

Commendations of Hearing Aid Compatible Assistive Listening

The first international "Hearing Loops" conference, hosted in late 2009 by the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People, was attended by nearly 100 people from fifteen nations, nearly all of whom were people with hearing loss or hearing industry and organization representatives, including the executive director of the Hearing Loss Association of America. As the conference concluded the conferees adopted a resolution recommending that

- 1) hearing aid manufacturers, manufacturers of cochlear implants, physicians, audiologists and hearing instrument specialists shall communicate the benefits of hearing aid/cochlear implant telecoil receivers for phone listening and assistive listening and educate people who are hard of hearing accordingly.
- 2) venues and service points where sound is broadcast shall offer assistive listening, such as induction loop systems designed to the IEC 60118-4:2006 standard, that broadcast sound directly to hearing aids and cochlear implants, enabling them to serve as customized, wireless loudspeakers (without the need for extra equipment). (Source: www.hearingloops.org)

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) "as a matter of policy HLAA does not endorse one technology over another." But it has supported hearing aid compatibility for phones (which communicate interference-free sound to telecoils). And it has declared that:

"It is the position of [HLAA] that telecoils be given the prominence they deserve as a valuable hearing aid feature that will allow the expanded use of assistive listening devices."

~[Hearing Loss Association of America](#)

HLAA executive director Brenda Battat also states, regarding the exciting 2009 New York City proposal to loop 642 subway booths, that "HLAA strongly supports the plan to install assistive technology at NYC subway booths. This is welcome news for subway riders who use telecoil equipped hearing aids and cochlear implants. It will greatly increase access especially when coupled with prominent signage and subway staff training in how to communicate with people with hearing loss" (with permission to quote).

Some affiliate state and local HLAA chapters are now endorsing assistive listening that communicates directly via hearing aids (with hearing loops being the currently feasible technology for doing so). Examples:

"On behalf of Michigan's hard of hearing persons, HLA-MI recommends that Michigan's public places, as defined by ADA and MPDCR, and where sound is broadcast, install assistive listening systems that broadcast directly through hearing aids and cochlear implants. . ." [more](#)

"In all new and extensively remodeled buildings, wherever there is a public address system, a loop should be permanently installed. . . . When there is a loop,

all a hard of hearing person has to do to be able to hear, is click on the T-switches on their hearing aids."

~[Hearing Loss Association of California](#)

"[Loop New Mexico](#) is an initiative undertaken by the Hearing Loss Association of Albuquerque. . . ." (See also "[Let's Loop Tucson](#)" from the independent Adult Loss of Hearing Association.)

"[Although] no one system is going to reach all hard of hearing people . . . loop systems are preferred for houses of worship because personal receivers and especially headphones are often a problem. There is good evidence that many people do not extend themselves to identify their need, collect personal receivers ahead of time, and wear rather noticeable headsets. Such receivers are always required for FM and infrared systems."

~[Rochester HLAA chapter](#)

Britain's Action on Hearing Loss (formerly Royal National Institute for Deaf People, RNID) has noted that "Induction loops are vital to ensure accessibility for hearing aid wearers," and offers suggestions for installing and checking them.

Various hearing leaders have also voiced support of the overarching concept of increased functionality for hearing aids:

Terry Portis, former executive director HLAA (quoted with permission):

"Our country will never be accessible for people who are hard of hearing unless we make hearing aid compatible assistive listening a reality."

Sergei Kochkin, Better Hearing Institute executive director (in the [Hearing Journal](#)):

"Clearly the utility of hearing aids must be improved if we are to achieve wider-scale acceptance of hearing aids as a solution to hearing loss. In an earlier paper, a wireless solution was proposed for hearing aid users. In simple terms, this paper recommended:

❖ Miniaturized internal wireless receivers in *every* hearing aid. . . ."

Santa Rosa, California, audiologist William Diles in the [Hearing Journal](#):

"We've installed loops in over 1500 homes. . . . Our patients often find the telecoil/loop program to be their favorite hearing aid feature. Having a loop in their home greatly improves their satisfaction with the hearing aids, as we've confirmed through satisfaction surveys. Since the loop is a hearing-aid compatible solution—as opposed to headphones, which are incompatible and compete with our core product—it gives patients one more reason to enjoy their hearing aids."

