



The 2017 Accessibility Conference:  
**Becoming a Catalyst  
for Inclusion**  
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## Creating a Campus Wide Captioning Strategy

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### Transcript from the 2017 Accessibility Conference

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SPEAKER:

We will get started. Thanks for coming this afternoon. The session is called Creating A Campuswide Captioning Solution. Anne has been involved in accessibility services on campus and off for the last 35 years. Currently she is the chair of McMaster Accessibility Council, responsible for AODA compliance. She is also part of the steering committee. Nancy is part of the closed captioning working group. She is responsible for course material and library material and providing that for students, staff and faculty.

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ANNE POTTIER:

Thank you very much. I'd forgotten we had sent our bio information in, so that was great – we don't have to do our own introductions. Welcome. I am Anne and this is Nancy. We've been talking about what we are doing at McMaster to create a global captioning solution. We will talk about our strategy, the university library, what our workflow is and what work we still need to do.

As you just heard, we have a McMaster Accessibility Council that has been around for seven years. It is comprised of senior managers from across the campus. This group is responsible for ensuring the adherence to all areas of accessibility under AODA. I'm the current chair. We are responsible for addressing barriers and developing a plan for the removal and prevention of the barriers. All of you will know this, but under section 14, these are the requirements we need to comply with. As of January 2014, new Internet websites and content all have to conform to WCAG 2.0 AA, other than having live captions or described pre-recorded videos.

Video captioning, to clarify, is when video files are used on a website. Captions or synchronised transcripts should be provided. All of us who are believers in captioning realise these help provide good universal instruction design for everyone but are also useful for non-native speakers, for example those of us involved in ESL, for when a video has poor audio quality and for when users who view the video use it with audio disabled. When audio is used on a web page, text transcripts or other solutions should be provided or be available on demand.

We put out the call to establish a Close Captioning Working Group and I couldn't believe how many people we had say that they wanted to be part of it. We probably had anywhere between 18 and 20 people come out to the first meeting. We asked them to help us define a captioning standard we felt could be adopted reasonably on campus. This work has been ongoing for two years now and we think we have a good idea about what to do. The Accessibility Council went to the university budget committee to ask for money to help with this captioning work because the biggest challenge with all of this is, who will pay?

We realised we have been talking about this kind of work for a long time, but unless someone figured out who will pay, we would not be able to move it forward. We asked the university budget committee to give us some money to support retroactive captioning and to fund captioning work for individuals who don't have ongoing or web IT support. The intent is, anyone who is doing new creation of video should build the cost of captioning into their production

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costs unless they were a department that had no budget and were creating short videos, and we would give them some tools to do that with and help them financially, if needed.

This is sort of what we are calling our standard. We have broken it down into types of videos created or used on campus. Basic 3 to 5 minute videos, we expect people to use the YouTube auto-generated captions and manually clean them. We are giving them tools so they can go in and do that. Anything from five to 60+ minutes, we are choosing to use Rev.com as our supplier. If less than 30 minutes, it is returned within 24 hours and it costs a dollar a minute.

I tested this out to try to edit a 15-minute video using the YouTube auto-generation and cleaned it up myself. I think it took me almost 3 hours. A dollar a minute is definitely worth it. My time cleaning up that video was very expensive. We expect people can build it into the cost of producing all-new videos, and we recommend they use Rev.com.

As a library we also have commercial videos which we need to ensure our captioned before they can be used. We work to get permission to caption them, then we provide a digital copy to Rev.com and use the same process. Lecture captions are the one area where we are stumbling, mostly due to cost. We use Echo 360 to caption lectures. I did a study on how much it would cost in one term. It would have been over \$50,000. Most are only used for that one term. It just didn't seem reasonable to put that kind of money into it.

When we looked at the retroactive captioning we wanted to do on videos used before 2014, we asked people to actually think about whether those videos are still being used or should be used to make sure they are still relevant and that it makes sense to spend the money to caption them.

Lectures are captured at the moment. An instructor often doesn't know what he or she will say. The next year they want to be able to say it all again fresh, so we won't go back and say they can listen to the one captured last year. It's the nature of how these captured lectures are used which causes the largest problem.

I would be happy to hear if anyone in the group has a solution for captured lectures.

