Accessible Social Media

A 2020 Guide to Accessibility for Social Media

BOSTON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

www.BostonChildrensMuseum.org

Social Media Accessibility

Accessible social media is crucial to reaching followers of Boston Children's Museum's social media platforms. These platforms are constantly evolving and will be updated yearly with best practices. However, the list below is a general guideline to social media accessibility for all platforms.

1. Use a URL shortener to minimize the number of characters in a hyperlink.

2. Use "Camel Case" or "Camelback" hashtags: capitalize the first letter of each word in a hashtag.
(For example, #PowerOfPlay instead of #powerofplay)

3. Avoid using acronyms in your posts. Do not write BCM.

4. Avoid excessive use of emojis. Screenreaders read each one!

5. Always provide alt text to photographs.

6. Provide closed or open captioning for videos.

7. While creating content with inclusion and diversity in mind, consider including people with disabilities in photos and videos.

8. Although a popular form of expression, animated gifs are currently not accessibility friendly. If using gifs, provide textual context as well.

9. Use all caps sparingly. Using full-capped words looks like shouting and is hard for some people to read.

10. Avoid saying "click here" since it requires people with screen readers to listen to surrounding content for clues on what the link is about. Use descriptive call-to-actions like: Buy Tickets for Silly Soirée, Learn more about Summer Programs, or Subscribe to Our Blog.

Writing Alt Text

What is Alt Text?
Alt text is a text description attached to an image on a website or email. It is used when the image cannot be displayed. It is important for search engines and for screen reader software, commonly used by blind people.

Alt Text Best Practices:
1. Determine if alt text is needed for an image. Ask yourself: "If I could not use this image, what would I put in its place?" to determine appropriate alternative text. When developing content, consider the alt text for all images.

2. Be descriptive and specific with content and function but do not be redundant.

3. Keep it under 125 characters.

4. Don't start it off with "An image of, a picture of, a photo of..." Many screen readers can identify that it's an image already.

5. Alt text is not about using keywords or hashtags.

6. If the image is linking to a website, describe the image content and the link function.

7. When an image contains only text, the text being displayed can usually be used as alt text, such as a button that says "Donate."

8. Decorative elements like a plain black line do not need alt text.

9. Logos should just state the name of the company/organization.

Accessibility on Twitter

1. When you tweet a hyperlink, indicate whether it leads to [AUDIO], [PIC], or [VIDEO].

2. Use a URL shortener to minimize the number of characters in the hyperlink.

3. Put mentions "@Name" and hashtags "#Play" at the end of your tweets. "Camel Case" or "Camelback" hashtags: capitalize the first letter of each word in a hashtag

(For example, #PowerOfPlay instead of #powerofplay)

4. Avoid using acronyms in your posts. Do not write BCM.

5. Avoid excessive use of emojis.

Example:

Boston Children's Museum @BosChildMuseum · 26s

Check out LEGO SnowPlows in the STEAM Lab. [VIDEO] #Lego #STEAM

Accessibility on Twitter

Initial setup to enable image descriptions:

1. Click on the "More" button to get additional options.

2. Click on "Settings and privacy" and then click on "Accessibility."

3. Click the check box to turn on "Image descriptions."
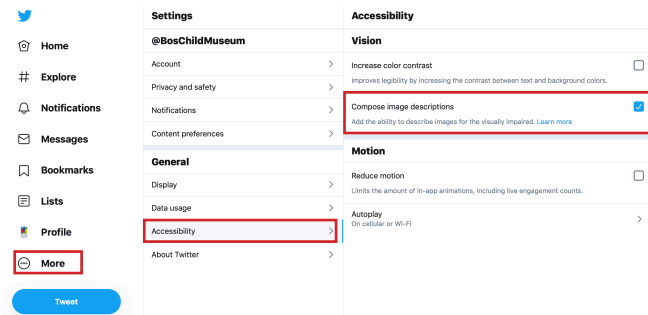
When composing a tweet with an image on a computer:

