

## ABOUT SUBTITLING

A good definition of subtitling could be:

Subtitling may be defined as a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off).

Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007: 8

This definition can be found in Díaz Cintas J, Remael A, *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*, Manchester, St Jerome, 2007, recommended for dealing with the intricacies of subtitling.

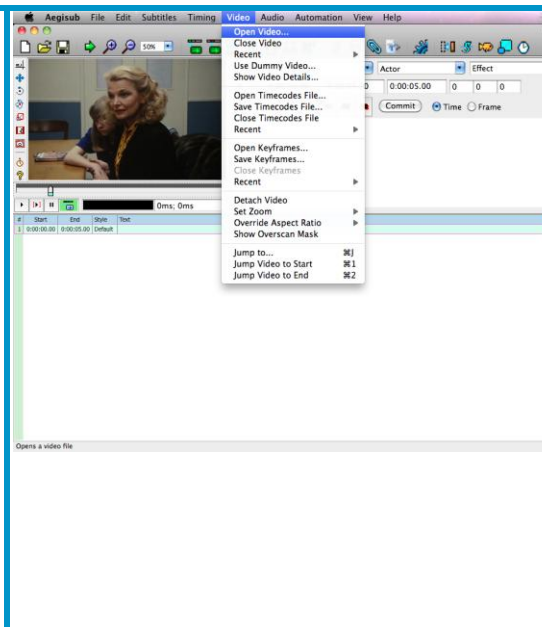
The first thing a subtitler needs to consider when starting a translation is that there should be coherence between the audiovisual message and the text you are creating. There are also space and time limits. Subtitles should take up to two lines and no more than 39 characters per line. They should not last less than 1 second or more than 6, and they should have a minimum gap of 2 frames so viewers notice there has been a change of subtitles. These norms may vary depending on the company.

Reading speed is also very important whilst subtitling. In a 6-second subtitle we can read much more text than in a 2-second one. Professional programmes can calculate titles automatically, but unfortunately, freeware sourced programmes do not. Ensure that you leave enough time to read each subtitle when you proofread them.


## USING AEGISUB

Open the Aegisub programme, which automatically opens a new subtitle file in which you can already start writing subtitles, but very rarely would you create them without a video.

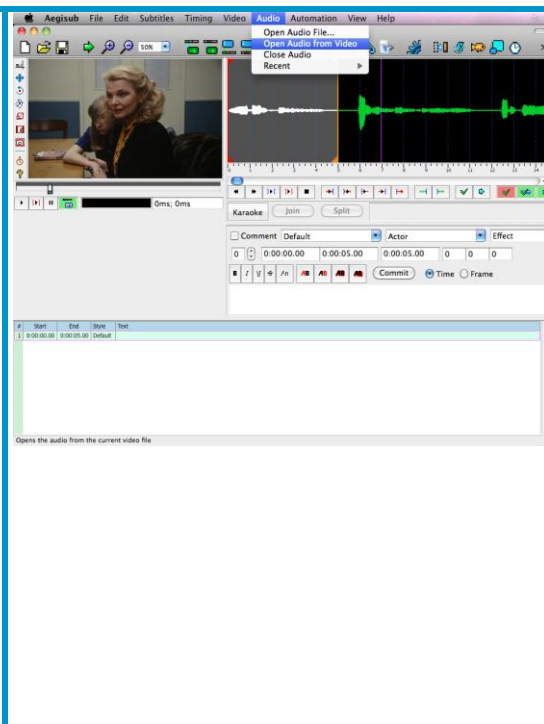
In order to open a video click on **Video / Open a video file**. Aegisub can read DVDs, but it is much better to work from other formats such as **.avi** or **.mpg** which are much lighter. Any videos sourced from a DVD can be converted into this format using easy-to-use programmes such as *Any Video Converter* (available from [www.any-video-converter.com/](http://www.any-video-converter.com/)). If you would like to work with any other video from Youtube or similar website, then you can use “a Tube Catcher”, downloadable from <http://atube-catcher.dsnetwb.com/>.



**Please note that if you download a video, subtitle it and then upload it or “re-publish” it; you may be infringing copyright laws.**

Once you open the video file, if you click on **Play**  you will notice that it has no sound. This is because you still have to open the audio track. Go to **Audio / Open Audio** from Video.

