



AUDIOBOOK CREATION WELCOME PACKET

How to turn your beautiful manuscript
into a fully produced audiobook.



WELCOME!!



HEY!

Welcome to your audiobook journey. I'm really excited to be working with you! If you're new to audiobook production, the information in this Audiobook Welcome Packet will help you better understand the stages of production for your audiobook, detail the processes to expect, help you better market your work, answer some common questions, and create the path for a smooth audiobook launch. It's a lot of information, I know, but it's definitely worth your time to read. I hope that as you peruse it and more questions arise, you'll reach out to me.

Ready? Let's get started!





CONTENTS

PART 1

PRE-PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

List of things that need to be done or prepped before you embark on the audiobook production

PART 2

KEY PRODUCTION STAGES

Track where you are on your production journey.

PART 3

PRODUCTION STAGES DETAIL

The finer points on the different stages of audiobook production and the deliverables at each.

PART 4

SOCIAL MEDIA & PROMOTION

Points and ideas to connect with me and to promote your amazing work.

PART 5

RESOURCES

Useful forms and worksheets to help you set up your audiobook narration project.

PRE-PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE YOU START...

List of things that need to be done or prepped before you embark on the audiobook production

Necessary

FULLY PROOFED MANUSCRIPT

Has your manuscript been fully edited and proof-read?

☐

SQUARED COVER ART READY

Is the squared off cover-art good to go?

☐

META DATA COLLATED

Is the book meta-data for your platform listings ready to create your listing?

☐

SELECT YOUR NARRATOR

Have you contractually engaged your narrator.

☐

AGREED YOUR TIMESCALES

Have you agreed sample and final delivery dates with your narrator.

☐

Advised

MS PROOFED OUT LOUD

Read your Manuscript out-loud. The benefits of this step are astonishing.

☐

NARRATOR NAME ON COVER

If you can, credit your narrator's hard work on the audiobook cover.

☐

AUDITION SCRIPT READY

If you are auditioning your narrator is this script prepped and clearly formatted?

☐

CHARACTER SHEET READY

List of main characters, especially recurring ones, and their descriptions.

☐

SQUARED-OFF ARTWORK DONE

Audiobooks have squared covers and your artwork will need adjusting.

☐

KEY PRODUCTION STAGES

01

EXCHANGE THE MANUSCRIPT

You send me your distribution ready manuscript.



02

READ AND PREP THE MANUSCRIPT

I read, and markup the manuscript, cast the characters and do any pronunciation research.



03

EXTENDED SAMPLE

I send you a longer (15 or so minutes) sample of one or more sections of the audiobook.



04

RECORDING THE AUDIOBOOK

I narrate the audiobook.



05

PROOFING, EDITING & MASTERING

I have the narration 3rd party proofed, edited and audiofiles mastered.



06

DELIVERY

I deliver the finished audiobook to our agreed platform or cloud storage.



07

PAYMENT

I invoice you and payment is exchanged.



08

QA AND RELEASE

The distribution service QA's the audio and the audiobook is distributed.



PRODUCTION STAGES DETAIL

01

EXCHANGE THE MANUSCRIPT

The Author or Rights Holder (RH) sends me the **distribution ready** manuscript, any character notes, and pronunciations.

The manuscript you provide for recording must be the final version in either MS Word or PDF.

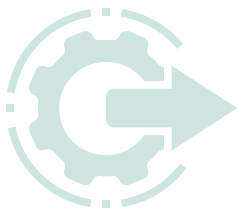
Unless agreed upon in our contract, please hold off sending me the MS until all manuscript edits are complete.

While we strive for perfection, even the most meticulous editors may overlook certain errors, and occasionally, textual adjustments become necessary post-recording.

In the event that extensive manuscript modifications necessitate a re-recording of audio segments, I am prepared to undertake this task for an additional fee. Feel free to reach out for a precise estimate.



Rights Holder sends narrator distribution ready manuscript.



02

READ AND PREP THE MANUSCRIPT

I read, and markup the manuscript, cast the characters and do any pronunciation research.

