

**Transcript for Accessibility Bites Series: Video Accessibility**  
**BCcampus webinar hosted on February 27, 2025**  
**Presenter: Luke McKnight**  
**Host: Helena Prins**

LUKE MCKNIGHT:

Hi everyone. My name is Luke McKnight. I work at Langara College, snəwəyət lələm, which means house of teachings in the hənqəmiñəm dialect. That name was given to Langara by the Musqueam people on whose unceded ancestral territory I am on today, presenting from BCcampus. I grew up in northern British Columbia on Wet'suwet'en territory, and I am always very grateful and reflective of what it means to be a guest on this land. We are going to learn about creating accessible video today, and I'm going to take over the screen share here and get that going, so everyone can see what I can see. And I'm gonna hide.

So. Yeah, we are going to look at some examples. Maybe some suggestions and strategies to improve the accessibility of your video content. And we're going to dive into something called integrated audio description.

Just to get started, I assume everybody here is making videos, has experience with video, that could be screen recordings, that could be actual videos, that could be lecture capture. But what we're going to talk about kind of applies to all of those use cases, I think. Getting started with some best practices. Plan and write a script. I can't stress how important that is. Sometimes even for a short video, you think, Oh, I can wing it. I'll just as it comes up, I'll go through it. It'll be fine. I guarantee the process gets so much easier. You get such a better finished product, more accessible product, more user friendly and more effective when you script. And I don't mean a storyboard and a Hollywood script. I mean speaker notes is what I'm really talking about. If possible, when you're recording video and audio, use a dedicated microphone in a quiet environment if you can. I mean, obviously, if you don't have an external microphone and you're just recording with your laptop microphone, that's fine. But it's certainly going to give you a lot clearer audio, and clearer audio is also going to help with the first pass of, you know, automated captioning. So there's less work to edit captions when you have clearer audio. And in terms of a quiet environment, I know that's not always possible. I had to bribe my office mate to go for lunch early today so that I would have the room to myself. No, I'm just kidding. She was a very good sport about it. But, yeah, if you can record in a quiet environment, it makes a big difference. If you're screen sharing, think about, you know, the resolution that you're screen sharing in. For example, today, I, you know, zoomed in on this web page so that we could all see the text a bit better. You want to record both your screen and your video in at least, you know, 720p. That's pretty standard. When you are using your webcam, be aware of shadows and lighting. I don't have the best lighting in this room, but it's not terrible. But if you couldn't see my face, that would become a bit of a problem, especially for someone who's maybe lip reading, following along with your facial gestures, etc. Try to have an uncluttered background. I've gone with the virtual blur because I unfortunately did not have an uncluttered background to work with today. But when you do, you know, use those virtual backgrounds, I

would say, avoid the animated ones just 'cause they can be distracting and often produce some odd visual effects. So maybe just avoid them if you can. If you're screen sharing, you know, close your excess tabs, excuse me, and silence notifications. You know, you don't want something popping up in the middle of your recording, especially if it's a cheeky message from a colleague on Teams or something like that, right? You don't want that included in your video. And, uh, knock on wood, somehow that's going to happen to me. I guarantee it. No. I did do that. I did silence my notifications. And then, you know, share accessible content, especially thinking about colour contrast and flashing content, right? That can actually be a danger to some people. And then once you've got a video, of course, you know, probably the primary thing we think about with video accessibility is adding captions and providing a transcript. And as I mentioned, right, start with machine-generated captions. Kaltura does that. One Drive. Lots of different programs will do that and then, you know, edit them to get to that 99% accuracy. And that should be relatively easy to do if it's your video, because most of the things that were said are you know, were you. But I'm not going to talk too much about captions and transcripts because there was that wonderful session, I think it was in November. Jamie Drozda did a different Accessibility Bites session, Supporting Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and there's some great information in there, and you can always go review that as well. So, that sort of begs the question of, okay, well, we're 6 minutes in here, 8 minutes in. What am I actually talking about? What is this? What are we doing today?

Well, we are going to do audio description. So what I think is a really underrated and underutilized thing that we can do is add audio descriptions to our videos. In Canadian broadcasting, it's often called "descriptive video." And so sometimes on a television broadcast, you might see this D with the sort of ellipses sound wave. Icon, and that indicates that there is an additional audio track that is an audio narration of visual elements, action, and information. And that could be a film or television. Sometimes you'll see it in a theatrical production. I notice there is a spelling mistake right there. Let me, I will fix that later. But, you know, we often sort of think of it, it is, you know, something so that for blind and low vision, consumers of media are included. So we're just going to watch a super brief example of what I'm talking about with that.

