

8 Benefits of Transcribing & Captioning Online Video

Why should I transcribe and caption my videos?

It's a simple question with so many answers. Here are the top 8 reasons why video transcription and captioning are beneficial for both your organization and your viewers.

1. Accessibility to Deaf or Hard of Hearing Viewers



Closed captions were originally developed to provide an equivalent television viewing experience for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Time-synced text is the best alternative to audio for these viewers, of which there are 48 million in the United States alone.

Quite simply, closed captions allow deaf and hard of hearing viewers to consume your videos, which broadens your audience and demonstrates a commitment to digital inclusion.

2. Protection Against Disability Discrimination Lawsuits



Anti-discrimination laws were enacted to protect the rights of people with disabilities to access the same resources as the rest of the population. Some of those laws require that videos include closed captions so that they are fully accessible.

Closed captioning standards for television and media broadcasts in the US are strictly regulated by the FCC, and the CVAA, passed in 2010, required that media companies caption online video if it aired previously on TV with captions.

More general anti-discrimination legislation like the Americans with Disabilities Act or Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act is open to interpretation: are all universities required to caption their online videos? What about eLearning videos? Or videos by other private organizations?

The debate about how these laws apply to online video captioning is raging in courtrooms across America. Harvard and MIT were recently sued for failing to provide comprehensive captioning for online educational video and audio content.ⁱ Netflix has been the target of two separate lawsuits about captioning — with contradicting rulings.ⁱⁱ

The best way to avoid being roped into this legal battle is to proactively transcribe and caption your videos.

3. Better Comprehension



Video transcriptions and captions can be hugely helpful for online learning.

Ben Labrum, Senior Product Manager for Training On Demand at Oracle, touts the benefits of captioning and transcribing all of Oracle's online training videos:ⁱⁱⁱ

"It's really cognitive reinforcement.... So when you read it and when you hear it at the same time, it helps you remember better.

For example, say we record an instructor in Atlanta, Georgia, and then there's a person in India who's used to a British accent. The student might not follow as well without captions. Captioning and transcripts add additional value."

A study by University of Wisconsin found that

50%

of students used transcripts as study aids

Closed captions can greatly enhance the experience for viewers whose native language is not English. Georgia Tech found that captions helped their many ESL students better understand videos,^{iv} since they can read along while they listen. This improves comprehension, teaches listeners new vocabulary, and reinforces correct spelling.

To see how adding captions and transcripts to media content was impacting the student body, University of Wisconsin-Extension surveyed their Sustainable Management students and found that 50% used the downloadable transcripts as study aids^v. The students appreciated that they could print the text, read along with the media, and highlight important parts as the instructors presented. In fact, much to UW-Extension's chagrin, they found that some students relied solely on the transcripts and didn't even watch the narrated presentations! The downloadable transcripts are so popular that if somehow a presentation slips through the cracks, students alert tech support right away that there's a missing transcript.

Captions help viewers with learning disabilities, autism, and attention deficits to concentrate and absorb the speech more easily.

Watching videos with captions can also help young children improve their literacy. A study by Michigan State University^{vi} concluded that:

Captions are beneficial because they result in greater depth of processing by focusing attention, reinforce the acquisition of vocabulary through multiple modalities, and allow learners to determine meaning through the unpacking of language chunks.

4. Viewability in Sound-Sensitive Environments



With closed captions on, viewers can watch your videos in places where audio is unavailable. This is particularly important as mobile video grows, and viewers are more likely to watch videos on-the-go.

If someone's on a noisy train or on a crowded street, captions will convey the speech when the sound is obscured. Captions also let viewers enjoy videos on mute in quiet environments like a library or office.

