

A VOLUNTARY INITIATIVE BY ACCESSIBLE MEDIA INC. (AMI)

# Integrated Described Video Best Practices

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Version 2.7

**Accessible Media Inc. (AMI) Described Video Specialists and Technicians**

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The intent of this document is to provide guidance to the producers of integrated described programming in an effort to achieve uniformity.

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## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

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## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Introduction

Despite the various terminologies from around the world for methods that make media accessible to people who are blind and partially sighted, the common denominator remains the same; to provide viewers with vision loss access to non-verbal elements of television programming, information programming, motion pictures and live theatre.

Although the delivery and production methods differ slightly, the common element is that a variety of techniques are used in combination with dialogue and environmental soundscapes to enable viewers to understand the interaction of actors with the set or environment.

In Canada, there are various methods of making media accessible to viewers who are blind and partially sighted. While the purpose of this document is to outline best practices for Integrated Described Video, the following offers a distinction between Described Video, Audio Description, Live Described Video and Integrated Described Video. Each of these has a unique place among the media landscape, depending on the medium.

### Overview: Methods of Making Media Accessible

#### Described Video (DV)

The term described video, or DV<sup>1</sup>, refers to the narrated description of a program's main visual elements, such as settings, costumes or body language. DV provides essential story information in an audio format, enabling television programming to be more accessible to people who are blind or partially sighted.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the World Blind Union, description services are also known as: Audio Description, Video Description, Descriptive Video Information, Descriptive Video Service™ and DVS™ (registered by WGBH Boston), Narrative Description and Descriptive Video.

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For instance, “A tall man wearing a dark coat stands outside a hospital entrance with his hand in his coat pocket,” may be a suitable narrative description for *The Godfather*. Without this narration, a viewer who is blind would hear nothing except the sound of background traffic.

In another major motion picture, *Star Trek VI*, a main character is seen rock climbing with a colleague levitating next to him. Again, without the DV, the blind viewer would not be able to grasp the gravity of the situation.

Typically, DV is undertaken after a program has been completed and packaged, with various methods of enabling the feature depending on the medium being used.

As such, DV is most suitable for previously packaged and repurposed programming, including scripted entertainment programming (i.e., drama, comedy, etc.) and documentaries.

Understanding the fundamentals of DV is essential in order to implement the other methods of making media accessible to people who are blind and partially sighted. As such, readers are encouraged to review the *Post Production Described Video Best Practices: Artistic and Technical Guidelines*, published by the Described Video Best Practices (DVBP) Committee, prior to applying the methodologies outlined below.

### Audio Description (AD)

The term AD is more commonly used in markets other than Canada including the United States and the United Kingdom<sup>2</sup>. For all intents and purposes, it is practically identical to DV in that a separate narrated track accompanies the program providing descriptions of on-screen or onstage elements.

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<sup>2</sup> The term Audio Description is also used in Australia, China, Europe, India, Korea and New Zealand.

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In Canada, however, AD has a separate definition from DV: AD uses a program host or announcer to provide a basic voice-over, reading text and describing graphics that appear on the screen<sup>3</sup>.

Audio Description should be used when on-screen talent refers to graphical props such as charts or images. For instance, if someone is presenting pie or line charts conveying graphical illustrations of large volumes of data, the following AD could be added, “A steep line represents price fluctuation over the past 12 months. The line rises steeply for the first three quarters and then flattens for the balance of the year.”

AD is often used for newscasts, weather reports, sports scores or financial data, and is best suited to live, information-based programming.

### Live Described Video (Live DV)

Live DV is a type of DV that occurs in real-time simultaneously with a live event. It is a process of listening, watching and narrating while determining where the description is necessary as the performance, event or live broadcast takes place. Unlike DV however, a described broadcast that is event live has no opportunity for revision.

Live DV is most suitable for sporting events, award ceremonies, telethons, parades, interactive specials or other special broadcast events.

### Live-to-Tape DV

Live-to-Tape DV is similar in nature as to Live DV, except that the real-time narration procedure is applied to previously recorded programs. This method is used to expedite the production process for productions with a fast turnaround and little action.

