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The TurnKey Publisher's

AUDIO Publishing Handbook

**How to Create & Self-Publish
Profitable Audio Books &
Audio Programs Without
Any Help From Publishers or
Recording Studios!**

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The TurnKey Publisher's Audio Publishing Handbook

How to Create & Self-Publish Profitable Audio Books & Audio Programs Without Any Help From Publishers or Recording Studios!

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Dedication

To the People Who Want To ...

Expand and Magnify Their Voice ...

Share Their Wisdom ...

Teach the World ...

Inspire Others ...

Lead by Example ...

Join the World Conversation ...

The Time To Begin Is Now.

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Introduction

In 1985, I bought my first CD player for my home stereo system. I was amazed by how quietly and elegantly the silver, digitally-encoded discs stored data and reproduced crisp, clean music within the laser-based player.

Before then, I bought vinyl records like everyone else did at the time to enjoy music, but I always disliked how fragile they were. Many music lovers bought cassette tapes because they were so portable. I disliked them because they had terrible sound quality.

Although laser-based CDs were more expensive than records or tapes, I was hooked on their quality and durability. As the years progressed into the 1990s, more people switched to CDs as their preferred music format. In the early 1990s, records fell out of the mainstream, followed by cassette tapes in the early 2000s.

Today, the CD remains the dominant format for delivering and distributing audio content. However, the ever-growing popularity of iTunes and the iPods shows the trend moving rapidly toward a purely digital file format.

(To this day, I still do not own an iPod. I probably won't need one anytime soon because my Blackberry cellular phone has a built-in music player. I can even connect my PC to my cell phone so I can transfer my photos, music, and even videos into it.)

I predict that within the next 10 years, the CD will become a relic of the past, much like the vinyl record and cassette tape before it.

The Birth of Audio Books & Audio Programs

That short recap of audio history primarily focuses on **music** as the primary audio content because, by far, it continues to be the dominant type of audio content being delivered. However, a subset of the audio content using the very same audio technology is *spoken-word, information-based content*.

Although not as widespread as musical content, spoken-word, information-based content continues to grow both in popularity and profitability.

For example, the traditional publishing industry discovered it could sell the same book twice by hiring professional voice talent and bringing him or her into a studio to read the book into a microphone. The whole idea of recording this reading was to create “audio books”, which often commanded a higher premium than traditional books.

Similarly, in the seminar industry, it is not uncommon for hours of audio recordings of presentations, seminars, and other educational content to be recorded and later sold as highly-profitable educational products.

Introduction

For more than 15 years, cassette tapes were the audio format of choice for this informational content because they were small, portable, and inexpensive to produce. Consumers could listen to tapes while walking, jogging, or driving.

Today, CDs are the preferred audio format for most audio programs and audio books, but I believe audio titles will move towards the “all-digital” format, just like the music industry has, in the years to come.

My First Experiences Producing Audio Programs

In 2002, I helped my friend, David, produce his first real estate investment audio course. This was a new venture for both of us. We would produce and sell this new product entirely online without the help from traditional publishers. While working with him, I discovered that PC software and technology had advanced far enough that the average person could produce his or her own audio programs and audio books without a professional studio. The studio I had hired to help us record David’s presentation used a simple Windows-based PC at the heart of its digital recording system.

I was amazed at the ease with which the studio seemed to record David’s presentations. I was even more amazed the studio could so easily correct speech errors using a mouse. I noted the software the studio used, and a few weeks later, I created my own little PC-based studio in my home office. Amazingly, it cost me less than \$400 to buy the extra hardware and software to get started.

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After David's project, I went on to help produce a variety of educational audio programs, audio interviews, and promotional audios for seminar presenters and business associates I knew.

Since those early projects, I studied and learned the art and business of independent book publishing. Coupled with my prior experience in creating and producing audio programs, I realized I had also learned the unconventional art and business of audio publishing.

Because the road I took was one of entrepreneurial bootstrapping, my view of audio publishing varies greatly from that of traditional publishers of audio books. Whereas traditional publishers continue to focus on reading book text into a microphone, I emphasize creating interesting and dynamic audio programs that far exceed the value of most boring, traditional audio books.

A New Book is Born

When I wrote Volume I of TurnKey Publishing, I had simply intended to write a small chapter on audio publishing within in a book largely focused on the business of **independent book publishing**. After I began writing, I realized I had far more information on audio publishing in my head than I could reasonably write and fit into a chapter. In fact, I had more information on audio publishing than I had found anywhere else.

That realization became the genesis of the book you hold in your hands. Although audio publishing can be an entire art and business all its own, I consider it one part of a much larger whole that I consider my independent publishing business. With that philosophy, I consider this book Volume II of *The TurnKey*

Introduction

Publisher book series, a direct follow-on to Volume I, TurnKey Publishing.

