



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 or by phone: 215-564-2729.

Press Inquiries

Media inquiries, please contact press@audiopub.org.