

LILY BOND: Welcome, everyone. And thank you for joining this webinar entitled "Best Practices for Integrating Closed Captioning with Mediasite Lecture Capture."

I'm Lily Bond from 3Play Media. And I'm joined today by Sam McCool, who's the instructional technology manager at Nevada State College. We're going to talk to you about integrating closed captioning with Mediasite, and that presentation should take about 30 minutes. And we'll leave 10 to 15 minutes for a Q&A at the end.

So today we're going to start out with talking about some of the benefits of closed captioning and some of the accessibility laws and lawsuits. And then I'll hand it over to Sam, who will talk about the operational considerations for captioning, the captioning workflow with Mediasite, and then he'll do a demo Nevada State College's integration with Mediasite and 3Play Media.

So to start out, I'm just going to briefly go over some of the benefits of captioning. The primary purpose of captions and transcripts is to provide accessibility for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. 48 million Americans experience hearing loss, and closed captions are the best way to make media content accessible to them.

Outside of accessibility, though, people have discovered a number of other benefits to closed captioning. Closed captions provide better comprehension to everyone. The Office of Communications in the UK conducted a study where they found that 80% of people who were using closed captions were not deaf or hard of hearing, and that closed captions really provide increased comprehension in cases where the speaker has an accent, if the content is difficult to understand, if there's background noise, or if the viewer knows English as a second language. And captions also provide the flexibility to view your videos in noise-sensitive environments, like offices, libraries, and gyms.

Captions also provide a strong basis for video search. People are used to being able to search for a term and to go directly to that point, and that's where our interactive transcripts let viewers do within a video. And in education, people find that interactive transcripts really improve user engagement.

For people who are interested in SEO, or Search Engine Optimization, closed captions provide a text alternative for spoken content. Because search engines like Google can't watch a video, this text is really the only way for them to correctly index your videos. Discovery Digital

Networks actually found that adding captions to their YouTube videos increased their views by 7.3%.

Another benefit of captions and transcripts is their reusability. The University of Wisconsin found that 50% of their students were actually repurposing the video transcripts as study guides, so they make a lot of sense in higher education. Of course, once you have a caption file in English, you can translate that into foreign languages to create multilingual subtitles and make your video accessible on a more global scale. And finally, captions may be required by law. And I'm going to dive into the federal accessibility laws right now.

So the first big accessibility law in the US was the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. And in particular, the parts that apply to captioning are sections 508 and 504. Section 508 is a fairly broad law that requires federal communications and information technology to be accessible for government employees and the public. So this is really where closed captioning requirements come in.

Section 508 applies only to federal programs. However, any states receiving funding from the Assistive Technology Act are required to comply with Section 508. So often that law will extend to state-funded organizations like colleges and universities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, or the ADA, is a very broad law that is comprised of five sections. Title II and Title III of the ADA are the ones that pertain to video accessibility and captioning.

Title III requires equal access for places of public accommodation. And this is where the gray area is, is what constitutes a place of public accommodation? In the past, this was really applied to physical structures. For example, requiring wheelchair ramps. But recently, that definition has been tested against online businesses.

One of the landmark lawsuits that happened a couple of years ago was the National Association of the Deaf versus Netflix. The National Association of the Deaf sued Netflix on the grounds that a lot of their streaming movies didn't have captions. And they cited Title III of the ADA.

One of Netflix's arguments was that they do not qualify as a place of public accommodation. But the courts ended up ruling in the end that Netflix does qualify. And they ended up settling, and now Netflix has captioning on close to 100% of all of their content at this point.

So the interesting thing to come out of this case is that if Netflix is considered a place of public accommodation, that sets a really profound precedent for the ADA's application to the web and to online content, including for places like colleges and universities.

Harvard and MIT were sued by the National Association of the Deaf in February for discriminating against the deaf and hard of hearing by not providing captions on their online content. And the decision in this case will have huge implications for higher education and the ADA.

And then finally, the CVAA is the most recent accessibility act. It was passed in October of 2010. And it requires captioning for all online video that previously aired on television. So that really covers more of the broadcast television.