Prepping the manuscript Includes:

- Reading the manuscript in full.
- Noting information and/or questions I may have about characters, plot, scenes, emotion, pronunciations, etc.
- Researching pronunciations, real-life persons that are referenced, and accents.
- Verifying the character sheet and/or pronunciations provided by author.
- Casting the Characters

If there are words, names or terms that I can't find the correct pronunciation of through research I may send you a list of pronunciation queries. This might include non-english words, names of people, places, or words with multiple pronunciations. If you are able it would be really helpful if you can provide an pronunciation using the phonetic spelling or recording an MP3 by using the voice recorder on your phone.

Occasionally, I miss a word or two in prep and then come across them while recording. I will email about these as I come across them.

If you have any specific passages you want including in the extended sample (see step 3) please let me know at this point.

Narrator sends any pronunciations or MS queries to Rights Holder.

Author or rights holder verifies the pronunciations sent by narrator.

RH sends character sheets and metadata sheets to narrator.



03

EXTENDED SAMPLE CHECKPOINT

The Extended Sample or 15 Minute Checkpoint serves as a checkpoint on the most critical aspects of the production: accents, pronunciations, pacing, and tone.

I record this for you and either leave it in a Google Drive share, or upload to the chosen delivery platform.

This audio sample should be representative of the production as a whole and doesn't need to be the actual first 15 minutes of the audiobook. It can be a sample from a different section of the book, and/or short samples of character voices.

When reviewing the sample, it is important to provide the chapter number, audio timestamp, a description of the error and what change you are requesting. I can provide you with a GoogleDocs Spreadsheet for noting any changes in.



Author or rights holder approves the “First 15 Checkpoint.” All character voices and acting choices must be approved at this stage of the process. Any changes after the audiobook is delivered are limited to errors that conflict with the provided manuscript, such as mis-pronunciations or misreads.



04

NARRATING THE AUDIOBOOK

I record the audiobook in full. I record full Punch and Roll audio from my lovely quiet StudioBricks sound isolated soundbooth in my studio.

From time to time I may need to contact you about:

- Pronunciations that were missed in prep.
- Anywhere the MS doesn't make sense or if I think I found a typo.



FUN FACTS

- A 5 hour audiobook takes an experienced narrator 1-2 weeks for the recording phase.
- I aim to record between 1 and 2 finished hours of audio every workday. Recording is mentally and physically tiring and this is an expected amount of audio for most audiobook producers.
- It takes between 2-3 hours to record one finished hour of audio for experienced narrators.



05

PROOF, EDIT, AND MASTER THE AUDIO

If your publisher does not offer this service, your book will be proofed, edited, and mastered in my studios by me or my trusted suppliers.

I outsource all proof-listening. Proof listening consists of identifying errors in the reading of the text. For example, mispronunciations, wrong voice, mumbles, and any extraneous noises. Think of it like a copy-editor for audiobooks, a second set of ears on the audio to make sure it's absolutely perfect. The proofer then sends back to me a list of "Pickups". I then fix or re-record these errors in the source audio.

My audiobooks are also edited by a professional 3rd party editor. I send the finished audio to my editor and he edits out any noises, clicks and bumps. He might also add or remove space in the audio to adjust pacing. For any audio that was wrongly recorded, or issues that he can't fix, he supplies me with a list of any pickups that he found.

My editor then masters it and returns finished, mastered audio files to me ready to submit to the platform.

Mastering is a process to ensure consistent audio levels to make it a pleasing experience for the listener and includes checks that the audio meets all distributor parameters for quality.



I send recorded audio to the proofer who sends me a list of errors which I correct in the original recording as "pickups".

I send the proofed and corrected chapters to my editor who works his magic and also sends me any pickups he finds.

He returns proofed, mastered WAVS, MP3's or FLAC files to me.

I then select a suitable retail sample from the returned audio.



06

DELIVERING THE AUDIOBOOK

This is the grand finale – the moment you've been waiting for with bated breath! Drumroll, please... It's time to unwrap your audiobook!

I upload your completed audio files to our agreed platform – be it ACX, Findaway Voices, Google Drive, or WeTransfer.

