

Seven Ways You Need To Make Your Course Videos Accessible





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Course videos must be accessible to provide learning opportunities to all students.

Introduction

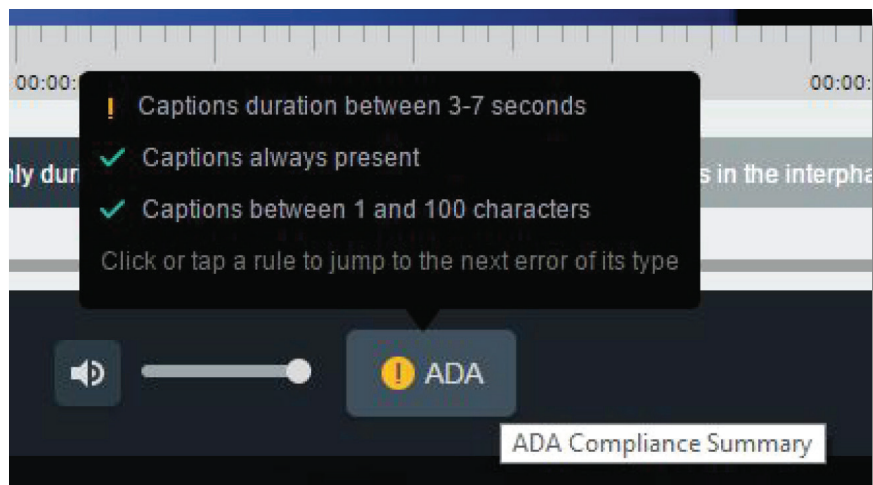
With growing demand for online courses, instructors are incorporating video lessons to give students the flexibility to learn at their own pace, increase engagement, and assess student performance. However, course videos must be accessible to provide learning opportunities to all students.

Accessible content doesn't 'play favorites' but instead makes information available to everyone, including those with disabilities. Providing accommodations to students with disabilities is required by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which was updated in 2018.

One of the major updates includes the incorporation of the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0** and applying Level A and Level AA Success Criteria and Conformance Requirements to websites and electronic documents, with an overall goal to ensure consistency in accessibility across the information and communication technology industry. In order to avoid situations seen at **Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology** for not providing closed captioning for online courses and other educational materials, it's imperative to make sure your course videos meet the latest requirements.

Below are seven ways you need to make your course videos accessible:

Captions allow students with hearing impairments to watch videos.



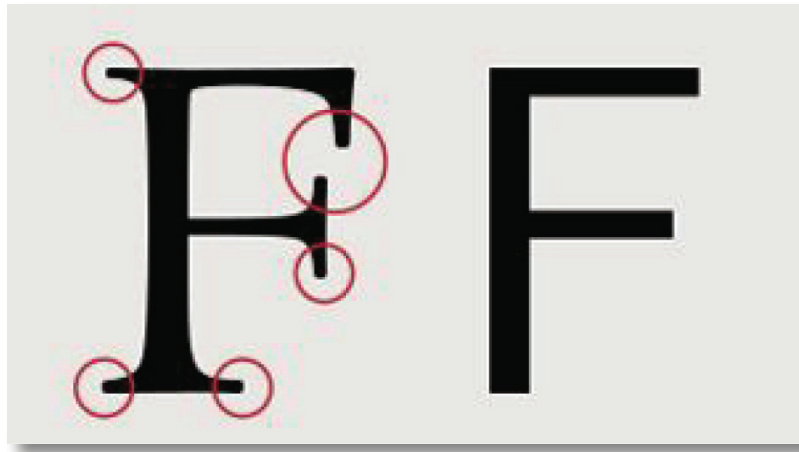
1 Captioning

As one of the most well-known ways to be accessible, **generating captions** allows students with hearing impairments to watch videos and follow along by reading the corresponding captions. Things to consider when captioning your content include the accuracy of speech-to-text capabilities, and whether or not the platform prompts you when captions are not aligned with captioning guidelines. According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, “authoring tools shall provide a mode of operation that prompts authors to create content that conforms to the success criteria for supported features and file formats.” **Non-ADA compliant captions** need to be highlighted so they can be edited, and lectures can be held so they aren’t published until final approval. It is important that captions can be easily viewed in the Learning Management System. Providing a transcript is advisable as well.

