



BIC Digital Audiobook Best Practice

Glossary

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This document is one of a set that Book Industry Communication has produced. Together, these provide a detailed standards and best practice overview of the digital audiobook supply chain.

BIC strongly recommends that you download and read the full set of documents. These currently comprise:

1. Supply Chain Diagram
2. Glossary, including
 - a. Terminology
 - b. Organisations
 - c. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Metadata Requirements
4. Good File Management
5. FAQs
6. EDItX Business Case
7. Sustainability Checklist
8. Accessibility Checklist

A single document including all of the above is also available.

The Glossary has been updated to include audiobook related businesses (pages 14 - 18) as well as a list of roles and responsibilities (page 19 onwards) in separate sections.

Inclusion of named retailers, resellers, platforms or service providers in this document does not confer any special status. For further information about individual businesses, please contact the businesses directly.

Please be aware that many of the terms in this glossary are not digital audiobook specific (nor are they necessarily ONIX specific). They have a meaning in the wider book industry that may differ in some specific ways to that in the audiobook supply chain. Even here, the definition may vary according to the context or the organisation.

OdBFS or Decibels Full Scale: The highest signal level achievable in a digital audio file recorded in industry standard WAV format.

AAC or Advanced Audio Coding: A compressed and lossy audio coding standard, with slightly higher sound quality than MP3 for a given bit rate. Considered by some as a successor to MP3.

Abandoned: Describes the status of a product that was cancelled prior to release. This is not an ONIX status. ONIX refers to 'cancelled'.

Abridged: The shortened audiobook narration or dramatisation of a book.

Academic: Describes that area of the book industry focused on study and scholarly learning.

Accessible E-book: An accessible e-book is a digital publication which can be read and understood by anyone, regardless of the sensory mode they use to access the content. The contents have been encoded in such a way that it does not prevent any text, image, chart, graph, map etc., being accessible via suitable reading devices. So, this includes the ability to resize and change fonts and images without a loss of understanding, or it can be listened to via text-as-speech technology or via touch using something like a braille reader. Any included image needed to understand the contents must have an alternative description that can be interpreted by suitable reading devices. If an e-book with no images does not allow text-to-speech, then there should be clear metadata that links the e-book to the audiobook version.

Active: Describes the status of a product that has been released and has entered the supply chain (and has not been declared 'out of print' or 'permanently withdrawn from sale').

Adapted: Content that has been modified to suit a different audience or purpose, for example, a dramatisation of a work of fiction.

Adoption: Implementation of a standard or bespoke set of work practices.

AI or Artificial Intelligence: A computer system able to carry out tasks that normally require human intelligence. For audiobooks, this may mean a non-human narrator.

AIFF or Audio Interchange File Format: An uncompressed lossless audio file format standard.

ALAC or Apple Lossless Audio Codec: A compressed but lossless audio file format standard.

App or Mobile App: An application. Usually downloaded by the user to a smartphone or tablet.

Audio: Relating to sound.

Audiobook: The recording of, usually, a book being read (or performed) out loud. It can be on CD, digital download or digital stream. The text can be abridged or unabridged and have a single reader, a cast of voice actors or synthetic voice(s).

Audiobook Package: This collectively describes the content (audio files) and the resources (cover image, minimal metadata - e.g., title, author – and any supplementary materials such as an accompanying PDF) that make up the final product as delivered to the consumer.

Audio Sample: A short extract from an audiobook, generally used for marketing purposes.

Availability: Defines the status of an audiobook at a specific distributor or reseller. Availability information should be updated as the underlying status changes.

Backlist: A published audiobook that has been on sale for more than a number of months (depending on the publisher, between 3 – 12 calendar months).

Back Office System: A collective way of describing those computer systems carrying out a wide variety of business operations, including but not limited to, finance, order fulfilment and distribution.

Bespoke: Non-standard, tailored to the needs of a specific organisation. It may refer to an audio file format, metadata standard or audio package format.

Best Practice: A set of principles that govern a concept, process or way of working that is recognised as delivering the best results. Best practice may become the standard or default over time.

Bit Depth: For each audio sample, the bit depth determines how many possible loudness values can be recorded. Most audiobooks are 16 bit.

