

DICAPTA'S NEWSLETTER

Monthly Accessibility News - February 2024



CURRENT EVENTS, COLLABORATIONS, AND MORE BELOW



Stay Up To Date with our February Accessibility Releases!

For February, we bring you a variety of new accessible releases, featuring productions from POV, WaterBear and NewDayFilms.

To celebrate Black History Month, our featured production is [United Skates](#). This movie deals with a community fighting in a racially charged environment to save the underground African-American subculture of roller skating.

For decades, these roller skating rinks have served as safe spaces for people to gather, showcase their skills, and build connections. However, this documentary highlights a concerning trend of these rinks disappearing, leading to the erosion of the tight-knit communities they once nurtured.

In the production [Brief Tender Light](#), a Ghanaian alum at MIT follows four African students striving to become agents of positive change back home. Even as their dreams are anchored in the societies they left, their daily realities are defined by America. Each must refine their ideas about the world and themselves, and ultimately, how to transform youthful ideals into action as adults.

Finally, we highlight "Humpback Whales," [streamed in WaterBear](#). The film shows the remarkable recovery of humpback whales from near extinction 50 years ago, showcasing their acrobatic abilities and delving into the reasons behind their lengthy migrations of up to 10,000 miles each year. Educational resources available for their film include an [educator guide](#) and a link to an [Oceanography Learning Lab](#), appropriate for grades 3 to 8.

You can also find the complete list of [new accessibility releases](#) on our website.

Accessibility for this content was funded under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education- Office of Special Education-OSEP, project "Enhanced Access to Video for Students with Sensory Disabilities through Emerging Technology," TV Access H327C210001.



Celebrating the Remarkable Careers of Larry Wexler and Glinda Hill as They Enter Retirement

Taking a moment to express gratitude is always essential, particularly when reflecting on the profound impact individuals such as **Larry Wexler** and **Glinda Hill** have made throughout their professional careers. After years of dedicated service in the Department of Education, Larry and Glinda have stepped into retirement. Their departure marks the end of an era characterized by exceptional commitment and groundbreaking contributions to the nation's children and youth with disabilities and their families.

Larry Wexler, Ed.D., had a distinguished 44-year-long professional career, during which he held several roles at the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), including Project Officer, Deputy Director of the Monitoring and State Improvement Planning Division, and Associate Division Director responsible for OSEP's National Initiatives Team. Before joining the ED, Larry served as a teacher for students with disabilities, a principal, a State Specialist for Intellectual Disabilities, the Chief of Staff for the State Director of Special Education, and the Director of State Monitoring. Larry also represented the ED on the Council of UNESCO's International Bureau of Education. Along with his vast knowledge, he always displayed empathy, wisdom, and humor, making him a formidable leader who significantly contributed to making education more accessible for children with disabilities.

Glinda Hill, a force for positive change, tirelessly worked towards inclusivity and equity throughout her 26 years at the U.S. Department of Education. She served as an Education Research Analyst and Education Program Specialist where she played an instrumental role in shaping various educational initiatives. As a project officer for our project titled "Captions and Video Description: Educational Tools for Hispanic Children with Disabilities," she became an insightful mentor who guided us to reach the best outcomes for the children we served.

On behalf of Hispanic children with disabilities, **Dicapta extends its heartfelt gratitude to Larry and Glinda for their years of service, dedication, and passion.** As they embark on a new chapter in their lives, we wish them a retirement filled with joy, relaxation, and new adventures. Their contributions will continue impacting children with disabilities for many years to come.



Dicapta and Descolonizarte Teatro Forge Partnership to Boost Accessibility in the Orlando Arts Scene

Accessible media comes in many different forms: films, books, TV shows, and even theater. **Due to their very nature, live experiences like theater pose some challenges in accessibility, resulting in many organizations turning away from it.** At Dicapta, we are proud to work with Descolonizarte Teatro and other organizations that embrace accessibility. [Descolonizarte Teatro](#) is ready to [dive headfirst into accessibility alongside Dicapta](#) with our exciting new partnership paving the way for accessible arts in Orlando.

On January 31st, Dicapta and Descolonizarte Teatro launched their partnership with a screening of the Oscar-nominated short film ["Feeling Through,"](#) the first film ever to star a deafblind actor in a lead role. **Dicapta is proud to have worked closely with director Doug Roland in making this film accessible with Spanish Audio Description and Captions and Spanish dubbing.**

The event focused on a panel with important figures in the disability community, including Dicapta's very own Founder and CEO, Maria Victoria Diaz, Caroline Pittman from Basically Wonderful and Peer Support Space, and Cassandra Santiago from the Disability Advisory Board for Orange County Florida.

Dicapta and Descolonizarte Teatro are committed to expanding access to local art productions by integrating accessibility into productions, the partnership aims to foster an environment where art is accessible to everyone, empowering communities that are often overlooked by the arts industry.



FCC Disability Advisory Committee presents recommendations related to audio description

On January 30, during the most recent Federal Communications Commission Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) meeting, **the DAC voted on recommendations related to the distribution of audio description of already described programming.**

The recommendations are based on the report written by the DAC's Audio Description File Transmittal for Internet Protocol Delivered Video Programming Working Group. This report addresses the Commission's request "to identify issues and best practices associated with the transmittal to, and receipt of, audio description by video programming providers and distributors so that audio description files associated with full-length programming remain available regardless of the distribution method."

- The recommendations approved by the DAC are:**
- Encourage vendors to deliver audio description scripts with timestamps to facilitate editing for various reasons.
 - Encourage vendors to provide narration-only audio description files to ensure equivalent quality to the original program audio.
 - Facilitate a workshop to discuss tracking and cataloging solutions for audio description assets across platforms, services, and distribution channels.
 - Encourage industry participants to establish and identify specific processes and effective communication channels for consumers to raise audio description concerns and register accessibility contacts in the FCC VPD registry.

In addition, the DAC recommends the FCC foster awareness of the report and collaborate with participants to address challenges and pursue the recommendations identified in the report.

[Visit our blog to learn more details about the recommendations provided](#)

Check the FCC's YouTube video to watch the [DAC's open session from January 30](#).



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