5. Increased Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Video Views

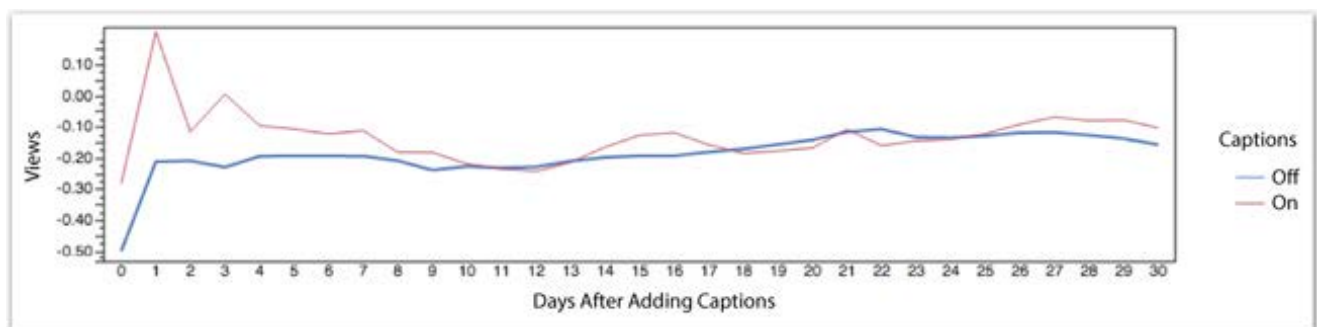
A study with radio show This American Life (TAL)^{vii} proved that adding transcripts boosts SEO for websites that offer video or audio content. The number of unique visitors who discovered TAL through organic search results increased by 6.68%. They also saw a 3.89% increase in inbound links directly attributable to the transcript pages.

Why?

Because transcripts allow search engines to crawl the full text of your file so that it can be properly indexed. Google can't watch your video, but it can read the transcript to understand what it's about.

A separate study by Discovery Digital Networks (DDN)^{viii} showed that YouTube videos with captions had 13.48% more views in the first two weeks and 7.32% more lifetime views, as compared to videos without captions.

See the graph below from the DDN study, showing the initial spike in views for captioned videos:



Another SEO strategy: long transcripts can be paginated and optimized for specific keywords.

+7%

Increase in unique visitors via organic search, once This American Life posted transcripts on website

+4%

Increase in inbound links

6. Video Search and User Experience



Transcripts make your video content vastly more searchable.

Not only can search engines crawl your content and drive traffic to your site, but users can find the videos they're looking for. They can search for a given word within a video, or even scan your whole video library for that keyword using an interactive transcript^{ix}.

Another way to improve user experience is to add an interactive transcript.

An interactive transcript encourages active engagement with the video as it plays, making it easy for the viewer to read along, jump to a specific point in the video, or skip ahead.

In a study by MIT OpenCourseWare,^x 97% of students said interactive transcripts enhanced their learning experience. Results don't get more conclusive than that!

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7. Derivative Content

Market researchers and content creators use recorded video or audio to create clips, reels, and montages, but sifting through that content without the aid of transcripts is a daunting task.

Transcripts are easily scanned and searched for key phrases or topics; direct quotes can be lifted with a simple copy-paste. A tool like [Clipmaker](#) even lets you make video clip reels using the transcript itself. Podcasters can easily create blog posts out of audio transcripts to drive traffic to their website via search.

Even institutes of higher education can harness transcripts for promotion: the University of Wisconsin used transcripts^{xi} from a library of video interviews to create an admissions promo reel.

8. Translation into Foreign Languages



A video transcript is the first step in creating subtitles in foreign languages. With 80% of YouTube views coming from outside the US and 67.5% of YouTube views coming from non-English speaking countries,^{xii} video translation is in demand. Offering subtitles in other languages instantly broadens your appeal to an international audience.

Translated transcripts and captions can also boost SEO for searches performed in other countries.

Ready to Start Captioning?

For high-quality video transcription and captioning services, visit:

www.3playmedia.com

ⁱ <http://www.3playmedia.com/2015/02/12/harvard-mit-sued-captioning-violation-ada-rehabilitation-act/>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.3playmedia.com/2015/04/06/federal-appeals-court-rules-that-ada-does-not-apply-to-netflix-captioning/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.3playmedia.com/2013/05/25/oracle-justifies-captioning-transcription-on-demand-training-video/>

^{iv} <http://www.3playmedia.com/customers/case-studies/georgia-tech/>

^v <http://www.3playmedia.com/customers/case-studies/university-wisconsin/>

^{vi} <http://llt.msu.edu/vol14num1/winkegasssydorenko.pdf>

^{vii} <http://www.3playmedia.com/customers/case-studies/this-american-life/>

^{viii} <http://www.3playmedia.com/customers/case-studies/discovery-digital-networks/>

^{ix} <http://www.3playmedia.com/services-features/plugins/archive-search/>

^x <http://www.3playmedia.com/customers/case-studies/mit-opencourseware/>

^{xi} <http://www.3playmedia.com/how-it-works/video-highlights/#video-tutorial-1/21>

^{xii} <http://www.3playmedia.com/2014/11/10/translating-closed-captions-resources-global-video-seo/>