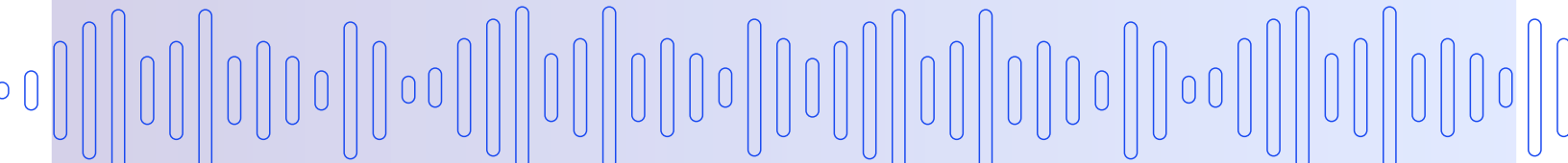


A decorative graphic in the top right corner consisting of a white line that curves from the top right towards the center, ending in a white downward-pointing triangle and a purple upward-pointing triangle.

Best Practices for Live Captioning

A horizontal audio waveform graphic spanning the width of the page, composed of vertical lines of varying heights representing sound amplitude.

The quality of your captions strongly depends on the quality of your audio, microphone placement and prep work. Whether you're captioning a lecture, campus event or commencement, make sure you've taken the time to review your set up. The good news is that improving caption quality can be relatively easy, and Verbit is here to help.

For a more effective captioning experience, incorporate these best practices into your workflow.

Tip #1



Provide Prep Materials

Before every session, Verbit's expert captioners enhance our automatic speech recognition (ASR) system using customer samples and in-house research. This process helps improve our speech models and delivers greater captioning quality for your sessions. We recommend providing customer input ahead of time, ideally a couple of hours before your session. Examples of helpful documents for preparation include:

- Course Syllabuses
- PowerPoint presentations
- Names of speakers or individuals that will be mentioned
- Existing transcripts of lectures or video content
- Reading materials

Tip #2



Invest in a Good Microphone

The type of microphone you should use really depends on your environment. Not all microphones are the same, and some are built to provide better results in specific contexts. For example:

- Dynamic microphones, such as ones that performers use onstage, are best suited for noisy environments where there may be background noise or chatter
- Lapel microphones are recommended for presentations, lectures or sessions with a few speakers
- Condenser microphones are ideal for recording studios or controlled audio environments as they are more sensitive to background noise

No matter what microphone you choose, always make sure to consider its placement. You'll want to position the microphone as close to the speaker as possible. While it's best practice to place a microphone 1-3 inches from the speaker's mouth, this can vary from microphone to microphone.

Tip #3



Nail Down Your Acoustics

Make sure all speakers have access to an individual microphone. Doing so will help clearly capture what each speaker says, avoiding the need to pass the microphone to a different person each time. If you can't have a microphone for every individual, provide a portable one or ask the primary speaker to repeat any questions or comments received.

While it's somewhat obvious to avoid sources of noise like traffic or barking dogs, it's also important to consider background noise within your environment. Before beginning a session, make sure to turn off devices such as loud fans, alarms or cell phones, and remind the audience to do the same.

Tip #4



Adopt Good Meeting Etiquette

Verbit also recommends adopting good meeting etiquette. Avoid speaker overlap, mute your microphone when you're not speaking, and make sure to pass the microphone between speakers so all dialogue is captured. It's helpful to start your sessions with a couple of ground rules for participants, such as:

- Request that everyone wait their turn before speaking and encourage them to pause briefly to make sure that the previous speaker has finished
- Implement a "raise hand" signal to indicate that someone wants to speak
- Encourage speakers to enunciate, speak in complete sentences and use pauses in their speech

Tip #5



Test Your Environment

Make sure to perform a test run to help you spot any issues with your audio and correct them before your session. Take time to determine the best set up for your environment, listen for background noise, and identify any areas that pose a challenge.



Regardless of your current set up, it's always good practice to have a discussion with your Verbit representative. Improving audio quality can be a challenge, but incorporating best practices will help make classroom and campus experiences more inclusive for students and your community.