

9 Tips for Producing Your Own Audiobook with a Do-It-Yourself Platform

Have you read about the explosion in audiobook sales and production? Do you want your title available in the audiobook format? Wondering how to make it happen? One option is a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) audiobook platform. DIY audiobook platforms bring together producers, narrators, rights holders and digital audiobook distributors, so you can drive the creation of your audiobook and get it out there for the public to consume. The two major DIY platforms, where you can both produce and distribute your audiobook are [ACX.com](https://www.acx.com/) and [Findaway Voices](https://www.findawayvoices.com/). These two options differ in process and distribution network so you'll want to research each and determine which best matches your project. Get your script ready, prep your budget, find the best platform for you, and dive right in.

What each of these platforms offer is the ability to connect you to audiobook professionals. You can get auditions for your titles to help you decide who the best narrator might be, and get help delivering the product in the format necessary for the variety of audio vendors in the market. The market continues to grow and change – let those who know how to do this work help you succeed!

Things to keep in mind when doing it yourself:

- 1) Make sure your script is final and ready to record. Changes to the text after production begins can slow down the process. You may find that your narrator is also a proofer of sorts. Reading text aloud often reveals small errors in the manuscript that you will want to address, so use that information to ensure all your products are at their best.
- 2) Be aware of the timeline – it generally takes 4-6 weeks for production and another 2 weeks to get the title live on the sites used by the distribution network you have chosen. So prepare for the process to take 8-12 weeks.
- 3) Have your budget range pre-determined and be open to the multitude of options within that range. Costs are estimated Per Finished Hour (PFH). PFH can be calculated based on word count. 9000 words per hour is used as the average rate. The final run time depends on the pace of the narrator's reading and the style of the work, so can vary quite a bit.
- 4) Know how you want to structure your title – should it be read by one narrator or multiple narrators? Male or female? What age are the characters? Does the narrator need proficiency with key accents? Narrators are skilled at playing a wide variety of characters of all ages and genders. If your book is third-person perspective you should expect that one talented narrator can, in fact, do it all!
- 5) Be excited about the casting process. Listen to samples of audiobooks and read reviews - both good and bad, both in your genre/category and not - to get a sense for what consumers of the audiobooks like and don't like. Do you have a particular voice in mind, and is that person or people available on the platform you are using? Will they fit into your budget? Who else is out there that could bring your audio to life? You might work with a producer who offers you auditions to choose from or you might audition narrators directly. Be open to the possibilities.
- 6) Narrators are freelance professionals. An audition is not a guarantee they will get the work so be respectful of their time. Audition pieces should be short. To receive the best audition, choose text that showcases the book and includes dialogue, a scene with multiple characters interacting, or other complex elements so you get the right feel for the narrator's voice with your text.

- 7) Communication is key. Remember: you're collaborating with another creative professional to publish your audiobook. Set your narrator up for success by discussing production dates and creative choices at the outset, and make yourself available to answer questions and review the audio they produce in a timely fashion.
- 8) Audiobook artwork is a different size than ebook art, so be prepared to create a square option (3000x3000) as a cover. Some authors "letter-box" existing ebook art by putting it into a colored square to achieve the correct size, but it is preferable to create a brand new square version of the art.
- 9) Once your title is complete you will be responsible for marketing it – send it out to bloggers and publications to get it reviewed, talk about it on your social media, advertise it in audiobook-centric places, make the purchase options available on your website. Leverage your audio sample and create "audio trailers" to share. Mention your audiobook wherever and whenever you talk about the title. Audio is just another way for your title to reach consumers, schools and libraries – make sure everyone knows the format exists based on the distribution network you have chosen and who that targets.

Audiobooks are a growing format and offering an audio version of your title is a great way to increase your audience. There are lots of choices out there for making it happen – whether you do it yourself or sell the rights to an audio publisher who will manage the process. Keep up to date about industry trends and tips for getting started by checking out the [Audio Publishers Association website](#).