

*Working to Section 508:
Hearing Web Pages*



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Section 508: Its Purpose and Reach

Purpose

The fundamental purpose of Section 508 § 1194.22 is to make all information presented on Federal web sites available to everyone, including those with disabilities.

Reach

The law applies to all Federal agencies when they develop, purchase, maintain, or use electronic and information technology.

Section 508: Private Web Sites are Exempt

Section 508 standards apply to a private sector web site **ONLY** when a sponsor is under contract to a Federal agency.

Why Bother Creating Accessible Web Sites?



Benefits

- Increased market share
- Easy transmission of data
- Browser compatibility
- ADA laws:
Increasingly relevant to private web sites

Why Bother?
Because It's the Right Thing to Do



This is what audio sounds like to people with a severe, high frequency hearing loss.



Sound

Section 508: Hearing Disability Standards

Section 508 § 1194.22 lists 16 standards to ensure that people with disabilities can access information on the web. Only 2 of these standards refer to hearing disabilities:

Standards A and B

Standards A and B



Standard A

A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided.

Standard B

Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.

Current Interpretations of Standards A and B

- Audio material: Requires a written transcript.
- Multimedia: (A video of a presentation) Requires synchronized captions.
- Live web casts: (Live streaming video) Requires synchronized captions.
- Live audio: Does not require captions as explicitly stated; however, without captions, those with hearing loss can't access the information at the same time as others.

Accessibility is Essential



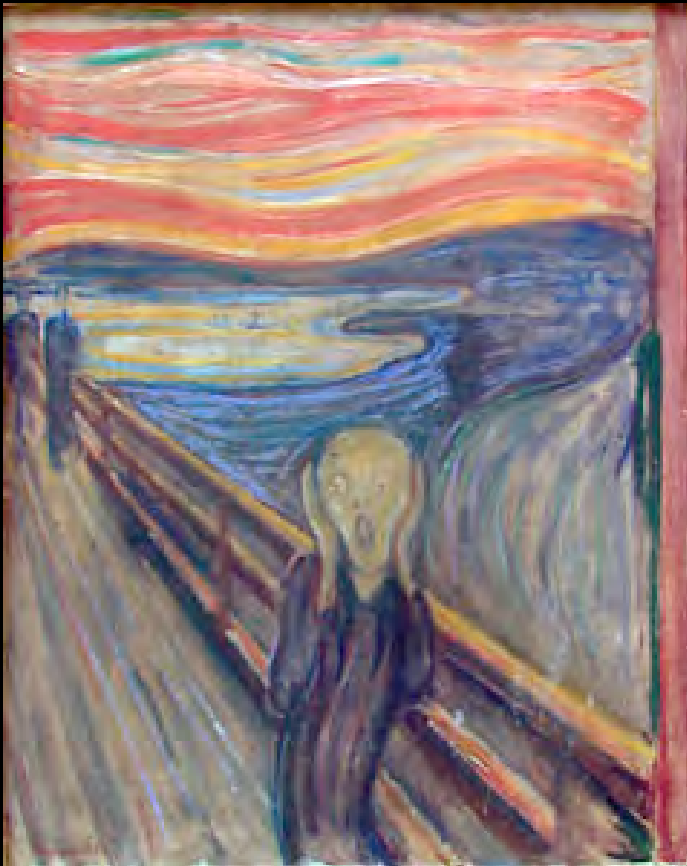
- Web accessibility for people with hearing loss means being able to access the audio via captions or transcripts.
- Web accessibility is the goal when following Section 508 and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Accessibility Plus Usability is Delightful!

- Web usability for people with hearing loss means being able to access the information easily.
- Web usability is only ensured when web designers hear and respond to our silent screams.

