# Deque DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Accessibility Awareness Lab Guide

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## Overview of the Awareness Lab

The Accessibility Awareness Lab is designed to enable organizations to gain a deeper understanding of how individuals with disabilities interact with technology. This hands-on lab provides participants with the opportunity to explore a range of assistive technologies and related tools, offering valuable insights into the experiences and challenges faced by people with disabilities when accessing computers and websites. Through these interactive activities, participants will:

* Learn how people with disabilities utilize technology and digital content
* Identify barriers caused by inaccessible technology
* Gain perspectives directly from individuals with disabilities

This document serves as a comprehensive overview of the Awareness Lab, offering guidance on how your organization can leverage these resources to replicate our lab model or adapt the concepts to design a custom experience. The lab is structured around multiple stations or tables and is flexible enough to accommodate various physical spaces and budget considerations. It can be implemented as a mobile event or established in a permanent location, depending on organizational needs. You are encouraged to utilize this framework either as a direct blueprint or as inspiration to develop a tailored accessibility awareness initiative that aligns with your objectives.

## What will you find in the zip file?

The following files are provided in the Zip file for your use during the development of your own awareness lab or to better understand the workings of the lab when Deque runs it for your group.

Deque Awareness Lab DIY Guide.docx

(This document.)

Deque DIY Awareness Lab Inventory List.xlsx

(Shopping list for the lab.)

Caption-First Video.mp4 Caption-Second Video.mp4

Hope Quote.pdf Hope1. Loss Of High Frequencies.mp3 Hope2. Loss Of Clarity.mp3 Hope3. Loss Of Weak Sounds.mp3 Hope4. No Hearing Loss.mp3

(For use at the Deaf & Hard of Hearing station.)

Icon\_AI\_x4.png icon\_blindness\_250x250.png icon\_cognative.png icon\_deafness\_512x512.png icon\_disability.jpg icon\_InnovativeSolutions.png icon\_manual\_dexterity\_512x512.png icon\_mobile.png

(Icon files for use with the station stamps.)

Passport\_2025\_a11y.pdf

(To be printed and provided to each participant as they enter the lab.)

Sample A11Y Awareness Lab Room Setup.PDF

(Document providing sample room configurations.)

Sample lab flier 2025.docx

(Sample flier you can customize and use to promote the event.)

Stars Tracing.pdf

(To be printed, 1 per guest, and used at the cognitive station.)

Website Combined Attendee\_a11y.pdf

(document that contains all the pages that are to be printed/laminated and placed (distributed) on each table for participants to view.)

Website Combined Operator\_a11y.pdf

(Document that contains all the pages that are to be printed/laminated and placed on the tables for the volunteers to use to help run the various activities. Also known as operator cards.)

## Staffing for Lab Events

When Deque conducts an accessibility awareness lab event, we typically assign 2–3 employees to oversee the proceedings while partnering with customer volunteers to enhance the team. Additional support (hands) for the tables is highly beneficial, as it enables a smoother experience for all participants. Although not every station requires dedicated personnel, certain stations—such as Cognitive and Braille—operate more effectively when a knowledgeable individual is present to explain concepts and guide activities. For events featuring all nine stations, an optimal staffing level is four to five team members actively engaged at any given time. One individual is generally designated to manage the check-in table, greeting guests, distributing event passports, and providing initial instructions. Volunteers may either be assigned to specific stations that align with their expertise or circulate throughout the event to address emerging needs. To facilitate the Stories station, it is essential to have a person with a disability who is comfortable engaging with attendees, sharing personal experiences, and addressing questions related to disability, assistive technology, and digital accessibility. The stories station is all about conversations.

## Lab Room Logistics

Ensure the event space is easily accessible, with clear signage directing attendees to the designated area. Strong attendance is critical for a successful report to leadership so a well thought out communication plan is essential. Whenever possible, secure a dedicated space to maintain control over lighting, traffic flow, and the overall environment. Events have also been effective in large cafeterias when a dedicated section is provided at one end. Remain vigilant about potential distractions and ambient noise that could impact the participant experience.

