Media Accessibility in Storyline 360 with featured guest Diane Elkins

Sabrina

Hi, this is Sabrina from LCA spotlight, and this is our guest feature where we answer your questions and dig deeper into accessibility topics. Our guest today is Diane Elkins. Diane is with Artisan eLearning and eLearning Uncovered. She is known for her award-winning courses, her work as an author, trainer, and an instructional designer. Diane, can you get us started by telling us about your accessibility journey?

Diane
Certainly. And thanks for having me and thanks for giving me a megaphone to this topic in our industry. So appreciate what you and the other folks at LCA are doing. So, my journey started with accessibility. I started in eLearning in 2000. So, in terms of eLearning that's a really long time and I didn't even come on my radar as a thing until 2009.

Which really speaks to privilege. You know that I didn't have to know about it, that there's this whole other world that I didn't know anything about.

And so, part of me is like, wow, you know, that's that was like a real wake up call for me is that I was just living in my own world and assumed everybody was like me.

And it came up for me because the client asked for it. So, one of our clients is Goodwill Industries international. So, you probably think about them as the donated goods retail store where you take your boxes from your garage. And one of their big areas of focus is, well, they're big area of focus is helping people have life and family, sustaining jobs and careers, and they target people with barriers to employment and people with disabilities is a big part of their target market. So, it was very important for them that they walk the walk and talk the talk.

Umm that their courses are fully accessible and so they came to us and I'm like.

I don't even know what that is and so I set out to learn it and realized it was not easy to learn, especially back then 2009. So, I thought 14 years ago there really wasn't a lot that I could find out there. Back then I didn't know anything about WCAG that didn't come on my radar until like five years ago. It was the Section 508 standards of the US law, which I think we're very subjective and it was a struggle, I'll be honest. But I bought into the concept.

Most people get into this industry because they want to be helpful. They want to share their message and I don't want there to be a big if attached to this, so I'm gonna share my message to anybody. Everybody has the right to get better at their jobs. If you don't have an issue with color contrast, you get to get better at your job. If you can hear.

And so, it's something that really resonated for me and I've spent the past 14 years trying to learn about it and I'll be honest, it's not easy, especially because it feels like a lot of what's out there is written for web programmers, and sometimes it's hard to connect the dots between what the guidance says and what we do. So, I'm all in on figuring it out and helping other people figure it out.

Sabrina
No, that that's so great because you know we get to learn from you and I totally agree that it is not easy to decipher, you know, especially the way they're written for the web, and we totally appreciate you sharing your knowledge. So, let's get started with our questions. A lot of these are sourced from our community. So, one of the first question is why should we care about audio or video being accessible in our training?

Diane
Right, so audio and video are fantastic training aids and one of the things that's I think important to know about accessibility is that accessibility is not about what you have to take out is about what you add. You know, if you have a building, if you're going to add a ramp, you don't take out the stairs.

If audio is the best way to communicate something, well let's use audio and if video is the best way to communicate something well, let's use video. It doesn't mean we have to stop doing these things, but instead it's about great. I have just used a medium. That assumes a certain physical ability. If I'm doing a video, I'm assuming you can see.

And so, since I don't want to make that assumption anymore, I do things for the person who can't see my video. So, it's not that we can't do these things, it's that if we don't want that big if, hey, you get to be better at your job, but only if you can see my video and you get to get better at your job, but only if you can hear my audio. As long as we don't.As long as we don't want to put that big, if there, that's kind of a no brainer. We're gonna make sure that our audio and video are both accessible.

Sabrina

Yeah, we wanna make sure we reach all our learners, and you know, not exclude them.

So, what are some common audio or video accessibility errors a person might make, Who is new to Storyline 360?

Diane
OK, so with let's start first about audio. Audio to me is the low hanging fruit of accessibility like if you want to go on an accessibility journey and make your courses fully WCAG compliant and even go beyond WCAG, Great! All in. But that could that doesn't happen overnight. Closed captioning can happen overnight. I mean it is not hard to do at all, the tools make it very easy. There are plugins that you can use, there are third party services or if you'd rather write a check then do it yourself, you can do it yourself like it is.

It's not hard to add closed captioning, and it is such a huge improvement for people who can't hear for whatever reason, and you know, disabilities can be a full or partial, and they can be temporary or permanent, and they can be situational. So, I want to do it for the person who has no other option.

If someone who is deaf. If there's no closed captioning, they have no other option.

In doing so, will I help the person who's in a noisy environment? Sure, that's not why I'm gonna do it, but there's a nice benefit there. And so, in terms of closed captioning, probably the biggest mistakes that I see, one is not doing it at all. The second would be assuming that the transcript is just as good.

