

UNIT 3B. EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND (E2U) AND AUDIO DESCRIPTION (AD)

ELEMENT 3. TECHNICAL ASPECTS

AD SOFTWARE: AN INTERVIEW

Other Video Transcript

This is unit 3B, E2U and AD. Element 3: Technical Aspects. Other video: AD software: An interview. This is a video interview. During the interview, Professor Enza Minutella will ask questions to Chris Damm.

Enza Minutella holds a PhD in Translation Studies from the University of Warwick. She is a Researcher in English Language and Translation at the University of Torino, Italy, where she teaches translation and directs the MA in Audiovisual Translation “MAVTO”. Her main research interests are audiovisual translation, the dubbing of animated films and of multilingual films, the influence of the English language on dubbed Italian, audio description and accessibility, the translation of humour, theatre translation, film adaptation and Shakespeare translation. Her most recent publications include two monographs: *(Re)Creating Language Identities in Animated Films. Dubbing Linguistic Variation* (Palgrave, 2021), and *Reclaiming Romeo and Juliet: Italian Translations for Page, Stage and Screen* (Rodopi, 2013).

Christoph Damm is a software developer and accessibility advisor. He has worked for 10 years at Masaryk University, Czech Republic, to support

students with disabilities. Here, Chris developed a Polygraf live transcription system for the hearing impaired students.

A specialist in the creation of accessible materials, since 2011 Chris Damm has organised diverse accessibility services for live events and conferences, such as Sign language interpretation, Speech to Text translation, Orientation Systems.

For several years Chris has been involved in providing and creating Audio Description services for Movies as well as for live theatre plays, and has developed a desktop application, ADauthor, to simplify this process.

This video will focus on this application.

VINCENZA MINUTELLA Hello Chris, I would like to ask you some questions about ADauthor. First of all, why have you developed this software?

CHRISS DAMM Hello Vincenza. ADauthor: I started to develop it mainly with the intention to help myself. Me, as visually impaired person, usually I find it's very difficult to follow videos and multimedia content, and it is very difficult to find content which is already properly prepared for the use by persons with visually impairment, and when you ask content providers why they do not include it, usually they have the answer "because it is complicated, because it is too expensive, because it is too much time consuming". And when I heard all of this, I tried to figure out if there is a solution, and when I discovered that there is no already existing software solution, together with my



previous employer, the University and the teachers working there we tried to come up with workflows how to make their multimedia content, what they are using during the lessons, how to make that accessible to students with disabilities. And when we made the research and when we tried to find ways how to make this kind of production quick and painless, we discovered that nothing on the market is actually working and especially not for the use of a teacher for example, who can make this kind of preparation independently, without the assistance of a technician or without the assistance of somebody who's making the recordings and so on. This was basically the motivation for me to start developing the software.

VINCENZA MINUTELLA Why do you think ADauthor is useful?

CHRISS DAMM ADauthor, compared to other applications which are currently on the market, has the possibility that it is allowing the process of creating Audio descriptions for any kind of production. So, it is useful for the quick solution for a teacher who wants just to add something, who wants just to add accessibility or notifications or any kind of descriptions to their content, to their videos, without any kind of pre-knowledge in video editing, any kind of recording skills. In the same time it is useful for bigger productions, for like animation studios, video makers or youtubers,

who usually invest much more time creating their content and have also higher demand on quality. ADauthor finds a compromise and finds methods for both of these requirements of the [UNCLEAR].

VINCENZA MINUTELLA So it can be used by both trainers and professionals.

CHRISS DAMM Exactly. Educators can just quickly create content without investing a lot of time and money and resources in making accessibility, and on the other side bigger productions which want and insist on professional speakers and professional recordings, they also can go this way, and ADauthor offers a solution to both of them.

VINCENZA MINUTELLA And also, I was also thinking, and that's how I use it, also for trainers. I mean, for lecturers who train audio describers as well.

CHRISS DAMM Exactly. The system and the possibility of writing down a description simply writing down text, then using the speech synthesis and hearing the description and hearing it right within the video on the position without having the need of creating files or making recordings, and then adding it and playing it on the right position: you just type in a text, the text is spoken by the synthesizer and you can hear right away what actually is the description: it gives the possibility also for students like your students to try, to check and to see what's the impact, if I have a description of five sentences I can actually hear that it is influencing



and interfering with the dialogs for example, or if it is a description which I am not sure about, I can just type it in, I can play it to my colleague and my colleague can say "yes this is reasonable" or "no, I have no idea what the scene is about".

