



Audio Publishers Association

## A HISTORY OF AUDIOBOOKS

**1931:** The American Foundation for the Blind and the Library of Congress Book for the Blind Project establish the Talking Book Program.

**1932:** The first test audio recordings include a chapter from Helen Keller's *Midstream* and Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven*.

**1934:** The first recordings are made for the Talking Book Program and include parts of *The Bible*, *The Declaration of Independence*, and Shakespeare's plays.

**1938:** The Reading for the Blind (later renamed Learning Ally) is founded.

**1952:** Caedmon Records is formed in New York and is a pioneer in the audiobook industry.

**1955:** Listening Library is founded and is the first to distribute audiobooks to libraries and schools.

**1963:** The cassette tape is invented.

**1970s:** Libraries start carrying audiobooks.

**1985:** *Publishers Weekly* identifies 21 audiobook publishers including Caedmon, Recorded Books, Books on Tape, Harper and Row, and Random House.

**1980s:** Bookstores start to display audiobooks on bookshelves instead of in separate displays.

1986: The Audio Publishers Association is created.

1986: The Book of the Month Club and The Literary Guild start offering its members audiobooks.

1987: *Publishers Weekly* starts a regular column to cover the audiobook industry.

1992: *Audiofile Magazine* is launched.

1994: The APA establishes the term "audiobook" as the industry standard.

1996: The first Audie Awards ceremony for audiobooks takes place at the Chicago Hyatt Regency.

1996: The first Audio Publishers Association Convention (APAC) takes place.

1997: Audible debuts the first digital audio player.

2003: Audible's deal with Apple marks an increase in public awareness as audiobooks became available on iTunes.

2003-2004: CDs replace cassettes as the preferred medium for listening to audiobooks.

2005: Preloaded Digital Players, an all-in-one audiobook format, are created.

2008: Digital downloads surpass CDs as the most popular audiobook format.

2013: *The New York Times Book Review* begins their twice yearly audiobook issues.

2014: The Deyan Institute of Vocal Artistry and Technology (DIVA) opened, the world's first school for teaching the art and technology of audiobook production.

**General Inquiries**

For general questions about the industry or more information on APA's programs please contact APA Headquarters by email: [info@audiopub.org](mailto:info@audiopub.org) or by phone: 215-564-2729.

**Press Inquiries**

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