

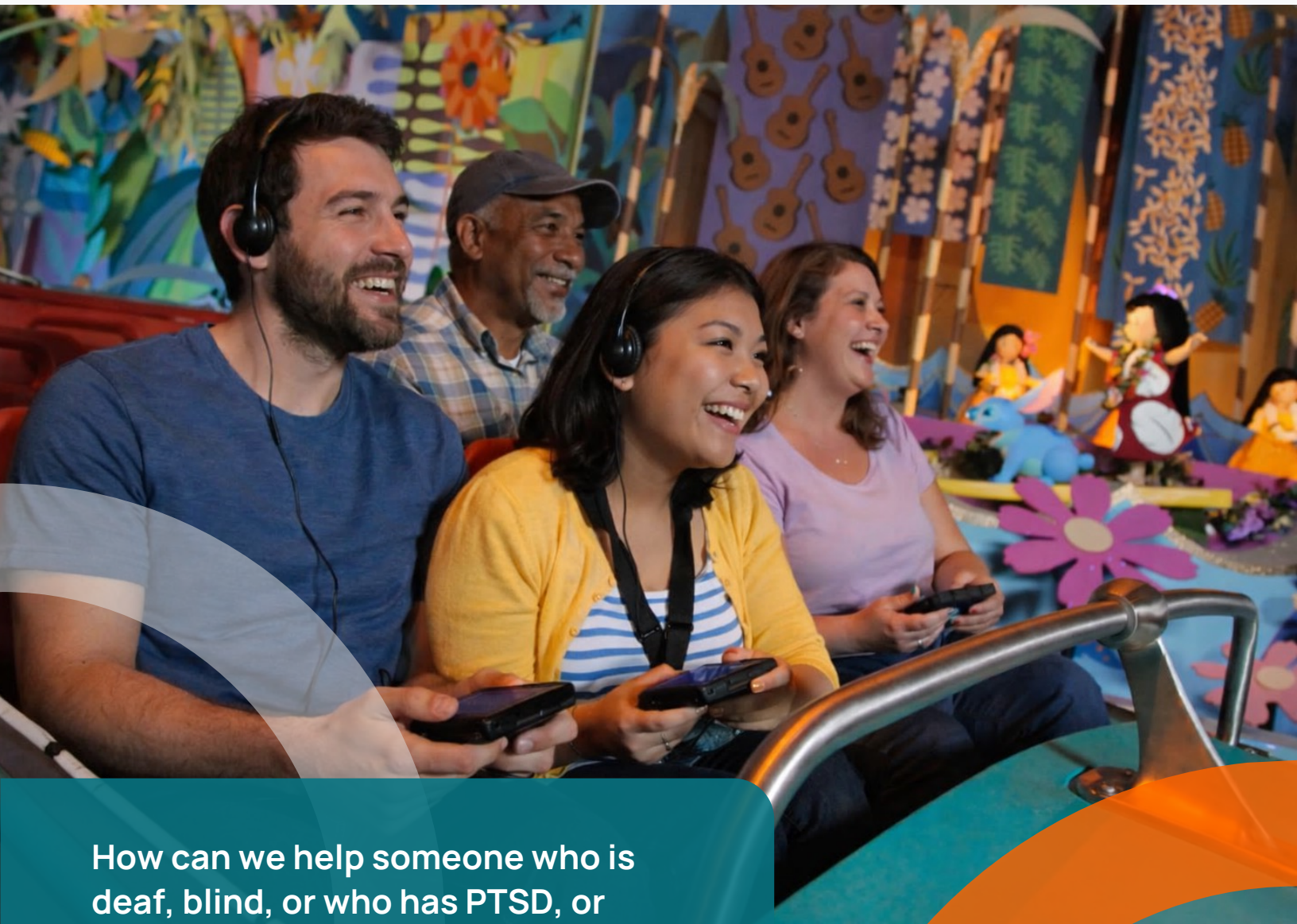
# Opening the Gates to **Digital Accessibility** in Theme Parks



# Remember the first time you visited a theme park?

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Even if you were an adult before you took your first coaster ride, the parks can be magical exciting places full of new experiences. Now, try to imagine that same visit as a person with a sensory or cognitive disability.



**How can we help someone who is deaf, blind, or who has PTSD, or ASD share the same experience?**

The latest advancements in audio-visual technology make theme parks more inclusive and enjoyable for [all](#) visitors.


# Digital Accessibility & the Future of Inclusive Theme Parks

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Since 2010, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has required theme parks to make provisions for the sensory impaired through accessible design. The regulations included things like supporting the hearing impaired with assistive listening devices and making interactive attractions and exhibits accessible by everyone. Even so, most have failed to properly implement these standards due to difficulties with integration, support and management.

