



Auracast is Here – What are you waiting for?

July 28, 2025

By Stephen O. Frazier

Auracast™ is the most exciting development in assistive listening since British inventor Joseph Poliakoff developed the telecoil, and followed it with the hearing loop way back in the 1930's. It offers features previously found only in WiFi Audio.

It features elements previously found only in hearing loop systems and offers them not just to a minority of hearing aid wearers, but to anyone with hearing loss. It's a technology that is already being used by audiophiles and techies, and offers improved communication access both to people with hearing loss and to those with normal hearing.

Six international manufacturers have marketed Auracast-enabled smartphones to receive and to stream [Auracast broadcasts](#). Seventeen different manufacturers offer Auracast-enabled earbuds that can connect to those phones. The owners of those earbuds can use them to listen, via Auracast, to an Auracast-enabled Samsung or [LG TV](#) in their living room, or by connecting a TV streamer from over half a dozen brands currently available that are Auracast-enabled.

For a backyard family barbecue, there are over two dozen devices that can be used to stream music to wireless, Auracast-enabled loudspeakers from twelve different makers. Alternatively, they could use a Victrola brand Auracast-enabled record player to stream to those loudspeakers. Places of worship like St. Paul's Cathedral in London have "tested" Auracast to make their services understandable not just to the hard of hearing, but to an entire congregation that can have difficulty overcoming the echoes of that now ancient edifice.

Theatres in the UK and Norway have "tested" Auracast and found it remarkably good. It was demonstrated at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, and some churches in the US, Canada, and elsewhere have gone beyond the testing stage and installed working Auracast

systems. In Australia, the world-famous [Sydney Opera House](#) and a pub in Brisbane are examples of permanent Auracast installations in that country. Daemyung Hearing Center, in Daegu, South Korea has installed Auracast and the Creative Computing Institute (CCI) at the University of the Arts in London has installed it in classrooms. Several others have been announced by the Bluetooth Special Interest Group (SIG) and many more, both here and abroad, are up and running.

The SIG website has a somewhat out-of-date list of Auracast-enabled devices now on the market, but simply classifies them as a “receiver” or “transmitter” rather than their specific type of receiver or transmitter.

A more complete list, broken down into several categories, can be found [here](#). A new website, entitled “Now Hear This”, is currently under construction with a focus on news and information on Auracast.

Why are they waiting?

Hearing loss and improved communication access are not news to the major media and go largely unreported. Do a Google search for such information and the results will be incomplete and take hours to get usable results. It can take considerable research to learn that four manufacturers of hearing aids make at least one model of their devices that is Auracast-enabled.

A like number offer [Auracast “ready”](#) hearing aids, as do two makers of over-the-counter aids. “Ready” means they are capable of connecting to an Auracast broadcast after nothing more than an over-the-air (OTA) update to their software. Cochlear announced over two years ago that their processor was Auracast “ready”. It’s still just ready.

Why are they waiting? Why are the others who are “ready” still waiting?

Some advocates for assistive listening say it’s too soon to promote Auracast for assistive listening system (ALS) use. They’re speaking for the half of hearing aid wearers that have telecoil-equipped hearing aids and waiting for hearing aids that connect to an Auracast ALS by the simple touch of a button. To me they’re doing the same thing that some hearing care providers have done for years – they’re deciding for hard-of-hearing people instead of letting those people make the decision themselves.

Only 10% of people who have or who could benefit from hearing aids have hearing aids with telecoils. Many of that other 90% only have access to an assistive listening system (ALS) with a borrowed receiver and earphones. Do they want people who need them to put off the purchase of hearing aids until the brand and model they should have is “ADA Access Ready”? There could very well continue to be people buying new hearing aids who are not

told about telecoils. Or, they'll be told, "Oh, that's old technology – you don't need it, you'll have Auracast."

There might not be a lot of Auracast ALSs available for a while, but there are innumerable ways hard-of-hearing people can use the Auracast feature in hearing aids. Places of worship, thanks to advocacy from hard-of-hearing members of their congregations, have already started putting in Auracast to supplement an existing ALS or as a sole ALS. It's also to be expected that new facilities that must meet the ADA requirements will lean toward Auracast instead of FM or IR or WiFi. Venues like that, and those visiting them, should act now, not wait for the "perfect solution" to the problems with their hearing.

Hearing aid buyers replace their devices every five to seven years, so if they buy new ones now, looking at Cochlear's example, there's no guarantee as to how soon the "ready" devices will become enabled. For others, they may be fitted with hearing aids that are not just not "ready, but that will never be "ready". They need to be alerted to what the future has in store as well as what's available today.

I was recently asked what I recommend to hearing aid buyers. My simple answer – only buy hearing aids that have [classic Bluetooth](#), Auracast, and telecoils. Insist that your new aids offer all three technologies. It may be a while before there are great numbers of places of worship, theatres, or other gathering places that offer an Auracast assistive listening system (ALS), but it's going to happen, and some of them won't also have hearing loops. Airports, sports stadiums, commuter trains, and a host of other places will be installing Auracast in the not-too-distant future. Anyone who buys new hearing aids now without Auracast will miss out on the benefits Auracast offers today and the many more that will be available as time goes by.

As for hearing aid and CI manufacturers and venues wanting to serve the most people with hearing loss, what are you waiting for?

About the Author

Stephen O. Frazier, trained by the Hearing Loss Association of America as a Hearing Loss Support Specialist, is a freelance writer with a focus on hearing loss issues. He was the organizer and chair of the Committee for Communication Access in America. He has presented workshops on a variety of hearing loss related topics to local, state and national audiences and his written work has appeared in most of the major hearing care and hearing loss related journals, blogs and newsletters. Many of his writings are posted at www.sofnabq.com. He can be reached at sofnabq@gmail.com.

