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Guidance on audio description

Recommendation ITU-T T.701.21

ITU-T



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Recommendation ITU-T T.701.21

Guidance on audio description

Summary

Audio description is a service or feature of the auditory modality that contains an oral narration with details or context involving situations and scenes found in an audiovisual content (such as recorded video presentations, broadcast television, cinema, live or recorded drama). The primary users of audio description are blind persons or persons with low vision and their friends and family.

Recommendation ITU-T T.701.21 provides guidance to audio description developers and practitioners in creating effective content describing audiovisual material in an auditory-only modality, the style or manner in which audio description is delivered, the audio description script and script time cues, in relation to the original content.

Recommendation ITU-T T.701.21 is twin with the published ISO/IEC TS 20071-21:2015 "Information Technology – User interface component accessibility – Part 21: Guidance on audio description" developed by ISO/IEC JTC1 SC35.

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Introduction

Recommendation ITU-T.701.21 provides audio description (AD) developers and practitioners with guidance in creating effective content describing audiovisual material in an auditory-only modality, the style or manner in which audio description is delivered, the audio description script and script time cues, in relation to the original content. The circumstances to which AD applies include recorded videos, broadcasts and broadband television, cinema, live or recorded dramas, museums and art gallery exhibits, heritage tours, news, and comedies. Some of this content is static and unchanging, some are dynamic, some are expressed in a visual modality alone, and some are in a combination of visual and auditory modalities.

An example of mainstream use of audio description techniques can be found in sports commentaries. It can be enjoyed by diverse audiences and uses personalities, emotional expressions and reactions to content to express qualities of the original content.

Audiovisual material is produced for people who can see and hear. It is also typically produced in a specific language for a particular audience. Translations of the original auditory content and associated audio descriptions can be provided in different languages. Providing audio descriptions and translating them into other languages can be beneficial to diverse users within diverse contexts, including persons who are blind or persons with low vision, persons with learning difficulties or cognitive impairments and in the case of translation, persons who need the content to be in another language. Translating subtitles and other on-screen texts and providing them in auditory forms can also be beneficial.

Producing audio descriptions can be thought of in a similar way to language translation where it involves several kinds of subjective decisions. For example, the use of vocabulary, tone, speed, intonation, and expression. The accuracy and quality that audio describers or script writers can achieve is determined by matching the factors above with the requirements of the original content.

The creation and delivery of audio descriptions based on the guidance in this Recommendation is not intended to interfere with or change the meaning of the original content, freedom of speech and expression, or opinion of rights holders.

Further benefits of providing audio descriptions can be attributed towards raising awareness of barriers experienced by blind persons and persons with low vision and other beneficiaries in accessing audiovisual content. The use of this Recommendation can also help embed universal and inclusive designed media content production practices in educational programmes (such as films, theatre performances, museums and art gallery exhibits and other forms of media).

Recommendation ITU-T T.701.21

Guidance on audio description

1 Scope

This Recommendation provides recommendations for describing audiovisual content in an auditory modality for use in recorded video presentations, broadcast television, cinema, live or recorded dramas, museums and art gallery exhibits, heritage tours, news and comedies, regardless of the language and technology being used to transmit and present the recorded or live audiovisual content.

NOTE 1 – There are many secondary users of audio description but the primary and intended users of audio descriptions are blind persons or persons with low vision and their friends and family.

This Recommendation provides guidance on the subjective nature of creating audio description.

It also provides guidance for audio description developers (script writers, voice narrators, and organizations or groups responsible for delivering audio description) in consistently and accurately representing audiovisual content.

NOTE 2 – It might not always be possible to provide an equivalent experience due to limitations in the amount of time available for an audio description depending on the content being described.

This Recommendation applies to describing audiovisual content and does not consider the devices or transmission mechanisms used to deliver the content or the audio description. These devices include but are not limited to, televisions, computers, wireless devices, projection equipment, digital versatile disk (DVD) and home cinema equipment and other forms of user interface technology. Therefore, this Recommendation does not consider transcoding files for the various video outputs.

NOTE 3 – Technical matters of transmission and distribution are covered by other standards (e.g., motion picture experts group (MPEG) standards and other technical international standards such as [b-IEC 62731]).

This Recommendation provides guidance on how to approach user preferences, available styles, and flexibility in approaches to audio description.

It does not apply to static images contained in electronic documents (see [b-ITU-T T.701.11] for guidance on text alternatives for images).

It applies mainly to auditory presentations intended to be transmitted or delivered simultaneously to the original audiovisual content.

NOTE 4 – Limitations experienced by broadcasters or people in synchronous environments might be reduced online or in asynchronous environments.

ITU-T T.701.21 is a twin text publication with ISO/IEC TS 20071-21:2015, "Information technology – User interface component accessibility – Part 21: Guidance on audio descriptions".

2 References

The following ITU-T Recommendations and other references contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this Recommendation. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All Recommendations and other references are subject to revision; users of this Recommendation are therefore encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition of the Recommendations and other references listed below. A list of the currently valid ITU-T Recommendations is regularly published. The reference to a document within this Recommendation does not give it, as a stand-alone document, the status of a Recommendation.

None.

3 Definitions

3.1 Terms defined elsewhere

None.

3.2 Terms defined in this Recommendation

This Recommendation defines the following terms:

3.2.1 General terms

3.2.1.1 audiovisual content: <audio description> Visual and/or auditory element of recorded video presentations, live performances, or static or dynamic events to which audio description applies.

NOTE 1 – This generic term is used where only the visual modality might apply, for example, in an art gallery or museum exhibits.

NOTE 2 – The range of circumstances to which this term applies includes recorded video presentations, broadcast and broadband television, cinema, live or recorded drama, museum and art gallery exhibits, heritage tours, news, and comedies.

3.2.1.2 Creative: <audio description> Creation and addition of new original content to existing content.

3.2.1.3 genre: <audio description> Classification of a film, programme, drama, or an event from an artistic perspective.

NOTE 1 – Genres include, but are not limited to, history, action, horror, romance, and comedy.

NOTE 2 – Programme genres are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

3.2.1.4 harmony: <audio description> Natural fit between the audio description script and its delivery and the original content.

3.2.1.5 programme category: <audio description> Classification of programmes

NOTE 1 – Some programme categories include documentary, news and information, and drama.

NOTE 2 – Programme categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

3.2.1.6 programme: <audio description> Complete unit of a recorded or live video broadcast.

3.2.1.7 video (recorded): <audio description> Combination of auditory and visual content intended to be presented together in a synchronized manner.

3.2.2 Audio-specific terms

3.2.2.1 audio track: Auditory components of a video other than audio description components.

