

THE BIG ACCESSIBILITY ROUND-UP

25th January 2024
Alyx Leeming



Image: Campaign 'Subtitling ads: Can more be done?'

We reflect on our journey to see how far we've come, and what progress has been made across the industry, to further accessibility in TV ads.

After launching [Clearcast Subtitling](#), at the end of 2022, we began researching the number of TV ads which tend to include subtitles in the UK.

The surprisingly low numbers and general lack of tracked data set us on an unexpected path into the world of accessibility. And since then, we've not looked back. Well, today we're doing just that...

THE CATALYST

For us, it started in November 2022 when we published a piece in Campaign magazine: [Subtitling ads: can more be done?](#) In short, yes.

Although some great work had already been done in the area (such as egta's brilliant [snapshot](#) in May), we couldn't find any concrete data on how many ads actually had subtitles, and from what we could gauge - it was clear it wasn't many.

THE MISSION

Since then, we've sought out ways to make that number higher, regardless of whether our service or that of another supplier is used. Although originally the context for launching and promoting our new service, our work on the topic quickly became much more than that.

As we became more knowledgeable, we in turn, became passionate about - not just Subtitling, but - TV ad accessibility as a whole, including Audio Description (AD), British Sign Language (BSL), and the idea of baking accessibility into creative choices from the very beginning. With the opportunity for brands to reach even wider audiences and to include people who would otherwise be excluded, it just makes sense.

All of this inspired us to launch the [Accessible #AdsForAll](#) campaign. And what a year (well, 14 months) it's been since.

THE TOP TEN

We've rounded up ten key moments that have made progress since that first article.

From published pieces to industry developments - some of our own, as well as a few from our friends in the industry.

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Gathering your thoughts

3rd March

[Accessible #AdsForAll survey](#)

We had bundles of passion and ideas – but were we informed enough to take the right steps?

We needed to hear from the people who actually make ads. So, on World Hearing Day we launched a piece of market research to take the temperature of attitudes across the spectrum.

From 3rd March to 18th April, with support from industry bodies and our shareholder broadcasters, we invited a variety of stakeholders to complete a short survey to tell us how they felt about existing practices. We then planned to share our findings with the industry.

Take a look at [number 4 on p9](#) for the results!

A screenshot of a presentation slide with a dark blue background and white text. The slide is titled 'CLEARCAST' in a bold, sans-serif font. Below the title, it says 'c. Thank you. Now let's hear your thoughts.' followed by a question: 'First of all, how important is it to you that TV ads are accessible? *'. The slide is shown within a window frame with a scrollbar on the right.

CLEARCAST

c. Thank you.
Now let's hear your
thoughts.

First of all, how important
is it to you that TV ads are
accessible? *

Increasing event accessibility

30th March

[Making the first accessible British Arrows](#)

We approached the British Arrows team with an idea: to make the 47th awards show as accessible as possible.

The big night, which celebrates innovators of moving image advertising, welcomed 1300 guests to the ballroom of the Grosvenor House Hotel. Host, Rylan Clark, announced all of the winners, including the Clearcast-sponsored Charity and Public service award.

FINDING SOLUTIONS

We worked with the Arrows team to provide a variety of additions to the show, that allowed more people to engage with it. This included subtitles for winning films and online interviews, sign language interpreters and live captions for key speeches.



Our aim was to not only make the evening better for guests who use subtitles and sign language, but to raise awareness for all guests, about the crucial need for access services.



We didn't hesitate when Clearcast asked us if we were open to making the awards more accessible. We're pleased to play a small part in raising awareness and helping to drive the #AdsForAll initiative during this year's ceremony."

Lisa Lavender,
Managing Director, British Arrows

After the success of 2023, we're working with the Arrows team once again for this year's event. We aim to make the 2024 show just as accessible as the previous, if not more so!



Image: sign language (source: Canva)

Sharing findings

2nd May & 29th June

[5 things you can do now to make your ads more accessible](#)

[Survey results reveal top 4 barriers and solutions to creating accessible ads](#)

Read advice

See results

Since throwing ourselves into the world of accessibility, we had gained many valuable insights. So we published two pieces to share some initial advice and our survey results.

ADVICE

First we gave brands and agencies pointers on utilising their key relationship, with a reminder that communication is key. We advised to start the accessibility conversation early, work in a budget line and make simple-yet-effective tweaks (eg mention your brand name in the audio!)

THE RESULTS WERE IN!

This was followed by the results to our #AdsForAll survey. The data was analysed by independent media insight consultant, Sue Gray, who published

a full report with methodology and statistics. You can read this [here](#), but if you'd prefer top-line info, we've summarised it with a focus on the main barriers and how to overcome them.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. The small, but interested, sample showed that more people had subtitled (3/4) than audio described (1/4) or signed (1/10) their ads in the last 12 months.

