

Audio Description for TV in the U.S.

Producers who are creating TV spots that will have Audio Description added should be aware of what this service is, who it is for, and how to best prepare and deliver elements to be used by the Extreme Reach team.

What is Audio Description?

Audio Description (AD) is audio-narrated descriptions of key visual elements. These descriptions are inserted into natural pauses in the dialogue. Audio Description makes television more accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Does Audio Description change how I create an Ad?

Audio Description is often added well after the production phase is complete, but this often presents a problem. Many ads feature “wall-to-wall” audio, which doesn’t leave any time for Audio Description. In some cases there is no possible way to add any descriptions. However, if a producer is aware that Audio Description is required, an alternate mix can be created that does leave space for the Audio Description to be inserted. Creating this alternate base mix will NOT affect the regular stereo or surround mixes created for the spot. Only people who have chosen to enable the SAP channel in their set-top box or television will hear the alternate mix.

What elements should I supply to Extreme Reach?

If the mix contains enough free space to insert Audio Description, only the final surround or stereo mix is required but a new Ad-ID must be used. If you are going to produce an alternate mix that allows for more space to insert Audio Description, that mono mix should be labeled as Ad-ID_AD_BaseMix (e.g. ABCD1234000H_AD_BaseMix.wav).

If you have a finished spot with Audio Description, the Ad-ID must be different than the spot without Audio Description, the mono mix with Audio Description must be on channel 7 and the mono mix on channel 8 (5.1 on channels 1-6 or stereo on channels 1&2).

The Audio Description track is broadcast on the Secondary Audio Program (SAP) channel that broadcasters air alongside the regular audio channel. In a typical cable/satellite provider scenario, a television viewer can change a setting in the set-top box to switch the audio feed to the SAP channel. This stream could be labeled as “SAP”, “Audio Description”, “Described Video”, “Alternate Language” or “Video Description” but all these selections will provide the programming assigned to this alternate audio channel.

Any questions? Get in touch at support@extremereach.com

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