



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

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Movies – Any Time, Anywhere, Any Seat NAD is committed to achieving this goal!

People who are deaf or hard of hearing want to be able to attend **any showing of any movie in any theater at any time**. We want to be able to sit anywhere in the movie theater with our family and friends. We want equal access to the movie soundtrack through high quality captioning that is consistently reliable.

The NAD is committed to achieving that goal.

Recently the NAD participated in an Emerging Technologies Symposium sponsored by Regal Entertainment Group. The purpose of the Symposium was to demonstrate several personal captioning display devices that could be used in movie theaters. Here is a description of the devices.

Microvision. This company designs glasses to be used to display information such text directions, message icons, and visual reminders. Ultimately, these glasses will be able to display movie captions. Captions will be displayed on one side of the glasses to be read by your “dominant” eye. For this demonstration, the device was attached to a visor, and a small transparent screen displaying red captions was positioned in front of one eye. This system caused eye strain for some users, and some users were unable to read the captions and see the movie at the same time. Some users liked the “cool” factor of this device and that, if all goes as the company hopes, you will see their glasses used by many people for different applications. Other users were concerned that the technology will be too complicated for many consumers.

SightLine. The device consists of lightweight headgear placed over the head, and the eye piece is attached to the headgear by a flexible goose neck that can be adjusted to position the eye piece near the “dominant” eye. The captions appeared on the eye piece on a gray colored square background. Through an attached PDA, users could change the color, size, and language of the captions. This system caused eye strain for some users, and some users were unable to read the captions and see the movie at the same time. Users liked the sleekness and ease of use of the PDA, but others were concerned that the technology will be too complicated for some.

eMagine. This device was worn with a headband and had two small transparent screens that displayed white captions in front of both eyes. This system, using both eyes for reading, caused less eye strain, but some users were unable to read the captions and see the movie at the same time. Users will be able to adjust font color and size, and line up captions with the top or bottom of the movie screen. Users said that the headgear was heavy and uncomfortable, but the company expects to lighten it over time.

USL Clozed Captions. This system used a green board mounted just below the movie screen which displayed captions that could be seen only by users wearing special glasses. Several users felt this was the easiest system to use because no adjustments were necessary. Further, with this equipment it is possible to display the captions at the flick of a switch for the entire audience to see, without use of the eyewear. Users did not particularly like the glasses, which were made from cardboard, but this is an easy upgrade.

It is difficult to say which or whether any of these systems is best since none are fully developed. Regal said it wants to achieve the goal of displaying captions for “any movie, any theater, any screen, any day, any time.” Regal believes the only way to do this is to identify a personal caption display system that is effective and acceptable to the vast majority of deaf and hard of hearing people.

The NAD will continue to advocate for caption display systems so that all deaf and hard of hearing movie goers can enjoy their favorite movie at a time and place of their choosing.