Silent Scream #1

No Captions or Transcripts

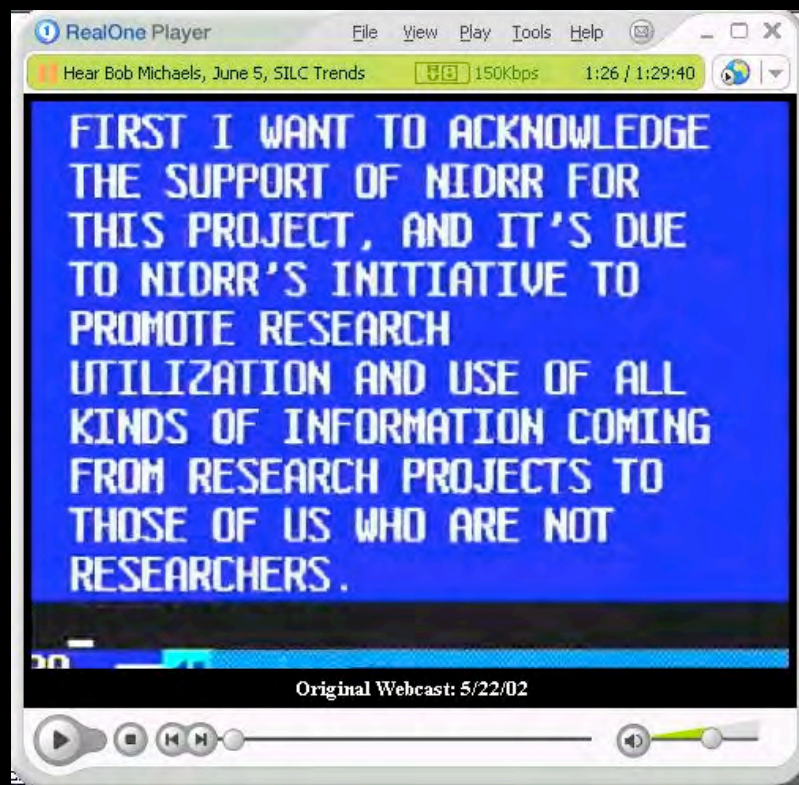


Most web sites do not have captions or transcripts!

This makes the site totally inaccessible to people with hearing loss.

Silent Scream #2

Hard-to-read Captions



Words typed in all caps are difficult to read because they lack the upper and lower case extenders (g, h, y,) that provide visual cues.

Dare we complain? At least the captions are there!

<http://www.ilru.org/online/archive/2002/sb05-22-02.html>

Silent Scream #3

Where's the Captions Button?



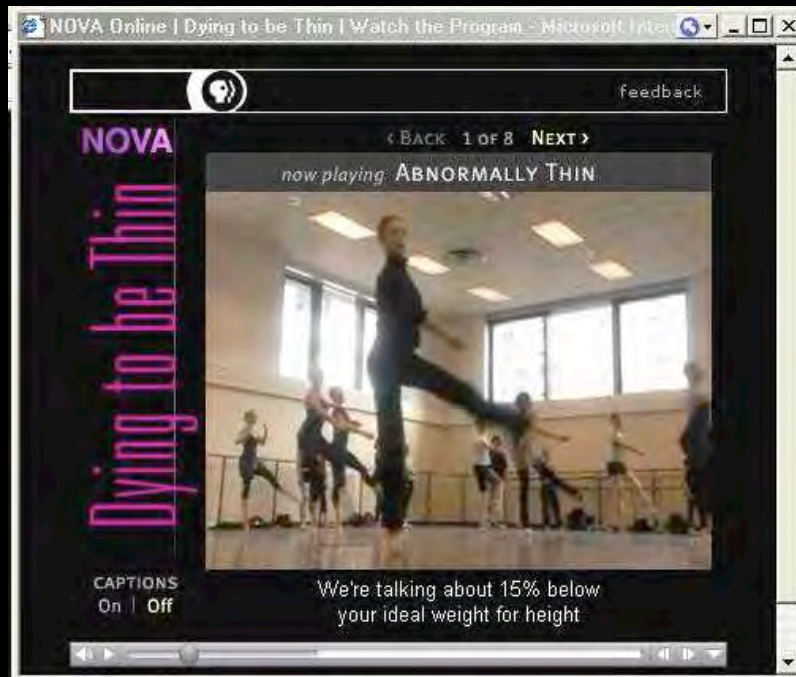
The captions button is buried in the toolbar:

View menu>Preferences>Content>Accessibility.