3.2.2.2 audio description: Descriptive audio.

NOTE 1 – Audiovisual content is described in an auditory modality.

NOTE 2 – Audio description can be used to describe sound not easily identified or sound coming from an unknown source or location.

NOTE 3 – Audio description can also be used to describe locations, directions, and objects.

3.2.2.3 audio introduction: Complementary auditory content included before the original audiovisual content begins.

3.2.2.4 basic audio description: Audio description provided along with the original audiovisual content without lengthening the time of presentation.

3.2.2.5 extended audio description: Audio description provided with the original audiovisual content that lengthens the total time of the presentation or event.

3.2.3 Language of presentation terms

3.2.3.1 original language: Native language in which audiovisual content is produced.

3.2.3.2 re-voicing/dubbing/voice-over: Secondary audio version of a film or video produced by voice talent, translators, and dialogue writers in a language other than the original language of the film or video.

NOTE 1 – When dubbing, this is timed to match the voicing or mouth movements of animated characters or the original actors.

3.2.3.3 subtitles: Transcription or translation of the dialogue, suitable for when the sound is available but not understood.

NOTE – Specific guidance on delivering subtitles, on-screen text, and embedded text will be provided in a forthcoming revision to this Recommendation.

3.2.3.4 spoken subtitles/audio subtitles/spoken captions: Subtitles on audiovisual content that are read aloud and spoken over the audio in subtitled audiovisual content.

3.2.3.5 spoken subtitles with audio description: Audiovisual content which is both subtitled and audio described through the narrator reading the translation after stating that a subtitle appears.

NOTE 1 – Subtitles can also be identified through alternative voicing, synthetic speech, or sound indicators.

NOTE 2 – Spoken subtitles often use a different voice to the voice of the audio describer to avoid confusion between the dialogue and the description.

NOTE 3 – Spoken subtitles and audio descriptions can be available to users separately or together.

NOTE 4 – Spoken subtitles are synchronized with the text on screen.

3.2.4 Audio description production terms

3.2.4.1 audio describing: Delivering a script designed to meet the needs of persons wishing to have access to audiovisual content.

3.2.4.2 co-produced: <audio description> Produced at the same time as the rest of the audiovisual content.

3.2.4.3 live production: Production process that involves creating audio descriptions in real time along with the creation and delivery of the original audiovisual content.

NOTE – Live productions are typically experienced initially in real time but can also be recorded for later redistribution.

3.2.4.4 machine narrator: <audio description> Technology which delivers text-based audio description.

NOTE – To date, machine-based narrations have not been as acceptable to persons who are blind or persons with low vision as voiced audio description.

3.2.4.5 post-produced: <audio description> Produced after the audiovisual content.

3.2.4.6 postscript/pre-production audio description: Audio description considered after the script has been developed, but before the event takes place.

NOTE 1 – An example of this is the text of a play.

NOTE 2 – This allows the script to be modified to include redundancies in audio and visual content (e.g., "Pass it to me" could be modified to "Pass my coffee, Jane").

3.2.4.7 pre-mixed production: Content that includes an audio description that is created and recorded prior to transmission.

3.2.4.8 voice narrator/narrator/describer/audio describer: <audio description> Person(s) and/or technology by which audio description is voiced.

NOTE – A human voice narrator can also be referred to as a narrator, describer, or an audio describer. For the purpose of this Recommendation these terms are synonymous and referred to as voice talent.

3.2.4.9 writer: <audio description> Person(s) who write(s) the audio description script.

4 Abbreviations and acronyms

This Recommendation uses the following abbreviations and acronyms:

AD	Audio Description
ASL	American Sign Language
DVD	Digital Versatile Disk
JSL	Japanese Sign Language
LSQ	Langue des Signes Quebecois
MPEG	Motion Picture Experts Group
TTY	Teletypewriter

5 Conventions

None.

6 Framework and process considerations for audio descriptions

6.1 General

6.1.1 Alternate names for audio descriptions

Terms used in this Recommendation vary according to the country, language, region, and type of audiovisual content. They include audio description, described video, described narrative, captioning for the blind, and others. For the purpose of this Recommendation, these terms are synonymous.

NOTE – In some jurisdictions, there are precise usages defined for one or more of these terms. Individuals can consult their own country's regulations for the local appropriate terminology.

There are four different types of video language presentations: original language, dubbed, voice-over, and subtitled.

6.1.2 Motivation for audio descriptions and spoken subtitles

Regardless of style, implementation, or quality, audio descriptions are not only an access strategy; it is ultimately a creative process. Since not all visual content can be described, decisions will be made regarding what is important to describe, the vocabulary used, voicing techniques, timing, and method of delivery. These decisions can help ensure that users of audio descriptions have optimum access to audiovisual content thus minimizing the extent to which they are excluded from the experience.

Audio descriptions can benefit a wider audience of diverse users beyond its primary target group i.e., persons who are blind or who have low vision.

Since reading is a complex cognitive process having subtitles to be read aloud can reduce access barriers and benefit various groups of people, including persons with learning and reading disabilities, persons with cognitive disabilities, older people, children, non-native language speakers as well as persons who are blind or who have low vision.

6.2 Types of audio description

6.2.1 Live audio description

Live audio description is suitable for events taking place in real time.

NOTE – Live audiovisual content and associated audio descriptions can also be recorded and later presented in recorded video form.

6.2.2 Pre-mixed audio description

Pre-mixed audio description allows careful planning and evaluation of the audio description before the delivery of audiovisual content.

- a) Where audiovisual is pre-recorded, the accompanying audio description should be pre-mixed.
- b) Pre-mixed audio descriptions should be created as part of the production process rather than external to it.

NOTE – This can involve the following:

- Beginning the description process during the script writing phase even though details might need to be added during production and post-production.
 - Establishing timing parameters during script writing and rehearsal processes but recording without strict attention to timing, as small adjustments can be made to the timing during post-production.
- c) Where pre-mixed audio description was not created as part of the production process, it should be overseen or at least approved by a member of the original production team.

6.2.3 Harmonious commentary

Harmonious commentary enhances auditory descriptions with voicing techniques and aligns emotional and expressive reactions to the script in conjunction with auditory descriptions.

- a) Harmonious descriptions should be used when character expression and actions are conveyed.
- b) Unlike announcers, audio describers should provide harmonious commentary that is in-line with the spirit and intention of the original audiovisual content.
- c) In blending traditional video narration with harmonious commentary, a narrator should work with and/or interview sources close to the production with the goal of understanding what the audiovisual content is about and what is most important to describe.