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<sup>3</sup> CRTC: [TV Access for People with Visual Impairments: Described Video and Audio Description](#); accessed June 1, 2016

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Live-to-Tape DV is typically applied to interviews, talk shows and current event magazine-style programming.

### Integrated Described Video

Integrated Described Video (IDV)<sup>4</sup> is the next generation of DV.

IDV is a method of producing television content for blind and partially sighted audiences from the ground up, whereby the identification of key visual elements is incorporated into the pre-production, production and post-production phases, so that traditional DV is not required after the program has been packaged.

For instance, interaction between two characters might include dialogue such as “Come on in to my office and have a seat across from me at my desk.” Of particular note is that the dialogue used to convey the scene is in character and is not awkward or out of place.

IDV is not meant to replace DV. Rather, it is the preferred application for original content where description can be included from the planning stages of the program. It works well with factual programming, documentaries, field production pieces and interstitials.

### How is IDV Different from DV?

There are four main categories of differences between IDV and DV:

- **Executed throughout production**  
Whereas DV is traditionally executed after a program is complete and packaged, IDV is executed from the outset of content creation and continues throughout pre-production, production, post-production and packaging.
- **No additional descriptive narration**

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<sup>4</sup> Integrated Described Video (IDV) was formerly known as Embedded Described Video (EDV).

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Since a program with IDV is created from the ground up with accessibility features built right into the original production, a program with IDV does not contain or require any traditional descriptive narration.

- **One delivery format**

Since a program with IDV does not require descriptive narration, there is no separate or secondary delivery format. A program produced with IDV is accessible to people who are blind and partially sighted, right out of the box.

- **Many production factors**

When creating a traditional DV version of the program, the production factors typically involve writing the description, recording the description and then mixing the narration with the program. With IDV, the entire audio palette can be utilized to make content accessible to those who are unable to see the picture. The process is akin to producing a radio play.

As such, many more production factors can facilitate a naturally descriptive program, including: making the scriptwriting more descriptive, adjusting the narration, training hosts and guests to be more descriptive with their interactions, utilizing and/or omitting environmental audio, using sound effects and music cues to establish action and scene changes, and the list goes on.



### Integrated Described Video Best Practices

## Integrated Described Video Working Group Membership

Alliance for the Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC)	Leo Bissonnette, Anthony Tibbs
Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB)	Jim Tokos
Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)	Lui Greco
Accessible Media Inc. (AMI)	Mark Bialkowski, Peter Burke, Simone Cupid, Janis Davidson Pressick, Michelle Dudas, David Errington, Alison Gorbould, Emily Harding, Émilie Huberdeau, Andrew Morris, Robert Pearson (former Chair), Brian Perdue, Ron Rickford. Chris O'Brien (Chair)
Descriptive Video Works (DVW)	Laura Davies, Diane Johnson
Corus Entertainment	Karen Clout, Sylvie Courtemanche, Mike Menard, Liz Thorpe
CBC	Heather Boyce, Patrick Dunphy
Bell Media Inc.	Colin Bennett, Geoff Grant, Ryan McGauley, Jessica Miller
TV5	Regis Harrisson, Annie Robinson
Onextra Inc.	Gabor Zoltan
Extreme Reach	Clinton Young
Inclusive Media and Design	Rob Harvie
Ryerson University	Charles Silverman
Beyond Description Sound Services	Richard Crooks
Sette Post Production	Julie Bouchard, Benoit Delpech
PMT	Julien Masson
College of Sports Media	Jim Van Horne
CNST	Jean Cabral
MELS	Edward Peitsch
Media Concierge	Matt Matysiak
JDescribe	Jim DeMelo
	Kat Mullaly, Marc-Andre Pichette, Brian Power

See the Post-Production Described Video Best Practices and Live Described Video Best Practices for original member profiles.



