



How to Create an Effective Government Video Series

508 Video Accessibility Checklist

1. Captions:

- If the video contains audible content, caption the video.
- Provide concise, accurate captions for each scene. Include:
 - Notable accents (if they provide context to the video's content), irony/inflection of voice, and whispering
 - Laughter
 - Introduction, or unannounced change, of speakers; indicate announcers separately from a speaker or an actor
 - Music and sound effects
 - Indications of any inaudible content
- Consider the video's screen size when writing captions; ensure there is adequate space for the caption content.
- Use an appropriate font and amount of letterspacing (not too tight) for the captions.
- Indicate any foreign words.
- Try not to edit the spoken content.
- Choose the appropriate caption type—open or closed captions. Check with an accessibility specialist for a case-by-case determination for the type of captions needed. Sometimes, but not always, it's preferable to use [closed captions instead of open captions](#), because of the text quality.

2. Audio Description Track

- If the video contains visual elements that must be seen in order to understand the video, an additional soundtrack, called an "[audio description track](#)," is also required. Example: Imagine a video in which a woman walks into the woods. While she's talking on her cell phone, she assures the other party that she'll be able to find her way back from the unfamiliar woods, though she doesn't explain how. However, with each step she takes, she drops breadcrumbs. Later, she's able to find her way out of the woods because of the breadcrumbs. A user who is blind won't know that the woman planned for her return from the woods. Contextual information such as this must be in an additional audio track. These audio tracks can be timed to be heard during pauses in the main audio track.

3. Transcript

- Make a transcript of the video.
 - Include a detailed description of the on screen action, as well as audible content.
 - Describe any screen shots, photographs, meaningful facial expressions, unusual costumes, use of irony, music, and scenery
 - Describe contextual information, such as the scenario described in the [Audio Description Track section](#) above.

4. Video Player / Software

□ Provide a link to download the software needed to play the video. Put the link on the page where the video—or the link to the video—is located.

- **Flash:** <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/otherversions/>
- **iTunes:** <http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/>
- **QuickTime:** <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>
- **RealPlayer:** <http://www.real.com/realplayer>
- **Windows Media Player:** <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/windows-media-player>
- **Other players (including custom built players):** Check with an accessibility specialist to be sure the software is accessible.

NOTE: The software links provided above take into consideration different environments, platforms, and devices—please use these specific URLs, and give the appropriate one to your project's developer.

5. Review

□ Ask an accessibility specialist to review the completed video page. Besides other accessibility requirements, be sure they've reviewed the items below:

- Confirm that the captions are synchronized with each scene.
- Ensure that there is no strobing or flashing content that causes the screen to flicker between 2 and 55 flashes per second.
- Use standard terms for the video player controls (such as pause, stop, rewind, fast forward, etc.).
- Make sure the video player controls are spoken properly by screen readers.
- Check that the video player controls are fully navigable by keyboard and voice recognition software.
- Ensure that the software controls don't interfere with assistive technologies' commands.
- Be sure the video is scalable.

Resources

For more accessibility guidelines for videos, including technical specifications, see: [HowTo.gov's guidance on multimedia, audio files, podcasts, etc.](#); and The National Center for Accessible Media's [Overview of Multimedia Accessibility](#) (this presentation has in-depth information on captioning).

See our complete guide to video content at howto.gov/social-media/video