NOTE – Harmonious commentary is frequently used for live events such as sports events, a New Year's Eve concert and countdown, as well as elections, parades, festivals, Olympic ceremonies, and theatre performances.

6.2.4 Extended audio description

- a) Extended audio description techniques may be used to allow the presentation of more information than could be presented using basic audio description.

EXAMPLE 1 – A video is identified as being audio described in advance of its commencement.

EXAMPLE 2 – The characters who will participate in the narration of a video that is audio described are introduced.

NOTE 1 – Levels of importance, including recommendations for the types of content that are suitable to be placed in an extended audio, are discussed in clause 7.4.4.

- b) Extended audio descriptions may involve one or more techniques for presenting additional information to users including the following:
 - 1) stop motion: stopping a video while continuing the description to provide additional time for audio descriptions;

- 2) video slowdown: slowing down the presentation of a video to provide additional time to insert audio descriptions;
- 3) audio introduction: added information is included before the event starts, offering complementary information.

NOTE 2 – Extended audio description is only possible with content that is recorded because its use extends the playing time of a video presentation not only before or after the presentation (during live presentations), but during the presentation itself (by pausing or lengthening the video to include more audio). This could include videos that are broadcasted and recorded by the user for a later playback.

6.3 Creating audio description

6.3.1 Narrator preparation

The narrator should have the following:

- a) good native language skills;
- b) the ability to articulate;
- c) prior knowledge of radio drama, storytelling and timing techniques (including emphasis, pauses, and sentence phrasing or shaping);
- d) prior knowledge of when and where musical interludes occur and the order of speaking within live performances;
- e) a sense of the rhythm and basic knowledge of music (e.g., rock, jazz, opera) that occurs within the original audiovisual content;
- f) a sense of timing as it relates to a scene pace and scene transitions;
- g) the ability to describe fast-paced action without overlapping dialogue, music, lyrics and intentional pauses in the audiovisual content.

6.3.2 Content genre and programme category

The audio description team (of narrators, writers, producers) should make use of (and develop where necessary) genre-based cohesiveness across programmes or series that are within the same programme category.

6.3.3 Scripting

Scripts can be created for both pre-mixed and live productions. It is expected that changes/additions to the scripts might be needed for live productions. Scripts for audio descriptions should consider spoken subtitles.

6.3.4 Writer considerations

The writer should have the following:

- a) a familiarity with the communication needs of people who are blind or have low vision;
- b) prior knowledge of or research into character names, locations and other specific terminology related to the original content (e.g., uniforms, monuments, architectural elements and fashion styles);
- c) story writing skills (e.g., skills in building a climax, developing characters, setting up plots, etc.);
- d) the ability to write concisely and anticipate the quality of spoken words per specific time constraints;
- e) the ability to create rhythm within phrases through word choices, order and syllable counts.

6.3.5 Recording

It should be recognized that any audio description might be recorded (by users if not by producers also), regardless of whether the video programme was live or pre-mixed.

6.3.6 Volume

- a) The volume of AD and spoken subtitles must have a good balance with the volume of the original audiovisual content audio.

NOTE 1 – In some instances, audio description is delivered as a separate stream from the original content. In this case it is important for both volume levels to be user-controlled where possible.

- b) Audio descriptions and spoken subtitles should be prepared so that users can adjust the volume of the audiovisual content and the volume of audio description separately.

NOTE 2 – This allows for flexibility in the way the content is used.

NOTE 3 – Regulatory rules on volume can exist and can vary from country to country.

6.3.7 Audio technician considerations

An audio technician should assist with the noise cancellation and audio signal processing levels to ensure that cutoff, microphone noise, background noise, levels between the audio description and the live soundtrack and other audio factors are mixed and filtered appropriately.

6.3.8 Inclusion of consumers in the process of creating audio descriptions

The full range of consumers of audio descriptions should be included in the process of creating audio descriptions where possible.

NOTE 1 – This can take the form of focus groups, employment of a consumer as a marketer or community consultant, use of a blind or low vision narrator. Consumers might also be included where stakeholder groups are actively involved in creating an audio description and marketing specific audio-described performances.

NOTE 2 – It is important to consider the balance between artistic expression and consumer needs.

6.3.9 Inclusion of consumers in evaluating audio descriptions

If an evaluation is part of the process of developing an audio description, representative consumers of audio descriptions should be involved.

NOTE 1 – It is important to evaluate pre-recorded and live audio descriptions wherever possible.

NOTE 2 – It is important for evaluations to focus on the clarity of the content of the audio description and to avoid dealing with stylistic or other artistic issues.

NOTE 3 – It is also important to understand the enjoyment of the target audience; however, the entertainment of the audio description needs to be considered in relation to the general entertainment of the genre. It can be difficult to separate these two things.

6.4 Live audio description

6.4.1 Live narration considerations

- a) Live narrators should work in teams of two.
- b) For the purpose of continuity, the narrator who is not performing should remain in the booth/location to assist by suggesting what needs describing as it comes up or identifying people and places in real time (such as audience's reactions to live and interactive performances through applause, laughing, standing ovations, etc.).
- c) For rehearsed events, e.g., in a play the narrator who is not performing should be stationed in the auditorium to monitor the reception of the narration and to intervene if the transmission fails.

- d) In the case of gallery/museum/heritage sites, the live tour should be conducted by the describer with a curator who will lead the group around the venue.

NOTE 1 – An audio technician could also play a key role in pointing out descriptions or providing names of those appearing on camera during the live event.

- e) The narrator(s) should be at the broadcast facilities during a live event.

NOTE 2 – Broadcasted feed can lag time in receiving video from a remote location; audio mixing and sound controls can impact the quality of an audio description if the video narrator is not on location.

- f) The audio description narrator should be isolated in a separate space.

NOTE 3 – The location of the narrator has an impact on the recording technologies used and noise cancellation requirements.

NOTE 4 – Using an isolated space allows the narrator to be able to speak without disrupting the audience at the live event. It also prevents noise from external sources from being transmitted by the narrator's equipment to the listener.

EXAMPLE 1 – Newscasts are normally straightforward because they take place in the same location each day. The narrator can be set up in a sound-proof booth somewhere in the studio facility with a video monitor and headphones.

EXAMPLE 2 – Many sports facilities have media areas where the media (radio and television) announcers are located.

EXAMPLE 3 – The narrator is located away from the audience so that the audience's voices do not disturb them at a live event such as a telethon, a play or a sports event.

- g) If the description is prepared for a recorded audio guide then it should be of studio quality.
- h) With allowances for translation and the possible need to describe unseen elements or unforeseen events, narrators should view and describe only what appears on stage, video, visual art or object/artwork/building.