We don't have a strategy for captured lectures yet. We have acknowledged that this category of video has been parked for the time being. But for the captioning of short videos, we have offered a system for retroactive captioning of them. We evaluated whether they were still relevant. We propose uploading them to YouTube video or departmental video channel for consistency, then using the YouTube auto generated captions. Then you must edit the material to ensure accuracy. Most people go, "I can do that." It is actually quite easy. If I can do it, you can.

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For captioning of longer videos, the closed captioning group evaluated several third-party vendors for accuracy, turnaround time and price. We sent the same videos out to various vendors at the same time to see what came back, when it came back, how expensive it was and how accurate it was. Based on that little experiment, our recommendation was that people use Rev.com. I would like to start building some capacity with them so that in the future we might be able to negotiate and even better price with them. The price we are working with is a dollar a minute, 24-hour turnaround time in less than 30 minutes. It comes back quickly.

We created some basic instructional videos to help people who want to do captioning. We have one, basically an introduction to closed captioning -why you should do it, all the good things about how it improves access for people. Another to show how to edit closed captioning you have done through YouTube. One to show how to upload transcripts and then one to show what happens when captioning is not done well, and all the different options available if it does not work. They are short videos that help people realise how simple it really is to do this work. Step-by-step guides to help get them through the process.

The closed captioning working group offered to assist individuals and departments with the funding of retroactive captioning. We created a system for those who have no IT support to submit materials and request materials to be captioned. We created a request form. Up until now, the cost is paid for out of the central fund because if it comes from an individual faculty member for use in a course, since there's no way the faculty member will say, "I will pay for that." That is one of the biggest issues.

This is what the captioning request form looks like. We were going to show this to you live, but we just realised it is behind a firewall, so can't do that. This is the first half of the form. It is very basic. It asks people to let us know who they are, and how they plan to use the video. Then it tells us more about what it is, gives them the opportunity to upload the video, then I think it has information about what the options are. We have the option of sending the request back to them to let them know they can do themselves and point them to the videos we have created or for departments who should be doing this work yourself we would tell them, for example, "This is what we would send to rev.com and what we would pay for it. It is a simple process and it will cost you this much."

All of these request forms feed into a database so we can get a sense of what kind of requests we are getting. Over time, we can try to provide the budget committee with data since I know we will have to go back and ask for more money so we can keep it going.

Since we are in the library, we also have legacy film collections we need to deal with. We have VHS, documentaries and videos. We identified all the videos which were already captioned and

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added labels to the cases because they were actually viewed. We just didn't look at what was printed on the case. We put our own label on the case to indicate someone had looked at them, figured out if it was captioned and added a standard note to the MARC record in our library catalogue - all the records for those things that were fully captioned.

For any items that weren't already captioned, especially for VHS's, we try to buy a DVD version with captions or seek permission to caption them.

We are now working towards incorporating captioning information into larger catalogues so other libraries can locate captioned copies when they need them. There is no point in one location captioning a video and then someone else captioning the same video, with all the duplication in costs and labour and to share the information back-and-forth, that is what we are working on.

NANCY WAITE:

Unfortunately, if we rely on the information in the catalogue record, it is missing lots of videos that are actually captioned. So, we gave a student the best summer job possible. We had them watch videos all summer. Damian watched to see if the video was captioned. We went to the catalogue and updated the records with either a record saying, "Close captioned for the hearing-impaired," or the ones that weren't captioned, "Film lacks captions." We made him update all of the records so there was a standard note so even the ones that did have a record, sometimes the records weren't consistent. For example, in Europe, sometimes it says "Subtitled for the hearing-impaired." We wanted to make sure that note was consistent so when we get our new catalogue in the summer, we can make those records searchable, so we went through and did that.

As Anne mentioned, we have the stickers - yellow, red and blue. Yellow are closed caption. They have the little icon there. The red stickers are for subtitled, so subtitled ones don't need to be captioned if that film is completely subtitled. Silent films don't need to be captioned either because they are silent.

ANNE POTTIER:

We have a surprising number of silent movies.

NANCY WAITE:

For a high-use VHS tapes that weren't captioned, we checked to see if we could find a replacement DVD that was captioned. We're working on it right now, this summer. We have gone through and captioned a few, not a lot.

