



Australian Government



GUIDE TO CAPTIONING AND AUDIO DESCRIPTION

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This guide should be read in conjunction with the *Screen Australia Cinema and DVD Captions and Audio Description Budgeting Guide* spreadsheet and checklist available on the [Screen Australia website](#) .

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All feature films funded by Screen Australia now require both captioning and audio description for cinema and DVD. It is the production company's responsibility to organise and pay for this, and all feature film budgets submitted to Screen Australia from 1 July 2011 must include the costs for captioning and audio description.

Please note, feature films funded before 1 July 2011 are only required to create captions.

What are captioning and audio description?

Captioning is the practice of translating a program's audio (including sound effects and music) into text to aid the hearing impaired. The text is commonly displayed at the bottom of the screen. There are several types of captioning – the most common are open captioning and closed captioning.

- **Open captioning** is characterised by the display of text on screen for all viewers (cinema).
- **Closed captioning** is a system where captions are activated by the individual viewer (DVD or via a set-top box, or special systems available for cinema-goers).

Audio description (AD) is a narration that explains what's happening visually in television, movies, DVDs or live performances.

Feature films made as co-productions or having a pay TV pre-sale to networks may already be required to deliver subtitles and AD on the delivery master or a separate subtitled file on disk. This can be used for closed captioning and audio description.

Production process for cinema

Access technology

In recent years digital cinema systems have been developed that enhance the enjoyment of the cinema experience for audiences with hearing or visual impairment. The only system currently available in Australia is **Datasat Digital Access™** (formally known as DTS).

Datasat Digital Access allows exhibitors to offer both captioning and audio description on a standard release print through the use of a CD-ROM and the Datasat Digital CSS system, instead of waiting for a specially captioned print.

Using this system a 'soft' overlay of open captions (CD ROM) is projected onto the screen with a secondary projector. This allows the exhibitor to use a standard release print and project the captions for the 'open caption' sessions in addition to their regular programming.

In addition to open captions and audio description, the unit can also provide closed captions via the Rear Window® Captioning System. This system displays caption data as reversed text on an LED panel on the rear wall of the theatre, and patrons view text via portable, transparent acrylic panels that attach to the theatre seats and reflect the captions superimposed over the screen.

Datasat Digital also offers a digital sound format, Datasat Digital Sound®, whereby the digital soundtrack is delivered on a CD ROM rather than encoded onto the film print. This could be licensed as a package with the Access format.

In order to utilise Datasat Digital Cinema technology a Datasat Digital timecode needs to be included on the prints.

Although not mandatory, it is advisable that the Datasat Digital logo is included on the credits of the feature.

Production process

1. Datasat Digital serial number

- The producer first needs to request a serial number from Datasat Digital Cinema (postproduction@datasatdigital.com) for an Access Licence. Datasat Digital will assign a unique serial number to the film, which will then be used when shooting the Datasat Digital timecode track. If the package option is chosen, Sound and Access will share the same serial number.
- The request email should include: the title, the name and contact details of the production company, the optical sound facility and their contact details, and a request to purchase a Datasat Digital Access license. Please cc all parties on this request email.
- Datasat Digital will advise the optical sound facility, producer and Screen Australia of the serial number for the film.

Allow up to 2 working days to receive the serial number.

2. Creating the captions and audio description

- The captioning and audio description files are created by an agency authorised for this purpose by Datasat Digital (see Contacts page 8).
- Datasat Digital requires the captioning and AD file to be provided by the agency with the timecode in and out points for each reel.
- Once the production is ready to be captioned and audio described, the necessary work materials (Log Sheet, Guide Image and final script) must be provided to the agency.

Log Sheet: The Log should record the first and last picture frame in and out of each reel/spool with timecode listed as:

Reel 1 01:00:02:00

Reel 2 02:00:02:00 etc

Guide Image: Datasat Digital has specific requirements for the Guide Image and each authorised agency will have a preference in regard to format or delivery (ie Digital Betacam, DVD, FTP, MPEG, etc). Refer to the *Deliverables summary* on page 6, and check with your preferred agency for this information before creating the Guide Image, What you supply must be the final Guide Image.

IMPORTANT: As Australia-wide cinema captioning and AD is relatively new, it is advisable that the first productions work closely with the agency. You may need to supply a spool–spool transfer of the completed answer print. **Both picture and audio require transfer (to ensure accurate sync).**

The final answer print must be approved by the distributor/sales agent prior to the captions being locked off. Any changes hereafter will require a new caption file at the producer's cost.

- The: process is as follows:
 - Captions are written based on the supplied film script
 - A qualified describer watches the film and writes the AD script
 - AD script is checked by a qualified AD editor
 - Captions and AD script are approved by Client (if required)
 - AD script is recorded by the agency using an AD VO artist
 - The agency creates the caption and audio description files for delivery to Datasat Digital.
- Screen Australia recommends that a key creative (ie producer or director) view the captions and audio description with the agency before the film is sent to Datasat Digital. This reduces the risk of mistakes and consequent delays in the process, and ensures the correctness of both interpretation and style.
- Producers can also request the agency to provide text files of the captions and audio description to check interpretation before the file is sent to Datasat Digital. Please be aware that this will extend the turnaround time for the return of Datasat Digital encoded captions.