If you choose to approach audio publishing as a stand-alone business, you should know many of the fundamentals of the independent book publishing business apply here. I recommend you read *TurnKey Publishing* prior to reading this book if you want to better understand my business philosophy and strategy. However, almost everything else you need to know to create and produce your first audio title resides within this book.

Like book publishing, I find audio publishing to be a rewarding and profitable endeavor. For me, the business of audio publishing complements the business of book publishing. Each business has its own strengths and virtues.

As you learn more about audio publishing, I encourage you to keep an open mind and tap into your imagination to find those special ideas that will make your audio program unique, special, and interesting.

We are fast approaching the age where creativity and imagination matter more than learning the technical process in audio publishing. It is becoming easier all the time. I encourage you to join in the world conversation of audio publishing and producing your own audio programs.

I look forward to one day seeing your audio book and audio program on my bookshelf.

Matthew S. Chan

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Chapter 1

From Book Publishing to Audio Publishing

Audio Publishing Is a Specialty

As I stated in the Introduction, when I wrote *TurnKey Publishing*, I initially included a chapter on audio publishing. I thought the topic would be simple and small enough a subject to write about as a tangent to my overall publishing business. However, once I began writing, it did not take me long to realize the chapter was going to be much longer than I had anticipated. In fact, I determined the subject of audio publishing could go on for several chapters.

I had a choice to make. I could stick to writing an overview of audio publishing and include it in the book, or I could write more comprehensively about the subject of audio publishing in another book.

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I could not write a sufficient summary of audio publishing without feeling like I cheated and left out crucial information readers needed to know. After all, it took me years to develop my system that included the different techniques, formats, and technical issues involved with audio publishing. I wanted to cover audio publishing in more depth than I had seen discussed anywhere else in the publishing field.

And so, this book was born. I now have the freedom and space to fully discuss the subject of audio publishing to my satisfaction. I trust you will agree with me that a more expansive treatment of the subject is far more preferable than a simplistic summary and overview.

Which Comes First—Audio or Book Publishing?

In the *TurnKey Publisher* series, I generally place a greater emphasis on book publishing than audio publishing. Starting out, the first two titles I published and released for my publishing company, Ascend Beyond Publishing, were printed books. I then went on to release two audio titles before going back to writing another book and a manual. However, you may find starting with audio publishing more appropriate to your situation.

Before I wrote my first book, I had technical experience in creating, producing, and editing several audio programs for other speakers and authors. But I intentionally chose to publish a book first because it carried a greater weight of credibility and it was something I had not done before.

I do not think it matters whether you start with a book publishing project or audio publishing project. The important thing is to actually start and complete your first title.

Volume II of “The TurnKey Publisher” Book Series

As I stated earlier, the subject of audio publishing is large enough to stand on its own. Though some similarities exist from a technical and production point of view, book publishing and audio publishing are very different animals.

I spend the better part of this book discussing the creative and technical process of producing audio titles. However, from a business perspective, I largely treat my audio titles the same as my book titles.

My prior book, *TurnKey Publishing*, includes the following business-related chapters on book publishing that are directly relevant and useful to audio publishing:

- The Benefits of Independent Publishing
- The Business Side of Publishing
- Forming a Publishing Company
- Pricing Books
- Marketing Books
- Office Operations & Administration

I could have included each of these chapters in this book, but I felt it artificially added pages of mostly identical information from my prior book. I did not want readers of *TurnKey Publishing*

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to feel there was too much repetitive information in this book. And so, this book assumes you have or will read the first book.

If you are a reader who bought this book only for the subject of audio publishing, you will learn the entire creative and technical process of how to create an audio title. But many business issues of independent publishing are not discussed here because I cover them more thoroughly in *TurnKey Publishing*.

This book on audio publishing is Volume II of *The TurnKey Publisher* book series and builds upon the foundation I established for my book publishing business in Volume I. Although not required, I highly recommend you read *TurnKey Publishing* to better understand how I *integrate* audio publishing with the business of book publishing.

Chapter 2

Creating and Developing Audio Content

In this chapter, I discuss the beginning of the content creation process. Similar to book publishing, audio publishing offers many ways to create and develop audio content. You can create a variety of consumer products, such as audio books, audio courses, promotional programs, and other audio programs. You just have to decide what kind of audio program you want to produce and for which audience you want to produce it.

What to Write About

One of the most common questions would-be authors ask is, “What do I write about?” People who find the idea of being an author very sexy but who simply do not know how or where to direct their energies often ask this question.