1. Upload a photo. Click on "Add description."

2. Write a description about the photo and click "Done."

3. The description will be shown underneath the image.
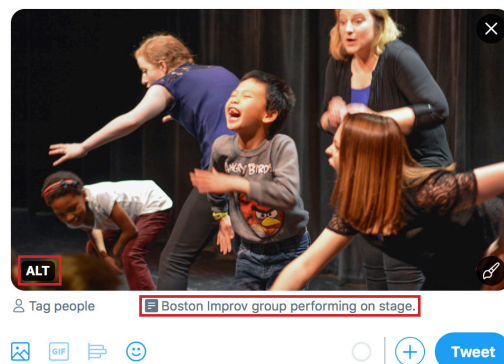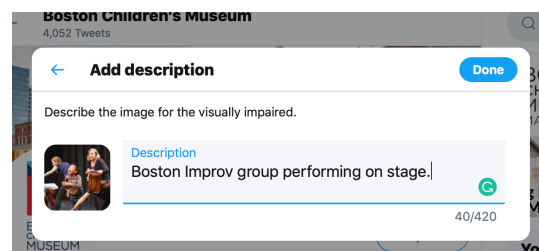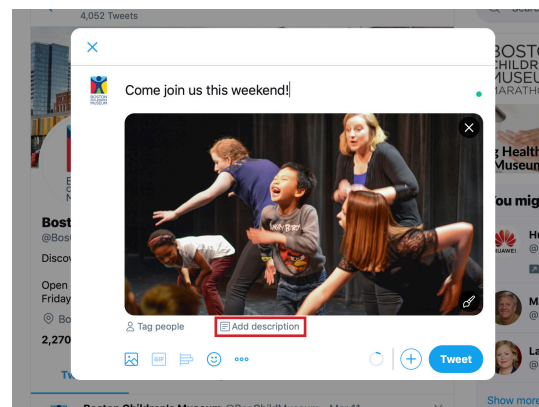
Accessibility on Twitter

Composing a tweet with an image on a mobile device:

Follow the same steps as you would on a computer.

1. Upload a photo, and click on the "+ALT" button at the bottom right of the photo.

2. Write a description about the photo and click "Done."
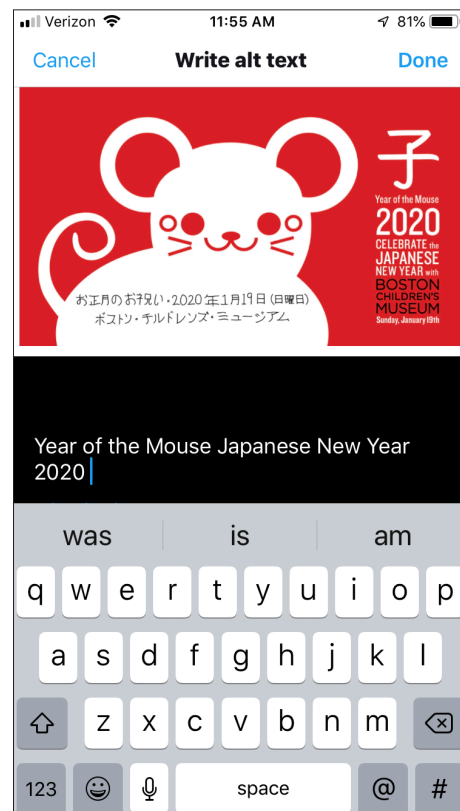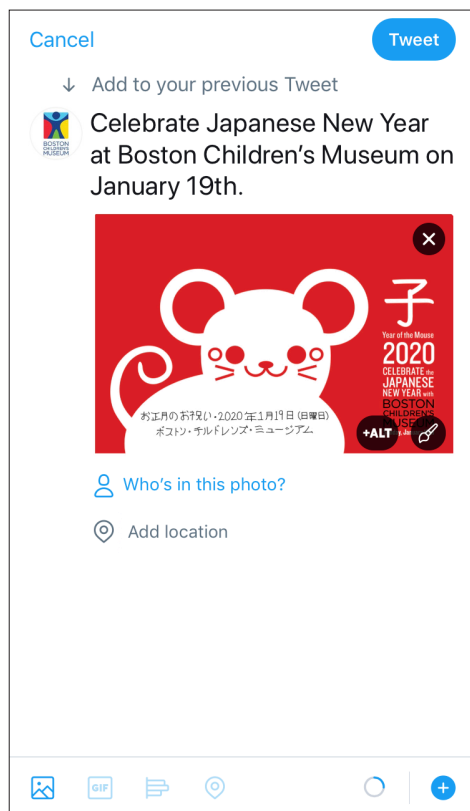
For Videos:

Generate video content using the app **Clips** (iPhones) for captioning and then upload to Twitter. If the video is coming from the Graphics department, the video should already have captioning as needed. In some cases, descriptive audio may also be included. (See page about Clips)

Accessibility on Facebook

Provide text in your posts that provide additional information as well as reiterate text that may be in an image.

Note: Facebook automatically machine generates text for images. However, you can overide Facebook's descriptions through the steps below.

When creating a post with an image on a computer:

1. Choose a photo to post and then move your mouse over the thumbnail for the "Edit Photo" option.
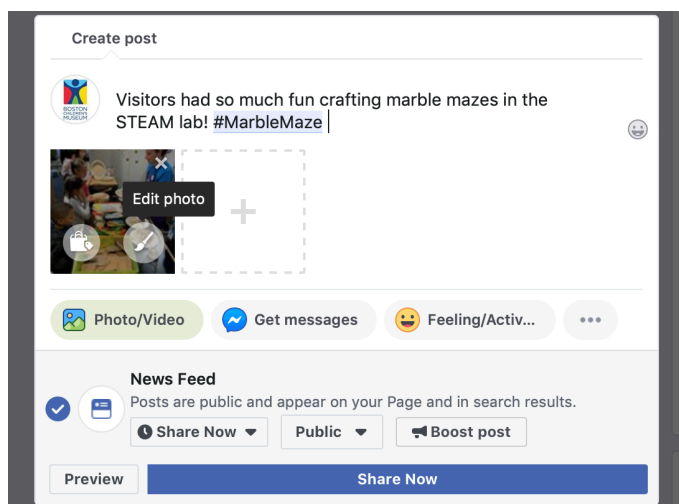
2. Select "Alt text" from the left-hand side and click on the empty box to enter your text.
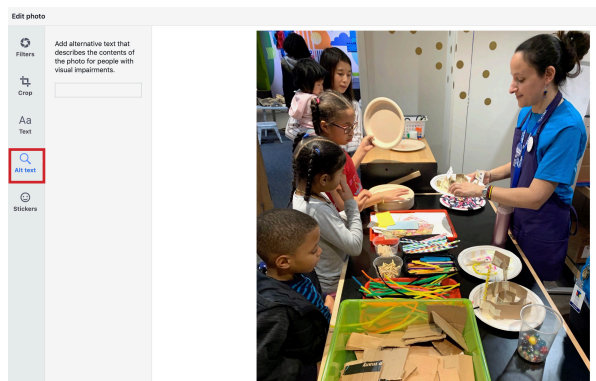
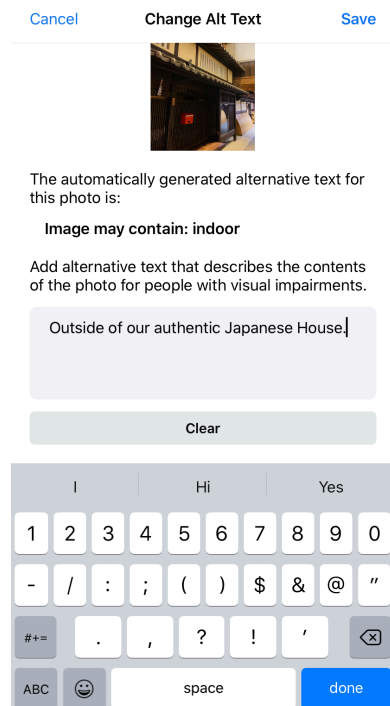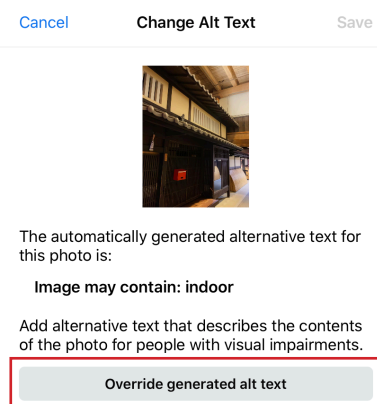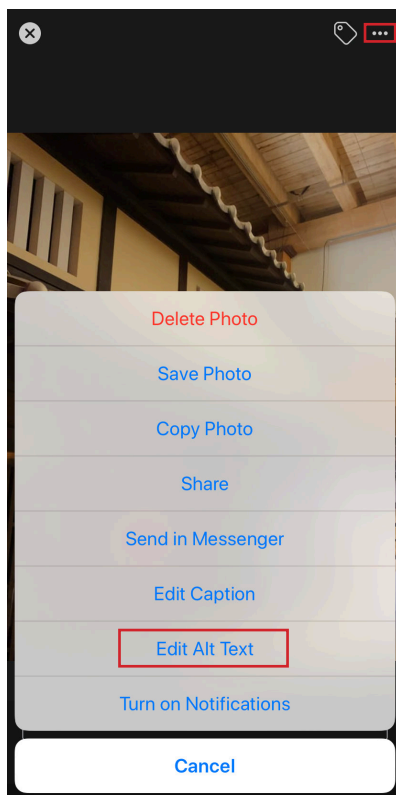# Accessibility on Facebook

