



# HOW TO SELF-PUBLISH AUDIOBOOKS



16 Tips from  
Indie Authors

**BookBub**



## ON DIVERSIFYING AUTHOR INCOME STREAMS...

Whether it's a lack of time, a long commute, or a blessed way to avoid screens after distance learning, audio is the sole source of stories for many readers. That means if you aren't producing audiobooks, that's an income stream you're not seeing. For me, depending on the month and the promotions I'm running, audio revenue can amount to anywhere between 12-20% of my revenue each month. If I didn't have that I'd be missing out on the bottom line.



**NANA MALONE**

*WSJ & USA Today bestselling author of *Ransom**





## ON GIVING READERS THE FORMAT THEY PREFER...

My readers ask me for audio all the time! In fact, I've had more than a handful say they no longer read unless it's their only option. Their preference is audio. And actually, that scared me a little. The last thing I want is to lose readers because I'm not giving them the platform they prefer to hear the story.



**ADDISON MOORE**

*NYT bestselling author of *Little Girl Lost**



## ON KNOWING IT'S THE RIGHT TIME TO INVEST IN AUDIOBOOKS...

Audiobooks require investment for production so it's worth waiting until you have several books selling well in other formats and a budget for the costs of professional narration. Even if you are going to narrate your own book, you will need to upskill and buy equipment, as well as hire someone for editing and mastering. So while audiobooks are a growing market and a fantastic creative product, they are not usually worth doing for the new author or self-publisher just starting out.



**JOANNA PENN**

*NYT bestselling author of *Audio for Authors**





## ON CHOOSING AN AUDIOBOOK PAYMENT MODEL...

I strongly believe that authors should hold on to their rights whenever possible, so I think it's more important to save up capital to pay for pay-for-production vs. royalty share. Authors have far greater flexibility with finished audiobooks when they do this, and narrators benefit as well (especially if they're SAG-AFTRA members). If cost-per-finished-hour is too high, look for emerging talent, or better yet, ask your fans. They may have some gems you've never considered.



**JULIA KENT**

*NYT bestselling author of *It's Complicated**



## ON CHOOSING A NARRATOR FOR AN AUDIOBOOK...

I encourage authors to choose scenes for auditions that are difficult and include dialogue. These would include not only love scenes, which can be tricky, but also scenes between groups of people to see how the narrator handles multiple female/male voices in one scene.



**BARBARA FREETHY**

*NYT bestselling author of *Beautiful Storm**





## ON CHOOSING HOW AND WHERE TO PRODUCE AUDIOBOOKS...

I'm a fan of reaching as many people as possible. I want to be in libraries and on other audio avenues that I can listen to as a consumer and audio fan. So one of my favorite ways to produce audio is through ACX exclusive for release and later go through Findaway and Kobo Direct to reach all of my listeners. It depends on the genre and length of the book as to when I go wide or stay exclusive.



**CARRIE ANN RYAN**

*NYT bestselling author of *Love Restored**





## ON DISTRIBUTING AUDIOBOOKS...

Originally, I distributed all my audiobooks through Findaway Voices. Now I distribute to most vendors through Findaway Voices and upload to Kobo directly. Kobo offers excellent promotional opportunities for authors who have audiobooks through them.



**DALE MAYER**

*USA Today bestselling author of Arsenic in the Azaleas*





## ON DISTRIBUTING AUDIOBOOKS TO LIBRARIES...

Never underestimate the power of library distribution for audiobooks. They might not get the flashy media attention of commercial audiobook sites, but a huge portion of my audiobook income is from library sales and borrows. And since Findaway Voices provides several channels for library distribution, they're an invaluable asset in my audiobook strategy.



**MERRY FARMER**

author of *Our Little Secrets*

A top-down photograph of a white surface. In the lower-left, there is a bright yellow twin-bell alarm clock with silver feet. To its right is a white smartphone with a black screen. A white charging cable is plugged into the bottom of the phone and loops around it. Several pieces of crumpled yellow paper are scattered around the phone and clock. The entire scene is set against a plain white background.

