

Assistive Hearing Technology and COVID: Questions and Answers

| Question | Answer(s) from Richard Einhorn and HLA A Staff* |
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| Are there any wireless earphones with low enough latency to use with smartphones and sound amplification apps, rather than using wired earphones? Any on the horizon? | Short answer: none I'm aware of. |
| Can I put an app on a laptop? Col.Doctors does telehealth on my iPad or iPhone, but I use Otter, and also the iPad does not have as good a speaker as my laptop. | Some apps have laptop versions. Check the app maker's website. |
| What captioning is being used for this zoom meeting? We are trying to get my son's live school meetings captioned. They are currently using WebEx. Do you have any recommendations of captioning services to use with WebEx? | Live CART was used. |
| Is there any way to add more people to the conference? I've already had two people tell me they can't connect because a 500 person capacity has been reached. | Thanks. It would be nice to have capacity greater than 500! We will adjust attendance for future webinars. |
| I'm thinking about hard of hearing HS and college students who are taking classes remotely due to Covid-19. When their teachers are lecturing to them, how can they access captions? Does the teacher have to hire a remote captioner? Thanks | Yes, probably. You could also look into Microsoft Teams, which has good auto captions. but you'll have to pay for it. |
| Could you please recommend the best way to caption live school meetings which are taking place in Spanish? What would be your recommended app? Thank you. | Live captions on zoom with a Spanish speaking CART operator is the only thing I can think of. There may be auto-translations that are good, but I don't know anything about them. |
| I am only interested in how to caption Zoom for when I host video calls. Will that be covered? Thanks! | If you're paying for zoom, it should be covered but you'll also have to pay the CART operator. See Zoom Web site for details on captioning. |
| How is it that you can wear a headset without your hearing aid whistling?? | I turn my hearing aid down and the volume going into the headset up. |

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| <p>I bought a bunch of batteries on-line and they must be old as I do not get the same amount of power each week! The amount of power is shorter and shorter. So, I assume on-line batteries sit around too long.</p> | <p>Quite possible.</p> |
| <p>Please remind people of the importance of wearing their hearing aids all day every day even if they're home alone. Absolutely Important for our brains.</p> | <p>Will do.</p> |
| <p>I keep a set of batteries in my wallet - never go anywhere without it.</p> | <p>Great.</p> |
| <p>Battery disposal? How should we dispose dead replaceable batteries?</p> | <p>Google: how to dispose of batteries.</p> |
| <p>Suggestions for battery storage to extend life. Thanks</p> | <p>I usually don't do anything, but you might try putting them in the freezer.</p> |
| <p>Is there any concern about audio of devices or in video conferencing etc. conflicting with a streamer? Or, if you have a streamer on and you participate in a call, responding or presenting info?</p> | <p>Not sure I understand the problem.</p> |
| <p>How DO we clean very old hearing aids before using them as backup if our current one failed?</p> | <p>I have used alcohol prep pads. Do NOT use Lysol or bleach!</p> |
| <p>Hi Richard, This presentation and you - are great! Can you recommend 1-3 on-line retailers for hearing aid batteries who have best prices, plus quick and reliable service going to southern California? Thanks in advance for your reply, and also for this presentation and for all you do for HLAA and for all the people who benefit from your very giving expertise. We are lucky to have you! You sure are a super wonderful fountain of information!</p> | <p>I'm reluctant to promote online retailers. Look for the obvious ones.</p> |
| <p>How do you use the app if you have no HA on?</p> | <p>You use wired earphones.</p> |
| <p>Please talk about captioning options for remote meetings (e.g. when on Zoom) and on phones. I'm particularly interested in iPhone options.</p> | <p>Sorry, I didn't cover this specifically.</p> |

