

- $780.00 for a one hour video

  - Transcript: $180.00 for a one hour video  april@ablescript.com
  - Captions: $600.00 accessiblemediasolutions@gmail.com

**8. Captioning at George Brown College, Toronto, ON**

Anne Villahermosa, Accessible Media Coordinator at George Brown College, arranged for the review and purchase of captioning software. The experience obtained in this endeavor was generously shared.

The team at George Brown College quickly ruled out free and low cost captioning software. It was felt that the companies represented did not have the stability to provide ongoing training, support and updates. To spend the time training a team in the use of the software without this type of support from the software provider was felt to be too risky.

A trial version of CC Movie Captioner was obtained but it was ruled out for not being user friendly and for its lack of training and ongoing technical support.
It was decided to pursue the purchase of broadcast quality software, CPC Captioner. The decision was based on the reputation of the company and the extensive training and support offered. As the software had a significant price tag, funding was obtained through the Bank of Montreal for the purchase of a new computer and for the software.

The software had not yet been implemented by George Brown College due to staff changeovers. The time/money would not be invested into training until the staffing situation was more stable. In the meantime, captioning requirements have been outsourced. A list of contractors and pricing was provided. (See under heading “Outsourcing”).

A pilot project to use CPC software to caption materials needed for September, 2013 was planned for May, 2013. This would help determine whether to continue to outsource materials or to caption in-house. It was anticipated that George Brown College would continue to outsource videos that are one hour or longer and use in-house captioning for the shorter video segments. If a fast turn-around was required, material would be outsourced as it’s not feasible to have staff dedicated to captioning. Library technicians were to be trained in the use of the captioning software to address the need for captioning material that has a reasonable turn-around time.

George Brown College has an in-house media technician who is able to convert VHS and DVD materials into the proper web-based video format. This service can also be outsourced to a media-house. For converting from one web format to another, free software, Handbrake, was recommended.

With reference to the type of captions, it was highly recommended that “open captions” are used. In this way, captions automatically appear when the video begins eliminating the need to provide instructions on how to turn captions on and off. It was also advised that “pop-on” captions are the most flexible type of caption enabling the positioning of the caption in an area where it won’t mask important video elements and enabling placement near the speaker for speaker identification.

George Brown has cataloged all captioned videos available at their facility and has listed them on their website. The generous offer was made to share these materials upon request.