

YouTube extends automatic video captioning

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The internet homepage of the YouTube website. YouTube, in a significant development for deaf Web users, extended automatic caption capability to all English-language videos on the video-sharing website on Thursday.

YouTube, in a significant development for millions of deaf Internet users, extended automatic caption capability Thursday to all English-language videos on the video-sharing website.

YouTube users have been able to manually add captions to videos since 2008 and in November of last year the site began offering machine-generated captions for about a dozen partner channels.

Hiroto Tokusei, a [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/) product manager, said in a blog post on Thursday that the automatic caption, or auto-caption, feature was now being expanded to all videos on the site in English.

Auto-captioning uses speech-to-text technology to generate subtitles.

"Making [video](#) easily accessible is something we're working hard to address at YouTube," said Tokusei, citing studies that predict that over 700 million people worldwide will suffer from [hearing impairment](#) by 2015.

The auto-captioning feature will make YouTube videos "more accessible to people who have hearing disabilities or who speak different languages," the YouTube project manager said.

While the auto-caption feature currently only works for videos where English is spoken, Tokusei said users can use Google's automatic translation service to simultaneously translate the captions into 50 other languages.

Auto-captioning in more languages will be added "in the months to come."

The YouTube project manager noted that auto-captioning is not yet perfect and a "clearly spoken audio track" without background noise is needed to create quality captions.

Video owners do have the capability, however, of downloading auto-generated captions, improving their accuracy and then uploading a new version.

One of the chief advocates for captioning capability at YouTube has been Vint Cerf, the [Google](#) vice president who has been described as the "Father of the Internet."

Cerf, who is hearing impaired and has been wearing [hearing aids](#) since the age of 13, made a personal appearance at the unveiling of the

YouTube auto-caption features at Google's Washington offices in November.

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