

MOVIES

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to open captioning, where the viewer can see the words printed on the movie screen. This can be disruptive to audience members who aren't hearing impaired, which is why RWC is a more popular form of captioning for the hearing impaired.

All theatres equipped with rear window captioning are owned by Famous Players. In total, Famous Player, states the coalition website, Famous Players has 336 screens in 32 theatres across Ontario.

With six locations with 138 screens in Canada, AMC Theatres was one of the latest theatres on board to adopt this method.

Rainbow Cinemas with eight locations and 47 screens in Ontario, Cineplex Odeon with 28 theatres in Ontario and a total of 265 screens, and Alliance Atlantis were the others.

Movie distributors, such as Universal Studios, has increased its selection of RWC widely, but not 100 per cent, states the site.

"There are over 3.1 million deaf, deafened or hard of hearing people in Canada who have hearing loss sufficiently impaired as to miss out on the enjoyment of going to the movies," the site explains.

The only drawback from this method for the hearing impaired is that they generally have a short shelf life; RWC can stay for as long as two weeks on certain movies, but not all.

Simser says this is definitely a victory for hard of hearing individuals in the Kanata area, as they are now able to enjoy movies in their hometown, and furthermore, it shows that the movie industry wanted to become "good corporate citizens."

"[They] also realized the extent to which their audiences benefited from captioning, such as those with learning disabilities, younger movie-goers who were still learning how to read, and immigrants who do not have English as their mother tongue," he says.

"The benefit for those who are deaf or hard of hearing is that they are fully able to participate in the movie-going experience," he adds.

"From the time where Darth Vader says, "No. I am your father," to the time that Rick says to Sam, "If she can stand it, I can. Play it!" movie-goers have always, since the time of silent films, dwelled upon the importance of sound as the key to enjoying movies. This not only includes dialogue, but also sound effects."

The RWC system also displays sound effects, such as "men chatting" - as was seen this past weekend during the movie "I Love You, Man".

RWC offers many benefits to those who aren't hearing impaired at all,



EMC photo by SABINE GIBBINS
Scott Simser enjoyed using a Rear Window Captioning system this past Saturday afternoon (above) at the AMC Theatres in Kanata. At right is a glimpse of what the device looks like on a seat.



such as those who are learning English as a second language or for those who can hear normally but find it difficult to in the movie theatre due to background noise.

"This is a win-win settlement for all," said Allison Taylor in a press release in 2007, speaking on behalf of the exhibitors. "Assuming the technological developments continue

as we predict they will, the deaf, deafened and hard of hearing communities will be getting a new closed captioning system that will offer a better movie going experience."

The press release went onto to say this would be implemented into theatres in a phased-in approach.

"Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, everyone has the right to equal treatment with regard to services. I am pleased that this settlement will enable the deaf, deafened and profoundly hard of hearing communities to fully enjoy theatre-going experiences in the same way as everyone else," said Chief Commissioner Barbara Hall.

As far as Simser, who is a strong human rights activist, is concerned, there is no need to convince other deaf people to join the movement for more captioning, he says, as they simply love movies.

"I remember when the first Spider-Man movie came out, there was an enormous buzz in the deaf community, as they loved Spider-Man and wanted to see it captioned in the theatres," he recalls.

So sit back, relax, and enjoy the show!



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