Better Together: Auracast™ & Hearing Loops – Understanding the Future of Assistive Listening

Questions not answered during the webinar (consolidated)

1. Is direct-to-device connectivity possible with Auracast?

Direct-to-device connectivity is possible with Auracast, but only if the listener's device supports Auracast. The technology is designed so that Auracast-enabled hearing aids, earbuds, headphones, or smartphones can tune into a broadcast without pairing, though the experience varies by device. Some devices can select the Auracast broadcast directly on the device itself, while others require a phone-based Auracast Assistant app to help discover and join available streams.

2. If BLE doesn't use traditional pairing, how do you connect?

Bluetooth LE Audio, including Auracast, doesn't use traditional one-to-one pairing. Instead, it relies on a "broadcast and select" model that works more like choosing a Wi-Fi network. A transmitter broadcasts an audio stream, and any Auracast-compatible device can scan for and discover those broadcasts either directly on the device or through a phone-based Auracast Assistant app. The user simply selects the stream they want to hear, with no pairing codes or manual Bluetooth connections required. This makes it easy for multiple listeners to tune in at once and switch channels quickly, which is ideal for public spaces and assistive listening.

3. What is BLE?

Bluetooth® Low Energy (BLE) is a wireless communication protocol designed for short-range data transfer with significantly lower power consumption than classic Bluetooth.

4. Why aren't there hearing aids that include both Auracast and telecoil?

Currently, there are no hearing aids that include both Auracast (Bluetooth® LE Audio) and T-coil in the same device, mainly due to size and physical design limitations. A telecoil requires a physical copper coil, while Auracast adds additional radio hardware, antennas, and battery demands, and today's small RIC and CIC hearing aids simply don't have enough internal space to support both. This may change over time as components get smaller, batteries become more efficient, and manufacturers redesign products to support

dual connectivity. The limitation is not the technology itself but the challenge of fitting both systems inside the tiny footprint of modern hearing aids.

5. Are there devices venues can provide for guests without compatible devices?

Yes. There are both professional-grade and consumer-level Auracast receivers that venues can purchase and provide to guests who don't have compatible personal devices. However, if a venue wants to meet ADA compliance, it will typically invest in a complete, purpose-built assistive listening system. An ADA-compliant Auracast system includes the transmitter, required signage, and the appropriate number of dedicated receivers and neck loops, which is based on the venue's seating capacity. This ensures the venue meets legal requirements while providing a consistent, reliable listening experience for all guests.

6. Will Auracast automatically stream phone calls like Bluetooth does?

That's a really good question. The short answer is: it depends on how Auracast is implemented — but most current Auracast systems do not automatically stream calls or general phone audio into your hearing aids the way a phone's Bluetooth connection does. Auracast offers a broadcast-style audio option for venues and public spaces — great for concerts, events, alerts, or presentations. But if you want calls to flow directly into your hearing aids the moment they ring, that functionality still belongs to the traditional paired-Bluetooth path.

7. What's the difference between Auracast-enabled and Auracast-capable?

Auracast-capable, also sometimes referred to as "ready", means the device has the right hardware to support Auracast, but the feature is not active yet. It might need a firmware update, software update, or manufacturer activation. The capability is built in, but it cannot join an Auracast broadcast today. Auracast-enabled means the device has both the required hardware and the software activated. It is fully functional and can join Auracast broadcasts right away, straight out of the box.

8. What does an Auracast Assistant do?

An Auracast Assistant is a simple tool on your phone or hearing aid app that helps you find and connect to nearby Auracast broadcasts. Instead of pairing or dealing with complicated menus, the Assistant shows you a list of available audio streams—much like choosing a Wi-Fi network—and lets you tap the one you want to hear. It makes it easy to connect your hearing aids directly to clear, high-quality sound in places like theaters, airports,

classrooms, and houses of worship. The Assistant also helps you manage how your hearing aids handle different audio sources, so you always stay in control of what you hear.

9. What does "channel count" mean?

By channel count, we mean each individual audio feed. With Auracast, you can broadcast multiple channels at the same time. For example, in the chapel you could offer three separate channels: one for assistive listening, one for audio description, and one for Spanish interpretation. Additional channels can then be supported in the Sunday school rooms as needed.

