

# VITAC

 a verbit company



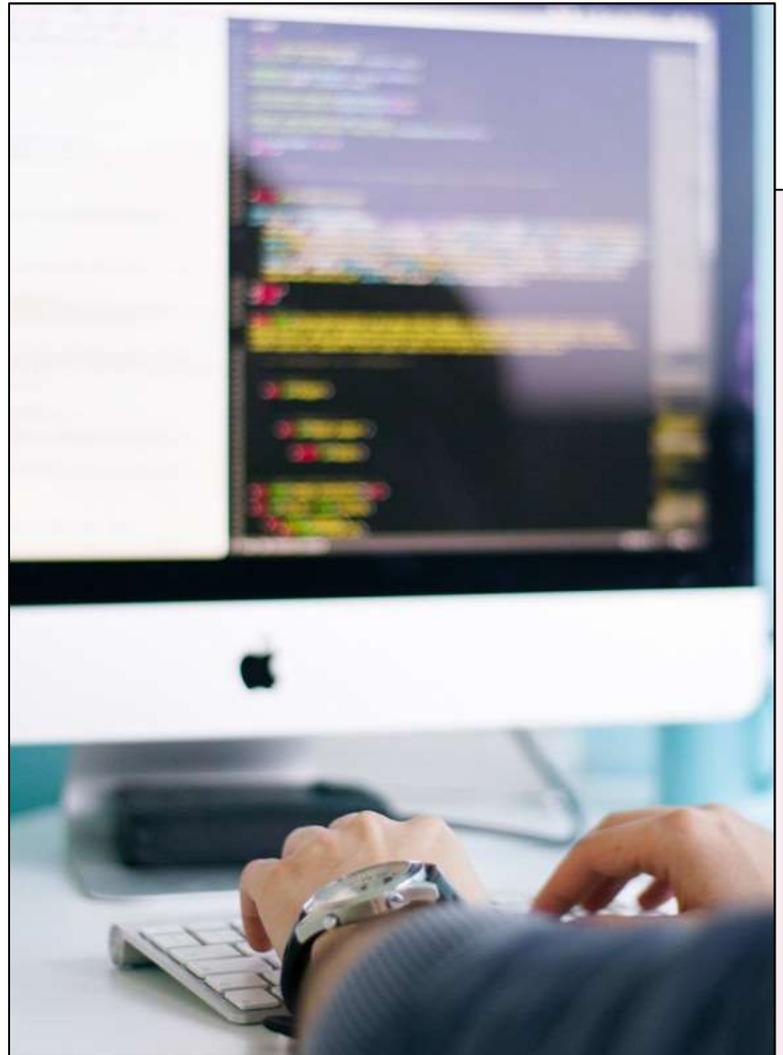
## ***A Guide to Corporate Captions***

***(Or Everything You Wanted to Know About Captions But Were Afraid to Ask)***



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Who We Are

# Trust the Caption Experts

VITAC is the country's largest and most trusted provider of media and communication accessibility services.

For more than three decades, we've met the needs of broadcasters, corporations, educational institutions, government agencies, sports teams, arenas, and event centers, among others, to provide federally mandated and legally required accessibility services for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

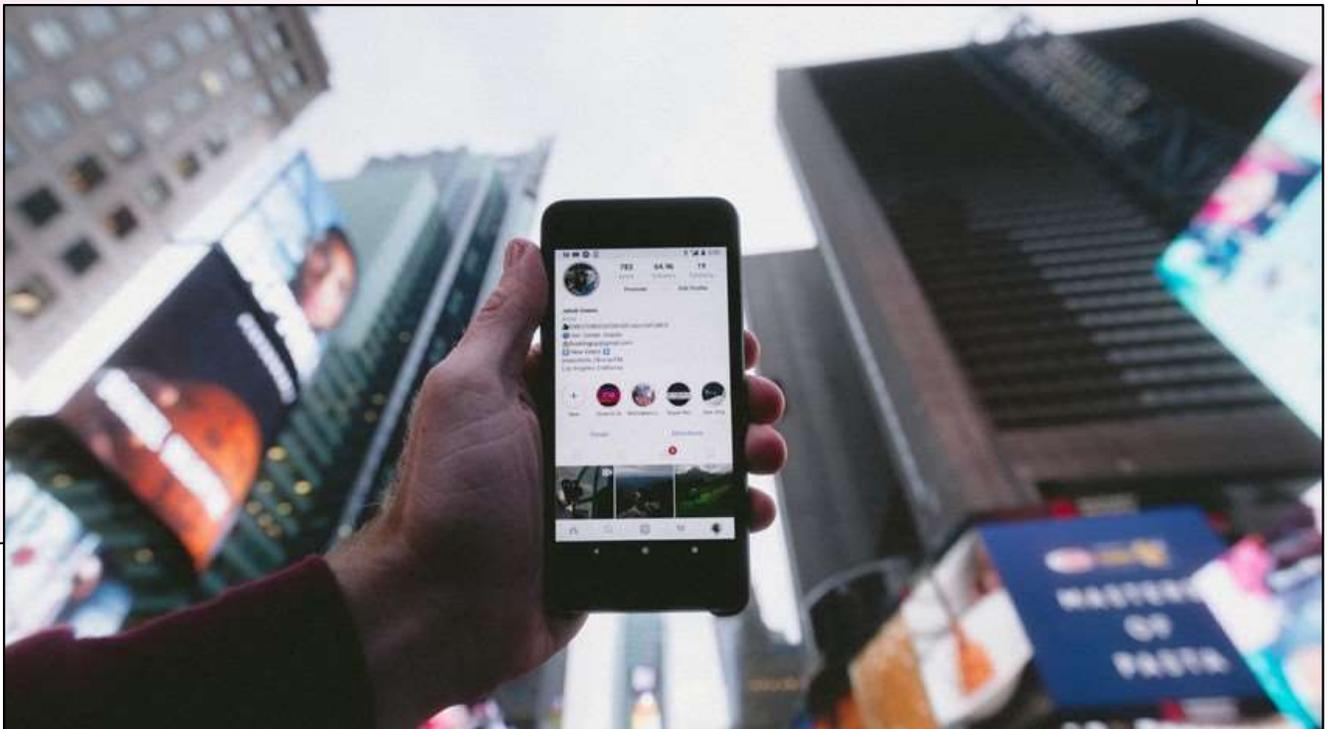
VITAC is a full-service vendor providing realtime captioning of live events and offline captioning for prerecorded video content.