When you listen to your audiobook, if you spot a mispronunciation or a misread, worry not! Just revisit the handy spreadsheet from the "Extended Sample Checkpoint".

But – no script changes or acting choice direction can be accepted! Corrections at this stage are for deviations from the script.

If you feel that you absolutely have to correct a script error that you didn't spot in the MS at this point, that, unfortunately, comes with an additional ticket fee. Blame it on my editor, he's got a strict post-production policy!

I put lots of love and care into crafting the best audiobook that I possibly can. I really hope that you love what I did! 🎧🌟





PAYMENT

Upon delivery, I will send you an invoice.

The calculation of the final audio length will be rounded to the nearest minute. If your book is very short, a minimum time length applies but this will already have been discussed with you at time of booking. It's worth noting that, as a non-member of SAG-AFTRA (the US performers' union), payments are to be directed to me directly.

If you paid a deposit at the beginning of the project this will be noted on the invoice and subtracted from the total.

Payment methods I offer are:

- Direct Bank to Bank
- PayPal
- GoCardless/Stripe for Credit Card payments
- TransferWise.

Please try to opt for payment methods that don't impose fees on the narrator, such as Direct Bank to Bank transfers. I'm open to accommodating preferences; if a convenient method for you involves fees (e.g., PayPal), please inform me, and we can find a suitable arrangement.

In the spirit of flexibility, I appreciate your understanding, and together, we can ensure a smooth and mutually beneficial payment process.



The total running time is calculated and an invoice is sent with some payment choices. Thank you so much :)



QUALITY REVIEW AND RELEASE

Distribution platforms such as ACX and Findaway have a series of quality reviews and checks once the author or rights holder approves the audio.

These include checks on:

- Metadata
- Audio quality, loudness, noise floor, file format and audiofile roomtone in the headers and footers of the files.
- Cover Art for “unsuitability”. This can be anything from lewd images to a requirement to prove a right to use the images in the cover art.
- That the narrator was paid.

This can take 30 business days, and has been known to take longer. Recently I have found that ACX has been pretty quick, one recently was 24 hours through QA, whilst Findaway seem to take a little longer.

After the quality checkpoint, the audiobook is released for sale.

Wooooohoooo!!!

Now is the time promote your book. I am pretty active on social media and I have a section that covers all of that a little later on.
READ ON!!!



Your Audiobook is live and in the WILD!!!!





SOCIAL MEDIA



CONNECT

I'm pretty active on Social Media. Please do connect with me so that we can tag each other in posts, comment and generally do algorithm friendly things. BTW, I'm an Instagram first poster.

POST

I might post about the book in one or all of these stages:

- booking or casting
- during pre-production -such as prepping the manuscript or performing research
- during recording or when the audiobook is pending release
- when the audio is released

Please do let me know if you don't want any social media announcements or if you prefer only some e.g. when audio is released on Audible or other distribution sites. Or if I need to wait for a specific time/date or event before posting.

HANDLES

Facebook Page: @deborahbalmvo

Facebook Personal: @debsbalm

TikTok: @deborahbalmvo

Instagram: @deborahbalmvo

Threads: @deborahbalmvo

LinkedIn: @deborahbalmvo

BlueSky: @deborahbalmvo





SOCIAL MEDIA

COVER ART

I LOVE Cover Art. Especially if it is done by an Indie Artist or if it really nails what the reader or listener can expect from your book. If your cover art is available, squared audio cover or the book cover, I would love to have it so I can use it in my social media posts.

FANBASE INTERACTION

I have joined some of my authors Facebook Groups if you would like me to interact with your fanbase as a guest I am happy to. It's fun for the readers to see kind of "behind the scenes" and engage in the process! If you want me to do so in your group, please just add me and let me know! I will tell you what week/s I will be producing your title and posting.

COLABS, REMIXES, INTERVIEWS

I'm available for Instagram or TikTok collabs, interviews, remixes. All the things!! I am also happy to appear on podcasts that you may be using to promote your book. I record most weekdays and not normally at weekends. I do check email on weekends if you had something urgent to discuss with me.



