

Podcasting



Captioning with QuickTime

Many people have asked me how to create captioned podcasts. The cheapest way that I've found to do this is using QuickTime Pro – available for Mac or PC for \$30.

First you'll need to generate a text document with your transcription. You can check out the Addressing Captioning episode to get some ideas how to do this.

After I have a text document, I typically slice up the document by putting in a return between each sentence, so that I have workable size segments to display on screen. Then I save this as a new document as a text only file, keeping my original transcript intact.

Open QuickTime Pro. Go to the File menu, and then choose Open File. Browse for your transcript file, and then click Open. And look at that, there's your text file open as a QuickTime movie. Because you sliced your text into sentences, you get one sentence appearing after another, but still not in time with your audio. We'll do this next. Go to the File menu and then choose Export. Give your document a new name, choose Text to Text from the Export pop-up menu, Text with Descriptors from this menu, and then click Save.

In a word processor, open the text file with descriptors, then open your MP3 file in QuickTime Pro. You'll notice your text file now includes this header code, that helps QuickTime know how to display the text. I'll change the width to 640, so these captions are a bit wider and easier to read. You'll also see this timing information that you'll change to match your audio. As you listen to the audio, pause the playback after each sentence, and enter the timecode from the QuickTime controller, before each sentence. So if the second sentence begins at 15 seconds, just change this number to 15.000 here.

Insert all the "in times" before each sentence, and then save this text document. Close any open movies, so that only your MP3 file is open in QuickTime Player. Then reopen your timed text document in QuickTime. Now we'll just need to merge these two movies together.

In the captions movie, go to the Edit menu, and then choose Select All. Go to the Edit menu, and then choose Copy. Click to make the audio movie active, go to the Edit menu, and then choose Add to Selection and Scale. This adds the captions to the audio file. Go to the File menu and then choose Save As. Give the new movie a name and make sure to save it as self-contained. This new .mov file now plays your audio file synchronized with your captions.

You can use this same method to caption videos also.