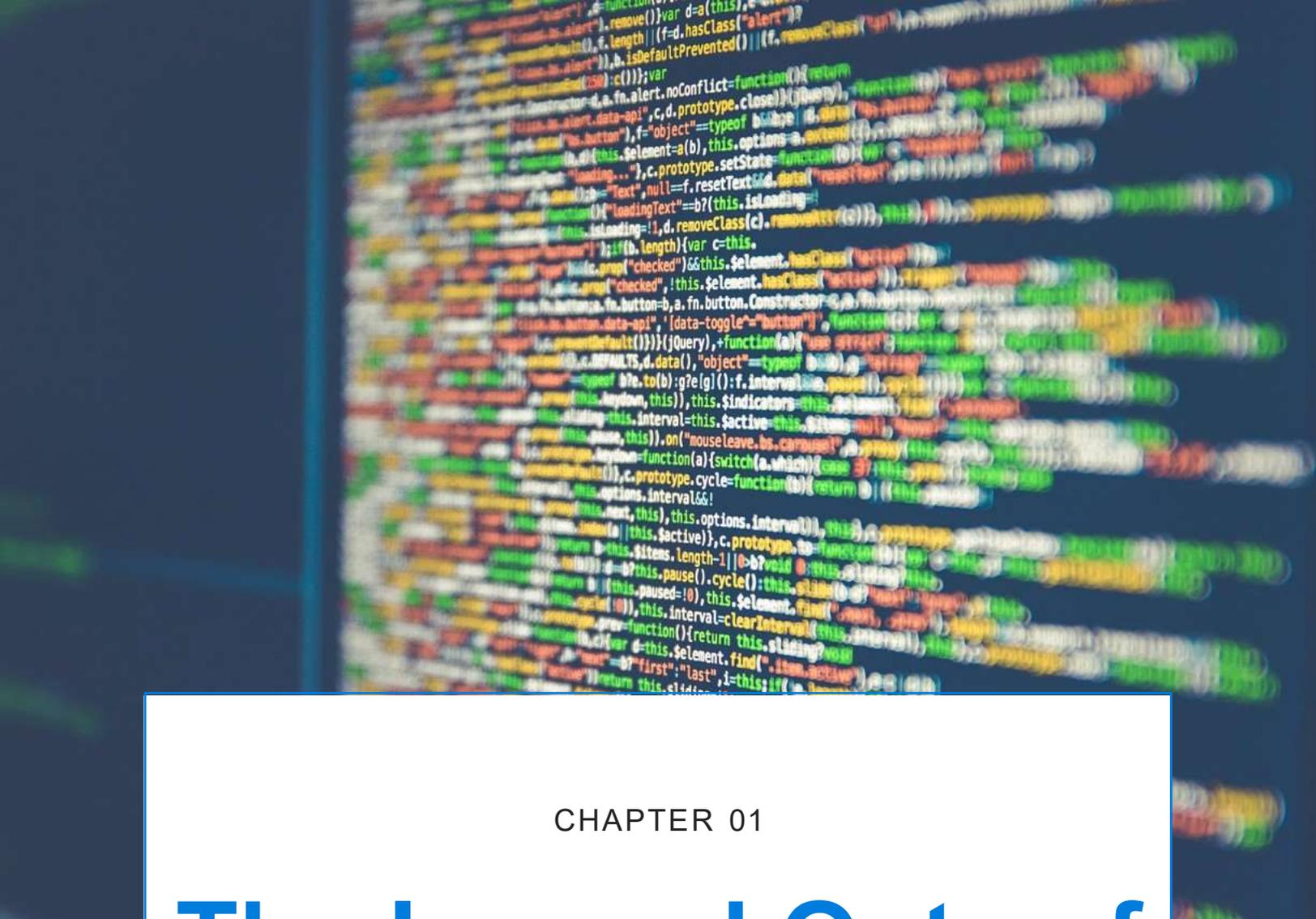
We also provide a host of multi-language services, including captions and subtitles created by expert translators in more than 50 languages, including, but not limited to, English, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Portuguese, Chinese, Arabic, Japanese, Russian, Polish, and Hebrew.