VINCENZA MINUTELLA Perfect, yes. So can you tell us what the functions of ADauthor are? What I can do with it? You've just talked about, just mentioned the artificial voice, the synthetic voice, but can I also record my own voice?

CHRISS DAMM Exactly. This goes in the way, as I said before, that we can start with a very simple thing like trainees for example, just like your students, using quick solutions like the synthesis, to give immediate feedback, but in the same time, if you are like a own creator on youtube or somebody like this, and you want to add audio description or you want to add any kind of audio commentary to your content, you can record your own voice: you can follow the video, you can add instead of a text the recording of your own voice, and in the same time you have an immediate feedback. And in the case you are a higher end production, a higher quality production, and you want to have the voice artist or some specific actor who's giving the commentary in your movies or in your documentary for example, there's no problem at all to make the recordings directly by this professional, and you receive the recordings and you implement them into the video



using ADauthor directly, without any kind of video editing or sound mixing necessary. ADauthor for example has also the possibility that you can start with writing down (as a professional audio describer you write down the audio descriptions), you check it with the synthesis, and once you are completely satisfied with the written descriptions you can export the transcript, and this script then is the basis for the professional voice actors to make the recordings. So you are starting to type the text, you are listening, you are checking, you are doing everything regarding the sense-testing, user testing for example, and just when you are completely sure about, then you send it to the recording and to the voice actors, and it saves you of course a lot of time and a lot of money.

VINCENZA MINUTELLA And I can export the script and the script which is created already contains the time codes? The description, the professional voice, can then start speaking the lines?

CHRISS DAMM Yes. The script contains the audio description itself but organized according to timestamps. You have the possibility not only to add purely the description, but you can add also additional information to the voice artist. So, giving information about intonation, or particular forms and ways of speaking. You can give additional information like which sentence or which phrase is coming before the actual description, so that the



person who's making the recording can orient and can prepare the recording according to your requirements as the professional audio describer. So you can concentrate on your specialization of being the audio describer and the person who's making the recording can be concentrated on his specialization which is purely the dubbing for example, or the reading of your audio description.

VINCENZA MINUTELLA Perfect, thank you very much. And now can you show us how to use ADauthor?

CHIRSS DAMM

Of course, I can show you a small project. Let's create a new project. To identify the project let's provide a unique name, choose the video file, then you have the possibility to make some default settings for the synthesizer. Select a storage for your project, then you click on Save and you are ready to go.

You are free to browse around the movie and find the right position for your audio description. Click the Plus to add the description, make the settings of your synthesizer and start to type the text. Click Save, and you can just follow and listen to the audiodescription you have

Una lettera scritta in Braille mi offre una nuova opportunità.

The same works if you want to create an audiodescription with your own recording, not using the synthesizer. You click again to Plus, you

select a chapter for recording, you make your recording, and once you are done you click Save and the audiodescription is added.

I miei primi passi a bordo per aprire la porta per andare sottocoperta e prepararmi.

You can add audio descriptions also by professional voice actors. Again the Plus button, choose your audiofile, and Save it.

Sono Andrea Cionna, atleta paralimpico cieco, e la vela è il mio sport.

You can export your project as video files. As video files with mixed audio, as video files with selective audios, for all the original sound or for the audiodescription soundtrack, and you can export it also as a script.

VINCENZA MINUTELLA Ok. Thank you very much, Chris.

CHRISS DAMM Thank you very much, Vincenza.

All the other pictures used in this presentation come from the Public Domain Vectors website, which gathers hundreds of royalty-free vector images under the Creative Commons Universal Public Domain Dedication ([CC0 1.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)) license.

This video was prepared by Enza Minutella from the University of Turin, Italy, and Chris Damm, software developer and creator of ADauthor. The video was produced and subtitled by Elisa Perego, Angelika De Marchis e Laura Marini from Università degli Studi di Trieste. The narrator was Annalisa Navetta.



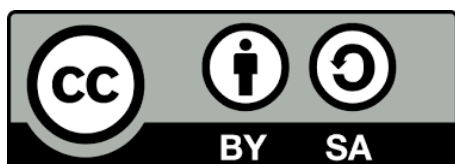
Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



You can reach Elisa Perego at eperego@units.it.

Copyright and disclaimer: The project EASIT has received funding from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education programme, grant agreement 2018-1-ES01-KA203-05275.

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Partners:

