

Number of theaters with Rear Window Captioning

14 conventional General Cinema movie theaters and specialty theaters such as Disney Land, Disney World, some National Park attractions and many IMAX theaters. The total number of current installations stands at 55.

It is far from a done deal that movie theaters will all be digital anytime soon. The vast costs to exhibitors and the slow pace the movie industry moves at both argue for restraint when talking about how soon we will see this as widespread technology. There are many opinions, strongly held, about this new technology, and it would be a mistake for anyone to assume it will go one way or another. We just need to be aware of the opportunities inherent in the technology.

Second, IF theaters go digital, the caption data and the audio descriptions will be easily embedded into the digital video signal being projected. At that point, if *closed* captioning is desired as an option, the Rear Window concept will still be viable and practical: the data will be sent to a datawall which displays the captions in reverse on the rear wall of the theater and a reflector at the seat of the deaf or hard-of-hearing moviegoer will reflect those captions. The moviegoer will then continue to have their private caption-viewing experience. In no way will digital cinema make Rear Window captioning obsolete - it will actually make it easier to distribute the data for captions.

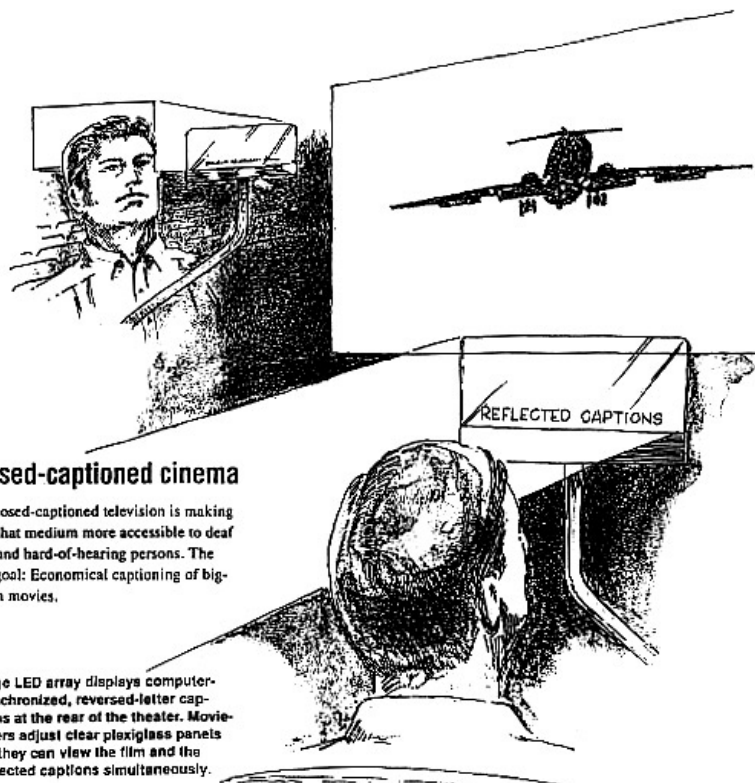
If a theater desires to display open captions or another language as subtitles, it is likely that the caption data could be embedded in the digital movie and, just like in TV closed captions, opened up for the whole audience to see at the push of a button. This of course assumes a theater wants to have open-captioned showings and the captioning agency can get their work done in time for national distribution (no easy task).

Rear Window Captions and Digital Cinema

by Mary Watkins

But, to avoid confusion and misinformation, it should be understood that the way the film is stored and projected (digitally in this case) is a separate issue from how the captions are presented to the end-user. It will just be more like TV captions, easier to deliver the text in either closed or open format according to the wishes of the studios and the exhibitors.

Rear Window is also purposely based on a very flexible data format, which can be adjusted to change with whatever new display technology may exist. It meets the needs of many people now and will be ready to be upgraded and improved as newer technologies emerge. **SK**



Closed-captioned cinema

Closed-captioned television is making that medium more accessible to deaf and hard-of-hearing persons. The next goal: Economical captioning of big-screen movies.

Large LED array displays computer-synchronized, reversed-letter captions at the rear of the theater. Moviegoers adjust clear plexiglass panels so they can view the film and the reflected captions simultaneously.