You'll miss the program as you hunt for the captions button.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/thin/program.html>

Here's the Captions Button!



<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/thin/program.html>

The author created a visible button to turn captions on and off.

This can be done in any player, but the author's task is to script it.

Silent Scream #4

What Happened to the Captions?



The captions in this video suddenly go off even though the narrator continues speaking.

The problem? The captions turn off as the narrator describes the scene for those with low vision. People with hearing loss think the captions are malfunctioning.

<http://www.abletv.net/>

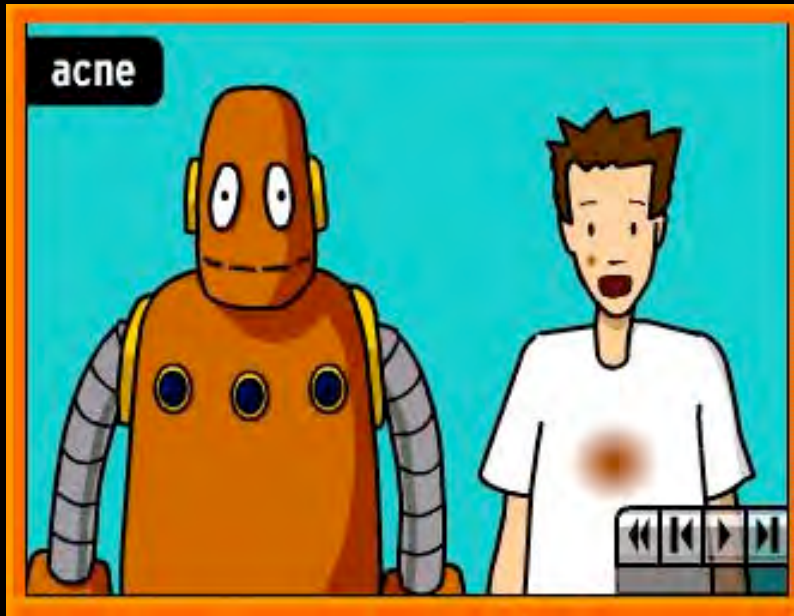
Easy Solution: Add Explanatory Captions



Provide captions that say “narrator describes scene” so that people with hearing loss don’t think they are missing parts of the presentation.

<http://www.abletv.net/>

Multimedia: A Powerful but Inaccessible Educational Tool



Multimedia may well be the most powerful educational tool yet invented.

Children and adults can best access this tool when synchronized captions are provided with multimedia.

<http://www.brainpop.com/health/endocrine/acne/captioned.weml>

Captions: Not Just For People With a Hearing Loss

People

- Can learn better when both senses (hearing and seeing) are engaged.
- Can listen without disturbing co-workers or family members.
- Can more easily learn English as a second language.
- Can easily improve their vocabulary, grammar, and spelling skills.
- Can hear better in noisy public places

Making a Difference



A small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

Resources

URLs

Section 508 government site has a wealth of info about Section 508:

<http://www.section508.gov>

The National Cancer Institute's 508 Multimedia Tutorial:

<http://oc.nci.nih.gov/web508/tut-b.html>

The Accessibility Forum tests tools that detect Section 508 violations:

http://www.accessibilityforum.org/docs/feb_mtg_02/af-denver-cdrom_feb02/index.htm

Section 508.com clearly and briefly defines Section 508's purpose and reach: <http://www.section508.com/about>

Williamette Galley article about the benefits of creating accessible web sites: http://www.stcwvc.org/galley/0303/C01a_Online_1of3.htm

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