



A how-to guide on captioning social media content

Discover how to reach and include
greater social audiences



Table of contents

Introduction	3
Tips from captioning pros	6
Facebook	8
YouTube	9
Instagram	11
LinkedIn	12
TikTok	14
A more inclusive world, one video at a time	15



Introduction

More than [5.2 billion people](#) are active on social media. Estimates suggest that every second eight new people login to social networking sites for the first time.

Video plays a huge role on social for both personal accounts and brands. Each week, [92% of online users worldwide](#) watch videos ranging from tutorials to music videos to influencer recommendations. This reality accounted for a 23% uptick in global online traffic volume in 2024.

With nearly everyone watching videos online, it's important to invest in creating more social videos to engage audiences and meet their expectations. However, when that content being posted and shared isn't accessible to friends, family and followers, it can have a detrimental effect.

Luckily, [adding captions to social videos](#) is a quick fix that goes a long way toward making your videos more inclusive. Plus, a Verizon study even found that people are 80% more likely to watch a video to completion if it's posted with captions.



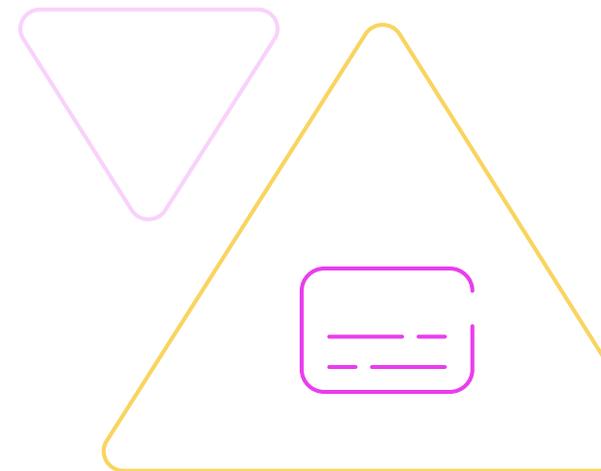
Why do I need to caption my videos?

Captioning your social videos immediately make them accessible to more audience members who would not otherwise be able to enjoy your content, including millions in the Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. Add to that an ever-growing number of people who opt to view social content silently or are watching from places where it's impossible to hear the audio — mass transit, busy restaurants, noisy gym treadmills and libraries. Then, there are viewers who simply prefer to watch videos with both the sound and captions as an extra visual cue.

Captions help viewers more closely follow along with your video's dialogue, more effectively understand your content and stay more engaged, keeping their eyes on your videos for longer (a real benefit for businesses and social creators).

Additionally, captions are known to boost your video's discoverability by making them more **Search Engine Optimization** (SEO) friendly. Search engines aren't capable of 'crawling' video content alone. Only when you post a video and provide accompanying text with it, can it drive up your SEO rankings. By adding captions, you're essentially embedding transcripts of your content in the video file's metadata. It pulls your video's searchable keywords to the forefront and boosts your search rankings as a result.

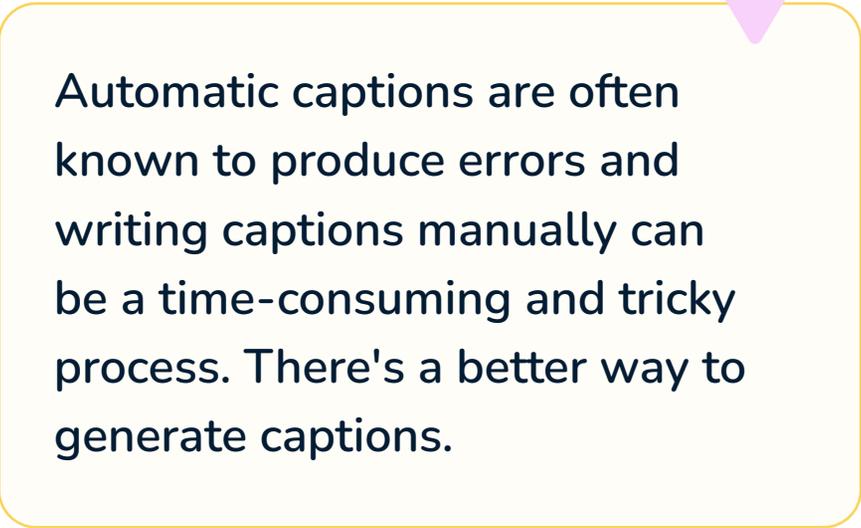
Essentially, caption files capture in text the words which are said in a video. Caption files also contain timestamps. These timestamps help to match the captions to the exact points in the video where the words are spoken. The placement of the captions are also important so that they don't cover up important aspects of what's being shown, and some prefer also different captioning styles to appear. Overall, captions help to enhance the overall viewing experience for a variety of audience members you're trying to reach.