[VIDEO STARTS]

DESCRIPTIVE VIDEO SPEAKER:

♪♪ A title appears, "Steamboat Willy." A view rises out. In a black and white cartoon, a paddlewheel boat cruises along a river, its twin smokestacks moving up and down as they toot.

[VIDEO ENDS]

LUKE:

So that is an additional audio track. That's an audio description. Now, in Canada, that's only required for major broadcasters during prime time. And I'm not saying that you've got to go and record a separate audio track for all of the videos you make. But what we want to do today is talk about why it might be better to incorporate a little bit of audio description. So we're going to watch an example video with, we're calling it less than optimal audio.

[VIDEO STARTS]

SPEAKER:

So go to the website. And you click on click on this, you go down and click on this one here. And when that's up, you click on that one. And I guess yeah, look through a couple of these points. Here, these would be good. Then this button, if you click it, pick the other one here. Then there's some stuff about recording. Then maybe scroll down. Yeah, you're going to want to have a look at a couple of these. And then back up there and click over on that one. And you just type in there. Okay, this is, you know, and maybe you want to look around here a bit.

[VIDEO ENDS]

LUKE:

So from that video, can anybody tell me what some of the useful labels that we should be announcing when recording a computer screen would be? Anybody? No. Of course not. So let's try that again. So we're going to watch the exact same video, but with a deliberate choice in audio track.

[VIDEO STARTS]

SPEAKER:

On the table of contents of the "Accessibility Handbook," scroll about halfway down the page to find the link for Video Accessibility. On the Video Accessibility page in the table of contents labelled on this page, choose the Audio Descriptions link. If we move down to the next heading, Integrated description, and specifically these lists of tips and best practices, consider the use of labels in your descriptions, including announcing slide numbers, figure labels, question numbers, and common elements like buttons, menu, and links. At the bottom centre of the screen, there is a Back to Top button. Let's select that to go back to the beginning of this page. Now we can select the Recording Setup link. Here, we can consider some factors about audio recording, and remember, you want to reduce background noise and always use a dedicated microphone. As we scroll to the bottom of the page, there are some further resources to look at. There's a link on Described Video, Integrated Description, and Accessible Speaking Best Practices. I would encourage you to follow those links if you're interested. Moving back to the top of the page again, in the top right is a search box, Type integrated and press enter or click the magnifying glass. The first result is a link to Inclusive Content Delivery. I won't go through all the details of this page, but there is the same on this page navigation and some great resources about how to increase the inclusivity of your content.

[VIDEO ENDS]

LUKE:

So, that video is exactly the same as the previous one. But with that improved audio, including integrating audio descriptions, we, as viewers, get accurate, useful instructions and information, even if we can't necessarily see or focus on what was displayed in the video, right? And obviously, the effects in the video are not meant to accurately represent, you know, varied experiences, various access means, but they're a stand-in for what someone, for whatever

reason, can't perceive the information in the video. So the intention is to show that, you know, integrated audio descriptions help all viewers regardless of access mean or circumstances. So within that, there was dyslexia assimilation on the table of contents. There was a buffering, the stuttering. There was loss of peripheral vision. There was far sightedness, there was screen glare. Was someone who's watching the video on a mobile device, someone who is distracted by other events. So the point here is that, you know, described video is legislated, you know, for blind and low-vision consumers of media. But by incorporating integrated audio descriptions into your videos, you actually, you help the entire spectrum of possible consumers of your media. So, just to bring it back just a tiny bit. If we consider as sort of a parallel thought, you know, with using accessible colour, we might go, well, that's essential for someone who's colour blind, but, you know, accessible colour also benefits people with other visual impairments. Someone who prints in black and white, or say someone who's viewing, you know, their phone on a sunny day and there's lots of glare, right? Better colour choices help all of those people. And so in the same way, integrated audio descriptions, you know, they're going to be essential for a blind or low vision consumer of that video. But they also benefit, you know, neurodivergent viewers, distracted, and tired viewers, people on their mobile phone, someone who's watching on their train, maybe users with an inconsistent connection, all of these reasons, right? So, you're not going to have to record that separate audio track, like in the "Steamboat Willie" example. But I'm going to ask you to create better audio tracks.

