

USER REPORT

CPC Takes Captions Outdoors

by **Buck McNeely**

Founder

Outdoorsman International

CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO.

For the last 19 years, I have been producing the nation's largest syndicated TV adventure series, "The Outdoorsman with Buck McNeely." Our production crew travels the world to film hunting and fishing adventures in a variety of locations, and the weekly series is syndicated nationwide on more than 260 TV stations and distributed by satellite.

Because of new FCC regulations, I needed to close caption the program. My initial reaction was, "Oh nuts, not another government regulation to comply with," until I learned that 10 percent of the population is hearing-impaired. We felt we could increase the audience share by captioning and it's also a valuable consumer service—plus, it helps TV stations comply with FCC minimums.

The initial decision was whether to use a captioning service or buy a system and caption in-house. Using the Internet, I found captioning services charge about \$480 to caption each 30-minute program.

I prefer to be in control of the complete production process, so I researched my options to see if buying a system was our best move and again turned to the Internet.

Computer Prompting & Captioning's Web site stood out from the others. It is packed with information about the captioning process and how CPC's software navigates through that process. The site also has a demo video on how the software works, a downloadable user manual and demo software.

Since I am a hands-on guy I tried the software out using the Quick Start section of the

manual as my guide. Within 15 minutes, I felt comfortable using the software.

DOING THE MATH

In doing some quick math, we discovered that captioning about 13 30-minute episodes would be enough for the software to pay for itself, so I went ahead and purchased it. (I previously purchased a model PCE 845 closed-caption encoder from Link Electronics.)

Since I had run the demo software I knew what to expect, but when I got familiar with the software, I found it was even easier to use and faster to caption than I had anticipated. When I import a Word file, the software breaks up about 80 percent of text into captions automatically, saving me a lot of time. To fine-tune the captions, the software has an icon-driven menu that lets me move words from caption-to-caption using a single keystroke.

Positioning the captions is a snap: I simply drag-and-drop the caption to the desired location. Since there is a lot of action on our program, we want to make sure that the captions do not cover up anything of visual importance to the audience and this drag-and-drop feature is a lifesaver.

When synchronizing the captions with the dialogue, I press the "+" key each time I hear the first word of each caption. It is intuitive and easy to use—just my style.

The software has the ability to not only output to tape for broadcast but by invoking a simple *Export* option, it creates files for



Buck McNeely of Outdoorsman International found that using the CPC captioning software saved money.

DVD captions and subtitles, and video-on-demand captions for viewing on the Web. These are not features we currently use but they will become useful in the future.

I currently use a closed caption hardware encoder. But CPC also offers a software encoder that will keep me from going down a generation.

In summary, CPC's captioning software is easy to use. I also can meet deadlines since I don't lose time using a service. Most important, it lets me keep everything in-house so I have total control over the quality of the finished product from A to Z. ■

Buck McNeely is the founder of Outdoorsman International and host of "The Outdoorsman with Buck McNeely." He can be reached at twolf@LDD.net.

For more information, contact CPC at 800-977-6678 or info@cpweb.com. Visit www.cpcweb.com for details.