Like the transcript panel in Storyline, or I'll make a PDF and those aren't bad things to do. One of the things that I've learned about accessibility is that choices are fantastic, so if you give people the option to listen to your audio, read the transcript, read close caption, There's nothing wrong with providing the transcript panel or in the PDF.

But if I can't hear. And I have to read the transcript over off to the side. It's going to be a little bit harder for me to read paragraphs while I'm looking at the visual, whereas closed captions give me little bits right there on the screen. It's easier for me to glance back and forth.

The other disadvantage of the transcript is let's say I've got 3 paragraphs. Most people will read faster than someone speaks. So, if I've got things synchronized on my slide, I could be reading in the transcript paragraph 3, but I'm still seeing the visuals for paragraph 2.

And in my mind, I'm trying to make them fit and they're not fitting.

So, a transcript is better than nothing, so if you're not doing anything, you know, transcripts are easy. Great. But having the captions synchronized is far in a way preferable for the deaf and hard of hearing community. So synchronized captions, the other thing that I've heard is that sometimes people don't provide some of the context necessary. So, if you have a narrator and then a character come in, you have to indicate what's the narrator and what's the character.

Or if there's three characters, when does it switch back and forth from character to character? And if it's a scenario and the person is sounding frustrated in their tone, well that needs to be included as well. So, if there's any kind of nuance in the tone or the energy or the pitch that's going to be important for someone who can hear it, it needs to be helpful for someone who can't hear it. And that's like my litmus test is that important for the person to hear it who can hear it? Great.

How can the person who can't hear it get that same information?

Sabrina

We need to provide our learners with as many choices as possible. So have captions, excuse me and the transcript and, you know, make sure they have multiple choices.

Diane
And you know, having the transcript in addition to the captions is above and beyond. So, it's a great addition. It's not required. Now what WCAG says is that if you have synchronized media, you must have synchronized captions. So, there's what's the right thing to do. And then what does WCAG say? And WCAG says if your media is synchronized, you must have synchronized captions. Now you may not have synchronized media. You may have static slides soon as the slide loads, whatever is on there is on there the whole slide. Technically in that case you do not have to synchronize your captions.

The transcript would be appropriate. Kept synchronized captions are still preferred to the deaf and hard of hearing community because remember, full and partial.

If I'm hard of hearing. I might be using the closed caption to supplement the fact that I am trying to listen. You know, you think about it. You know, if if sometimes I'll watch one of the like, a British crime drama I watched recently and there was this one captain, I just, I couldn't follow what he was saying because of his accent. And so having the closed captions was a nice support.

So even if you have static slides. Uh synchronized captions are preferred, but with if your slides are synchronized, they're required for WCAG compliance. And I did think of one other if I may Sabrina of things I commonly see now that there are so many AI tools that automate captions that is great and could be a huge time saver.

None of them are 100% accurate, and I bet you would not be OK. If you're a storyboard script was 95% accurate. So why would you be OK with your closed captions being 95% accurate so you can use the AI tools to save you time? Absolutely go in and double check. Do not rely on AI to get you where you need to go for training content.

Sabrina
That's really a good point to make because you know it does speed up the process, but then you want to make sure what you're saying is accurate. So, before we go into captions and we were talking about narration, let me ask that question first. Now, there are conflicting opinions when it comes to audio narration. You know, people say you should not have narration in your courses. Some people say you should. But what are your thoughts about audio narration in general?

Diane
OK, good question. You can go on for an hour. So, I'm gonna separate it into two buckets. One is the instructional design philosophy. The other is accessibility philosophy. So First off, there's nothing in WCAG that says you have to, or you shouldn't. So, there are a lot of misconceptions out there. I can't have audio in an accessible course, or I have to have audio. Otherwise, how will they know it's on the text? Well, a screen reader, a screen reader would provide that.

So, you don't have to.

And it's not forbidden, it is your choice 100%.

So, let's go from the instructional design side. I always refer back to the book eLearning and the science of instruction by Ruth Koban Clark, and Mayer as his last name. And forget Roger Robert. It's Robert Mayer.

Where if you've not read that book, it's fantastic. eLearning and the science of instruction, and it's where they do lessons in different ways, and they have people take it and then take tests. So, it's not about this trend or that fad, but what works and what they're finding is, is that for complex material, the best learning method is when you have audio as the primary communication channel and then visuals that support it.

Not a straight match to text. They actually found that if you have bullet points and you are reading the bullet points verbatim, that actually inhibits learning. That is worse than just text or just audio. You combine them, you've made it worse. But if instead of you it's key visual so it's a keyword. It's a diagram. It's a representative image.

So, because of that, I am a fan of audio in courses, and now can you learn without audio? Absolutely. I run many things in my life by reading a book. So it's not required, it's not forbidden. I like to use it.

But there are, you know, there are issues other than just closed captions. So again, close captioning is a fairly simple thing to do for folks.