Understanding the differences between posts on different social platforms

Just as each social media platform has its own unique way to post content, they also differ in the ways captions can be integrated.

Most platforms offer options for users to add automatic captioning or upload their own captions manually. While this may seem relatively simple,



Automatic captions are often known to produce errors and writing captions manually can be a time-consuming and tricky process. There's a better way to generate captions.

This is especially true with longer videos, music clips or videos that feature multiple speakers and quick, back-and-forth conversations. At **Verbit**, we can help you save time and aggravation, while providing assurance that your social posts are both accurate and inclusive.

Discover how to add captions to some of the most popular social networks — **Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn** and **TikTok** — below.



Tips from captioning pros

We sometimes hear from people who want to caption their own videos. Though the best captions are created by professionals like those here at Verbit, we understand that sometimes it's not always the right fit for everyone. Below are a few tips for users who want to make their content accessible to a wider audience.



- 1** **Caption everything that's said.**
Try to make sure that every word in your video is captured via text to the best of your ability. If it's spoken, it deserves a caption.
- 2** **Check your spelling and capitalization.**
It likely goes without saying, but check your spelling and capitalization, and be consistent throughout. Pay attention to homonyms such as their/they're/there, you're/your, and it's/its.
- 3** **Pay attention to punctuation.**
When it comes to punctuation – use it. It helps folks better understand what you're saying rather than omitting it and making your sentence look like it's just one big run on line of text with no beginning middle or end (like we just did). Use quotation marks when conveying quotes, and end sentences with a period, question mark, or exclamation point.
- 4** **Place your captions carefully.**
Keep in mind that you don't want the captions to obscure what's going on in the video (covering people's faces or other important onscreen graphics) or placed in a spot that makes the text difficult to see.

5 **Make sure captions are readable.**

What good are captions if they're difficult to read? Your text needs to be easy to read (consider a font with large, clean letters – script fonts, for instance, usually are a bad idea) and properly spaced across the screen.

6 **Watch your speed!**

And speaking of readability, the speed in which the captions pop on the screen is important, too. You need to give viewers enough time to read the captions before a new line of text appears onscreen.

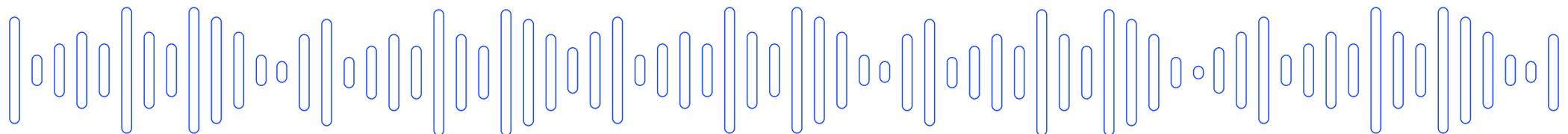
7 **Caption sound effects.**

Sound effects help tell a story. The sound a creaky door makes as it slowly opens or the squealing tires of the getaway car as it flees the scene all enhance the action and are important parts of a video.

8 **Name that tune.**

If your video contains music with lyrics, include the lyrics in the captions. If you want only to identify a snippet of music (perhaps in instances where music is playing in the background), try to be somewhat descriptive when identifying music. For example, “rock music,” “classical music,” or “country music” can be helpful descriptions.

The above are just a few ideas to keep in mind when adding captions to your video content. It can be a bit of a time-consuming and tricky process, especially with longer videos that feature multiple speakers and quick, back-and-forth discussions.



Facebook

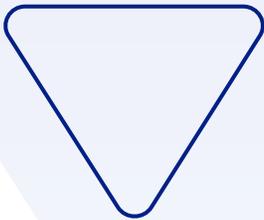
Facebook continues to be the king of social media. In 2024, it reported [more than 3 billion active users](#). That means that nearly three out of every five of the estimated 5.17 billion social media users across the world are active users of Facebook. Facebook also ranks among the apps that consumers spend the most amount of time on.

Adding captions to Facebook

You can add captions to a Facebook video to make it accessible to a broader audience using the [SubRip \(.srt\) file](#) format. (You can learn more about naming conventions for .srt files [here](#) and common .srt formatting issues [here](#).)

