

## **Captioning and Transcribing of Online AV materials (Section 508 Compliance)**

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Notes from a 4/29/2009 workshop presented by Gaeir Dietrich of the High Tech Center Training Unit (funded by the state chancellor's office to provide support to California Community Colleges)

Gaeir clarified several issues related to Section 508, and one section of her talk covered captioning and transcribing of online AV materials.

Over the years we have had a number of discussions about what online videos need to be captioned and what audio files need to be transcribed.

Generally speaking, videos do need to be captioned and audio files do need to be transcribed when used in an online class or on a school's website. However there are exceptions.

When an video or audio file is a "one off" single use item and there is restricted access to the material, then it does not need to be captioned/transcribed. To give an example, if an instructor recorded a lecture and posted it to his or her Insight online class, and that lecture was only intended to be used that semester, then it would not need to be transcribed.

The reason is that this example meets both conditions:

1. The audio file is for limited use--just the current semester.
2. There is restricted access to the material--only a registered student with a login and password could access it. A member of the public could not access it. All of our online courses meet the definition of restricted access by the way.

Similarly, if a student posted an online video in a class, then it would not need to be captioned because the student will only be in the class for one semester.

However, if the instructor planned to use the same audio file each semester, then it would need to be transcribed. The same is true for any video (either produced by the school or purchased) to be used each semester.

If there is a deaf student in the class, then an accommodation (captioning or sign language) would have to be provided for a required item even if the audio/video file was a "one off" item.

For YouTube type videos (ones we don't buy or have control over), we discussed taking a common sense approach: caption if it is required viewing but do not caption if it is not. And of course please as always give preference to materials that are captioned.

Captioning of a YouTube video might be possible but would require getting permission etc. so I don't recommend relying too much on outside material of that sort. Also keep in mind that if you post to YouTube yourself, you may discover later that you have transferred your copyright to Google (read the agreement to be sure of what your rights are in this regard).

I got the impression from the workshop that Section 508, properly understood, is much more flexible than one might initially think. It is a pretty reasonable approach that focuses on getting vendors to respond to market demand for accessible products and materials. Gaeir may be coming back in the fall and I highly recommend taking this excellent workshop if you can.