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Why include subtitles in an online course?

Let's find out how subtitles improve the teaching effectiveness of online courses and what aspects should be taken into account for proper subtitling.

When thinking about the **subtitles of an eLearning course**, they are generally linked to the need for deaf people to take the course without audio. However, adding subtitles and captions to online courses offers many other advantages. In this article we will see how subtitles improve the teaching effectiveness of eLearning courses and what aspects to take into account to create appropriate subtitling.

The use of subtitles from an educational point of view

As we have mentioned, adding subtitles and captions to an eLearning course allows you to reach a wider audience including hearing impaired users, meeting the accessibility requirement which should be the basis of any web content. But that's not all.

The use of subtitles makes the **course accessible in every environment and situation**, because it allows you to enjoy it even when you don't have the possibility to activate the audio. Just think of the times when background noise disturbs audio comprehension or when you are in very quiet environments and do not want to disturb those around you. One of the main advantages of eLearning, on the other hand, is that you can enjoy the course at any time and from anywhere.

In addition, several studies show that subtitles help students to concentrate and **understand the content better**, while at the same time giving them the opportunity to absorb the topics learned and master them more easily.

Subtitles are also one of the most effective and cost-effective ways to localize the course and make it available in other languages and are a more than valid alternative to voiceover, i.e. the re-recording of audio files in the target language.

Finally, subtitles are a powerful **web marketing** tool. Adding subtitles to online courses, in fact, makes the courses searchable with respect to the real and complete content they display and allows to improve their **indexing on search engines**. Thanks to subtitles, search engines will understand the course content and you will reach a wider audience.

How to insert subtitles in an online course

Contrary to popular belief, adding subtitles to online courses is not a trivial activity and can take a long time: educational designers estimate that it takes about 10 times the length of the video itself to complete the caption files. So, if the course video lasts 10 minutes, it may take 100 minutes to create the file!

This is because the subtitle files not only contain the text component (which has to be written, revised and corrected anyway), but also information about the position and style of the text paragraphs. In addition, the files must contain, for each line of text, the **time codes** that guarantee the correct **synchronization** between the video and the text. There is nothing more annoying for a student than reading subtitles that go ahead of or behind the video.

However, some LMS (training management software), such as DynDevice LMS, have features that allow **automatic transcriptions** of the audio and video files that make up the course.
With **DynDevice LMS**, for example, the creation of subtitles is automatic thanks to modern Deep-Learning and DNN (Deep Neural Network) algorithms that guarantee levels of accuracy with peaks of 98% in speech recognition.

Tips for effective subtitling of the online course

When entering subtitles into an online course, certain aspects must be taken into account to facilitate effective user enjoyment. Let's see some of them:

Positioning
Subtitles may affect the view of the course in terms of screen space. For this reason, the ideal position for subtitles is at the bottom and middle of the screen, so that they are visible but at the same time do not distract those who prefer not to read them.

Readability
Make the subtitles easy to read: use a fairly large font, a font from the sans-serif family (no thanks, also called "stick font") and place the text on a maximum of two lines. Also make sure that there is a good contrast between the text and the background on which it is placed. If the background is not uniform, consider whether to insert a dark, solid-coloured frame on which to place the white text.

Speed
Try to maintain a slow and steady pace so that all students can read the subtitles without missing anything. If necessary, also consider rewriting the text to eliminate the superfluous.

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