

Live Audience Accessibility & Augmentation ('LAAA') Project(s)

CHEAD Innovations in Practice Presentation – 26th February 2025

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Overview

- **Introduce myself**
- **Contextualise accessibility and haptic ICT**
- **Consider the LAAA Projects**
- **Talk about research-based learning**
- **Share on-going research outputs**

Live Audience Accessibility & Augmentation Projects

The LAAA project(s) explored music festival audience's perceptions of liveness, haptic dancefloors and haptic vests regarding accessibility, disability and neurodivergence

Disability in the UK

“An individual can be classified as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on [their] ability to do normal daily activities.” (Equality Act, 2010)

In 2020/21, **24 percent of the UK population** (16 million people) had a “physical or mental health condition or illness that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more.”

(House of Commons Library 2023:1)

“More than a quarter of UK residents will be aged 65 years or over within the next 50 years.”

(Office for National Statistics, 2018)

Some music context...

Music festivals can be conceived of as “**social field configuring events**” ...capable of advancing the global accessibility movement.

(Duignan 2023:3)

The music industry is exclusive, it **discriminates** against pretty much all the protected characteristics of the Equality Act **and** poverty

“73% of disabled respondents felt they had to compromise their health or wellbeing to do their job (vs 52%)”

UK Music Diversity report (2024)

Accessibility refers to “**measures put in place to address participation by those with impairments**”

Finkel, Sharp & Sweeney (2019:2)

Accessible digital futures

Existing ICT augmentations can increase access

Hearing loops which deliver a wireless signal for hearing aids
(Hearing Link Services, 2023)

Time synchronised text in the form of **closed captioning**
(Mahoney 2023)

Sign language interpretation on a big video screen

and...Haptic technologies?

Haptic technologies?

- Haptic ICT deploys tactile sensations to ***“stimulate the sense of touch in a user experience”*** (Mass Challenge 2021)
- Touch is one of the ***“big five”*** senses (Sensory Trust 2020:3)
- Identified by Robertson et al (2015:580) as a likely element of future audience experiences at music festivals.
- ***“Deep-seated correlations”*** between the senses of hearing and touch (Jack et al 2015)
- Benches, gloves, sneakers, **dance floors, Vests**

Initial Work: BEAT BLOCKS & DEAF RAVE

- Live Audience Accessibility & Augmentation ('LAAA') Project
- 5 Live public performances
- 2 DEAF RAVE DJ Workshops
- BEAT BLOCKS Floor installed
- 255 attendees
- 17 businesses + 2 schools support
- 1 Royal Visit



IMAGE: LAAA Royal visit



IMAGE: LAAA 80 Raves Poster

LAAA Project Images



Image: Attendees at LAAA Project using BEAT BLOCK haptic floor CREDIT Matt Jessop



IMAGE: Attendees at LAAA Project DEAF RAVE DJ Workshops CREDIT: Matt Jessop

Live Audience Accessibility & Augmentation Festivals 2 Project



IMAGE: Audience at Deaf Rave Festival 2023
– credit Adrian Bossey



IMAGE: Attendees at Boomtown Fair 2023
Deaf Rave takeover – credit Adrian Bossey

Live Audience Accessibility & Augmentation 2 Beat Blocks Project



IMAGE: National Star attendees on Beat Blocks floor at Cheltenham Jazz Festival – credit Sara Tink



IMAGE: Mother and child on haptic floor during DJ Countryman set at Tropical Pressure – credit Tropical Pressure

Engaging Students

- Nineteen Student Research Assistant roles, supported field tests
- Ten student performers gained experience of performing to public audiences with haptics
- Over three hundred student audience members have experienced the haptic technologies (so far)



IMAGE: Collecting questionnaire responses at Meltdown during Les Amazones d'Afrique – credit Kirk Davies

Research-based learning

- ***“Designed around inquiry-based activities”*** (Griffiths 2004:722)
- Students collected data and facilitating research activities
- *“It definitely helped me plan my dissertation research”*
- *“this event has changed something (and) within me it’s changed my insight ...”*



IMAGE: Student research assistants at Cheltenham Jazz Festival – credit Adrian Bossey

Research outputs

- Three journal articles submitted for review
- Two journal articles being written-up
- Six conference presentations delivered and three planned
- Two new projects in planning
- One student access consultancy start-up and possible future policy impacts ...



IMAGE: Baroness Thangam Debbonaire experiencing the Haptic dancefloor – credit Adrian Bossey

Case Study

- Teaching case study published
- **Bossey, A** (2023) *Do you think ICT enhanced performances are really 'live' music*. In: Routledge International Case Studies in Event Management. Routledge <https://repository.falmouth.ac.uk/id/eprint/4954>
- Please feel free to check it out ...

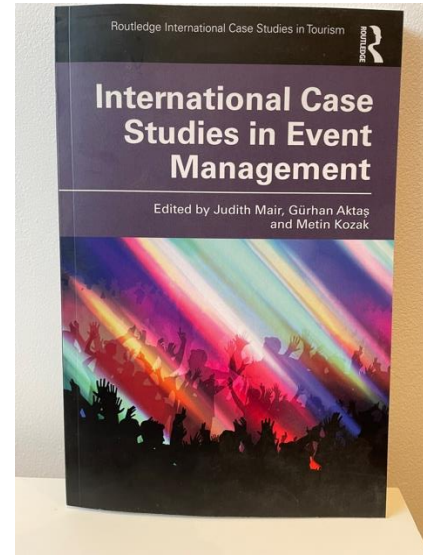


IMAGE: cover of International Case Studies in Event Management – credit Adrian Bossey

Thank You

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University of Brighton

aeme
Association for Events
Management Education



IMAGE: Haptic dancefloor at Tropical Pressure – credit Steve Tanner

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