

#4452937 Closed Captioned Video Programming

Submitted December 23, 2020, 4:02 PM
Received via Web Form
Requester [REDACTED] [REDACTED]@verizon.net>

CCs

Sherita Kennedy <sherita.kennedy@fcc.gov>

Status	Type	Priority	Group	Assignee
Open	-	-	DRO - Main Form	Sherita Kennedy

Name of TV program TV Method

WPXI Morning News Cable

Accessibility Issues

Closed Captioning on TV (from a television station or subscription television provider, for example, cable, fiber optic or satellite)

First Name	Last Name	State	Zip Code	Time of Issue	Date of Issue
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Pennsylvania	15143	6:00 AM	Dec 22
Phone (where you can be contacted)	TV channel	City Where Program was Viewed/Heard			
[REDACTED]	11	Pittsburgh			
City of Company Complaining About	State of Company Complaining About				
Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania				
Preferred Method of Response	Network	Name of Company Complaining About			
Email	NBC	WPXI-TV, Pittsburgh.			
Zip Code of Company Complaining About	Call Sign	State Where Program was Viewed/Heard			
15214	WPXI	Pennsylvania			
Address 1	Phone Number of Company Complaining About	City			
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Sewickley			
Filing on Behalf of Someone	Name of Subscription Service				
No	Comcast/XFINITY				

[REDACTED] Dec 23, 4:02 PM

I am a 76 year old male with failing hearing and use CC to enjoy TV programs. I live in Florida for the winter and the Pittsburgh area for the summer/fall months. We are currently living in our Pittsburgh home. One of the local stations we enjoy watching in Pittsburgh is the NBC affiliate WPXI-TV. CC on their national programs are excellent. Up until recently, their local live news programs had good CC. However that has all changed drastically. Their CC of breaking stories are hardly legible. Names and places come out completely wrong most times. I called WPXI to complain about their CC, and was transferred to someone in their engineering department. I was advised that they recently changed their CC method from a live CC service and are now using a voice recognition system to CC their news programs. I asked if this was a temporary change and was informed that it was authorized by their parent company. The person I spoke to said they hoped the system would improve in the future. I asked if anyone at WPXI was reading their CC and he said they were analyzing the system and were aware of the translation errors and were working with their vendor to hopefully improve the system. It is a shame that people who depend on CC have to suffer with this system when the prior service was very good. CC viewers should have been notified that they were changing systems, so we didn't have to try to figure out if it was our cable company or television sets causing the problems. I have some hearing, so I could decipher immediately that something was wrong. I feel sorry for my deaf friends who must be struggling with this inferior service. We thought the FCC had quality standards that stations had to adhere to. Apparently WPXI and its parent doesn't care if the CC service they are providing to their caption users is any good or not. Thank you.

Will Schell Dec 23, 4:19 PM

Internal note

Request [#4452901](#) "Closed Captioned Video Programming" was closed and merged into this request. Last comment in request [#4452901](#):

I am a 76 year old male with failing hearing and use CC to enjoy TV programs. I live in Florida for the winter and the Pittsburgh area for the summer/fall months. We are currently living in our Pittsburgh home. One of the local stations we enjoy watching in Pittsburgh is the NBC affiliate WPXI-TV. CC on their national programs are excellent. Up until recently, their local live news programs had good CC. However that has all changed drastically. Their CC of breaking stories are hardly legible. Names and places come out completely wrong most times. I called WPXI to complain about their CC, and was transferred to someone in their engineering department. I was advised that they recently changed their CC method from a live CC service and are now using a voice recognition system to CC their news programs. I asked if this was a temporary change and was informed that it was authorized by their parent company. The person I spoke to said they hoped the system would improve in the future. I asked if anyone at WPXI was reading their CC and he said they were analyzing the system and were aware of the translation errors and were working with their vendor to hopefully improve the system. It is a shame that people who depend on CC have to suffer with this system when the prior service was very good. CC viewers should have been notified that they were changing systems, so we didn't have to try to figure out if it was our cable company or television sets causing the problems. I have some hearing, so I could decipher immediately that something was wrong. I feel sorry for my deaf friends who must be struggling with this inferior service. We thought the FCC had quality standards that stations had to adhere to. Apparently WPXI and its parent doesn't care if the CC service they are providing to their caption users is any good or not. Thank you.

Support Software by **Zendesk**



Henry H. Wendel
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February 9, 2021

VIA E-MAIL

Ms. Sherita Kennedy
Disability Rights Office
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WPXI(TV), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Facility Identification Number 73910
FCC Complaint Ticket No. 4452937 ([REDACTED])
Response to Notice of Informal Complaint

Dear Ms. Kennedy:

On behalf of WPXI, LLC (“Cox Media Group”), licensee of WPXI(TV), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, we hereby submit Cox Media Group’s response to the December 28, 2020 letter from the Commission’s Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (the “Letter”).¹ The Letter forwarded a complaint from Mr. [REDACTED], which referenced the WPXI Morning News program at 6:00 AM on December 22, 2020, and stated that WPXI(TV)’s “[closed captioning] of breaking stories are hardly legible. Names and places come out completely wrong most times.” Cox Media Group takes seriously all viewer comments and concerns and seeks to resolve complaints promptly. Cox Media Group has conducted a thorough investigation into Mr. [REDACTED]’ complaint.² This response, a copy of which is provided directly to Mr. [REDACTED], reflects the result of that investigation.