3. Enter new text and then click "Save."

Accessibility on Facebook

Note: At this time, the only way to add alt text from a mobile device is to edit the photo(s) AFTER posting it.

Creating a post with an image on a mobile device:

1. Create a Facebook post and click "Post."

2. Go to your post and click on the photo that needs alt text.

3. Click on the elipsis "…" at the top right of the screen for photo options and choose "Edit Alt Text."

4. You will see the automatic generated alt text that Facebook provided. Click on "Override generated alt text" to edit it.

Accessibility on Facebook

Note: Only Facebook Pages have autogenerated captioning options.

Autogenerating captions on Facebook videos:
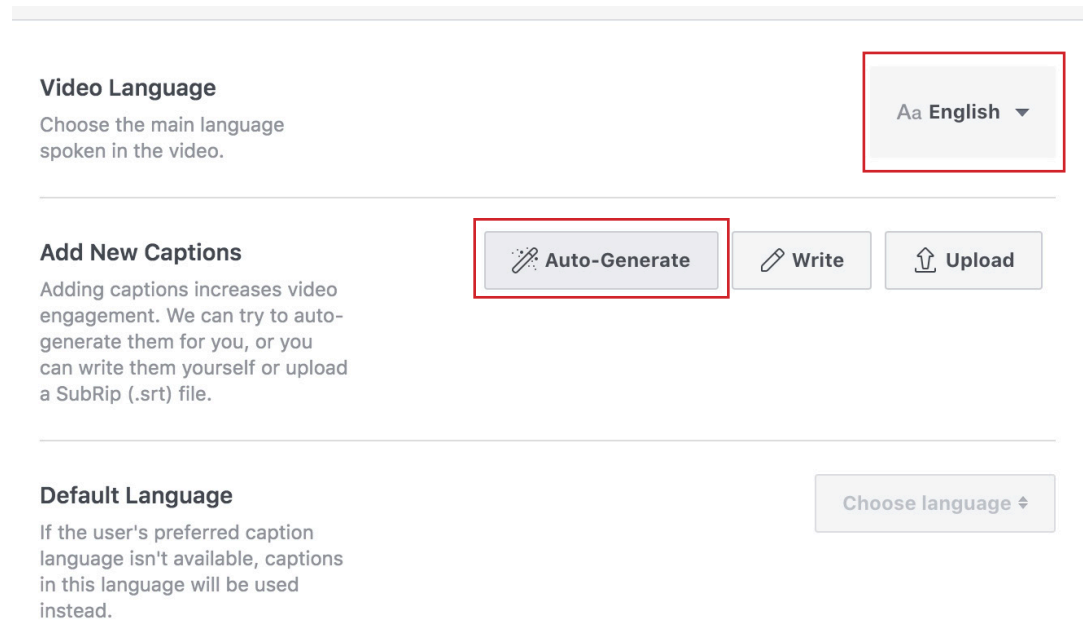
1. After posting the video, go to "Edit Post."