AUDIOBOOK PROMOTION

Now it's time to promote your audiobook! It's all about marketing, marketing, marketing. Sound familiar? Here are some ways to market your audiobook, get reviews, and gain new fans in audio.

PROMO CODE GIVEAWAYS

Sites like ACX and Findaway provide promotion codes to give to listeners. Some suggestions for giveaways are:

- In your Facebook Fan Groups or relevant groups you participate in.
- through your website or newsletter
- at book signings or events

Remember to link to the audiobook on each listing.

PROMO CODE EXCHANGE FOR REVIEW

In addition to giveaways, you can post your audiobook and the codes to the following sites to in exchange for a review:

Free Audio Book Codes: <https://www.freeaudiobookcodes.com/>

It handles code distribution and they have now improved the way they encourage reviews so listeners are more likely to leave a review

Audiobook Boom: <https://audiobookboom.com/authors>

Sign up to have your book promoted in a weekly newsletter. Readers request a code in exchange for a review. You can review their previous Audible, Amazon or Goodreads reviews, and you have control who you send codes to.

Audiobook Blog Tours: <https://theaudiobookworm.com/>

Sign up to have your audiobook go on a virtual tour. Bloggers sign up to promote and or review the audiobook on their site.

SOCIAL MEDIA GROUPS

Facebook and Goodreads have audiobook-specific genre and sub-genre specific groups that allow promotional and giveaway postings. Most groups have rules about promotions so be sure to follow them!

Many groups are very active and members recommend authors and narrators they like in their discussions. See my section for Audiobook Social Media Groups.

AUDIOBOOK PROMOTION

HAPPY RELEASE DAY!!

Highlight the release in your newsletter, groups, pages. Use your network to promote the audiobook. Do link to the audiobook on Audible in all of your communications.

WHISPERSYNC

Whispersync allows the listener to switch back and forth between the eReader and audio without losing their location. Make sure to contact ACX or other distribution platform make sure the audio and ebook have sync enabled.

Audiobooks that also have a Whispersync option often sell well because readers who have the eBook can purchase the audio at a discount. Many readers will grab the audio if the book is whispersynced because it is offered at a discount.

EXTRA PROMOTIONAL SERVICES

- 60 Second Video Trailer with Audio
- 2 Additional Promotional Social postings

Ask me about other services that you would like that are not listed.

COVER ART

They say “Don’t judge a book by its cover!” Well here’s the thing. Readers really do and so should too. It will be the eye-catching covers that make readers stop their scroll. Do you have a beautiful eye-catching book cover suited to your style of book that might have been professionally designed? Congratulations!! The cover is part of the recipe for best-selling audiobooks.

If you have told yourself that the cover doesn’t matter you may wish to revisit that. Take a look on Amazon at the top-selling 100 books in your genre and ask yourself if your book cover is on par or better than your competitors. I say this from a place of kindness. I really want your book to do well and absolutely, a sale can be made or lost on the cover.

Talk to me if you would like a Cover Evaluation or if you would like a professional cover artist recommending to you.

FACEBOOK GROUPS

You will probably know the Facebook Groups that are supportive of your work. Maybe you even run your own Fan Group. Here are some other suggestions:

GENERAL



Audiobook Lovers facebook.com/groups/audiobooklovers
Audiobook Addicts facebook.com/groups/audiobookaddicts
Audible Book Club | Audiobooks facebook.com/groups/219431745345392
The Audiobook Club facebook.com/groups/theaudiobookclubgroup
Everything AudiobookE.A.R.S. facebook.com/groups/EverythingAudiobooksE.A.R.S
Audiobooks Unleashed facebook.com/groups/audiobooksunleashed
Audio Bookfly facebook.com/groups/AudioBookfly
Audio Loves- facebook.com/groups/AudioLoves/
Free Audible AudioBook Giveaways facebook.com/groups/freeaudiobookgiveaways
UK FreeAudioBooksforReview- facebook.com/groups/1858692994428812