The Commission’s rules require stations in the top 25 markets and affiliated with one of the four major national networks to adhere to closed captioning quality standards

¹ *Official Notice of Informal Complaint*, Disability Rights Office, Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, to WPXI(TV), FCC Complaint Ticket No. 4452937 ([REDACTED]). This response is timely filed pursuant to an extension of the response deadline provided by the Commission staff on February 3, 2021.

² See 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(g)(4).

related to accuracy, synchronicity, completeness, and placement.³ The Commission will permit *de minimis* captioning errors, considering “the particular circumstances presented, including the type of failure, the reason for the failure, whether the failure was one-time or continuing, the degree to which the program was understandable despite the errors, and the time frame within which corrective action was taken to prevent such failures from recurring.”⁴ Stations outside the top 25 television markets may caption their programming by using the electronic newsroom technique.⁵ WPXI(TV) is assigned by Nielsen to the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Designated Market Area (“DMA”). In Nielsen’s most recent rankings, the Pittsburgh DMA ranked outside the top 25 television markets; therefore, the Commission’s rules allow Cox Media Group to rely upon the electronic newsroom technique to provide captions to WPXI(TV)’s viewers. Rather than relying on that permitted technique, WPXI(TV) provides captions utilizing state-of-the-art voice recognition technology recently installed at the station.

Cox Media Group takes seriously its obligation to ensure that its closed captioning meets the FCC’s standards. Prior to October 28, 2020, Cox Media Group utilized a live captioning service, which had some shortcomings, including but not limited to incorrect spelling (often of names and places), missing captions for certain audio, miscoding certain audio, or the captioner not starting to provide captions at the beginning of the programming. Recognizing the importance of providing quality closed captioning for its viewers, Cox Media Group made a significant investment to incorporate a new closed captioning service to caption its locally-produced programs. Specifically, as of October 28, 2020, Cox Media Group converted two of WPXI(TV)’s control rooms to Audimus.Media (“Audimus”), which is a closed captioning technology based on voice recognition software.

Cox Media Group has taken and continues to take steps to train and improve the Audimus system, a system it views as superior to the predecessor technique for delivering quality captioning. Prior to Mr. ██████████ complaint, Cox Media Group took the following actions: (1) improved the quality of the audio being fed into the Audimus server; (2) eliminated music, transition audio effects, and as much extraneous audio/noise as possible; (3) connected the WPXI(TV) newsroom computer system to the Audimus server so that Audimus will scan through the station’s newscast scripts to cull out particular words and spellings; (4) provided Audimus with a list of talent names (e.g. anchors, reporters, and common guests, etc.), as well as location names to significantly improve recognition of unusual words that are common to the local area; and (5) provided feedback to Audimus of specific words and/or phrases that were incorrectly transcribed. In addition, the Audimus system is dynamic in that it

³ See 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(j).

⁴ See 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(j)(3).

⁵ See 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(e)(3).



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continuously refines the captions it provides. Therefore, the captions that WPXI(TV) includes in its local programming will continue to improve over time. Finally, station personnel continue to work with the manufacturer to identify measures they can take to improve the closed captioning technology.

Cox Media Group respectfully submits that its closed captioning complies with Commission rules. Indeed, Mr. [REDACTED] complaint is the only captioning complaint that WPXI(TV) has received since transitioning to the Audimus system. As one can see while viewing the recording attached to this response, the captions that are the subject of this complaint met the accuracy, synchronicity, completeness, and placement standards set forth in the Commission's rules and far exceed the requirement for stations using the electronic newsroom technique. The captions included in the December 22, 2020 newscast were detailed, accurate, and allowed the viewer to understand the programming. As Cox Media Group described above, the Audimus software can include errors when providing captions, but any closed captioning errors included in the newscast were *de minimis*. Moreover, Cox Media Group believes that the quality of the captions provided in the newscast were superior to those that likely would have been provided by a live captioning service. Cox Media Group will continue to monitor the captioning, and take proactive steps to increase accuracy.

Cox Media Group takes great pride in serving the Pittsburgh market and provides local viewers with closed captioning information that fulfills its obligations under the FCC's rules. As part of its ongoing dialogue with the community, Cox Media Group provides several approaches by which Mr. [REDACTED] and other viewers can share their questions or concerns about the WPXI(TV) closed captioning service. A viewer can report any closed captioning problems by sending a message to the station's Technical Hotline mailbox at TechnicalHotline@wpxi.com. In addition, viewers can contact WPXI(TV) by telephone for assistance with closed captioning. A station representative receives and responds to any and all viewer closed captioning comments or complaints within one business day.



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To the extent Mr. [REDACTED] experience was different than what Cox Media Group has described herein or that Mr. [REDACTED] observes in the video, we urge Mr. [REDACTED] to contact the station directly so Cox Media Group's engineers can help to troubleshoot any additional issues Mr. [REDACTED] may be experiencing.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Henry H. Wendel
Emily B.V. Harrison

Counsel to WPXI, LLC

Attachment

cc: Mr. Kevin Hayes (*via e-mail*)
Mr. [REDACTED] (*via e-mail*)
WPXI(TV) online public inspection file

Due to the size of the recording of the newscast in question, a copy of the recording cannot be uploaded to the station's online public inspection file. A copy of the recording that was included in the response to the closed captioning complaint is available upon request.