# Trial report: auXala – audio streaming for events

In early November, I had the opportunity to try out auXala, an Austrian audio streaming solution for events. Alexander Drechsel had kindly organised this trial and explored the platform with me while Nathan Aviner from auXala was there to support and guide us through the technology. Susana Rodríguez also joined later during her interpreting break.

It should be noted that auXala is not currently a remote interpreting solution but a service that is designed to replace conventional sound transmission and PA technology (i.e. infrared and RF) at conferences and similar events. It can therefore be used for the sound in just one language, but also for interpreting from booths on site. Listeners will use their own (mobile) devices to listen to speakers and/or interpreters via auXala, which incidentally is not an app but a website. They will be given an event-specific URL and then listen via any modern browser. So auXala supports BYOD ("bring your own device") sound transmission at events, and by default does this via the cloud, not local Wi-Fi like other solutions (e.g. Linguali) do. This means that strictly speaking you can listen to an event from anywhere provided you have been given the link (which can be password-protected), but as there is no video feed, remote interpreting possibilities are limited. In the backend, there are two different tools to use: the auXala Dashboard and the auXala Ingest. The Ingest needs to be installed on your computer (Mac or Windows) and is used to select which sound input goes into the system. (This is where a local sound system or other sound interface can be connected.) The Dashboard then allows you to choose which channels to interpret *into*, and you can also choose between three different sound quality levels. (It could be called the interpreter console, but it is quite different from what we as interpreters are used to, so I think that is not the appropriate term to refer to it.) For incoming sound, the interpreters will simply use the listening interface. It is worth pointing out, however, that the ingest software is not primarily designed to be operated by interpreters but only by the local technicians. Interpreters would typically still be using a conventional console. Nonetheless, auXala also provides the option of replacing consoles for scenarios in which interpreters would interpret directly into laptops with the software installed. So both options are available, which again differentiates auXala from solutions such as Linguali.
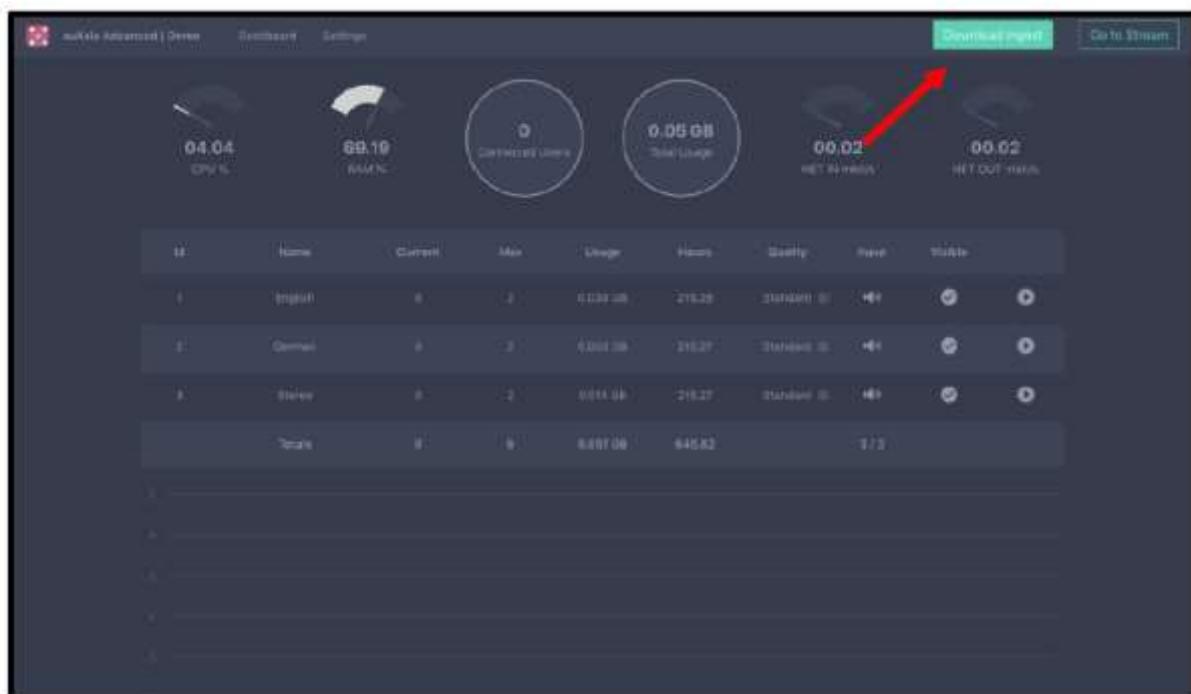
During our session, we played around with the solution and in particular the Dashboard. It really did not take long to get used to the features and settings. One of the most important points for us obviously was assessing the sound quality. We took turns in speaking, listening and mock interpreting and found the sound was of sufficient quality, comparable to some of the RSI platforms out there. This does not mean that we are now in a position to assess the actual ease of use of the system in a real interpreting scenario. However, according to the company, the system has been used at at least one real conference where interpreters were working from their booths using auXala. The company claims that this worked seamlessly and provided a perfect solution for the event in question. It would be interesting to verify such claims by trying the system in a real scenario (possibly in parallel to traditional conference gear), but my initial impression is that it is intuitive and glitch-free indeed.

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