

Global accessibility regulations:

A guide for media professionals

Understanding accessibility regulations

What are accessibility regulations?

In the media industry, these rules ensure content is inclusive and accessible to all, requiring features like subtitles, closed captions, and audio descriptions.

Why they matter:

Inclusivity: Equal access for hearing-impaired and non-native speakers.

Legal compliance: Avoid fines and lawsuits by meeting accessibility laws.

Broader reach: Subtitles attract diverse, global audiences.

Higher engagement: Subtitles keep viewers watching, even in sound-off settings.

Cultural connection: Culturally adapted subtitles build stronger local ties.



Canada

Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)



United States

· Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
· Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)



Brazil

National Telecommunications Agency (ANATEL)



Argentina

National Communications Agency (ENACOM)



European Union

· The European Accessibility Act (EAA)
· The Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)



South Korea

Korea Communications Commission (KCC)



Japan

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications



Australia

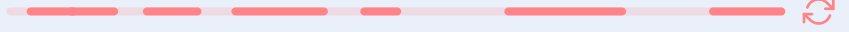
Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)



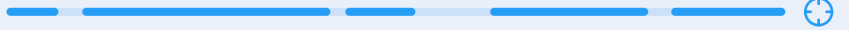
Main accessibility rules for media content

Subtitles & captions

Accurate Match spoken dialogue exactly.



Synchronized Align with audio timing.



Complete Cover all dialogue, sound effects, and speaker identification.



What happens when you don't comply?

- ✔ Legal penalties up to €2.5M per violation.
- ✔ Suspension of broadcast or streaming rights.
- ✔ Missed growth opportunities due to limited audience reach and inclusivity.
- ✔ Loss of trust, public backlash and reputation damage.
- ✔ Reduced advertising revenue and profitability.
- ✔ Increased costs from retroactive compliance and operational disruptions.
- ✔ Failure to uphold principles of equality and social responsibility.

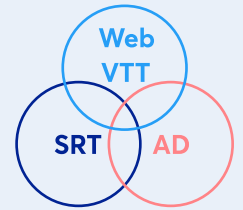


Real-time captions for live events

Provide live captions for broadcasts and events.

Assistive technology compatibility

Make content accessible with screen readers and voice controls.



Audio descriptions

Describe key visual elements (actions, scenery, expressions) without interrupting the flow.

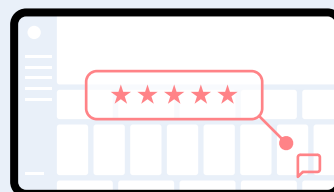
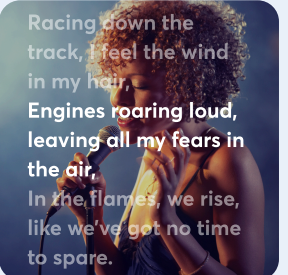


Customizable captions/subtitles

Let users adjust font size, color, and contrast.

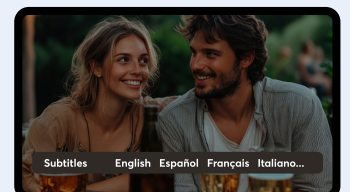
Text transcripts for audio content

Offer written transcripts for audio-only media (e.g., podcasts, webinars).



Feedback mechanism

Allow users to report accessibility issues for fast fixes.



Multilingual translations

Localize captions and audio descriptions in multiple languages.

Main accessibility rules for media content

Regulatory Body	ADA	FCC	Ofcom	AVMSD	ACMA	WCAG
Potential Fines	Up to \$150,000 per violation, with millions for repeat offenses.	Up to \$100,000 per violation	Up to £250,000 per violation	Up to €2.5 million per violation	Up to AUD \$250,000 per violation, with millions for repeat offenses.	No specific fines; legal actions vary by jurisdiction
Captions/ Subtitles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Audio Descriptions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assistive Technology Compatibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Real-time Captions for Live Events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Customizable Captions/ Subtitles	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Text Transcripts for Audio Content	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Feedback Mechanism	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multilingual Translations	Not explicitly enforced	Not explicitly enforced	Not explicitly enforced	Encouraged but varies by member state	Not explicitly enforced	Not explicitly enforced



Best practices for producers

- ✂ **Invest in training:** Ensure your team is knowledgeable about accessibility standards and subtitling best practices.
- ✂ **Use professional services:** Collaborate with qualified translators familiar with accessibility needs.
- ✂ **Incorporate technology:** Use advanced tools for creating accurate and timely subtitles.

How to integrate accessibility in your workflow

- ✂ **Pre-production:** Plan accessibility early by identifying regions and languages for compliance.
- ✂ **Production:** Capture high-quality audio and clear dialogue for accurate transcription and subtitling.
- ✂ **Post-production:** Use AI for subtitles and audio descriptions, but validate with expert reviews.
- ✂ **Distribution:** Ensure platform compatibility for TV, mobile, and streaming.
- ✂ **Audits:** Conduct regular content audits to meet evolving accessibility standards.



About Happy Scribe

Happy Scribe is an AI-powered, expert-checked media localization platform designed to accelerate content creation and localization for producers, distributors and broadcasters. With compliance to global accessibility regulations at the heart of our service, we empower you to unlock revenue from international markets—quickly and confidently.

