

# Integrated Audio Description

## Creating Liberal and Integrated Media Experiences

Centre for Learning Technologies

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

### What is Audio Description?

- ♦ Audio Description (AD) is a verbal description of visual stimuli for people who are blind or low-vision.
- ♦ Inserted in non-dialogue spaces.
- ♦ Conventional AD is usually created by a 3<sup>rd</sup>-party company using a single style and approach.
- ♦ 3<sup>rd</sup> person, newsreader style.
- ♦ **Problem:** single approach does not fit all genres and styles of film/television.
- ♦ Blind viewers want to be entertained more than informed.
- ♦ What about amateur describers and the potential of crowd sourcing?



First-person audio description of *Odd Job Jack*

"He landed a right!  
Then he landed a  
left! Then I fell on my  
ass!"

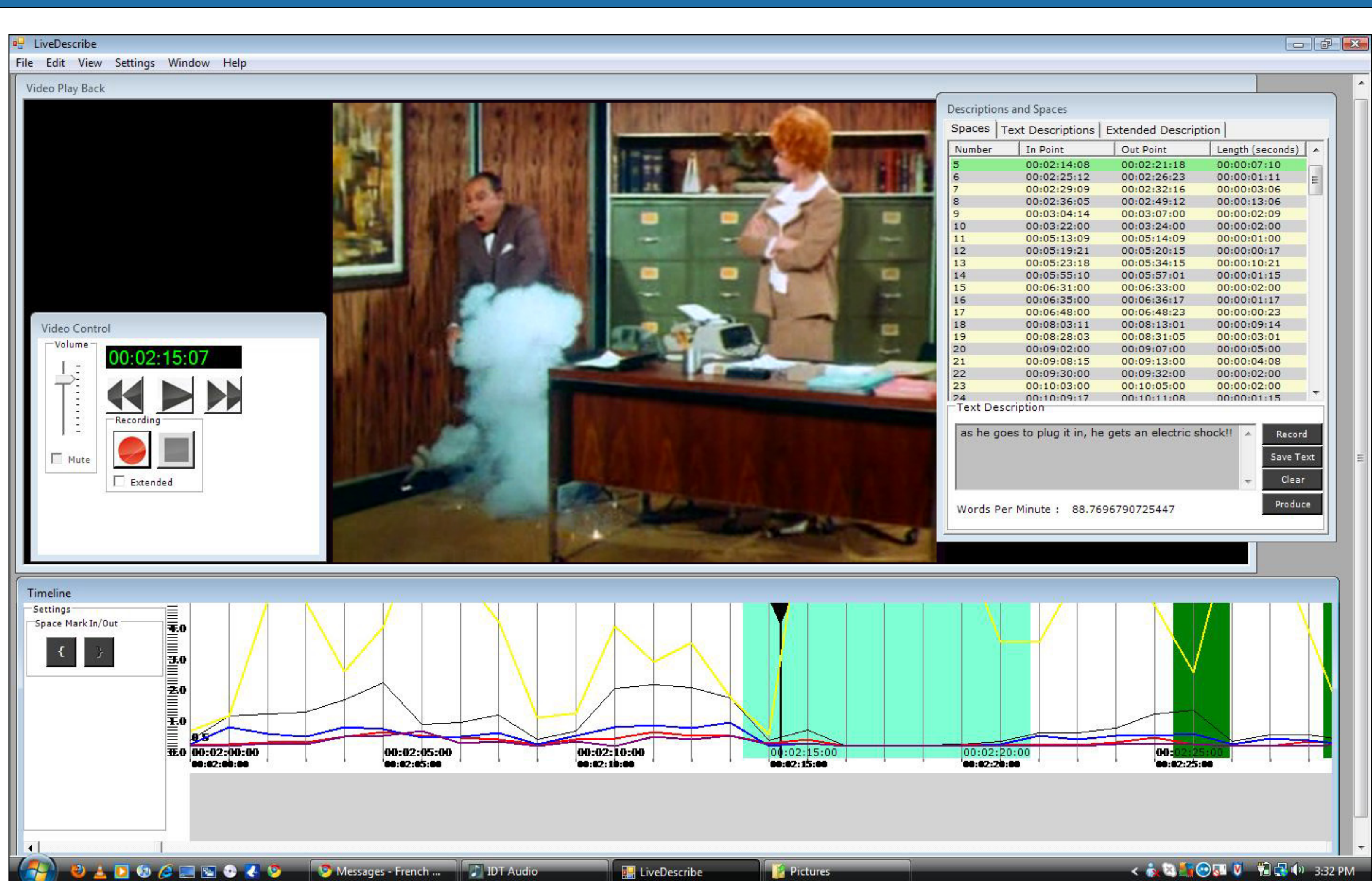


Colour commentary audio description of *Mass Exodus*

"The girls are waving to the audience, the audience is waving back....  
Oh god, they're so cute!"

### Research

- ♦ **Premise:** creative team driven AD.
- ♦ Involved two television series and nine live theatre creative teams in alternative/integrated AD.
- ♦ Different approaches:
  - ♦ 1<sup>st</sup> person,
  - ♦ Colour commentary,
  - ♦ Existing character as describer (Horatio in *Hamlet*; Fiddler in *Fiddler on the Roof*),
  - ♦ Describer as a new character in the production
