



Audio Publishers Association

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## *AUDIOBOOKS CONTINUE THEIR MARKET RISE WITH 16% GROWTH IN SALES*

### **AMERICANS ARE LISTENING TO MORE AUDIOBOOKS THAN EVER**

June 18, 2020, New York, NY – Audiobook sales and consumption continues to grow according to recently released results from the Audio Publishers Association’s annual sales survey conducted by independent research firm InterQ and their annual consumer survey conducted by Edison Research. Based on information from responding publishers, U.S. audiobook sales in 2019 totaled 1.2 billion dollars, up 16% from the previous year, with a corresponding increase in units. This continues the EIGHT-year trend of double-digit revenue growth.

“Eight straight years of double-digit revenue growth is simply phenomenal,” says Chris Lynch, co-chair of the APA’s Research Committee and President & Publisher of Simon & Schuster Audio. “Even more encouraging are the continued upward trends in consumer listening behavior – both in how many titles they listen to per year and in their finding more time in their day to listen.”

In addition to the sales increase, Edison Research’s national survey of American audiobook listeners ages 18 and up found that the average number of audiobooks listened to per year increased to 8.1 in 2020, up from 6.8 in 2019. The most popular audiobook genre continues to be Mysteries/Thrillers/Suspense. 57% of frequent audiobook listeners are under the age of 45; this is up from 51% in 2019. And audiobook publishers reported that there were 60,303 new titles produced in 2019, an 18% increase over 2018.

Other notable findings from the surveys include:

- Audiobook consumers place a high priority on quality of narration. Non-fiction and fiction listeners alike prefer a professional voice actor to the author as a narrator.
- For the third year in a row, more than 50% of audiobook listeners say they are making “new” time to listen to audiobooks and consuming more books.
- A clear market for shorter audiobooks exists, with 43% of audiobook purchasers saying they would buy an audiobook that is one to three hours long.
- The car remains the #1 overall place for listening, but the home remains the place where people listen most often.
- 60% of respondents own a smart speaker, and 46% of smart speaker owners have used it to listen to an audiobook (up from 31% in 2019).
- 37% of respondents say they listen to Mysteries/Thrillers/Suspense the most, up from 27% in 2018 and 31% in 2019.

### **How the Edison Research Consumer Study Was Conducted**

The study is a national survey of Americans age 18 years and older who have ever listened to a complete audiobook. Edison Research completed 1044 online interviews in January/February 2020. The data was weighted to the audiobook market, as measured by The Infinite Dial, a nationally representative survey of the American media landscape conducted by Edison Research and Triton Digital.

### **How the APA Sales Survey Was Conducted**

This survey was conducted by InterQ Research in the spring of 2020 on behalf of the Audio Publishers Association. The purpose of the survey was to gather industry sales data, including gross sales, sales by various formats, and channel discounts. This is a national survey of Audio Publishers Association members who publish audiobooks. Twenty-four publishers provided data, including Audible Inc., Hachette Audio, HarperCollins, Macmillan, Penguin Random House, and Simon & Schuster.

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### **[About the Audio Publishers Association](#)**

Formed in 1986, the Audio Publishers Association (APA) is a not-for-profit trade association that advocates the common, collective business interests of audio publishers. The APA serves as a networking, educational and information forum for its members; delivers programs, services and awards that serve the common business interests for its members; and promotes policies and activities that accelerate audiobook awareness and industry growth.

### **[About Edison Research](#)**

Edison Research conducts survey research and provides strategic information in over 50 countries for clients including AMC Theatres, Amazon, Apple, The Brookings Institute, Facebook, The Gates Foundation, Google, the U.S. International Broadcasting Bureau, Oracle, Pandora, The Pew Research Center, Samsung, Spotify, and SiriusXM Radio. The national tracking study The Infinite Dial® and the syndicated Share of Ear® are two of the most widely cited studies in the audio space. Edison is also the leading podcast research company in the world and has conducted research for NPR, Slate, ESPN, PodcastOne, WNYC Studios, and many more companies in the podcasting space.

### **[About InterQ Research](#)**

InterQ Research is a full-service market research firm, based in San Francisco, CA. Founded in 2015, the firm is women-owned and specializes in qualitative and quantitative research. InterQ has worked with some of the world's leading brands, across sectors that include automotive, airlines, and technology.