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## **Integrated Described Video Best Practices**

### **Accessible Media Inc. (AMI) Described Video Specialists and Technicians**

#### **Robert Pearson**

Robert Pearson joined AMI in April 2011 as Director, Accessible Digital Media, responsible for leading AMI's efforts to improve the accessibility of digital media, develop and manage AMI's relationships with likeminded and accessibility focused organizations and to liaise with the CRTC on various initiatives.

In December 2014, Robert was promoted to the role of Accessibility Officer for AMI. In that role, Robert was focused on establishing and maintaining AMI as a leader and standard bearer on media accessibility by setting and influencing accessibility standards and best practices, shaping organization policies and encouraging the development of technology and industry solutions that contribute to creating an inclusive environment within AMI and with their external partners. After his promotion to Accessibility Officer, Robert was appointed in February 2015 as a representative on one of the subcommittees overseen by the Federal Communications Commission's Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) in the United States.

A passionate advocate and pioneer for media accessibility, Robert Pearson passed away suddenly on December 26, 2015. His hard work lives on in the Described Video Best Practices projects that he spearheaded back in 2012.

#### **Simone Cupid, Emily Harding and Ron Rickford**

The Accessible Media Inc. (AMI) DV production team boasts more than 15 years' experience making media accessible to Canada's blind and partially sighted community.

Collectively, the team has written and produced thousands of shows with described video including television series, movies, documentaries, sporting and live events and PSAs.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

In July 2012, the team worked alongside the Canadian Association of Broadcasters and community groups to develop the Described Video Best Practices, which are supported by the CRTC and provide guidelines and ensure consistency with post-production DV. In addition, the team has been heavily involved in the research and development of Integrated Described Video (IDV) which is an inclusive approach to making television accessible without adding a described video track in post-production. The AMI DV team provides feedback and quality control on programs created with IDV to ensure they meet Canada's high standards for described programming.

The DV team is also instrumental in training external partners, including The Weather Network and CBC, to ensure their content is accessible.

Over the last four years, the team has taken an active role in describing a plethora of live events including but not limited to the Royal Wedding, Toronto Blue Jays Baseball games, the Grey Cup, the Canadian Screen Awards, the Toronto Santa Claus Parade and the Federal Election.

Finally, in addition to broadcast, the AMI DV team has worked in collaboration with the Royal Ontario Museum, the Stratford Theatre and the Audio Description Alliance of South Africa to make their venues and exhibits accessible to blind and partially sighted visitors.

### Andrew Morris

Andrew Morris is a production executive with over 15 years' experience in broadcast production, specializing in content development, television production, and making media accessible to people of all abilities. In collaboration with his DV production colleagues at AMI, he pioneered a method of creating original television content that audiences who are blind and partially sighted can enjoy without the need for additional audio description, now known as IDV. Since then, he served as Executive Producer for several television series, including *Milestones of Champions*, a documentary mini-series in partnership with the Canadian Paralympic Broadcast Consortium. Andrew also spearheaded development of the network's current



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affairs program, *Canada in Perspective*, winner of the Academy's 2016 Diversity Award, and served as development executive for the network's critically acclaimed cooking show, *Four Senses*, hosted by *MasterChef* winner Christine Ha and *Top Chef Canada* winner Carl Heinrich.

### Mark Phoenix

Mark Phoenix has spent most of his professional life making things sound good. He is a graduate of Ryerson University and a former production coordinator for a campus-community radio station. Born with low vision and cone dystrophy, Mark's personal interest in making media accessible led him to volunteer as a reader at AMI's predecessor organization, before joining the audio post-production team at AMI-tv in 2008.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Guidelines for Usage

These high-level guidelines are designed to provide guidance to producers who wish to incorporate Integrated Described Video into their productions. They are not an instructional manual. These guidelines are intended to be complementary to the Post-Production Described Video Best Practices as well as any internal established best practices producers may have developed based upon their experiences.

Producers of description should ensure that the work they produce is in line with these artistic guidelines, and their logistical and technical equivalents, with the understanding that they be considered alongside any established internal best practices. Canadian broadcasting industry uniformity will be sought in this manner, by providing a common foundation on which to base all description.

