

## The Facts About Hearing Loop/Telecoil Technology

Hello Loopers et al. - There's a belief in some circles that hearing loop/telecoil technology is simply an outdated form of assistive listening that, with the advent of Bluetooth®, is redundant. Never mind that Bluetooth®, though a valuable technology, is not able to serve groups of people assembled in a venue nor provide some of the many other benefits offered by telecoils to users around the world daily.

Bluetooth® won't help a user hear a boarding call at the Phoenix airport or the next station announcement on a BART train in San Francisco - telecoils will. It won't connect to the sound system of the Plaza Theater in Wharton, TX (population 8654) or all of the theaters in the Santa Barbara, CA International Film Festival - telecoils will.

Even as mistaken ideas about telecoils continue and the availability of hearing aid models and CI processors equipped with telecoils shrinks, the awareness and availability of hearing loops has expanded dramatically here and abroad and is expected to continue doing so.

See below for details on these and other looping advances and go to [here](#) to see the previous edition of this newsletter.

### **Hearing Loop Market to Experience Substantial Growth During the Forecast Period**

According to the firm Transparency Market Research, the increasing number of people with hearing disorders and the world's growing geriatric population are projected to drive the growing international hearing loop market. Europe, the manufacturing epicenter of the industry, dominates the market due to the easy availability to the technology and a rise in the number of government initiatives promoting it. In spite of the growing interest in Wi-Fi Audio, one review of the TMR research indicated "old is new again" saying, "Some of the most futuristic technologies that exist in the market landscape today include infrared

systems, audio loops, and FM systems. Go [here](#) to request a brochure of the report.

## **More US Airports Getting in the Loop**

Since the first edition of this newsletter was circulated in July, two more US airports have been added to the list of known terminals using or planning to use the technology. On August 24 the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced the awarding of \$766 million dollars in Airport Improvement Program grants to 279 airports. The funds will be used for airport infrastructure improvements. In Ft. Wayne, IN and Charlotte, NC those funds will be used to install hearing loop technology in the terminals.

Meanwhile, hearing loop technology was among the "touchless solutions" for addressing accessibility for people with disabilities at the FAA's 12th Annual National Civil Rights Training Conference for Airports (NCRTC) on August 24. In a slide presentation to attendees discussing Effective Communication Requirements at Airports, the Open Doors Organization encouraged the presence of hearing loops, reporting that, "Hearing loops are catching on, especially at airports that serve many retirees like Sarasota and Phoenix." The presenter went on to say that at many airports, accessibility is still siloed, i.e., not an integral part of planning, design, IT and customer experience.

As the looping of airports gains momentum, advocates are exploring ways of reaching out for support for their efforts. A Tampa, FL advocate has mounted an online petition calling on Tampa International Airport to install loops. The petition can be accessed at:

<https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/hearing-loops-tampa-international-airport>

The complete list of known looped US airports can be downloaded by going [here](#) and scrolling down to **AIRPORTS AND HEARING LOOP TECHNOLOGY**.

## **Theatres Continue to Get in the Loop**

The installation of hearing loops in "live" theatres (their preferred spelling) now reaches from many owned by Broadway's Nederlander and Schubert organizations to converted old movie houses in rural America like the Plaza Theater in Wharton, TX (population 8654). This Art Deco movie theater that

opened in March, 1942 has been repurposed and is maintained as a regional, iconic performance space for live plays, concerts, special events as well as a community gathering place. To improve access for patrons with hearing loss, the theater was looped just last month.

All four theaters in New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts ( Vivian Beaumont Theater, Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, Claire Tow Theater) and the LCT box office have been looped for some time. It's now expected that, when the renovation of Geffen Hall (formerly Avery Fisher Hall and home to the NY Philharmonic) is completed that it will be the first of the big three concert/opera/ballet venues in Lincoln Center to offer hearing loop access to the sound system.

Jerry Bergman, an HLAA looping advocate in New York City, maintains the attached list of over 320 known looped performance spaces around the country that possibly just touches the surface. Let me know, or email Jerry (whose address is on the list), if you are aware of any such venues that are missing from the list.

### **Hearing Loops Going To the Movies**

Thanks to the ADA, the move to digital sound systems required that older movie houses (single theaters and multiplexes) had to add hearing loops or neckloops as an option when they upgraded to new digital systems. If they did not install a hearing loop in place of or in addition to using IR or FM, they had to offer a neckloop option to users of their loaner receivers. New facilities had to include a hearing loop or neckloops in their new assistive listening systems.

For some theaters, though, actual loops have been installed not because of ADA mandates but simply to accommodate their hard of hearing patrons. In time for their 35th Annual Film Festival in Santa Barbara, CA last year, with the generous help of the Manitou Fund, the Santa Barbara International Film Festival was able to permanently equip all four Metro 4 Theaters and two screens at the Fiesta 5 Theaters with hearing loop technology. With these installations all SBIFF theaters, including the Lobero, Arlington and Riviera "live" theatres, provide the actual hearing loop system. North of there, the Landmark Theatre in San Francisco is the first multiplex in San Francisco to install a hearing loop in all of its screens.

Like its contemporary in Wharton, TX, the circa 1916 Alamo theater in Bucksport, ME (population 4,924) has just recently installed a hearing loop. Unlike Wharton's repurposed Plaza, the Alamo is still a movie theater, dedicated to preserving and making accessible northern New England's moving image heritage. The Northeast Historic Film organization presents archival moments from their collection before the weekly feature films are presented.

## **Hearing Care Offices Getting in the Loop**

Kudos need to go to Dr. Juliette Sterkens for her many presentations on hearing loop technology to hearing care providers at state and national conventions throughout the country. Those presentations plus the ongoing advocacy by HLAA's Get in the Hearing Loop, the Sound Investment campaign of the country's Sertoma Clubs, and Janice Schacter Lintz with her very successful Hearing Access & Innovations initiative, appears to have recruited more support for the technology on the part of hearing care practitioners.

A few years ago a Google search of the terms "audiology hearing loop hearing care" found an encouraging number of hearing care offices that included information on loop/telecoil technology at their websites. Today such a search results in a plethora of such offices. Here are a few random examples:

Warwick, RI - <https://www.hearcareri.com/hearing-loss/hearing-loops/>

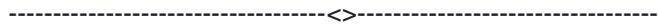
Bethesda, MD - <https://potomacaudiology.com/hearing-loop-technology>

Deerfield, IL - <https://www.audiologyillinois.com/hearing-loop-systems/>

Albuquerque, NM - <https://abqhearing.com/patient-resources/telecoils-loops/>

## More Mention of Loops in the Hearing Loss Related Media

To raise awareness and understanding of hearing loop technology among both hearing care providers and people with hearing loss, a piece on hearing loops and travel was recently posted on the Hearing Health Foundation's blog and can be read [here](#). *Hearing Life Magazine* has a piece on hearing loop access in the Big Apple in their fall issue (just out and available [here](#) and additional pieces referencing the technology are scheduled to be published soon.



### NOTE TO READERS:

If you are aware of a newsworthy story regarding hearing loops, neckloops or telecoils and would like to have it considered for publication in a future edition of this newsletter, please send the details to: [intheloop@juno.com](mailto:intheloop@juno.com). Submission are welcome from any of the private individuals, hearing care providers or looping advocates, installers, distributors and manufacturers receiving this newsletter.

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Hearing Loss Support Specialist and Freelance Writer

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**GET IN THE HEARING LOOP**

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**Hearing Loss Association of America**