

## **5 Reasons Audiobook Sales Are Booming And How You Can Be Part of This Growth**

Audiobooks are a hot ticket these days - currently the fastest growing piece of the publishing industry, audiobooks are on everyone's mind and in everyone's ears. To monitor that trend, the [Audio Publishers Association](#) (APA) completes crucial pieces of research each year to track growth and provide key business guidance for members. The annual Sales Survey of members provides important information about unit and dollar sales along with the number of titles published. Some incredible leaps in production are also tracked via this survey. In 2010, the APA members reported 6,200 audiobooks produced. By 2015, that number had exploded to 35,944, and in 2020, *that* number nearly doubled to 71,502 new audiobooks. Sales revenue in 2020 was up 12%, the ninth consecutive year that audiobook sales revenue has shown double-digit growth.

The 2021 APA Consumer Survey completed by Edison Research shows corresponding data that audiobook listening remained strong and stable despite the pandemic. The most significant change in listener behavior was the shift in listening location from the car to the home as American commuter patterns were so dramatically affected by pandemic stay-at-home orders. In the current survey, 55% of listeners say they listened most often at home, compared with 43% the prior year; and only 30% of listeners cited the car as their main listening location in 2020 as compared with 41% the previous year. Key corresponding data from Edison Research's Share of Ear® report, which tracks daily listening habits for Americans 13+, noted that the overall share of time spent listening to audiobooks has grown 60% since 2017.

*How and why is that happening?*

### **Growth Reason 1: Technology Advancements**

Production technology improvements have certainly helped: digital editing, email distribution of manuscripts, use of tablets instead of hard-copy scripts (no need to edit out page-turn noises), and proliferation of home studios for narrators have all shortened the time needed to create audiobook products and reduced the cost of production.

### **Growth Reason 2: Greater Sales Opportunities**

The digital sales format has also been a big influence. Audiobooks are now easier to purchase and store than in the days of cassettes and CDs. Portability, the ability to multi-task, and the ability to listen wherever you want are the top three reasons cited in the APA's 2019 consumer survey for why people enjoy the format. As digital devices such as smartphones are now ubiquitous, audiobook access is simple and convenient.

### **Growth Reason 3: Rising Social Media Mentions**

Social media chatter and publicity about audiobooks are also on the rise. Authors are talking about the format, as are professional audiobook narrators (who have their own rabid followers), and even production studios are part of the story – helping to push titles with their own social footprint. The cross-talk between authors, narrators, and studios about their titles is an exciting development and helps each appeal to a wider audience. On top of this we've also seen an increase in celebrity interest and participation.

#### **Growth Reason 4: Creative Marketing**

This social media chatter encourages publishers, authors, and narrators to get creative with marketing – many are incorporating video and author interviews about the making of audiobooks into their campaigns. And during June of 2021 (June Is Audiobook Month!), the APA worked with 24 Instagram influencers who promoted audiobooks with giveaways to their nearly 2 million followers, reaching untold numbers of new audiobook listeners. More social media presence, more marketing, and more support from big names means more sales and more sales means more production. Which brings us right back to where we started.

#### **Growth Reason 5: Success Breeds Success**

Sales keep increasing – if the industry made more titles and consumers didn't respond with more purchases then we wouldn't continue to see these same increases in production.

#### *How Can You Become a Part of This High-Growth Format?*

Ask your publisher or agent or editor about the options to get your book in audio. Check out [AudioPub.org](https://audiopub.org) to learn more about the Audio Publishers Association – the [Getting Started](#) page provides some links to producers and distributors if you would like to publish your own title in audio. Visit one of the many online audiobook retailers (including your independent bookstore) and listen to an audiobook – learn what all the fuss is about. One thing we know for sure... once you listen to an audiobook, you'll know exactly why audiobook consumption is growing.