These guidelines are not point-by-point instructions on how to produce good-quality Integrated Described Video. Rather they are an industry-agreed-upon aggregation of the important elements required to produce good-quality IDV. The method of implementation of these guidelines along with any internal best practices will be at the discretion of the describer and may differ in each instance upon consideration of the work being conducted.

### Main Themes of This Document

#### Universal design

IDV is not simply DV that is added during the production. It includes more information than verbal description of the visuals, such as environmental sounds, audio effects, music and pacing. It's meant to be part of the production, and meant to be for everybody.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### IDV is different from DV

With IDV, producers have full control to make the production accessible from the outset, whereas DV is a service added once a program has been packaged.

### Everybody gets the same information at the same time

With IDV, the listener is always prioritized. Make a conscious effort to reveal information through the audio before or at the same time as it is revealed visually.

### Listen to the audio

If something is missing or confusing, that's an indication that the IDV could be improved.

### Document Features

Accompanying some of the best practices within this document, there are also examples, techniques and considerations.

- **Best Practices** are tested methods that should be utilized in the creation of high-quality IDV.
- **Techniques** are procedures that can be utilized when solving specific IDV-related issues.
- **Considerations** are matters to keep in mind during the creation process.
- **Examples** are scenarios, hypothetical or real-world, which demonstrate the appropriate circumstances in which to apply particular practices and techniques, or to illustrate considerations.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Role of the DV Consultant

Since producing a program with IDV involves consideration at each stage of the production process, an experienced describer is assigned to a program from the outset and becomes a member of the crew, applying DV best practices throughout production.

The describer essentially acts as a consultant to the director and/or producer, participating in the process from pre-production (scriptwriting, talent coaching, etc.) to post-production (video editing, audio editing, etc.). The describer receives an on-screen credit as “DV Consultant” for their production efforts and to identify the individual accountable for the accessibility of the program to blind and partially sighted viewers.

DV Consultants have three main functions:

#### 1) Training

DV Consultants train everyone involved with the production including the cast, crew and guests to ensure all parties are aligned with IDV objectives and best practices. IDV training includes the following:

- Educating contributors on what IDV is and its uses
- Rehearsing ‘descriptive language’ and getting contributors ‘thinking descriptively’ in intros and interviews
- Consolidating a roster of descriptive terms
- Determining acceptable and unacceptable terminologies
- Considering ambiguous sounds like specialized mobility or accessibility tools (e.g., tapping of a white cane, a wheelchair motor, etc.)
- Considering locations and soundscapes that may require clarification

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- Considering the positioning of on-camera contributors so that they can be recognized by voice and placement on-screen
- Being mindful that frequent relocation may require extra consideration regarding distinct environmental sounds
- Being mindful that changes in sound, light and atmosphere may require IDV clarification

### 2) Quality control

At each step of the process, DV Consultants ensure the program is written and produced in a manner that makes it accessible for blind and partially sighted audiences.

### 3) Documentation

Notes are taken during each phase of production as a means of relaying lessons learned and to provide accurate records of actions taken to ensure accessibility.

### Qualities of an Expert DV Consultant

While judging the effectiveness of DV is subjective, an individual with specific areas of experience, coupled with a positive industry reputation in those areas, is ideally positioned as an expert DV consultant. Those areas of expertise are:

### Experience with DV

Likely the most obvious, a DV consultant must have strong experience and a positive reputation in the industry for writing and producing effective DV within a broadcast environment that is aligned with the Post-Production Described Video Best Practices<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Artistic and Technical Guidelines provided by the Described Video Best Practices (DVBP) Committee, consisting of broadcasters, description producers and community representatives

## **Integrated Described Video Best Practices**

### **Experience with Television and Media Writing**

Simply adding traditional DV at an earlier stage of production defeats the purpose of creating an entertaining and universally accessible program that all audiences can enjoy without the need for DV. DV Consultants who have education and experience writing for television and media are well-equipped to help writers make their scripts more accessible organically.

### **Experience with Television and Media Production**

Creating a program with IDV entails the participation of a DV Consultant at all stages of production. Therefore, familiarity with those stages, including the sequence of production events, production crew hierarchy, and all other aspects of production, enables the DV Consultant to provide appropriate and timely advice.

### **Experience with Audio Post-Production**

While technically a phase of production, in this context, audio post-production deserves a category of its own. DV Consultants who have a strong aptitude for audio post are well-equipped to offer creative solutions that involve the entire soundscape, not just the dialogue. Audio post is the last link in the chain to ensure the production is accessible, and sometimes adding or even removing simple sound effects in a scene can achieve the desired result.

### **Producer's Intent**

While creating a program with IDV requires input from an expert DV Consultant at all stages of production, one of the most important considerations for making programs with IDV is the intent of the producer.

For instance, when making television programs for the general population, producers are aware that the DV is added after the program has been completed and packaged – or after the producer's job is done. As such, there is generally no need to be concerned with DV during production.

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However, for programs produced with IDV, the producer must have the intent to make the program accessible from the outset. It is with that intent that the producer accommodates the DV consultant, ensuring they become a member of the production team and participate in the program from start to finish.

In other words, simply checking off the box of hiring an expert DV consultant is not a guarantee that a program will be accessible. Making a program accessible with IDV requires the will and intent of the producer to make the program accessible for viewers who are blind and partially sighted.

### Identifying an IDV Program

It is important to identify programs produced with IDV, in the same way programs with DV are identified – to make audiences aware that the program is accessible to blind and partially sighted viewers.

Programs produced with IDV that are broadcast on AMI-tv have an ID at the beginning of the program identifying the program as such. The following ID is displayed and read aloud:

*“This program contains Integrated Described Video. It was written to be accessible for blind and partially sighted viewers.”*

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Pre-Production

#### Preparation

- Consider what kinds of sounds you want to capture for use in a given segment and the environments in which you intend to shoot, with regard to how they will affect the IDV you intend to create.
- Locations with many people may provide opportunities for capturing lots of good crowd noise for use in B-roll and multitrack layering; reporters and subjects may have to speak louder than usual if the location is particularly busy, or has high-volume noise sources such as PA systems.
- Outdoor locations may suffer from wind noise, but they can also feature natural noises such as chirping birds or rippling water.
- While technology can generate distinct, transient noises that can make crafting IDV around B-roll or subjects easier, sources of constant noise such as compressors and power-line hum are much less pleasant to listen to and provide little to no useful information to the audience.
- Prepping the cast and contributors well in advance helps them be much more prepared to create proper IDV in a short time on set. This includes explaining carefully what IDV is and how it is best used. It might be productive to create a module for cast and field crew that is similar to AMI's module for producers. Extending this information beyond the creative team has proven to be very helpful, especially in cutting down time explaining setups and systems.
- Prepping Cast/Characters in advance is key, especially in a pre-interview. Solution: Provide a cut-down presentation or spiel to prep talent, guests, crew – everybody.
- Plan keys in advance of shooting.
- For honorary guests, the producer will need more advanced preparation.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Production

#### Interviews

- Introduce everyone on camera as they appear (e.g., if two people are shown at the beginning of a segment, introduce them both at the beginning of the segment)
- Ensure interviews work for radio (e.g., if relevant, agree verbally, not by nodding); make an effort to incorporate descriptive language in interviews and V/O.
  - **Consideration:** Vocabulary: When describing something, “you see” can be omitted.
  - **Example:** Make sure it’s clear when someone is doing an impersonation.
- Avoid language like here, there, this, that, see, “look at this” or gesturing to some undescribed object.
- Don’t omit details in the Lower Third or V/O just to make the program accessible, as it may take away understanding for both sighted and blind viewers.
  - **Consideration:** Introduce locations if necessary. Sometimes the location needs to be identified to make sense of ambient sound.
  - **Consideration:** Make an effort to incorporate more descriptions in interviews and V/O. Reiterate who people are by description, not just a name ID. (e.g., “the child/girl with red hair streaming down her back”). It is good to help people along, because it is not always easy to follow and remember names.