2. Select "Subtitles and captions (CC)" on the right side panel.

Accessibility on Facebook

Autogenerating captions on Facebook videos:

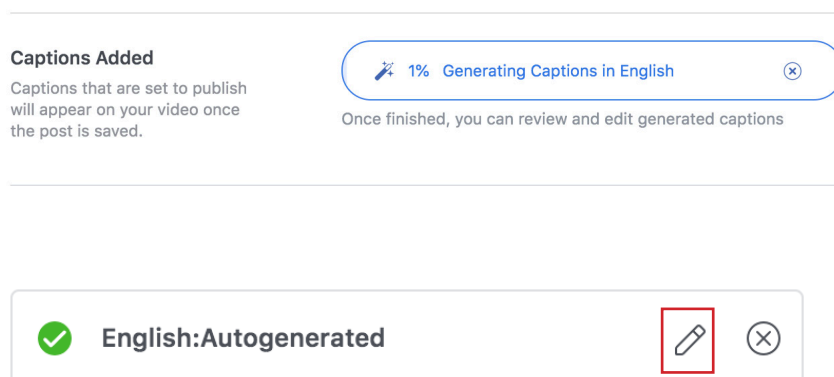3. Set the language and then select "Auto-generate."

4. The captions will begin loading. Once completed, click the pencil button to manually edit errors from the autogenerated captions.
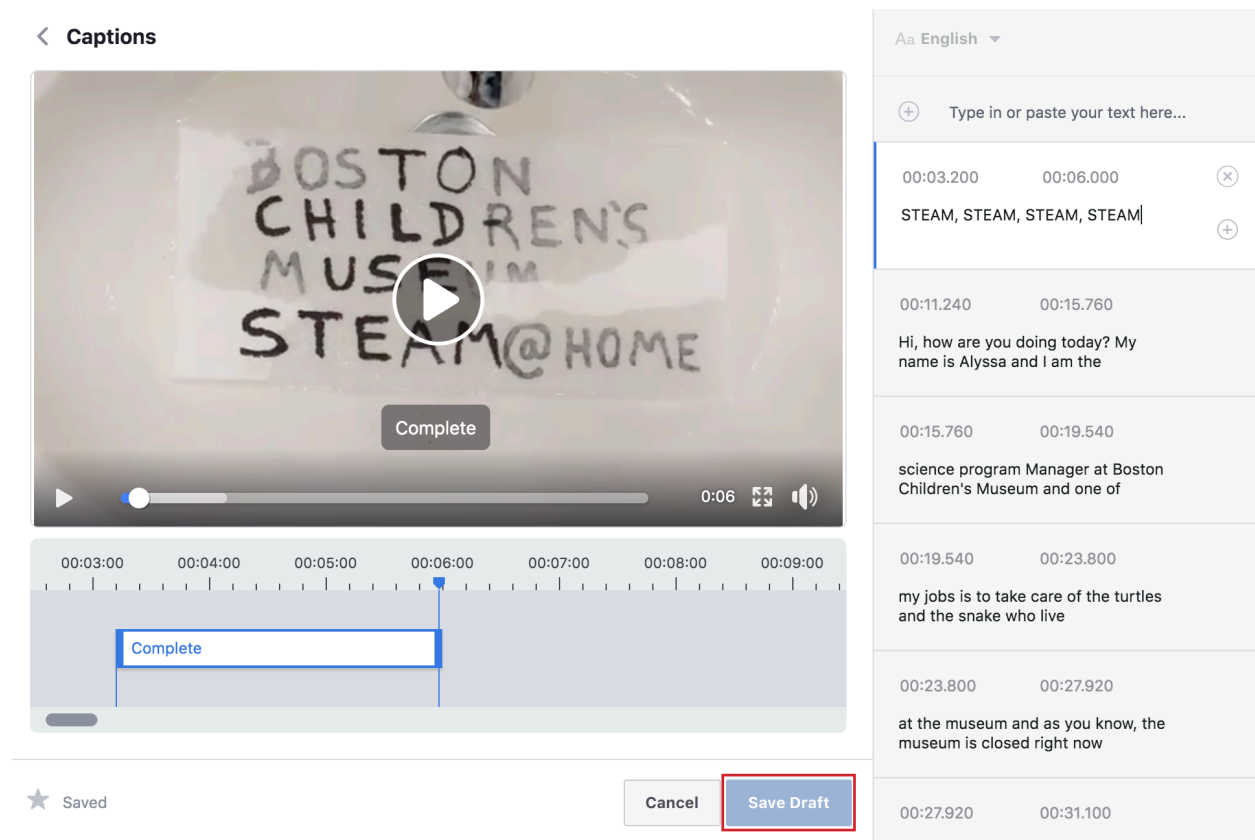
Accessibility on Facebook