1. Click 'Photo/Video' at the top of your timeline or feed.
2. Choose a video from your computer, then click 'Post.' Facebook will notify you when your video is ready to view.
3. Click the three dots (...) in the top right and select 'Edit post.'
4. Click 'Edit' on the post and then select 'Add Captions.'
This will give you the option to upload an .srt file.
5. Click 'Save.'

To add captions in other languages, repeat steps 4 and 5 for each additional language you want to add.



YouTube

YouTube, one of the early big names in online video hosting, makes it easy for anyone to create content and distribute it to wide audiences around the globe. It is the second most popular social media platform with just over 2.5 billion active users. Nearly [500 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute](#) worldwide and 1 billion hours of YouTube video is watched every day.



Adding captions to YouTube

YouTube gives a few options when it comes to captioning videos, allowing content creators to either upload a caption file, use automatic captions or manually type in the text.

Uploading a video to YouTube

1. Upload your video. Click 'Next' once YouTube processes the video.
2. Click 'Add Subtitles.' This will give you the option to upload a caption file, like those created professionally by a third-party vendor like Verbit, a preferred YouTube partner, use YouTube's auto-captioning software or manually type in the captions.

Uploading a caption file

If you work with a captioning provider, they should be able to provide you with a caption file in the file type you need. YouTube accepts many file format types, from .srt to .scc and more. The full list of supported caption filetypes can be found [here](#). Using a captioning service provider can help you meet your project deadlines, ensure quality and comply with ADA guidelines.

If you choose to create your own captions, you'll need to make sure you save your caption file as a filetype YouTube accepts.

1. Select 'Upload file.'
2. Choose between 'With timing' or 'Without timing,' then select 'Continue.'
3. Choose a file to upload.
4. Select 'Save.'

Automatic captions

In general, YouTube will automatically caption videos that you upload. These auto-generated captions may not immediately pop up, depending on the size of your video. YouTube may not be able to provide auto captions if the video is too long, the sound quality is poor, it contains overlapping speech or if the platform doesn't support the language.

Automatic captions are available in Arabic, Dutch, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese.

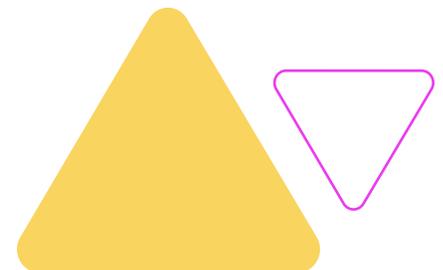
YouTube's software offers a quick way to add captions to your videos, but as these captions are automated, they may not provide the best results, especially if your video contains some of the above-listed elements that can reduce caption quality.

Manual captions

You can type or paste a transcript of your captions directly into the platform. With this option, your caption timings will be set automatically.

Depending on the size of the video, this can be a more time-consuming approach. If your video is lengthy, includes a lot of crosstalk or fast-moving discussion, music, or sound effects, the process will take much longer for someone who is not a professional captioner.

1. Select 'Upload file.'
2. Select 'Type manually.'
3. Play the video and enter your captions or subtitles.
You can pause while typing.
4. Select 'Publish.'



Instagram

Instagram, most known for sharing images and videos, allows users to upload media that can be edited with filters, organized by hashtags and associated with specific locations via geotagging. It boasts [2 billion monthly active users](#) and sees nearly [140 billion video views](#) on its Instagram Reels feature every day.

Instagram Reels is based on short videos. Reels usually range from a few seconds to a few minutes. They can be made up of a single video, several clips edited together, still photos or a combination of photos and video. They can be created using Instagram's built-in video editing tools or by using a third-party video editing app.

Adding captions to Instagram

1. Open the Instagram app and scroll to the Instagram Stories or Reels camera. You can either record a new video or select an existing one from your camera roll.
2. After your video is ready, tap on the sticker icon (the smiley-face icon) at the top of the screen.
3. Select the blue 'Captions' sticker.
4. Once you select the sticker, the words 'Transcribing audio...' should appear on the screen. After a few seconds, the automatic captions will start to appear. Users can move the caption text around and customize the caption format using different text formats and color options.

Once captions are complete, be sure to review the captions for accuracy. While Instagram's automatic feature offers a quick way to provide captioning, know that it's likely to include errors and misspellings. You can edit any incorrect words by clicking on the caption as it scrolls across the screen. Once you're satisfied with the results, click 'Done' and publish as normal.