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- **Consideration:** Encourage hosts/presenters to actively participate. When nodding, or giving a thumbs-up, give some sort of verbal cue that they are on board or excited.
- When a presenter addresses the camera (the audience), be clear about whom s/he is addressing. Suggestions: call people by name, call the audience “you at home”.
- When shooting/editing B-roll, capture/utilize visuals that contribute to the focus of the story. Also, vice versa – if there is a need to use a certain visual/B-roll, ensure it is captured in the storytelling.
- Ensure interviews work for radio.
- Don’t call attention to IDV in an interview. “I am going to describe this for our visually impaired audience.”

### B-Roll

- If a second camera or sound recordist is available, use them to focus on capturing B-roll, environmental sounds and incidental sounds for later use in editing, freeing the videographer to focus on capturing audio from interviewers and subjects.
- Pay particular attention to capturing high-quality audio in B-roll and action. Clear, reasonably identifiable sounds can fill narrative gaps that would otherwise have to be identified in IDV; conversely, poorly-captured or ambiguous sounds will need to be identified, reducing the time available to describe strictly visual elements.
- Make sure b-roll is not telling a different story from the audio.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Audio

#### Best Practices

- Pay close attention to maintaining good audio capture and editing techniques, as high-quality audio is critical for successfully crafting high-quality IDV:
  - **Consideration:** Bring a variety of microphones to a shoot, if available.
  - **Consideration:** Use professional-grade headsets or in-ear monitors while shooting, and review material for audio quality.
  - **Consideration:** Avoid use of compression, limiting and automatic gain control while shooting, except when absolutely necessary in a loud environment.
  - **Consideration:** Capture sufficient room tone for use in audio post, using the same microphones used to capture a given subject.
- Ensure interviewers maintain good technique when eliciting responses from subjects. It is even more critical to ensure interviews are cleanly captured when some of the queries and responses will be part of IDV. Avoid crosstalk and interruptions.
- Sound-ups. Make sure your location is clear – make sure it’s clear where you are, where scenes take place, etc. And make sure it is clear when we are leaving interview space.
  - **Example:** S/U on laughter from audience could sound like the audience is laughing at something else (e.g. the presenter or something said in an interview)
    - **Solution:** Give context in the intro (e.g., “stand-up comedian Craig Gass...”).



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- Solution: Add the end of a joke to give context (instead of starting on the laughter after the joke).

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Post-Production

#### Text and Graphics

#### Titles / Intro Graphics

- Make sure it's clear that the title is the title.
  - **Technique:** Read the title in an authoritative manner that stands out.
- Titles that come up at the beginning of an opening sequence should be conveyed when they appear on screen.

#### Lower Thirds / Keys

- The description should have all the same elements as the key.
  - **Consideration:** The name and title in the audio track might not be verbatim or in the same order as presented in the key, but they should provide the same information as the key.
  - **Consideration:** Honorary titles may not exactly match keys for reasons of political protocol. (e.g., a key displaying the text: "The Governor General of Canada", may be narrated as: "His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston").
  - **Technique:** Key information (name, title, organization, etc.) can be conveyed through OC, V/O or by the guest.
- Give information earlier or at the same time if possible.
- Uncommon acronyms should be avoided. Don't shorten any names or titles in the audio version if they are in full on screen.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

- **Consideration:** Common acronyms are acceptable (e.g., CBC, RCMP).
- For long format shows, re-introduce and re-key contributors.
- Sign-offs, intros and keys should be presented at the same time as the information appears on-screen.

### Location Keys

- City locators (e.g., “Whitby”) that appear on-screen should be conveyed through the audio.
- Double-enders should convey what city the guest and host are in through the audio if the text is on-screen.

### Info Keys/ Graphics

- Info keys and graphics add information to the story via a key bed, but only the sighted audience is privy to the information. Convey the info to the blind and partially sighted audience by finding a space to speak about them or include them in a V/O.
  - **Consideration:** Any other extra on-screen information has to be included (e.g., tickertapes).