But then the other challenge with audio is the potential conflict with someone using a screen reader. So, if I am visually impaired, I may choose to use a screen reader that's going to read to me that text on the slot that's going to read to me the description that the programmer put to that

image, the alt text. So, it's going to read to me what's happening. Well, if there's audio playing and my screen readers trying to talk, they're talking over each other and that's a conflict. And so, a lot of people shut down then and say, well, clearly, I can't have audio.

No, it just means you need to manage for that and so there are a couple of ways that you can manage that conflict. One is and what we do at Artisan is we provide first of all on the very first slide. We don't put any audio.

That way the learner has a chance to orient themselves to the course, figure out where everything is. If I'm using a screen reader, I don't know where the next button is.

I don't know if there's a menu like I need time to get my bearings, so we personally choose never to put audio on the very first slide, and then we have a little link or button that's called accessibility preferences or accessibility instructions. And it explains to the learner how to use keyboard navigation such, and it includes a preference to turn off autoplay.

So, by default a slide is going to play when you arrive on it, but with a very simple trigger on a master slide, you can say pause the timeline on this slide when the slide loads. If this variable is false, we create an autoplay variable defaulted to true. They check that box if they don't want it to autoplay.

Now there's a downside to that, because when I arrive on Slide 3 and I have things synchronized to the audio and the slide doesn't start. And then that content is there.

So, I need to be careful that if the if they pause autoplay and they show up on a blank slide, that's not helpful either. But the goal is to give them a choice is I will press play when I want to press play and you don't get to choose from me. So, they'll still play the slide to hear that audio, but they'll do it on their terms. Now one of the things Storyline did well, year ago, you're maybe even two years now.

Now I've lost all sense of time in the last three years, but two years ago is they added keyboard shortcuts for the user.

So that is first of all I think helpful for everybody. I'm a huge keyboard shortcuts fan, but it's especially great for people using assistive technology because if I say, well, my course has a play pause button. Yeah, but The learner using a screen reader has to tab all the way through that button and be listening to the screen reader while your audio is playing, just to hit the pause button. That's not helpful. Well, control alt P is pause control, alt M is mute. Control alt N is next. The keyboard shortcuts that come in Storyline are, I think, helpful for everybody, but they're massively helpful for people who use assistive technology. The challenge I love that story, that Articulate did this and I feel like they felt this short.

Is they don't tell the learners that they're there. There's no way for our learner to automatically know that there are keyboard shortcuts.

And so it's my job to tell them so on on that first page, I'll have an accessibility preferences button and I'll have a button that says keyboard shortcuts.

And I think that can also help. Now if we go back to the WCAG, in fact, let me share my screen and I will actually pull up the guidelines. So, hand click it, share my screen #2 and go to WCAG.

So, Let's see. I had the audio description one up and that's not what I want. I want the autoplay.

Umm so I don't have it handy. Quick. Hang on. Let me search for seconds.

There we go. Audio control.

If any audio on a web page plays automatically for more than three seconds, either a mechanism is available to pause or stop the audio, or a mechanism is available to control audio volume independently from the overall system volume. So we don't even have to question what the minimum requirement is because it's right there. It's 1.4.2, it's a level A requirement. This requirement exists because of that conflict and potentially other issues, so if you only wanted to meet the minimum and again this is just level A.

Your standard player in Storyline is going to do it. If you have something that plays automatically for more than three seconds, there is a mechanism to pause or stop the audio. Yep, play pause button, mute button, volume button or mechanism is available to control audio volume independently from the overall volume level.

Early in my eLearning career, I didn't put volume controls in my eLearning because I thought, well yeah, I've got a mute button right here in my keyboard.

But if I mute it on my system, I've also muted my screen reader, so it's important that learners are able to mute just the course and keep the screen reader going. So, all you need is a play pause button or that volume button and you are compliant.

I choose to go a little farther and have that autoplay option because again, choices are really good for accessibility, so that's what.

That's what I recommend doing, and then again, letting people know about the keyboard shortcuts. They're especially helpful for keyboard only users and for your screen reader users.

Sabrina

So, to summarize, we have accessibility preferences at the beginning of the course, also letting our learners know how you know where all the different controls are, and then also we have the play pause button and any keyboard navigation so that they don't have to search, you know, for a screen reader user. So, going back to captions, how could you just give us a demo about how to add captions and Storyline 360?

Diane
OK so here I have a Storyline course here with a little bit of audio.

And I've got my text here in the notes panel.

So, I'm going to just grab a little bit of this text here. Normally I'd have my storyboard up on the other monitor, but I'm just gonna grab you can't actually tell if I have selected that, so here in the timeline, I'll go to my audio and then on the options tab, I can go to add captions.