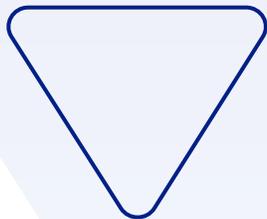


LinkedIn

LinkedIn is one of the most popular professional social networks, and with good reason. It's a great way to stay in touch with colleagues, make new connections and learn about new opportunities. Thanks to its video capabilities, LinkedIn is also a great place to share your work and market your business videos and offerings to the world.

Adding captions to LinkedIn videos using an .srt file

1. Using the desktop experience, log into your LinkedIn account.
2. Upload your video. From the box labeled 'Start a post' at the top of your LinkedIn home page, click the 'Video' icon.
3. A pop-up will appear. In it, click 'Select video to share' and select the video you want to upload from your device.
4. Once you select your video to upload, a video preview will appear. Click the 'Edit' option. This will take you to the video's settings. Click the "Select caption" option to add an .srt file to your video.
5. Now that you've selected your video, added your captions (and any text or hashtags), click 'Post.' LinkedIn will upload and process your video and send a notification when it's ready for viewing.



Adding captions to LinkedIn videos using auto captions via desktop

1. After uploading a video, from the 'Select/edit your video' pop-up window, you can:
 - Add captions automatically: Switch the toggle 'On' next to 'Add auto captions' to add captions to the video as soon as they're generated. (You can switch the toggle 'Off' if you choose not to add captions.)
 - Review auto captions before they are published: Switch the toggle 'On' next to 'Review captions before viewers can see them' to review the captions before they're published.
2. Click 'Done.'
3. Once the video posts, you'll see one of the following banners below your post based on your previous selection.
 - Auto captions have been added to your video: You can view the video with captions and click the 'Edit' button to edit them.
 - Auto captions are ready for review: Click the 'Review' button to review captions and click 'Approve' to add them to your video.

Adding captions to LinkedIn videos using auto captions via mobile

1. After uploading a video, tap the 'Captions' icon on the bottom of the page.
2. From the 'Auto captions' pop-up, you can:
 - Add auto captions automatically: Switch the toggle 'On' next to 'Add auto captions' to add captions to the video as soon as they're generated. You can switch the toggle 'Off' if you choose not to add captions.
 - Review captions before they are published: Switch the toggle 'On' next to 'Review captions on LinkedIn before viewers can see them' to review the captions before they're published.
3. Tap 'Next' on the upper right.
4. After you post the video, you'll see one of the following banners below your post based on your previous selection:
 - Auto captions have been added to your video: You can view the video with captions and edit them.
 - Auto captions are ready for review: Tap 'Review' captions to review captions and tap 'Approve' to add them to your video.



TikTok

Popular social platform TikTok has more than [1.5 billion monthly active users](#) who watch 4.4 billion minutes of videos each day, spending an average of 23.3 hours on the video app each month. It offers a couple ways to caption video content.

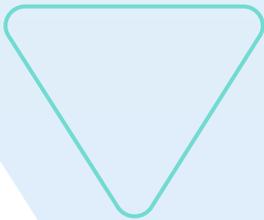
Automatic captions

TikTok [announced late last year](#) that all of its uploaded videos will include captions by default. The company noted that creators still could edit or delete captions after posting a video while video viewers could turn captions on and off within their personal settings. Though the auto-captioning feature will save time in making your content accessible, it's a good idea to review and edit the autogenerated captions before publishing.

Manual captions

You can add captions to your TikTok videos manually using the platform's built-in text editing tools and features. Depending on the length of the video, this can be a more time-intensive process.

1. Upload your video.
2. Click the text icon at the top of the menu on the right side of the screen. This opens the text editing tool and displays the keyboard.
3. Play your audio and use the keyboard to transcribe the content.
4. Review the captions and, once satisfied, post your video.



A more inclusive world, one video at a time

If you're interested in maximizing your social media engagement and growing your audience – or simply want to make your content more inclusive and accessible – one of the best and easiest things you can do is caption your videos.

Captions create a better experience for so many individuals in your online community. They improve your videos' SEO and online discoverability. Captions also attract more viewers and engagement to boot. Perhaps most importantly, though, when you invest in adding captions to your content, it labels you as an inclusive content creator which can create great loyalty among audiences who need or lean on captions.

Creating accessible content helps to create a more inclusive online world, one video at a time. For more information on creating captions, feel free to [reach out to Verbit](#) to serve as a partner in the process. Captions are only effective if they're accurate, and Verbit prides itself as serving as the captioning partner to major brands, social creators and news networks alike.



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