Bit Rate/ Bitrate: The number of bits (digital data) stored or transmitted per second, often stated as Kbps or Mbps for thousands or millions of bits per second. Bit rate (for uncompressed audio) is the product of **bit depth** and **sample rate**. Compression (e.g., into an MP3 file) can alter this relationship. For a given codec, fewer bits per second implies a more compressed file, with lower quality but smaller file size.

Block: The term used within ONIX to refer to high-level composites used to arrange data functionally within a product record. There are eight blocks plus a minimal preamble (which is informally known as 'block zero'). A product record may contain all the relevant blocks.

Block Update: An update to an ONIX metadata record. A block update contains the preamble (block zero) plus the blocks within which there are one or more data elements that have changed since the previous ONIX message was sent. An ONIX product record contains 8 or 9 blocks, and each block can be updated independently of the others.

Block 3: In ONIX. Rich, chapter level metadata carried in the ONIX record for the whole audiobook product. Note that Block 3 does not describe the relationship between the chapters and the files which make up the audiobook. It solely concerns chapter names and timecodes.

Block 8: In ONIX. Carries information about the manufacture and production of audiobook products (also e-books and POD print books). Block 8 includes a manifest of the files required

to assemble the product. Together with Block 3, it can indicate the relationship between files or CDs and chapters. Block 8 is not yet widely adopted.

Cancelled: Describes the status of a product that was abandoned prior to publication or release.

CD or Compact Disc: See 'Red Book'. A physical disc used for storage of digital audio, including music and spoken word. The standard format holds circa 80 minutes of audio. The physical format has been adapted for data and other digital media (see 'Yellow Book').

CD-Quality: Synonymous with high-quality recordings. CD quality is often the standard against which other audio is compared because the audio on a CD is not compressed.

CD-ROM or Compact Disc Read Only Memory: See 'Yellow Book'. Contains read only data.

Chapter: Separates the audiobook into more manageable parts corresponding to the chapters, parts or sections in the print or e-book. The number of chapters may or may not align one-to-one with the number of audio files comprising the product.

Chapter Level Metadata: A document indicating the titles of individual chapters of the audiobook, chapter authors, page ranges or timecodes, and other supporting metadata that relates to the individual chapter. Note there is no necessary direct relationship between chapters and files. Chapter level metadata can be carried in ONIX Block 3.

Chunking: The splitting of an audiobook recording into multiple files for production and supply chain purposes. Audiobook chunks/ files may not correspond to chapters in the audiobook. The size of a chunk may be dictated/ informed by operational constraints. There may be many chapters per file, or several files per chapter.

Clipping: Also called 'digital clipping'. Clipping occurs when a digital signal peak reaches or rises above 0dBFS (Decibels Full Scale) and creates undesirable distorted sounds.

Codec: A device or more usually software that compresses data to enable faster transmission and decompresses the received data. Usually, significant compression is accompanied by a loss of audio quality. Examples of codecs include MP3 and AAC.

Compression: A mechanism for reducing the amount of digital data in a file to enable faster transmission. Compression may or may not reduce audio quality (see lossless/ lossy), depending on the compression format. Where there is a loss of quality, this is permanent.

Content: The audio material (recording) comprising an audiobook.

Content Management: At a high level, the set of processes for creating, organising and distributing audiobook content.

Cover Image: A photograph or illustration representing the audiobook online or incorporated in the audiobook package.

DAM or Digital Asset Management: A digital asset management system manages the ingestion and storage of digital assets such as audio files, their cataloguing and metadata, search and retrieval, and sometimes distribution. DAMs can be structured like a library aimed at simplifying the reuse of assets, or as a workflow tool forming part of a production system.

dB or Decibel: Loosely, the unit of measurement for sound volume.

dBFS or decibel Full Scale: Not to be confused with 'dB' or 'decibel' in the above entry. 'dB' is an analogue measurement whereas dBFS is the digital measurement. 0dBFS is the highest signal level achievable in a digital audio file recorded in industry standard WAV format. If the signal exceeds 0, then the top portion of the incoming waveform will simply be 'clipped' off and lost. This will distort and damage a recording in a way that is both unpleasant to the ear and irreversible. For these reasons, audio engineers take great care to avoid it.