2. The main barriers were cost (4/10), lack of knowledge (4/10), creative considerations (1/5) and timing (1/3).

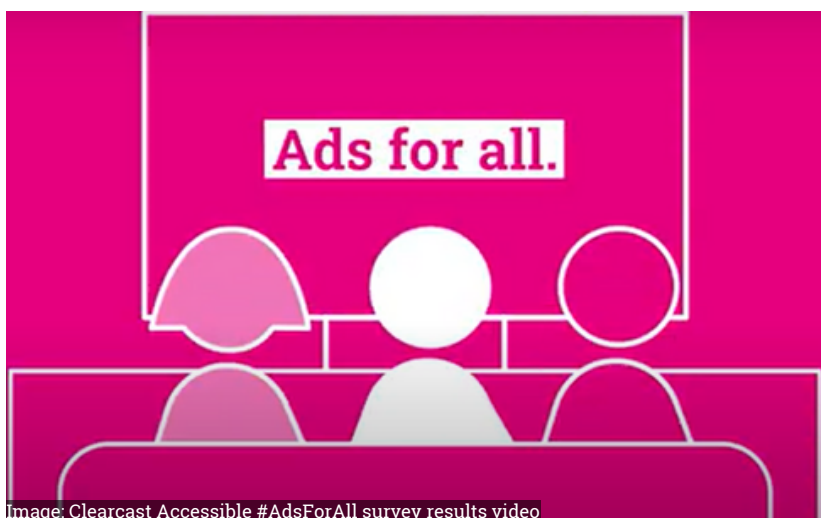


Image: Clearcast Accessible #AdsForAll survey results video

Collaborating with the industry

May onwards

Accessible TV ads: working groups

With research in hand, we knew to make lasting change, we couldn't do it alone.

We needed expertise, differing opinions (including those with the lived experience) and buy-in from a cross-section of stakeholders. This led us to start two new working groups, to foster cross-collaboration.

GROUP 1

Comprised of survey respondents who expressed interest in joining (6/10).




GROUP 2

Made up of experts and people from industry bodies, who could provide us with a wider scope. Including representatives from ISBA, Advertising Association, IPA, Thinkbox, Flock Associates and AMV BBDO.







We used this to share updates and gather opinions on developments.




The group has also been instrumental in helping to spread the word online.


We'd like to thank everyone involved in the group in 2023 and hope to collaborate further this year.



Our semi-regular meetings, which are still ongoing, have allowed us to share knowledge, experience, support, and to produce collectively agreed-upon actions, to drive real progress.



In addition, the RNID and RNIB shared their expertise with us on certain projects, and introduced us to people with relevant lived experiences, whose voices have been vital.



Lots of brilliant things have come out as a result of this group, including a guide to tackling accessibility (number 5, p11) and a change to the way things are done in The Library (number 9, p17).

We'd like to thank everyone involved, with extra special thanks to ISBA who are now taking the lead with the group.

Publishing official guidance

31st October
[REFRAME: Guidance for Marketers on accessible advertising - by ISBA & Flock Associates](#)

Read guide

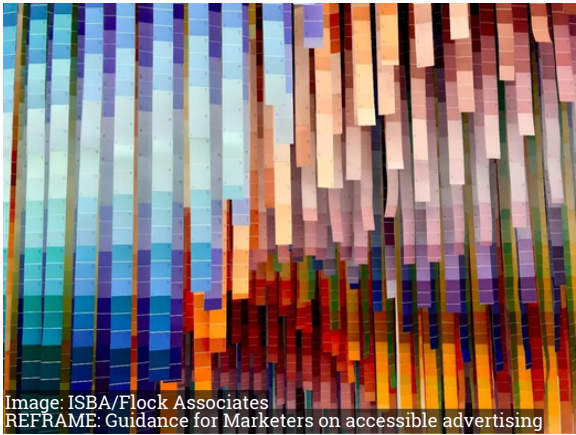


Image: ISBA/Flock Associates
REFRAME: Guidance for Marketers on accessible advertising

Our friends at ISBA and Flock put together a brilliant guide to help with a common barrier: lack of knowledge. Their ambition is to drive an accessible advertising ecosystem, by encouraging advertisers to consider this when briefing agencies.

Visual

Auditory

Cognitive

Motor

It outlines different types of accessibility impairments people can face, practical tips on how to integrate accessibility into the process and more.

Training the first delegates

1st November

[Ad Accessibility Training - The results](#)

[Read more](#)

We welcomed our first delegates to 'Ad Accessibility Training' – the brand new course aimed at combating the concerns and knowledge-gaps people have when trying to make their ads accessible.

We created the course in collaboration with RNID ([Royal National Institute for Deaf People](#)) and RNIB ([Royal National Institute of Blind People](#)), plus lots of input from many other key players.



Image: RNID's Andy during Clearcast Ad Accessibility Training

We covered why accessible ads are worthwhile - featuring unique insights from people with the lived experience - and shared statistics, costs, 'how to' demos, creative and practical tips, as well as some successfully accessible ad examples.

This included a great ad made by our friends at [egta](#), who gave us exclusive early-access to show their World TV Day ad ([more on this on p14, number 7.](#))



I really enjoyed that you made sure to include the voices/opinions of disabled people. There is a tendency in disability education to talk about/for people with disabilities, as opposed to letting the real people affected by accessible provisions explain for themselves. It's a hard balance as well to not make it the burden of disabled people to have to fight to be taken seriously. In this way, the training hit a lovely balance I thought."

