CIE DigiGuide: Making asynchronous video recordings accessible

This Guide is focused on making asynchronous video recordings accessible, as part of regulatory requirements and good practice of designing inclusive learning resources for students. Captioning synchronous sessions is covered in another guide. You can also auto-caption existing recordings.

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1. Key terms

- **Asynchronous video recording**: a video recording made before or after a synchronous online session and made available to students in a video format, usually hosted on a streaming server to save bandwidth of students accessing it. Can include a webcam or screen recording, for instance, a narrated PowerPoint presentation.
- **Transcript:** usually a text file including the voiceover in the recorded video.
- **Subtitles/closed captions**: commentary displayed on screen, showing a transcript of spoken words on the video. For the purposes of this guide subtitles and closed captions are treated the same, although there is a difference:
    - *Subtitles:* presumes that the audience can hear the audio.
    - *Closed captions:* presumes that the audience cannot hear the audio, so a description of visual/other elements are also provided, which are necessary for understanding.

2. Why do we need to make videos accessible?

- **It's the law**: for the University, this means that any learning resource which is planned to be used from Sep 2020 with students (on web and in VLE) needs to be accessible; see the '[Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#)' including guidance on materials created before Sep 2020.
- **It's good inclusive practice:** "Accessibility means more than putting things online. It means making your content and design clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things". ([Government Digital Service, 2019](#)) – in other words, the benefits

for specific groups also appear for *all* students (e.g. alternative formats for deaf students will help those who are travelling, in a noisy environment or speak a different language; similarly, audio formats for those with sight problems might benefit those who watch videos using a small screen etc.).

- Recent research on [Student Uses and Perceptions of Closed Captions & Transcripts](#) found that 71% students without hearing difficulty use captions at least some of the time, to aid their learning or in case the audio/video quality has issues etc.

3. How do I make an asynchronous video recording accessible?

The accessibility requirement is to **provide subtitles/closed captions or a transcript of the recording**. However, if you have a concern that these do not convey all the essential information required, you may consider providing additional information (e.g. describing audio for those with auditory impairments, or describing visual information for those with sight problems).

The good news: there are a number of institutionally provided tools for auto-captioning, including Canvas Studio, and also Microsoft Teams, Zoom & PowerPoint (Office 365). For ease of use, we recommend Canvas Studio (see section 3.4).

Below are tips on improving the accessibility of your video, before, during or after the recording.

3.1 Before the recording
- Make a plan and structure your recording (this may include scripting).
- If using a camera or webcam, make sure the camera is well positioned and focused.
- Check audio recording levels before recording started.
- Record in a quiet space with little or no background noise.
- Use a headset/microphone for better sound quality.
- Choose a recording software with auto-captioning (here we focus on using Canvas Studio, but Microsoft Stream, Zoom and PowerPoint/Office 365 also offer auto-captioning).
- Consider making 10-15 minute videos or shorter – students tend not to engage with long videos without interaction.

3.2 During the recording
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Give listeners time to process the information – pause in between topics.
- Use clear language, it is best to avoid acronyms as people with disabilities such as memory difficulties can struggle.
- No background music running throughout the video, even if the music is quiet.
- Avoid using flashes as it can cause seizures.
- Avoid a mixture of static and moving content (e.g. static person against moving background, moving image beside static text), and any quick and unexpected motions (e.g. scrolling or swirling slide transitions) for those with balance issues.
- When using text, consider font type, size, and colour (see CSD's guide on [How to make your content accessible](#)).
- Try to avoid phrases like, as you can see from the chart. Perhaps use, the chart shows (provide in-depth detail).

3.3 After the recording

- Create closed caption or transcript for the audio track (see next section).

3.4 Step-by-step auto-captioning with Canvas Studio.

You have different options, possibly the easiest to use is [Canvas Studio](#).
You can also use the Studio recording tool in Canvas, even if you are not yet using Canvas as a VLE.

1. Open [Canvas Studio in Canvas](#).
2. **Record** screen or video ([Record with webcam](#), or [Record with screen capture](#)).
   a. Edit video, if needed (one you have uploaded the video, it can't be edited).
3. **Save** and upload.
4. Click **View** file.
5. **Request** automated **captions**- see [text-based guide on captions](#) (Canvas) or [video guide on captions](#) (CIE, 3 min).
6. **Review** captions (e.g. correct typos, jargon etc.).
7. Make video available for students:
   a. **Canvas users**: make video available in Canvas – see [embedding Canvas Studio media in a course](#) (Canvas Community guide).
   b. **Non-Canvas/VITAL users**: publish video, then copy link (or embed code) and make it available e.g. in VITAL – see [video guide on copying link or embed code](#) (from 9 mins : 15secs).

To enable captions on the video recording in Canvas Studio,
click the 'cc' icon (see also: this video tutorial on [Hosting and adding captions in Canvas Studio](#)).

More info: check [Canvas Community's set of guidance on Canvas Studio](#).
You can also [record videos directly](#) in a Canvas course.