## ON MAKING AUDIOBOOKS AVAILABLE FOR PREORDER...

Even before the release date, you can begin marketing your audiobook to your audience. If your audiobook has been produced and is 100% ready to go one month or more prior to your release day, contact your distributor(s) about setting up a preorder. (Contact your representative or customer service team at Findaway, ACX, or Kobo and ask for an audiobook preorder; explain that the files are final and ready to upload.)



**PENNY REID**

*NYT bestselling author of *Neanderthal Seeks Human**





## ON BUILDING BUZZ FOR AN AUDIOBOOK...

Remember, all steps of production are fascinating for readers. So get them hyped up. Tell them when you book your narrators. Tease your readers with tidbits like the start and end of recording sessions. Ask your narrator to film themselves reading. And when you have your finished product, you can even create some audio sample snippets and share them with your readers.



**NANA MALONE**

*WSJ & USA Today bestselling author of *Ransom**





## ON PROMOTING AUDIOBOOKS ON INSTAGRAM...

On Instagram, readers want a glimpse into our lives, writing process, and a behind-the-scenes look at the making of our books... Enlist narrators to show the making of an audiobook, such as footage from inside their recording booth or insight into their process for a caption.



**JESSICA HAWKINS**

*USA Today bestselling author of *Violent Delights**





## ON MAXIMIZING AUDIOBOOK EXPOSURE...

Funny enough, my tip to self-published authors is honestly to consider Findaway Voices and going wide with audio. And for promoting audiobooks, authors should really leverage those free codes they get from ACX and Findaway in exchange for reviews and exposure.



**ANTOINE BANDELE**

author of *The Kishi*



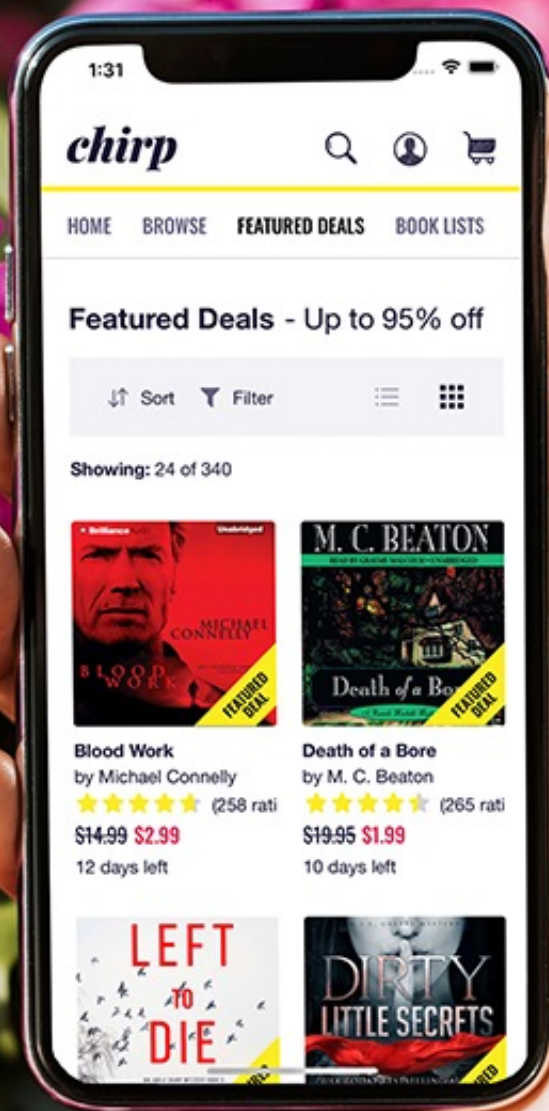
## ON DISCOUNTING AN AUDIOBOOK...

The ability to control the price of an audiobook on retailers is an extremely valuable marketing tool. One might even argue it's essential to maximizing reach. If you distribute wide through Findaway Voices (to Chirp, Apple Books, Google Play, Authors Direct, Audiobooks.com, Hoopla for libraries, etc.) then you have full control over the price of your audiobooks on those retailers. Ultimately, you'll have the ability to offer discounts and sales on your terms and your schedule rather than having the price (or discount) dictated to you. This opens up the world of loss-leaders and first-in-series (or even second-in-series) free.