We offer a wide range of caption integrations that make it simple to bring captions and accessibility to live, streaming meetings and online conferences and events – including those by Zoom, Cisco WebEx, GoToMeeting, and Adobe Connect – as well as encoding and audio description services.

VITAC has seen – and played a role in – lots of changes in the past 30-plus years, and we've always grown and adapted with industry and consumer needs, enhancing and expanding our service offerings and continuing to make significant investments in our people, process, and technology.

We sit on the Federal Communications Commission's Disability Advisory Committee, and we make sure our captioning efforts are FCC-compliant and conform to Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 508, and WCAG 2.1 requirements.





## CHAPTER 01

# The Ins and Outs of Closed Captioning

Learn how captions are created and how business of all sizes use captions to attract customers and better communicate with their entire audience.

# What is Closed Captioning

***Closed captions aren't just for your father's 27-inch Zenith anymore.***

From corporate boardrooms to elementary classrooms and from standing-room-only concerts to sold-out sporting events, captions continue to expand well beyond traditional television and media and into the business, government agency, and education sectors, reaching new audiences every day via computer screens, tablets, and smartphones.

For some, closed captions are simply those words that flow across the bottom of the television that describe the on-screen dialogue and action.

But for nearly 50 million Americans in the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, captions are so much more — they are an important connection to a world that many in the hearing community take for granted.

Captions provide a link not only to entertainment, but to education, news, and emergency information.

Add to that an ever-growing number of Americans who use captions to watch content in environments where it's impossible to hear the audio — a noisy bar, a busy airport, on a crowded gym treadmill, or the library — and the number of

people who rely on captions grows even larger.

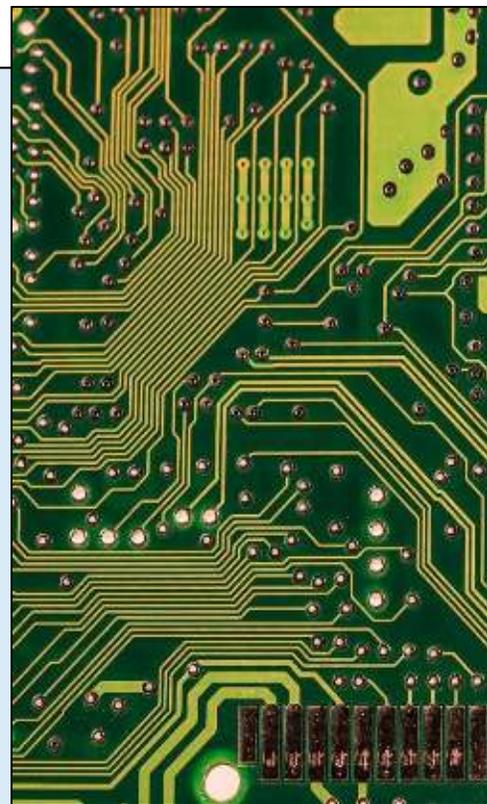
Additionally, a broad range of businesses, including global tech firms, financial institutions, telecom providers, and a number of Fortune 100 companies, use VITAC captions to help employees, customers, and partners access and navigate the world around them.

Primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities also have employed captions to make their classrooms more accessible for students as well as during their commencement ceremonies to ensure accessibility for all participants and attendees.

Professional sports teams also use VITAC to bring the action to all of their fans, showing captions on scoreboards and ribbon boards as well as mobile devices via a dedicated URL.

Adding captions to live events, videos, boardroom presentations, webinars, training sessions, corporate conferences, classroom lectures, or stadiums and arenas, isn't complicated, expensive, or time-consuming.

It is, however, a great way to reach a larger audience and satisfy federal accessibility regulations in the process.



## Did You Know?

- 1 in 5 Americans has a hearing loss.
- About 2 to 3 out of every 1,000 children in the U.S. are born with a detectable level of hearing loss in one (unilateral) or both (bilateral) ears.
- 1 in 8 people in the U.S. (13%) aged 12 years or older has bilateral hearing loss.
- Nearly 25% of people who are 65-74 years old, and 50% of those 75 or older, have disabling hearing loss.
- More than 2 million veterans have hearing loss as the number one service-related injury.

