

Customer Spotlight: Oregon State University

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In a Nutshell

Oregon State University was using a small team of human transcribers to meet the needs of its students who required transcripts and note taking assistance in order to meet ADA requirements. When COVID-19 forced the campus to function entirely online, the need for transcripts and captions - both live and in post-production - drastically increased. The university's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Access Services partnered with Verbit to automate these services and provide accessible materials to all students.

The Challenge

At the onset of COVID-19 when OSU migrated its courses and lectures online, the university saw an unexpected and increasing number of requests for transcribing and captioning. Despite already having a team of on-site transcribers, it simply wasn't enough for the unprecedented demand for transcripts and post-production captioning that followed the move to online. The university simultaneously experienced an increase in the number of students who are hard of hearing and do not sign. Additionally, many university organizations and campus partners began conducting webinars and Zoom meetings that required captioning.

"Sometimes students who have traditionally used one type of communication access method and then they switch over to something else, and it's like, 'Wow, I had no idea I was missing this much...I can follow along so much better, or I can participate more'..That's what I tend to see with transcribing and then by extension, live captioning."



**Oregon State
University**

Barbara Forrest-Ball,
Manager, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Access
Services, Oregon State University

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Oregon State University (OSU) is a highly rated public university located on a 420-acre campus in Corvallis, Oregon. With student enrollment averaging 32,000, OSU is the largest university in the state. The university's roots date back to 1856, with the idea that everyone deserves access to an education that can transform their lives.

The Solution

One week into the drastic switch to online learning, OSU reached out to Verbit to start setting up its automated transcript and captioning services. The solution hasn't just benefited hard-of-hearing learners, but also students with other learning disabilities. Teaming up with Verbit has meant that the university has been able to help meet its mission of providing 'everybody access to an education that can transform their lives.

Verbit offered:

- **Live captions & transcription services:** Enabling students to continue their learning remotely and live with peers via video conferencing tools
- **Seamless integration:** Smooth connection with Zoom to service video captioning and transcription needs quickly
- **Guidance:** "Having that ability to meet on a regular basis until we were ready to be on our own. That was really helpful."
- **Ease of use:** A product that could be easily explained to instructors and implemented into courses

"It was interesting because after spring term, I was thinking, 'I wonder if these students are going to request transcribing again,' and sure enough they did.... This is working for them and it's something that they are relying on to get all the information."

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The Results

OSU's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Access Services team has been able to understand and address students' accessibility needs and provide technical support where needed. The university's courses are running smoothly online and accessible to all students by incorporating Verbit's software into its online classes.

- ✓ **Helping students with numerous disabilities**
"[Aside from hard of hearing students], we tend to find that students with auditory processing disorder will be found eligible for captioning. There are a couple of students on the autism spectrum who have used captioning or transcribing. We just approved captioning for a student who has ADHD."
- ✓ **A quick process**
"We were able to come up with a contract. That process went really quickly. Then within that next week, I would say, I was meeting with [Verbit] and we were getting everything in place for live captioning."

- ✓ **Smooth delivery of services**
"[Verbit] had suggestions on how we could have delivery of services more smoothly on the student's side and on the instructor's side, so the instructors wouldn't have to send an API token every time."
- ✓ **Customization to meet student preferences**
"The student has to be the one that takes the lead. The way that I have approached it with students is, this option is open to you. If you're comfortable with X, then let's go with that, but just know that at any point, you can switch over to Y if you want."
- ✓ **Accessible on-demand video**
"Post-production captioning is really important. We had some instructors who posted their lectures online, so it was available to students afterwards."

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