NOTE 5 – If the narrator is viewing the entire stage/arena and not looking at a video monitor then the description might not match what is being broadcasted due to the camera angles, shot changes, zoom, etc.

6.4.2 Preparing for live narration

- a) The role of a script should be determined in advance of the narration and provided as guidance to the narrator.

NOTE 1 – This way the narrator can predetermine how closely the script needs to be followed and how much the narrator can add to or modify the script.

- b) Where possible, a script should include cues for timing.

- c) A script should be prepared and reviewed by the narrators in advance of the narration. For drama, opera, etc., the provision of a script in advance of the narration is essential.

NOTE 2 – A script can vary in its detail and contents from describing notes to fully prepared lines for delivery. However, it is important to recognize that spontaneous and unplanned events can occur during live broadcasts and events and to leave room for these to be allowed for within any script.

NOTE 3 – A script can be produced with reference to a pre-recorded live performance of, for example, a play or a live show. For drama, opera, etc., the provision of a recording of the performance is essential to aid the production of the narrator's script particularly with regard to timing the narration.

NOTE 4 – In the visual arts / heritage sector, the describer needs to prepare by meeting the relevant curatorial/education staff and having access to catalogues and other research material.

- d) The audio technician should visit the location ahead of time to identify the problems.

- e) Sound tests with equipment to be used on location should be conducted well in advance of a performance to allow for sufficient time in making modifications to equipment or equipment placement.

6.4.3 Narrator transitions in live audio

- a) Depending on the length of the programme narrators should alternate every half an hour to maintain their energy levels. This requirement may be relaxed for stage performances when long passages of dialogues provide narrators with natural breaks and the interval is logistically the most appropriate place to switch narrators. For live tours, one describer can provide the description for the whole tour.
- b) Narrator transition should feel natural.
- c) There should not be any interruption in the timing of the audio description as the narrator transition occurs.

6.5 Pre-recorded descriptions

6.5.1 Creation of pre-mixed audio after the main production process

Where pre-mixed audio description is not created as part of the production process, it should be overseen or at least approved by a member of the production team if available.

6.5.2 Audio description team for pre-mixed audio

The audio description team should involve a blind or low vision individual.

6.5.3 Evaluation of pre-mixed audio

An evaluation of the audio description should be done mid-production rather than leaving it until the end.

NOTE 1 – The necessity for approval depends on the content and on the expertise of the audio describer.

NOTE 2 – The writer compiling an audio description script can view the programme without the images to determine the challenges of the programme as part of developing the script.

6.5.4 Voices for pre-mixed audio

The audio description should be well timed to harmonize with the sounds and the voices of the original audiovisual content.

6.5.5 Sound engineering for pre-mixed audio

Sound engineers should supervise recording and mixing to avoid unbalanced sound reception.

7 Guidance on audio description

7.1 General considerations

7.1.1 User considerations

- a) At the beginning of each programme, the user should hear an auditory notification such as "This programme is audio described."
- b) The auditory notice should assume that the listener is using audio description.
EXAMPLE – "This programme is audio described" is preferable to "This programme is available...".
- c) The availability of audio description should be identified by a standardized logo both on the screen (in the case of recorded video content) and in any media where it is advertised.
NOTE – It is recognized that logos might vary from country to country. Logos must also be consistent across as many jurisdictions as possible.
- d) Users (including blind or low-vision persons) should easily be able to access information (both in real time and in advance) that identifies when an audio description is available and for which programmes or events.

- e) The user should be provided with an easy-to-use means of selecting and changing between presenting such as the following:
 - 1) basic audio description;
 - 2) extended audio description;
 - 3) no audio description.
- f) When multimedia content that is translated with subtitles has an intense dialogue it might not be possible to translate and describe everything. If it is necessary to shorten the audio description, providers of audio descriptions must make sure that there is an introduction where the characters, scenery, etc. are well presented. If the spoken subtitles are summarized the user also needs pre-information.

7.1.2 Consistency across technologies

Audio description should be consistent regardless of the technology or method being used to transmit and/or present the original content.

NOTE 1 – Some technologies used for transmission include cable, satellite, Internet and DVD.

NOTE 2 – Some technologies used for presentation include television, computer and smartphone.

7.1.3 Consistency within a programme and series

- a) The style of audio description should be consistent throughout a programme.
- b) The style of audio description should be consistent throughout the programmes in a series.

7.1.4 Placement of descriptions

- a) Audio description should only occur during non-dialogue pauses.
- b) Audio description should never occur over dialogue.
- c) Audio description should not obscure music that is necessary to understand the storyline.

NOTE – Music (diegetic or non-diegetic), sound effects and/or ambient noises might be used to increase emotional resonance within a scene or to help enhance the storyline. It is important to be sensitive to the inclusion of audio descriptions in relation to music, sound effects and ambient noise and to understand the purpose of the music, sound effect or ambient noise before deciding whether to overlay descriptions on a song, musical piece, sound effect or an ambient noise.

7.1.5 Use of pauses

- a) Audio description should not fill every moment.
- b) Where possible, descriptions should allow time for the listener to pause and enjoy/experience quiet moments, music (that is used to increase emotional resonance) and/or background noise.

7.2 Developing an audio description

7.2.1 Clarity in audio descriptions

Audio describers should present their information in a manner that can be easily understood by their intended users.

NOTE 1 – Proper pronunciation/articulation is the primary objective of the narration, and it supersedes all other considerations for narration.

NOTE 2 – The preparation of a script is useful for lexical choice and selecting which details to describe.

7.2.2 Creativity in audio descriptions

- a) As a creative process, the audio description should consider the history, logic and the tangible rules that govern genre and sub-genres.

NOTE – This is encouraged because the diverse nature of a film, television, recorded, theatrical and online content require detailed consideration of the genre involved to appreciate its nuances.

EXAMPLE 1 – A narrative genre has an audio description that elaborates more on the characters whereas an action genre has an audio description that focuses more on the plot descriptions.

EXAMPLE 2 – A video that has repeating parts has repeating audio descriptions to provide cohesion within the content theme.

- b) The words selected and used for description should be appropriate to the era and genre of the original content.

EXAMPLE 3 – A film portraying the Western United States during the early 1900s might refer to black people as "coloured people" in a dialogue.

EXAMPLE 4 – The audio description of a music video makes use of a rhythmic diction.

7.2.3 Narrating/reading audio description scripts

- a) A narration style for description should be identified and followed consistently within the same content. There are different styles that could be adopted, and which have different implications for how an audio description is developed and delivered.