# How are Captions Created?

***The real question isn't whether you should caption your content – it's how you should do it.***

Though technology is making great strides, the best approach to captioning remains rooted in the human experience of the spoken word.

Professionals trained to create captions bring human sensitivities and contextual awareness to the captioning table that no Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) system can do on its own.

Top-quality captions are created by highly trained captioners who listen to the audio of a program or presentation and transcribe words, sound effects, and music, and add in the correct, proper punctuation and speaker identifications to give the viewers a fuller sense of what is happening.

Live events are captioned by trained realtime captioners who listen to a program as it is being presented and “write” what they hear, sometimes at speeds of up to 300 words per minute. The captions are then displayed live on screens.

Offline captions are created by professionals who expertly sync a script or text (adding such things as line breaks, sound effects, and other descriptive elements) to a corresponding pre-recorded video.

From a business perspective,

there is no one-size fits all solution for making corporate events and meetings accessible for deaf or hard-of-hearing attendees. There is, however, little question on one key item – professional human captioners provide the highest quality communication access.

When comparing captions created by humans to those created exclusively by even the smartest of machines, there's an obvious disparity.

Though speech automation certainly has a role in creating captions, the programs need a human hand (and eye and ear and voice and intelligence) guiding and assisting it. The problem in quality lies with “unassisted” captions, where a human is not involved.

Even the most advanced speech recognition programs lack human intelligence and are, in essence, a guess by machines at the spoken word.

ASR systems routinely fail to present names and technical terms properly, they stumble on accented or mumbled speech or background noises, and can have difficulty in determining the differences between what a speaker “said” and what they actually “meant.”

Without having an actual person monitoring the machine for accuracy and completeness, ASR often fails to meet expectations.



## How Live Captions Work

Interested in learning more about how live captions are created?

Accurate, live captions can only be generated in two ways — by a steno captioner or a voice writer.

Check out our short video that shows how realtime captions are created, and the work involved in bringing captions to the screen, whether it be television, tablet, computer, or mobile phone.

Click here: <https://www.vitac.com/how-realtime-captions-work/>.



## CHAPTER 02

# Take the Guesswork Out of Understanding ADA Requirements

ADA lawsuits are on the rise. Learn more about the Americans with Disabilities Act and ways business can protect themselves from costly litigation.

# Accessibility and the ADA

## What are the main goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990?

The Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in 1990, is the first comprehensive civil rights legislation addressing and granting basic accessibility needs of people with disabilities. It prohibits disability discrimination for state and local government services, employment, commercial facilities, transportation, places of public accommodation, and telecommunications.

Providing accessible solutions for all customers, clients, and employees — whether it be via captioned content, wheelchair access, or accessible website design — not only satisfies ADA requirements but, perhaps just as important, is good business and simply the right thing to do.

## How does the ADA affect accessibility?

*Title I of the ADA says that employers cannot discriminate based upon a person's disability status.* Companies must provide “reasonable accommodations” for employees, and many provide captions and [audio description](#) services for their online training videos, conference calls, and webinars to ensure compliance.

*Title II of the ADA requires state and local governments to make their programs, services, and activities accessible to individuals with disabilities, including individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.* Title II allows for different “auxiliary aids and services” at the request of individuals with disabilities, which may include using captions in the classroom and for online learning (both live and recorded sessions).

*Title III of the ADA requires businesses open to the public to ensure that individuals with a disability have equal access to all that the businesses have to offer.* Title III was used as the basis for the National Association of the Deaf's lawsuit against Netflix and, as a result, the online streaming media giant now captions all of its

videos (and provides audio description as well). The decision trickled down to include captioning for much of the online video world not covered by the FCC, including programs on Hulu, Amazon, and YouTube.

Recently, the courts have interpreted this section to include websites.

### Recent ADA Suits and Settlements

- The Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University each recently settled captioning lawsuits and pledged to make their websites and online videos more accessible to people who are deaf and hard of hearing. The suits claimed that the schools discriminated against people in the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities by not adequately or accurately captioning lecture videos and other programs they posted online.
- The Supreme Court denied a petition from Domino's in October 2019 to hear whether the pizza chain's website needed to be accessible to people with disabilities. The decision effectively upheld a lower court ruling that business websites are covered under the ADA, and underscored the need for businesses of all sizes to evaluate their current practices regarding accessibility and accessible services, especially in regards to their online presence.
- Wal-Mart Stores East, LP, a subsidiary of Walmart, Inc., agreed to pay \$100,000 to settle a suit over a lack of closed captioned training videos and sign language interpreters for employees at one of its stores. The suit claimed the retailer failed to provide accommodations under the ADA, and that the employees were unable to take part in workplace meetings and training sessions.

