

# **Publishing Your Audiobook Through Digital Distribution**

**Written by Marshall Davis, Davis Sound, LLC, July 11, 2015**

## ***Introduction***

There are several ways an author or publisher can publish and sell audiobooks. The common way in the past was to create CD packages and sell them through stores or online sites. However, sales of audiobook CDs have been decreasing over time. What is increasing strongly is sales through digital distribution. This is the primary method and future growth path of sales for audiobooks today.

Amazon's audiobook business unit called Audible.com (referred to as Audible going forward) and iTunes are the two largest digital distribution sites online. This article will describe what is involved with publishing your audiobook on these sites and how payment from sales works.

## ***Producing the Audiobook Through ACX***

Amazon has a group called Audiobook Creation Exchange, usually referred to as ACX. ACX acts as the distributor of audiobooks to Audible and iTunes. But in addition, ACX can also act as the orchestrator of the audiobook creation process. Authors or publishers, whoever is the rights holder, can be connected to narrators or producers (Referred to as simply producers going forward) through an online audition system. Once a producer has been connected with a rights holder, a contract for the audiobook process will be generated by ACX to be signed by both the rights holder and the producer. This then begins the creation process. From then on, the rights holder will work directly with the producer.

Once the audiobook is completed, the rights holder approves the audiobook through the ACX site, and then pays the producer. Once payment is complete, the audiobook goes through ACX's quality assurance (QA) process. Once the QA process is completed, the audiobook is then distributed.

## ***Producing the Audiobook Outside of ACX***

An audiobook can be produced outside of the ACX system but still be submitted and distributed through ACX. Auditions, contracts, and all other business dealings are conducted only between the rights holder and the producer. Once the audiobook is completed and the producer is paid, the rights holder can submit the audiobook directly to ACX. The same QA process and distribution method will occur.

## ***Distribution Options***

When distributing an audiobook through ACX, there are three different options a rights holder can choose for payment. These are described below.

1. Royalty Payment – Davis Sound does not engage in royalty business so this description will be very brief. In royalty business, the producer creates the audiobook with no up front payment from the rights holder, and instead takes payment in the form of a percentage of sales. 20% of sales goes to the rights holder, 20% to the producer.
2. Pay for Production – Davis Sound only engages in Pay for Production. With this method, the rights holder pays the producer upfront for a completed audiobook, and retains all rights to future sales. The producer received no further payments. Pay for Production comes in two forms:
  - a. Exclusive Distribution – ACX handles all distribution through Audible, Amazon, and iTunes via ACX, as well as anywhere else Audible chooses. Under this model, Audible has the exclusive right to distribute the audiobook. If you choose this option, the audiobook cannot be distributed by any entity except ACX in any market or format. Royalty payment for exclusive distribution is 40% paid to the rights holder.
  - b. Non-Exclusive Distribution – Distribution through Audible, Amazon, and iTunes via ACX, as well as wherever else Rights Holder chooses. Under this model, Rights Holder can grant distribution rights to parties other than Audible in any market or any format. Royalty payment for non-exclusive distribution is 25% paid to the rights holder.

For more information about ACX and the audiobook creation process, visit [ACX.com](http://ACX.com).

### ***Price Range for Audiobooks***

Each retailer of your audiobook independently prices your product and determines such price in their sole discretion. While not always the case, the regular price on Audible for the product is generally priced based on its length, as follows:

- Under 1 hour: under \$7
- 1 – 3 hours: \$7 - \$10
- 3 – 5 hours: \$10 - \$20
- 5–10 hours: \$15 - \$25
- 10–20 hours: \$20 - \$30
- Over 20 hours: \$25 - \$35

Given these guidelines, an audiobook on Audible that is 8 hours long may sell for \$25. Under exclusive distribution, the rights holder would receive 40% of that price, or \$10 for each audiobook sold. For more details and for variations on pricing, visit [ACX.com](http://ACX.com).

ACX does not and cannot control how iTunes prices your audiobook in their store. However, no matter how they price it, the rights holder will be paid the same percentage as for Audible sales.

## **About Davis Sound, LLC**

Davis Sound is an audio and video production company located in Hopkins, MN. Davis Sound specializes in audiobook production and is certified as an Approved Producer by Amazon's Audible.com business unit for audiobooks. Davis Sound has been involved with 25 audiobook projects since starting as a full time business in 2012. Davis Sound works with a wide range of voice actors to do the audiobook narration, or can work with authors interested in reading the books themselves. Narration is done in Davis Sound's professional recording studio. Marshall Davis, owner of Davis Sound, has been involved with recording studios for 35 years as both a recording artist and audio engineer.

For more information on producing your audiobook, contact Davis Sound at 612-968-3384 or by email at [business@davisound.net](mailto:business@davisound.net).