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Disability Inclusion Task Team



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Accessible Audiovisual Content

Rationale

Persons with disabilities are the largest minority group in the world, representing an estimated 16 percent of the world's population, or approximately 1.3 billion people. About 80 percent are of working age. They are a diverse, heterogeneous population that face discrimination and barriers that makes it more challenging for them to access equal opportunities. Mainstreaming disability inclusion means a consistent and systematic approach to disability inclusion in all areas of operations and programming. Considering that media tools have an important place in our lives, providing accurate and accessible media content for persons with disabilities should be prioritized while preparing audiovisual content. For this reason, this checklist has been prepared to easily guide accessibility and disability inclusion efforts in our daily work and to be used while preparing accessible audiovisual content.

Key terminology and definitions

Accessibility: The degree to which both the built environment and information can be used or accessed by as wide a group of people as possible. Accessibility is a precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society. Without access to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communication, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or



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provided to the public, persons with disabilities would not have equal opportunities for participation in their respective societies¹.

Assistive technology: Any information and communications technology, product, device, equipment, and related service used to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with specific needs or disabilities².

Persons with disabilities: Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others³.

Reasonable accommodation: Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms⁴.

¹ General Comment No. 2 - Article 9: Accessibility.

² ICT & Digital Accessibility for the BOS, 2021.

³ CRPD, Article 1 – Purpose.

⁴ CRPD, Article 2 – Definitions.



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Universal design: The design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design⁵.

Standards and actions around implementing each thematic issue

Forms of image descriptions

Alt-text, or Alternative text

- Used for simple images.
- Offers textual description of images. This text is visually hidden but when a blind or visually impaired reader encounters an image while using their screen reader, the alt-text will be read aloud.
- Alt-text should be short and concise, yet descriptive.

Long Image Description

- Used with complex images such as charts, graphs, maps, and diagrams
- Is a detailed text description of an image that can be several paragraphs long
- May contain other elements, such as tables and lists.

⁵ CRPD, Article 2 – Definitions.



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Caption

- Is a component of an image that provides additional information about the photo.
- It may describe the image briefly and/or give contextual information about the source of the image.
- It does not usually describe the image in great detail but instead, works in conjunction with the image.
- When it comes to accessibility, captions are optional, but image descriptions are not.

Decorative images

- These are graphics whose purpose is to enhance visual appearance and do not convey any meaningful information.
- They often do not need to be described.
- Exceptions include images like logos that might be important and give contextual information to readers.

Guidelines for writing image descriptions

Clear structure

- ✓ Write descriptions with a clear structure (go from the general to the specific, provide an overview of the image before you describe specific details)
- ✓ Break the image up into component parts and organize them so that the description makes logical sense.

What to include?



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- ✓ Imagine yourself describing this image to a person with visual impairment:
 - ✓ general overview of the scene in front of you;
 - ✓ where is it taking place;
 - ✓ who is present;
 - ✓ what actions are being implemented;
 - ✓ how and when.
- ✓ Choosing what to include in the image description depends on "Will the user be able to perceive the content without this image?"

Charts and Graphs

- ✓ Start by providing an overview and give information about the type of visualization
 - ✓ The labels on the axes
 - ✓ The number of lines
- ✓ Get into the details by describing the shape of particular lines.

Guidelines for writing video captions (or closed captions)

- ✓ Not only represents audio content in a textual format but also includes audio information such as music, different sound



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effects, or a textual representation of any audio information that is essential to the perception of the content.

- ✓ Not every sound can be captioned, only key sound effects, music, and singing that is key to perceiving the content
- ✓ Single captions may be packed with implied meanings.
- ✓ Use present tense
- ✓ Keep your sentences short
- ✓ Identify speakers and medium of speech (radio, television, phone)
- ✓ Place sound effects or music between brackets
- ✓ Use Inclusive Language: Be mindful of using nondiscriminatory, culturally inclusive language.
- ✓ Automatic live captions in online meeting platforms: Online meeting platforms provide the ability to use automated or manual captioning services
- ✓ Sign language interpretation to videos: Can be provided in a box on the side of the screen.

