

Auto-Captioning Starter Guide

This is a quick starter guide on using auto-captioning technology to improve sound access in meetings, events, presentations, and lectures.

What are auto-captions?

Automated captions, or auto-captions, rely on automated speech recognition software to convert spoken audio into text on a screen. They can be included in videos (such as with [YouTube's auto-captioning](#)) or projected on a screen during live events.

Auto-captioning is not a quick fix. It does not solve all issues related to sound access. Professionally generated [closed/open captioning](#) and [CART \(Communication Access Realtime Translation\)](#) are often better options for accuracy and clarity. See also: [#NoMoreCraptions](#).

However, if used with practice and planning, automated captions are a low-cost option that can provide a measure of accessibility for your audience.

What are some options for auto-captioning presentations and events?

- 1) [Microsoft Translator for Education](#)
 - a. Free downloadable add-on for Microsoft PowerPoint.
 - b. Requires Windows 8 or later, and PowerPoint 2013 or later. Works on Windows only.
 - c. The captions will be visible below or above the slides.
 - d. Captioning accuracy can be improved by typing in jargon in the speakers notes, or even better, scripting the presentation fully.
 - e. Audience members can join the conversation using the [app](#) or [website](#) to see the captions and send questions/comments.
 - f. Allows for translated captions and comments in over 60 languages, viewable in each participant's chosen language.
 - g. [Download Microsoft Translator for Education here](#).

This guide was created by Vivian Ly.

2) [Google Slides](#)

- a. Feature of all Google Slides presentations for free.
- b. Requires a Google account, Google Chrome browser, and an internet connection.
- c. The captions will be visible above or below the slides.
- d. Captioning accuracy can be improved by typing in jargon in the speakers notes, or even better, scripting the presentation fully.
- e. Available only in English.
- f. PowerPoint presentations can be [uploaded to Google Slides](#).

3) [Microsoft Translator app and website](#)

- a. Free downloadable Android and iOS app. Also available on browser, Amazon device, and Windows desktop.
- b. The same as Microsoft Translator for Education, just without PowerPoint integration.
- c. There is no option to input jargon without PowerPoint speakers notes.
- d. Best for one-on-one or group conversations.
- e. Works in over 60 languages, viewable in each participant's chosen language.
- f. [Download the Translator app here](#) or access it via browser at [translate.it](https://www.translate.it).

4) [Live Transcribe app](#)

- a. Free downloadable Android app by Google.
- b. Best for one-on-one or small group conversations.
- c. Available only on Android devices with 5.0 Lollipop and up.
- d. Works with over 70 languages and dialects.
- e. [Download the Live Transcribe app here](#).

5) [Google Meet](#)

- a. Free and paid videoconferencing platform with captioning.
- b. Available on Android app, iOS app, and browser. Paid version allows for participants to dial into meetings with a phone.
- c. Free version requires all participants to use a Google account (same as Gmail account) to join.
- d. Paid version requires the meeting organizer to be a G Suite user. It allows for people to join without a Google account or by phone.
- e. The captioning can be toggled on or off for each individual participant in the call.
- f. Captions indicate who is speaking at a given time.
- g. No transcript of the captioning is saved by Google Meet, but this can be done through third-party apps like [Tactiq](#).
- h. There is no option to input special terms or jargon.
- i. Available only in English.
- j. [Read instructions on how to start a call here.](#)
- k. [Read instructions on how to join a call here.](#)
- l. [Read instructions on how to turn on captioning here.](#)

6) [Skype](#)

- a. Free videoconferencing platform available on Android, iOS, Windows, Mac, Linux, Alexa, Xbox, and browser. Paid calls to mobile phones and landlines.
- b. Captions indicate who is speaking at a given time using their icon.
- c. No transcript of the captioning is saved by Skype.
- d. There is no option to input special terms or jargon.
- e. Works in 11 languages, viewable in each participant's chosen language.
- f. [Download Skype here.](#)
- g. [Read instructions on how to turn on captioning here.](#)

Tips

- **Even if you do not wish to include visuals, you can open a blank presentation** to use Microsoft Translator and Google Slides.
- **Include unusual terms and jargon in the speakers notes** of your PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation, so that the auto-captioning knows how to spell them.
- **Make sure that you have good audio quality** going into the device that is creating the captions. Direct audio input, such as through a USB microphone or a headset with microphone, is best.
- **Test your captioning software ahead of time!** Practice speaking aloud with it turned on. You can “teach” the auto-captioning technology your accent by spending 5 minutes with it.
- **Speak slowly and clearly.** Try to speak a moderate pace and e-nun-ciate. Pause at the end of sentences.
- **Listen to those in your audience who are struggling with sound access.** Invite opinions, criticism, and suggestions on ways to improve accessibility of all kinds. Provide a variety of ways to give feedback. Make space for a collective effort to improve access for everyone.