And just before we move on to, you know some tips and stuff to do that, there's this, I think, true, but possibly apocryphal story about Mr. Rogers, that he would feed his fish. And then after a while, you know, then the next time he didn't say he was feeding his fish, and a blind viewer wrote in, worried that the fish had died or that he'd stopped feeding it. So what he would do is he would announce whenever he fed his fish, using his voice to describe his actions and ensure everyone was included. So we're just going to see that really briefly as an example that, you know, this is not necessarily something new, and this is something easy to incorporate.

[VIDEO OF A "MR ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD" SEGMENT STARTS]

MR. ROGERS:

Of course, things don't always turn out to be just the way we plan. But we'll make believe about that another day. There you are, fish.

[VIDEO ENDS]

LUKE:

So that very simple. "There you are, fish." It just makes sure that everyone is included, is aware. And it's a very simple thing we can do.

So, it's all well and good that I tell you to do this or that I recommend that you do this, but let's actually talk about it. So, some best practices for integrated audio descriptions. Write a script or have speaker notes. Write down in, like, a list of the steps that you're going to be showing in your video or the actions that you're going to take. Avoid vague references. Nobody knows

where my mouse is. That doesn't mean anything to anyone, or when you say "here" and shimmy your mouse around, that unfortunately is not a very useful cue for pretty much anybody watching your video. Refer to specifics when you can. So things like figure number, slide number, figure label, question numbers, etc., or common elements like menus, toolbars, buttons, things like that. Avoid sensory-dependent instructions such as shapes and colours. So you don't necessarily want to say, click on the red circle, because that could exclude someone from understanding that language that you're using. Describe your actions. So, you know, if you're doing a computer demo, you know, say, you know, I opened the Create Menu. I selected the Radio button, highlight the text, things like that. And then try to orient with relative positions. You know, so in the top right, there is a search box. Beside the search box is the search icon. And by, you know, providing that level of detail, you're ensuring that everyone should be able to perceive the information in a means that is accessible to them. I do have a bit more information that's linked, which you'll be able to access. So feel free to read through that and learn a bit more. Now, yeah, we got time.

So I have a very brief activity that I'd like us to do, 2, 3 minutes, max. If I think the link for this resource is in the chat, and on page 3, there's an H5P that you can use to do this, or you can just write it down or blank Word document. But what I would like you to do is just to write a really brief script with your integrated audio descriptions, with your specific deliberate actions written down, how you access your work digital employee interface. So Office 365 or SharePoint or Workday or whatever, you know, you go to your employee portal through, you know, a browser like Chrome or Firefox or Edge. And you can do that really briefly. But just try and be deliberate, try to include those actions. If you'd like to use the H5P, I'll show you how it works kind of live as we're going, but I will check in with everyone in 2 or 3 minutes. So please just document that process.

So I hope the H5P is relatively intuitive, but basically, you can use it to generate a script for you, but if not, feel free to document however you like.

So I'm just going to bring everyone back in. Let's try a long shot here. Any volunteers to do a super brief screen share. Or you know what, frankly, if you don't want to screen share, that would work just as well, because hopefully, with all of the best practices of integrated audio description, I wouldn't even need to be able to see your screen to follow along. But I also never volunteer in events like this, so if there are no volunteers, I will gladly be the volunteer. I'm just going to count to 10 in my head just in case somebody's feeling brave. That's fine. I knew it would be me. That's okay. I came prepared. Okay. So, we're pretending that this is part of, you know, a separate recording, but what I would like to show you today is how to get to the EdTech, Langara's EdTech website. So from my desktop, I'm going to click on the Start menu. It's probably in the bottom left for you, but for me, it's in the top left, and I'm going to scroll down and go to Microsoft Edge. In the address bar at the top, I'm going to type langara.ca and press Enter. That takes me to the Langara home page. In the top right, there is this login button, which takes me then to the login portal. There are a number of different options here, but we are going to look for the My Langara Employees' button under the Employee's column.

Selecting that then takes us into SharePoint. Now, I was already logged in. However, if you're not logged in, you will be prompted for your Langara credentials, so your Langara email and your password. Now, across the top of the page, there's a menu bar, and the last one along to the right is Academics. Selecting that opens the menu, and there is a link for EdTech. And that takes me to the EdTech homepage. Now, tricky to follow along with that because I wasn't showing you. But hopefully, my integrated audio description would be enough for you to understand all of what I was explaining to you there. Now, just to wrap up because this is an Accessibility Bite, and we are going light speed.