Take the Guesswork Out of Understanding ADA Requirements

# Don't Make These Costly Noncompliance Mistakes

Although captions on TV and videos have become more common over the years, there still are some businesses in the corporate sector that surprisingly don't consider accessibility.

And that oversight could prove quite expensive, as an ADA accessibility lawsuit can easily result in settlements between \$10,000 and \$100,000, with many businesses settling for around \$15,000.

And it's not just brick-and-mortar businesses that need to be aware of accessibility laws. The topic of website accessibility has been a hot one in recent years, with law firm Seyfarth Shaw reporting that the number of federal ADA lawsuits continued to increase in 2019, thanks in part to a rise in website accessibility claims.

Further muddying the waters, the U.S. Department of Justice in 2018 withdrew its rulemaking and technical guidance for ADA accessible websites — a decision that has and likely will continue to cause uncertainty for businesses, retailers, and owners and operators

of public websites as to what, if any, benchmarks they must meet to comply with ADA requirements.

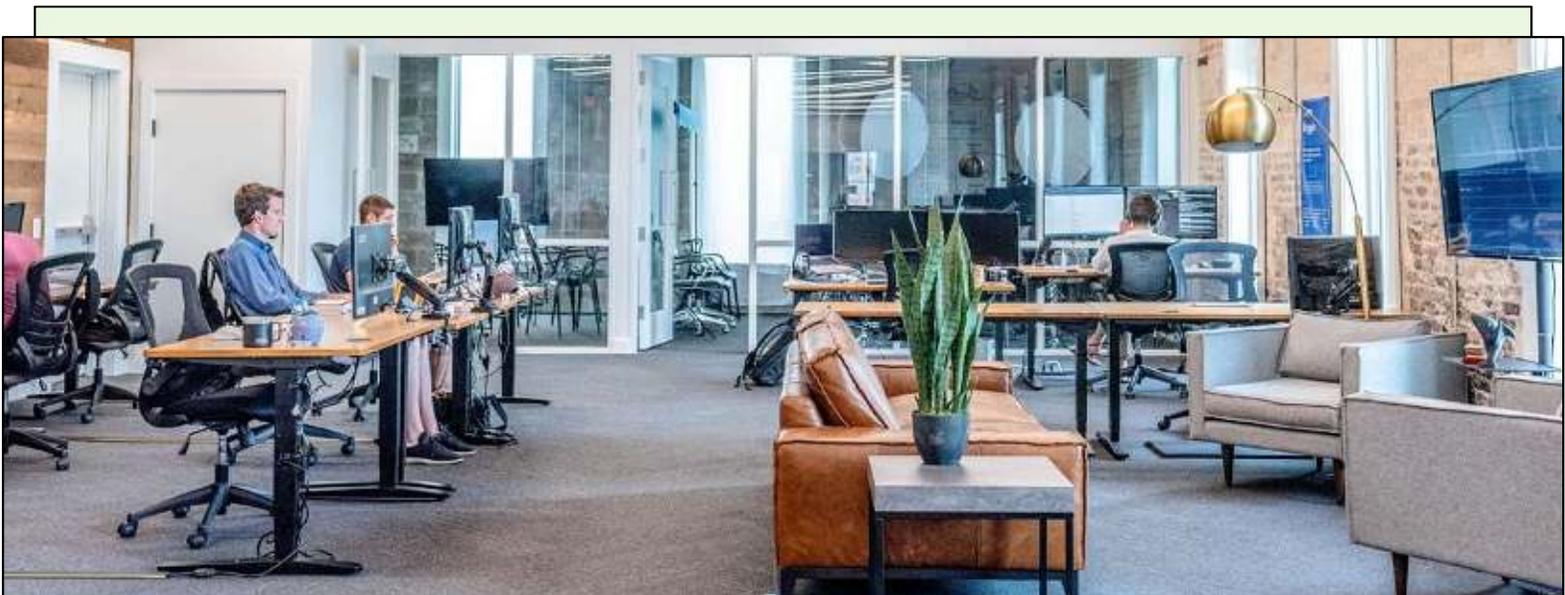


**Important:** This lack of formal rulemaking on the topic of website accessibility will continue to place responsibility on the courts to interpret the law on their own. However, the withdrawal of this guidance does not change the legal responsibilities of businesses, educational institutions, and state and local governments to comply with the ADA requirements and make their offerings accessible to all.

Business owners and operators at all levels would be wise to evaluate current practices regarding accessibility and accessible services for deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons.

The best and most forward solution is to avoid litigation in the first place and make websites, buildings, and offerings accessible to everyone. Ignoring accessibility, and the costs — financial and reputational — of potential lawsuits, is something that no business can afford.