Beth, Tviva Ltd, training delegate

To experience the course for yourself, it's now available to book bespoke, at a date and time that suits you. Get in touch with the training team via [the course page](#) form to enquire.

Celebrating and raising awareness

21st November
[World TV Day ad – by egta and partners](#)

Later in the same month, another milestone took place: World TV Day.

Watch the ad

Every year egta and their partners celebrate the big day with a purpose-made ad to highlight a particular aspect of TV. The focus for 2023 was accessibility, so we couldn't help but get involved, to help give it the best possible chance for success.

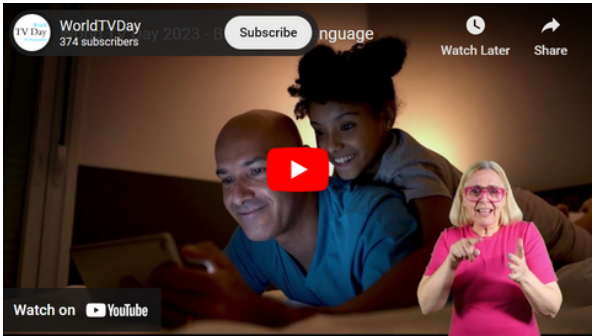


Image: Youtube - World TV Day 2023 ad.

We were proud to play a part in the ad's development, with hands-on help, access to our services (Fast Track, Edit to Clear, TV Admin, Delivery) and BSL interpretation which we sourced and commissioned.

You can watch the brilliant ad via the link on [page 14](#). There you'll also be able to read about how egta used creative choices and access services to achieve their accessible ad.



Image: Youtube - World TV Day 2023 ad.

Two versions were made: one with subtitles and the other with BSL. The ad was broadcast on Channel 4 and ITVX in the UK, plus a number of international channels.



Image: Youtube - World TV Day 2023 ad.

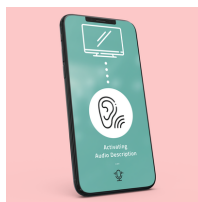
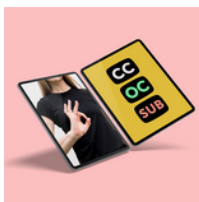
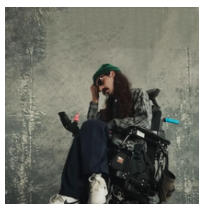
Centralising knowledge

21st November (and previous)

Accessibility in TV Advertising knowledge hubs - from [Thinkbox](#) and [egta](#)

As part of the World TV day celebrations, our friends at Thinkbox launched their brand-new hub for accessibility in TV advertising, centralising advice on how to start your own journey - featuring news, opinions and a gallery of ads which champion progressive ideas.

It's also worth noting that egta have had their own hub on the topic for a while, which helps people to understand access services. It also features testimonials, case studies, insights from industry leaders and a library of further resources.



Images: Thinkbox Accessible TV Advertising hub & egta Accessibility in advertising knowledge hub.

Exploring Audio Description

8th December

[Audio description in TV advertising: What is it and what are the key benefits for brands?](#)

[Read full piece](#)

As we launched our very own subtitling service, we spent a lot of time focussing on the benefits of that service. But, we thought it would be useful for people to hear a little more about Audio Description (AD), so we published an article in The Drum, to take a closer look.

There are over 2 million people in the UK living with sight loss, but it's estimated that even fewer ads offer AD than subtitles. As so many people are regularly missing out, we outlined three key benefits to encourage brands to consider including it in their next campaign.

BENEFITS

1. Social responsibility
2. Further reach
3. Brand loyalty

We went on to explain just what AD really is, how to do it well and how to get it made.



Changing the way things work

2nd January 2024

[A small change in The Library](#)

Recently we announced a small, yet hopefully significant, change that we've made to our system: The Clearcast Library.

Previously in The Library, when you're asked if you intend to subtitle your ad or not, the default is set to 'off'. Now, the default is set to 'on', meaning that if you don't intend to subtitle your ad, you'll need to change this to 'off'.

This change was a great topic of discussion in our industry working group (number 4 on page 9) allowing us to gain valuable insight from our collaborators and the sections of the industry which they represent.

Although a minor change, we hope this will increase awareness of the option to subtitle and contribute to a shift in perceptions around what is considered standard practice and the 'status quo'.



Subtitles

Select if subtitles are going to be added to this material

WHAT'S NEXT?

Congratulations to all involved with the progress made - there's a lot to be proud of! We're now looking ahead to what can be achieved this year and beyond.

YOUR ACCESSIBILITY JOURNEY

Check out some of the links referenced for your next steps: guidance, training, inspiration and knowledge.

1

Read: [REFRAME: Guidance for Marketers on accessible advertising](#)

2

Book: [bespoke Ad Accessibility Training](#)

3

Explore: [our latest accessibility news & blogs](#)

4

Enquire: [about Clearcast Subtitling](#)

5

Explore: [egta accessibility in advertising hub](#)

6

Explore: [Thinkbox accessible TV advertising hub](#)