2 No Mouse Required

For the video player to be accessible to those with visual impairments, it must be usable by keyboard, not mouse. It must be navigable by a screen-reading device that allows the student to ‘tab’ through options to pause, replay, fast forward, or adjust the volume. This compatibility must include the ability to read words (and images) on the screen and let the viewer choose which buttons to click. Everything image-based must have some form of text associated with it, so that those who are visually impaired know exactly how to interpret the image. Any interactive features or quiz questions must also be compatible with a keyboard and available for a screen reader.

A serif font can make smaller text difficult to read.



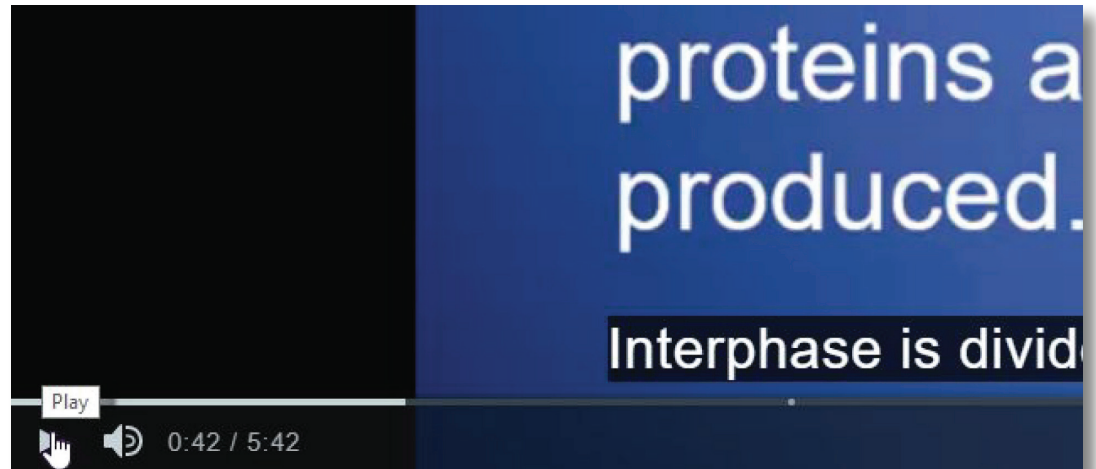
3 Make Sure It Is Readable

It is important to create material that it is easily readable. To keep things simple, ensure there is high contrast between the background and the text – such as white background with black text – so that it is readable to anyone who may be color-blind or have other visual impairments. When choosing a font, avoid **serifs**, as the extra “decoration” of a serif font can make smaller text difficult to read. Choose a sans-serif font instead. In addition to using an appropriate font, when incorporating **links** into content, use descriptive language because it provides information on where the link will take the reader. Avoid using the terms “click here” or “use this link”, but instead describe where the link will lead them. This descriptive language is much more helpful to those using a screen reader.

4 Share the Remote Control

Viewers should be able to have control of the video playback. Avoid making pages that are automatically redirected or videos that are auto-play. Students should have the freedom to learn at their individual pace and within a time frame that is convenient for them. Therefore, make sure viewers can control the video play buttons – the start and stop time, replay, and can also speed up and slow down how fast the video plays.

Incorporate standard navigation terms with practical placement.




5 Make an Audio Version

Converting lectures into a **podcast** can help students who learn through audio. While this is not a requirement, it is recommended to assist those who can not access any visual content.

Creating a podcast is a simple way for students to listen to video lectures or other course videos while multi-tasking. For instance, they can listen to the lecture while driving in the car, doing household chores, or exercising. Once downloaded onto a mobile device, the student has the freedom to listen to the material at their own convenience, while also completing other tasks. Video lectures and reading materials require full attention, which can make engagement difficult. Supplementing lecture materials with podcasts make it easy for students to incorporate the course content into their daily routines.

6 Make It Easy to Navigate

When creating video content, simplicity is key. Make sure that content is easy to find, easy to navigate, and uses commonly-known navigation language and functions. In order to accommodate those using a screen reader, be sure to incorporate standard navigation terms with practical placement. For example, typical website tabs (such as Home, About, Contact Information, etc.) should be named accordingly and at the top of the page, for easy accessibility. Keep player terms simple and clear (such as Play, Rewind, Fast Forward) so the user can easily understand how to navigate through video content.