Autogenerating captions on Facebook videos:

5. When done editing, click save draft, and then save.

Another video captioning option:

Generate video content using the app **Clips** (iPhones) for captioning and then upload to Facebook. If the video is coming from the Graphics department, the video should already have captioning as needed. In some cases, descriptive audio may also be included. (See page about Clips)

Accessibility on Instagram

Creating a post with an image on a mobile device:

When posting a photo, include a detailed description in the caption or click on "Advanced Settings" and then click on "Write Alt Text." Instagram also has machine generated Alt Text, but it will only list basic things in the photo that it can identify. Best practice is to write your own.

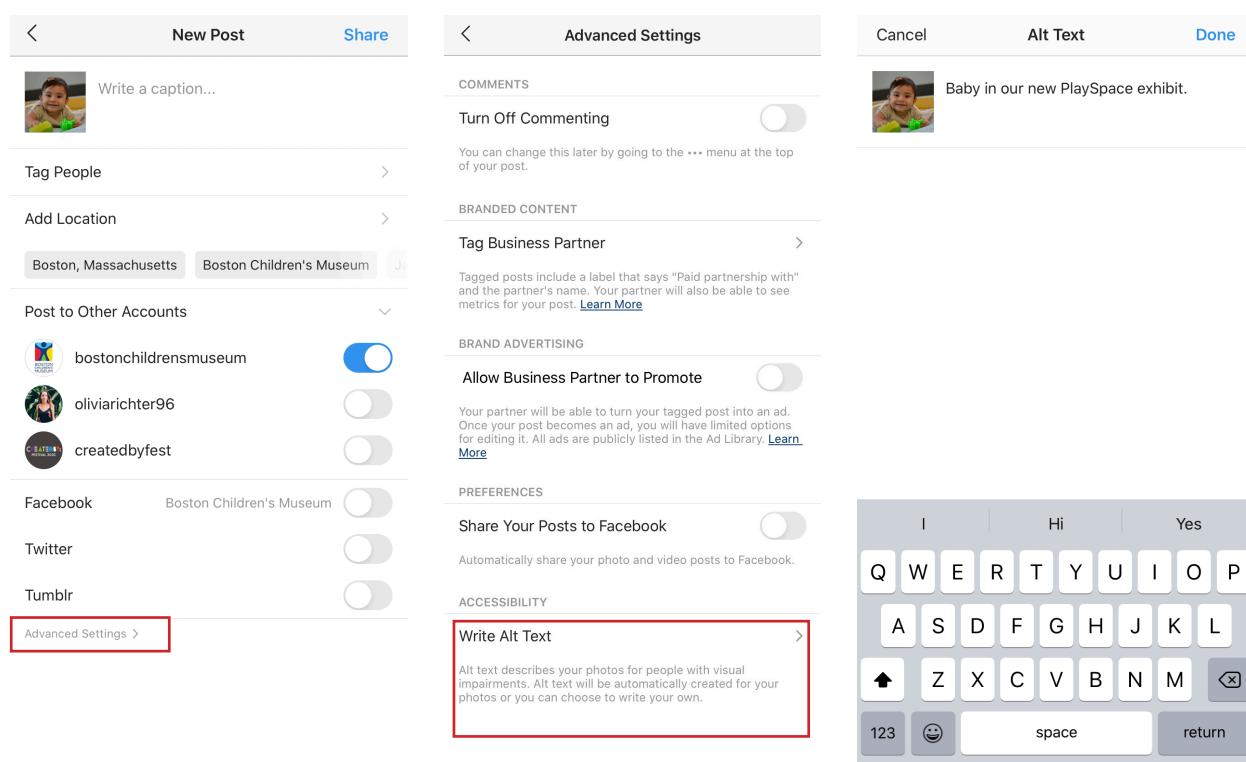## For Videos:

Generate video content using the app **Clips** (iPhones) for captioning and then upload to Instagram. If the video is coming from the Graphics department, the video should already have captioning as needed. In some cases, descriptive audio may also be included. (See page about Clips)

Accessible Videos

When creating video content for social media, it is important to keep in mind viewers that are visually impaired/blind and hard of hearing/deaf. There are many captioning resources out there, and the Design Accessibillity Museum Initative team can help direct you to the best options available.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Videos should always be captioned.

2. Make sure captions are uppercase and lowercase and high contrast for legibility.

3. Audio transcribe what is happening in the video. Introduce yourself. Describe demonstrations, pictures, performances, etc.

3. Limit live videos to only when you need to engage in a dialogue with viewers. If you do make a live video, describe important information. Try to reupload the video with captioning afterwards.

5. Use the phone app Clips (if you have an iPhone) for quick, easy, and free videos with captioning.

Example of video captioning:

Clips for Video Captions

What is Clips?

Clips is a phone app for iPhone users that's free to use and has captioning capabilities. Clips has three notable limitations. It only captures square format video, it only works on iOS devices, and you have to use the app to record—meaning, you can't import video from other sources into Clips for captioning. Here is a brief look on how to use it below.

Getting Started:

To the right is the first screen you'll see when you open the app.

Note: To record, you must press and hold the pink button for the entire video duration!

Camera screen to take a video.
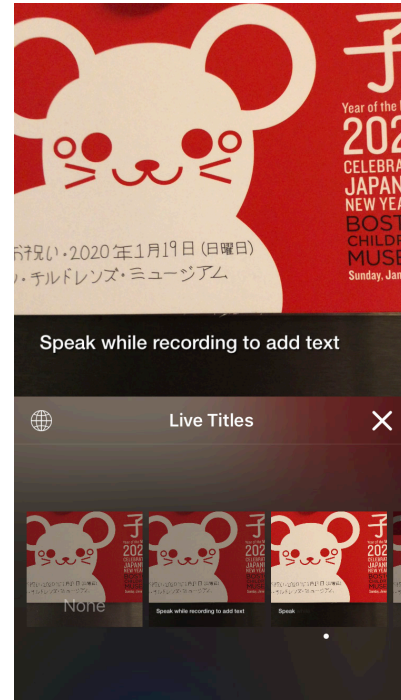
Record button
Caption options

