

# Audiobook Trend Continues Even In Time of Crisis

*Circulation of juvenile content growing rapidly*

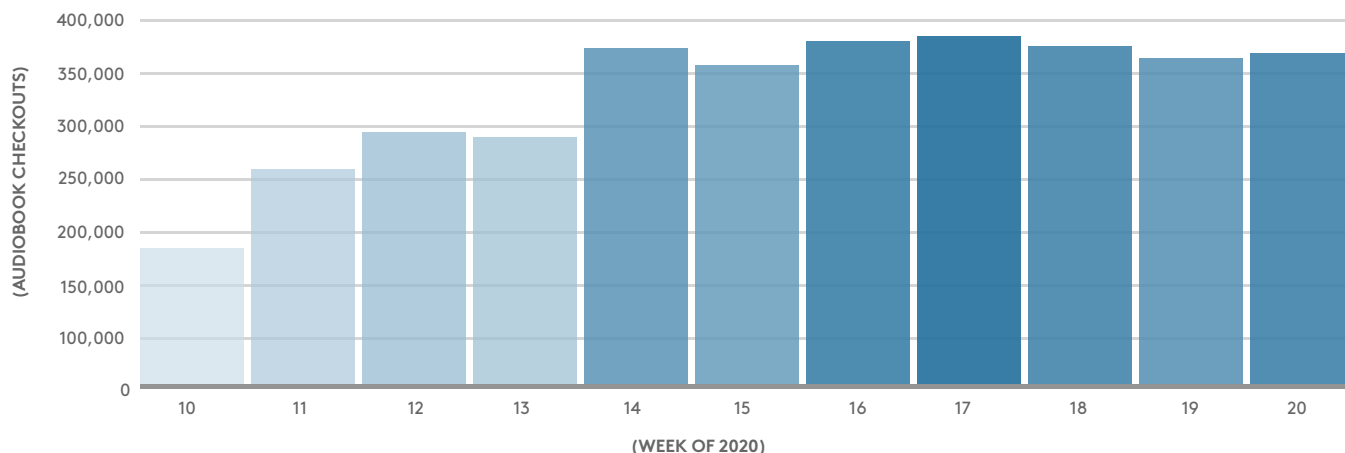
**As libraries and communities continue to adopt new guidelines for services, digital content thrives with audiobooks making serious strides, particularly among younger readers.**

After a national emergency was declared in the U.S. on March 13 due to COVID-19, many schools and public libraries closed their physical buildings. Since then, demand for digital content has increased, both among public library readers and students doing remote learning.

In particular, audiobooks continue to prove popular despite a decrease in commutes as more people work from home. Prior to March 13, the audiobook was the fastest-growing format among readers of all ages and this remains true, specifically for Juvenile & Young Adult audiobooks, in light of COVID-19.



**Juvenile Fiction Checkouts**



## JUVENILE FICTION LEADS THE WAY

In recent months, we have seen an influx of demand for juvenile and young adult content. As schools pivot to remote learning, parents and students are leveraging the content available through their public library to supplement their child’s classroom instruction.

As of May 10, juvenile fiction audiobook checkouts have seen an impressive **49 percent average daily growth** compared to the first week of March. This equates to **over 16,000 more juvenile fiction audiobooks being checked out per day**, with action and adventure and humor titles proving the most popular.

Some of this can be attributed to OverDrive’s [Public Library CONNECT \(PLC\)](#) feature. With PLC, students can access their public library’s collection alongside their school library all through the student reading app Sora. PLC provides students with access to even more digital content during a time when they are unable to visit their school or local library.

## DIGITAL BOOK CLUBS DRIVE DEMAND

Along with juvenile titles, young adult audiobooks are seeing a rise, too. This can partly be tied to two unique programs that were available to OverDrive users during March and April. The first was Big Library Read (BLR), which is OverDrive's digital book club. Comedian Michael McCreary's memoir *Funny, You Don't Look Autistic* was the title selected for the spring 2020 BLR. Written for a young adult audience and available to readers in both ebook and audiobook format, the memoir was popular at participating public and school libraries. Interested in hosting your own digital book club? Invest in Simultaneous Use content to make select titles available to patrons without waitlists or holds.

Running alongside BLR was a special promotion from Pottermore, digital publisher of J.K. Rowling's immensely popular Harry Potter series. Pottermore made the ebook and audiobook versions of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (U.S.) and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (U.K.) available without waitlists or holds. Users could check out both the ebook and audiobook in all available languages, expanding the reach and audience of the title. Unsurprisingly, Pottermore titles dominated the juvenile audiobook checkouts. While only the first book was made available without waitlists or holds, the other six audiobooks in the series continued to be popular.

## RETAINING READERS IN TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

Libraries are now focusing on how to retain the users who have discovered their OverDrive digital collections - and audiobooks - during this time of restricted access to physical materials.

With cities opening back up, many workers will be turning to audiobooks during their commutes. For those that use a car, the Libby app's integration with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto is a seamless listening experience. Audiobook listeners who will still be at home and own a Sonos smart speaker can also access their library's audiobooks that way.

Libraries looking to capture the digital book club enthusiasm can recreate it using titles from their own collection. Since late 2017, Anne Kennedy at Ohio Digital Library has been featuring different Simultaneous Use titles on a daily or weekly basis, similar to BLR.

*"Patrons' interest in these featured titles has been overwhelming,"* she says.

Audiobooks were popular before countries declared a state of emergency, and they will undoubtedly continue to be after. Libraries wanting to leverage that popularity can build an audiobook collection that meets the evolving needs of their community.

**Visit Marketplace today to start growing or adding to your audiobook collection!**

## BEST PRACTICES FOR AUDIOBOOK COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT & CURATION

- Invest in Simultaneous Use audiobooks.** These select titles are available to patrons without waitlists or holds
- Curate Simultaneous Use titles** into an "Available Now" collection on your homepage
- Feature one Simultaneous Use audiobook title weekly** at the top of your OverDrive site
- Consider Cost Per Circ (CPC)** and only pay for what users borrow
- Set up a **holds manager cart** to manage high-demand audiobook titles
- Turn on **Recommend to Library**
- Promote your audiobook collection using **print-ready and digital marketing materials** available on the Resource Center