Introduction

Welcome to A2i Transcription Services, where we make information accessible so that people who are blind, visually-impaired, or unable to read printed text can get equal access to information.

In this recording we tell you all about our different services and how you can make your information accessible.

- Approximate recording time: 20 mins
- CD 1 of 1
- Return not required.

Contents

You can skip through the tracks in this recording to find the start of the following sections:

1. **Welcome**
2. **What are alternative formats?**
3. **Braille**
4. **Audio** including
   4a) an extract from a care document
   4b) an extract from a newsletter
   4c) an extract from a theatre what's on guide
   4d) an extract from a university prospectus
   4e) an extract from a journal
   4f) an extract from a health information leaflet
   4g) an extract from a charity document
5. **Large Print**
6. **Easy Read translation**
7. **E-text**
8. **Complex items, images and tactile diagrams**
9. **Language Translation**
10. **Get in touch**

1. Welcome to A2i Transcription Services

Here at A2i we believe everyone should have equal access to information. We can help you reach a wider audience by making your information accessible to people who are blind, visually-impaired or cannot read printed text. We produce documents in a number of accessible formats such as Braille, Audio, Large Print, E-text and Easy Read.

Our aims are to:

- make information accessible for people with a disability
- help businesses meet their legal requirements
- provide a fast turnaround
- and offer a friendly and professional service.

A2i was set up in 1999 by managing director Susie Fisher – that's me! – and is now a thriving small business with a dedicated team. Back in the early 90s, I worked in a disability department in a university. I discovered it was impossible to get accessible formats transcribed for our visually impaired students in under two months. I felt this was a huge equality problem, but one that I could do something about. So I set up A2i.

A2i is now a leading alternative formats provider in the UK. We offer a speedy and reliable transcription service for a whole range of companies, individuals and organisations who want to be able to reach their disabled audiences.

We've put together this recording to not only showcase some of our voice artists, but to also introduce the different services we offer… If you have any questions about anything you hear, feel free to contact us. Our details are in section 10.

2. What are alternative formats?

As approximately 1 in 5 people in the UK are disabled, finding a reliable, professional and speedy alternative format transcription company is essential if you want to provide a fair and accessible service to your customers.

The term 'purple pound' is now widely used to refer to the collective spending power of disabled people. This spending power is estimated to be worth about £249bn annually to the UK economy. So making your products and services accessible is a win-win scenario. Not only are you creating a more accessible environment for disabled people – contributing to more independence, choice and opportunity – you are also increasing your market potential for your products and services.

But how can you make your information accessible?

You may have heard of Braille and possibly Large Print, but there are other types of accessible transcription too. For example there's also Audio, E-text and Accessible PDFs (for electronic documents), and Easy Read amongst others. Each of these formats enable the reader to access information in a format more suited to their individual needs. Some formats are better suited for some people than others... it's a common misconception that all blind people read Braille; but it's far from the case. For example, people with milder visual impairments may prefer Large Print.

In the following tracks we go into more detail about each of the main formats we produce.

3. Braille

Braille is a tactile code made up of simple dot patterns which are used to represent written language. People use their fingers to ‘read’ it. Although not all blind people read Braille, it is read by many, and is an important format, enabling people to live independent and fulfilled lives.

A2i’s Braille transcription service enables you to receive any document in Braille, whatever size or complexity – from single-page letters to magazines and books.

All our Braille documents are thoroughly edited to give a consistent and easy-to-use Braille layout. We can also add your logo or other branding to match your print style.

Our Braille transcribers are experienced in producing a range of Braille documents, including: financial statements, magazines, books, reports, exam papers, menus, business cards, Braille labels and more.

We can also transcribe more complex documents, including diagrams, tables, graphs, images and languages other than English. What’s more, our in-house specialist Maths team can even transcribe Maths Braille to degree-level standard.