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| Hi Richard, are there headsets like yours for CI users? | Not that I'm aware of. Use your DAI direct audio input and connect to your computer. It will work very well. Ask your audiologist for help in setting it up. |
| Is there a video app that provides automatic captioning? | Some services offer auto-captioning, some don't. Check their website. |
| You show grid view on zoom - I understand this needs to be downloaded - do you know? | I have no idea what this is. |
| Google Meet has a great captioning feature which is a simple click on the home screen | Good to know. |
| Are you using an automated transcription/captioner or CART? | CART. |
| Hi, Thank you for the presentation. Does Zoom or FT have closed captioning options? | Zoom, yes. FT no. |
| My big hope is that you can cover how to insert captions for a video conference call that will appear for all participants on the call. | Possible on some video call services, not possible on others. |
| If there is no video app with automatic captioning. Is there a speech to text app I can run alone with the video app? | Many people run otter or google live caption on their phones while on video calls |
| Does Zoom have the blurred background feature? | I don't think so. |
| Resound also allow streaming from PC to mini mic to HA? | Yes, it does. |
| Oticon has a Bluetooth dongle to make your computer Bluetooth compatible with your Oticon aids. | Good to know. |
| In Zoom, you can use virtual screens. I find them distracting and wish they had a "blur" option. Do you have any comments on lipreading with Zoom virtual screens? | Sorry, I don't know any techniques for improving lipreading on videos. |
| What are some headphones that are good for people with hearing loss that aren't too expensive? | There are great headphones at all price point from \$25 up to \$2500. Roughly, you get what you pay for. I like 1More |

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| | and Shure brands. For very high end, I love Audeze. |
| Do you use headphones with hearing aids in? | No. |
| Re headphones with boom mic - are there some that work while wearing BTE hearing aids? I have severe loss and otherwise headphones will not be strong enough for me. | Any headset with over the ear or on the ear style will work. Just watch out for feedback. |
| Correction: re Wi-Fi bands: it's not 5G but 5GHz. Don't mix people up. | Thanks for catching that. |
| When I use Otter on a zoom call, it keeps reverting to my wallpaper on phone. | Contact Otter with this problem. |
| Google Live Transcribe is great if you have Android phone | Yes. |
| Microsoft Teams works well. Mind you, I work for a non-profit organization for deaf/hard of hearing consumers, so we have the paid version. | Yes, exactly. |
| I am a therapist conducting virtual group therapy in Zoom. Do you know if these captioning services (Otter or other apps) are considered HIPAA compliant? And if it would be at all effective in distinguishing between voices if there are 8-10 people on the call? | They are not. I have no idea if they will distinguish 8-10 people. I would try it out at the end of a session to see how it works. |
| Microsoft Teams will be rolling out additional features for the consumer version later in April. Not sure if this will include captioning. | Good to know. |
| I have tried RELAY CONFERENCE CAPTIONING on Zoom meetings. (available in some states through Sprint Relay). It's free. | Great. |
| FYI on TEAMS. The quality is actually very good for me. The problem is Microsoft is rolling it out and not everyone is given the option. It just appeared for me about 2 weeks ago. | Thanks. |
| Please go over the names of the captioning apps | Otter, Live Caption, Google Live Transcribe. |

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| <p>1. I have Marvel hearing aids. When I put Otter on my iPhone it shuts off the hearing aids. I haven't been able to get an explanation from my audiologist or the Phonak rep.</p> <p>2. Do you know how to make the Otter captions crawl? I am using it on an iPad, and they used to crawl, but now they don't, and I have no idea what I could have done to end it.</p> | <p>1. Try turning off Bluetooth. 2. No, I can't help you. Ask Otter.</p> |
| <p>Do any of the phone apps work with CI's?</p> | <p>If you use DAI, they all should work. DAI=direct audio input.</p> |
| <p>Otter can be connected to a free Zoom account and share the window (I use my iPhone and my MAC and hook them up with a lightening to USB cable) and share the screen and display Otter on the screen - works great, free for me.</p> | <p>Great.</p> |
| <p>Have you tried Verbit? Any opinions?</p> | <p>No, I don't know Verbit.</p> |
| <p>For working folks, there are many different versions of each different online meeting platform. Most federal options do not include auto captioning.</p> | |
| <p>I would like to put my iPhone in front of the mask of the person I am, trying to communicate with and read speech-to-text with large letters. Which app could I use? Thank you.</p> | <p>Try Otter or Live Transcribe or Live Caption.</p> |
| <p>Yes auto-caption should be free especially now!!!!</p> | <p>Agree.</p> |
| <p>I totally agree that free captioning should be provided to people with hearing loss who choose to live and thrive in the hearing world. Thank you for your great presentation.</p> | <p>Agree.</p> |
| <p>Do you recommend that all persons in a video conference call use a headset and boom microphone for increased understanding and ASR accuracy?</p> | <p>Yes.</p> |
| <p>check out SprintRelay.com</p> | <p>Thanks.</p> |