Delivery Manifest: In metadata, a list of files or other resources (e.g., those required to assemble the completed product). For example, ONIX Block 8 comprises a file manifest and some detailed processing instructions or product specifications.

Delta Update: In the context of ONIX, a set of updated metadata records, one full record per product where one or more metadata element has changed since the previous ONIX message was sent. Contrast with a full set of metadata records (which includes product records that have not changed), and with a Block update, which does not contain whole records but only *parts* of records that contain changes.

Digital: Recorded, stored, processed or reproduced electronically from numerical data.

Digital Asset Management or DAM: A digital asset management system manages the ingestion and storage of digital assets such as audio files, their cataloguing and metadata, search and retrieval, and sometimes distribution. DAMs can be structured like a library aimed at simplifying the reuse of assets, or as a workflow tool forming part of a production system.

Digital Audiobook: The recording of, usually, a book being read (or performed) out loud. It is delivered as a digital download or digital stream. The text can be abridged or unabridged and have a single reader, a cast of voice actors or synthetic voice(s).

Dramatised: Usually an adapted version of an original book, using voice actors to represent the characters. Dramatised versions may include sound effects and music. Some versions will adhere more closely to the original plot than others.

DRM or Digital Rights Management: Usually refers to technical protection measures (e.g., encryption or watermarking of the content), that are used to enforce or monitor compliance with the licence to use an audiobook. DRM can for example prevent or limit copying and redistribution of the digital content, sharing and lending, and can also place a time limit on the use of the content to enable rentals. DRM is intended to protect intellectual property from copyright infringement but can also (often inadvertently) prevent usages that are specifically allowed by copyright exceptions.

Dynamic Range: For audio, the difference between the quietest and loudest sounds. The dynamic range of real-world sounds is generally larger than the maximum dynamic range that can be recorded on a CD or in a digital audio file, so sounds are often "compressed" (the quietest sounds are boosted, the loudest quietened) when mastering an audiobook. This compression is different from file compression.

eAudiobook: Sometimes just 'E-audio'. See Digital Audiobook.

E-book: An electronic book. Has the attributes of a physical book (cover, table of contents, chapters with text and images, product identifier), but is in digital rather than physical form. E-books are available in a number of different formats (including EPUB, Kindle and PDF) and can be downloaded to smart phones, e-readers, tablets, computers or accessed online.

Edition: Loosely, the version of a published book. More precisely, the edition may relate to the format ('the audiobook edition') or refer to content updates leading to a new edition being published ('the third edition', 'the abridged edition').

Embargo: Proscription of sales, or sometimes of publication reviews, of a book prior to a particular date.

File: An electronic container storing information.

File Manifest: A document containing a list of files that comprise a single digital audiobook.

File Segment: [to be confirmed].

FLAC or Free Lossless Audio Codec: A compressed but lossless audio coding format.

Forthcoming: A publishing status, meaning not yet published and available in the supply chain (though advance orders can be accepted).

Frontlist: The range of forthcoming and recently published audiobooks that a publisher is actively promoting and selling. Between 3 – 12 months after publication (depending on the publisher), they become part of a publisher's Backlist.

Full Feed: A metadata message containing (usually) a publisher's complete audiobook catalogue. See also Delta Update, Block Update.

Hertz: A unit of frequency (1 cycle per second). Refers to any type of waves. Audio data/ soundwaves are usually in the range of 20 to 20,000 Hz.

ID3 Tag: An electronic container holding some limited metadata. Usually contained in MP3 files, holding the title and contributor(s) of an audiobook or music track as an example.

ISBN or International Standard Book Number: A thirteen-digit product identifier for books in physical, e-book and audiobook formats. Administered by the International ISBN Agency and numerous affiliated national agencies (including Nielsen BookData in the UK and Ireland). Publishers apply for ISBN allocations through their local ISBN Agency. Used for book discovery, ordering and tracking sales, the ISBN is unique to a specific title, edition and format combination, and cannot be re-used.

JPEG/ JPG: A commonly used compressed and lossy digital image format created by the Joint Photographic Experts Group.