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## Take the Guesswork Out of Understanding ADA Requirements

# Costly Noncompliance Mistakes

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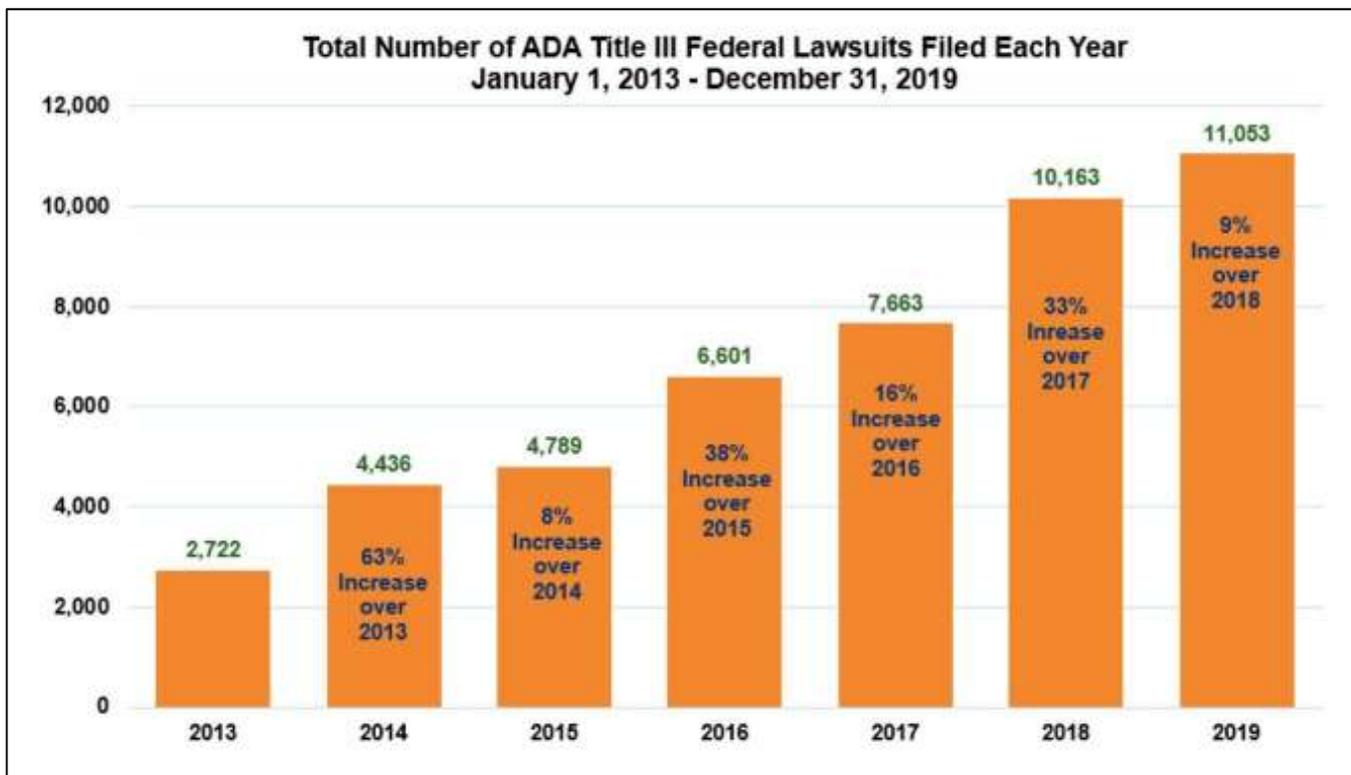
The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission have targeted companies for violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, almost always with costly results and highly disruptive outcomes for those involved in litigation.

See the chart below for a breakdown of ADA Title III lawsuits filed in federal court from 2014-2019.

Today, more than ever, companies across the U.S. are being targeted with costly, embarrassing, and

time-consuming ADA litigation, often with significant consequences, and the rate at which lawsuits are being filed is accelerating.

