

# The Project

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## Subtitles Are Becoming More Popular Due To Changes In Technology Advancements and Film Consumption



It's at least one way of getting people to read again.

For quite a long time, it was pretty rare to watch a TV show with subtitles.

Back in the day, the only time people would encounter subtitles was when they were watching a late-night movie on SBS on a Friday night.

But, nowadays lots of people are opting into using subtitles even when watching TV shows in their own language.

Of course, there are a number of reasons for this. People who are deaf or hard of hearing have been using subtitles and closed captions for years. But, now that so much more content is being consumed on our mobile phones, many

people are finding that the sound can be difficult to decipher.

A lot of this is more about where and how we are watching our favourite TV shows.

We used to curl up on the couch at a specific time and day every week to watch our favourite shows, but now we tend to watch them on our phones whenever we have a few minutes to kill on a train or bus ride as we commute to and from work.

As anyone who has taken a train in a major city will attest, those places can be pretty noisy and make it hard to follow what's happening in the show without a little extra help from the alphabet. But, it's not just the surrounding noise that makes subtitles necessary; it's the way sound isn't mixed specifically for use on our devices.

"There are a lot of reasons, I think, why there's possibly an increased use of subtitles," RMIT University digital media senior lecturer Ben Byrne told the ABC.

One reason he points to is that films are "often made with a focus on being presented in the cinema where there are a lot of speakers... Then those films are also distributed on streaming services, and in other ways, and people watch them on TV at home, also on their phone, on their laptop" and these devices don't have cinema-quality speaker systems.

It's also worth noting that with more and more of us consuming international content, subtitles have become more and more critical. And, we're not just referring to foreign productions like Squid Game.

Even English-speaking shows with American or British accents may require some people to use subtitles to help them follow the plot.

Anyone who has ever watched True Detective will know that the southern drawl can be pretty difficult to follow.

Yes, Matthew McConaughey is a magnetic actor, but he does not like to enunciate syllables and there is a reason why his iconic catchphrase 'alright, alright, alright' requires him to repeat the same word three times for viewers to understand what he's trying to say.

And don't get us started on Peaky Blinders. Yes, it is a fantastic show and Cillian Murphy is incredible as Tommy Shelby, but good luck trying to work out what he's saying in that Brummie accent without the subtitles translating things into English.

Of course, the rise in people using subtitles is great for educators. Parents are always worrying about their kids not reading. But, now, they just need to plonk them in front of the TV, turn on the subtitles and the kids are being educated.