Kbps or Kilobits per Second: The number of thousands of bits (a unit of digital data) per second in a digital file or stream. This is a measure of how much data can flow in a specified time period, and by extension a guide to the quality of an audio file.

Lossless: Any digital format in which no audio quality is lost during encoding or decoding.

Lossy: Any digital format where audio quality is lost during encoding or decoding. Compression in a lossy digital format results in some of the sound data being discarded to reduce the file size, resulting in a loss of quality (even if it isn't audible). The lossy audio file will be different to the master version.

LUFS or Loudness Units relative to Full Scale: A measurement of the average loudness of a sound signal, based on the human perception of loudness.

Manifest: In metadata, a list of files or other resources, e.g., those required to assemble the completed product. For example, ONIX Block 8 comprises a file manifest and some detailed processing instructions or product specifications.

Manual Intervention: Requiring a human to step in either to link up separate processes or to fulfil an action that allows processes to continue.

Master File: An original audiobook file, usually in an uncompressed format from which lower quality, compressed versions can be made.

Mastering: The processing of audio data after the initial recording and editing, to optimise the equalisation and loudness, limit the dynamic range and create the 'master' from which all future copies are made.

Metadata: A set of data that describes and gives information about an audiobook product. A distinction can be drawn between 'file metadata' (technical detail about the audio file format, codec, bitrate etc.) and 'content metadata' (the title, author, chapters, etc. of the audiobook product itself). Another distinction can be made between metadata embedded within content (for example, ID3 metadata tags within an MP3 file), and metadata supplied separately from the content (for example, in an ONIX file).

Migration: Transition from one standard or format to another.

Mono: Mono recordings are (broadly) recorded using a single microphone, contain only one channel of audio data, and are usually reproduced by delivering the same audio to both ears.

MP3: A lossy compressed digital file format widely used in audio. MP3s are smaller but of lower audio quality than lossless or uncompressed files. There are a range of qualities of MP3, characterised primarily by their bitrate (i.e., 256 kilobits per second is fairly high quality, 128 kbps is audibly less good). Files are roughly 1 megabyte per minute or less (quality dependent) and can carry minimal metadata content via ID3 tags.

New Title: For the purposes of audiobooks, a new audiobook is one that has been published within the last 3 – 12 calendar months. Frontlist comprises not yet published and new titles.

Noise Floor: The low level of room noise on a recording. This is a problem when it is too high and becomes an audible hiss between spoken words during playback at normal volume, or when it has been completely removed by software and lends the track an unnatural quality.

ONIX or Online Information eXchange: The international and most widely used standard for capturing and communicating book product information. This includes both physical and digital audiobook metadata.

Online: Meaning electronic or digital or of the internet. In terms of audiobooks, this includes consumed, listened to or purchased via the internet.

Package. This collectively describes the content (the audio files) and the resources (cover image, table of contents and supplementary materials) that make up the whole audiobook product ready for distribution and sale.

Pay Per Stream. The amount of money or rate of pay generated every time a file is streamed on an audio platform.

PDF or Portable Document Format: A standard file format for electronic documents, originally devised by Adobe as a simplification of PostScript, and now an ISO standard. PDFs are sometimes a supplementary part of the content of audiobook packages.

Peak: The loudest point of an audio track.

Platform: A digital service making audiobooks available to consumers.

Podcast: Made available as a digital audio file for download, a podcast is usually made up of existing episodes and new instalments. Series can be limited in length, seasonal or on going. They take different forms such as interviews, conversations, can be educational or based around current affairs.

Postponed: Describes the status of a product when publication or release has been delayed.

Pre-publication: In advance of publication date. Often abbreviated to 'pre-pub'.

Process: The steps (manual or automated) required to achieve a specific outcome.

Product: Any separately tradable book-form item. This includes audiobooks. In the book trade, each separate product would normally be identified by a different ISBN to facilitate discovery, ordering and sales analysis.

Product Availability: Describes the product's status in the supply chain.

Product Status: As above. Describes the product's availability in the supply chain.

Professional Publishing: Describes that area of the book industry focused on publishing books for bodies and institutions focused on learning, standards and qualifications.