To talk a little bit about us, 3Play Media is an MIT spinout, and we are still based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. For the last seven years, we've been providing captioning, transcription, and subtitling services to over 1,600 customers in higher education, government, enterprise, and media and entertainment.

Our goal is really to simplify the process of captioning and transcription, which can be a barrier for a lot of people. We have a really user-friendly online account system. And we offer fast and reliable turnaround, with a lot of options in terms of turnaround time.

We offer over 50 different output options, as well as video search plug-ins that make your videos searchable and interactive. And we also have integrations with most of the leading video players and platforms, which can automate the process to make captioning even easier.

Today, Sam's going to be going over the integration with Mediasite. But to give you a brief overview, once you've linked your 3Play Media and Mediasite accounts, you can select a file or folder for captioning directly from within your Mediasite account. And when the captions are completed, they'll just automatically post back to your files in Mediasite, which means that you don't have to worry about caption formats or associating caption files with your videos.

And now I'm going to hand it off to Sam, who's going to talk about the intricacies of that integration and some of the operational considerations that went into deciding on this solution.

SAM MCCOOL: OK. I think everyone should see my desktop now.

LILY BOND: Yeah, looks good.

SAM MCCOOL: Great. As Lily said, I'm Sam McCool, the manager of instructional technology at Nevada State College. We're a four-year school in Henderson, Nevada. We're 13 years old. We're a 21st century school.

One of the things that we've done in the last, I would say, four or five years is address issues around accessibility for our students, particularly as we've expanded our use of media in our classes. All of our classes, whether they meet in a classroom or online, use what we call WebCampus, which is Canvas by Instructure. And those courses are expected to have rich content that includes media.

And so we have challenges for providing students with accommodations when we use video or audio and they need captions. We don't have a policy, but we have some guiding principles.

And first and foremost is student service. It's the most important thing that we do. And the second guiding principle is finding innovative ways to provide services to our students using the technologies that are available. And that's what led us to 3Play Media when we adopted Mediasite.

Mediasite is how we capture lectures in the classroom and broadcast them out to students. We do on-demand viewing and we do live viewing. And so when a student needs accommodations, we need to be able to provide those captions.

We would love to be able to provide captioning proactively so that everything was captioned. But like I said, we're a new four-year school in Henderson, Nevada and we don't have that kind of budget. But we do have an ability to respond quickly, because we're using tools that allow us to do that.

One of the things we did early on was to get an evaluation of what we were doing from an outside consultant. And I recommend this is if you are just starting off with using lots of media. We turned to a consultant named Jane Jarrow and asked her to come in and appraise what we were doing.

And she helped us set up a task force and get faculty input from the three schools. We have a School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, a School of Education, and a School of Nursing. And the faculty from those schools have very different views on accommodations and using media. We also came up with ways of engaging our faculty senate to raise this issue for faculty.

So after getting a lot of input, what we came up with was a strategy called Just in Time. When we get an accommodations request from the Resource Center for Students with Disabilities, we respond as quickly as possible.

We have student workers that are trained in doing captioning through Amara and YouTube. Amara is a very interesting service that's integrated into Canvas by Instructure that allows us to caption any short videos that have been uploaded into Canvas for a course.

And so we use that a lot, and we've trained our student workers to do that. And in fact, when a new student worker comes on board, one of the first things we ask is, what are your typing skills like? Because we're going to show you how to do captioning.

For feature-length or classroom presentation-length presentations, though, we decided to do two major things-- is subscribe to services that provide long videos or audio and make sure the specs for that subscription service specifies that captioning is available for it.

So we subscribe to Films On Demand and several other services which I can't remember right now. But one of the things that we require of them is all the items that they provide to us in their catalog are captioned.

And then for Mediasite, well, initially we had some challenges there. We weren't really sure about what we were going to do. But we went to some conferences. We talked to the Mediasite folks and found out that 3Play Media had a way to actually allow us to quickly integrate from Mediasite, send, and upload a video into 3Play Media.

