

Access to Media: 1955-2012

Public Investments and Private Initiative

Larry Goldberg, Director

The Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family

National Center for Accessible Media at WGBH



Early U.S. History - Captioning (1955 - 1980)

- Captioned Films for the Deaf - Dept. of HEW
- Open captioned TV @ WGBH's Caption Center
- Closed captions - Federal funding + network support

U.S. History - Captioning (1980 - 1990)

- Competition begins
- Broadcast networks ramp up
- Federal dollars matched by corporate contributions
- Progress slow on local TV stations, cable networks

U.S. History - Captioning (1990 - 2006)

- TV Decoder Circuitry Act
 - Enacted by Congress, 1990
 - FCC regulations in effect, 1993
 - Future-proofed for Digital TV
- Telecommunications Act of 1996
 - FCC regulations phased in from 1998-2006 (100%)
- Movie theaters added (1997)
- Section 508 Federal procurement rules (2000)
- Missing Components
 - Quality measures
 - New technologies

U.S. History - Captioning (2007 - 2012)

- FCC rulemaking on quality, reliability (pending)
- New media platforms (in development)
 - HD-DVD, BluRay
 - Technology barriers (Component, HDMI, alt delivery)
 - Online and mobile media (streaming, downloads)
 - Digital Cinema
- Catalysts for Progress
 - Voluntary industry efforts
 - Consumer advocacy
 - Government action

U.S. History - Video Description (1985 - 1990)

- Multi-channel Television Stereo (MTS) standard, 1985
- WGBH, community R&D and advocacy
- CPB and U.S. Dept. of Education funding + PBS support
- Descriptive Video Service® (DVS®) started, 1990

U.S. History - Video Description (1990 - 2002)

- PBS, TCM, Home Video, Theaters
- Limited commercial network involvement, broadcast or cable
- U.S. Dept. of Education funding continues
- FCC mandate
 - Based on Telecom Act of 1996
 - Four hours/week on 4 broadcast, 5 cable nets, assured delivery
 - April-November 2002
 - Federal Court overturns rule (NAB, NCTA, MPAA, NFB suit)
- PBS, CBS continue service
- Section 508 Federal procurement rules (2000)

U.S. History - Video Description (2002 - 2012)

- PBS, CBS, Theaters
- VHS to DVD to HD DVD/BluRay
- Alternate delivery platforms
 - Online (“Wind in the Willows”)
 - Audio-only: HD Radio, XM/Sirius, iTunes, Audible.com
- Congressional action (pending)

Captioning and Video Description (International Activities)

- Canada (CRTC)
 - Requires 90% of programming to be captioned
 - Description “encouraged” or “expected”
 - CTV-4 hrs./wk.
- UK (Ofcom)
 - Subtitling: 70-90%
 - Video description: 10% by 2010; 4-8% now
 - Sign language: 5% by 2015; 1-4% now

Captioning and Video Description (International Activities)

- Japan (Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications)
 - Target: 100% (of “feasible” programs) closed captioned by 2007 (!)
- Mexico (Comision Federal de Telecomunicaciones)
 - Pending funding and technology development
- Australia (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts)
 - Analog and DTV: all news and prime-time; 6am-midnight @ 70%
- Others?

Contact Information

Larry Goldberg, Director

**The Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family
National Center for Accessible Media at
WGBH**

Larry_Goldberg@wgbh.org