It's going to bring up the wave form, and when you're making captions, one of the best practices is to break your captions in logical places in terms of thought and grammar. So, if you have a prepositional phrase on the fence, you wouldn't split up on the end fence. You try and keep them together, and Storyline automatically tries to guess where your natural pauses are and gives you captions accordingly. Doesn't always get it right. For example, it just missed this one completely.

Umm, I might decide that once too short and I wanna combine so it's not perfect, but that's OK and I'm gonna paste my text in here.

Now one of the tools that I encourage you to go look at is the DCMP captioning key, DCMP captioning key, and it's a whole document on the best practices around closed captioning, like how long should they be? You don't want them to be too long, so this one is too long. I think this one borderline. So, I'd put my text in there. Now, unfortunately, once you have this open, you can't go back to your Storyline notes panel. That's why I would have my storyboard up on the other screen.

But you could, you know, maybe you don't have a transcript already, so you can also just listen.

Here sure you could fit 3 bottles of detergent and there you can. Sure, you could fit 3 bottles of detergent in one bag.

I don't worry, I won't do this the whole way because you did not come here to watch me type. And then in terms of timing, you know you can adjust the timing however you want. So, for example, this is really short and if it's only up for half a second, it's not gonna be enough time for someone to read it. So, I might say, well, let me use up some of this blank space here to make that a little bit longer. I want, I don't want our customers want when getting. So, I'm going to split this caption into two and I can move them around and here I'm missing a caption. So, I am going to add a caption.

Uh, so caption. There you go.

So, you just you adjust them just like you do anything on the timeline, but you can decide how big you want the captions to make you paste them in. Now I save and close. If I go and remember, I have to be on the audio and I'm on audio options the same as true for video. Once I'm done, I can then edit captions and go in and make any changes.

Now when I first go to preview this.

Consider the ultimate where are my patches deciding how to pack well by default, captions are turned off and what you get is a captions button.

So, over here in my player I have CC button.

If I didn't have captions on this slide, that button would not be there. So, the minute you add captions.

What you add is the CC button and then the learner can activate them. What they want is a global setting. So, if I turn it on for the slide, it will continue to be on for future slides unless I turn it off.

Umm, this is a feature in the player dialog box. It is turned on by default and again it will only show up if you actually have captions. Now some people like to turn them on by default, not the button, but like to actually have them show by default. Remember by default they do not show the learner has to go in and do it.

One philosophy is make it less make your course less work for the folks who have to use assistive technology. Make it easier for the people who can see and click more freely. So, if you wanted to do that, that closed caption button is managed with a variable.

If you go to the variables dialog box and built in and then you go to player display captions, the default value is false. If I go in and set it to true.

Then when I preview the slide, the course published the course, whatever it is I'm doing, consider the they are on by the bag. When I had to go in and turn them off. Sure, you put the easy one time change if you would like them to be on by default.

Now you'll.

Sabrina
That's nice. Yeah. I'm sorry. I was just gonna say that's an excellent tip. God.

Diane
Good. Now you may notice they feel a little small on this particular course. Some of that has to do with how big my monitor is. Some of it has to do with, you know, so see if I have it on a smaller monitor. It feels bigger in proportion to the slide. So, mode has to do with how big your slide size is.

So, if I want to make the closed caption bigger relative to the rest of my course in the player dialogue box.

Here we go. It's gonna be a little small and I go to the is it colors and effects? Yes.

Captions font. You can change the font and you can also change the relative percentage. So right now, I have the default so I can change it maybe to 125% and now if I were to preview it.

Consider the ultimate weight of the bag, when deciding even on a large monitor. So sure, you can choose to do now. I mentioned also one of the things you can do is use third party AI tools or a vendor like we use three play media at Artisan is you can also import caption files so I'm gonna go back and I'm going to delete my caption file and then rather than add it manually I can import a file.

So VTT SRT, there's a couple of different formats. In fact, it'll tell you right here you can take an SRT, VTT, or sub files. So, these are the files you would get if you have. If you're using a third-party tool or a third-party vendor. So, I would if I use three play media I'm gonna upload my audio file. I'm going to upload my script to save a little money so they don't have to transcribe it also and then they give me I give them money.

So three things my audio file, my script and my money and they give me this file for every audio file and I go click.

Open.

No click.

Open.

And I'm done.

Like it's added, I'm done.

And if I want to edit, I still can.

So I can still go in now and edit it however I want, so that's a nice feature. The other thing that you can do is you and and I'm sorry what is? Let me explain what that is. Is a VTT file just a text file. So let me pull this up on my other monitor so you don't have to watch me again.

It's just a text file, so you could make it yourself if you wanted to, but you don't even necessarily. You know I can't imagine you ever making one from scratch, but just so that you know, it's not like this mythical creature.

