
Press release

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New online database provides central resource for captioned educational DVDs

A new online database launched today will provide a central comprehensive resource for teachers hunting for captioned educational DVDs. The Accessible Education Database, found at www.mediaaccess.org.au/education, is the first of its kind in Australia and is an initiative of Media Access Australia (MAA), a not-for-profit organisation.

Audio visual materials are increasingly being used to support the school curriculum, and it is vital that these are captioned for students who are Deaf or have hearing impairment.

“Schools have a duty of care under the *Disability Discrimination Act* to provide curriculum support materials that are accessible,” explained Anne McGrath, Education Manager at MAA, who is also a Teacher of the Deaf.

“The Accessible Education Database will mean captioned curriculum support materials will be much easier to find.”

“Captions can also improve learning outcomes for all students, particularly those with learning difficulties, visual learners and ESL students, by assisting information acquisition and reading skills,” added Ms McGrath.

Captions differ from foreign language subtitles in that they are coloured and positioned to indicate who is speaking, and provide information on music and sound effects which may be crucial to the understanding of the program.

“The database will save teachers planning time,” said Ms McGrath, “filling a crucial gap in the hunt for captioned resources and potentially saving money, as many of the titles on the database can be sourced readily from Libraries Australia.”

Teachers can find out about over 800 captioned education titles listed on the database, which can be searched for by various categories oriented to teachers’ needs and the curriculum.

Titles initially included on the database will focus on the following subject areas:

- English
- History
- Geography
- Science
- Mathematics
- Commerce

“A key element of the database will be its interactivity, allowing teachers to add titles or keywords, helping improve the accuracy and searchability of the database. explained Ms McGrath

The ongoing success of the database will be assisted greatly by teachers’ commitment around the country, to helping build it – a shared resource for all.

The Accessible Education Database has a large number of titles that have been captioned as a result of the support of the Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) through the Captioning Grant.

The National Geographic Channel, in consultation with MAA and with the assistance of the Captioning Grant, will distribute 500 sets of 63 hours worth of educational captioned content to schools where students are enrolled who are Deaf or have hearing impairment, by the end of 2009.

About Media Access Australia

Media Access Australia (MAA) is an independent not-for-profit, public benevolent institution and Australia’s primary media access organisation. The organisation’s primary role is to provide information about media access and to support the development and application of technological solutions to media access issues. This includes, but is not limited to, supporting the development of captioning and audio description for the Deaf and hearing impaired, and blind and vision impaired.

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