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So for the videos being shown in class, we started a project last fall to catch the ones being booked through video booking services, so it was a partnership between video booking, classroom A/V and acquisitions. We sat down together, we had a few hiccups with the format, but we got them all, and it went quite well. It was a good way to identify which ones would be the ideal ones to caption.

At the end of the day, we ended up creating two copies for the instructors – a DVD version and an MP4 version. The MP4 version allows them to play it on their computer even if they don't have DVD playback software. We had to put the project on hold partway through the term because we were missing a couple of team members. We captioned 202 videos in total within a fairly short period of time.

Compared to proactively captioning, captioning for an accommodation is pretty much the same process with the exception being we don't wait for permission from the producer. We still request the permission from the producer, but we go ahead and get the captions and get them to the student as soon as possible. If the permission comes back, that is great. If it doesn't, it is an accommodation.

So, I am laughing. The Friday of Labour Day, I took it off. My phone starts vibrating and I looked down at my phone and I'm like, "Oh, my God – 169 emails. What is going on?" An instructor put in a request for captions. They needed videos for their course. They needed them for the following week. This was a new process for us. It was exciting to get this request because this was all through word-of-mouth. This is a new process. At the same time, I wondered how we would deal with it.

It was fabulous they were hearing about it, but it was a bit of a challenge – 169 – and they needed it next week. We put the request through to rev.com and because they were all short clips, the turnaround time from them was fabulous. We had them the next day, which was great. I will show you a video in a minute of the DVD program we use. Because the title was unique and the title of the caption files was unique, when I open the file, it auto-loaded the caption files and it was, like, instantly associated and was just a thing of beauty! I can't explain it any more other than the fact even though they submitted it Friday of a long weekend, they still had their files the following Thursday.

NANCY WAITE:

The only reason it was so much of a crisis is they had to get their content management system uploaded and all files had to be there. It was all very last-minute stuff. We didn't think it could be done. It was a good test of the system. It was done well.

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NANCY WAITE:

This program we have, it is called DVD Fab. We have done testing with other programs before. Each did its own thing. This is the only one we found that did everything all together in one program. It is great. It costs \$200 for lifetime membership for all the things we do. If you're interested, we will do a demo right now.

NANCY WAITE:

So, please work. Volume.

(Video plays)

NANCY WAITE:

It takes about 15 minutes for an hour-long DVD. When I say rip, it means copying it off the disc and converting it into a digital format, in case you are new to DVDs. One part in the video, when I mentioned changing name, I added 'CC' to indicate that it has the captions. You can't have two files with the same name in the same folder. Also, there was a part where I said, "It will auto load it." You could tell because there was an 'EN' at the end. It pulls in the SRT file when you click on the MP4. To create the two discs, you don't need any other programs, other than DVD Fab. We use it to burn the DVD version, and Windows to copy the MP4 version to the disc.

It takes about 30 minutes. It can run in the background. Our next plans are to continue to seek out permission for all of the ones not captioned. We want to do a bulk permission. We break down the publishers and send out bulk permission requests. We also are working on a shared captioned file repository. I know the OCUL Video community is working on something but it is quite a way away. We want to share the SRT files we have. Part of our permission request is that we be able to share these SRT files within the community already. Hopefully soon.

Then we are trying to catch more videos as they come in as requests come in. We are working with SAS - Student Accessibility Services - on a described video process.

ANNE POTTIER:

What else can we do? It is important that you know your context on your own campus or your business or wherever you are from. For us, we need to know more about our collections to understand the size, age and format of what we have, how much they are used and how much is already available. For your users, we need to understand who they are. Mostly we talk about

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students, but we have a lot of faculty and staff who are in need of these things. You need to get a sense of what our users are and who we are doing the work for.

At the university, all of the departments generate so much video these days as a means of promotion, and they don't understand what that really means. It is a cool thing to do, but you have to make it fully accessible. That is often a shock to them. It is making sure they understand these things. You have to monitor the trends to understand how critical this is. We are trying to collaborate as much as we can. At sessions like this, we can share strategies about what we are doing, we like to hear about what others are doing, and develop best practices. There is a separate service provider directory which is part of the ROAM (Report on Accessible Media) report that I think needs to be updated, but with input from the community. We have to advocate for the inclusion of captions and streaming services as well as on DVDs distributed in Canada and monitor what is going on on campus.

