

How a Hearing Loop Works: *Describing the Invisible*

Can you explain how a hearing loop works? Or what a telecoil does? It's really hard to describe this invisible, somewhat magical, process that can't be seen but that profoundly enhances **hearing accessibility**.

As advocates for this powerful, and empowering, tool everyone needs to be able to describe the essential, fundamental components to someone else. Understanding these basics also gives the telecoil user the ability to troubleshoot if a system doesn't seem to be working correctly

So, at the risk of holding a one-sided conversation, I am sharing an image our Oregon loop group has developed to reduce a loop system's operation to its very basics (*note: we always use it as an in-person teaching tool*). We have found it especially effective when explaining loops to non-telecoil users in groups like Rotaries, Chambers of Commerce, etc. Often, these are "hearing" business people who then become interested in installing a counter loop when they understand the simplicity.

We fondly call this the "Blue Mist" of looping! It depicts the fundamentals needed from the user's perspective for any loop system of any size to work. The user needs to have in place:

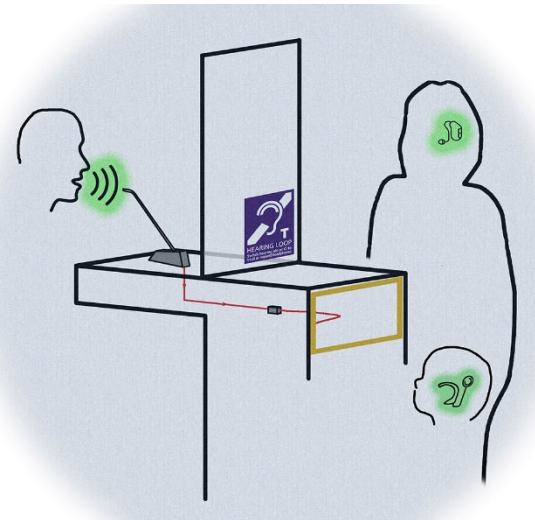
1. A copper wire loop (almost always invisible, shown here as a yellow rectangle), that when connected to a power source sets up...
2. A magnetic field (also invisible!) "shown" here by our "blue mist" that goes through glass barriers and covers multiple users, and,
3. A microphone (sometimes invisible) to send the sound directly to...
4. A telecoil (always invisible) in the user's hearing aid or cochlear implant.

If you study this image a bit, it can help telecoil users give feedback when encountering a loop system that doesn't appear to be working. You can ask:

1. Is there truly a hearing loop in place, or some other assistive listening system mistakenly called a "loop"? Is it turned on?
2. Is there sound actually coming through a microphone?
3. Is my telecoil program turned on in my hearing device?
4. Am I in the loop's field?

Please try using this image to explain a loop to someone with hearing loss or to a business where you want to hear better. Even if you don't use loops yourself, it is empowering for you to be able to tell someone else how simple and effective a loop can be!

Call The Shedd for more information or a demonstration. It can be a life-changer for someone you know!!



The mission of The Shedd Institute's Loop Your Life/Loop Oregon Committee is to understand, educate, and advocate for the installation and usage of hearing loop/telecoil systems in appropriate public and private spaces.