



Producing Programs and Videos for Viewers with Vision Impairments

If your production company or network would like to create television programs and/or videos for viewers who are either blind or visually impaired, the Descriptive Video Service® (DVS®) can provide the necessary services and information. A nonprofit service of the Media Access Group at WGBH, DVS prepares descriptive narration of key visual elements, making TV programs, feature films, home videos, and other visual media accessible to people with vision loss. Key visual elements are those elements that viewers with visual impairment would ordinarily miss, such as actions, costumes, gestures, facial expressions, scene changes, and onscreen text. Inserted within the natural pauses in dialogue and narration, audible descriptions of important visual details help to engage viewers who are blind or visually impaired with the story.

Should your production schedule or budget prevent you from engaging the services of DVS, there are relatively simple ways to modify your script and soundtrack production process in order to make your visual content more accessible to this growing audience. Regardless of how you choose to produce an accessible TV or video product, you'll increase both its value and viewership significantly by enabling millions of viewers with vision loss to "watch," enjoy, and learn!

Basic Script and Production Tips for Increasing Accessibility

- The narrator's voiceover script should describe all key visual elements necessary for the full understanding of the onscreen presentation.
Visual: people riding bikes
Non-accessible script: "Exercise is good for everyone."
Accessible script: "Exercise, such as riding a bicycle, is good for everyone."
- The voiceover should include all words or text that appears on the screen (chyrons), such as names, titles, dates, and locations.
Visual: Chyron reads "Albert Smith, Curator, Museum of Science" over video of Mr. Smith talking.
Non-accessible script: Cuts to Mr. Smith saying: "When I first saw the Tyrannosaurus Rex..."



Accessible script: “Albert Smith, curator of the Museum of Science, explains his reaction: ‘When I first saw the Tyrannosaurus Rex...’”

- The voiceover should set up and identify the source of significant sounds before they occur, particularly if the source is not clear.

Visual: A girl throws a ball, which hits and knocks down a lamp.

Non-accessible script: sound of a crash without explanation.

Accessible script: “Sara throws a ball, which hits a lamp.” SFX: “Crash!”

- When describing where a person or object is located, or how to do something, the script should use the most specific language possible; vague terms often rely upon additional visual information to be fully understood.

Visual: A man is standing beside a tree, showing how to tie up a horse.

Non-accessible script: “Stand here and tie the rope like this.”

Accessible script: “Stand next to the tree and wrap the rope around the trunk.”

Producing for the Web

The Media Access Group at WGBH has developed a free, do-it-yourself software tool for creating description and captioning for digitized media, such as online education courses and other multimedia with video clips. The Media Access Generator, known as MAGpie, is compatible with both PC and Mac formats. For more information and to download the software, visit ncam.wgbh.org

RESOURCES

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