We have to develop a campus wide communication strategy. The biggest thing we have to do is make sure everyone is on board. All the work we have done so far has been on a word-of-mouth basis. We have to watch the videos being posted on our websites to see if they are captioned or posted without captions, then contact those who post them and remind them that they have to be captioned, and provide assistance, if needed.

The first thing I do in the morning is read the Daily News from McMaster. It is the online news website. The second thing I do is contact those who have posted a video to let them know it's not captioned. Often their first response is, "Oh, damn! We forgot, again." I'm hoping to come up with a checklist for their posts. The posting of videos is often timely because they have to get it out there because they don't want to get scooped or it is tied to a physical event happening, but within an hour or two of it being posted, it often gets reposted with the captions. At least the ones coming out of our Public Relations Office. We must take whatever opportunity we can to remind people that videos need to be captioned. You need to be the captioning police in some cases. When they see you, they go, "Oh, captioning. Right." We also need to think about videos being created as part of staff training events. These need to be captioned too, but people are still forgetting the captions. We need to keep reminding them about how easy it is to do this work.

So, that is where we are at. Our contact information is coming up. If you have any questions, we will do our best to answer them. If you have any other strategies you are using, particularly around what you're doing about captioned lectures, please let us know. Thank you.

(Applause)

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SPEAKER:

Thank you to our presenters.

SPEAKER:

Thank you for that presentation. I also work at a university library. I wondered what your success rate looks like in seeking clearance for permission to caption when there is not accommodation. How's that going?

NANCY WAITE:

I have only had one distributor who has refused. With further follow-up and education, they were OK with us captioning.

ANNE POTTIER:

To add to that, we offer the SRT file back to the producers so they can embed it in the next iterations of that product. Often these things were created before captioning was available or of interest to people. They didn't include it. Since we have done the captioning and paid for it, we send them back an SRT file so they can make a captioned copy available. If they are in Ontario, they should be doing it as part of their production process. Many aren't.

SPEAKER:

Hi. That was great. Thank you very much. I am curious. For the video clips captioned for classroom use, are the captions permanently embedded on the video so when the video is shown by the instructor, the captions are there, not turned on and off?

NANCY WAITE:

That is the big challenge. They will choose not to, so we burn them in so they must.

SPEAKER:

So you can use the functionality of YouTube to turn them on and off.

NANCY WAITE:

One of the things we had with the legacy stuff is the equipment in the classrooms is so old. They may have VHS players in the classrooms that don't have the ability to show captions. That was a stumbling block right off the bat. Having to create a different format they could use right

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off the laptop was important. People don't turn on the captions even if they are there. If we pay for it and it will be uploaded into a content management system, the captions are burned in.

SPEAKER:

It would be cost prohibitive to do it any other way. Thanks a lot.

SPEAKER:

I am Craig and I work at the university. I could see a time in my near future where I steal all your ideas and then go...

ANNE POTTIER:

That is the whole point. Go for it. That is the collaboration.

There are certain things that will have to be funded centrally. Captioning is one. It's impossible to get people to think they have to bear the cost if they don't already have budgets for production.

It is not costly if you are doing it at the time as you are producing. For a dollar a minute, it is nothing.

We have crossed those hurdles. We are doing it automatically. It is the other guys. We will always have those departments and faculty who want to comply but won't pay for it. I will likely have to go back and ask for more money at some point. I think we got \$20,000 and we probably have about half left. I haven't checked lately. We did a big batch of retroactive captioning for lots of departments and went on to big sites that had videos from 2014 and said that we could help them with that. The largest was a health forum. I think we sent out 1,000 minutes of video for them. That cost about \$1,000, but it was worth it because they are a very high profile unit. They weren't prepared to go backwards with their captioning work. I think it was around \$20,000. It was part of a larger ask from the budget committee around accessibility related issues.

SPEAKER:

Will the majority of money go to rev.com for the service they provide?

NANCY WAITE:

Yes.

SPEAKER:

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I had a question. We both use rev.com. I'm curious about what you do for non-English captioning.

NANCY WAITE:

We haven't had any.

SPEAKER:

That would be helpful. You triage request. Is that someone's part-time job, full-time job? Who is managing that?

