Zero Project Innovative Practice 2018 on Accessibility

# How to support your embassies in producing captioned videos

# USA – Department of State – global Video Captioning Program

## Summary:

### In 2015 the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations, a division of the U.S. Department of State (DOS), established a global Video Captioning Program on a web-based platform that supports and standardizes the process of more easily captioning videos for internal content producers and clients.

### In 2017 as many as 5,000 videos will have been captioned and uploaded for general use, making information on such topics as visa applications and education exchange programs accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing worldwide.

## Problems Targeted:

### The Department of State produces or owns nearly 20,000 videos per year in various domestic offices and at over 250 overseas locations in more than 70 languages. Videos include information on a huge range of topics, from how to apply for a visa to an education exchange program.

### In the Departent of State there was no coherent policy or strategy on how to caption video media; from a basic understanding of what “captioning” meant, to a more comprehensive policy on captioning standards for new productions and existing videos.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact:

### Using cloud services as file-sharing mechanisms between domestic and international locations, the DOS has been able to make the process of captioning videos easier for internal content producers and clients. The Video Captioning Program uses Sharepoint, a web-cloud solution developed by Microsoft, Inc. Videos are uploaded to this cloud environment and are then augmented by input from staff, unpaid interns, and vendors providing transcription and captioning services in over 70 languages.

### These workflows allow for the automation of many processes, such as notification of new captioning assignments, notifying clients regarding the status of their requests, and delivering the finished product via auto-generated emails.

### The site also provides guidelines to offices that prefer to caption their own videos. There is a strong customer service focus, including written guidance on tone and language to use for phone calls and emails, and a response time of no more than three business days.

### DOS can now caption live video (including Adobe Connect webinars) in two languages, and pre-recorded video in over 70 languages.

## Outlook, Transferability, and Funding:

### The program has gone from one employee (to design the program) to three, plus three contractors and several vendors specializing in captioning. During the first year of operations there were 1,945 captioning requests; in 2017 the DOS expects more than 7,000 requests. Several

### offices have begun captioning their own video media, following program guidelines. The program has also begun investigating audio description services to make videos even more accessible.

### The practice is working internationally, as the DOS is a global entity, with over 250 missions overseas. Several other federal agencies have expressed an interest in replicating the practice, which can be done relatively easily, as the software used by the DOS is widely used in other countries.

### The current budget is over 2 million US-Dollars for captioning and captioning-related services, all paid for by the U.S. Government.

## About the Practice at a Glance:

### Name of Innovative Practice: How to support your embassies in producing captioned videos

### Organization: U.S. Department of State (DOS) Office of Accessibility and Accommodations

### Country of Implementation: Washington, D.C., and worldwide

## Facts and Figures:

In 2016 there were 1,945 captioning requests.

In 2017 at least 5,000 captioned videos will be produced.

As just one example, in 2016 captioning services were provided for one office that produced 51 live events watched by over 11,800 viewers. In mid-2017, 49 live events for the same client have already been captioned.

## Contact:

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## Links and Further Reading:

### [U.S. Department of State (DOS) Website](https://www.state.gov/)

## Quote:

“This is my first time using this service, and I have to say I am pleased with the level of professionalism and turnaround time. Thank you for ensuring accessibility for those of us who are deaf and hard of hearing!”

—Sara Collins, Contracting Officer