
**Information technology — User
interface component accessibility —
Part 23:
Visual presentation of audio
information (including captions and
subtitles)**

*Technologies de l'information — Accessibilité du composant interface
utilisateur —*

Partie 23: Présentation visuelle d'informations sonores

ISO/IEC 20071-23:2018

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Published in Switzerland

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work. In the field of information technology, ISO and IEC have established a joint technical committee, ISO/IEC JTC 1.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 35, *User interfaces*.

A list of all parts in the ISO/IEC 20071 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

Captions and/or subtitles for audio content provide visual alternatives for audio information in audiovisual content. This document provides requirements and recommendations on the production and design of the visual presentation of audio information (including captions and subtitles) that supports users who cannot make use of the audio content.

The use of this document helps to support universal and inclusive media content production practices. It provides guidance for producers, exhibitors, or distributors of audio content (including the medium of distribution and the medium of delivery) to support the accessibility and usability of visual alternatives of audio content.

Different jurisdictions have different expectations of what belongs in a caption or a subtitle. From the point of view of the user, what is important is receiving the information in an accessible design, not the technological means of its delivery. This information can include text conveying speech, sound information, verbatim transcription of the spoken word content, translations of the spoken word content, etc. This document uses “visual presentations of audio information” to include all audio information needed to be made accessible for some users.

Standardized guidance for producing visual presentations of audio information is important to meet a variety of needs. For example, it is important to recognize acceptable values for specifying typography variables such as the letter size and/or number of characters in visual alternatives that rely on text.

Providing visual presentations of audio information (including captions and subtitles) can be beneficial to all, and in particular to diverse users who cannot hear or understand the audio content in diverse contexts, including: persons with hearing loss, persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, persons with learning difficulties or cognitive disabilities, persons watching a movie in a non-native language, persons who need the content to be in another language, persons who cannot hear the audio content due to environmental conditions, or circumstances where the sound is not accessible (e.g. noisy surroundings), the sound is not available (e.g. muted, no working speakers), or the sound is not appropriate (e.g. a quiet library). Although this guidance acknowledges the need of visual presentations of audio information to provide non-visual presentations for diverse users, it does not include guidance for producing non-visual presentations, such as spoken captions/subtitles (see ISO/IEC TS 20071-25 for further reference) and tactile displays (e.g. Braille). The production, delivery, and exhibition of visual presentations of audio information based on this standard are not intended to interfere with or change the meaning of the audio content.

The production, delivery and exhibition of visual presentations of audio information vary according to the time and methodology of production, the technology used for its production, the system of delivery, and the display (including the brand and model of the display).

Information technology — User interface component accessibility —

Part 23: Visual presentation of audio information (including captions and subtitles)

1 Scope

This document provides guidance for producers, exhibitors, and distributors on the visual presentation of alternatives to audio information in audiovisual content, such as captions/subtitles.

This document provides requirements and recommendations that are intended to support users who are not able to use the audio information, prefer to use a visual representation of audio information, or prefer both audio and visual presentations.

NOTE Many users do not have a choice, for instance, when in a noisy environment (e.g. bar, restaurant, etc.). In these situations, the user does not select a visual presentation of audio information but is offered the content with captions/subtitles.

This document acknowledges the various needs and preferences of viewers (end users) as well as the different approaches to visual presentation of audio information. It applies to all presentations of visual alternatives to audio information intended to be presented as captions/subtitles.

This document does not apply to the presentation devices or transmission mechanisms used to deliver the content or visual presentations of audio information. These devices could include, but are not limited to: televisions, computers, wireless devices, projection equipment, DVD and home cinema equipment, video game consoles, and other forms of user interfaces technology. This document does not apply to transcoding files and formats for the various video outputs.

This document gives guidance on visual presentations which are delivered in the same language as in the audio (i.e., intra-lingual captions/subtitles) and visual presentations which are translated into a different language (i.e., inter-lingual captions/subtitles). This document does not apply to the specific process of language translation.

This document helps to improve accessibility. This document does not establish requirements on specific industries (e.g. television broadcasting, motion pictures) nor is it intended to supersede specific international standards within their domain.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>

3.1 information

knowledge concerning objects, such as facts, events, things, processes, or ideas, including concepts, that within a certain context has a particular meaning

Note 1 to entry: Although information will necessarily have a representation form to make it communicable, it is the interpretation of this representation (the meaning) that is relevant in the first place.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 2382:2015, 2121271]

3.2 content

interactive or non-interactive object containing information represented by text, image, video, sound, or other media

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 23026:2015, 4.6]

3.3 caption/subtitle

transcription or translation of audio content, visually presented together with the content

Note 1 to entry: Transcriptions or translations include speech and/or non-speech information.

Note 2 to entry: Transcriptions or translations are often suitable for use as an alternative or a complement to the audio content.

3.4 open caption open subtitle

caption/subtitle visually presented regardless of user preference

Note 1 to entry: Open captions/subtitles do not include visual elements that are a part of the original video contents.

3.5 closed caption closed subtitle

caption/subtitle visually presented only in response to user preference

Note 1 to entry: Closed captions/subtitles are usually presented by a specialised device or decoder.

3.6 non-speech information NSI

part of the audio content, other than spoken words

Note 1 to entry: NSI can convey information about: plot, humour, mood, or meaning of a spoken passage.

EXAMPLE Speaker identification information (e.g. off-screen speakers and multiple on-screen speakers), sound effects, music (e.g. singing, background music, instrumentation), manner of speaking (e.g. whispering, emotion, word emphasis), audience reaction (e.g. laughing, groaning, booing).

3.7 visual alternative container VAC

opaque or translucent area visually presenting alternative content

Note 1 to entry: While VACs are largely used to provide alternatives to audio content, they can also be used to provide alternatives to other content.

Note 2 to entry: There can be multiple VACs presented at the same time.

Note 3 to entry: VACs can be displayed to indicate where the visual presentation of content will appear in the future or has appeared in the past.

EXAMPLE Caption/subtitle-boxes, -stripes or –lines are common examples of VACs.

3.8

audiovisual content

content that includes audio and visual components

Note 1 to entry: Only the audio or the visual components might be active at some times within the presentation of audiovisual content.

3.9

video

combination of audio and visual content presented together in a synchronized manner via Information and Communication Technology

Note 1 to entry: While the visual content is often presented using a screen, it might also be presented via other technologies e.g. a projected hologram.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC TS 20071-25:2015, 2.1.2, modified – Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.10

content category

<audiovisual> classification of audiovisual content

Note 1 to entry: Content categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Note 2 to entry: When content category is considered from an artistic perspective, it is often referred to as genre.

EXAMPLE Content categories include: dramas, museum and art gallery exhibits, heritage tours, comedies, documentaries, video users' guides and manuals, university lectures, meetings, sporting events, etc.

3.11

importance

level of need for users to know information in the content

3.12

essential (information)

<importance> information that is necessary for users to understand the content and/or its function

3.13

significant (information)

<importance> information that provides a more detailed understanding of the content for most users most of the time

3.14

helpful (information)

<importance> information that provides a thorough understanding of the content for some users

3.15

unhelpful (information)

<importance> information that does not help users understand the content and/or might interfere with that understanding

4 Framework for the visual presentation of audio information

4.1 Purpose

Visual presentations of audio information should aim at providing viewers with alternative or complementary visual information that meets users' needs and contexts of use (e.g. noisy environments).