Here's what it is. Let's see if I can make it look bigger for you. From .5 seconds to 4.47 seconds. This is the text it place, from 4.6 seconds to 10.3 seconds. This is the text it place, so it's just timestamp

text, timestamp text. So, they're nothing fancy, but it's somebody else doing it for you. So, this is a common output format. You can also, yeah.

Sabrina
So I have a question on the transcript to so very often, you know, we use the VTT file or try to use that as a transcript. You would have it maybe in Word, but I think good practice is not to have the time stamps in there and sometimes it can be like a tedious process to get rid of all the timestamps. What is there a tool which can do that for us? Or is there a best practice to make it faster?

Diane
 So, the question is if all I have is a VTT and I don't have a transcript, how can I easily turn it into a transcript by automatically deleting all of those? I don't know, but I'd pay for that tool.

Sabrina
Yeah.

Diane
One other thing about captions is the media library is really great for managing it at a global level. So, if you go to the media library, is it gonna show me the media library? Of course, it's not.

Uh, let me do my little fun thing again, so let me go to the media library.

OK, so I'm gonna describe it in every put on your make believe hats

Diane
So in the media library, there's a tab for all your audio, and there's a column for closed captioning, so you'll see a little caption icon on every audio file that has closed captions. So, it's a quick way to double check your work. Look. Oh, that audio file does not have closed captioning on it, and then you can click that button right there.

So, if I'm, let's say I have gone to three play media and I have 30 slides. So, I have 30 VTT files. Well, I can go to slide one, select the audio, options tab, import whatever like and then go to the next slide. It's like 6 clicks per slide. I can just go to the media library.

Audio one, click it, add it two click add three, click add four. Click add. So, if you're doing something at a global level, the media library might be a quicker way to do it.

Sabrina
That's a great tip. So, you just click, and it adds and then you just import it to that particular slide. That's awesome. Yeah.

Diane
Right from there, right from the media library. So you can do all the slides in one place.

Sabrina
That's an excellent tip. So, since we since we have your demo up here, I don't know if you have a video in there, to make a video accessible? What should be? Should we be thinking of or what should we do?

Diane
Good. So, with the video, you've got two options or two audiences. You want to make sure you're

serving one is your deaf and hard of hearing audience. And so, you've got the same close captioning considerations. There are not a lot. There really aren't many differences.

A video you're probably more likely to have, maybe a change in speaker than you might in a straight audio file. So, all the things I talked about change in speaker. Any significant tone, any significant sound effects, but closed captioning is extremely similar. It's the same in Storyline. You go to the video file, you go to the options tab. You import is the same process. So I'm gonna focus more on the second group of users and that is the folks who can't see the audio. So, a lot of people think well, I'll just provide the transcript and a screen reader can read it.

Well, the transcript is just the audio. What about the visual information? Now if you just have a talking head?

There might not be any extra visual information, in which case the audio is is perfectly fine, but if there's any visual information you have to figure out how someone who can't see is going to get that visual information.

And so there are.

Two main ways to do that.

One is to write more carefully so that your visual information is already covered in the video, so I'm gonna take this one now. This is this is not a video, but it's a synchronized slide and a synchronized slide. You need to treat almost like a video in the same way. So I'm going to play this Slide.

Consider the ultimate weight of the bag when deciding how to pack everything.

Sure, you could fit 3 bottles of detergent in one bag, but should you?

We don't want our customers to struggle when getting their groceries back home and into the kitchen.

Unless the customer has a specific preference, keep bags to 1lbs5 or lighter. OK? So imagine that was maybe a motion graphics video I made in after effects and I brought in or just the fact that it's a synchronized slide synchronized slides in Storyline or practically videos for all intents and purposes.

So how do I deal with the person who couldn't see those videos?

Well in this case.

The audio is adequately describing it, so I want you to I'm going to play the audio again and I've got the closed captions going here.

So, I want you to ask yourself if you couldn't see the visual.

And all you got was that audio where you read the transcript. Is there anything you would miss because you couldn't see it? You consider the ultimate weight of the bag when deciding how to pack everything?

Sure, you could fit 3 bottles of detergent in one bag.

But should you?

We don't want our customers to struggle when getting their groceries back home and into the kitchen.

Unless the customer has a specific preference, keep bags to 15lbs or lighter.

Diane
So what would I even add?

Sabrina

Right.

Diane
Like does would really be helpful to say, hey, there are three bottles and they jump into a bag that's sitting on a scale.

That doesn't add any value.

So, I don't need to do anything extra to address the visual information, and so sometimes if you just add two or three extra words to your script, you can adequately describe the the visual component. So one of the things that's really important and I see new folks get this confused, is they go back and forth between my focusing on the person who can't hear it or the person who can't see it. So right now I'm focusing on the person who can't see it. If I can't see it. Have I missed anything? No.

