



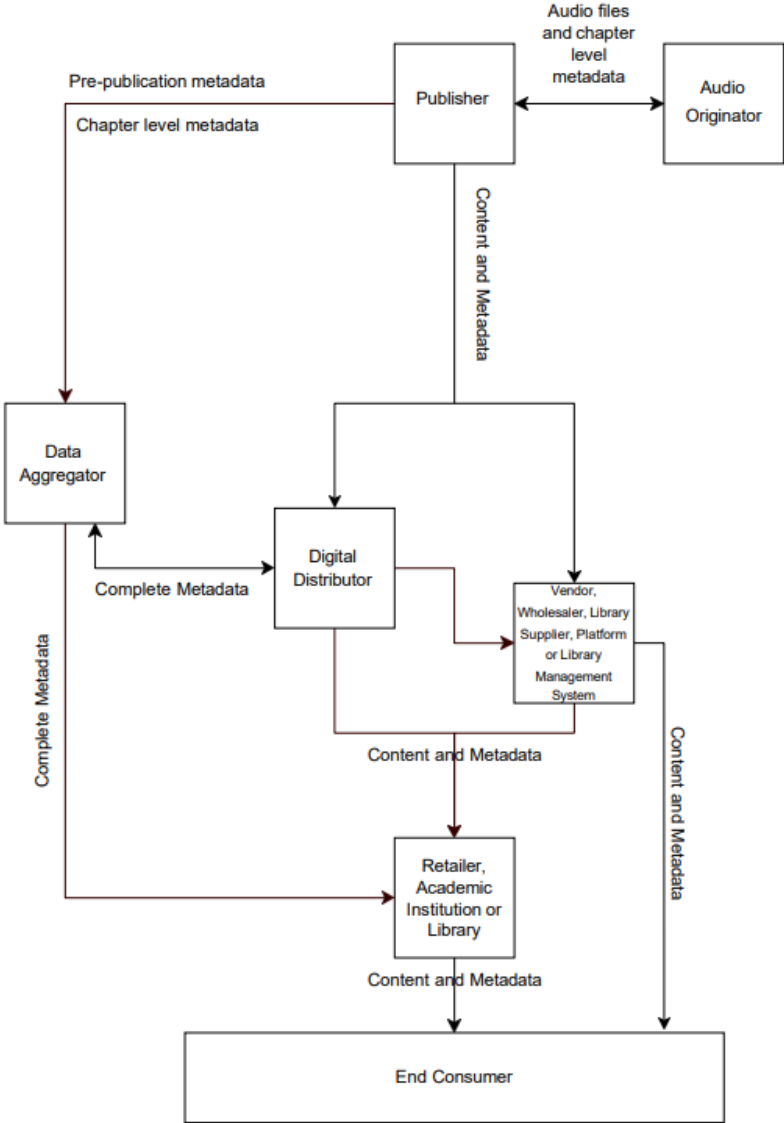
# **BIC Digital Audiobook Best Practice**

## **Current High Level Supply Chain Workflow**

Prepared by Stephen Long  
November 2022 Version 1.0

Copyright © 2023 Book Industry Communication Ltd.





The purpose of these notes is to provide some context to the Workflow Diagram. Please note that not all workflows will exist at the same time. They are dependent on the stakeholders and the specific trading requirements.

‘Audio Originator’ generated content includes audio files and chapter level metadata. ‘AI’ or ‘Artificial Intelligence’ has not been differentiated on the workflow. ‘AI’ is simply another form of ‘Audio Originator’.

The Workflow Diagram does not distinguish the different audio file types (such as WAV) or metadata formats (such as ONIX). Files may or may not conform to recognised industry standards. Standards compliance will drive levels of automation.

‘Metadata’ can include cover images and supplementary files.

The movement of sales data has been excluded from the diagram. This project is focused solely on the flows of digital audiobook content and metadata.

Updates to content and metadata will follow similar paths to those on the diagram, so have not been replicated.

For simplicity and clarity, the workflow does not include the various feedback loops. The primary ones are listed below and can be bi- directional:

- ‘End consumer’ to ‘Retailer’, ‘Academic Institution’, or ‘Library’.
- ‘End Consumer’ to ‘Vendor’, Wholesaler’, ‘Library Supplier’, ‘Platform’ or ‘Library Management System’.
- ‘Retailer’, ‘Academic Institution’ or ‘Library’ to ‘Digital Distributor’.
- ‘Digital Distributor’, ‘Vendor’, ‘Wholesaler’, ‘Library Supplier’, ‘Platform’ or ‘Library Management System’ to ‘Publisher’.
- ‘Audio Originator’ to ‘Publisher’.
- ‘End Consumer’ to ‘Publisher’.

**Stakeholder Roles:** These roles are multipurpose. Their place in the workflow is dependent on the supply chain model and the other stakeholders involved.

**Academic Institution:** An educational establishment dedicated to scholarly learning.

**Academic Supplier:** A supplier of audiobooks to academic institutions.

**Audio Originator:** The creator of the audiobook. The source material is usually a book (published or pre-publication). However, other sources can include podcasts, radio and television programmes or specially produced, straight to audio, material.

**Data Aggregator:** An organisation that collects audiobook product metadata. This is validated against recognised industry standards and made available on a commercial basis to other interested parties.

**Digital Distributor:** An organisation responsible for the delivery of audiobook files to libraries, retailers, wholesalers, academic institutions and online platforms on behalf of publishers. The publishers are not necessarily owned by (or own) the digital distributors.

**End Consumer:** Someone who listens to audiobooks on CD, via digital download or a digital stream. The assumption is that the end consumer pays per download, stream or CD (or has a subscription to an audiobook service (paid or unpaid)).

**Library:** A collection of books and related items such as newspapers, periodicals, audio and visual materials. These collections are either physically housed in rooms or buildings or increasingly curated online. The collections are made available for use or borrowing by library patrons – members of the public or members of a specific business, institution or group, dependent on the library's purpose (public, corporate, academic).

**Library Management System:** A system used to manage library acquisitions, cataloguing, loans and borrowings.

**Library Supplier:** A wholesaler which specialises in supplying library and sometimes school customers. Library suppliers usually provide selection or bundling of suitable products and cataloguing services.

**Platform:** A digital service making audiobooks available to consumers.

**Publisher:** A business responsible for bringing audiobooks to the market.

**Reseller:** An intermediary retail organisation such as a wholesaler, library supplier or retailer that makes digital audiobooks available to consumers on behalf of publishers. Done on a business to business or business to consumer basis.

**Retailer:** An organisation selling goods, such as digital audiobooks, to the end consumer. A retailer can sell through physical ('bricks and mortar') bookshops or may operate a direct sales operation (such as a book club). Increasingly, retailers sell both physical and digital products through online stores.

**Vendor:** An organisation offering a product or service for sale or loan on a commercial basis. The vendor fulfils roles in different supply chain models. These include direct to consumer, direct to government and business to business.

**Wholesaler:** In the book industry, a business that has the attributes of a distributor and a retailer.

[A comprehensive glossary relating to digital audiobooks is available here.](#)