



Hearing every word at the Statue of Liberty museum

Accessibility was a keyword in the development of the new Statue of Liberty Museum on Liberty Island in New York in 2018/19. Central to that was a comprehensive assistive listening system from Contacta to give visitors with hearing loss the best possible experience of the new attraction.

With 12 exhibits all requiring separate audio playback, our challenge was to design a network of hearing loops in close proximity without creating overspill into the neighbouring display. The Museum wanted to create a listening environment where visitors could move seamlessly from one exhibit to another, hearing the right playback in each area.

The Museum needed the cables to be invisible but didn't want any scoring of the floor and the ceiling was too high to be an option.

Other AV companies had suggested to the Museum that loop cables could be installed in the walls, and at a cheaper cost. We knew that wouldn't be an option because it would create a horizontal magnetic field that would cause a loss of signal for people at head height. Our design team used its bespoke field 3D visualisation software to design a multi-loop system with direct burial cables that could be laid into the fresh concrete as the flooring went down. The design used a combination of small-size perimeter loops and phased array layouts in different directions with cancellation segments to control overspill.



The project was managed by Contacta Inc and installed on-site by our NYC partner Hearing Loop New York.

A live demonstration of the system has been organised on-site prior to installation. This enabled the Museum management to experience the loop and how it would sound. This demonstration allowed HLNY to make some changes to the plans in the field to improve the loops' performance and carry out testing of the final installation to ensure it offered the best possible listening experience. Contacta V7 and V12a loop drivers were concealed and connected to the sound source of the local exhibit playback, creating a seamless transition for the listener between the looped areas across the museum.

The Statue of Liberty Museum is the latest in a series of high-profile installations for Contacta Inc in the USA, which have included MOMA (the Museum of Modern Art) in New York, the Kennedy Space Centre Visitor Attraction in Florida and Graceland in Memphis, Tennessee.