4. Audio

Audio transcription is often the quickest way to make your documents available to as many disabled people as possible. People who have a visual impairment, reading difficulty, dyslexia, or who have learning difficulties can access information easily through audio.

At A2i, we are experienced in producing a range of document types in audio, including: prospectuses, letters, utility statements, magazines and reports, course materials, academic journals and audiobooks. We also offer you the choice of a real or synthetic voice.

You can choose to have your audio output in various ways, such as audio CD, USB memory stick or for use online. Our experienced team produce bespoke audio scripts of your document, tailoring the recording and including easy navigation and indexing with the listener in mind. All our audio transcriptions are produced in our own in-house professional recording studios.

The following few tracks are some extracts from previous recordings:

4a) Here is an extract from a care document

Our clients are those who, because of increasing age or disability, find it difficult to cope with domestic responsibilities, and their own personal care needs. We provide

care services to both the private and public sectors, and your needs for care and support are identified through an assessment. This may involve the care manager from the local authority. We operate within the postcode areas of BS5, BS15 and BS16, East Bristol, parts of North Bristol and South Gloucester.

4b) Here is an extract from a newsletter

Runcorn firefighters held an Easter-themed coffee and cake morning at the Heath Road fire station on Good Friday to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Research and The Firefighters Charity. There were plenty of cakes and refreshments, as well as an Easter Egg hunt, the opportunity to look around the station and to sit in the fire engines. Road and kitchen safety advice was given out and people were invited to share any concerns they may have regarding fire safety. Hundreds of people turned up to the event, and over £1000 was raised for the two charities.

4c) Here is an extract from a theatre what's on guide

Royal Shakespeare Company presents Romeo and Juliet, by William Shakespeare.

What if your first true love was someone you'd been told to hate? Ripped apart by the bitter divisions of their parents, two young people will risk everything to be together. The most famous story of love at first sight explodes with intense passion and an irresistible desire for change. Will this spark a revolution or will division continue to tear through generations?

Audio-described performance: 2nd February, 2pm.

Captioned performance, 31st January, 2pm.

4d) Here is an extract from a university prospectus

Higher Education Courses:

- Business Foundation Degree, Level 4 and 5, Code H5027ELA1
- Business HNC or HND, Level 5, Code D5848FLA
- Computing and Systems Development HNC or HND, Level 5, Code D6612FLA
- Working in Integrated Services for Children and Young People BA(Hons), Level 6, Code H7610PLA

4e) Here is an extract from a journal

Sharing the Benefits of School-Based Counselling

In May, we took representatives from the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) to Northern Ireland, to see how they have applied their model of school-based counselling. Family Works, the main provider of Northern Ireland's school counselling programme, talked to us about their successes and the obstacles they've overcome. With SAMH we'll use the learning from this visit to develop our dialogue with the Scottish Government in this key policy area.

4f) Here is an extract from a health information leaflet

This information is for people who would like more information about Ductal Carcinoma In Situ (DCIS). It describes what DCIS is, the symptoms, how a diagnosis is made and possible treatments. We hope this information helps you understand more about DCIS, discuss any questions you have with your specialist team, and be involved as much as you want in any decisions about your treatment.

4g) Here is an extract from a charity document

Summary Findings

Working-age visually impaired people can find it hard to access or sustain employment that could help them meet their material, social and disability-related needs. Support in and into work can help, but some feel the odds are stacked against them. Visually impaired people on low incomes prioritise their basic material needs but also consider it important to be able to afford social participation and avoid the risk of isolation. This involves covering the extra costs of transport and human support, which are more restricted when budgets are limited. And visually impaired people can miss out on access to technology and other aids that could support them in performing daily tasks and maintaining independence, due to the cost, limited knowledge about what is available or support using it.

5. Large Print

Not every visually impaired person reads or needs Braille. Many people have some sight, but have difficulty reading regular size print – usually 10-12 font.

