

Add closed captions, subtitles, etc. to your videos

INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the new HTML5 `<track>` element, useful for adding closed captions, subtitles, descriptions, and metadata to your videos. It comes with a new JavaScript API.

The `WebVTT` format used for describing a track file is also presented in this chapter.

Most of the major desktop browsers now support HTML5 captioning

- See [this compatibility table](#) for the up-to-date status of the different browsers. Also, please [check on caniuse.com](#) for information about the `<track>` element support by browsers.

Some definitions

- **closed captions** describe all relevant audio present in the video (fire, rain, birds, gun fights, etc.).
- **subtitles** are only for spoken words.

The accessibility features of TV programs often propose both options for people with hearing deficiencies.

TYPICAL USE: ADD A SUBTITLE/CAPTION TRACK TO A `<VIDEO>` ELEMENT

Important warning!!

The `<track>` element cannot be used with a `file://` URL. Please use `http://` and a Web server. Your server must use a special MIME format for

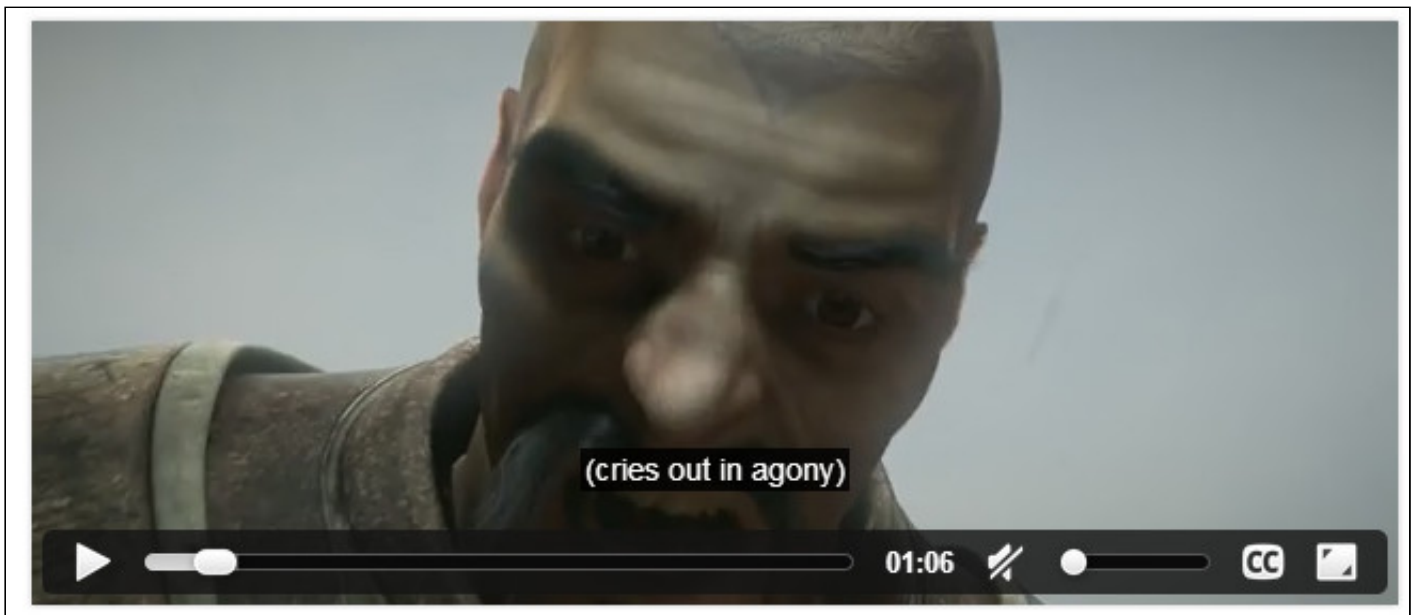
the .vtt files: `text/vtt; charset=utf-8` (set by default on most servers now).

Examples of the lines to add to an Apache Web server:

```
<Files mysubtitle.vtt>  
ForceType text/vtt; charset=utf-8  
</Files>
```

It might be worth mentioning that most browsers work fine with WebVTT even if the MIME Type is not set, **but Internet Explorer doesn't, in fact it will ignore WebVTT entirely unless the MIME Type is set correctly!**

Here is an example of a video element that includes a `<track>` element in the .vtt(WebVTT) format (line 7), original version at <http://www.jwplayer.com/html5/track/>, and we also cooked a version easier to study on jsbin: <http://jsbin.com/luyazi/2/edit>.



As seen in this screenshot, the example uses a `<track>` element to insert basic *caption*s to the video: sounds and music are described, in addition to standard *subtitles* that correspond to what the different movie characters say.

```
<video height="272" width="640"
```

```
poster="http://content.bitsontherun.com/thumbs/q1fx20VZ-640.jpg"
crossorigin="anonymous"
controls>
<source src="http://demo.jwplayer.com/html5-report/sintel.mp4"
type="video/mp4">
<source src="http://demo.jwplayer.com/html5-report/sintel.webm"
type="video/webm">
<track src="http://demo.jwplayer.com/html5-report/sintel-captions.vtt"
kind="captions" label="Closed Captions" default>
10. </video>
```

Notice that the `<track>` element at line 9 has an attribute named `kind` that indicates the type of the track that is included. Possible values

are: subtitles, captions, descriptions, chapters or metadata.

The `<track>` element also has an attribute `default` that indicates that we want this track to be displayed by default when reading the video.

We also used an attribute named `crossorigin` that is necessary just to run this demo, as the server that hosts the video from this example requires it.

MULTIPLE TRACKS MAY BE INCLUDED IN A VIDEO ELEMENT

Multiple tracks are needed to support different languages, video captions for the hearing-impaired, subtitles, etc.

Find below an example ([from the specification](#)) that includes multiple `<track>` elements (subtitles for three languages and captions only for English):

```
<video src="brave.webm">
  <track kind=subtitles src=brave.en.vtt
    srclang=en
    label="English">
  <track kind=captions src=brave.en.hoh.vtt
    srclang=en
```

```
    label="English for the Hard of Hearing">
  <track kind=subtitles src=brave.fr.vtt
    srclang=fr
    lang=fr
    label="Français">
  <track kind=subtitles src=brave.de.vtt
    srclang=de
    lang=de
    label="Deutsch">
</video>
```

Notice the use of some new attributes in the `<track>` element:

- `label`: the label value will be displayed in the GUI control that is included in the default HTML5 video player,
- `srclang`: gives the language for the text track data. The value must be a valid [BCP 47 language tag](#). This attribute must be present if [the element's kind attribute](#) is in the [subtitles state](#).

EXTERNAL RESOURCES (OPTIONAL, IF YOU WISH TO LEARN MORE)

- The W3C specification for the `<track>` element
- [The living W3C standard for the WebVTT format](#)
- [Examples of text tracks with JavaScript scripting](#)
- [HTML5 video with SRT subtitles](#)
- [Creating and validating WebVTT subtitles](#)
- [Silvia Pfeiffer's HTML5 Video Accessibility slides](#) give more examples of working with markup, as well as showing how to build chapter tracks for navigation and description tracks for screen readers.