Publication Date: The date on which an audiobook is officially published. For digital audiobooks, this is usually (but not necessarily) the date on which retail consumers can first download or stream the entire audiobook. See also Sales Embargo Date.

Purchase: Digital audiobooks 'purchased' by an end customer are subject to a perpetual licence (which may for example specify a limited right to lend the audiobook). Rentals of audiobooks are simply time-limited licences).

PWfS or Permanently Withdrawn from Sale: The term which reflects the decision by a publisher not to make any further copies of a digital product available to the supply chain. There is no direct link between a physical product being made 'out of print' and the digital product being 'permanently withdrawn from sale'.

ONIX defines the publishing status of 'Permanently Withdrawn from Sale' as "Withdrawn permanently from sale in all markets. Effectively synonymous with 'Out of print', but specific to downloadable and online digital products (where no 'stock' would remain in the supply chain)".

Recording Schedule: A timetable or plan that captures the who, how, what and when of creating an audiobook. It also details pre and post recording steps.

Red Book CD: The standard for CDs (including audiobook CDs). Defined as 16 bits per sample and 44,100 samples per second (or 44.1kHz), in stereo (2 channels) and with 640 megabytes of data per hour. Allows for circa 80 minutes overall.

Retrofit: Apply a current book industry standard to a business process after that business process has been active for a significant period without the standard.

Rights: A general term covering copyright, moral rights and other intellectual property rights, plus contractual rights such as the right to distribute or sell products. So called volume rights give the publisher the right to publish and sell products based on a copyright work and are sometimes divided by language and geographical territory. Subsidiary rights – initially attached to the volume rights but often sub-licensed by the volume rights holder to another publisher – sometimes include the right to publish specialised manifestations such as audio.

RMS or Root Mean Square: A measurement of the average loudness of a sound signal. Some audiobook platforms specify minimum and maximum permitted RMS values.

Royalty: The fee paid (by the publisher) to an author or content creator each time an iteration of their work is downloaded, streamed or purchased in physical form.

Sales Embargo Date: The earliest date on which retailers may sell an audiobook to consumers. Distinct in meaning from the publication date, though it is usually the same actual date. This is the date which determines the release of the audiobook by retailers to consumers. All books and audiobooks have a publication date, but only some have a sales embargo date.

Sample Rate: When converting an analogue sound wave to digital, the sampling rate is the number of measurements taken in each second of sound. Audiobooks are commonly sampled 44,100 times per second (44.1 kHz). The sample rate controls the highest frequency sound that can be recorded.

Sidecar File: An electronic file of *additional* metadata relating to an audiobook file, where that metadata cannot be included in a standard metadata file (e.g., in an ONIX file). In audiobook workflows, the need for sidecar files should diminish as ONIX Block 8 is adopted. Sidecar files are sometimes required when the sender's or recipient's ONIX implementations are incomplete. They are not a good, long-term solution.

Speech Synthesis: Production of human speech by a computer.

Standards: A recognised and authoritative set of guidelines. A point of reference.

Stereo: Stereo recordings have two different audio signals, for two separate audio channels (e.g., left and right loudspeakers), which create a perception of space. Audiobooks are generally mono unless they are multi-voiced.

Stitch: The act of combining separate digital audiobook files, originally sent as multiple tracks, into a smaller number of larger files or tracks. Stitching is also referred to as 'concatenating', 'joining' or 'splicing'. It can be undertaken for several reasons, such as meeting an audiobook platform's requirements on file length (duration) in order to deliver a complete audiobook in a single, very long file for one platform or as several more manageable files for another.

Stitching can also make for a more consistent user experience. From a technical viewpoint, app developers need to make compromises for in app streaming on mobile devices, such as uninterrupted listening when the mobile or Wi-Fi signal is poor vs. the temporary space available to the app from the device's operating system vs. the ability of the app to encrypt cached audio content on the fly.

Stream: Listen to digital audio via the internet. Usually received to and played on a smartphone or computer using an app or software. The audio is listened to in real time, and the audio recording never exists in complete form on the listener's device. Compressed audio files and improved internet speeds make streaming possible and more reliable.