*Create content
with accessibility
as a priority.*

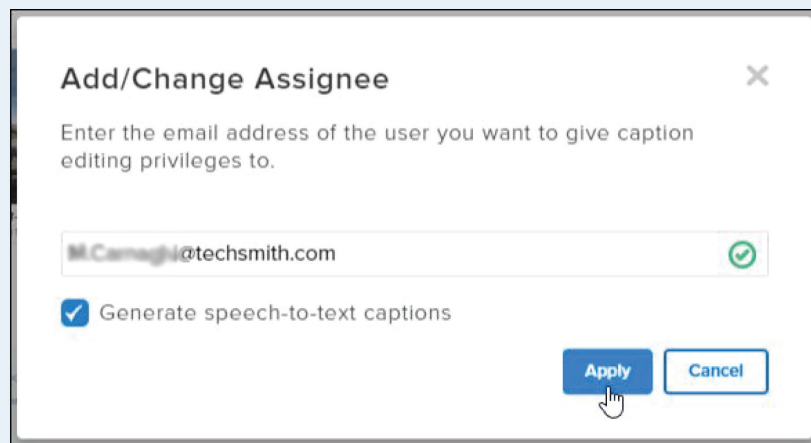
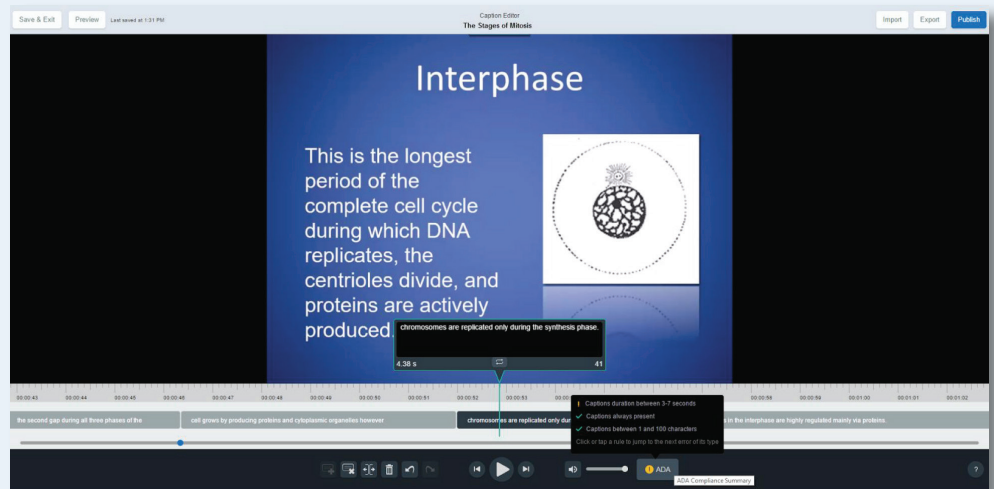
7 Record Videos With Accessibility in Mind

When creating course videos, create content with accessibility as a priority, not an afterthought. When recording lectures, make sure your audio is clear and repeat any questions that were asked in class. If the video content includes you standing in front of the camera, be sure to face the camera head-on, making it easy to read your lips. Any visual aids that are recorded in the video should be described to provide clarity to those who are listening. Be sure to include a keyboard-accessible way to be contacted for office hours, such as email or text. Don't use bright, blinking (strobe-like) content, which can trigger seizures in people prone to photosensitivity.

Where Do I Start?

Accessibility is a process. Begin working with your most current (and most popular) content, then work your way back to older content. It's important to have the proper video creation and capture tools to ensure excellent accessibility. Creating accessible content will help all your students learn in a way that works best for them.

TechSmith's interactive tools help instructors create content that meets ADA and Section 508 guidelines.



How Can TechSmith Relay Help?

Founded in 1987, TechSmith provides screen capture and video editing solutions for online, and blended learning. Techsmith Relay is an easy-to-use educational video platform that helps instructors create content that meets ADA and Section 508 guidelines, including:

- A highly-accurate speech-to-text caption engine.
- A web-based caption editor that highlights captions which may not be compliant, and lets you make corrections easily.
- Ability to assign captioning to faculty, students, or a third-party service.
- A SmartPlayer that is keyboard and assistive technology accessible.

Let's talk and see if TechSmith Relay is a good fit for you.



Learn more about TechSmith Relay

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