Now, beginning in April 2026, updates and enforcement under the ADA will expand accessibility beyond physical infrastructure and into the digital realm.

These emerging standards, known as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA, require websites, mobile applications, wayfinding, and digital content, to support people with sensory, cognitive, and mobility disabilities. While there is a carve out for some items for private business, theme parks are still required to meet the mandates for “effective communications”. **This includes digital content in rides and attractions.** Those who don’t comply risk public lawsuits and fines of up to \$96,000 for a first offense, and up to \$193,000 for each additional offense.

A woman with a cochlear implant is shown in profile, looking towards the left. She is wearing a white t-shirt and holding a smartphone in her right hand. The background is a blurred theme park with a Ferris wheel and roller coaster visible. A large orange curved graphic element is on the right side of the page.

Theme parks, shouldn't think of this as a penalty. It should be considered an opportunity to raise the guest experience and reach a much larger audience

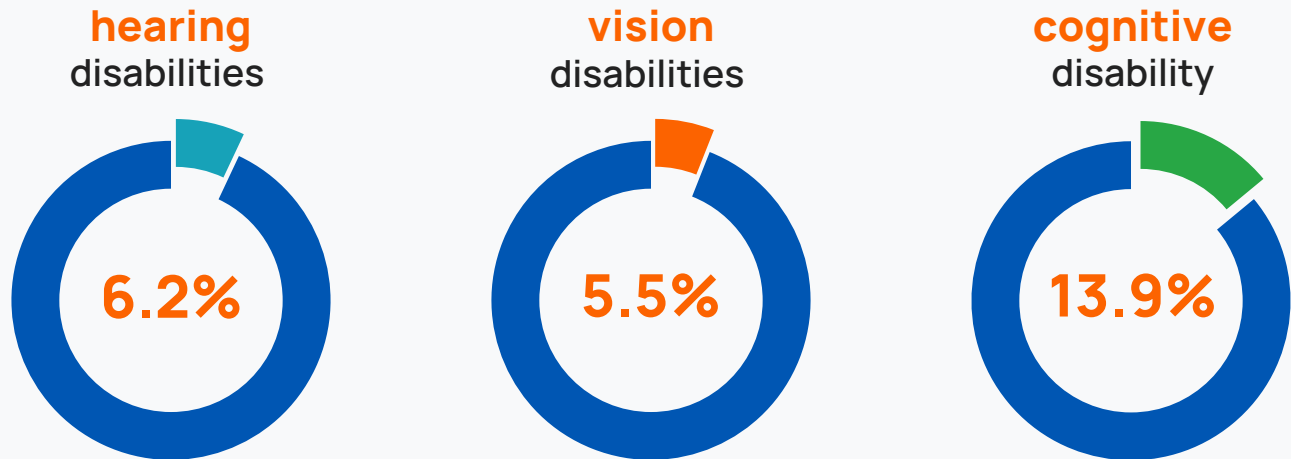
# The Size of the Accessible Audience

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Sensory Disabilities are far more common among potential visitors than many operators realize.

According to U.S. Census and CDC data, almost 14% of Americans, roughly 45 million people, live with a sensory disability, and more than one in four adults reports some form of disability when broader functional categories are included.

## % of U.S. adults have



Because theme parks are complex, highly sensory environments, filled with signage, announcements, entertainment, and navigation challenges, these groups represent a substantial segment of visitors who can benefit from enhanced accessibility technologies.

# The Revenue Opportunity for Theme Parks

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Accessibility is not just a compliance issue; it is a **significant business opportunity**.

Millions of families plan vacations around whether destinations are inclusive and easy to navigate.

**Inclusion expands the addressable market and helps parks tap into a large and loyal segment of travelers seeking accessible entertainment. When guests experience the thrill of digitally accessible rides and attractions, it is the owners and operators that see the magic of increased revenue!**

# Did You Know...



## Digital ADA Services that improve the Guest Experience

For the deaf community, **sign language is their primary and most natural language**, while written English is often a second language. As a result, relying only on closed captioning does not always provide the same level of clarity or comprehension as sign language interpretation.

Sign languages such as **American Sign Language (ASL)** are visual languages with their own grammar, sentence structure, and cultural context that differ significantly from written English.

When integrated into the park's audio-visual systems, software like **Kara Technologies** can provide near real-time sign language and text translation for public address, rides, and shows via on screen AI avatars. These avatars can be created to look like park employees in uniform, or even mascot characters.