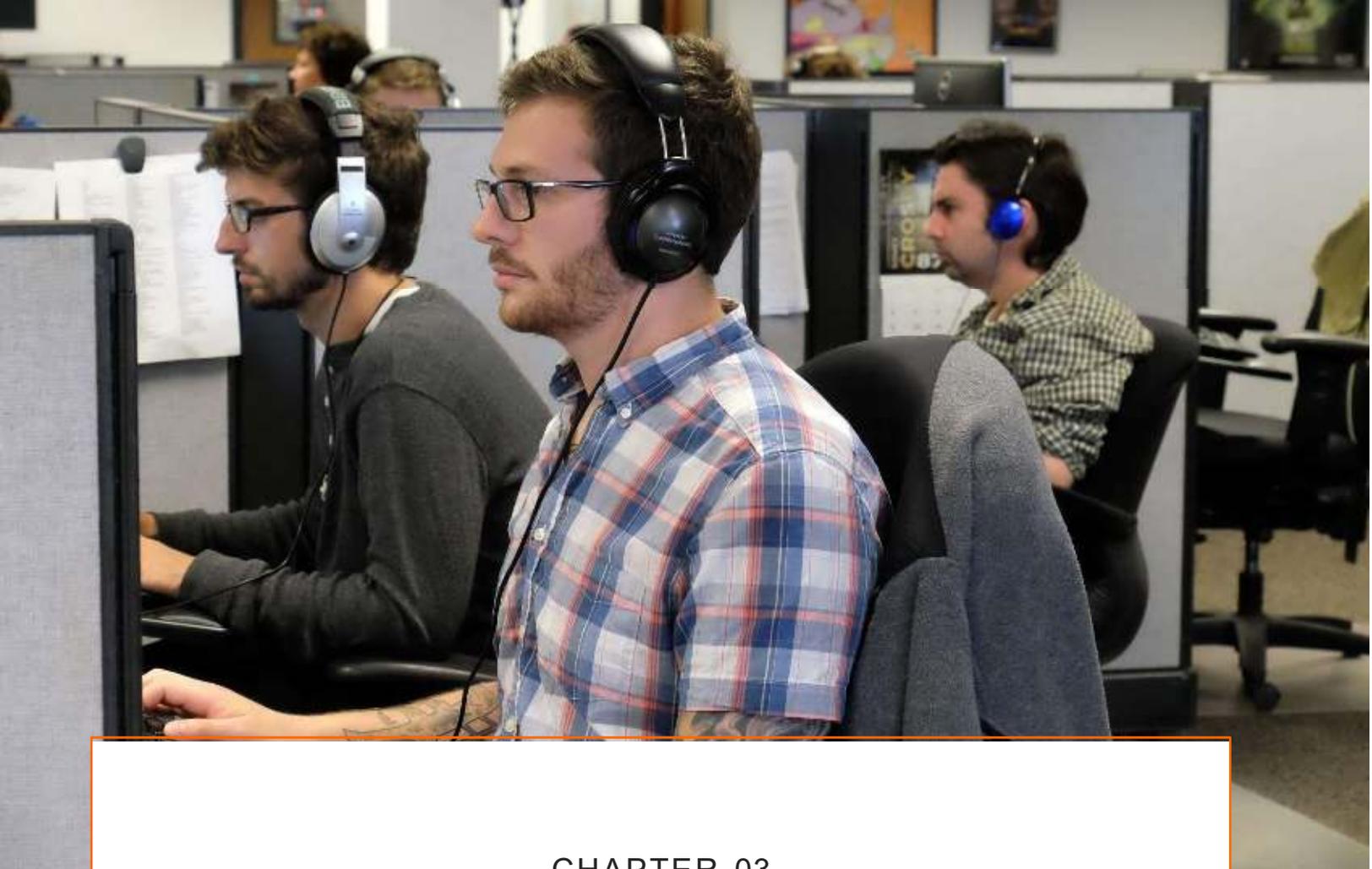
Many of our clients, including some of the most recognized Fortune 100 companies in America, as well as event centers, educational institutions, and federal agencies, are successfully avoiding targeted ADA litigation for noncompliance.



ADA Title III Lawsuits

Source: Seyfarth Shaw LLP

To keep up with the latest news, updates, events, and rulings regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act, visit our blog at [www.vitac.com/blog](http://www.vitac.com/blog)



## CHAPTER 03

# How Captions Can Work For You

Discover how captions can increase your SEO rankings, provide instant transcripts from any meeting or event, and help you communicate with colleagues in different countries around the world.

How Captions Can Work For You

# How Businesses Use Our Captioning Services

VITAC offers a variety of corporate captioning services for domestic and international companies, from live-captioning conferences to captioning web meetings to translating corporate communications.

We provide captions for a variety of meeting and webinar programs used in the corporate sector such as WebEx, ON24, Digitell, Adobe Connect, Zoom Video Communications, and GoToMeeting.

Using the same professional, highly trained captioners that produce closed captioning for live television, news, sports, and weather, businesses quickly and easily can arrange for live, realtime text streamed all around the world, making the content more accessible to everyone.

Our corporate customers include software manufacturers, big box retailers, international pharmaceutical companies, banking and financial institutions, and web services providers, just to name a few. Communication is critical in any business venture, but it's also important that businesses speak to their entire audience.

As the country's largest provider of closed captioning services, VITAC has developed a number of custom solutions to help all of our clients not only satisfy legislative requirements but also ensure full participation and inclusion by all attendees for the following:

- Conference calls
- Meetings
- Training sessions
- Group discussions
- Video conferences
- Webcasts



How Captions Can Work For You

# The Hidden Benefits of Captioning

## Captions and SEO

Video has fast become the king of online content, with surveys showing that 55 percent of people watch online each day.

And Cisco estimates that, globally, IP video traffic will account for 82 percent of all consumer Internet traffic by 2022.

