Center for Hearing Access
at The Shedd Institute

Assistive Listening Systems Quick Guide

Choosing an assistive listening system can be overwhelming and confusing, especially in light of emerging technologies like Auracast™ streamed assistive listening (AL)*.

Here are some guidelines to help people with hearing loss hear today.

- Any system must provide clear, intelligible sound, use well-placed microphones, and have minimal sound delays (latency).
- Any proprietary, complex system limited to specific equipment or requiring people to bring additional devices will leave some people out.
- Any system that requires technical know-how, such as downloading and using additional apps on a smartphone, will leave some people out.
- Auracast™ broadcast audio is a new Bluetooth® capability that has the potential to provide an assistive listening system for people with hearing loss.
- Consumers prefer hearing loops. They are the only user-friendly, widely available, non-proprietary assistive listening system used worldwide.

	Hearing Loop	FM	Infrared (IR)	Wi-Fi	Auracast as ALS*
Easy to use	✓				In development
Needs no equipment check-out †	✓				In development
Used at service counters / help points	✓				In development
Used in public transport	✓				In development
Used outdoors	✓	✓		✓	In development
Low overspill	with phased array design		✓		In development
Meets ADA standard	✓	✓	✓		In development
Does not need a smartphone or app	✓	✓	✓		In development
Susceptible to electromagnetic interference (EMI)	✓	✓ ††	✓ ††	✓ ††	In development
Minimal latency (sound delay)	✓	✓	✓		In development
Available now	✓	✓	✓	✓	In development

International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standard 60118-17 for Auracast intended for hearing aid use is not scheduled to be released until December 2027. See Auracast Streamed ALS (webpage).

* The full technical name is "Auracast™ Broadcast Audio used as part of an Assistive Listening System (ALS)" and is simply identified as Auracast streamed assistive listening (AL) in this document.
† For telecoil-enabled hearing instruments (hearing aids, cochlear implants, and bone conductive devices).
†† When used with a neckloop.

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