10. Is Auracast transmission line-of-sight?

No, Auracast transmission is not line-of-sight. Because it uses Bluetooth® LE Audio, the signal can travel through people, furniture, and many building materials, so listeners do not need a direct view of the transmitter. Like any RF technology, performance can be affected by distance, structural materials, and other sources of interference, but in most venues such as churches, classrooms, theaters, and meeting spaces, Auracast works effectively without line-of-sight placement.

11. Is there a delay like regular Bluetooth?

Traditional Bluetooth Classic (the type used for most headphones today) often has noticeable latency, sometimes 100–300 ms or more. This can create a visible mismatch between a speaker's lips and the audio, or between live sound and what a listener hears. Auracast, which is built on Bluetooth LE Audio, is designed for very low latency and performs much closer to real time. In well-designed systems, the delay is typically small enough that listeners do not perceive any mismatch between what they see and what they hear.

12. What's the cost for venues to install Auracast?

$2,000–$4,000

13. How do you ensure privacy if the range is large?

Even though Auracast can cover a large area, privacy isn't a problem because the system can be secured. With Auri™, venues can enable encryption or password-protected

broadcasts so that only authorized listeners can tune in. This prevents eavesdropping and ensures that sensitive or restricted audio, such as meetings, rehearsals, or confidential events, remains private. Venues can choose whether a broadcast is open to everyone or locked down for specific groups, giving them full control over who can access the audio.

14. Can Auracast and hearing loops coexist?They actually work very well together — they don't interfere or compete. A hearing loop and an Auracast system operate on completely different technologies, so they can coexist in the same space without any conflict. For the user, it's simply a matter of choosing which system works best for them. Someone with a telecoil-equipped hearing aid may continue using the loop just as they always have, while someone with an Auracast-enabled device can tune into the Auracast broadcast instead. In many venues, offering both technologies creates a more inclusive environment by supporting a wider range of hearing devices and user preferences. Ultimately, the systems complement each other and give people more ways to connect — not fewer.

15. if your phone is Auracast enabled (i.e. Google Pixel 10 with the latest release), and your devices are not…can you get Auracast from the phone and stream that to the hearing devices?

Good question, only if your hearing devices themselves support Auracast or Bluetooth LE Audio, a phone alone (even if it's Auracast-enabled) cannot reliably "relay" Auracast broadcasts to hearing aids that don't support Auracast.

16. Is there a delay between speech and audio reception like there is with regular Bluetooth?

Traditional Bluetooth Classic (the type used for most headphones today) often has noticeable latency, sometimes 100–300 ms or more. This can create a visible mismatch between a speaker's lips and the audio, or between live sound and what a listener hears. Auracast, which is built on Bluetooth LE Audio, is designed for very low latency and performs much closer to real time. In well-designed systems, the delay is typically small

enough that listeners do not perceive any mismatch between what they see and what they hear.

17. Any insight as to when the manufacturers will be able to do the firmware update to enable devices that are "ready"? Some of those products have been out for a couple of years already. Are they waiting for the IEC standards to be finalized (anticipated late 2027)? Or what's the holdup??

The timing will vary widely from one manufacturer to another. Even if a device is labeled "Auracast-ready," each company sets its own schedule for activating the feature. Some may be waiting for additional field testing, some for internal validation of latency and reliability, and others for broader market adoption before rolling out firmware updates. While industry standards for large-venue Auracast performance are still evolving — and full IEC specifications aren't expected until 2027 — that isn't necessarily the reason for the delay. Ultimately, each manufacturer will enable Auracast when they feel confident in the performance, usability, and support implications for their customers. Your best course of action is to check directly with your hearing-aid manufacturer for their specific roadmap.

18. For TVs, is it the TV that must he Auracast enabled, or miss the broadcasters...i.e., the TV channels that must broadcast using BLE technology?

For TVs, it's the TV (or the audio equipment connected to it) that must be Auracast-enabled — not the broadcasters or TV channels. Broadcasters don't need to transmit anything differently. The TV simply takes the audio it is already receiving (from cable, satellite, streaming, antenna, etc.) and rebroadcasts that audio locally using Auracast Bluetooth LE Audio.

Think of Auracast as a local wireless audio output, similar to how a TV can output sound through HDMI-ARC, optical, or Bluetooth. The broadcast doesn't change — the TV just needs the ability to send its audio as an Auracast stream.

If a TV isn't Auracast-enabled, you can still make it work by adding an external Auracast transmitter, which plugs into the TV's headphone jack, optical port, or HDMI-ARC. That transmitter then sends the Auracast audio that your devices can receive.