Though embraced by consumers and advertisers alike, this upsurge in online video content does bring with it a few new challenges for businesses, especially those trying to stand out from the rest of the crowd at the top of search engine results pages.

But that's where VITAC can help. Adding captions to online video goes a long way in boosting that video's search engine optimization (SEO) ranking.

SEO encompasses both the technical and creative elements needed to improve web site/content rankings, drive traffic, and increase search engine awareness.

Bots – programs designed to scour the web – index Internet pages and collect various bits of online data, including the words and keywords on web pages or the way in which other sites link back to you, to ensure that your content appears high on the list of results returned by search engines, such as Google, Bing, or Yahoo!.

But videos throw these web bots a curve, as the programs aren't able to "read" their content unless the videos also contain some sort of text that the bots can index.

Captioning videos, however, does for search engines what it does for nearly 50 million deaf and hard-of-hearing Americans — translates audio to text. By adding captions, you essentially are embedding transcripts of your content in the video file's metadata, pulling all the video's searchable keywords to the forefront for the bots to capture and boost your search rankings.



And in today's competitive market, SEO is more important than ever.

Search engines serve millions of users per day looking for answers to questions or solutions to problems. Captioning external content expands reach, boosts rankings, and ensures everyone, everywhere, sees your message.

## Captions and Transcripts

VITAC's Internet Captioning Streamer (ICS) service is a web-based captioning delivery platform that allows customers to view captions on their computers or mobile devices for meetings, phone calls, classroom lectures, video conferences, or conference calls.

Our highly trained professional captioners – the same who produce closed captioning for live television programming – can quickly and easily provide realtime text streamed to wherever you need it, making the content more accessible to everyone.

An added bonus of the ICS platform is the immediate availability of professionally created transcripts of the event. Transcripts can be created in real time, cleaned up for reference, and translated into other languages.

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# The Hidden Benefits of Captioning

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Meeting participants can view the session's transcript at any time during the discussion in a separate window with up-to-the-moment text. This means there are no worries if a junior executive misses something during the call or is late to a presentation – simply go back to the transcript and catch up on what was said while continuing to view the ongoing discussion.

Transcripts can be used for a wide range of purposes. For example, a major national daily newspaper publisher calls upon VITAC to provide transcripts of press conferences and government meetings which it then uses to supplement articles with accurate quotes.

A major web services provider also relies on VITAC transcripts during its mega-conferences to share timely, accurate, as-it-happens content and updates with its social media followers.

Corporations also have found that having transcripts of meetings and speaker events gives employees a written record of the proceedings, and can be useful in everything from project planning to creating marketing collateral. They're also useful as a written resource for employees who find English easier to read than speak.

### Multi-language Services

Today's business world no longer is defined by its brick and mortar walls, with companies expanding their global footprint in countries far and wide.

And as this global workplace continues to grow, so, too, does the need for corporations to effectively communicate with all of its employees, clients, and customers across borders and around the world.

Whether it be internal company-wide memos, CEO communications, employee training materials, or video conferences, getting your message out to your global audience is important.

VITAC provides a host of multi-language services (MLS) for international corporations looking to reach all of their employees.

VITAC's multi-language services offers quick-turnaround translation and subtitling for almost any video format or web platform, and realtime translation with captions delivered to a wide variety of caption encoders or integrated with webcast or conference applications.

For instance, VITAC provides hundreds of hours of prerecorded Spanish captioning and subtitling each year for a variety of media and entertainment and corporate customers, including large-scale webinars for a global Fortune 50 technology company.

Our team also handles the translation of internal corporate videos – such as quarterly reports and updates, education and external product marketing pieces, and safety and security training videos – for a Fortune 50 telecom company and an international network of educational institutions.

Our MLS team are experts at translation and the creation of captions and subtitles in more than 50 languages, including, but not limited to: English, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Portuguese, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Japanese, and dozens more.

Our team of captioners and subtitlers include:

- EML experts: Skilled English captioners who create the original English Master List (EML).
- Translators: Native speakers, fluent in English, who populate the timed EML file with translations.
- QC Experts: Native speakers, fluent in English, who are skilled at timing subtitles.
- Reviewers: Native language subtitle experts who review and render final files.

Our MLS professionals can create files that work on almost any video platform, and we are constantly evolving our offerings as customers continue to develop new platforms and come up with new needs.

# Ready to Include Captions and Embrace Accessibility?

Since 1986, VITAC has been the leader in captioning and accessibility services, featuring the most professional, highly skilled employees, 24/7 support, and a secure, technically sophisticated infrastructure.

When you choose VITAC's services, you can be assured that you will receive the highest quality product with unmatched customer service. Whether you need live or prerecorded captioning, audio description, translation, subtitling, or all of the above, you can count on us for all your accessibility solutions.

Talk To Us

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[www.vitac.com](http://www.vitac.com)

