

Accessible Europe

12 December 2018

**Audio-visual media services, TV
and video programming**

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U.S. Telecommunications Policy: People with Disabilities

- Reliance on “Universal Service” obligation to mandate access
- Costs to society of “lost access”
- Pervasiveness of the telephone/Internet in commercial transactions, jobs, education, and personal contacts
- Market forces don’t always work for people with disabilities
- Accessibility promotes innovation and access for all (beyond disability community)
- Ensures that people with disabilities are not left behind as digital, Internet and mobile innovations develop

Closed Captioning



1990 – Television Decoder Circuitry Act – U.S. Congress mandated closed captioning capability on TVs with screens larger than 13 inches

1996 – In changes to the Communications Act of 1934, U.S. Congress required closed captions on nearly all TV programming

FCC Closed Captioning Requirements

- ▶ Captioning is required on TV for English, Spanish and bilingual programs
 - ▶ 100% of new programming
 - ▶ 75% of older programming (first shown before January 1998)
- ▶ Some exemptions - for example: overnight programming (2:00-6:00 a.m.), commercials under 5 minutes, channels producing annual revenues under \$3 million
- ▶ No provider must spend more than 2% of its annual revenues on captioning
- ▶ Closed captioning quality: rules require captions to be accurate, synchronous (correspond with dialogue and sounds), complete from beginning to end, placed appropriately on the screen



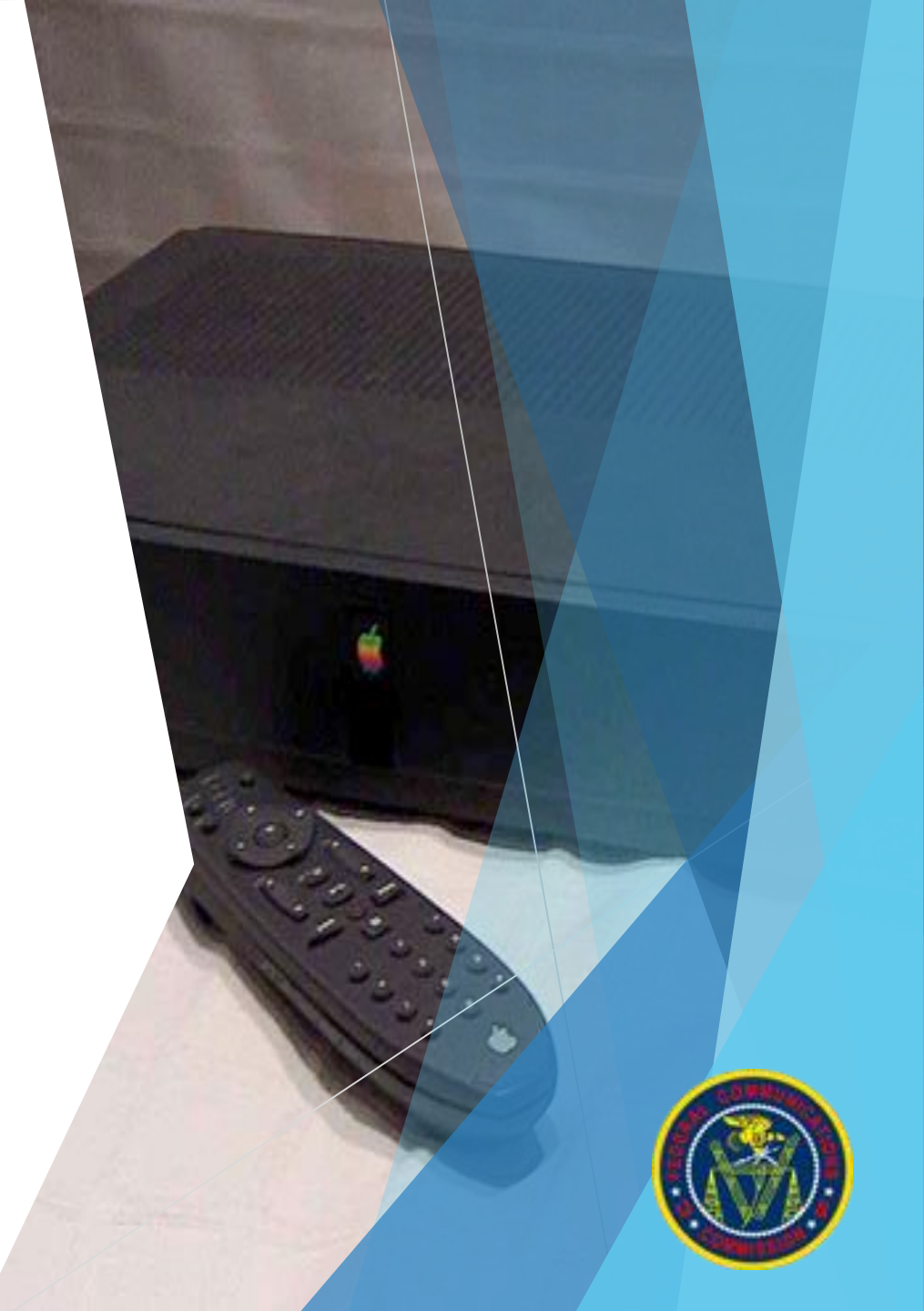
Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA)