3.5 Converting captions to a transcript in Canvas Studio

If you want to make a transcript available as a text file, you can do this by downloading the captions file from Canvas Studio and convert it into text format. This presumes that you have already captioned your recording as per section [3.4](#).

The steps include:

1. Log in to **Canvas** (you can still do this even if you are not using Canvas with students yet).
2. Click **Canvas Studio** in the blue left-hand menu (near the bottom).
3. In My Library, click **View** on the video you want.
4. Click **Captions** from under your video timeline.

5. Click on the three dots and click **Download**. This will download a .zip file onto your computer. It is likely to be (on a Windows machine) in your Downloads folder.
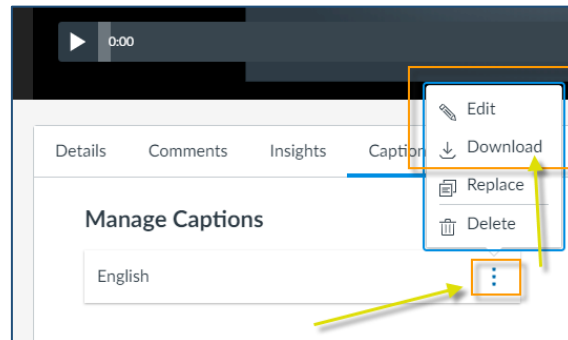
6. Extract your zip file (right click). You will see two .srt files, which were downloaded.

7. Open the 'latest .srt'. This is a timestamped transcript of your video recording.

8. **Select All** your text and Ctrl-C copy to convert this into a text file without the time stamps. You can use freely available software, e.g. ToolSlick. (You can search for these in Google: convert .srt to text.)

9. **Go to**: Toolslick's SRT to TXT Converter page and **Paste** your text into the box, as below.

10. Click **Convert** and your text format will be displayed in the box below:


```
Output: Converted Text
    1   Yes so hello everyone. My name is Tunde Varga-Atkins and
    2   Innovation in Education talking about remote
    3   teaching with four guests and it's very
    4   metafictional because we're trying to also record
    5   this remotely obviously in the current
    6   circumstances. So perhaps can I ask my guests to
    7   introduce yourselves? What subject you're from,
    8   perhaps summarize your re remote teaching
    9   situation in as much or as little detail as you
   10   want and then also perhaps about the kind of
   11   teaching that you normally do. So can we stop it
   12   or not perhaps because you're on my screen first.
   13   OK. Hi I'm Anna O'Connor. I teach in the School
   14   of Health Sciences. I teach orthoptics. In simple
```

11. Optional: you can then use another tool to remove the line breaks if needed (e.g. Textfixer's Line Break Removal Tool page)
12. Copy and paste the resulting text into Word or whatever format you want to upload to the VLE for your students.

3.6 Other options for captioning (MS Teams and Zoom)

Above, we have given Canvas Studio as one of the easiest, simplest option for auto-captioning. Below are some alternatives, including Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

So, when to use which? Consider if they provide captions in the language of your choice? Usage statistics? A search function to locate a particular segment? Shareable link externally to @LivUni?

This is not an exhaustive guide, if you need to weigh up different considerations with respect to using these in education, do contact us at cie@liverpool.ac.uk.

3.6.1 Microsoft Teams

Note: Microsoft Stream (or MS Stream) is part of our Office365 service. This is different from our previous university's streaming server (stream.liv.ac.uk - no longer used) and lecture capture system Panopto.

Steps:
1. Log in to Microsoft Stream or via office.com (uni account).
2. **Upload** your video to MS Stream or use an existing recording there.
3. Follow the guide on Captioning video recordings in Microsoft Stream (or CIE video tutorial: Hosting and adding captions in Microsoft Stream).
4. Alternatively, you can use MS Stream to create a **new screen recording** (max 15 mins).
    a. Then, click **Upload to MS Stream**, select the Language, e.g. English, then **Publish**.
5. **Canvas/VITAL users**: create an item using the embed code from MS Stream. View Embed Microsoft Stream videos in other apps.

3.6.2 Zoom

Although Zoom is mainly for holding live webinars, which can be auto-captioned synchronously, during the meeting, the principle is the same for creating captioned, asynchronous video recordings with Zoom. You basically schedule a synchronous session

recording yourself and/or your screen and enable auto-captioning. At the end, Zoom allows you to download the media file, as well as a separate transcript and timestamped caption file, which can be edited. For more information, see the Zoom Help Center, Using closed captioning section.

3.7 Auto-captioning already existing video recordings

The following steps use Canvas Studio (although you can use any of the other alternatives):

1. **Download** your original media recording (e.g. mp4).
2. **F**ollow the steps in 3.4, captioning using Canvas Studio, but choose **Upload media** in Step 2, instead of recording new media.

4 Further links and resources

- @LivUni Disability team's guidance on subtitles and close captions.
- Accessible document and resource formats (@LivUni Disability Team).
- JISC's useful guidance on 'Accessibility regulations -- what you need to know'.
- See also: accessible text, images and video (Derby University) .
- More on the principles making video accessible, see LexDis advice and Kent's guide.
- See also: Accessibility in Canvas.