Play back
Recorded videos
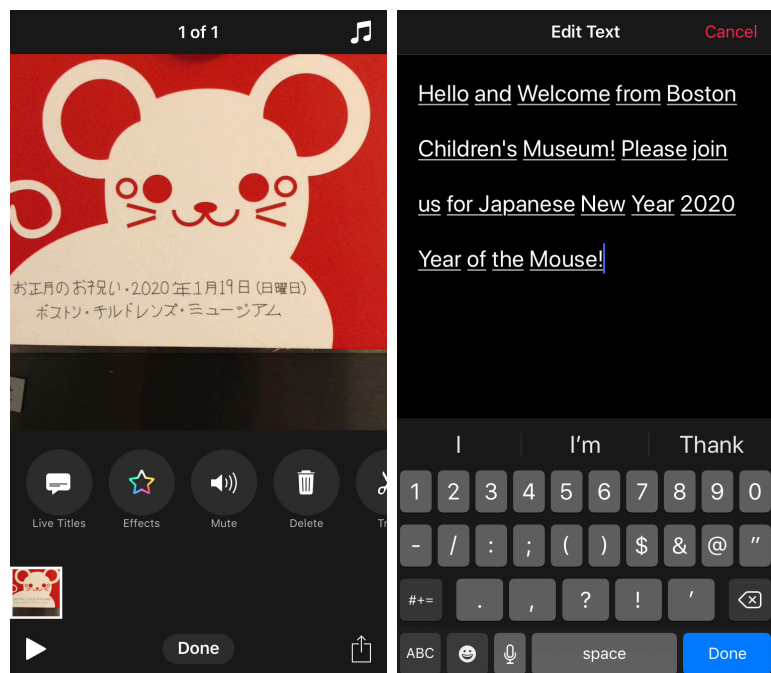
Clips for Video Captions

Choosing captions:

Once you've clicked on the captions button, you will see a screen where you can choose a style. Make sure to pick one that has high color contrast and has upper and lowercase lettering.


Editing captions:

Once you've clicked on the video you want to edit, click on the "Live Titles" button. The next screen shows the "Edit Text" screen where you can type in corrections. The majority of videos will require some minor text edits.

Clips for Video Captions

Exporting Video:

Once you've finished the video, it's time to export for social media. Click on the video you'd like to use. You can either save it to your phone's library with the "Save Clip" button (you will have to scroll through the buttons) or post directly to social media platforms by clicking on the button in the red box on the bottom right corner. You can also save the video to your phone library this way too by clicking on "Save Video."
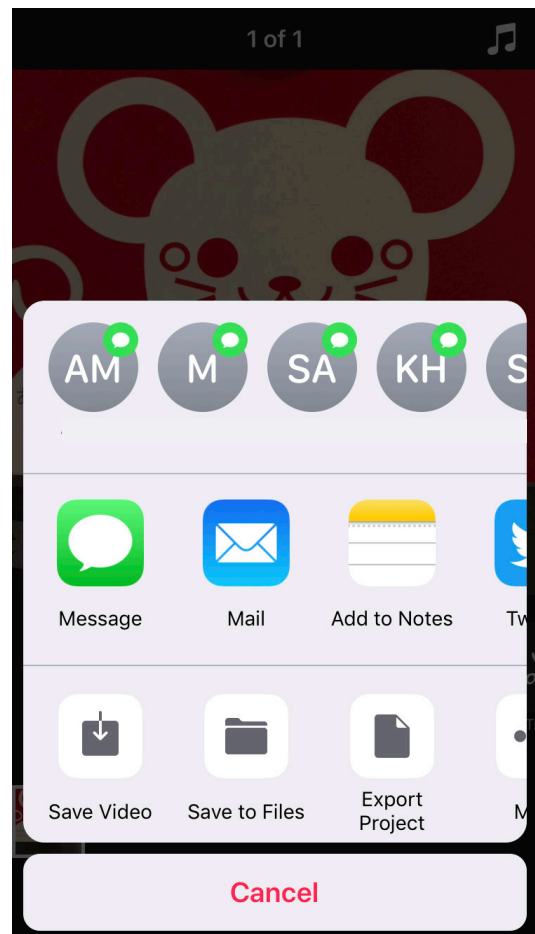
Contact

Thank you for doing your part to make social media as accessible as possible for our followers. This document was created by Boston Children's Museum's Design Accessibility Museum Initiative team and was updated in March 2020. We will continue to update this document regularly.

For general inquiries, please contact:
Access@BostonChildrensMuseum.org