



Ealing, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018

To: Rogers Media Inc.  
Re: the process of creating Described Video

Further to our conversations concerning Described Video production processes, I'm happy to provide the following background information.

Described Video is a creative process – it's not an audio form of captioning, where the captioner is simply transcribing dialogue with pointers as to music and sound effects. DV begins creatively with a blank page, and there are many decisions to be made - from understanding what is the most important thing to describe at any given moment, through considerations of tone and language, to the technical aspects of how describe them within the time constraints of the gaps in dialogue available.

Overall, our productivity target is 8:1 for DV – made up of 6:1 scripting and 2:1 voicing; in our experience analysing the programme and writing the script has always taken typically three times the duration of the recording sessions – which themselves are twice as long as the content itself. As an illustration, this would indicate that an average 30 minute show would take 180 minutes to script, and 60 minutes to record; a 60 minute show would take 360 minutes to script and 120 minutes to record. This does not include any administration linked to allocation of the tasks, retrieval of the media, customer engagement, generating the delivery formats etc.

Not all shows are average; dramas and nature documentaries will require the greatest volumes of DV effort, as long silent sections (whilst a fully sighted viewer is able to follow the action on screen) may require the development of complex descriptive sections, or careful scripting to avoid the DV audience missing out on key developments in a crime drama. The production process for this kind of content will be much more involved and will take far longer as a result.

For late delivered captioning workflows we can split a show amongst a number of captioners, and then they can caption their sections in parallel; this enables us to caption an hour-long show in considerably less than one hour. Writing descriptions is a more creative process, and for the majority of shows it is not feasible for many scripters to contribute to a single script; therefore it is usually preferable for one person to script the programme right through, rather than reducing time by having several people sharing it. This is because DV relies on:

- the identification of characters at certain stages by name, depending on when that is most relevant for the story



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- identifying the most relevant things to describe at any stage and sometimes going back to alter previous descriptions if something is found to be more important later in the drama
- not wasting valuable 'DV time' by repeating descriptions of someone/something that's already been described earlier. Shows are not created with a DV soundtrack in mind; this leaves unpredictable and often brief gaps for descriptions, requiring a very succinct use of language and absolute focus on the overall narrative

Similarly it is important to achieve continuity of description across a drama series – to ensure that the listening experience mirrors the viewing experience, building on information presented in previous scenes and avoiding jarring changes in tone, language or naming approaches.

We understand that late deliveries and short turn-arounds are all part of the nature of TV production, and as a result there may always be some programmes that need to be described at the last minute – but to ensure a consistent and meaningful end product for the Blind and partially-sighted audience it should be avoided as a regular procedure for a series, especially for drama.

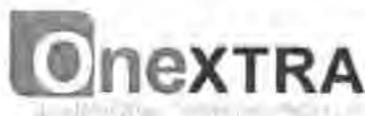
Documentaries may be more amenable for fast turnaround as they will tend to have fewer descriptions, typically as a result of fewer gaps in dialogue or narration, and will be more likely to be standalone episodes – where continuity of description is less important. It would always be our preference to receive material well in advance of delivery – whilst this may not change the overall production effort required for delivery, it does enable us to provide optimal descriptions for the target audience.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Simpson".

**Matt Simpson**  
Head of Portfolio, Access Services





October 19, 2018

To: Bell Media

Re: Descriptive Video (DV) – Production Process

Our industry has been changing and technology advancements have made their marks on producing closed captioning and subtitling files, shortening some parts of the processes as AI (artificial intelligence) making inroads. The same is not necessarily true for Descriptive Video creation, not as effectively anyways.

Descriptive video production is a creative process, requiring highly trained and experienced team to deliver quality final DV tracks. The common misconception is that media accessibility projects are just the same as captioning – quick transcription process and a timing / editing step to complete an scc file for broadcast. Off-line captioning is typically a 4:1 process for most cases or faster. Write what you hear, verbatim, no creativity required.

To create a DV file, the first step is to select the writer best suited for the genre requiring DV. For example, DV creation for documentaries and drama will require the most time spent. Documentaries with long silent (music only) periods in the film, will challenge the DV script writers the most. The goal for a well prepared DV script is to help the visually impaired person to experience the film as it was meant to be for the sighted audience.

DV should allow the target audience to follow the plot and enjoy the visual experiences communicated in the film.

This takes talent and lots of time on the writers' part to write a good script. This is where creative writing is so important.

Documentaries and dramas average a 9:1 ratio and other genres will require on average 7:1 ratio to produce a DV file. 85% of the required time is allocated to script writing.

So, a one hour documentary will take full shift of 8hrs to write and approximately 1.5hrs to record and mix at the end, and so on.

Our writers follow the Canadian Best Practice Guide for off-line VD production for broadcast. They will review every video before start writing to best position each and every description added to the mix. Films are not created with DV in mind... this makes it extra challenging for the writers to fit their work in the time-gaps allowed for description. So the writers are challenged to not only best describe the scene but also to best describe it in as few words as possible without losing the meaning of their message (takes time).

Another very important point is continuity: it is as important for DV as it is for the show itself. It is strongly recommended to keep television series with the same writers and voice-over talents (logistics). The writer will know what he/she had described and how approached



creatively the plot in previous episodes. This helps the user to adopt to the DV style being used. It is equally important to use the same voice talents. The user will learn and recognize the DV voice and have a better experience enjoying these shows.

Not all DV files are created equal. While the industry is under tremendous time and cost pressure to deliver DV on time, at the lowest cost, this pushes producers to start “cutting corners” and try to be “inventive” in the production process to reduce time used to produce a DV file. Most looks at the obvious: try skipping an actual script and just “improvise” on-the-fly with little stopping and rewinding. Others will attempt to use a “AI voice” to read the script, rather than a live person... These approaches hit only one target...and that is low cost, while completely missing the original purpose of why this is being done the first place. DV is created to serve, help and allow the visually challenged or impaired segment of the population to have a fuller life by not limiting their abilities to consume television programming and equally be informed through televisions as the sighted part of society.

In conclusion, DV production takes time, creative writing is not a process that can be automated or rushed. Continuity is paramount for DV production for both writers and voice talents for the sake of DV consumers. To rush and press for incredibly short turnaround times for DV creation equals to reduction in DV quality delivered which equals to not fulfilling the original purpose of Described Video.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabor Zoltan', is written over the typed name.

Gabor Zoltan  
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