**PENNY REID**

*NYT bestselling author of *Neanderthal Seeks Human**







## ON DISCOUNTING AN AUDIOBOOK SERIES...

I've done several promotions through Chirp now and have always been delighted with the results. I also sometimes stagger pricing for the next books in the series. This allows the listener to buy the first book at a deep discount and the second book at a very nice discount with the hope of hooking them into buying more books in the series.



**DALE MAYER**

*USA Today bestselling author of Arsenic in the Azaleas*





## ON RUNNING ADS TO PROMOTE AN AUDIOBOOK...

It's possible to break even or have a positive instant-ROI on BookBub Ads for \$0.99 audiobooks if the author targeting, ad copy, and artwork are on point. Get your cost-per-click down by targeting lesser-known authors who show up in the “also-boughts” for the big-name authors in your genre. If you can get your first-in-series into a lot of readers' hands using this ‘reader magnet’ strategy, and keep the initial ROI positive or break-even, you'll be gaining readers for a very low customer acquisition cost, and future read-through revenue will be pure profit.



**DUSTY SHARP**

author of *Blood Brothers*





Skywave  
K. Patrick Donoghue

### Ad Creative



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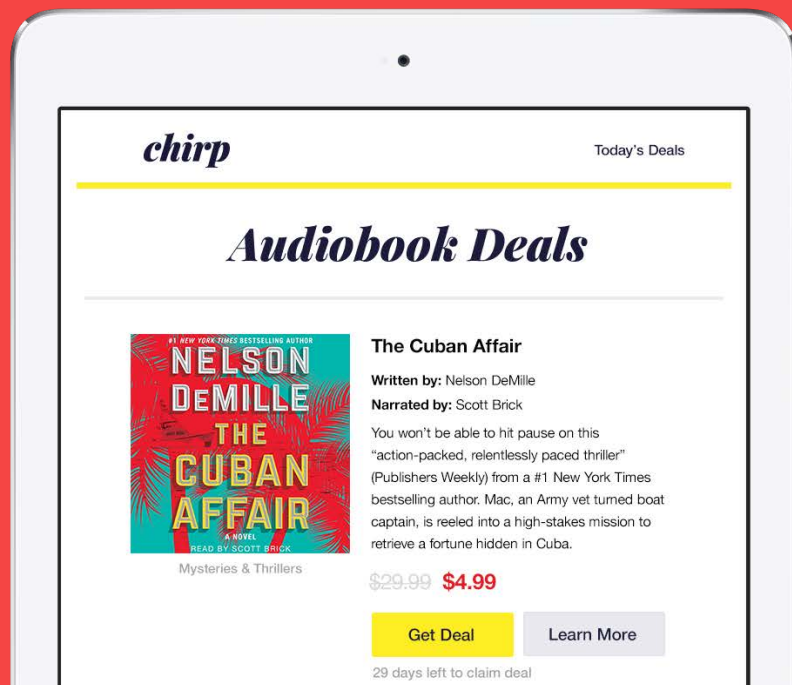
## ON RECOUPING AUDIOBOOK PRODUCTION COSTS...

I sought a Chirp Deal in order to aid in rapidly recouping the audio narration and production costs for the three books (in my series). This was a tall order since I invested in a pricey narrator. The net royalties from the 28-day Chirp Deal and my own (BookBub) ad spend during the deal will recoup more than 50% of the combined audio production costs. I anticipate recouping the remaining portion in the next two to three months. The Chirp Deal played a significant role in making that possible.



**K. PATRICK DONOGHUE**

author of *Skywave*



# Have you run a Chirp promotion for your audiobook?

Drive significant increases in sales and boost visibility for your audio titles.

Here are some of the ways BookBub helps you reach new listeners:



## CHIRP RETAILER

Chirp offers listeners access to a full catalog of audiobooks they can purchase à la carte with no subscription fees.



## CHIRP DEALS

Similar to BookBub Featured Deals, our team works with publishers and authors to curate new audiobook deals every day.



## AUDIO BOOKBUB ADS

Use BookBub's flexible self-serve advertising platform to promote your audiobook with powerful targeting options.

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