- ▶ Programs delivered via Internet protocol must have captions if shown on TV with captions.
- ▶ Requires all types of video equipment to be capable of displaying captions, if achievable and technically feasible (TVs, laptops, cell phones).
- ▶ Video programming distributors generally must caption video clips of programming they have shown on TV with captions, when they post those clips on their websites.



Video (Audio) Description

- ▶ Narratives provided during natural pauses in a television program: helps people who are blind or visually impaired understand program content.
- ▶ Shown on the secondary audio channel in the U.S.
- ▶ 87.5 hours per calendar quarter must be described on the following:
 - ▶ NBC, CBS, ABC and Fox (and their affiliates in the top 60 markets).
 - ▶ Top 5 national nonbroadcast networks - currently USA, HGTV, TBS, Discovery, and History. Top 5 are defined by an average of the national audience share during prime time (as determined by Nielsen ratings) that reach at least 50% US households and have at least 50 hours/quarter of prime time programming that is not live or near-live.



Televised Emergency Information



- U.S. law requires critical information about emergencies presented on television to be both visually and aurally accessible.
 - Examples of emergencies covered: hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, heavy snows, widespread fires; power failures, explosions, civil disorders and school closings
 - For people who are deaf and hard of hearing, generally this is achieved with closed captions.
 - For people who are blind or visually impaired, the information must be provided through the secondary audio stream, after an aural tone on the main audio.
- Cable, satellite and other multi-video programming distributors (MVPDs) generally also must pass through audible emergency information via the secondary audio stream on second screens devices, such as tablets, smartphones, and laptops (when this information is delivered to subscribers as part of regularly scheduled programming over the MVPD network).

Video Devices



- Video devices of all sizes must provide captioning, video description, and emergency access, if achievable and technically feasible.
- Easy access must be provided to activate closed captioning and video description - for example, through a button, key, or icon.
- A simple and easy mechanism must be provided to access emergency information aurally on the secondary audio stream.
- User Interfaces must be accessible if achievable: people who are blind or visually impaired must be able to access on-screen text menus and programming guides.
- Compliance may be through the use of software, peripheral devices, or other solutions, and must be provided free to the requesting individual within a reasonable time

More information: Visit our FCC Consumer Guides

- ▶ Closed Captioning:
<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/closed-captioning-television>
- ▶ Closed Captioning of Internet Video Programming:
<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/captioning-internet-video-programming>
- ▶ Display of Captioning on Equipment Used to View Video Programming:
<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/closed-captioning-display-requirements-equipment>
- ▶ Video Description:
<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-description>

Contact Information

FCC - Disabilities Rights Office Webpage:

<https://www.fcc.gov/accessibility>

FCC - CVAA Webpage:

<https://www.fcc.gov/general/twenty-first-century-communications-and-video-accessibility-act-0>

Subscribe to AccessInfo@fcc.gov. (get updated information about FCC accessibility actions)

Contact Information: DRO@fcc.gov

*****Enjoy the rest of your conference!!*****