To accommodate all lab stations, a room size of 800 to 1,000 square feet is recommended for optimal flow and comfortable table spacing. For smaller groups or limited locations, stations may be combined to maximize available space creatively. The ideal capacity is approximately 40 participants per hour. Engagement levels will vary: some individuals will explore every station and activity, others may selectively participate, and some may prefer to observe. All forms of participation are encouraged, as each attendee stands to benefit from the event.

## Shopping List

The Excel spreadsheet included contains the list of products we used to build our lab. Substitution of products should be expected as availability continuously fluctuates. We tried to provide links to unique products as needed but these resources can quickly change. Use the spreadsheet as a guide and be flexible with your selections. Technology rapidly changes so we are not recommending any model phone, tablet or laptop because in most cases entry level products are all you need to provide a great experience.

## Station Notes

1. **Registration Table**

Normally located at the entrance to the event space. It is where the participant first encounters the lab. A brief introduction to what they will find should be given and then a passport (see files) or some type of flyer to hand them in is beneficial to guide them around and give them something to take away from the event as a reminder.

1. **AI Table**

The activities require the use of a laptop (on table) that we demonstrate our Axe Assistant AI Bot for digital accessibility knowledge. This allows the participant to ask any question about accessibility and see what answer they get. They also have a couple of other activities they can do using software on their phone.

1. **Braille Table Teaches the participant how to write their name in Braille. Involved exercise that is best handled with a dedicated volunteer to help. One of the more frequented tables. If there is a Braille reader on the lab team they will get asked to proof what the participant wrote.**
2. **Cognitive** A real brain stimulator that really gets people thinking differently. Best run with a dedicated volunteer to help manage the process.
3. **Deaf and Hard of Hearing** Simulates being hard of hearing as well as what it is like watching videos that are not captioned using a laptop.
4. **Innovation** A wide variety of fun and interesting products to look at that promote thought. Games, toys and daily personal care items are displayed to provide awareness.
5. **Low Vision & Blind Table** This table has several activities from vision simulation sheets to peruse as well as goggles that simulate vision conditions. A laptop running the NVDA screen reader (free) to download at <https://nvaccess.org>. allows user to experience using a computer with no vision.
6. **Mobile** Allows users to try a screen reader on either Android or iOS. Simple exercises demonstrate touch screen usage by people with no sight.
7. **Motor** Demonstrates how it is to run a iPad without the use of your hands (switch control). It can be tricky to set up using Bluetooth depending on the model switch purchased.
8. **Stories Table** This is the easiest table to set up since it just has a sign and a stamp. The key is that there needs to be a person running it during the event and the person needs to have a disability. This station can easily be removed if no volunteer is available.
9. **Speech Table (**Retired Station) This information is provided as a potential option should it align with your needs. Previously, we offered a speech input station utilizing Dragon Dictate software on a laptop, paired with a high-quality microphone. The activity involved users entering a simple line of text through the dictation software. In quiet, controlled environments, this exercise proved effective and provided valuable insights for lab participants. However, we recommend implementing this only if a quiet setting can be ensured. Most Deque labs, particularly during peak times, tend to be busy and noisy, with up to 40 individuals engaging with various exhibits simultaneously. In these conditions, we found it challenging for speech input to function reliably as an interactive experience.

## Stamps and Stickers

One purpose of the passport is to gamify the activity by collecting stamps or for some groups unique stickers. We use the stamp method, but both approaches will work. Here are some instructions on how to find the stamp products we use.

1. Go to <https://www.rubberstamps.net/>
2. Search for Trodat printy 4924 self-inking stamps.
3. Ink Colors used previously

AI (Red), Blind (Blue), Cognitive (Purple),

Deaf (Monarch Orange), Innovations (Sunflower), Mobile (Bluebird), Motor (Green), Accessibility Stories (Vibrant Fuchsia), Braille has no ink stamp.

This is just one company that makes this type of stamp product. The colors are not required but add interest to the activities.

## Final Thoughts

We trust this guide and accompanying materials will support your efforts to foster disability awareness and advance digital accessibility within your organization. Should you wish to have Deque facilitate the Awareness Lab or provide similar training at your site, please contact us through our website for further assistance.