Average minimum time to complete the captioning and audio description process is 5–7 working days for 100 minutes of screen time.

3. Encoding

- Datasat Digital encodes the file supplied by the agency.

Typical turnaround time is between 2 to 3 days.

4. Master disc

- Datasat Digital sends the encoded file to the optical sound facility for the creation of the master disc.

5. Quality check

- The producer/post production manager arranges a quality control check (QC) where the sync is inspected against the audio. It is essential for the producer/content owner (post supervisor) to be in attendance to verify the accuracy of the captioning content.

6. Distribution

- Once Datasat Digital is advised by the producer/post production manager of the master disc approval, Datasat Digital replicates and delivers discs to the Motion Picture Distributors Association of Australia (MPDAA) or to distributors not part of MPDAA for direct delivery to the equipped cinemas for release.

Production process for DVD

The agency creating your captions and audio description for cinema release can also produce them for DVD (see Contacts, page 8).

1. Creating the captions and audio description file

- Once the production is ready to be captioned and audio described, the necessary work materials (Guide Image and final script) must be provided to the agency.
- The Guide Image for DVD must be identical to the length of the PAL video in 25 frames per second; therefore, a 25 frames per second telecine transfer is required. Check with your preferred agency for this information.
- Each agency will have a preference in regard to format or delivery of the Guide Image (ie Digital Betacam, DVD, FTP etc). Refer to the *Deliverables summary* on page 6, and confirm with your preferred agency.
- There are several types of authoring systems used in DVD production. The agency needs to be notified of the system your preferred authoring house uses. This determines how the captions are created and what type of file is delivered.
- DVD distributors generally have a unique style guide for their captions. The respective style guide of your preferred distributor should be made known to the agency.
- The agency creates the caption file and audio description file. This file(s) will be forwarded to your DVD authoring house.

Average minimum time to complete the captioning is 5–7 working days for 100 minutes of screen time.

2. DVD authoring

- The DVD authoring house receives the captioned file and audio description to create the DVD version of the film, including captions.

3. Distribution

- The producer and distributor receive the final product to distribute.

Deliverables summary

All deliverables to a captioning/AD agency must be in accordance with the requirements of that agency. A summary is provided below, but it is advisable to contact the agency directly and confirm what they need before creating the Guide Image

Red Bee Media Australia

- Preferred image format is a low res MPEG 1 file but will accept:
 - Digital Betacam
 - MPEG 2
 - QuickTime
 - Betacam SP
 - DVD
 - DV
- Preferred script format is via email.

The Substation

- Digital Betacam transfer of consecutive film reels with burnt in timecode to match the reels:
 - For film delivery the Digital Betacam must run at 25fps with 24fps burnt in timecode.
 - For DVD/PAL the Digital Betacam must run at 25fps burnt in timecode.
- Electronic script if available.

The Captioning Studio

The Captioning Studio require delivery of:

- Windows Media Video file or an MPEG 1 file or a DVD with in-vision timecode matching the Datasat Digital timecode.
- Script in an electronic format.

DVDTech

DVDTech require delivery of:

- MPEG1 or Windows Media Video files at 24fps of each spool, with in-vision timecode matching the Datasat Digital timecode burnt in to the top right-hand corner as follows:

Reel 1	01:00:02:00
Reel 2	02:00:02:00
Reel 3	03:00:02:00
Reel 4	04:00:02:00
Reel 5	05:00:02:00
- If this is unavailable DVDTech can accept a Digital Betacam with a timecode that matches the Datasat Digital timecode.
- Electronic script if available.

POST-PRODUCTION SCRIPTS

Productions will need to provide the caption/AD agency with song title and artist information. This could be included in the post-production script within the 'shot description' column and should outline where the songs are used in the film. This information should be provided to the person generating the post-production script.

Captioning agencies would also prefer to receive the post-production script as an Excel or Word document rather than a PDF.

Contacts

Datasat Digital (formerly DTS) USA

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Screen Australia Sydney

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 Amanda Lansdowne amanda.lansdowne@screenaustralia.gov.au

Screen Australia Melbourne

Heather MacFarlane heather.macfarlane@screenaustralia.gov.au

Authorised Datasat Digital film laboratories/optical sound facilities

Australia

Deluxe (formally Atlab): www.bydeluxe.com

Ph: (02) 9429 6500

Tony Oldham tonyoldham@bydeluxe.com

New Zealand

Park Road Post: www.parkroadpost.co.nz

Ph: + 64 4 380 7800

Peter Amies parkroad@parkroad.co.nz

Authorised Datasat Digital captioning/AD agencies

Australia

Captioning and Subtitling International: www.captioningandsubtitling.com

Ph: (02) 9219 9100

Michelle Kwan michelle.kwan@captioningandsubtitling.com.au

The Captioning Studio: www.captioningstudio.com.au

Ph: (02) 6255 6544 or (08) 8463 1639

Alex French alex.french@captioningstudio.com

DVDTech: www.dvdtech.com.au

Ph: (02) 8905 8000

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Red Bee Media: www.redbeemedia.com.au

Ph: (02) 9212 5277 or (03) 9696 1996

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