EXAMPLE 1 – For a third-person style of description, the voice of the narrator is clearly distinguishable from the other voices in the video. Where the cast is predominantly male, the director chooses to have a female narrator to clearly distinguish the narrator from the production itself or to have a male narrator to integrate better with the style of the audiovisual content.

NOTE 1 – Speech synthesis can replace the human narrator in the audio description; however, research indicates a preference for the human voice-over voice synthesis.

NOTE 2 – Research indicates that if a speech synthesis is used there is a preference for quality speech synthesis since the synthesized speech is clearly identified as an audio description and avoids confusing the human voice of an audio describer with the character's voices.

NOTE 3 – The quality of a speech synthesis is determined by its similarity to the human voice and by its ability to be understood. People familiar with using speech synthesis can be used to judge the quality of the speech synthesis.

EXAMPLE 2 – The reading of spoken subtitles or other unique visual elements (such as point displays or thought bubbles) is voiced using speech synthesis or by another narrator to indicate a change in content delivery.

EXAMPLE 3 – Two voices, male and female are used. One is used to read spoken subtitles and one to read audio description scripts.

- b) The voice of the narrator should complement the content being described.

NOTE 4 – Often, trained actors are employed as narrators and use their talent to infuse the description with appropriate emotive characteristics.

EXAMPLE 4 – A young voice is used to narrate a video intended for children to make the narration seem that it is coming from another child. In some countries, a female voice is used for audio describing children's programmes.

- c) The narrator should be identified at the beginning of the programme to eliminate confusion unless, to advance their artistic vision the director chooses to have the narrators remain anonymous.

NOTE 5 – If the main character is anonymous, to coincide with the story, the director might choose to have the narrator remain anonymous too.

- d) The narrator should be consistent throughout a series of programmes unless, to advance their artistic vision the director chooses to have multiple narrators.

EXAMPLE 5 – If the main character dies halfway through a film and a new character continues the story from a different perspective and gender, the director could decide to switch to a new narrator to reinforce the break in perspectives.

- e) The scriptwriter and the narrator of the audio description should not alter, filter, or exclude content or images that disturb or offend them.

NOTE 6 – The narrator's role is to describe what is seen and not to censor it.

EXAMPLE 6 – If the original script uses coarse language the description script adopts similar coarse language.

- f) The scriptwriter and narrator should make use of a background or previous knowledge of the culture from which the content originated.

- g) Where it is not possible to make use of the knowledge of the culture in advance, pre-recorded audio descriptions should be evaluated by persons with a background in or previous knowledge of the culture from which the content originated, before being released.

NOTE 7 – This also includes knowledge of how to voice spoken subtitles in films which include them due to language changes.

EXAMPLE 7 – In a Chinese horror film, a character selects the number four in an elevator. This is significant and indicates a potential threat. Knowing the cultural significance of the number four in Chinese culture, a Chinese narrator might describe the number whereas an Italian describer might not.

7.3 Styles of narration

7.3.1 Newsreader style

Newsreader style focuses on relaying information in a serious manner.

NOTE – This style is appropriate when the goal is to educate viewers, as is frequently demonstrated in documentary films or news programme categories.

7.3.2 Commentator style

Commentator style focuses on providing entertainment.

NOTE – This style is appropriate when the goal is to include commentary and effective content together with factual content, as is frequently utilized for content that is primarily for entertainment purposes.

EXAMPLE 1 – When describing visual actions and events for a situational comedy, the narrator takes on a light-hearted tone, strategically choosing to communicate comedic visual events in a tone that is similar to the show.

EXAMPLE 2 – For a courtroom drama, the narrator aims to capture and maintain the intensity of each scene.

7.3.3 First-person

The narrator can take on the role of a character describing the character's perspective and reflections on the events.

When a first-person narration is being used it should be made clear to the audience that the narrator is taking on a first-person role.

NOTE 1 – Past tense is the common verb form used for this style.

EXAMPLE 1 – "He moved his queen diagonally to take my rook. Then I clobbered his queen with my bishop."

EXAMPLE 2 – "There was an 18-wheeler towards my left side and a police car chasing me. I put the pedal to the metal...".

EXAMPLE 3 – While "Ann wears only one glove." is in the third-person, "I noticed that Ann is wearing a single glove." is in the first-person.

NOTE 2 – The nature of the first-person is considered to be one perspective that may or may not be reliable.

7.3.4 Third-person

The narrator speaks from an external point of view.

In a third-person narration, the narrator should not include or reference themselves in the narration.

EXAMPLE 1 – "The sun rises over the city skyline."

EXAMPLE 2 – "Don picks up a book and begins to read."

EXAMPLE 3 – While "We now see Bruce entering the living room." is in the first-person; "Bruce enters the living room." is in the third-person.

7.4 Levels of importance

7.4.1 Using importance levels

Too much information can interfere with a user's ability to understand the programme. Additionally, depending on the programme genre there may be very little opportunity to place information.

Levels of importance are determined by the persons responsible for developing the audio description (e.g., content providers, scriptwriters and narrators) and will vary between different contexts.

NOTE – It is useful to include consumers of audio descriptions in making this decision where possible.

7.4.2 Essential information

Essential information is information necessary for the listener to understand the visual and auditory content within the video or performance in which it occurs.

- a) Elements essential to the narrative should be described before additional details are provided.
- b) Audio description should primarily describe the most essential visual details for the comprehension of context, plot, and characters.

NOTE 1 – Essential information can have some or all of the following properties:

- It is aimed at the target audience.
- Content must be known to be easily comprehensible.
- Most people want/need it most of the time.
- The listener would be confused as to what is happening without this information.
- For the content provider, this is the information that they absolutely want the listener to know.
- It identifies visual information that intentionally conflicts with the dialogue or background sound.

As more of these properties apply it is more likely that the information is essential.

NOTE 2 – If time allows, the audio description can include additional descriptions about the setting, a character's physical appearance and/or clothing to enhance the experience.

7.4.3 Significant information

Significant information is secondary to essential information. It provides listeners with a complete understanding of the visual content and sounds within the audiovisual content in which it appears.

Significant information should be presented if time permits in the audio description.

NOTE – Significant information can have some or all of the following properties:

- It is aimed at the target audience.
- It gives a more detailed and thorough understanding of the audiovisual information.
- It is information that can be obtained by more than, for example, a quick glance at a video.
- It is important for the user to know about it as they are listening to the main audio content to understand the video or event.

- Without this information the user has an idea of what the video or event is about but does not have a detailed understanding of it.
- For the content provider this is information that further explains and provides more details on what they want to tell the listeners.

As more of these properties apply it is more likely that the information is significant.

7.4.4 Helpful information

Helpful information provides a thorough understanding of the visual content within the video or event in which it occurs.