I haven't missed a thing that's helpful or relevant because I mean I shouldn't have graphics. Well, I mean the graphics are helpful for the people who can see them, but it's not like there's extra information that I'd miss out on. So I have another example that's way more complex. So let me pull that up.

Hang on, it is right here, and that is systems training. So teaching on computer systems is like a whole extra category. So here I have a very stereotypical systems training. It's on how to do conditional formatting in Microsoft Excel, so I'm going to play this twice. So first I'm just gonna play it through. It's maybe a minute and change.

To set up conditional formatting, start by selecting the cells you want to format.

Then on the home tab, click the conditional formatting drop down button and select the type of formatting you want.

Next, you'll select the type of argument you want.

Next, enter the condition.

From there, pick the formatting you want to use on any cell meeting that criteria. Here you can either select one of the premade options or choose a custom format.

Once you are done, click OK.

Now the formatting is automatically applied.

And automatically updated when the values change.

OK, I'm gonna play that again.

And this time I want to consider. I want you to consider.

If you couldn't see what was happening and all you heard was the audio.

What would you be missing?

So.

Sabrina
I think all of it.

Diane
Yeah, there's a lot. So let's let's play it again and and everybody think about that for a minute. What would you miss? And Sabrina, you're right.

To setup conditional formatting start by selecting the cells you want to format.

Then on the home tab.

So for example, like what are we even trying to accomplish?

I I don't even like you have a great example. So if you're the instructional designer, you probably spend a lot of time picking this inventory list as your example and you've got just the right example. So because the example provides useful context, if I can't see what this script, I have no idea what the context is. I don't even know we're trying to do.

Click the conditional formatting drop down button and select the type of formatting you want.

OK, select the type of formatting we want. You know what you're talking about.

You mean like bold versus red?

I don't know what you mean. I can't see that.

Next, you'll select the type of argument you want. What's the type of argument?

Next, enter the condition.

What's the condition? From there? Pick the formatting you want to use on any cell meeting that criteria.

But kind of what are my choices here? You can either select one of the premade options or OK what are they?

Once you're done, click OK OK, that one. I understand now the formatting is automatically applied to what? What formatting? What was it applied and automatically updated when the values change or values are changing? Why are values changing like I'd have no clue.

OK, so now let's look at a different version of the same video.

Here I have an inventory spreadsheet and I want to highlight in red any cells where the item has more than $5000 tied up in inventory.

To set up conditional pause it there so there's a little bit of context about the example now. It didn't go into. Here's what's in column A, and here's what's in column B. And here's what's in column C and C5 is $19.00.

But it's setting up enough to provide the context, so yes, if I could see I would get more detail, but what I've provided there in the audio is sufficient detail to meet the learning objective without overwhelming the person, because if I can see I'm not processing the details of this spreadsheet, I'm not.

I'm getting a sense of it and so we're providing a sense, let me play that part again.

Here I have an inventory spreadsheet and I want to highlight in red any cells where the item has more than $5000 tied up in inventory. OK and by the way, was that setup helpful for everybody?

Like and the other one. Nobody knew why we were doing it here. I'm setting up my goal up front. That's better for everybody.

To set up conditional formatting, start by selecting the cells you want to format, so I'll select the header for the inventory value column. Remember, I said sometimes just adding a few words, so I just added the words so I'll select the column heading for the inventory value column.

It's just that little bit extra.

To I think help everybody, but especially somebody who couldn't see what I was doing. I'll just do a few more steps.

Then on the home tab, click the conditional formatting drop down button.

And select the type of conditional formatting you want.

In this case, since we want to highlight cells that meet certain criteria, we want highlight cells rules. So there are had to make a decision if I can see, I'd be able to see the five other choices.

I chose not to include that and only talk about the focus of that. So technically with somebody who could see learn a little bit more about conditional formatting, yes, but one of the things you need to manage when you're providing extra context for someone who can't see is there cognitive load. It's true with Alt text, it's true with audio descriptions.

If I'm providing if I'm including so much detail, I mean, do I really need to say oh by the way, or on the home tab? But there's also an insert tab and a draw tab and a page layout. I mean if you can see you're learning other things about Excel right now, so I have to manage that.

And do one more.

From the flyout menu, you'll select the type of argument you want, such as, greater than or less than. So there I only listed greater than or less than to let people at least somebody who couldn't see at least get an idea of what kind of thing are we talking about.

So this is 1 approach. Is a just your language where sometimes adding just a few words can make it clearer to someone who can't see. And by the way, it might be helpful for every. It might be more helpful for everyone.

