

RECORDED BOOKS

People have been recording literature since the phonograph's invention in 1877. Recording an entire novel using this technology was impractical, but works of poetry and short stories were possible. The history of the recorded book is one of rapidly changing formats. The transition from phonograph to vinyl record to cassette to compact disc to digital all happened in less than 100 years, which is astounding when compared to the many centuries that other book formats took to evolve.



*The phonograph at home
reading out a novel*

"The Papa of the Phonograph" in
Daily Graphic, April 2, 1878

TALKING BOOKS

Full-length recorded novels began to appear in the 1930s, when **talking books** recorded on a set of long-playing (LP) records were made for people with visual disabilities in the United States and Great Britain. West Germany later followed with a similar service. The average novel could fit on 10 records.

The American Foundation for the Blind and Royal National Institute of Blind People continue to record talking books today. Talking books differ from audiobooks in one key respect: they have never been sold to the public.

Woman listening to a talking book circa 1939



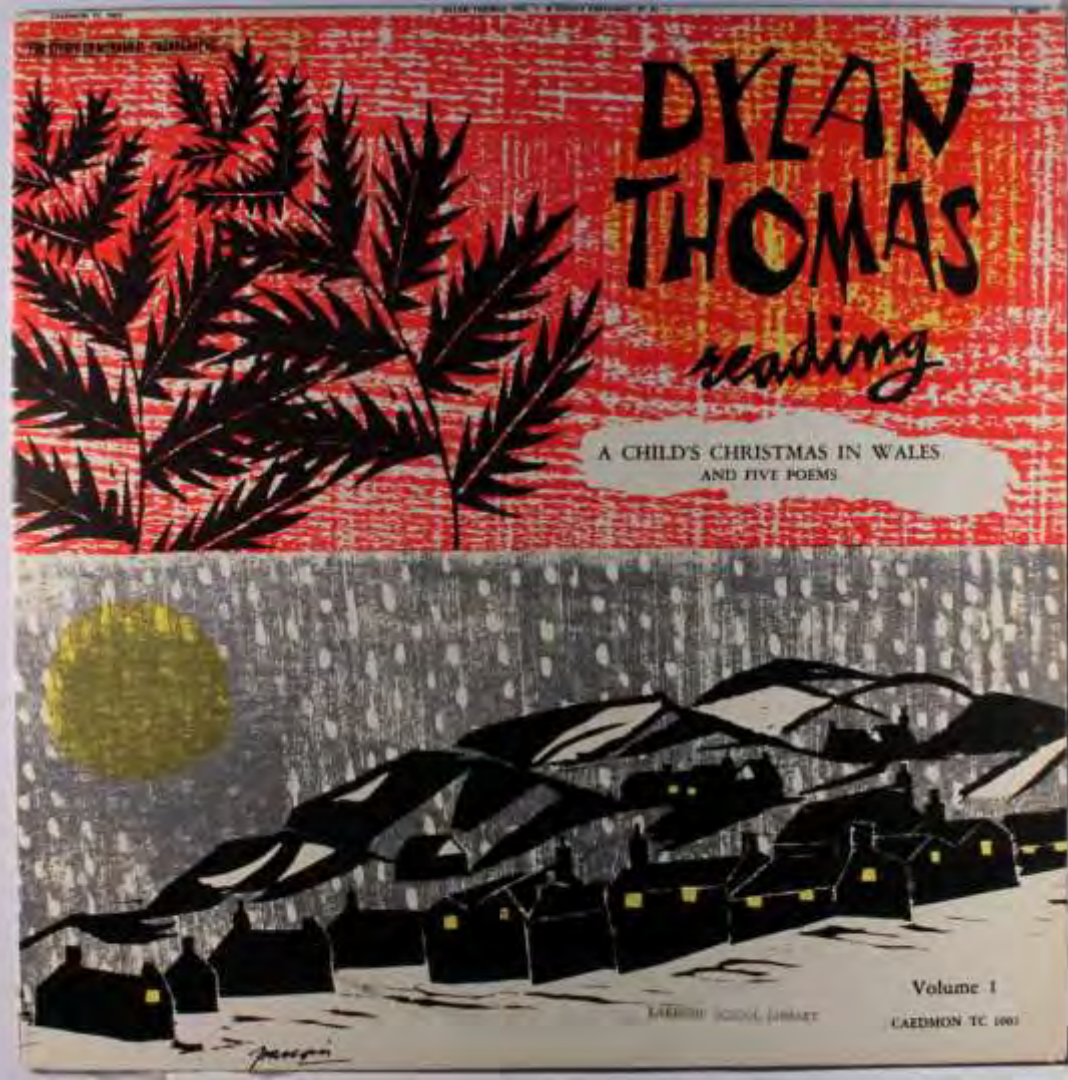
For more on the history of talking book programs, visit:

www.afb.org/talkingbook/home.asp

www.howweread.co.uk/gallery/talking-books

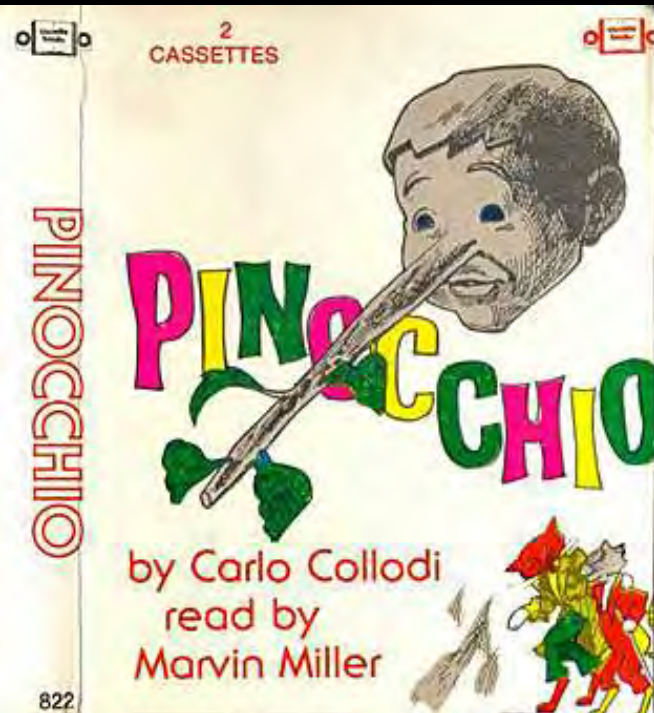
VINYL RECORD BOOKS

Record companies began recording literature for the general public in the 1950s. As the first company dedicated to providing spoken word books to the public, New York based Caedmon Records pioneered the audiobook industry that we have today. Their first released record was *A Child's Christmas in Wales and Five Poems* read by the author Dylan Thomas. Listening Library and Spoken Arts also produced recorded books during this time and they were the first to distribute to schools and libraries. Both companies still exist today.



BOOKS ON CASSETTE

Audiobooks became mainstream with the introduction of cassette tapes, first invented in the Netherlands in 1963. Most of the early book cassettes were created for instructional material. Companies like Books on Tape and Recorded Books began distributing to libraries and schools and provided the general public with rental options (audio books generally cost \$80-100 at the time). New technology such as Sony Walkmans and car stereos increased the demand for audiobooks.



FUN FACT:

Olympic gold medalist Duvall Hecht founded Books on Tape (BoT) in 1975. Thirty-two years later, his highly successful company was the catalyst for meeting his wife Anne Marie, who responded to an audiobook competition sponsored by BoT. Hecht was so impressed with her entry that he wrote her a letter and thus began a romantic courtship through the written word.

AUDIOBOOKS TODAY

The term *audiobook* became the standard term in 1994 for all recorded books, making it easier to encompass so many rapidly changing audio formats. In the US, Books on CD (compact disc) replaced cassettes in popularity sometime around 2003 but only had a decade to shine before the introduction of digital audio books (eAudio). While many people still use books on CD and libraries continue to carry them, there is no doubt that downloadables are now the preferred format in many countries. Exceptions to this trend include children's audiobooks in Germany and audiobooks in Israel and Middle Eastern countries, where cassette remains the primary format.

The recent popularity of audiobooks is astounding: 6,200 audiobooks were released in 2010, compared to 25,787 in 2014! The global audiobook industry is currently worth \$2.6 billion, with Germany being one of the hottest markets of all.