Helpful information is information that might be of interest to some users occasionally and if created, should be placed in an extended audio description file.

NOTE – Helpful information can have some or all of the following properties:

- It might be of interest to some who are the target audience of the audiovisual content.
- It is the "director's cut" version of the audio description that further defines the cinematic and background details.
- It can be used to reassure the listener that they have not missed something of importance.
- Without this information listeners have a fairly complete understanding of what the audiovisual content is about but have any additional information that they would still want to know.
- It includes different or other possible interpretations of the information being expressed by the visual image.
- For the content provider this is information that could clarify some things for some people, for example, those with cognitive impairments, English as second language speakers or children.
- It includes optional extra information that is seldom wanted or needed and which elaborates on what is already available.

As more of these properties apply it is more likely that the information is helpful.

7.4.5 Irrelevant information

Information is irrelevant if it does not help to provide additional understanding of the visual content for any users to understand the audiovisual content in which it occurs.

Information that is irrelevant should not be presented to users either in a basic audio description or in an extended audio description.

NOTE – Information that is irrelevant can have some or all of the following properties:

- Very few users will want to know this information.
- It is rarely helpful.
- It is not important enough to mention.
- Without this information the listener knows everything that they want or need to know to understand and enjoy the video or event.
- This is information that might result in unintended confusion or boredom, and which does not help users understand what the content provider wants to communicate.

As more of these properties apply it is more likely that the information is irrelevant.

7.5 General guidance on descriptions

7.5.1 Description of sounds

- a) Common well-known sounds such as a ringing telephone, barking dog, or a car horn should not be identified / described unless the sound is out of context or is coming from an unknown source.

EXAMPLE – Malcolm is in the driver's seat of his car. Another car moves close behind, and the driver honks their horn and shakes their middle finger angrily. The description of the honking horn need not be described as the honking can be heard and it would be an unnecessary description.

- b) An unknown sound should not be identified / described if such a description will give away the plot.
- c) In the case of a subtitled programme, a description with the sound effects should be added at the beginning of the video if there are spoken subtitles.

NOTE – This is considered to be "describing the screen real estate".

7.5.2 Logos / credits / titles

- a) Titles and credits at the beginning and the end of programmes should be read at a normal pace without rushing.
- b) In general, although it is unlikely that there will be sufficient time to allow for a verbal delivery of all credits, effort should be made to include as many as possible.

7.5.3 On-screen text

The narrator should acknowledge the text elements, describe the content, and read the messages.

NOTE – Signs, speech bubbles and other non-captioned on-screen text elements might appear in the background which has some relevance to the setting, plot, or understanding of actions taking place.

EXAMPLE – "A road sign reads: 'Caution construction zone'."

7.6 Guidance on identifying objects

7.6.1 Identifying objects

- a) In languages that have definite and indefinite articles, when an object is first introduced, the indefinite article (e.g., "a", "an" in English) should be used.
- b) When the same object is referred to or has already been known, named, or identified, the definite article (e.g., "the" in English) should be used.

NOTE 1 – This helps distinguish new from known objects and multiple objects.

EXAMPLE 1 – "Sandra removes a chocolate from a heart shaped red box. She bites into the chocolate, closes her eyes and smiles."

EXAMPLE 2 – "I entered the cave bearing a sword. I saw the sword Excalibur embedded in a large stone and ran to it. I dropped my own sword on the ground and slowly withdrew the jewel-encrusted Excalibur from the stone."

EXAMPLE 3 – "Alan takes a broom out of the closet. He takes the broom with him and leaves the kitchen."

NOTE 2 – An object can be considered as known if its presence is understood as a given or is common to the circumstance or setting.

EXAMPLE 4 – "Ida and George are sitting on the couch."

EXAMPLE 5 – "I lit the candles on the dining room table."

EXAMPLE 6 – "She waters the flowerbeds with the garden hose."

7.6.2 Describing colour

- a) Colour should be included in descriptions as appropriate.

- b) It should not be assumed that colour holds no significance to blind persons or persons with low vision or that they have never seen colour or lack understanding of the concept of colour or its cultural symbolism.

NOTE – Some poetic descriptions involving the symbolism of colours might not be easily translated into other languages or cultures.

- c) Word choices for colour may also contain a textural element.

EXAMPLE 1 – "The ballroom is lit with a fire." The word "fire" in this example is intended to represent the colours of red and yellow but also has textural properties of heat or warmth.

EXAMPLE 2 – "My gown is trimmed in gold". The word gold used in this example can be understood as a colour but also has textural properties of being heavy and soft.

7.6.3 Describing visual effects

- a) Camera-specific terminology should be avoided unless it is a commonly used term in the language.

NOTE 1 – Visual distortions such as blurring, focus and mirror views can be used to provide a character's point of view or mood.

NOTE 2 – Camera angles or camera point-of-view can be meaningful.

EXAMPLE 1 – "I focused on a small paper lying on the sidewalk." The camera zooms in on the small paper on the sidewalk.

NOTE 3 – Lighting and lighting effects can be used for mood and/or symbolism.

EXAMPLE 2 – "The light cast a shadow of someone behind the curtains."

EXAMPLE 3 – "The operating room becomes awash in white light. A blue sky appears."

- b) Some dances, dance styles or movements have specific names that should be used. When the dance is not identifiable by a specific name, a more general term can be used.

NOTE 4 – Dancing and choreography are a combination of movements, music and motions in addition to the dress and costume attire of the individuals appearing within a scene.

EXAMPLE 4 – A specific type of dance could be "the Tango", whereas a general term could be "Latin dancing".

EXAMPLE 5 – A specific martial art form could be "Karate", whereas a general descriptor could be "martial arts".

7.7 Guidance on identifying persons

7.7.1 Identifying characters or places by name

- a) Minor characters or places should be described by their prominent physical appearance or identity.

- b) Once an appellative is established for minor characters it should be used consistently.

- c) Minor characters or places, or those whose names remain unknown should be described in general terms.

EXAMPLE 1 – "A tall well-dressed woman walks through the crowded sidewalk to the car and leans through the open window and asks..."

- d) When known characters or places first appear they should be identified or introduced using their full name.

- e) After their first introduction, the narrator should consistently use the name that is most commonly used by the other characters to refer to well-known characters.

EXAMPLE 2 – When a doctor first appears, the narrator says, "Michael Hunt entered the room." Since Michael is well known to the others in the room the narrator later refers to him as "Michael".

EXAMPLE 3 – "Raj Binder enters the classroom and approaches Consuela Singh. Raj grasps Consuela's hand and together they turn towards the children sitting at their desks."

