DB CAN NJ
DeafBlind Community Access Network of New Jersey, Inc.

Guidelines for Making Videos Accessible for DeafBlind Viewers:

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Providing equal access results in dependable, quality information for all. Each individual who has a hearing or vision loss is different. An adaptation may work for one, but not for all. These guidelines were developed by people who have varying amounts of vision and hearing. By thoughtfully applying these guidelines, your videos will have a higher probability of being accessible to all.

Accessibility Options

Before making your video available to the public, consider whether it includes these options so that those who are deafblind can gain full access using their own technology:

1. Sign language interpreter or translator (at least half the height of the screen)
2. A described transcript (available as a preview prior to viewing the video)
3. Captions, in large print and in a color in contrast to the background
4. Visual and environmental descriptions added to the captions (ex: <points to a small stack of pumpkins at right>)
5. Audio description
   a. If the speaker is talking, include visual and environmental information
   b. If the speaker is signing, the spoken dialog can include visual and environmental information in the captions (as in #4 above)
6. Playing the video at an optimal speed for the viewer
7. A contact person, in case the options above fail

Adapted Longer Films

Adapted longer films can be broken into shorter segments with a preview summary provided before each segment. This helps to explain the plot and the characters before jumping into the story. As the virtual screen comes up, provide clear directions on how to size the Zoom window to be able to see both the speaker and the interpreter. Provide the described transcript several days before the screening so that individuals can preview and know what to expect in the story.

<u>**Making Your Video**</u>

1. **Interpreter or translator.**

   a. Interpreter: A live presentation

   b. Translator: A prepared, reviewed and edited presentation that is recorded for posting to a website or as an announcement. It is not live. Preferred recommendation is to use a deaf interpreter to ensure appropriate linguistic and cultural representation.

2. **Background and clothing colors in contrast with the signer's skin.**

   a. Interpreters are trained to have a background and clothing that contrast with their skin. This is *really* important for people who don't see well. When the background and clothing color are similar to the skin tone, the hands seem to dissolve into the background or the clothes.

   b. If the signer has light skin: wear black, navy or another dark color

   c. If the signer has dark skin: wear beige, tan or another light color (but not white)

3. **Plain background.** This means no pictures, no furniture, no wallpaper designs, no artwork or other items on the walls. People with low vision struggle to see. It's hard work and exhausting. Objects in the background – especially right behind the head – can be distracting and make it challenging to determine to what the viewer should be paying attention. Make it easy for the viewer: Keep the background plain.

4. **Interpreter/Translator inset size:** The size of the individual should be at least half the size of the screen so that the viewer can follow and understand the message without straining.

5. **Captions.** People who are hard of hearing or deaf may depend on lipreading, hearing and/or reading the captions – maybe one of these, or maybe all three as each option can complement the others to reinforce that the message has been correctly understood. Therefore, it's important that the speaker, the person voicing (if applicable) and the captions match, and that the captions are a color that contrasts with the background, so that they are easier to read.

6. **Description by the Speaker.**

   a. Visual and environmental description are useful when they provide additional context to aid in understanding. In a perfect situation, the deafblind person is consulted ahead of time for the amount of description they want or need. Some people want to know everything; some want to know only very basic information.

      i. For example, at a baby shower, one person may want to know where the gifts are, how many, how they're wrapped, how many people are there, what Aunt

Jane is wearing, what's outside the window, the wallpaper, the carpet, where the food is set up, what's being served, and so on. Another person may want to know only where to put her gift and what it is that smells soooo good.

    ii. At DB CAN NJ, we consult with our DeafBlind Access Team to ensure that we're providing a reasonable level of description.

b. For people who have been blind all their lives, color has no meaning, nor do visual words for objects that we can never touch like "sunset" or "rainbow." Use objective descriptions such as, for example, 6' (not "tall"), 4 people on line (not "a few").

c. Consider the point of the video. Why are you making it? Add descriptions that help the viewer better understand the topic of the video. If the topic is light-weight eyeglass lenses, then a description of the glasses shown would be appropriate. If the topic is how to use an accessible voting machine, a description of someone's glasses is irrelevant.

d. If you think it's necessary to provide detailed descriptions about the speaker and the background, consider adding that information to the transcript and the captioning.

e. Nonverbal expressions and gestures are an important part of communication. Adding objective descriptions to the captions and transcript such as smiling, frowning, looking down, turning away, or referring to a point away from the speaker provides clear, unbiased visual content and allows the viewer to draw their own conclusions.

7. **Described Transcript.** A described transcript should include all the content of the video: the video itself as well as all environmental and visual description.

a. If a speaker wants to provide detailed self-description, it should go here.

b. The described transcript should be available via email in both Word and PDF version; the PDF is necessary because many people don't have Word.

8. **Be able to slow the video.** If possible, make a final product that can be played at various speeds. For example, YouTube allows slowing the playback speed to accommodate the viewer's preference for the speed of the ASL and the presentation of the captions.

9. **In-person facilitation**. If possible, for those who are fully deafblind, consider providing in-person facilitation by interpreters, communication facilitators or access providers.

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To engage the services of the DB CAN NJ DeafBlind Access Team
to make your video accessible, email dbcannj@gmail.com