PLAYAWAY[™]
READY-TO-GO AUDIO

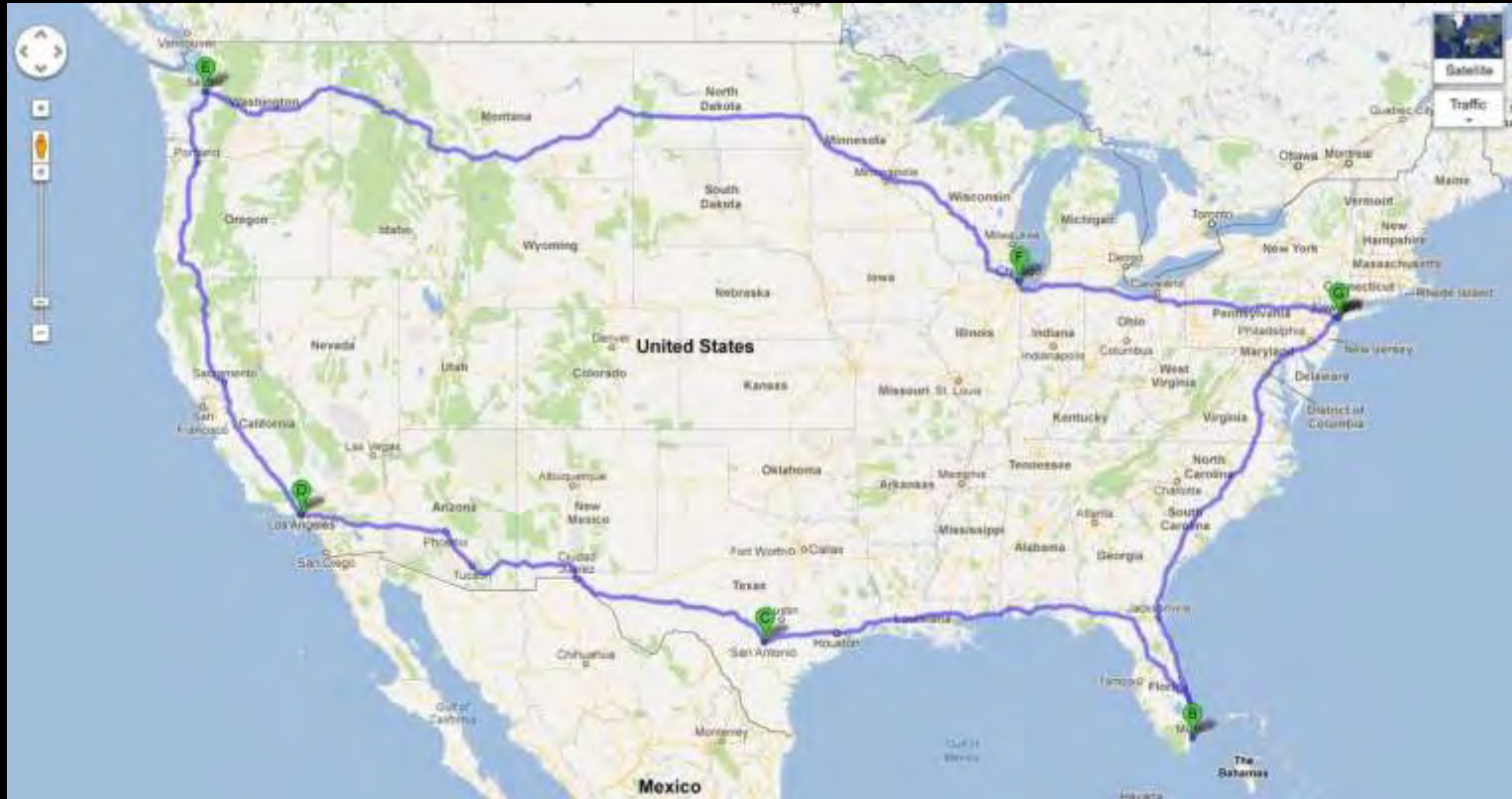


WHAT IS THIS?