Guidelines for adding sign language interpretation to videos

Filming of the Video



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- ✓ Make sure to spare a space at the bottom right corner of the video when filming a video.
- ✓ Use horizontal videos instead of vertical videos. This would allow more space for sign language and subtitles.

Filming of Sign Language Interpretation - General

- ✓ Add sign language in the official national language of the country or the language of the main target audience of the video (for example, if the video is targeting Syrian refugee in Türkiye, then sign language interpretation should be in Arabic sign language).
- ✓ If possible, add sign language interpretation in the different languages of the video.
- ✓ Translate (if needed), share the script and the final draft video at least two days before the filming of sign language interpretation.
- ✓ Avoid using busy background, a plain background for the interpreter -blue chroma is commonly used.
- ✓ The background should also contrast the skin tone and the clothing of the interpreter. Lighting has a large part to play in this.
- ✓ Maintain a reasonable distance (less than 2 meters) when filming the interpreter, hand signing as well as lip movements and facial expressions should be clear.
- ✓ The camera should be at eye level, so the narrator is directly signing to the person who is watching the video.



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- ✓ The camera should not be moved; it should remain in the same position.
- ✓ If possible, it is best to disable automatic focusing as it reduces the filming quality, and to use manual focusing on the face. Either a manual zoom should be used, or the camera should be placed at the correct distance.
- ✓ The signs should not be cut off by the camera; the narrator signing upwards, downwards and to the sides must be visible.

Filming the Video – Instructions to the Interpreter

- ✓ Ask the interpreter to wear plain clothes of a color which contrasts with their skin color, especially if you are using picture-in-picture.
- ✓ Indicate the space the signer can use before starting to film.
- ✓ Mark the correct position of the narrator on the floor.

Filming of Sign Language Interpretation - Lighting

- ✓ Pay attention to the shadows from the screen or from the presenter, which should be kept to a minimum.
- ✓ The light should be sufficient to generate contrast between the screen and the narrator.
- ✓ Making the most of natural light is recommended, while paying attention to the shadows that may appear.



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Editing and Broadcasting

- ✓ The sign language interpreter should appear on the screen at a sufficient size and resolution to enable viewers at normal viewing distances to clearly see and accurately recognize all movements and facial expressions.
- ✓ Make sure that the interpreter appears on the screen at a sufficient size and resolution to enable viewers at normal viewing distances to clearly see and accurately recognize all movements and facial expressions.
- ✓ Test if sign language is synchronized with the audio track and if it accurately reflects the audio.
- ✓ During the video broadcast, ensure that subtitles do not conflict or cover the interpreter.
- ✓ Test the video with persons with hearing impairments to get their feedback before releasing it.

Audio Description

Types of Audio Description

- **Standard audio description:** audio information that is inserted in the gaps between dialogues or voiceover, using natural pauses
- **Extended audio description:** detailed audio description that is inserted within the audio track, with inserted audio content, added to the original audio track (adding audio content to the natural pauses in the dialogue or voice-over). It is often used



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when the visual content description cannot be inserted in the normal gaps between dialogue

- **Elements in audio description production:** Audio description script and Audio description narration.

Guidelines for writing audio descriptions

- ✓ **From the general to the specific:** describe the general scene, then who are the person's involved, what they are doing, and when.
- ✓ Include only the necessary details that are significant to perceive the content.
- ✓ Avoid mentioning unnecessary details like clothing colors or style, unless it is necessary to perceive the content.
- ✓ Describe facial expressions rather than interpreting feelings: the young lady smiles; the man rolls his eyes
- ✓ Use adverbs to add an extra description layer to the verb: The child walks out of the room.

Useful resources, links, and guidance on disability inclusion

- [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy - Putting Words into Action, UNSSC Blueline Course \(only available for UN staff\)](#)
- [United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy](#)
- [UN Training Package on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)



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Useful resources, links, and guidance

- [All About Audio Description](#)
- [Accessible Publishing](#)
- [Image Description Guidelines - DIAGRAM Centre](#)
- [Closed Captioning & Everything You Need to Know About It | 3Play Media](#)
- [Captioning Guidelines - Talking Type Captions](#)
- [Disability-Inclusive Communications Guidelines](#)