That was done sort of automatically, which I'm going to demonstrate. But the key thing there was to set up a way that the Resource Center for Students with Disabilities could submit a request.

So we use KBox it's a Dell KACE product. I don't know if folks are familiar with that. I'm certainly willing to answer questions about that. But we use that to create tickets. As soon as we get a notice in our system for a request for captioning, we can respond quickly.

The communication flow is based on providing the Resource Center for Students with Disabilities with accounts so that they can actually look at the classes, look at the content, make evaluations when they're doing their accommodations of evaluations.

They can then quickly communicate with us. We're known as InTech, the Instructional

Technology Team. And we can go in and make sure that we know what media has to be captioned. If it's short, again, we're going to use the Amara service. If it's through Mediasite, or it's a long video, we're then going to submit that over to 3Play Media.

Today, I'm going to show you how we would quickly respond to a Mediasite captioning request.

We copy the instructors on the ticket. We keep them informed of what's going on, but we do not mention students. Students' names never show up in those tickets. In fact, that's the understanding we have with our CSD. That the director will alert us with an accommodations request, but no student information's going to be included in that request. Only information about the class, the instructor, and what needs to be captioned.

So the importance of streamlining for us is about meeting that strategy of just in time. We are very aware that there are last-minute requests. They almost are always last minute. We try to get information at the beginning of the term about accommodation needs, but we'll get a request as late as the middle of the term, or-- well, for midterms or as late as finals.

So we're prepared. We can respond to those requests as quickly as possible. And we know that many times those requests might be unplanned.

So why 3Play Media? Well, like I said, it integrates with Mediasite. That's a big thing for us. We got recommendations from colleagues and vendors about using them-- vendors who actually use 3Play Media to caption their own webinars, like the one you're viewing today.

And at the 2013 Accessing Higher Ground Conference, I met the 3Play Media folks, talked to them about our needs, and within a couple months-- thanks to Erin Batog-- we were up and running. So we're very happy about the response from 3Play Media.

You should be looking at our homepage for Mediasite. For Mediasite users out there, obviously you're going to be working with your Mediasite admin, setting all this up with them. Some of you might be Mediasite admins like myself. I have several staff members who do this as well.

So to set all this up, we contacted, as I said, 3Play Media. Our sales rep, Erin, walked us through this. So what you would do is once you get an account, you go in and set up a profile. And you're going to create a 3Play Media profile. It's very easy to do. Once you've got your

account information, you create that profile, put your username in and your password, and you simply add that to your account.

It's that easy. It's amazing. The hardest part really is getting folks to agree to making the subscription, which is the politics I described earlier in the session. But once you have that added to your audio transcription profiles, you now can go to your content.

And I have an example here just from our School of Education. They're captioning a major course this fall. And if I wanted to caption one of those events that were just, for instance, recorded yesterday, I would go in, select that object. Again, this is a request you would put into your Mediasite admin. And they can bring that up. They might want to edit it, edit out that space.

And then you can check on a delivery. Captioning content has not been configured yet. So you would click on Edit, click Delivery again. And now you would add the audio transcriptions right here. Choose your provider. And the provider, of course, is that profile we created earlier.

And then you would just save this. In this particular case, I'm not going to save it. But the Save button's right here. And that triggers sending that request for captioning over to 3Play Media automatically. It's that easy to do.

So let's see what's happening on the 3Play Media side. Again, your 3Play Media admin would handle this. We have a special location for all our Mediasite requests. And we have lots of folders.

Our current folder that we're working in will show us the requests that had been posted. We had two last week. They're both finished. You can see them here. This is a code name that we can actually see in Mediasite. And then we had one from yesterday. And this is for the EDU 250 course, and it was just submitted yesterday. And the captions are due on the 14th.

Now, the one that's done and ready, I can show you what that looks like in Mediasite. This is Ted Mitchell's EDU 250. And as you saw, that request for this lecture was done. So if we play that, once that comes up, we'll notice right away that captioning is available. And we know that because in Mediasite, a CC button will show up at the bottom of the screen.

