Audio/Video Description

Availability of Audio Description or AD (my preferred term and abbreviation)

There is a good selection of AD during prime time on the 4 major stations but there are still many shows that do not provide AD. If you like police drama, there is CSI, NCIS, Criminal minds and others. But there are also some police shows that do not have it. If there is no AD and the show has a lot of action, I will not watch it as it is no longer entertainment, it is frustration. (I do have minimal vision, less than 5 degrees of peripheral and night blindness) Prime time television shows should all have AD so that all consumers can choose what they want to watch. Not providing AD on all shows is like telling those of us who are blind or have low vision that we can only drink Pepsi, not coke or 7up for us. Also, others in my household who do not have a vision disability enjoy AD for certain shows and movies.

Accessing information on AD content

My cable service provider, Spectrum, does not provide any indication in their guide as to whether a program has AD. It tells me if a show is new, if it is in HD and if there is CC, but not AD indication whatsoever. The Audio Description Project on the American Council for the Blind website does a decent job of listing shows with AD, but it adds extra searching for the consumer that detracts from the entertainment experience and is just plain cumbersome. The database for all entertainment media should include an AD indication which could be picked up and included in the guide. When a consumer is scanning the tv guide for something to watch, they don’t want to constantly refer to another document, that is in an entirely different sort order, for information as to accessibility.

Benefits of AD

You ask to quantify the benefits. Here is an article from 3 Play Media on benefits <https://www.3playmedia.com/2018/06/21/deep-dive-how-audio-description-benefits-everyone/?fbclid=IwAR1x1VvrL10ddBy3lrFgt3O0DhEJtuHIDPBje8UxICiThjfa_g57fWDQd1M>

Opportunities for a dedicated AD audio stream

Although I am not a provider, as a consumer this is an essential next step. The sharing of the current SAP channel is fraught with issues that our especially difficult when you cannot see. I see no reason why with the current transition to cloud-based software and content, anyone can consider this a difficult task. It requires prioritizing, resource dedication and time. Unfortunately, with no consequences, accessibility does not become a priority.

Final thoughts

Streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu also have many of the same issues, not indication on programming regarding AD on both services. Hulu does not pass through AD on the non-original content that they stream as well as not providing AD on their original content as Netflix does. Content is made available in many forms and serious consideration to accessibility needs to be given before these services even launch, not as an afterthought. Also, my cable service provider has had an ongoing problem with rebroadcast of AD on its “On Demand” service. I have been “working with them” on this problem for months. Sometimes I feel like I am their beta tester instead of a customer, only I don’t get a paycheck…