7.7.2 Physical appearance

7.7.2.1 Character's physical appearance

- a) Third-person descriptions should describe qualities that would allow the listener to draw their own conclusions i.e., long shiny dark hair, large brown eyes, tall athletic build and flawless complexion.
- b) Third-person descriptions should avoid using terms that evaluate the character's appearance (such as beautiful, lovely, ugly, plain) unless relevant to the plot or genre.
NOTE – For third-person descriptions the level of attractiveness of a character is a value judgment.
- c) First-person descriptions may provide a personal assessment of attractiveness if it is relevant to that particular character.

EXAMPLE – When the narrator takes on the character of a beauty pageant contestant using language that describes the individual's self-assessment of her beauty (or that of others) is appropriate.

7.7.2.2 Facial / physical expression

Terms should be used which describe emotion or reaction through facial / physical expressions when they are important to the understanding of characters and plot.

EXAMPLE – "John gives an evil smile as he escapes in his car" adds extra unnecessary words "gives an evil smile" where one word is sufficient as in "John sneers as he speeds away in his car."

7.7.2.3 Attire

Describing the clothing worn by characters should be included if it helps establish characterization, role, plot development, setting, occasion, location, or the enjoyment of the genre.

NOTE – Attire is often used to portray a stereotype. In these instances, a sighted viewer instantly identifies the character type by their clothing. The narrator could either describe the attire or the character type as appropriate for the situation.

EXAMPLE 1 – A comedy series has a recurring character who is a nerd/geek. Describing this character's unfashionable, outdated, and ill-fitting or inappropriate clothing could help support the characterization.

EXAMPLE 2 – A scene in a drama series involves investigators entering a bar where many of the patrons are tattooed and wearing leather and chains. The narrator could elect to simply call them "bikers" or to describe their attire or both.

EXAMPLE 3 – A person wearing a white coat over their regular clothing and carrying a stethoscope is a character stereotype that instantly identifies them as a doctor.

7.7.3 Race / ethnic origin

7.7.3.1 Identifying race / ethnic origin

The appearance of characters should not require that they be identified by race or ethnic origin unless these types of identifications provide meaningful information or insight to a sighted viewer which would not otherwise be available to persons who are blind or who have low vision in a similar timeframe i.e., plot development, character motivation or background.

NOTE 1 – Consider the role of a casting director. Is a character's race or ethnicity relevant to the selection and casting of roles and if so, why?

NOTE 2 – If sighted viewers could use the race or ethnic origin of the characters as clues to solving the crime or providing a better understanding of the culture or behaviour of the characters, it would be appropriate to include race/ethnic origin in the description.

EXAMPLE 1 – In a police drama series, investigators are interviewing witnesses/victims of a robbery. The actors playing the roles are Asian, Black and Aboriginal. The narrator does not identify the subject's race/ethnic origin unless it is relevant to the plot, and it cannot be recognized from the existing dialogue.

EXAMPLE 2 – A medical series with a large multiracial ensemble cast have doctors treating patients of various races and ethnic origins. In these instances, the race or ethnic background of the characters might have no relevance. The rare exception might be relevant if such information specifically relates to a plot development i.e., the patient has a disease that is specific to a racial/ethnic group.

EXAMPLE 3 – A reality show has contestants of various racial and ethnic backgrounds. If the narrator thinks or has been informed by the director that this type of information is useful or meaningful to the viewer, then it is important that all the contestants be identified using these characteristics.

7.7.3.2 Terms to describe race / ethnicity

- a) Derogatory or disrespectful language should never be used unless it is part of the development of the character in a first-person style.

EXAMPLE – If the narrator took on the role of an Indian princess from the mid-nineteenth century, the use of derogatory language when talking about or referring to people of a "lower" class might be appropriate if that type of language is used in the original content.

NOTE – It is important to remain sensitive and aware that some ethnic/racial descriptive terms accepted in western cultures might differ from other cultures and do change over time.

- b) Descriptions should use common and factual terms to describe individuals that would be understood by the majority of listeners such as the following:
- 1) light brown, brown, dark brown, tan, light tan;
 - 2) light/fair skinned, dark skinned, olive-skinned;
 - 3) tan, ruddy, olive, white, yellow.
- c) If the attire of a character suggests their cultural or ethnic origin then this information should be described i.e., kilt, burqa, saris, kimono, parka, etc.

7.7.3.3 Use of racial / ethnic descriptive terms in settings

Non-judgmental ethnic terms may be used to concisely describe a setting.

NOTE – There are instances where the physical location/setting is relayed visually through stereotyped images or understandable cultural clues. Such settings and descriptive terms are currently accepted in western cultural vernacular. Attempting to describe the setting to a blind person or a person who has low vision through a collection of "descriptive clues" rather than providing an interpretation otherwise obvious to all sighted viewers would not be reasonable.

EXAMPLE – An open-air marketplace has multitudes of stalls and exotic goods on display and if the vendors and consumers are dressed in traditional middle eastern attire it is described as "an Arab market".

7.7.4 Gender-related

7.7.4.1 Identifying gendered expression

- a) The appearance of characters should not require that they be identified by their gender expression unless these types of identifications would provide meaningful information or insight to a sighted viewer that would not otherwise be available to persons who are blind or have low vision in a similar timeframe i.e., plot development, character motivation or background.

NOTE – Consider the role of the casting director. Is a character's gender expression relevant to the selection and casting of roles and if so, why?

EXAMPLE 1 – In a comedy series, characters are typically males appearing in cross-dress clothing acting as female characters (even modifying their voices to a higher pitch). This is part of other characterizations that is used for comedic effect. If sighted viewers benefit from the entertainment value of the cross-dressers, then it might be appropriate to include cross-dressing in the description.

EXAMPLE 2 – In a drama, the central character first appears as a male until it is revealed he was born biologically female. The character struggles with society's views of gender expression in a conservative small-town environment. To be accepted as a male the character changes his voice to a lower pitch. The narrator refers to the character as a female who is transitioning to a male.

- b) In instances where the gender of the person helps the audience in understanding the character development, it should be described.

7.7.4.2 Terms to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer (LGBTQ)

- a) Derogatory or disrespectful language should never be used unless it is part of the development of the character in a first-person style.

EXAMPLE – If the narrator took on the role of a gay priest from the mid-nineteenth century, the use of derogatory language, such as "homo," when talking about or referring to him might be appropriate if that type of language is used in the original content.

NOTE – It is important to remain sensitive and aware that some gendered or/and LGBTQ descriptive terms accepted in western culture might differ from other cultures and do change over time.