Strict On Sale Date: Also known as the 'sales embargo date'. Where the publisher wishes to exercise close control over the earliest retail availability of a product, this is the earliest date that a consumer may obtain a copy of the product – though advance orders (pre-orders) may be placed prior to the embargo date.

Studio Quality: A higher quality audio than 'CD quality'. Defined by 48 kHz or 96 kHz recordings and sampling at 24 bits per sample.

Subscription: Depending on the service offering, for a monthly or annual subscription paid in advance, consumers have access to a limited or unlimited number of audiobooks. Subscription packages usually incentivise longer subscription periods.

Supply Chain: Simplistically in the book industry, this comprises all the organisations, individuals and activities that are involved in the creation, manufacture, distribution, sale and return of books and book related products. Also includes the support functions such as Marketing and Finance. The supply chain model will vary according to the type of product (physical/ digital) and who the end consumer is (such as b2b, b2c, b2g).

Territorial Rights: These legally describe where an audiobook product may or may not be sold (and may or may not be made available to borrow).

Timecode: An electronic marker identifying the precise location in an audiobook recording. Sometimes also termed a 'bookmark'.

Transcoding: The conversion of one digital audio encoding format to another (e.g., from MP3 to AAC). With 'lossy' formats, transcoding always involves a further loss of audio.

Unabridged: The full content of a work. Not abridged.

W3C Audiobook Package: A specification, developed by the World Wide Web Consortium for a standardised digital audiobook 'package', primarily for delivery to the end consumer (sometimes called the 'Lightweight Packaging Format' or LPF). In practice, an audiobook package is a zip archive containing the audio (and any other) files and two predefined metadata documents: a manifest listing the files in the package and a table of contents specifying (at minimum) the listening order. Note this is a *delivery* format, not one used at earlier parts of the supply chain, and thus does not overlap significantly with ONIX Block 8. The W3C package specification makes explicit the relationship between chapters and files.

Watermarking: In audio, the addition of extra inaudible data to an audiobook, to allow retrospective identification of the purchaser or licensee in the event of large-scale infringement of licence terms.

WAV: Waveform Audio File Format. WAV files are almost always uncompressed and lossless. The files are very large and are used within the supply chain but are too large to be the consumer delivery format. Roughly 10 megabytes per minute of audio, with no metadata content.

Yellow Book CD-ROM: The standard that defines the format of CD-ROMs. A CD-ROM contains 650 megabytes of computer data rather than digital audio data.

ZIP: A file format that supports lossless data compression. A ZIP file may contain one or more files or directories. ZIP can be used to bundle together all audio files that make up an audiobook.



BIC Digital Audio Best Practice Organisations

ACX or Audiobook Creation Exchange: An Amazon-owned audio production and distribution platform aimed predominantly at self-published authors and small publishers.

Apple: Technology company and developer of iTunes. A global platform for digital book and audiobook content.

Audible: Amazon's audiobook and podcast platform.

BA or Booksellers' Association: An industry members association and founder member of BIC.

BDS or Bibliographic Data Services: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. A data aggregator.

Beat Technology: A Norwegian audiobook and e-book platform providing technology services for businesses such as Chapter, Fabel and Skoobe.

Biblio: Virtuales' content and digital asset management system. Holds and manages digital audio assets and metadata.

BIC or Book Industry Communication Limited: An independent organisation set up and sponsored by the Publishers Association, Booksellers Association, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals and the British Library to promote supply chain efficiency through e-commerce and the application of standard processes and procedures.

BISG or Book Industry Study Group: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. Works for a more informed, empowered and efficient book supply chain in the United States of America. Not for profit.

Bolinda: An audiobook and technology company.

BookBeat: A digital subscription service for audiobook streaming. The service also offers e-books. Both can be downloaded for offline listening and reading.

BooksoniX: A metadata solutions vendor.

Bookwire: An audio production and distribution business.

BorrowBox: An app to manage e-book and eAudiobook borrowings from a library.

Canongate Books: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. An independent publisher.

CoreSource: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. A digital distributor widely used by many trade and academic publishers to process and distribute content and metadata to resellers and institutions worldwide. Also converts formats (transcodes) as requested by the client.