Bjørn Christ, past-president ReSound USA in the [Hearing Journal](#):

"Loop systems and telecoils have a tremendous advantage over current and upcoming technologies as regards cost. I am hard-pressed to come up with competing technologies that will seriously challenge the performance/price equation of loops in the next 5 years. And from a

cosmetics/stigma point of view, telecoils are even finding their way into micro-BTEs these days.”

American Academy of Audiology Career Award in Hearing winner Mark Ross in the [*Hearing Journal*](#):

“If we could . . . make it known that [telecoils] are also effective and convenient receivers for assistive listening devices (ALDs), then their potential benefits could be fully realized in the U.S., as they have been in some other countries. . . . It takes only a little reflection to appreciate the advantages of a telecoil over traditional FM or IR systems. As long as the consumer has his or her hearing aids on, the “receiver” for an assistive listening system (ALS) is always handy. It is not necessary to remove one’s hearing aid or to borrow and return a receiver supplied by a facility. Furthermore, when using one’s own hearing aids, a person can be assured that the system is working appropriately and that the hearing aid programming options are retained. All a consumer has to do is enter the looped facility and switch the hearing aids to the T position, or to M/T if simultaneous acoustic access is also desired. Nothing could be more convenient.”

(Mark Ross also writes, in another [*Hearing Journal*](#) issue, that “The telecoil is by far the most convenient TV assistive listening device I’ve ever used, and I’ve used them all (hard wire, FM, infrared).”

Dr. Ruth Warick, President of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH), in her closing remarks at the 2nd International Hearing Loop Conference in Washington D.C., 2011:

“I think the future is bright. Telecoils and hearing loops used to be the past, and now it’s the future.”

Sample comments from persons with hearing loss, audiologists, and audio experts (with permission):

----- Original Message -----

To: dmyers@hope.edu

Sent: Saturday, May 23, 2009 5:33 AM

Subject: T-coil loop

My husband and I are travelling in Norway. We were lucky enough to get tickets for Swan Lake at the new Oslo Opera House. I notice that it had been looped for T-coil. I flipped the switch on my [cochlear implant] processor, and the sound came in beautifully. This was stark contrast to a concert we went to at Avery Fisher Hall (Lincoln Center) in NYC the night before we left, where I borrowed an ALD which brought in mostly static. I thought of your article in the HLAA magazine and your work to get Western Michigan looped. Bravo. When I get back, I'm going to bring this to the attention of the administration at Lincoln Center.

Greetings from Norway,
Julia Rosenblatt

----- Original Message -----

cc: dmyers@hope.edu

Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2009 2:34 PM

Subject: Why I haven't sent more pictures

. . . the induction loop is so common that there isn't always signage for it.

"All the churches have them," the organist at the Stavanger Cathedral told me yesterday. I haven't seen a sign in any church. I tested it out at the worship service this morning. Sure enough, when I switched on the T switch, the sound came in so clearly that I was sure I could have understood every word of the minister had she not been speaking Norwegian. I've been told it's the law to have them. Perhaps someone in the Norwegian government can verify it. The sound quality was so good, I could get rhapsodic about it.

----- Original Message -----

To: ['David Myers'](#)

Sent: Sunday, February 15, 2009 3:35 PM

Subject: Hearing loop comment in Oshkosh

Thank you Dave for giving us a great new way to put smiles on people's faces.. See comments below. We spent three hours at the Algoma blvd United Methodist Church and at every service we encountered comments and expressions of gratitude like this one. Amazing. My test-engineer/skeptical loop installer husband was totally "converted" after this morning. □

Juliëtte

Good morning again:

I am home now and I can't stop smiling. The system went way beyond meeting my expectations. I was in awe. From the very first words Barry spoke, I could understand every word. It was wonderful. Every minute you and Max have spent on that system is worth it 10 times over. It was great to sit in wonderment and watch the faces of the people as they "tuned in." What an overwhelming experience. Thank you so much. I thought I would never again be able to experience a church service where I could hear every word and be able to follow along with the music knowing I was singing the correct note and verse. Usually Pam tells me what verses we are singing - today I could tell her!

