

WebVTT

WebVTT (Web Video Text Tracks) is a World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) standard for displaying timed text in connection with the HTML5 `<track>` element.

The early drafts of its specification were written by WHATWG in 2010 after discussions about what caption format should be supported by HTML5—the main options being the relatively mature, XML-based Timed Text Markup Language (TTML) or an entirely new but more lightweight standard based on the widely-used SubRip format. The final decision was for the new standard, initially called WebSRT (Web Subtitle Resource Tracks).^[2] It shared the `.srt` file extension and was broadly based on the SubRip format, though not fully compatible with it.^[3] The prospective format was later renamed WebVTT.^{[4][5]} In the January 13, 2011 version of the HTML5 Draft Report], the `<track>` tag was introduced and the specification was updated to document WebVTT cue text rendering rules.^[6] The WebVTT specification is still in draft stage but the basic features are already supported by all major browsers.

WebVTT

Filename extension	<code>.vtt</code>
Internet media type	<code>text/vtt</code>
Developed by	<u>World Wide Web Consortium</u> (W3C)
Initial release	10 August 2010 ^[1]
Type of format	<u>Timed text</u>
Extended from	<u>SRT</u>
Standard	<u>W3C WebVTT</u> (https://www.w3.org/TR/webvtt1/)
Open format?	Yes
Website	(VTT)

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Main differences from SubRip

- WebVTT's first line starts with *WEBVTT* after the optional UTF-8 byte order mark
- There is space for optional header data between the first line and the first cue
- Timecode fractional values are separated by a full stop instead of a comma
- Timecode hours are optional
- The frame numbering/identification preceding the timecode is optional
- Comments identified by the word *NOTE* can be added
- Metadata information can be added in a JSON-style format
- Chapter information can be optionally specified
- Only supports extended characters as UTF-8
- CSS in a separate file defined in the companion HTML document for C tags is used instead of the FONT tag
- Cue settings allow the customization of cue positioning on the video^[7]

Compatibility

Browser Support^[8]^[9]

Browser	Cue Text Tags	Cue Positioning	CSS Styling
Chrome	35+		
Android stock browser	5.0+		
Opera	22+		
Safari	7+ (iOS: 8+)		
Firefox	31+ (Android: 32+)		N/A
Microsoft Edge	12+	N/A	
Internet Explorer	10+	N/A	

Firefox implemented WebVTT in its nightly builds (Firefox 24), but initially it was not enabled by default. The feature had to be enabled in Firefox by going to the "about:config" page and setting the value of "media.webvtt.enabled" to true.^[10] YouTube began supporting WebVTT in April, 2013.^[11] As of July 24, 2014, Mozilla has enabled WebVTT on Firefox by default.^[12]

Subtitles in a .vtt file show online, but not when stored on a local drive.

Example of WebVTT format

```
WEBVTT Kind: captions; Language: en

00:09.000 --> 00:11.000
<v Roger Bingham>We are in New York City

00:11.000 --> 00:13.000
<v Roger Bingham>We are in New York City

00:13.000 --> 00:16.000
<v Roger Bingham>We're actually at the Lucern Hotel, just down the street

00:16.000 --> 00:18.000
<v Roger Bingham>from the American Museum of Natural History

00:18.000 --> 00:20.000
<v Roger Bingham>And with me is Neil deGrasse Tyson

00:20.000 --> 00:22.000
<v Roger Bingham>Astrophysicist, Director of the Hayden Planetarium

00:22.000 --> 00:24.000
<v Roger Bingham>at the AMNH.

00:24.000 --> 00:26.000
<v Roger Bingham>Thank you for walking down here.

00:27.000 --> 00:30.000
<v Roger Bingham>And I want to do a follow-up on the last conversation we did.

00:30.000 --> 00:31.500 align:end size:50%
<v Roger Bingham>When we e-mailed—

00:30.500 --> 00:32.500 align:start size:50%
<v Neil deGrasse Tyson>Didn't we talk about enough in that conversation?

00:32.000 --> 00:35.500 align:end size:50%
<v Roger Bingham>No! No no no no; 'cos 'cos obviously 'cos

00:32.500 --> 00:33.500 align:start size:50%
<v Neil deGrasse Tyson><i>Laughs</i>
```

00:35.500 --> 00:38.000

<v Roger Bingham>You know I'm so excited my glasses are falling off here.

[13]

Other features

In June 2013 an example was added to the specification that included a new "region" setting.^[14] This feature is supported since Firefox 59^[15] but not in any other browser.^[16]

References

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14. "Added region example to Introduction section under "Other features" – GitHub commit details" (<https://github.com/w3c/webvtt/commit/4255ed479aab5651654e323fd6e52915f951663c>).
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