Sabrina

Especially for me, when I look at a table like that with so many numbers, it can be overwhelming. So, you know, if it's like pick the inventory value. So, it's so much easier to say, you know, go to the header and then you kind of point out where that is. It's definitely helpful for everyone.

Diane
Yeah, I mean, it's your job as an instructional designer to manage everyone's cognitive load. And when you're describing what someone you can't see needs to see, you need to be extra careful. Because for those of us who can see, we are very good at zoning in on what's important.

And zoning out everything else, especially if the audio is helping us figure that out. So, I'm gonna do that subconscious. I'm gonna. I am subconsciously with my eyes, ignoring most of what's happening here.

So that's what we need to do for someone who is going to be relying on our audio is not giving them too much information, but we also can't give them enough. Now. Sometimes you can't put enough words in without it feeling clunky for everybody.

Where there's just too much going on visually, especially physical demonstrations where there's no amount of words that would feel natural to someone who could also see it. So, in that case you can do what's called an audio description version. So, with an audio description version is it's a separate version of the video.

Where with a separate voice, a distinctly different voice, you pause the video and you splice in a description of the visuals that they would be otherwise missing. So this next one I'm going to demo has that, and it's a kind of a hybrid of the two scripts. It's not as sparse as the first one, but it's not as detailed as this one.

Sabrina

Do you just provide 2 links in the training and say this is the audio description version?

Diane
Yeah, usually I would put the primary then the typical version on the slide and then a button that usually pulls up the audio description version in a layer. Or if I'm in Rise, I usually use the tabs interaction that says standard version audio description version and they can pick whichever one they want.

Sabrina

OK.

Diane
OK, so let's try this one out.

Narrator in video

There is an inventory spreadsheet with details like item number, quantity and stock and the inventory value in dollars.

Diane
To set up conditional formatting, start by selecting the cells you want to format.

Narrator in video

The demonstrator clicks the heading for column E inventory value.

Diane
Then on the home tab, click the conditional formatting drop down button.

Narrator in video

A menu of options appears, including highlight cells, rules, top bottom rules.

Data bars, color scales, icon sets, as well as options for managing rules.

Diane
OK, so that's the concept now. You still have to decide how much detail to give. So I'm gonna play that little bit again and you'll notice I didn't describe every column and every row, but I did give a little more description than the previous one. So I gave a couple of representative values or columns, including the one that we're gonna focus on. And then when I get to this menu, I didn't like, I summarized these bottom three. I didn't list all of them, so.

If you do this already or description version, you still have to make really smart choices about what's the right level of detail, so let me play just that little bit again and consider that I didn't describe everything, but I described a lot. There is an inventory spreadsheet with details like item number, quantity and stock and the inventory value in dollars to set up conditional formatting. Start by selecting the cells you want to format the demonstrator clicks the heading for column E inventory value.

Then on the home tab, click the conditional formatting drop down button. A menu of options appears, including highlight cells, rules, top bottom rules.

Data bars, color scales, icon sets, as well as options for managing rules.

And select the type of formatting you want.

In this case, since we want to highlight cells that meet certain criteria, we want highlight cells rules.

When the demonstrator selects highlight cells rules as sub menu appears.

Next, you'll select something that gives you a sense.

In this case, the alternate voice was a computer generated voice and that is a very typical to use an auto generated voice for that.

Umm uh screen reader user is very used to listening to auto generated voices, but you can certainly use a human as well. So I had to write that I had to decide what those would be. Companies like 3 Play Media will do it for you.

But then they're making decisions about what's relevant, so I'd be careful about letting a third party decide for you what needs to be described.

Now you could have a third party executed by putting in the pauses and the extra you know doing all that extra editing work, but I'd be hesitant to term. I would. Maybe I'm just a control freak. I'd be hesitant to turn over that.

Sabrina

I think it's, it's a good way to learn how to do it yourself, you know, I mean, there are times where we may have to send it to an external vendor based on your time timeline and how much time you have, but I think it's, it's an excellent way to learn to do it yourself. So let me just go to our last question, which is how do we test to make sure, like in Storyline to make sure that our audio and video are accessible? Would it be just like a final manual QA check?

Diane
Uh-huh. Well, in terms of closed captions, first I would do a check to make sure all of them are covered. I'd look in the media library and check to make sure that they all had what they needed.

There's an audio tab in a video tab, but not all videos need close caption because it could just be like a background abstract video, something like that. So we have somebody.

Watch all the closed captions. Are they synchronized properly? Are they spelled properly? Does it say who the narrator is? If they need to, or who the voice is so we have somebody manually read every word of every caption and make sure that's correct. And we do that towards the end because if you make an edit to your audio, you've got to remember to make an edit to your captions. Both the wording and the synchronization can change.

So, we do that and then with the audio description as well as synchronized slides, we have somebody go through and really use that filter. If I couldn't see this, would I be confused if I didn't see if I couldn't see this, would I be missing out on content?