Modern accessibility solutions, like **Listen Technologies' ListenWiFi** leverage visitors' own smartphones connected to park Wi-Fi networks. These systems can deliver ADA support services directly to guests in real time, including:

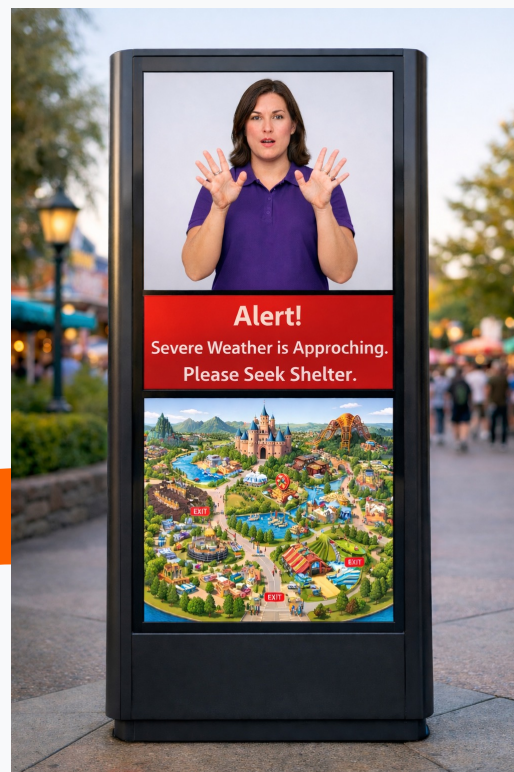
- Assistive listening systems for rides, shows, and announcements
- On-screen sign-language interpretation for live performances or safety briefings
- Closed captions and descriptive video services for visually or hearing-impaired visitors
- Accessible navigation tools and step-by-step wayfinding

Under ADA rules, places of public accommodation such as theme parks must ensure equal access to services, which includes providing auxiliary aids like listening devices, captioning, and audio description.

# Improving Safety and Navigation

Beyond entertainment accessibility, digital ADA tools, when integrated into audio-visual, life safety, and wayfinding, can also improve safety and mobility within the park. Smartphone-based accessibility systems can provide:

- Turn-by-turn accessible route navigation
- Crowd and queue alerts for visitors with sensory sensitivities
- Emergency alerts in multiple accessible formats
- Clear visual instructions for ride and park safety procedures



For guests with sensory or cognitive challenges, predictable information and accessible communication can dramatically reduce stress and confusion, allowing them to move through the park more independently and comfortably

# A Platform for Multilingual Guest Services

An additional advantage of Wi-Fi-based ADA support systems is that the same infrastructure can deliver multilingual content. Once a platform exists to stream captions, audio descriptions, and navigation assistance to mobile devices, it can easily support:

- Near Real-time translation of ride instructions and announcements
- Multilingual captions and subtitles for shows
- Park maps and wayfinding in multiple languages
- On screen sign language translation in multiple languages

This capability significantly improves the experience for international guests, a demographic that represents an important source of revenue for all destination parks. The result has dual benefits: improved accessibility compliance and expanded global appeal.



## Accessibility as the Next Competitive Advantage

As ADA digital compliance regulations continue to evolve, theme parks that embrace inclusive design early will gain a strategic advantage. By integrating assistive listening, sign-language translation, descriptive video, and accessible navigation into smartphone-based platforms, parks can simultaneously meet regulatory requirements, improve safety, enhance guest satisfaction, and unlock new revenue streams.

In the modern attractions industry, accessibility is no longer simply about ramps and elevators. It is about creating a fully inclusive, digitally supported environment where every guest, regardless of ability or language, can fully enjoy the magic of the park!

# Creating the Barrier Free Park

Most theme parks don't fully understand the compliance requirements and how to best support their guests with disabilities. This is where we come in. Our team begins by assessing your park's compliance and creating an integration plan to bring you up to the latest standards.

We design and integrate ADA compliant technology solutions including.

- Audio-Visual Systems
- Wifi Based Assistive Listening
- Sign Language Interpreter Software
- Public Address & Mass Notification Systems
- Closed Caption Support Systems
- Motorized Lift Interactive Displays for height accessibility
- Accessible Wayfinding Displays
- Acoustic Design

We are proud partners of these manufacturers that support people with disabilities...



## To Open the Gates to Digital Accessibility in Theme Parks, contact us...



AV-ation is an Audio-Visual Consultant based just west of DC. Our team members have designed, built, and managed systems for theme parks, museums, planetariums, zoos and international airports around the world.

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Creation Networks is an Audio-Visual Integrator with offices in the SF Bay area, CA and Reno, NV. Our team specializes in designing and installing inclusive technology systems across the United States.

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