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| <p>great idea to offer/expect free captioning. Sadly, though, most auto captioning offerings are not really ready for prime time. Sigh. (though they'd be better than nothing!!)</p> | <p>Agree.</p> |
| <p>Is not providing captioning a violation of the ADA?</p> | <p>It depends on the situation. For example, if you are required by your school or your workplace to remote into a meeting via Zoom or Go To or another conferencing platform, and you requested captioning, then it would be a violation of the ADA. If you haven't requested it, or if it's a social event organized by co-workers, then no, that would not be a violation of the ADA. *</p> |
| <p>Can mini mic plug into an iPad?</p> | <p>Not sure. You may have to ask Apple support.*</p> |
| <p>should captioning be free? YES - those programs are commercial businesses that should be public accommodations under ADA and therefore required to accommodate people w. hearing impairments</p> | <p>Agree.</p> |
| <p>I think you meant AVA but said Otter when talking about the screen display</p> | <p>Sorry.</p> |
| <p>You said Otter will only work with Zoom Pro or higher. I used it last week at family "gathering" putting it near laptop and it worked well.</p> | <p>I meant integrated into Otter. But yes, this will work.</p> |
| <p>We use Teams at the Red Cross and the live captions are terrific. We are expecting real time language translation soon. I wish that Microsoft would make Teams available to the hearing impaired community. Should automatic captioning be free and easy to access? Yes! Good project for HLAA to take on. Perhaps y'all could put together an action team that could try to influence industry leaders to make this available to our community.</p> | <p>Agree.</p> |
| <p>I see you are wearing headphones. Do you have cochlear implant? If so, how does the CI microphone pick up the audio from the headset?</p> | <p>I wear hearing aids.</p> |
| <p>Live Transcribe for Android is a great live captioning app. You can put it near your PC, and it will caption what is being said. It is mostly accurate.</p> | <p>Yes.</p> |

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| <p>CaptionCall telephones are free if you have a hearing loss (under the ADA). They have a 2-3 second delay and ~95% accuracy. Right now, because of Covid there is a very, very heavy usage and consequently there is a slightly slower delay.</p> | <p>Yes.</p> |
| <p>Is headphone and boom mic one piece or two?</p> | <p>Usually one.</p> |
| <p>With all due respect to your captioner, I had Otter running simultaneously in a window next to Zoom. Otter was faster than your captioner.</p> | <p>Good to know.</p> |
| <p>is there anything that allows captions on a smartphone without access to the internet? Had a storm that took out both power & landline.</p> | <p>I don't know.</p> |
| <p>Any recommendations for specific headsets with amplification for computer use (USB plug)?</p> | <p>Any with a USB plug should do.</p> |
| <p>I wear Ci in one ear and HA in other and use mini mic for streaming. would a headset/boom mic still be helpful?</p> | <p>Possibly. Buy a headset/boom mic from a place where you can return it if it doesn't work out.</p> |
| <p>I don't feel you covered Innocaption for cell phones enough. It is far superior to captioned landline phones, which are useless as far as I'm concerned.</p> | <p>Good to know.</p> |
| <p>How can you get captioning when there is an important video on CBSN?</p> | <p>I don't know. Contact CBSN. They should all be captioned, I believe</p> |
| <p>Google Meet (part of G Suites) works extremely well for videoconferencing. Has autocaptioning and easy to set up.</p> | <p>Good to know.</p> |
| <p>What are the smart phone apps? I came in late to the conference, 20 minutes late because every time I clicked on the link, I got a message saying the conference was full and to try later.</p> | <p>Look at the recording of the webinar when it's posted.</p> |

