



## Audio Publishers Association (APA) Fact Sheet

### Overview of the Audio Publishers Association

- The Audio Publishers Association (APA) is a not-for-profit trade organization created in 1986 to promote awareness of the audiobook industry, gather and disseminate industry statistics, encourage high production standards, and represent the interests of audiobook publishers.
- Audiobooks have a unique and fascinating history. In 1933, anthropologist J.P. Harrington, drove the length of North America to record oral histories of Native American tribes on aluminum discs using a car battery-powered turntable. Now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the definition of books and publishing is evolving as technology advances and the consumer demands change. Audiobooks allow avid readers to multi-task in today's hectic world. Consumers can listen to an audiobook as they commute, exercise, or cook. At the same time, audiobooks preserve the oral tradition of storytelling that J.P. Harrington pursued many years ago. Narration, sound effects, and music can complement the reading experience.
- A historical perspective by Marianne Roney: In January 1952, Barbara Cohen and Marianne Roney, sat down with Dylan Thomas in the bar of the Chelsea Hotel and persuaded him to record some of his poetry. Spoken word records were almost unheard of at the time. Cohen and Roney knew that Thomas's poetry was shocking, moving and important, and that they wanted to record it to preserve the sounds. With the promise of five hundred dollars, and much coaxing and cajoling, a recording session was arranged. Thomas selected the poems, writing the list in his tiny round letters in Miss Roney's appointment book for Friday, February 15th, 1952. Caedmon Records was born the next week, named, appropriately enough, for the first poet to write in the native language of Old England. February 15th came and went, without Thomas. It is difficult to imagine how much nervous energy was expended in trying to find the lost poet and rescheduling his recording session. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Peter Bartok, son of the composer Bela Bartok, had set up his equipment in Steinway Hall to do the recording. Thomas began the session with "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night." Bartok had perhaps expected a quavering poet's voice, but instead he got a French horn. After some consideration, he adjusted the microphone for a symphonic recording to accommodate Thomas's sonorous voice. Thomas continued, reading "In the White Giant's Thigh" and a handful of other poems. And then came the realization that the poems were long enough for only one side of a long-

playing record. To fill the other side of the record Thomas recorded a story he sold to Harper's Bazaar, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. This recording established *A Child's Christmas in Wales* as a Christmas classic. It is Dylan Thomas's most widely known work and, as a model of translucent prose, stands as an everlasting testament to his greatness as poet and bard.

### **Sales Figures**

- In 2004, APA's publisher members participated in a sales survey that evaluated sales data from 2001- 2003:
  - According to the survey, retail and wholesale sales increased 14 percent and library sales increased by 7 percent from 2002-2003. (Audio Publishers Association, December 2004)
- Factoring in sales from non-reporting APA members and other audiobook companies who are not members, APA estimates the size of the audiobook market is \$800 million. (Audio Publishers Association, December 2004)
- Overall sales growth from 2002 to 2003 is up 5.1 percent. (Audio Publishers Association, December 2004)
- Shifts in format continue to advance with revenue of CD sales increasing from 35% in 2002 to 45% in 2003. Cassette revenue decreased from 2002 to 2003 (58% to 49%). Returns as a percentage of sales showed a steady decrease since 2001, as indicated by the 31.1 percent drop between 2001 and 2002 and 5.5 percent drop between 2002 and 2003. (Audio Publishers Association, December 2004)
- The market share for abridged and unabridged audiobooks was essentially unchanged from 2002 to 2003. Abridged sales represented approximately 21% of the overall sales dollars and unabridged represented 71%. (Audio Publishers Association, December 2004)
- Readers are increasingly turning to audiobooks as a way to supplement their reading time, and publishers say it's now expected that an audiobook will account for 10 to 15 percent of a book's overall sale. ("Analysis: Some of the Factors Contributing to the Growth of Audio Books," *National Public Radio*, January 27, 2005)

### **Consumer Use**

- Of the main audiobook listeners surveyed, 76% are female and 24% are male. The average listening age for females is 45 and the average listening age for males is 47. (Audio Publishers 2001 Consumer Survey)
- Roughly one in five American households listened to an audiobook within the last year—23 million households. (Audio Publishers 2001 Consumer Survey)
- The average audiobook listener earns 25% more than non-listeners, has a higher level of education and is more likely to hold a professional and

- managerial position than a non-listener. (Audio Publishers 2001 Consumer Survey)
- Americans make 51.3 billion trips to and from work in their own vehicles every year.” (“Commuter Consumer,” *The Washington Post*, April 24, 2005)
  - One factor driving sales is, literally, driving. “The number-one place people listen is in their cars,” says Mary Beth Roche, publisher at Audio Renaissance. As commuter times lengthen, she says, avid readers are driven to books that let them keep their eyes on the road. (“Now Hear This,” *American Way*, May 15, 2005)
  - The Cracker Barrel Old Country Store restaurants have developed a successful program that lets travelers buy an audiobook at any of their 519 locations in 41 states. It can be returned at any of their other stores and restaurants, minus a weekly fee of less than \$4. (“Audiobooks Ease Time on Road,” *Courier Journal*, June 26, 2005)
  - “The best patrons are the best book-buyers. They’re avid readers who use audiobooks to keep up when their eyes are busy,” says Mary Beth Roche, president of the Audio Publishers Association. (“Commuter Consumer,” *The Washington Post*, April 24, 2005)
  - “A trucker working to the legal limit in the U.S. can rack up to 3,432 driving hours a year—nearly 10 times that of the average New York commuter—or enough to listen to the unabridged version of Bill Clinton’s *My Life* 77 times. (*Publishing Trends*, Market Partners International, September 2005)
  - According to the 2002 eBrain Market Research survey, 71% of respondents listen to audiobooks on long car trips. (*Audio Books Ownership and Market Potential*, Consumer Electronics Association)
  - The average annual delay due to traffic congestion has more than tripled since 1982.
    - More than 19 million commuters travel more than 45 minutes each way to their jobs;
    - More than 97 million workers drive alone to work each day;
    - The average rush hour driver will spend an additional 62 hours stuck in traffic—at standstill—each year. (Texas Transportation Institute 1002 Urban Mobility Study)
  - Twenty-eight percent of listeners rank Mystery/Horror/Suspense as their favorite audiobook genre. (Audio Publishers 2001 Consumer Survey)

