

DRAFT
Accessibility for Hard of Hearing Library Users
Ottawa Public Library
April 2009

Audited Branches

Elmvale Branch April 6, 2009, Auditor, Michel David
 Orleans Branch April 6, 2009, Auditor, Michel David
 CentrepoinTE Branch January 20, 2009, Auditor, Michel David
 Main Branch January 26, 2009, Auditors, Frank McNally, and Leah Simeone

Findings

1. Staff Knowledge of services and needs	“Info desks were manned by part-time and volunteer staff...some did not appear to be fully informed of accessibility measures, but others did. All could use training”
2. Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)	No ALDs are available in public meeting rooms; no mention of ALDs on website or in written media.
3. Lighting	Diffused, non-glaring. Lighting was good in all sites visited. The one exception was the auditorium at the Main Branch.
4. Emergency and Fire Alarms	Auditory only except in Main Branch which also has Visual feature (Flashing Lights)
5. Staff Desks and Counters	In most cases the customer is able to read the computer monitor when screen is turned to face them. Handing out slips of paper with the names of the books loaned and the date of return is also a beneficial service for hard of hearing persons.
6. Collection on Hearing loss	Collection on Hearing loss is not specifically

	referred to. Closed Caption films not bundled together.
7. Meeting rooms	Unknown if meeting rooms are equipped with 1) Internet access and 2) overhead projector, 3) TV with captioning ability. If Computer Assisted Realtime Translation (CART) or Computerized Notetaking was requested for a meeting or event, No 1 & 2 would be necessary to provide the service. No. 3 necessary for some occasions.
8. TTY Telephones	Incoming TTY - Due to the low number of TTY calls received, the OPL transferred its TTY number to the City of Ottawa Call Centre service. The service is currently accessible via the old TTY number or the City's 311 Call Centre. However, the service is not well advertised. The majority of brochures and other written media do not refer to the TTY service. Outgoing TTY calls- The public telephones are not equipped with TTY technology. Except at the main branch????
9. Public Telephones	Volume Control - public telephones are equipped with volume controls. Some public telephones located in noisy areas.
10. Website	The only hearing loss related service noted in the Specialized Services page 1 is the availability of sign language books for Deaf children and the TTY service.
11. Digital catalogue holdings	Using the search feature, clients can find all films that are listed as closed captioned, subtitled or referring to hearing loss and its many other terminology.

12. Online reservations, inquiries etc.	The use of computers and the internet greatly facilitates the reservation of books, inquiries via email, etc. People with hearing loss no longer need to depend on their faulty hearing to get such information via the telephone or in person at each site.

Recommendations:

1. Hearing Awareness Training. The OPL should provide all its staff and volunteers with hearing awareness training. All new staff and volunteers should be required to take the training as part of the OPLs policy and mandate.

2. Identification of sites requiring ALDs to render their auditoriums and meeting rooms accessible to hard of hearing persons when these are used for public meetings. When ALDs are available, OPL staff need to be trained in their use.

When ALDs are available, the OPL needs to advertise their availability for the workshops and programmes it offers.

3. Meeting rooms and Auditoriums used for public meetings need to have their lighting system upgrade to provide non-glaring, non-reflective and non-blinking lighting.

4. Emergency Alarms. Replace auditory systems with alarms that are both auditory and visual.

5. Staff desk and Counters. The OPL should consider installing an Intellitype monitor to facilitate communication with hard of hearing persons who cannot lip-read.

6. Collection on Hearing Loss. Material on hearing loss is accessible via the digital catalogue. The OPL is encouraged to make month long displays of such materials during May – Speech and Hearing Awareness Month. Such displays will help educate both the general public and hard of hearing persons and their families. Such collections could be accompanied by Brown Bag lunch workshops hosted by Hard of Hearing organizations.

7. Auditoriums and Meeting Rooms. These are probably the most problematical for hard of hearing persons at the OPL. The HOH can use internet services to facilitate their communication and decrease their face to face or telephone communions but many of them cannot fully participate or participate at all in meetings, workshops and programs under the auspices of the OPL without some kind of assistive listening technology provided. The sites need to be reviewed carefully and upgraded to meet today’s requirements for accessible public facilities under the AODA Standards.

8. TTY Telephone Inquiry service. The TTY service should be listed in a prominent location in all OPL media.

9. Public Telephones. The location of public telephones should be reviewed to ensure they are located in quiet alcoves. The availability of volume control should be clearly noted above the telephone through appropriate signage.

10. Signage. As soon as a Branch upgrades its accessibility for hard of hearing persons, it should denote such access by installing clear signage at the entrance to the facility and throughout the building. Signage should reflect the accepted international symbols of access (See appendix).

11. Website. Once accessibility has been improved; the Specialized Services page needs to be upgraded to inform OPL users of the various services and programs available to persons with hearing loss.

12. Policy. It is recommended that the OPL draft a policy ensuring that future renovations and constructions of library facilities exceed the minimum requirements of Building Code Standards and Guidelines. Architects, policy analysts, administrators, interior designers, and event planners should take into consideration guidelines and standards that meet the needs of persons with hearing loss. They should anticipate the rise in noise induced hearing loss, in aged related hearing loss from our aging population, and the consequent rise in service requirements of the OPL.

13. Annual Accessibility audits and reports should identify at least one barrier that has been removed to the benefit of persons with hearing loss.

Appendices

1. UD and Barrier Free Access- Guidelines for Persons with Hearing Loss

2. Hearing Loss Symbols of Access

3. Glossary