

AUDIOBOOKS 101:

A How-To for Indie Authors and Rights Holders

SEATTLE WORLDCON 2025

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14TH 1:30-2:30 PM (PDT)
Indie Publishing; Streaming; Virtual / Room 443-444

Audiobook Lingo:

ACX- The Audiobook Creation Exchange- A matchmaking service for audiobook producers and rights holders, as well as a distributor for Audible and iTunes

Audible- Amazon's audiobook retailer/ app

Audio Drama- A fictionalized story acted out through an audio medium (usually an audiobook, podcast, or radio production) with a full cast of actors playing various characters, and a full range of sound effects

Audiobook Retailer- A service or app that provides audiobooks. For ex: Audible, Chirp, LibroFM, Downpour, etc. May also include library services/ apps (Libby/ Hoopla)

DAW- Digital Audio Workstation. Computer software for editing audio

Dual Narration- a style of narration where each narrator voices all of the characters as well as the narrative voice in particular sections of the audiobook (usually alternating chapters)

Duet Narration- a style of narration where each narrator voices only particular characters, for instance, all of the male voices or female voices

Distributor- in the audiobooks world, this is a company that provides the audiobooks to retailers. Examples are ACX, Voices by InAudio (formerly Findaway by Spotify) Authors Republic, and Spoken Realms. Some large publishers have their own distribution department.

Exclusive Audiobook Distribution- Generally refers to ACX/Audible's exclusive partnership plan which provides incentives for keeping audiobooks exclusive to Audible and iTunes

Multicast Audiobook- An audiobook narrated by 3 or more narrators

Narrator/producer: an individual that acts as both the narrator and producer of an audiobook, and is responsible for providing finished (mastered and proofed), retail-ready audio files

Pickups- Corrections to audio narration that require re-recording.

Producer (audio)- The individual or company responsible for coordinating an audiobook project and producing the final (finished) audio files

Proofing/ Proof Listening A stage of audiobook production where a "proofer" listens to the audio and follows along with the text to make sure the words match and there are no editing errors

Publisher (audio)- The rights holder of an audiobook. It can be a company or an indie author

Per Finished Hour (PFH)- Payment based on running time of the finished audio files

Rights Holder (RH)- The audiobook Publisher. It can be a company or an indie author

Royalty Share- An ACX agreement where Audible gets 60% of sales, the RH earns 20%, and the producer earns 20%

Royalty Split- any agreement where the RH and the producer split the sales royalties. (Includes ACX Royalty Share)

Royalty Share Plus- An ACX agreement where the RH pays a Per Finished Hour (PFH) rate on top of a royalty share agreement. The PFH generally covers post production expenses

SAG-AFTRA- Trade union that represents actors, including audiobook narrators

Panelists:

Rebecca H. Lee (Moderator)

Rebecca has been narrating audiobooks since 2014, and works out of her home studio in Seattle. She works with major audiobook publishers as well as indie authors.

becksvoice.com

Alex Kingsley

Alex (they/them) is an author and audio producer, and co-founder of new media company Strong Branch Productions

alexkingsley.wordpress.com

Gabrielle de Cuir

Gabrielle has narrated and produced hundreds of audiobook titles, specializing in fantasy and humor, and those requiring extensive foreign language and accent skills.

skyboatmedia.com

Kim Iverson Headlee

Kim Iverson Headlee has been a critically acclaimed author since 1999 (Dawnflight, Simon & Schuster) and a student of Arthurian lore for more than half a century.

Kim Headlee/ Kim Iverson Headlee on Amazon

Shiromi Arserio

Shiromi Arserio is an award-winning audiobook narrator with over 300 titles. She works with both indie authors as well as all the major publishers.

shiromispeaks.com

Stefan Rudnicki

Serious careers in academics, stage direction and film converged for Stefan when he joined Dove Audio in 1994, resulting in his subsequently producing, publishing or narrating approximately six thousand audiobooks.

skyboatmedia.com/the-golden-voice

Additional Resources:

This book has an entire section devoted to audiobooks, written from the perspective of a rights holder:

[The Business of Writing](#)

Practical Insights for Independent, Hybrid, and Traditionally Published Authors

By Kim Iverson Headlee

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E-book ISBN-10: 0-9971202-6-6

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Quick Tips and How-to Videos:

Audiobook Tip of the Week (For Authors)

Subscribe to the [Youtube Channel](#) : @RebeccaHLee

Or sign up for the e-mail list at becksvoice.com/production

Handy Document on the General Process:

Paige Riesenfeld's Free How-To for Indie Authors Guide

tinyurl.com/praudiobookproduction

Audiobook Casting Services:

ACX (acx.com)

Authors Republic [Narrator Marketplace](#): (AuthorsRepublic.com)

Audiobook Distributors:

ACX (acx.com) (Audible and Itunes Only)

Authors Republic (AuthorsRepublic.com)

Spotify for Authors (Authors.Spotify.com)

InAudio (VoicesByInAudio.com)

Sound effects (for Audio Dramas):

- Freesound.org
- FilmCow's sound library
- The BBC sound library
- Yellowstone National Park sound library for any nature sounds