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| <p>I am using free zoom service. Will the caption work? How does it work with a bunch of people talking at once?</p> | <p>No captions with free Zoom.</p> |
| <p>Can you recommend a model of headset with boom mike?</p> | <p>Any will do if they have a USB plug.</p> |
| <p>I have trouble using my Roger Penn FM with my CI on streaming shows. Any suggestions?</p> | <p>I need more info. Write Phonak with your questions because they make Roger Pens.</p> |
| <p>I used a free Live Transcribe app on my android it helps me followed one on one in zoom.</p> | <p>Good to know.</p> |
| <p>The information is overwhelming even for myself who has used systems for 40 years. We need a conference call related to the issues of seniors who even have difficulties with hearing aids. They are the ones in the nursing homes and hospitals are really being lost given current perceptions about hearing aids. We are living at the apex of good systems, but many people are not there.</p> | <p>HAAA will consider this for future meetings/webinars.*</p> |
| <p>What is your opinion of using Bose earphones for one-sided hearing loss?</p> | <p>I have an asymmetrical hearing loss and Bose products work well.</p> |
| <p>Hello, 1st year audiology student here. Thank you, this has been great. In response to the question that captioning should be provided, I would agree yes. Certainly, when many people are going to work remotely, something like this should be covered by ADA as equal access to information.</p> | <p>Agree.</p> |
| <p>I completely agree that captioning be free - not only during this pandemic but at all times. With as cheap as it is in addition to how easy it is to either automate or provide, there is no reason why anybody should pay, especially as many people would benefit beyond the hard of hearing/deaf communities. Many thanks for this presentation and the information you provided. This was great and really appreciate it!</p> | <p>Agree.</p> |

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| Can you wear a headset with a cochlear implant? | Use DAI - direct audio input. If you don't know what this is, ask your hearing healthcare provider. |
| What apps for voice to text - for general conversations - can be used on smartphones | I covered this in the webinar. Please look at it when the video is posted. |
| Thank you, Richard, for doing this presentation. Greatly appreciated. | |
| Why do I keep hearing an electric keyboard from time to time during this call? | I don't know. |
| Richard, you can have someone in the zoom call, type out the captions (third party) if you don't go with a live CART person | That's not practical. Most people can't type fast enough to keep up with live conversation. |
| If you use a loop instead of headset (like you have), how do you get a microphone with the loop? Or is this not possible? | I don't think this is possible. Just use the loop with the mic in your computer or phone. |
| Is there any way to change CC on TV? | Yes. look in your owner's manual for the TV. |
| Are there any websites to purchase hearing aids (brands) at a discount? Where we can then bring the hearing aid to the (brand name) audiologist for programming? | These companies offer discounts for HLAA members: https://idealhearingaids.com/HLAA/ https://www.americanhearingbenefits.com/ |
| In regard, to the Live Listen feature, patients can use their AirPods to stream the audio signal from their iPhone to their ears. | Yes, but AirPods have limited gain, i.e., they likely aren't loud enough except for the most mild hearing losses. |
| This has been a great presentation!! If you have used WebEx—have you been able to use closed captioning with it? TY | I have not used captions with WebEX. |

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| <p>Many HLAA chapters are using Zoom but with its privacy issues some are looking at Google Hangouts as an alternative. Do you have any experience with Hangouts?</p> | <p>Very little. Not enough to have an opinion yet.</p> |
| <p>The Roger pen can be connected directly to the TV for streaming to the patients hearing aids.</p> | <p>Yes.</p> |
| <p>Why can't TV captioning be better? They should all be using the Otter technology to avoid the long time-lag with traditional captioning.</p> | <p>I don't know much about TV captioning and the constraints.</p> |
| <p>What's the best headphones with mic for a person who is deaf in one ear and hard of hearing on the other?</p> | <p>Good headphones start at \$25 and go up. I like 1More, Shure, and Bose.</p> |
| <p>I have Meniere's and hearing fluctuates from all mumbles to some days 50 or 60% word discrimination. Do you have any recommendations for people with Meniere's? I have a great audiologist and world class ENT but not helpful for improving hearing. Sometimes ANY sound hurts so badly. I prefer silence of CC when available.</p> | <p>I'm sorry, I know very little about Meniere's and also, I'm not a medical professional.</p> |
| <p>However always remember keep them away from children,</p> | <p>Agree.</p> |
| <p>I have Roger select that I use with Roger MyLink. If I plug the Select into the computer and switch to t-coil, I have gotten pretty good results.</p> | <p>Yes.</p> |
| <p>Comment: re the question about getting clear signal from computer via Roger pen: Roger can be hard wired with a cable to the computer (in the same way that Roxana uses her mini mic.)</p> | <p>Yes.</p> |
| <p>For telehealth services, patients should request CART.</p> | <p>Agree.</p> |
| <p>Google Hangouts Meet is another video conf platform and it has very good built in captions. Yes, it costs money and is a bit hard to set up</p> | <p>Yes.</p> |