### Text in Bumpers

- Bumpers provide a visual reminder of the title of the show. This information should be conveyed in the audio.
  - **Technique:** Narrator: “You’re watching ‘insert show title’”
  - **Technique:** The host incorporates the title in the throw to commercial.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Text/ Signage Appearing On-Screen

- If the audience is intended to read text on-screen (in B-roll, graphics or lower thirds), then it should be described.
  - **Consideration:** Don't focus on text if it cannot be conveyed in an accessible manner.
- When words on-screen are the focus of the shot, they should be described.
  - **Example:** When a shot zooms in on a slogan, that's the focus of the shot.
- For an establishing shot of a building sign, the name of the building should be included in the audio.
- Text that is visible in shots of books should be incorporated into the narrative.
  - **Example:** If pages of a children's book are shown with readable text, it should match what is being said.
- IDV should match what is on signage.
- Don't shorten uncommon names in audio.
  - **Example:** If dialogue includes the acronym IBBY, and a sign in B-roll says "International Board on Books for Young People", the sighted audience is getting more information.
  - **Technique:** Establish what acronyms mean before using them (e.g., Accessible Media Incorporated, then AMI).
  - **Technique:** Shoot B-roll signage in a way that the focus isn't specifically on the text.
- Crests, badges and logos should not be the immediate focus of a shot without V/O to support it.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Website, E-mail and Phone

- For websites, don't go past the ".ca" or ".com" unless they are simple.
- Keep e-mail addresses simple and clear.
  - **Consideration:** Omit "www" and slash direction (e.g., forward slash).
  - **Consideration:** The purpose of adding the website is to explain there is a website. It's not necessarily to get people to go there, memorize it or write it down.
  - **Technique:** Read the site, then spell the ambiguous parts (e.g., "W-O-N vs O-N-E").
  - **Technique:** Spell out calls to action if they are not clear verbally (email and websites).
  - **Technique:** Say the website first, spell it second.
  - **Example:** wonwithone.com: "Won with one dot com; that's W-O-N with O-N-E dot com."
- Websites should be spelled out if they could cause confusion when said verbally.
  - **Example:** Vocal Eye could be interpreted as 'eye' or 'I'; Born 2 Create could be 'born to create'.
- Phone – If spelled out, give spelling and numbers.
  - **Example:** 1-800-TAXICAB. Say, "One eight hundred taxi cab; that's one eight hundred, eight two nine, four two two two."

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### Courtesy of (Photo/Footage)

- The purpose of courtesy text on-screen is for legal reasons. There is no need to include it in the audio unless the source of clip is relevant to the story.
  - **Consideration:** The options are to include it in the narrative, add it to the end credits or omit it in the audio.

### Closed Captions

- Any text information presented on screen should be conveyed in the audio.
  - **Consideration:** Closed captions are the exception.

### Post audio

- Use sound as punctuation, not just as atmosphere. It may help to develop a radio-like mindset when constructing a sound bed. Let the sound tell parts of the story that would otherwise have to be covered in narration/IDV.
- Make use of B-roll and wild audio to fill in the gaps between interview segments and to create a narrative soundscape. Crowds and nature settings tend to make for self-descriptive filler audio.
- If B-roll contains sounds that don't reflect the story, reduce or remove it from the mix to avoid confusion. If a sound-up, interview, or segment of B-roll is necessary to the story, but contains sounds that may not be quite identifiable on their own, it may require additional description or some sort of narrative context.
- If unwanted noise can't be edited or filtered out, such as strong wind noise or machinery, it may need to be somehow explained.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Credits

#### Opening

- Opening credits should be built into the opening of the show either in an opening sequence or by the host/narrator.

#### End

- End credits should be narrated if there is a credit roll.
  - **Technique:** Use the same best practices as DV. Narrate what fits to time. Not all credits will fit.
  - **Technique:** Make credits more of a narrative that fits the tone and style of the show.
  - **Example:** Be more creative with credits – tailor them to the show (e.g., people could read out their own names).
  - **Technique:** Omit the credit roll – make the credits available online and reference where to find them.