ROMANCE

Aural Fixation facebook.com/groups/auralfixationaudio
Audio Loves facebook.com/romanceaudioloves
Audio Bookfly facebook.com/AudioBookfly
Audiobook Obsession Review Group facebook.com/AudiobookObsessionReviewGroup
Reverse Harem Audio Books facebook.com/RHaudiobooks

MYSTERY THRILLER

Mystery Audiobook Lovers facebook.com/mysteryaudio
Cozy Mystery Audiobook Lovers facebook.com/293318778619666

SCIFI AND FANTASY

Fant-SciFi Audiobook Club facebook.com/FantSciFiAudiobooks SciFi Audiobooks
facebook.com/292258431569710
Fantasy Audiobook Fans facebook.com/fantasyaudio

LGBTQ+

Lesbian Audiobooks facebook.com/1498493863718913

CHRISTIAN

Christian Audiobook Narrators & Authors (CIA-CARS) facebook.com/220404914802348



CAN I LISTEN TO EACH CHAPTER AS YOU PRODUCE IT?

I know the temptation to want to hear each chapter as soon as it's recorded is strong, but all the audio files need to be edited and mastered by my editor in one batch. To deliver the chapters "as you go" would be like trying to bake a cake one ingredient at a time – not the best recipe for success. Plus, it would dramatically increase the time and costs needed for the production of the audiobook.

DO YOU NARRATE EROTICA?

I absolutely do, though usually under my pseudonym. If I'm working with you on a project and the narrative is darker or more risqué than my regular audiobook persona work with, I may suggest we work under my erotica pseudonym.



THANK YOU!!

WHEW!!!



I know this is a lot of information! Let me know if you have any questions or need more information on anything! If you are new to audiobooks, I don't expect you to know all of this. That is what I am here for... The great part about audiobook production is that I'll take care of all the details for you. The result? An entertaining production that makes your story come alive. So, sit back, relax, and keep writing.

Don't hesitate to reach out to me, we are working together as a team and if there is anything I can do to help, I will!

So looking forward to getting started on this production with you!!

CHARACTER SHEET

More detail makes a character, more real. One for each main character.
Also in the Google sheet.

NAME

AGE

Age range in book.

PRONUNCIATION

eg Helena, Alena, Eleanor. "Eh-leh-nah"

GENDER

Or Gender identity. Pronouns.

WHERE FROM?

e.g. raised in Newcastle but lives in London.

THREE ADJECTIVES

Impulsive, Carefree, Introverted, Sunny, Fearful

RECURRING?

Future book minor/major character?

ACCENT/RACE

VOICE NOTES

Gruff, silky, oily, deep, sonorous, light, harsh.

ROLE/RELATIONSHIPS

To others in story.

DEEPEST HOPE OR FEAR

DREAM CASTING

Best actor or famous person to play them.

DESCRIPTION

Appearance, attitude, motivations, education level, life expectations.

CONCERNS OR ABSOLUTES

eg Script states character is from London, but you want them to have an American accent.



METADATA

TITLE

AUTHOR

SERIES

GENRE

CHAPTERS

PAGES

WORDS

EXTENDED SAMPLE DUE

FINAL DELIVERY DUE

PUBLICATION DATE

DISTRIBUTION PLATFORM

TIME SETTING

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

OVERALL TONE AND PACE

REQUIRED AUDIO FILE FORMAT (MP3 OR FLAC)



AUDITION ORGANISER

Title: _____

Narrator Gender: _____

Fiction/Nonfiction: _____

Genre: _____

Budget: _____

Vocal style: _____

Accent(s): _____

Main Character age: _____

Target Narrator age: _____

Words: _____

Estimated Length: _____

Book Sample Section: _____

Date Audition Posted: _____

Required Delivery: _____

Latest Sample Delivery: _____

Auditions Received: _____

Auditions Shortlisted: _____

Offer Made: Y/N _____

SELECTION CRITERIA

Pleasant Voice
Engaging
Complete Service
Proofing Offered

Sound Quality
Cadence
Enunciation
Prof. Sound Engineer

Project Fit
MC Fit
Accent Skill