And one of things we like about this-- and sorry about the delay on the video. But one of the things we like about the Mediasite integration is that the CC shows up here. And the captions show up right over here on the left-hand side.

And one of the reasons I like how the captions show up is because they are fed, not in a single line, but in multiple lines so that students can catch up with them. So that's just an example of what it looks like.

Anyhow, that's how we've set it up and how easy it is to move back and forth from Mediasite and 3Play Media. I know that was quick, but there are our modules. And 3Play Media actually has several small little video tutorials that will actually take you through all those steps.

LILY BOND: That was great, Sam. Thank you so much.

SAM MCCOOL: You're welcome.

LILY BOND: So we're going to jump to Q&A. And I encourage everyone to continue to ask your questions in the questions window of your control panel. We'll do about 10 minutes of questions.

While we are compiling some of those, I just wanted to mention that we have a few upcoming webinars. We are doing a webinar that we're really excited about on the 16th on "Netflix and the ADA-- How a Landmark Case Changed the Legal Landscape of Closed Captioning." And that's with Arlene Mayerson, who led the case against Netflix. We also have webinars on "Free Tools for Testing Web Accessibility," "10 Tips for Creating Accessible Online Course Content," and "Understanding Closed Captioning Standards."

So Sam, we're going to get started off with Q&A. I'm going to start by asking, why do you have no accessibility policy?

SAM MCCOOL: Well, policy is difficult to build. We are working on that through the task force and working with faculty. Hopefully at some point we may develop that. What's most important is providing the services. And like I said, based on our guiding principles for service to students and using innovative technologies, we came up with solutions, and what you might call just in time solutions.

Building any kind of policy in any college and university takes a lot of work. And we're working on that. And eventually we should have some standards in place and some policy around that. But right now, we're just working off basic principles that this school lives by. And it makes it a little easier for us to do that-- right now, anyhow.

LILY BOND: Great. Thank you. Someone is asking, is it possible to edit captions once they're in Mediasite?

And is that relatively easy to do?

I'll just say that we in 3Play Media, in our account system, there's a caption editor that's really easy to use. And if you edit the captions in our system, those edits will automatically propagate to Mediasite without having to do any manual syncing.

Another question, Sam, have you had any technical problems with the 3Play-Mediasite interaction?

SAM MCCOOL: Well, we always had technical problems with technology. I mean, things break. We've had some situations in which we've submitted a request for captions-- and by the way, we haven't had any requests for live captioning. So we haven't done that yet.

But we do have on-demand viewing. And sometimes what happens-- we process that request, and it isn't caught by the 3Play Media servers, or it isn't sent by the Mediasite server. So what we do is we monitor those requests. So we're checking the first 30 minutes after a request is made just to make sure that the request actually went through. That's what I have staff for. And so we're always double checking to make sure that request got processed.

It's been working, I would say, 98% of the time without any problems. But every once in a while, the communication between the servers doesn't sync for some reason. We don't know exactly why. We've done some tests to see what might happen there.

But I would say, like with any kind of technology, always have a plan B. Our plan B is to double check to make sure that the submission went through. Usually you'll know that within 30 minutes after the request. If you don't see it show up, call the support desk, let them know that there's a caption request there, and then resubmit it.

Obviously if you submit something twice, you don't want to pay for that second captioning. So it's best to contact the support desk. And usually what I do is contact the support desk at Mediasite and the support desk at 3Play Media just so that they know that there's a request there and we're not seeing it happen.

LILY BOND: Great. Thanks, Sam. Someone is asking, do you transcribe lectures even if there isn't a deaf student?

SAM MCCOOL: No. That's something we aspire to. We've talked about being proactive. But we have a very limited budget. We can't do that right now. We kind of posed that to Jane Jarrow and asked

about how to respond appropriately, because we want to have content that's accessible. But at this point, we can only afford to caption that media that has to be captioned for a student requesting that accommodation.

So that's in the future. We're certainly hoping at some point that we would be able to do that so that everything is captioned. Also, keep in mind we haven't had this request yet, but students who have visual handicaps, those students might request description services. So we're looking at description services as well. We don't have to provide them quite yet, but we're prepared to start doing that when we need to do it.