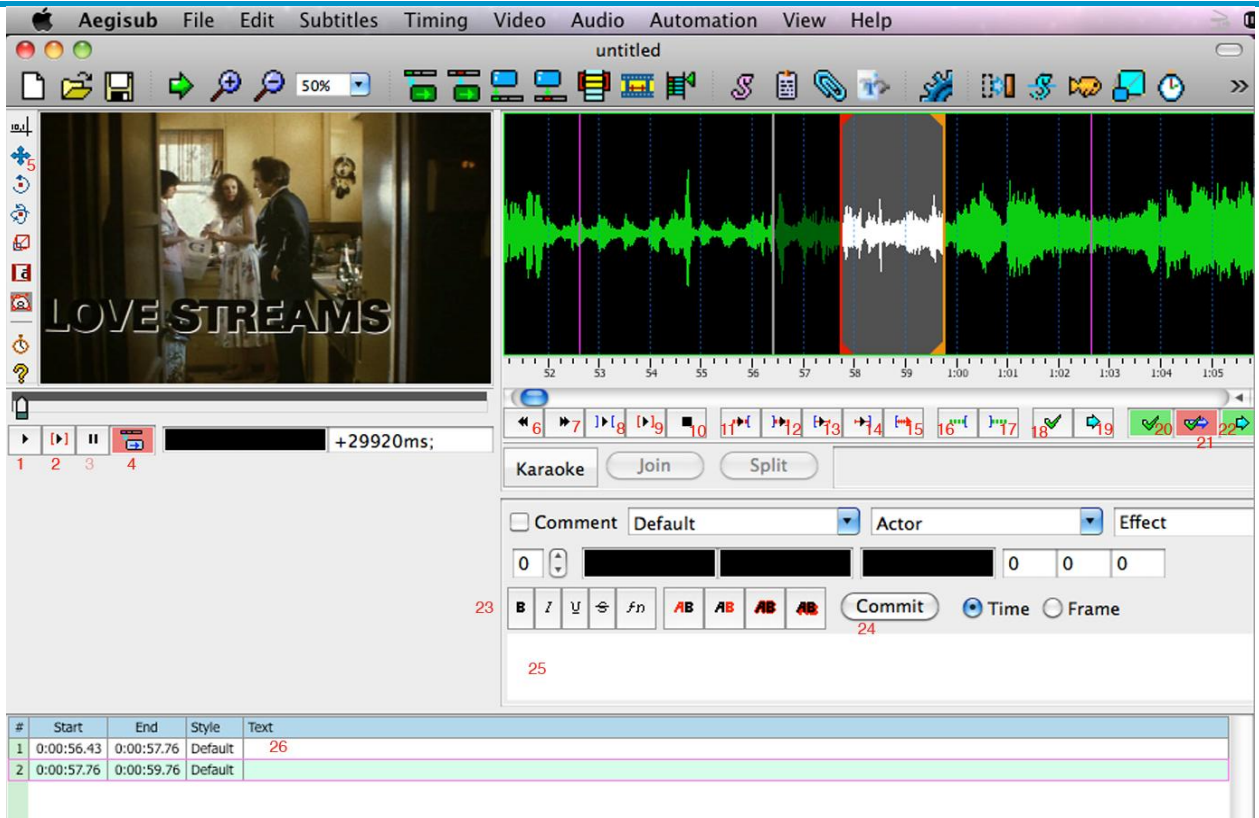
The image to the right is what your work surface should look like. The red bracket in the Audio Window indicates the beginning of the subtitle and the orange, the end. You can easily adjust it to the sound with your mouse. The sound is visually shown by the green vibration line that turns white when it is within the brackets. The pink vertical lines indicate shot changes. However, you will notice that pink lines can also appear when there is a change of light within the same shot or when on-screen text comes in and out. The numbers below the Audio Window indicate seconds.



The list below introduces each of the main commands for the programme (including shortcut keys). You can compare these with the image below and start subtitling!

1. **Play**. Note that when you click here you will play both the video and the audio.
2. **Play selected subtitle**.
3. **Pause**.
4. **Toggle** autoscroll of video.
5. **Drag subtitles**. This is the only tool out of this menu we may need from the menu on the left hand side of the Video Window. It might come useful for cases with on-screen text, in which we have to move the subtitle. It might be the case of the frame we have on the example in which the name of the film is occupying the subtitle area.
6. **Previous subtitle** (Left/Z)
7. **Next subtitle** (Right/X)
8. **Play selection** (Space/S). Note that when you click on it, you are only playing the audio. This might help you do the spotting, but in subtitling it is very important to have the visual aspects in mind. Otherwise you can for instance anticipate information to the spectator.
9. **Play current subtitle** (R). To select a subtitle you click on it on the subtitles table on the lower part of the screen.
10. **Stop** (H)
11. **Play 500 milliseconds before selection** (Q). This will guarantee the subtitle is not going in too late.
12. **Play 500 ms after selection** (W).
13. **Play first 500 ms of selection** (E).
14. **Play last 500 ms of selection** (D).
15. **Play from selection start to end of file** (T).
16. **Add lead in** (C). This key adds 200 ms at the beginning of the subtitle.
17. **Add lead out** (V).
18. **Commit changes** (F8/G). You can also commit changes clicking on "**Commit**" or pressing "**Enter**". Remember to commit every change before you proceed to the following action, or they will get lost.

19. **Go to selection.**
20. **Automatically commit all changes.**
21. **Go to next line** on commit automatically.
22. **Scroll audio display** to selected line automatically.
23. The nine keys to the right will allow you change the style, the font and the colour of the font.
24. **Commit.**
25. Text box.
26. Subtitle box.



You can now start to create your own subtitles. Remember to save you files frequently.

Save subtitles in **File / Save Subtitles as...** Aegisub will create as **.ass** file.

You can open your subtitled video with VLC (this is multimedia player available for free online from <http://www.videolan.org/vlc/> ); this programme can open any video format and/or subtitle file.

This programme may initially look complicated but once you get started it doesn't take long to get used to its format.