



# Multimedia Accessibility FAQ

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on making W3C multimedia accessible

(Take from (<http://www.w3.org/2008/06/video-notes>))

### Q1. What do I need to do to make audio and video accessible?

- **Transcript - required.** For most W3C media, such as recordings of teleconferences, you only need to get/make and post a transcript to provide basic accessibility.  
*Note: Minutes are not sufficient for a transcript of an audio or video of a meeting (unless done by a court reporter or someone who can capture every word).*
- **Audio description - required only for relevant visuals not already covered in what's said.** (Audio description says what's in the visuals, so it's available to people who are blind.) Most W3C video won't need audio description. For example, you do **not** need audio description for talking heads only, or for text on slides as long as the slide text is woven into what you say. You might need audio description of things like charts and diagrams.
- **Captions - nice to have for most W3C media, required for some.** (Captions are essentially the transcript synchronized with the video or audio.) Most W3C media, such as audio-only recordings of teleconferences, will not require captions. Captions are important when people need to see what's happening in the video and get the audio information in text at the same time. Even with videos that are only talking heads, it's good to have captions so that a person who is deaf or hard of hearing can see facial expressions. Some people will even appreciate captions for audio-only media, for example, if they are hard of hearing or non-native speakers and would like to listen yet also have the text to fill in what they can't hear or understand.
- **Sign language - not required for W3C multimedia.** (Sign language translation/interpretation is useful for people who are deaf and sign is their primary language.) While we encourage providing sign language for W3C multimedia, it is generally not required.

**WCAG - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0**

**For details and resources, see the following WCAG 2.0 material at**

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag>:

- List of relevant WCAG 2.0 guideline, success criteria, and technique [in How to Meet WCAG 2.0, "Time-based Media: Guideline 1.2"](#)
- Detailed [Understanding WCAG 2.0, Time-based Media: Understanding Guideline 1.2](#) - follow the appropriate "Success Criteria for this Guideline" link

## **Q2. Can I put it online and have the community transcribe it, e.g., via wiki?**

No. All media must be accessible when published. It is not acceptable to post a video now and the transcript later. (as that would be discriminating against people who are deaf)

It **is** acceptable to post a **complete** transcript for more cleanup, for example, posting the transcript of a teleconference and asking Working Group participants to make sure that what was said is accurately transcribed.

*An exception* would be if you have someone committed to do the transcript **the next day** and it's easiest if you put the video online for them to access it — that would be OK provided you don't announce it at all until the transcript is available. However, even this is risky, because someone could have it set to notify them when a new video is uploaded by a certain person or with certain keywords.

## **Q3. How do I get a transcript for my media?**

You can just type it up yourself or ask a volunteer to type it up.

There are several services that make transcripts of audio files, for a fee that varies by turnaround time and quality. They provide multiple formats, many offer HTML. It's as simple as sending them the media file, or pointing to it online.

Once you have the transcript, make sure it's linked to from the same places the media file is linked to, including web pages and e-mails.

See also: [Transcripts on the Web: Getting People to your Podcast and Videos](#) includes how to get or make transcripts, and best practices for transcripts.

[example transcript for presentation](#)

[example transcript for podcast](#)

#### **Q4. How do I do audio description of visuals?**

Remember that most W3C video won't need audio description. For example, you do **not** need audio description for talking heads only, or for text on slides as long as the slide text is woven into what you say. You might need audio description of things like charts and diagrams. (For guidance, see [Effective Practices for Description of Science Content within Digital Talking Books](#).)

How you provide audio description depends on the situation. For things like a title slide, you should put it [in the main audio track \(example\)](#). In a presentation that is all about visuals, e.g., a video showing how to replace batteries, it would be quite tedious for a sighted user to listen to audio description; therefore, you might have a separate track or file with the synchronized audio description. You could additionally provide a text file (HTML page) that combines the transcript with the audio descriptions for people who would prefer to skim it quickly, listen to it with a screen reader, etc.

