

Audiobooks on iPods

Boost Relationships with NIST Scientists

Keeping Them Current with Management Trends

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Who We Are

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) develops and promotes measurement, standards, and technology to enhance security and improve the quality of life. The Information Services Division provides professional, scientific/technical information assistance to NIST research staff. The NIST Research Library holds approximately 300,000 science and engineering volumes.

About Audiobooks

Digital versions of books read aloud

Advantages/Features:



- permit maximization of time
- allow for multitasking
- portable
- play on a digital media player for 4-6 or more hours

Useful for books that users read cover to cover.

Why Do Our Scientists Want Them?

- Extend their knowledge into new areas: Leadership and Management
- Increase available time for learning

The Research Library had not offered audiobooks in the past because most of its collection consists of science and engineering technical books, handbooks, and textbooks. Researchers most often use scientific books to locate specific bits of information—frequently visual information—but do not necessarily read them straight through or in their entirety. For this reason, the audio format is not particularly useful for scientific books.

Leadership and Management books, on the other hand, are very well suited to a “listening style” of receiving information, as they are meant to be read cover to cover and contain minimal visual data.

What We Learned

About digital media players:

- Apple® media players (iPods) have an intangible “coolness factor” that appeals to customers
- iPods have the largest U.S. market share of all media players
- iPods have video screens that permit viewing of movies



Apple® iPods

About copyright protection

There are two types of copyright protection currently used for audiobooks:

Digital Rights Management (DRM), used with Windows Media Audio (WMA) audiobook files

FairPlay®, used in Apple® Advanced Audio Coding (AAC) audiobook files

The differing technologies are responsible for player/audiobook hardware and software incompatibilities.

Digital Media Player	Audiobook File Type	Digital Rights Management
MP3 (such as Creative, Samsung, Toshiba, others)	WMA (Windows)	DRM
iPod (Apple®)	AAC (Apple®)	FairPlay®

Types of digital rights protection

About audiobook vendors

OverDrive® and NetLibrary® make audiobooks intended for use with library software. They can be

What We Learned, cont.

checked out for a specified time period, tracked, and downloaded from library web sites. At this time they cannot be played on iPods.

We decided to use Audible® audiobooks because they are in the format iPods require and it is simple to download and transfer them to iPods. We made our choice in spite of the fact they cannot easily be tracked by library circulation systems, downloaded by multiple customers, and do not “expire” after a specified checkout period.

The Options

1. Load Leadership and Management audiobooks into our ILS
 - + Customers download
 - + Can't be played on iPods
 - + Predictable or predetermined costs
2. Purchase each audiobook on customer demand
 - Library staff download
 - Playable on iPods
 - Costs can't be projected

Neither of these choices was acceptable to us.

Our Solution

To avoid all hardware and software conflicts, we decided to circulate the hardware:

- iPods pre-loaded with 4-6 Audible audiobooks
- Protective case
- Wall charger
- Disposable earphones
- 4-week checkout period



We use free software to load audiobooks onto the iPods

Our Solution, cont.

We began in July of 2007 with two 5th generation video iPods, and 6 audiobooks on each. Over the ensuing months as demand grew we added 6 more iPods (iPod Classics). We now are circulating a total of 39 audiobooks on 8 iPods.

We developed a Responsibility Agreement for each borrower to sign, instructions, and complete listings of audiobook titles by iPod.

Videos

We asked the NIST audio-visual department to convert popular one-hour internal lecture series films to MP4 format that play on the iPods. We are in the process now of loading them onto all of the iPods.



Usage

The iPod program has been wildly popular. In its first 9 months, customers checked out a total of 256 audiobooks!

Acquired July 2007	Average Usages over 9 Months
Print Books	1
Audiobooks	6.6

Usage of books purchased in July 2007

New audiobooks received more than 6 times the usage of print books acquired that same month.

Summary

- Customers multitask, learn about management
- We provide what customers want creatively, without a major expenditure
- We serve a niche need for busy scientists in a “cool” way
- Library is perceived as innovative, and customers have opportunity to try iPods

*The identification of any commercial product or trade name does not imply endorsement or recommendation by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.