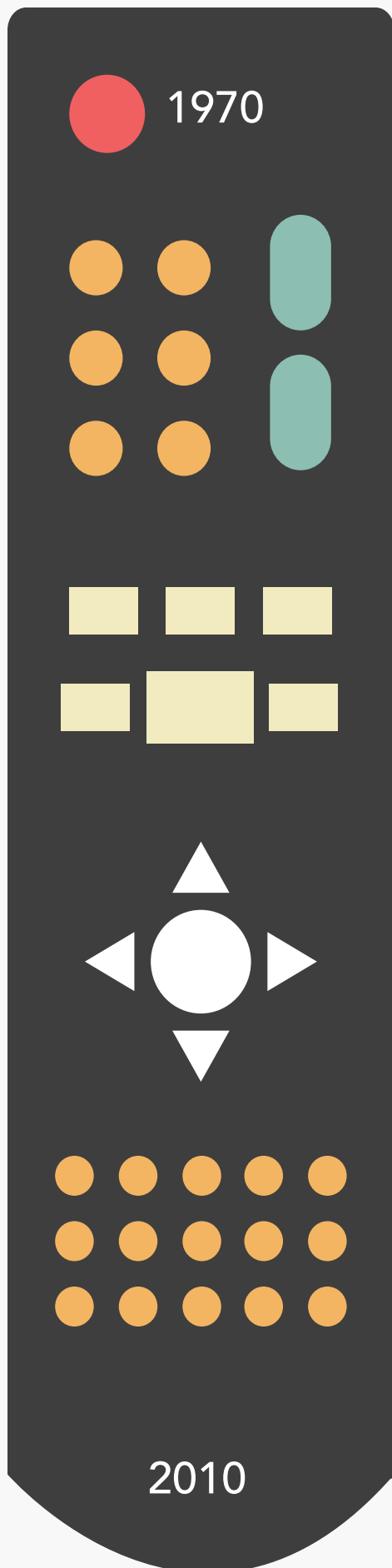


# TELEVISION DECODER CIRCUITRY ACT OF 1990

## TIMELINE



1972

The nation's first captioning agency, the Caption Center, was founded at the Boston public television station WGBH.

The first television shows with captions were rebroadcasts of *The French Chef* with Julia Child and ABC News programs.

1979

The Federal Communications Commission formed the National Captioning Institute (NCI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and providing access to closed captioning.

1990

In October, the Television Decoder Circuitry Act passed, amending the Communications Act of 1934.

1996

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 expanded on the Decoder Circuitry Act to place the same requirements on digital television receivers.

2005

Mistakes happen! American Idol displayed the wrong phone number to vote for contestants in the closed captioning of its broadcast.

2010

The Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 required broadcasters to provide captioning for television programs redistributed on the Internet and for any video devices that receive or display video programming transmitted simultaneously with sound to have captioning.

# TELEVISION DECODER CIRCUITRY ACT OF 1990

## FAST FACTS

### 1 PURPOSE

- A** Requires that any television with at least a 13-inch screen made in the US or made to be sold in the US is equipped with a built-in decoder designed to display closed-captioning on TV transmissions. The only transmissions excluded from this are ads that run less than 5 minutes and programs that air between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.
- B** Directs the FCC to ensure closed captioning service continues to be available to consumers as new video technology is developed.

### 2 PLAYERS

- A** Introduced by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA).
- B** Cosponsored by Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Senator Paul Simon (D-IL), and Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI).
- C** Signed into law by President George H.W. Bush.

### 3 KNOW YOUR CAPTIONS

- A** **Closed captioning (CC):** “closed” means it is hidden until selected.
- B** **Open captions** are always in view and cannot be turned off.
- C** **Prerecorded captioning** is applied to prerecorded programming, such as sitcoms, movies, commercials, and game shows. It can take up to 16 hours to caption a one-hour prerecorded program.
- D** **Real-time captioning** is typically done by court reporters or similarly trained professionals who can type accurately at speeds of up to 250 words per minute. It is meant to provide a way for the deaf and hard of hearing community to enjoy live press conferences, local news, and sporting events on television as they happen.