

EXPAND YOUR REACH. EXPAND YOUR AUDIENCE. EXPAND YOUR IMPACT.

Descriptive Narration for TV, Films and Web-based Video



The Lion King courtesy Walt Disney Studios

To hear samples of DVS online double click on the pictures.



2009 Presidential Inaugural



A&E's *Touch the Top of the World*

"My first experience with DVS was very emotional. I found myself pacing the floor in tearful disbelief. It was like somebody had opened a door into a new world, in which I was able to see with my ears what most people see with their eyes."

Jane Morin, Auburn, MA

What do *The Simpsons* on Fox, *Frontline* on PBS and CBS's *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* all have in common? Other than being "appointment viewing" each week for millions of television fans, they are also described by WGBH's Media Access Group for people who are blind or have low vision. WGBH, Boston's public media outlet, developed description for television in the late '80s, after pioneering captioning for television in the early '70s.

What is Descriptive Video Service® or DVS®?

Descriptive Video Service provides descriptive narration of key visual elements for television programs, feature films, DVDs and other forms of media to make them accessible to the nation's 12 million viewers who are blind or have low vision. Key visual elements include the characters' actions, costumes, facial expressions, as well as scene changes and on-screen text. Narration of these elements is carefully woven into the soundtrack of the program or film, so that the finished, accessible version is a seamless mix of program audio and descriptive narration.

How is DVS produced?

A carefully written script is prepared by a describer trained to impart crucial visual information based on the length of the pause in dialogue. WGBH created special software that times pauses in a program's dialogue, allowing describers to write to the time available. We take special care not to talk over the soundtrack. Sometimes there are just a few seconds to relay important information; sometimes (as in the case of *2001: A Space Odyssey*) there is a lot of time to convey the many visual aspects on the screen. Once the description script is polished and edited, professional narrators record the description track.

How does a viewer receive DVS?

In analog television, description is provided via the Second Audio Program, or SAP feature of stereo-equipped TVs or DTV converter boxes. In digital or satellite television, description is distributed via an alternate audio channel accessible by the remote control or set-top box.

Description is also available in more than 350 first-run and specialty theaters in the U.S. and Canada equipped with WGBH's Motion Picture Access® or MoPix® systems. In theaters, patrons listen to descriptive narration via headsets, while the movie's soundtrack comes through the auditorium speakers. A full list of equipped theaters, as well as current and "coming soon" described movies, can be found at www.mopix.org.

Descriptive narration can also be provided for Web-based video, and we anticipate this will be a growing market in the years ahead (especially for government-funded media). Not only is description helpful for viewers who have trouble seeing the screen, when the description text is combined with caption text, producers and distributors provide an unbeatable resource for search-engine optimization.

How to get started...

If you're interested in hearing more about description, give the Media Access Group a call or send us an e-mail. We can provide an estimate of the time and cost involved. We've described everything from 60-second ads, to music videos from Stevie Wonder, to major network programs, museum installations and even the last four presidential inaugurations (live!). Once your project has been described, we can help get the word out through our vast network of description fans—individuals as well as national and state organizations serving people who are blind or have low vision.



Descriptive Video Symbol

This universal symbol was originally created as a logotype for The Descriptive Video Service® (DVS®). DVS is now part of the Media Access Group at WGBH. Today, media carrying this mark (now publicly available via a Creative Commons license) informs its audience that its content is described for the blind or visually impaired.

Media Access Group at

WHY WORK WITH US?

On-air, online or on the go—wherever your content needs to be, the Media Access Group at WGBH can take it there. We pioneered captioning for television in 1972, and we've been leading the way in making media accessible ever since. We combine the most current thinking and technology with the most flexible and efficient production and delivery processes to guarantee that your project will be delivered on time and on budget.

Members of our expert bi-coastal staff are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When you call one of our full-service offices in Boston or Los Angeles, you'll speak with a live person who will attend to your project needs immediately. You will receive a clearly written summary of the services we will provide, along with all associated costs.

GET STARTED

To learn more about Web captioning, subtitling, description and other services offered by the Media Access Group at WGBH, contact us:

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