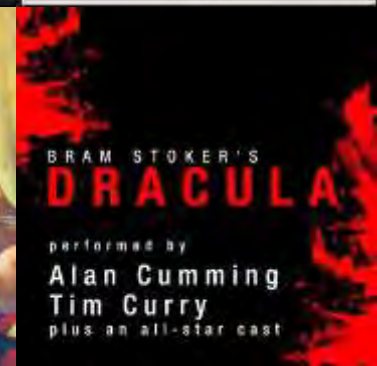
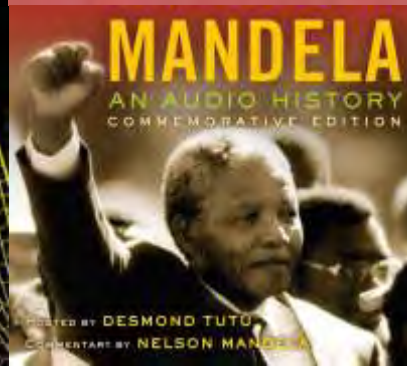
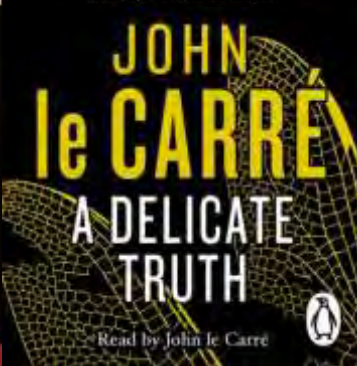
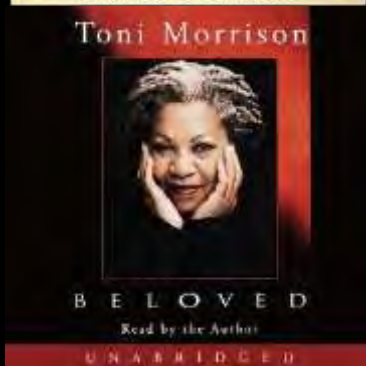
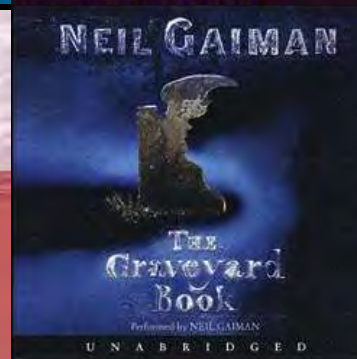
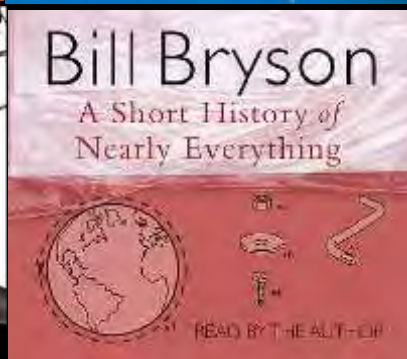
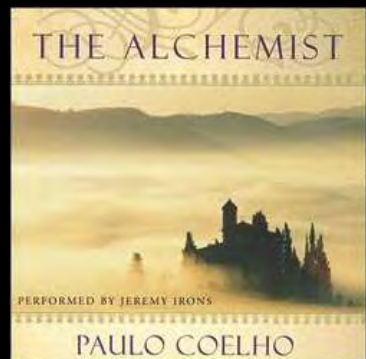
If you've never heard of a Playaway, head to your local library. All you need to listen to one of these pocket-sized audiobooks is a set of earphones.

ONE LONG AUDIOBOOK...

You could drive from New York to Miami to San Antonio to L.A. to Seattle to Chicago and back to New York in 130 hours. If you were listening to the unabridged audiobook of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* the entire time, [you'd still have 23 hours left!](#)



IF YOU ONLY
READ **ONE**
AUDIOBOOK
EVER, READ ONE
OF **THESE...**



“The good thing about technology...is that it has never shunned away our **love for reading**. There have been many ways by which inventors could say that we have no more need of books – that we should turn completely to other kinds of media, and yet that hasn’t happened yet, which is a testament to the power of words – **the power of books** – and how they are an integral part of our lives.”

Dom Einhorn [February 7, 2015]

<http://born2invest.com/cdn/audiobooks-make-people-read-more-and-other-interesting-facts-about-this-emerging-industry>