LILY BOND: Great. Thank you, Sam. Along those lines-- someone is asking, where does the funding come from?

SAM MCCOOL: The source for funds is set aside through budgeting. We can anticipate based on historical data what our funding would be. It's mandated so that those funds are coming out of a public source of funds that we get allocated in our budget.

It's tough, because as I said, it's mandated. So no matter what the requests are, we have to respond. At this point, we're meeting out those requests and accomplishing that.

To tell you the truth, I don't know too much about how those funds get allocated or set aside, but I do know that we have to do that. And our response, as I've described it, is limited by the constraints we have on getting that funding.

LILY BOND: That makes sense. Someone else is asking, is it possible to change the viewing template in Mediasite, including how the captions are displayed?

SAM MCCOOL: You can change how the screens are viewed. You can flip them around. You can prioritize either the slides or the camera view. The captioning-- I don't believe you can make a change in there. I haven't actually asked about that. What I've seen so far is pretty fixed. So that's the way they look.

LILY BOND: Great. Do you know if it's possible to adjust the font size?

SAM MCCOOL: No.

LILY BOND: OK.

SAM MCCOOL: Yeah. It's still fairly limited.

LILY BOND: That's fine. Someone else is asking, how do you build buy-in?

SAM MCCOOL: Well, you do things like-- I act as a liaison from the technology group, which is actually under the academic affairs side of the college. I act as a liaison from that group to the faculty senate. And I share information, concerns, topics such as accessibility. We make accessibility a periodic, once-a-semester, maybe several times a semester seminar, and invite faculty to come and talk about the challenges.

We have a Technology Fellows Institute every summer in which we raise issues around accessibility using media, types of media. For instance, working with the library services and making sure that the subscriptions that we have do specify that any content is captioned.

So we're proactive in the sense that we consider this a very important issue. And we bring it up in front of places like the faculty senate. And we make it a periodic subject that we give presentations on.

LILY BOND: Great. Thank you. One final question here-- how are you impacted by accessibility laws?

SAM MCCOOL: Well, we're aware, and I think everybody in this electronic room that we're in should be aware, that a student can go to the Office of Civil Rights and file a complaint that they're not getting access. And I think when I started here in 2006, I made it very clear to the leadership here that that was a concern of mine, that I wanted to avoid any situation in which students felt like the request for accessibility or the requests to have access to content were responded to quickly.

And student service, as I said, is first and foremost a priority here at Nevada State College. So leadership, even though it was a little hesitant about spending a lot of money on doing captioning without having requests, still knew that we needed to respond.

And we create a culture here that students feel like someone's going to listen. Our Resource Center for Students with Disability creates a very positive culture about that. So even though we don't have a policy in place, we know that a student, if they're not heard, if they feel like no one's responding and providing the access they want, can easily file a complaint with our Board of Regents, with the legal counsel of the Nevada System of Higher Education, or the Office of Civil Rights.

So we don't want that to happen. That's not a good thing. Certainly not a good thing for an organization or for the students or faculty in that organization. So we've just made it a point

that we respond as quickly as possible. We find ways to make that response super fast, as we've shown here today. And we want to create and sustain that culture.

Yes, eventually we may have some policies in place. But right now, we're making sure that students are heard, and their request for access get a response right away.

LILY BOND: Thanks, Sam. So I think that's about all for today. Sam, thank you so much for joining me. That was a wonderful presentation, and people really appreciated the demo. So thanks so much for being here.

SAM MCCOOL: Well, thank you. You're quite welcome. And I'm looking forward to being at Accessing Higher Ground in November. Hopefully some of the folks attending today will be there as well. And we'll be giving a similar presentation there.

LILY BOND: Yeah. It would be great to see everyone there. Well, thank you everyone for joining. A reminder that we will send out an email shortly with a link to view the recording and the slidedeck. And I hope everyone has a great day.

SAM MCCOOL: Thanks, everyone.