



VITAC 24/7 Client Support, Client Solutions, Client Satisfaction

Background

VITAC is the largest provider of realtime and offline captioning products and services in the United States. Our captioners keep a full schedule of program assignments, providing more than 580,000 hours of live and pre-recorded captions each year to a wide variety of clients, including every major broadcasting company, most cable networks, program producers, corporations, educational institutions, and government agencies.

Our live, realtime captions are generated by highly trained human captioners who listen to live broadcasts and translate that audio into captions, which are then relayed back to the broadcaster and displayed on the live program – all within seconds.

The Problem

A construction fire in New York caused a break in the fiber-optic line that routes to one of our client's broadcast centers. These are the same cables that VITAC uses to transmit information, including live captions, to the network. The break, outside of a communications gateway location that damaged several cables, required the New York City Fire Department's assistance to secure the area.

Though the fiber-optic's carrier worked with New York City authorities to access and repair their facilities (and eventually reroute IP traffic and restore IP services to the client), connections were down for the better part of the afternoon and early evening, which could have substantially impacted our client's caption capabilities if not for the quick response of our VITAC team.

The Solution

A full-service captioning company with skilled engineering, technical, production, and customer service support available 24/7, VITAC plans for such contingencies and tries to anticipate problems before they actually *become* problems. As such, our extensive backup systems – both technical and staffing – are designed to keep clients up and running, with little or no stress.



Recognizing the connections were down, VITAC's Production Operations and Tech Operations teams immediately began testing the system and looking for solutions. After contacting the client and monitoring news updates, our team devised a quick and efficient work-around to get the client's connections restored so that our live captioning no longer was impacted.

Though the fiber-optic connection was down, an "old school" captioning solution – dial up – was still available, and we worked with the broadcast operations center to test all of their available modem connections so they could make the proper adjustments on all other programming.

This included physically dialing the modem phone number associated with an assigned channel and then testing each phone number. Once we made it through all the connections, the client was able to determine which lines they were going to use for specific programs, and assigned each line to a specific path at the network's operations center. This dial-up solution allowed viewers to continue watching client programming, including the high-quality captions provided by VITAC, with very little disruption.

The Results

Because of the quick work of our production, tech, and engineering teams, as well as those in the client's operations center, what could have been a lengthy disruption resulted in only about 30 total minutes of live captioning loss between two channels.

VITAC has been providing captions and caption solutions for clients for more than 30 years. While our size is notable, our people, capacity and technical expertise are our true differentiators. We take great pride in the captions we create and the work we provide our clients – as well as our assurance that our customers are always on the air with captions – and we are always dedicated to finding solutions for every captioning need.