- b) Descriptions should use common and factual terms to describe individuals that would be understood by the majority of the viewers such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, or queer.
- c) If the attire of a character suggests their identity, then this information may be described i.e., butch, femme, masculine, and/or feminine, etc.

7.7.5 Disabilities

7.7.5.1 Identifying disabilities

- a) The appearance of characters should not require that they be identified by their disability unless these types of identifications would provide meaningful information or insight to a sighted viewer that would not otherwise be available to persons who are blind or who have low vision in a similar timeframe i.e., plot development, character motivation or background.

NOTE – Consider the role of a casting director. Is a character's disability relevant to the selection and casting of roles and if so, why?

EXAMPLE 1 – If the audience knows a character is using a wheelchair and that person enters the screen. The narrator says that person "comes in" rather than "rolls in" because the act of arriving is what is important to the plot.

- b) If an assistive device is central to a character's movement it may be appropriate to include verbs that accurately describe the character's entrance.

EXAMPLE 2 – A wheelchair rugby documentary having diverse cast members that includes amputees, quadriplegics and paraplegics. In this instance, the diversity of the character's physical abilities might have no individual relevance. The rare exception might be if such information specifically relates to a plot development i.e., one of the players has more use of their upper body and hands and this has an impact on the other players perceptions of their involvement on the team.

7.7.5.2 Terms to describe persons with disabilities, assistive devices, and disability

- a) Derogatory or disrespectful language should never be used unless it is part of the development of the character in a first-person style.

EXAMPLE – If the narrator took on the role of someone exhibited in a "freak show" during the mid-nineteenth century, the use of derogatory language when talking about or referring to them might be appropriate if that type of language is used in the original content.

NOTE 1 – Language being used to talk about disability affects societal perceptions of persons with disabilities. It is important to remain sensitive and aware that some disability descriptive terms accepted in western culture might differ from other cultures and can change over time.

- b) Commonly used terms should be used to describe individuals who would be understood by the majority of viewers such as someone with epilepsy, schizophrenia, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, blind or has low vision, quadriplegic and autistic.

NOTE 2 – It is important to recognize the terms that are preferred by the people being described (e.g., deaf individuals often prefer to be described as "a deaf person" rather than "a person who is deaf").

NOTE 3 – Derogatory terms to be avoided currently include retarded, idiot, moron, imbecile, wheelchair bound, crippled, handicap and gimp.

- c) Since the above lists are not exhaustive, care should be taken to check the situation in particular jurisdictions with organizations controlled by persons with disabilities.

NOTE 4 – Common assistive device terms include the following:

- mobility: elbow crutches, wheelchairs, scooters, artificial limbs, walkers, casts, electric scooter, and wheelchair ramps;
- respiratory: breathing tubes, respirators, inhalator or inhalers, etc.;
- visual / auditory: hearing aids, teletypewriter (TTY) phones, cochlear implants, guide dogs, white canes, glasses, etc.;
- others: EpiPens (Epinephrine auto-injector), catheter, feeding tube, other medical devices.

NOTE 5 – Types of disfigurements include burns, bruising, rash, scars, birthmarks, amputation, reconstructive surgery, balding, etc.

NOTE 6 – Each sign language has its own name [e.g., American sign language (ASL), Japanese sign language (JSL), langue des signes Quebecois (LSQ), ASL interpreters, Braille].

7.7.6 Age

- a) Commonly used descriptive words that immediately identify the approximate age of the subject: infant, baby, toddler, child, pre-teen, teenager, youth, adult, young, middle-aged, elderly, should be used in third-person descriptions of age, unless greater detail is required.

NOTE – Further descriptions could include the ranges of ages, such as the following:

- "a child of 8 to 10 years old";
- "a woman in her early 30s";
- "a man in his 50s".

- b) For a first-person description, it may be appropriate to state the age of the character e.g., "I was 15 years old".

7.8 Guidance on relationships

7.8.1 General guidance on explicit content

Script related to violent or sexually explicit content should not have the effect of censoring or changing the original content.

NOTE 1 – If the original content has a visual-only warning of the inclusion of violent or sexually explicit material, it is important that a warning be included in the introductory audio description.

NOTE 2 – If a blind person or a person with low vision would be prevented from understanding or appreciating the original content, it is important for narrators to deliver scripts that describe the explicit nature of the content.

NOTE 3 – If sighted viewers could use information about the violent or sexually explicit behaviour of the characters, or the nature of specific images in the original content as clues to provide a better understanding of the plot, or the culture or behaviour of the characters, it would be appropriate to include unambiguous references to such behaviour or such images in the description.

7.8.2 General guidance on relationships

In most instances, unless the relationship between individuals is known, it should not be specified.

NOTE 1 – Certain relationships would be obvious or inferred to a sighted viewer because of cultural stereotypes i.e., a young woman holding an infant would often be described as a mother, a man throwing a

ball to a child would be described as a father, an elderly person holding a baby or playing with a small child might be called a grandparent.

NOTE 2 – If the true nature of the relationship is unknown, the narrator could use terms such as motherly, fatherly, grandfatherly, etc. to describe such individuals.

7.8.3 Establishing place / setting / time of day

Information on the view of the general setting, time of day and sometimes weather conditions which is often provided very briefly during the opening credits or the opening minutes of the programme, should be shared with the listeners.

NOTE 1 – Even in a recurring series where many viewers might already know the primary location, confirmation, weather, and/or the time of day establishes the context and possible relevance.

EXAMPLE 1 – "Sailboats of all sizes race through the harbour with their sails furled."

EXAMPLE 2 – "A full moon is shining over the Boston general hospital."

EXAMPLE 3 – "Children are frolicking at the shoreline in this crowded beach."

EXAMPLE 4 – "During daytime in the city, heavy snow fell as cars moved slowly in the congested traffic."

EXAMPLE 5 – "My neighbour's son was riding his bike and delivering newspapers on my street in the rain."

NOTE 2 – It is important that flashbacks, flash forwards, jump in time, re-enactments, time distortions, and time travel is identified using appropriate time reference terminology.

EXAMPLE 6 – "100 years later, a spaceship crashed."

7.8.4 Interaction between animated characters / objects and real actors

An animated character or object should be identified as being animated.

NOTE – An animated character can sound like a real actor and could be confused for one.

7.9 Guidance on parts of speech

7.9.1 Descriptive verbs

When possible, descriptive verbs should be used to reduce repetition of common verbs to enhance audience experience and understanding:

EXAMPLE 1 – "To hold" can be more descriptively described as to grasp, to grip, to clasp, to clutch or to seize.

EXAMPLE 2 – "To walk" can be more effectively described as to saunter, to glide, to hobble, to march, to stride, to stagger, to pace, etc.

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