ANNE POTTIER:

Part of being an Associate University Librarian means I have some control over what is going on in the library. I chose to add this work to Nancy's job. It helps us inform them about what is going on out there. It gives us an in to say, "What else are you doing? Maybe there are other things we can help you with." Sometimes Nancy will say she needs materials from them. That is part of a real job. It has grown into this captioning job.

SPEAKER:

What proportion, what percentage, of a full-time role is that work?

NANCY WAITE:

The process was new last fall. Going forward, it shouldn't be that big of a deal.

SPEAKER:

OK, thanks.

ANNE POTTIER:

Because of the library providing the services, it made sense to have this work come back into the library because nobody would take ownership of it. It is something the library would do as a service. It made sense to add it to the work we are doing.

SPEAKER:

I was wondering about specialised vocabulary. How did you find Rev with medical vocabulary? Have you had much experience with that?

NANCY WAITE:

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We actually had one video with complex language; I don't remember what it pertained to. Rev.com asked for more information. It was something specific to a video they were captioning. They wanted to know how to spell that particular word because it had come up a number of times. I was quite impressed with the fact they followed up with it. They wanted to make sure they were spelling that word right.

ANNE POTTIER:

When we did our test, we didn't send easy videos. We sent them things that would be difficult, had different volume levels, someone with a weird accent. Our president is difficult sometimes because he is British and has a beard and swallows his words. He says things like provost instead of provost. It came back as (Mumbles) because they did not know what it was. We knew what he was saying. He was saying 'provost'. The critical thing is to go back and listen.

People figure, since they've sent it out, they don't need to listen to it again. We have a context that the other person doesn't. You do need to review when it comes back. We had one really awful thing with a mispronounced name of a major donor on campus. We had to go back in and fix it. I wouldn't have a job if it said the wrong thing. Those things are important. You have to listen to fix them, if you can.

SPEAKER:

Thank you.

SPEAKER:

A question about captioning the 3 to 5 minute YouTube videos. Have you experienced any pushback from people when you ask them to do that at all? If you have, how you did you manage that?

ANNE POTTIER:

I haven't because I know how easy it is to do, and we can point them to a video that shows how easy it is to do it. Have you had much pushback Nancy?

NANCY WAITE:

I have had a few, but then I send them to you. (laughter)

ANNE POTTIER:

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Big stick. It is quite simple. You don't have to know much. There are no technological skills. You have to follow the steps. If you do the steps in the right order, it is easy. I am a perfectionist. You can get a little obsessive about it to make it perfect.

TONY ABRAHAMS:

It is the best example I have seen of a university going from zero to hero in one step. I agree with a lot of the approach in terms of centralising it. I don't think that you would get the economies of scale you actually managed to get if you were pushing this onto individual departments even if they did have a budget. I think the results you have achieved for a \$20,000 budget are extraordinary actually. One thing I wanted to come back to, because it was a question earlier, Anne, that you put on, how you approach lecture captions. We have experience of this in the UK and Australia. Captioning everything is not an option.

The costs of doing that are way too high. What we have experience of that has worked is an approach that is similar to the approach you took with offline captioning, which is set a budget for the semester and then make a decision on what is the most important content to be captioned. That can either be where there is the greatest need based on the cohort immediately or the highest number of students going through that course or where having written access to that content is most important. It can be a technical subject with a large number of students, either with disability or where there is a high cohort of students who speak a language other than English. A lot of international students, for example, that tends to be a high priority. And the other part that is a high priority is where there is either a retiring lecturer or where there is a guest lecturer who comes along and the university does want to hold that content over and make it available as a segment of the course in future semesters. Then it also gets done.

ANNE POTTIER:

That is a good point. Thank you. Definitely the hardest part of what we're doing.

SPEAKER:

Is there any future plan for video description?

ANNE POTTIER:

We have had one request. It is not easy to find people who do that. We found one local supplier in Hamilton. I think our services up until now have done it on an accommodation basis. We are now working more closely with them. All this work is being done in the same place, can

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be submitted using the form or come through there. That is helping us to fund the kind of activities so we know how much we have to develop that.

NANCY WAITE:

And I had a conversation with the assistive technologist last week about coming up with a strategy on a more permanent process. That is something we are working on in the summer.

ANNE POTTIER:

We are creating these one-offs for students and paying a lot of money. We should be keeping the copy in the repository so if another student needs it, we're not doing it over again.

It is time!

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