**Tip:** If you plan a presentation a little before you record it, you can usually weave the audio description of key visuals smoothly with your main talk, and not have to go back later and add anything. For example, instead of pointing to a slide and saying, "as you can see on this slide, the traffic peaked here", you can say "this chart of website traffic for the last year shows that it peaked in August." (More tips under "[Best practices for the audio](#)" in [Transcripts on the Web](#).)

[example audio description of text in video](#)

[example audio description of action in video](#)

[example transcript with description of visuals](#)

#### **Q5. How do I do captions?**

Including captions in a video is more complicated than a simple transcript. You can use software such as [MAGpie](#); or tools provided with online services such as [dotSUB](#) or [YouTube](#); or hire someone to do it. See also:

- the list of **Captioning tools below**
- [guidance on adding captions and descriptions to different forms of multimedia](#)
- "[Resources](#)" section of G87: Providing closed captions in Techniques for WCAG 2.0

Note that when you provide captions, it's good to also provide the transcript, so that you and your users can realize the [additional benefits of transcripts](#).

[example video with captions](#)

## Captioning tools

*Resources and links are for information purposes only, no endorsement implied.*

- [MAGpie](#); also creates audio descriptions
- [Subtitle Workshop](#)
- [ccPlayer](#)
- [CapScribe](#)
- [CaptionTube](#)
- [World Caption](#)
- [CC for Flash](#)
- [Adobe captioning component](#)
- [DFXP](#)

## Q6. What about media posted elsewhere, such as YouTube?

Yup, it's covered by this policy and must be accessible.

You can post media in places that do not support accessibility as long as it includes a link to the accessible version:

- At least in the description
- Preferably also in the video/audio itself

## Q7. What about media that someone else does?

All multimedia of W3C's work, *even if produced or published by others*, should be accessible; for example: a W3C Working Group member posts an audio recording of a teleconference or a video of a face-to-face meeting, a podcaster interviews W3C staff, or an Interest Group provides training materials.

If W3C Staff is asked to participate in multimedia to be posted online, e.g., an interview, you should require that it be made accessible, or at least strongly encourage it. (In some cases W3C might be willing to help with making it accessible, for example, posting the transcript on our website.)

## Q8. What about a conference presentation?

If you prepare a video to be shown at a conference where there are mostly live speakers, you probably don't have to have captions for accessibility because whatever method is being provided for accessibility of the live speakers should work for your video as well (e.g., sign language interpreter, real-time transcription).

However, if it will be available other than at the conference, e.g., online afterwards, then the above answers apply and you should make it accessible yourself or require that the conference make it accessible.

## Q9. Are there exceptions?

Of course there are exceptions to some of these specific points. Any exception needs approval. [WAI staff \(wai@w3.org\)](mailto:wai@w3.org) are happy to help evaluate what is an acceptable exception from an accessibility perspective.

## Q10. Where can I get more info?

- From Web Content Accessibility Guidelines [WCAG 2.0](#):
  - List of relevant WCAG 2.0 guideline, success criteria, and techniques in [How to Meet WCAG 2.0, "Time-based Media: Guideline 1.2"](#)
  - Detailed [Understanding WCAG 2.0, Time-based Media: Understanding Guideline 1.2](#) - follow the appropriate "Success Criteria for this Guideline" link
- Overcoming the challenge of podcast transcription (previously at <http://www.rnib.org.uk/wacblog/multimedia/overcoming-the-challenge-of-podcast-transcription/> )
- [Transcripts on the Web: Getting People to your Podcast and Videos](#) includes the [benefits of transcripts](#), [how to get or make transcripts](#), and [best practices for transcripts](#).
- [Guidance on adding captions and descriptions to different forms of multimedia](#)
- [Effective Practices for Description of Science Content within Digital Talking Books](#)
- [Deafness and the User Experience](#) explains that written/spoken language is a second language for people who are Deaf

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