And then if we are doing the autoplay option, then we have somebody go through the whole course with autoplay turned off.

And make sure that every slide stops when it loads, and then we personally at artisan we want to make sure something appears on the slide because if you have, if all of the objects on your slide have an entrance animation and then you have this variable that says pause the audio in the timeline starts, your slide will be blank completely blank. So, we always make sure there's something on the screen right away.

We also make sure that anything they have to click stays up until the very very end. So if I have something they're supposed to click that appears in the middle and then disappears, I'm choosing for them how long it's gonna take them to activate that and some with assistive technology or with certain cognitive disabilities might not. They might need more time, so anything that's interactive always stays up till the very, very end so that they have as much time as they need. So, we have somebody who goes through the whole course to make sure that the audio autoplay works.

Sabrina
So the best practice would be to have a peer check or a QA somebody else, because 's it's easy to miss when you are developing your own course.

Diane
I don't trust me. Like we we are a big QA company that somebody else checks everything. I don't care who you are. I own the company and people are checking my work because human error is real. I don't care how conscientious you are. You will make a mistake and we want somebody else to make sure they catch that.

Sabrina
Yeah, definitely. And especially when you keep looking at your training right over and over again, you tend to miss things, yeah.

Diane
Over and over again, the process. So absolutely.

I also did. I wanted to go briefly to the WCAG standard for audio descriptions, if I may.

Sabrina

Sure.

Diane
Let me bring that up.

So there's a Gray area about audio descriptions, so audio descriptions are the best practice where if the if you cannot make it happen in the script.

And there's visual information that someone would miss. The best practice is an audio in a separate version where you pause and you put it in. However, technically that is AAA.

Not technically, that is AAA, so let me go back up here.

So AAA.

And that's your alternative for time-based media. I'm sorry. No, that's your extended audio description. That's what I just showed you an extended audio description is 1 where you pause.

To say what you need to say. And that's AAA.

What's AA?

AA is an audio description but not extended.

So, if you go to understanding. One of the things that says here it says during existing pauses in dialogue audio description provides information about actors, characters, scene changes in on-screen texts that are important and not described or spoken in the main soundtrack during existing pauses. Well, imagine I'm a movie. Remember how these are not written for learning designers. Let's say that I'm a movie and there's a car chase.

There's not a lot of dialogue, so there's plenty of time without pausing without creating a separate version that's paused. There's plenty of me time to decide to describe what's happening. If I'm doing a nature video and there's a cheetah tracking a gazelle.

Usually there's plenty of silences where you can splice in that voice without having to pause the video. So AA, you don't have to do that extended version where you pause the audio and splice something in. You only have to put it in during the existing pauses. Well, in a training video, how often do you have existing pauses?

Sabrina

Right.

Diane
Like you don't in that in that, UM, Excel video I showed you, there were not adequate existing pauses in the dialogue to do this work. So, this is just a really great fuzzy area for me. Because does this say, oh, well, I failed as many existing pauses as I could. There weren't any. So, I'm good. I've met this requirement.

But I haven't helped anybody. So this is one where we will often go to AAA because we can't do this with our type of work. The other thing that I have done in some cases I have an example here is I will do a text audio description version. So this is not let me see if I can find it. This is not specifically compliant in that it doesn't say you can do it.

But AA says I use the existing pauses well here I've got a video where there are no existing pauses, so technically I'm compliant, but I'm not being helpful. So instead of going all the way to an extended audio description which is AAA and more than we need to do, we came up with a hybrid solution that the customer was happy with where we made a text version. Of the audio description so.

Here's what the narrator says.

The narrator is that is the beginning of the slide. There's just a little narrator then doctor Corpe was the person who did the video and then just how the excel just says the Excel had that extra voice coming in. We're having that extra voice coming in just in text format. So, if this had been a true extended audio description version, this is.

Audio that would have been spliced in, so it's almost like the script of the audio description version without making it.

So is this compliant? I actually don't know. Because the true AA is usually kind of impossible for us to do if we don't have natural pauses in our videos.

Sabrina
If people in our community want to connect with you, where could they do that?

Diane
Uh LinkedIn is my social media of choice, so feel free to reach out to me on LinkedIn. Diane Elkins, feel free to shoot me an e-mail if you want. I am a D as in Diane P as in Patricia Elkins Elkins at artisaneLearning.com.

Sabrina

So, I wanted to thank you so much for your time today. And you know this has been valuable information because you know, there's so many, you know, like you said, Gray areas or fuzzy areas with audio and video and especially with the guidelines have been written for web and not for instructional designers. I think it really helps to have an expert share their knowledge. So, thank you so much for sharing your knowledge with their community.

Diane
Thank you so much for doing this again.