#### Translations

- Dub English over other languages as subtitles are visual.
  - **Technique:** If subtitles appear on-screen they could be read neutrally (not imitating the voice or accent) or characters could be cast. When mixing the audio, ensure that the original voice is established prior to the translation coming in.
  - **Consideration:** On-screen subtitles are optional. Once the translation is added they would not be necessary. It would be a style choice to include them or omit them.

### Integrated Described Video Best Practices

- **Consideration:** If the subtitles are being considered because the English is hard to hear or unintelligible, listen to the track with your eyes closed to determine if a blind or partially sighted audience could understand it. V/O may be necessary to ensure dialogue is clear.

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Final QC

As any good describer knows, once you see something, it is impossible to ‘unsee’ it. Thus, it is important to first approach the production as if you have no vision. Here is a checklist of things to do when Quality Controlling the final segment/program.

### Best Practices

- Watch/listen to the entire episode/segment with eyes closed.
- Make notes on what was unclear or confusing.
- Watch the program with eyes open.
- Make notes on anything that was misleading. For example, dialogue or sound effects made you think something else was happening in the video.
- Make note of any additional information the sighted audience is getting that the blind/visually impaired audience is not.
- Make suggestions to improve IDV deficiencies.
- Give a priority rating for items and the segment/program as a whole.

It is important to document suggested changes and deficiencies. Have a rating system noting what is suitable to go to air. Any rating system will do as long as it has a pass/fail scenario. In other words, if it is deemed accessible it may go to air; if it is not accessible, it cannot go to air.

### AMI uses the following rating system for all IDV content:

- 3:** Item needs to be changed in order to be accessible to blind and partially sighted viewers

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

- 2: Item should be changed, but if no solution is found, it would be passable if it remains as is
- 1: Item may remain as is
  - **Consideration:** Reviewing all segments of a compiled program individually could provide extra insight into the way the segments relate to each other. One or more separate segment may clarify missing information from another segment, or sometimes information in another segment can make things more confusing in another. An 'eyes closed' pass will make these moments apparent. Even if every segment in the program has gone through the QC process, it is still crucial to do the full IDV QC process on the compilation of segments making up the final program.

## Conclusion

Given the mandate of this work, it is understood that these best practices will be submitted to the CRTC for its consideration and decision upon any next steps to be taken to further develop and implement this work across the industry. The Described Video Best Practices Working Group has found consensus on these guidelines and to that end has suggested some potential next steps for their continued evolution.

Recognizing that the process to develop these best practices has been a voluntary initiative, the signatories have agreed to adopt this work as a high-level set of industry guidelines. It is felt that this may be achieved through an agreement on enforcement at the association level to ensure that those providing IDV programming, namely broadcasters, will engage those producers of IDV programming who were either a participant in the development of this work or who may seek an understanding and adoption of these guidelines in the future.

Providers of IDV programming would ensure that producers would be aware of these guidelines prior to engagement. New adopters of these best practices would

## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

then be required to show an understanding of the intent of consistency within this work in the product that they produce, which would be as defined by the industry standard. Providers will apply years of experience, community relationships, industry collaboration and quality developed through an understanding of consumer needs to develop a consistent product, all of which should be a consideration of an IDV program provider in the selection of an IDV program producer.

Recognizing that these guidelines have a living nature, it is anticipated that they will continue to evolve as the practice itself continues to evolve. Furthermore, upon industry adoption of these high-level guidelines, it is anticipated that public feedback on the consistent delivery of IDV programming may increase and feedback methods and other forms of consultation may need to be developed. Following submission and consideration of this work by the Commission, it is suggested that other feedback methods could be explored. Either through the continuance of this group in some form or through other methods such as the AMI DV Guide Call Centre, which began to garner feedback of this nature following the implementation of the Described Video Working Group's DV Public Services Announcement.



ACCESSIBLE MEDIA INC.



## Integrated Described Video Best Practices

### Signatories

- Alliance for the Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC)
- Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB)
- Canadian National Institute of the Blind (CNIB)
- Accessible Media Inc. (AMI)
- Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB)
- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)
- Bell Media Inc.
- Corus Entertainment
- Descriptive Video Works (DVW)