----- Original Message -----

To: [David Myers](#)

Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2008 10:02 PM

Subject: Re: loop stuff

David,

. . . I've set up my home loop system and it is very helpful!

Thanks again,
Deidre

[Deidre Downs, the 2005 Miss America, has significant hearing loss]

----- Original Message -----

10/22/2002 8:50:14 AM

To: 'David Myers' [dmyers@hope.edu]

Hello David,

. . . The Michigan [HLA—see above] resolution does not appear to conflict with existing or upcoming federal rules and would be a great benefit to people who are hard or hearing. . . .

Marsha K. Mazz

Technical Assistance Coordinator

U.S. Access Board (www.access-board.gov)

----- Original Message -----

8/6/2002 8:50:40 PM

To: dmyers@hope.edu

. . . Never in my audiology career has something so simple helped so many people at so little cost.

Jerry Owens, Audiologist

----- Original Message -----

6/23/2008 11:50:53 AM

To: David Myers [dmyers@hope.edu]

David,

When ASCOM was introduced to the reemergence of loop systems, we were reluctant to promote this technology as most people did not have compatible hearing aids. What we did not consider was the influence consumers could make on this technology. When individuals with hearing loss had a chance to experience the hearing loops or talk to someone who had, the demand for both hearing aids w/coils and loop systems increased dramatically. After installing our first loop system and seeing the reaction from the individuals with hearing loss, we immediately shifted our sales focus to loop systems. It has been several years since we have installed an RF hearing assistance system. The two biggest problems from a users standpoint with RF systems are: A) The user must pick-up a belt pack and earpiece from the sound technician, building manager or host. Problems with this can vary; Is the facility even marked as having hearing assistance available and who do you see about getting one? nobody can find the devices, nobody knows how to use them, they are in bad repair and do not work, the batteries are dead and replacements are not available, just to name a few. B) The earpieces are not tuned specifically to the individual level of hearing loss making them in some cases useless after finally finding one. It is like wearing someone else glasses to see."

Todd Billin

ASCOM Inc.

----- Original Message -----

2/3/2003 10:12:19 PM

To: dmyers@hope.edu

Hello David,

Audiocoils [telecoils] transform hearing aids into "personal communication systems" . . . I am glad to be a part of an initiative that makes such a significant difference in someone's ability not only to communicate but to participate

Sincerely,
[Audiologist] Karen Van Doorne

"The experience of actually hearing such clear sounds was thrilling and hard to describe. One has to experience the improvement. It seemed overwhelming."

Donald Vandebunte [A hard of hearing church goer after experiencing his church's new hearing loop]

Date: Sun, May 31, 2009 at 6:51 PM
Subject: Hearing Loop Article May 2006 in Hearing Journal
To: myers@hope.edu

Dear Dr. Myers:

I can certainly attest to the spread of the loop system in Michigan. Before we installed our [church's] system I telephoned a number of facilities listed by a loop vendor as having installed such a system. I was amazed to discover that not a single installed site had anything but vociferous praise for the product!!! One would expect at least one nay-sayer in a group that large (31). But there was not a single one!!!

Sent: Thursday, November 11, 2010 9:54 AM
Subject: Hearing Loop

We have the hearing loop here at Evergreen Retirement Community and I wonder what we did before we installed it??? Honestly, my residents hear so much better, that it is amazing. We installed it in the chapel, the fireside room behind the chapel and down stairs in the commons. Max did a wonderful job of working it all out between the two floors and with our present sound system. We have had absolutely no problems with it, and we only had to get Max back here several times to fine tune it. Soon all was well. Algoma Boulevard UMC has it here in Oshkosh as well as First United Methodist on Linwood might be thinking about it. If I was serving a church today, I would do anything to have one put in my sanctuary and probably my large gathering room. I hope you can make it work. I know you are in the midst of your capital funds drive, and this might be an incentive for people to give. Everyone wants to hear in worship, and this is so noninvasive or visible. And lastly, most of the people today getting hearing aids have the t-coil and know what it is.