Just to review, video accessibility best practices. Script with integrated audio description, Record in at least 720p resolution for both webcam, camera, screen share. Record audio with a microphone. When you're sharing, share accessible content. And when you're done with your video, caption it, make sure they're accurate, and provide a transcript, if possible.

So for there, I'm going to leave us with this quote that I think is really powerful, and I try to use it to guide a lot of my work, but from Steve Krug in his book, "Don't Make Me Think Revisited." "The one argument for accessibility that doesn't get made nearly often enough is how extraordinarily better it makes some people's lives. How many opportunities do we have to dramatically improve people's lives just by doing our job a little bit better?" And that's all I'm advocating for today is when you make those videos, be deliberate, be specific, and you're going to make everyone watching your video, your screen recording, your demonstration, so much happier, and so much more included, and everything's just going to be a lot better for everyone. There are some links here, the Video Accessibility chapter of the "Accessibility Handbook for Teaching and Learning," the World Wide Web Consortium Audio Content and Video Content Guidelines, the Accessibility Bites by Jamie from November, which covers closed captioning in great detail. If you haven't, if you weren't there, hadn't the recording, I highly recommend it. And then there's also another one that talks about audio descriptions in mediums other than just pure video. And that one is just a great video about what's possible. So, I thank you all very much. Are there any, excuse me, any questions? We are right at 12:28. I don't have a heart out, but yeah, thank you, everyone. Really appreciate everyone coming today.

HELENA:

Hi, Luke, there is a question that I just want to raise quickly. It says, Thanks so much for organizing this. Which tool did you use for screen recording? Would you suggest a microphone to buy, which might work well for screen recording and which tool did you use to edit and add soundtrack? So just a quick little tech question for you.

LUKE:

Sure. So if you are a Microsoft organization, Clipchamp is a great tool. You can get started with very basic screen recording and editing. If you're a Kaltura organization, Kaltura Capture works really well. If you're a Mac user, the default screen recording software is great. If you're really interested, talk to me about OBS, because that is the best one, but it is a little bit more

advanced. In terms of a microphone, I mean, I got some grant money, and part of it bought me this very nice sure podcast quality microphone. You don't need that. You know, very popular is the Yeti Blue. You know, they can run about \$100. They're not inexpensive, but if you are doing a lot of recording. Yes, thank you, Helena. And that's the one I have at home as well, and it is great. And if you're doing a lot of video, I think it's absolutely worth it. And the third one was maybe about editing video? Is that the other question? Yeah. So in Clipchamp, you can do some editing. In Kaltura Capture, you can do a little bit of editing. For default Microsoft video editing, Clipchamp is kind of the option. You know, if you know about Premier Pro, you know more than I do. But if you're a MAC user, iMovie is pretty intuitive and can do some pretty good editing. And I think that is actually what I used for the demonstration video was iMovie. Yeah. Did I get all the questions? Yeah. And I'm happy to chat more with anybody about anything. My contact information is on that last page of the workbook. And again, yeah, thank you all for coming.

HELENA:

There's one more question, sorry. Is there any particular PC software online for editing dialogue?

LUKE:

Just for the audio. Yes, there is, and I'm sorry. My brain is going. Audacity. Yeah, Audacity is a free open source audio editing software. Probably, in terms of open source, it's the leader. An online one. I can't think of one off the top of my head, but I prefer to avoid editing online just in case your connection gets disrupted or yeah. I've never really been burned, but I like to edit on the desktop with a file that's not on the cloud if I can.

HELENA:

Well, thank you so much, Luke. I know it's a tall order, 30 minutes to teach us how to do something. But I really appreciate your angle today. Thank you for that. I've learned a lot. Thank you for our interpreter, Debbie, and thank you for Paula being here. I wish all of you a wonderful, wonderful afternoon. I do ask if you have 3 minutes to just complete our feedback survey. I've put the link in the chat for you. We really value your input, and specifically today, I'm also inviting you to give us topics of interest for the next Accessibility series. If you know of presenters or if you yourself want to participate, don't hesitate to send me an email at [helenaprins@bccampus.ca](mailto:helenaprins@bccampus.ca). Thank you, everyone. Have a wonderful afternoon.