

Understanding the Advantages of Auracast, Telecoils, and Assistive Listening Systems

Get the most from your hearing aids, at home and on the go. Theaters, large meeting rooms, or places with background noise can expose some of the limitations of hearing aids. In such settings, **Bluetooth Technology** and **Assistive Listening Systems** can be of **great** help.

Bluetooth technology enables a wireless connection between hearing aids and nearby personal electronic devices for a clearer, personal listening experience, but it cannot be used in public places. Bluetooth helps greatly with the phone, listening to music or podcasts, watching TV, or working on your computer.

In public settings, Assistive Listening Systems (ALS) capture audio from microphones on a stage or lectern and deliver it directly to a person's ears, reducing the adverse effects of reverberation, background noise, and distance. This means you will hear audio in the venue with exceptional clarity.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) acknowledges the difficulty that some people with hearing loss have in understanding speech in public places, such as theaters, lecture halls, government meetings, and airports. This law requires that, where audio amplification is used, an **Assistive Listening System** be provided, that this technology be hearing-aid-compatible, and that it be offered to the public free of charge.

You may encounter several types of assistive listening systems:

- **Hearing Loops** can connect wirelessly to hearing aids via a telecoil. If this feature is built in, there's no need to borrow a listening device from the venue. Look for places that display the hearing loop logo with the letter **T** (which stands for Telecoil). To find the thousands of hearing loops used in the US: [CenterforHearingAccess.org/state-lists](https://www.centerforhearingaccess.org/state-lists)
- **Auracast used as an Assistive Listening System**, a new Bluetooth LE Audio technology. Auracast is just beginning to appear in new hearing aids and in some consumer electronic devices (like TVs and Android phones). The use of Auracast in public places is expected to ramp up quickly in the next 2-5 years. If you don't have Auracast built into your instruments, ask for a receiver with a neckloop or headphones. Auracast installations can be found on Google Maps and bluetooth.com/auracast/auracast-locations
- **FM/RF or Infrared transmission.** (See logo on the right – note the letter "T" is absent). To benefit, borrow a listening device with headphones from the service desk and ask for a neckloop (instead of headphones) if you own hearing aids with telecoils.



Neckloops are worn around the neck and connect wirelessly to hearing aids **via a built-in telecoil**. While it may sound inconvenient to pick up a separate Auracast or FM receiver with a neckloop, assistive listening systems can help you hear much more clearly during a religious service, lecture, or play. Ask for them! You won't regret it.

New Hearing Aids? When you purchase new hearing aids, especially if you enjoy travel, lectures, the theater, and religious services, having them include **Auracast** and **telecoils** (known as **"ADA-Access-Ready" Hearing Aids**) is the way to go. That way, you will be all set to use existing assistive listening systems, such as hearing loops, and future Auracast systems.

To see how you can use assistive listening systems (with graphics and video), visit tinyurl.com/ALS-Intro for an overview of assistive listening (web page).