De Marque: A digital content ecosystem.

DK or Dorling Kindersley: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. An international publisher focused on full colour, illustrated publications.

EDiEUR: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. A

membership-supported organisation that develops standards such as ONIX, *Thema* and EDItX for the global book supply chain.

Fabel: A website and app for book consumers. Focuses on socialising book content.

Findaway: A US based audiobook content, production and distribution platform cited by academic publishers as one of their distribution partners. Owned by Spotify.

Firsty: A commercial organisation that specialises in direct-to-consumer content delivery in publishing.

Gardners: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. A wholesaler and library supplier.

Glassboxx: An audiobook and e-book direct to consumer solution. Owned by Firsty.

Glose: A social reading platform.

Google Books: A global discovery service for print, e-books and audiobooks. Provides the Google Preview service.

Google Play: A store or distribution service selling audiobooks as well as e-books, apps, tv, films and music.

Hachette: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. An international publisher and distributor.

HarperCollins: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. An international publisher and distributor.

Hodder & Stoughton: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. An international publisher and distributor.

Hoopla: A media streaming platform for audiobooks, comics, e-books, movies, music and tv.

Hummingbird Digital Media: A turnkey e-book and audiobook retailing platform.

Ingram Content Group: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. Provides physical and digital book distribution.

Klopotek: A content and digital asset management system.

Kobo: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. Rakuten's global platform for e-books, audiobooks, e-readers and tablet computers.

Libro.fm: A US based audiobook platform.

Nextory: A Nordic subscription service for audio and e-books. The service is also available in other European markets.

OverDrive: A global distributor of digital content and digital audio content for libraries and schools.

PA or Publishers Association: An industry members association.

Pan Macmillan: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. An international publisher of physical and digital products.

Penguin Random House: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. An international publisher and distributor of physical and digital products.

Scribd: A US based audiobook platform.

Skoobe: An e-book platform and app.

Sound Understanding: An audio production company specialising in non-fiction and academic titles.

Spotify: A global music and podcast platform, now entering the audiobook market in earnest with the acquisition of Findaway.

Stison: A metadata solutions vendor.

StoryTel: An international subscription audiobook platform and app. StoryTel has purchased audiobooks.com and audiobooks.co.uk.

Taylor & Francis: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. An academic publisher.

uLibrary: A library digital platform for borrowing eAudiobooks and eBooks.

Ulverscroft: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. A publisher and distributor of large print and audiobooks.

Usborne Publishing Limited: A member of BIC's Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice Project. An international publisher.

W3C: World Wide Web Consortium. This is an international community developing open standards across the web, including CSS, HTML.

XigXag: A consumer-focused audiobook platform and app for trade publishers.

Zebralution: A German digital distribution company for independent record labels, audiobooks and podcasts.



BIC Digital Audio Best Practice

Roles and Responsibilities

Academic Institution: An educational establishment dedicated to scholarly learning.

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

Bookseller: A chain or independent bookshop or retailer. It may also refer to an online entity. The term also denotes an employee of a chain or independent bookshop.

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

Creator: Takes the original published book and creates the audiobook version. The recording of a book being read (or dramatised) out loud can be abridged or unabridged.

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.

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 Patron: A user of a physical or online library service.

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

Narrator: See 'Reader'. May also be a character named (or functioning as) 'the narrator' within a dramatisation.

Performer (Voice Actor), Lecturer, Speaker: Contributors to various types of audio material.

Publisher: A business responsible for bringing audiobooks to the market. Also responsible for the creation and management of the audiobooks' metadata.

Reader or Read by: A voice actor reading an audiobook out loud. The role may also be performed by an AI-based synthetic voice reader. Not to be confused with 'Narrator', a role in a dramatisation.

Recording Studio: A location for recording sound. Designed to optimise sound quality.

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.

Specialist: An organisation with a specific focus in the book industry.

Studio: A location for creating and recording (and often editing) audiobook content. Designed to deliver the best sound quality.

System Supplier: A specialist organisation providing computer hardware and/ or software to fulfil specific business functions.

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.

Voice Actor. An actor reading an audiobook aloud, or performing a dramatised audiobook, as part of a voice cast.

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