## Marketing

- Marketing test have shown that audiobooks displayed with the book sell up to seven times more titles than when displayed in the audio section.

## Downloadable

- The sector that showed the most growth in the audiobook industry was downloadable sales. Downloadable sales increased dramatically between 2001 and 2003.
- Data regarding download sales was supplied by APA member, Audible, Inc., a leading provider of digitally delivered spoken word audio. In 2001, Audible's total download sales were \$5,143,000. The next year, 2002, saw an increase of 112 percent in download sales to \$10,940,000 and, in 2003, Audible's download sales surged another 69 percent with sales of \$18,490,000. (Audio Publishers Association, December 2004)

## Technology/Digital

- Projections for the size of the digital audiobook market in 2005 range from \$50 million to \$80 million, according to Gene Munster, a technology analyst at investment firm Piper Jaffray Inc. ("Harry Potter Unlikely as a Download," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 27, 2005)

## Production

- Audiobook production celebrates the most incredible instrument of all: the human voice! The industry's best storytellers - the talent who 'tell' the author's 'story' - transport us from the written page to as far as our imagination can soar. The time honored art of storytelling, then, is the gift our industry's most talented narrators bestow upon us. Listening to just some of our most notable *The Audie*<sup>®</sup> winners, and Audiofile Magazine's Earphone recipients, and Golden Voices: Barbara Rosenblat; Jeff Woodman; Kate Fleming; Simon Jones; Barbara Caruso; Simon Prebble; Oliver Wyman; and Jenna Lamia. Or up and comers perhaps destined to be most notable, including Cassandra Morris and David Ledoux. These narrators, whether narrating solo or as part of an ensemble, hear these wonderful storytellers and imagine 'audiobook' as a creative, distinctly unique performing art.

## Education

- Educators know that one of the most important reasons for the increasing interest in audiobooks for young people is the research demonstrating that listening to audiobooks fosters reading comprehension, fluency, language acquisition, vocabulary development, and improved achievement. ("Not Just for Listening," *Book Links*, May 2005)
- Fewer Americans are reading books than a decade ago, according to the National Endowment for the Arts, but almost a third more are listening to them on tapes, CD's and iPods. ("Loud, Proud, Unabridged: It Is Too Reading!" *The New York Times*, May 26, 2005)
- "Listening to tapes with books in front of students is very, very good for building vocabulary," said Wendy Kasten, an education professor at Kent State University who encourages elementary educators to experiment

using audiobooks with students. ("To Curl Up With a Good Book, Listen Up," *The Plain Dealer*, May 23, 2005)

### Library

- The recent *Library Journal* survey, in which the Audio Publishers Association participated, showed that circulation for adult audiobooks in libraries jumped 13.5 percent in two years, while the circulation of children's audiobooks rose 10.7 percent. In addition, budgets for adult audiobooks went up 6.1 percent and budgets for children's audiobooks rose 4.8 percent. (Audio Publishers Association, December 2004)
- Libraries say the growth in circulation of audiobooks is outpacing overall circulation. Book clubs are increasingly made up of hybrid listener-readers, and the market for children's audiobooks is booming. ("Loud, Proud, Unabridged: It is Too Reading!," *The New York Times*, May 26, 2005)

### Format

- "Not too many years ago what you would find abridgements of bestsellers in bookstores, and a limited selection," said Robin Whitten, *Audiofile* magazine. "Six months later you would find the unabridged version in the library. Now, anything making the bestseller list will probably have audio versions (simultaneously), abridged and unabridged." ("The Readers Are All Ears," *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 2, 2005)
- *AudioFile's* 2005 Format Survey shows that 53% of audiobook fans do their listening in the car or other transportation. (*Publishing Trends*, Market Partners International, September 2005)

### International

- In 2001, German's largest audio publisher, Horverlag, saw its sales grow by a staggering 88%. (*Publishing Trends*, Market Partners International, September 2005)
- As the German audiobook market grew 14.7% to 140 million Euros in 2004, sales for Horverlag reached 16.5 million euros (an increase of 25% over 2003). (*Publishing Trends*, Market Partners International, September 2005)
- International Fiction Bestsellers include:
  - UK
    - *Harry Potter and Half-Blood Prince*, J.K. Rowling, Bloomsbury
  - Italy
    - *The Paper Moon*, Andrea Camilleri, Sellerio di Giorgianni
  - Spain
    - *Deception Point*, Dan Brown, Umbriel
  - Holland

- *The Da Vinci Code*, Dan Brown, Luitingh
- Turkey
  - *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*, Robin Sharma, Goa
- Japan
  - *Love Flowers-Red*, Yoshi, Starts

For a more complete listing, (*Publishing Trends*, Market Partners International, September 2005)

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