CAPTIONR by B3N: how to install

CAPTIONR is a panel for Adobe After Effects. It turns the speech in your audio into timed captions, lets you fix the words, style them and add your animation presets, and builds them as text layers in your comp.

What you need

- After Effects 2020 or newer, on a Mac or a Windows PC.
- Your own ElevenLabs account and key, to turn speech into words. The panel shows you how the first time. ElevenLabs' free plan is for non-commercial use only; for client or paid work its terms ask for a paid plan. Plans and prices: https://elevenlabs.io/pricing
- Internet, for a moment when you switch CAPTIONR on, and whenever you transcribe. CAPTIONR also needs to reach the internet at least once every 30 days to check your licence. When it is online, it checks about once a day that your purchase is still active. If it has been offline for more than 30 days, it asks you to connect once; nothing is lost.
- One purchase is for one computer.

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1. Install the .zxp file

Your download is two files: the CAPTIONR `.zxp` file, which is what you install, and this guide as a PDF. There is nothing to unzip. If your browser says the .zxp is not commonly downloaded, choose Keep: it is an After Effects extension file, which most browsers rarely see.

A .zxp file does not open with a double-click. There are two ways to install it.

A. With the free installer (easiest). Get the free ZXP/UXP Installer from aescripts (Mac and Windows): https://aescripts.com/learn/zxp-installer/ . Quit After Effects, open the installer, give it the CAPTIONR .zxp file, and wait until it says it is done. Then open After Effects.

If the installer says no compatible application was found, press **Install** anyway. CAPTIONR works with After Effects 2020 and every version after it; that message only means the installer's own list of versions is older than your After Effects.

B. By hand.

1. Quit After Effects.
2. A .zxp file is a zip file. Change the end of its name from `.zxp` to `.zip` and unzip it. Open the folder you get: you should see `CSXS` and `index.html` straight away, not another folder in between. Name that folder `CAPTIONR`, and do not change anything inside it.
3. Move the `CAPTIONR` folder into the extensions folder. Make the `extensions` folder if it is not there.
   - Mac: `~/Library/Application Support/Adobe/CEP/extensions/` (in Finder choose Go > Go to Folder and paste that)
   - Windows: `%APPDATA%\Adobe\CEP\extensions\` (paste that into the address bar of File Explorer)
4. Open After Effects.

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2. Open the panel

In After Effects choose **Window > Extensions > CAPTIONR**.

If CAPTIONR is not in that menu: quit After Effects and open it once more (a newly installed panel shows after a restart).

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3. Tick one After Effects setting

This setting is in After Effects itself, not in CAPTIONR. Open **Scripting & Expressions** in After Effects' settings and tick **Allow Scripts to Write Files and Access Network**.

- Mac: the After Effects menu > Settings (called Preferences in older versions) > Scripting & Expressions.
- Windows: Edit > Preferences > Scripting & Expressions.

A fresh After Effects has this box switched off. CAPTIONR reads your audio, saves previews and your settings, and this box is what lets it.

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4. Switch CAPTIONR on

The panel opens on **Switch on CAPTIONR**. Paste the licence key from your purchase email into the box and press **Switch On**.

- You do this once on your computer. Updates switch themselves on.
- If After Effects is blocked from the internet on your computer (by a firewall, for example), press **No Internet? Switch on in Your Browser** under the button and follow the steps it shows: **Open in My Browser**, paste your key on the page, **Get My Code**, **Copy Code**, then paste the code into CAPTIONR and press **Finish**.
- One purchase is for one computer. Moving to a new computer? Ask on the Discord (section 8).

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5. Your ElevenLabs key

Near the bottom of the panel, read the line beside **Get an API Key** (it says what to switch on for the key), then press the button. It opens the ElevenLabs page where keys are made. Then press the gear at the top right of the panel to open Settings, paste the key under **Connection** and press **Save**.

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6. First captions

1. Press **Choose Audio File**, or select your audio layers in the comp and press **From Composition**.
2. Pick how the words are grouped on **Format**, and the look on **Style** (or switch on **Quick Captions** and pick a look).
3. Press **Transcribe**. When the words arrive, check them on the **Caption** page and press **Create Captions**.

The tutorial button at the top of the panel walks you through every part.

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7. Updates

Updates are free, with the same licence key. Download the new version from your purchase email, install it the same way as the first time, and it switches itself on. Your saved setups, looks and settings stay.

8. Help

Ask on our Discord: https://discord.gg/vj85SyAGXJ . It is also in CAPTIONR's Settings (the gear), as **Get Help on Discord**.

9. How to remove CAPTIONR

1. **Take your ElevenLabs key off the computer first.** Open Settings (the gear). Under **Connection** press **Remove**, then **Remove Key**.
2. **Mac only, and only if you installed the firewall helper:** in Settings scroll to **Firewall Helper** and press **Uninstall**.
3. Quit After Effects. Remove CAPTIONR with the installer you used, or delete its folder from the extensions folder (section 1B).

CAPTIONR keeps its log, a copy of your settings, previews and any isolated vocals in `~/Library/Application Support/captions-by-b3n` on a Mac (`%APPDATA%\captions-by-b3n` on Windows), and your switch-on in `~/Library/Application Support/CAPTIONR` (`%LOCALAPPDATA%\CAPTIONR` on Windows). You can delete both folders once CAPTIONR is removed. If a project of yours has a layer called "vocals: ..." that CAPTIONR made, it plays a file from the first folder (its name starts with `vocals_`): move those files somewhere safe first.

The notices for the parts of CAPTIONR that other people made are in `vendor/THIRD-PARTY-NOTICES.txt` in the CAPTIONR folder.