We produce Large Print documents to a size and format that we know is suitable for most people with visual impairments. Our standard Large Print size is 18 font, using black text on pale yellow paper. However, we are happy to adapt our style to create a Large Print version suitable for an individual's needs.

Our Large Print service is mainly used for people with sight loss, however it can also be used as a format for dyslexia. Sometimes dyslexic people find it easier to read documents if the text is clearer, and our Large Print service involves using clear fonts and spacing.

If you require a specific font size, font style, or colour paper for an individual please just let us know and we will include this in our adaptation.

6. Easy Read translation

Easy Read is a specialist format that combines images with clear text. It is designed to help organisations communicate with people with a learning disability. Easy Read has been developed by and with adults with a learning disability to meet their needs.

Our Easy Read service is produced by our in-house experts who have experience of dealing with a wide range of documents. We have worked closely with a leading consultant on Easy Read translation to develop our service and ensure that documents are fully accessible for the target audience. We are dedicated to the continual improvement of our service by ensuring that our Easy Read translation style is regularly checked, to ensure ongoing accessibility.

When translating your document into Easy Read format we always think about your intended audience, and adapt your document to provide a logical structure and clear design. We strive for unambiguous, jargon-free language, re-design tables, graphs, charts and forms, and use Photosymbol images alongside text to help convey your message.

We have produced Easy Read documents for health organisations, government bodies, local councils, housing associations and local authorities.

7. E-text

At A2i we want to make sure people can access information both in hard copy and digitally. Many disabled people access text using computers or other digital devices, using software which reads text out loud.

Our transcription team can adapt your document so it is compatible with the largest range of read-aloud software possible (e.g. JAWS). We also ensure your document can be used with Braille displays and enlarging software. This is called E-text (which is short for ‘electronic text’) transcription, and we have a long history of transcribing magazines, journals, financial statements, text books and other educational material into this format.

8. Complex items, images and tactile diagrams

Have you ever thought about how blind and visually impaired people access images and diagrams? At A2i we strive to make your whole document accessible – this includes transcribing visual information such as graphs, charts, pictures, photos and maps.

When we translate your document into alternative formats, we consider who your reader is and what information they might need. We ask ourselves what the author was trying to communicate when they included the image or diagram in the original print text. Some images are best transcribed with a full and informed description,

some can be omitted in the alternative format as they are for aesthetic value only; and sometimes a tactile version of the diagram is appropriate.

Tactile diagrams translate a visual image into a tactile one. They use raised surfaces so blind and visually impaired people can feel the image with their fingers. Tactile diagrams are particularly helpful for maps and can be combined with Braille labelling.

If you have any questions about how we adapt complex items – or have something to transcribe that you're not sure about – get in touch with our team. You can find our contact details in section 10 of this recording.

9. Language Translation

A2i offers you a one stop shop for all your translation and transcription needs. We provide a full language translation service through a network of skilled translators. We deliver accurate, high-quality translations in your chosen languages and in all subject matters, including: legal, technical, medical, financial and commercial documents. We use highly qualified professional translators with a wide variety of expertise who have been screened and tested to high standards.

We offer translation in more than 200 languages, including: Polish, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujarati, Urdu, Arabic, French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Portuguese, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Italian, Somali, Lithuanian and German.

If you need your translation in an accessible format we can of course also help you with this! We can transcribe many languages in accessible formats such as Audio, Braille, E-text and Large Print. Talk to our friendly team if you want further information about this specialist service.

10. Get in touch

Let us help you with your project…

Making information accessible is what we love to do! We have trained and experienced staff who can skilfully make your information accessible for disabled people.

Get in touch if you have any questions or would like to discuss your project.

You can contact us…

by Phone: 01179 44 00 44

by Email: info@a2i.co.uk

or follow us on Twitter: @a2itranscribes

Our web address is www.a2i.co.uk

You can also sign up to our quarterly newsletter for service updates, news, and articles relating to accessibility. Just visit: http://a2i.co.uk/newsletter-signup/

End of recording.