

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 (completed by Management Practice Inc since 2013 for 2012 data) provides important information about unit and dollar sales along with the number of titles published. Some incredible leaps in production are tracked via this survey. In 2011, the APA members reported 7,237 audiobooks produced. In 2012, that number had more than doubled to 16,309, and by 2016, that number had more than tripled to 50,937 new audiobooks. Sales revenue in 2016 was up 18.2% over 2015, the third year in a row that audiobook sales revenue has grown by nearly 20%.

The 2017 APA consumer survey completed by Edison Research shows corresponding data that audiobook adoption is on the rise with more than 67 million people in the US listening to audiobooks each year (that is a 22% increase over the number of people reporting listening just 2 years prior).

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. Portability and the ability to listen wherever you are being one of the top three reasons cited in the 2017 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 about the making of audiobooks into their campaigns. In fact, during the fall of 2016, to support their members and increase the social media presence about audiobooks, the APA launched the #loveaudiobooks video campaign where big name authors and audiobook fans such as Whoopi Goldberg and Stephen King talked about their love of the format. 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 sales then no doubt 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 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 your local bookstore or library 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.