  - ♦ Director as describer,
  - ♦ Stylistically integrated 3<sup>rd</sup> person,
  - ♦ Description integrated into script for all characters.
- ♦ Viewer response has been positive.
  - ♦ Prefer 1<sup>st</sup> person to 3<sup>rd</sup> person as more entertaining.
- ♦ LiveDescribe developed for amateur describers.
  - ♦ Families and friends of blind viewers are often describers. Why not record them?
  - ♦ See [www.livedescribe.com](http://www.livedescribe.com) for software and wiki containing uploaded descriptions provided by "crowd"



LiveDescribe user interface

### Acknowledgements

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- ♦ The CLIME project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).
- ♦ LiveDescribe is funded by National Institute of Health in the US.
- ♦ See [www.imdc.ca/clime](http://www.imdc.ca/clime) for more information and demonstrations.
- ♦ *Researchers:* Mala Naraine, Maria Karam, Lisa Copeland, Carmen Branje, Jorge Mori, JP Udo, Deborah Fels
- ♦ *AD partners:* CBC, Smiley Guy Studios, Glenvale Players, Hart House Theatre, Wanda Fitzgerald, Clay and Paper, Theatre Passe Muraille.

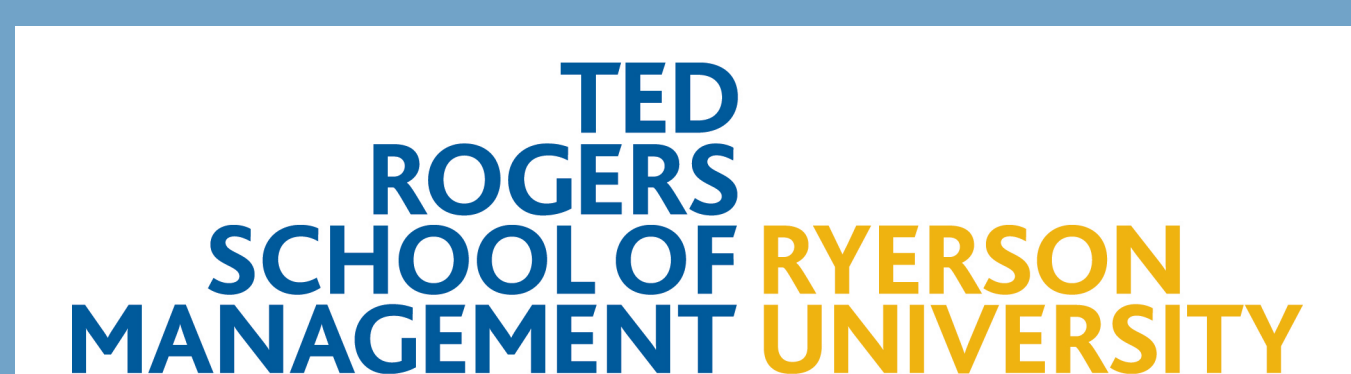


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- ♦ The Centre for Learning Technologies is part of the Ted Rogers School of Information Technology Management at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.



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