Pastor Alice Riemer McKee, Evergreen Retirement Community, Oshkosh

Sent: Saturday, August 27, 2011 9:49 PM

“I experienced my first bone crushing hug from a senior citizen lady at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church in Lodi. She was crying and said I changed her life. FM hearing assistance failed to help her. She attended Mass faithfully despite the fact she could not hear Father Higuera. It was a unique experience for me.”

Mike Mair
Lifeline Audio Video Technologies Inc.
Platteville, WI

Sent: Friday, December 02, 2011 7:04 PM

We have a man in the congregation who took a bullet to the head in Vietnam. It has impacted his hearing to the point that he is completely deaf. Through the Veterans Administration he just got his hearing aids to access the loop system. A few weeks ago coming out of church, he was filled with joy because he could hear every word. He was like the deaf man in the gospel healed by Jesus.

Kent Fry
Senior pastor, Third Reformed Church, Holland, MI

For some three dozen more personal testimonials, such as the one below, see www.loopwisconsin.com/Testimonials.aspx:

Hearing loop technology has dramatically improved my hearing. I cannot say enough good about it. The elimination of background noise means that I don't have to sit in the front row all the time. I can actually watch the power point screen instead of staring at the speaker's face for lip reading cues. My husband and I can watch television together again because we have our own separate sound systems. ... Since my first 'AHA Moment' of listening to the clear amplified sound provided by the T-coil, I have been trying to spread the word about this remarkable technology. The first hearing loop site in my county was at my home in our television room. Next came my church in Nelsonville. And recently the meeting room at the Portage County public library. ...Hearing impaired people deserve to know about this technology and have more venues looped. It will enhance their quality of life - just as it has for me.

Christine Klessig - retired attorney, Amherst Junction, WI

-----Original Message-----

From: Newton, Margaret <Margaret.Newton@marriott.com>
To: development <development@portlandstage.org>
Cc: Linda Remensnyder (lsrurhearing@aol.com) <lsrurhearing@aol.com>
Sent: Fri, Aug 3, 2012 5:43 pm
Subject: The Hearing Loop and Marriott Theatre

Hello Rxxx,

Dr. Linda Remensnyder asked me to reach out to you to give you some feedback regarding our experience with our Loop install. . . . Our old system (which is still in place for a bit as we phase it

out) is an infrared system. I'm not sure what you currently have, but the issues for us with this is the constant challenges with signal completion along with clarity. While it was a satisfactory system for some, it still left so many others in a position where they couldn't understand the dialogue and although volume was increased, the quality was poor. We even lost many of our hearing impaired patrons who had been with us a long time.

I cannot begin to tell you the amazing difference this has made. I never realized how many patrons we have with the T Coil already in their hearing devices, and I am not exaggerating when I tell you that at EVERY performance we get big Thank You's. We have subscribers who are returning and telling their friends. . . . My favorite moment was when a young man in a wheelchair who has several medical issues stopped one of our actors to tell him that this was the first time he was able to really hear a show as he has 5% hearing. He comes all the time with his family and Bernie Yvon actually was moved to tears when the young man shared this with him.

I could go on and on. . . .

I encourage you to do whatever you can to get "Looped," it truly is one of the best investments we've made, but more importantly, what we've given to our patrons is priceless.

Best of luck to you,
Sincerely,
Margaret

Margaret Newton
Business Manager
Marriott Theatre
10 Marriott Drive
Lincolnshire, IL 60069
847-634-0204

Sent: Thursday, April 25, 2013 12:34 PM
Subject: Fwd: Summerfield theater

I'd like to let you know how much I appreciate the hearing loop in the Summerfield theater. Movies are a hearing challenge for me, and I find regular theaters to be very frustrating. When my friends plan a movie evening, my first question is "Is it playing at the Summerfield?" If we go there, I join them and am able to enjoy the movie completely. If they choose to see a movie at a non-looped theater, I usually decline, knowing that I will not be able to hear well enough.

RTB
