



We know what hearing loss is about – we live it!

 Hearing Connections

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Auracast – the new buzz word for people with hearing loss.

If you listen to the marketing hype, Auracast will solve all our problems with hearing the TV, phone and in public buildings.

Let's look at the facts!

Auracast is a transmission system that will one day replace hearing loops, infrared and FM systems. It is made up of two parts – an Auracast transmitter and either a hearing aid, cochlear processor, or smartphone with Bluetooth LE.

Currently, it is expected that you will need a smartphone to choose the app that matches the Auracast transmitter you want to connect to. But in one case that I know of, the Auracast transmitter can be paired by pressing a button on the transmitter.

A minimal number of smartphones and some new versions of hearing aids released this year (but not all) currently have Bluetooth LE working. Some manufacturers say their devices have Auracast or are Auracast-ready, which is not entirely true. They need an update via the audiologist's computer, which is not yet available—clearly, they can't be Auracast-ready in this case.

At this stage, I know of four manufacturers that will be providing Auracast transmitters to the Australian market next year. They range in price from approximately \$300 (for connecting to your TV) up to \$6,000 for large venues.

We may begin to see some new TVs that have Auracast installed around April. These will be the 2025 versions and the more expensive sets. Often the retailers offer the previous year's TV sets as well as the current year.

If you hear that the hearing loops will be gone in three years, don't believe it. Just because there is a new technology, it doesn't mean all those venues with hearing loops, FM, and infrared systems will suddenly rush out and spend money replacing great working systems. Venues can't even get the basics right, like signage!

Also, not every model of hearing aid and cochlear processor will immediately have Bluetooth LE – it will take time (years) for every model of hearing aid and CI processor available on the market to have it, in the same way not all models of hearing aids/CIs currently have Bluetooth. Then, it will take time for all those

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for people with hearing loss, by people with hearing loss

Specialist in Hearing Augmentation, Hearing Loops,
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users currently wearing hearing aids or cochlear implants to replace their devices – particularly for those who don't have funding provided for them. I remember when I had hearing aids, I made mine last 14 years – with a young family and a mortgage, money was hard to come by, and even more so today.

In summary, it is very early to draw any other conclusion than that it is exciting, and we have a long way to go to establish how it will work in practice, particularly when not everyone has a smartphone (particularly among the elderly). In addition, I can say that in 15 to 20 years, we can expect to see the demise of hearing loops, FM, and infrared systems.

Hearing Connections specialises in technology and support for people with hearing loss. Andrew Stewart is the Managing Director and has two cochlear implants, having grown up with a progressive loss. All his siblings also wear hearing aids and/or cochlear implants, as do his children and other family members.

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Auracast Symbol

