

Week Four – Supporting Document Three

Audio Recording Specifications

Specifications for Audio Book Recording and Editing

This covers the Audio Editing and Preparation services required for recorded material to prepare it in such a way that it is suitable and ready for publication through sites such as ACX.com or Audible.com.

- The raw audio files created by your narrator must meet the following minimum specification
 - These should be recorded using a program such as Audacity, as that will allow all of the required settings to be made.
 - These should be recorded using a good quality microphone, with no technology induced noise or distortion – too much noise in the base of the recording will cause the distribution sites (such as ACX and Audible) to reject the files, even if all else is correct.
 - These should be recorded in a quiet place, with no accidentally intrusive background noise.
 - All files should be recorded in Stereo (by preference) or all in mono – no mixing of the two is allowed.
 - Each file must be one chapter of the book only
 - The title of each chapter (even if it is only 'Chapter one') must be spoken at the start of each chapter.
 - Where one chapter's recording exceeds 120 minutes, it must be broken down into two sections (or we can do that, if you identify the point at which the break should occur)
 - Some 'edit space' needs to be left at the start and finish of each recorded file – typically 5 to 10 seconds of silence.
 - Separate recordings should be provided for the opening and closing credits (or we can create these for you if the relevant information is provided)
 - The sound of each file must be between -23dB and -18dB with peaks no louder than -3dB (an editor can adjust to some extent, but the raw file must be close for that to work). This is set in the recording software, by doing some test samples and adjusting based on the results for that narrator's voice.

- Be in mp3 format, with a Constant bit rate of 192kbps or higher – again, this is set in the recording software.
- Be at 44.1 kHz – this is also set in the recording software.
- Have an agreed “oops” noise to mark clearly for an editor where the narrator has made a mistake. A sharp snap of the fingers or similar will work. The narrator should, upon making a mistake, make that noise, wait a few seconds, and then start the sentence in which the mistake was made again, and continue reading from there. Do not break the recording – just ‘mark’ the issue and continue.
- Identification of which section of text from the book you would like made into the audio sample file – this should be a good teaser to get people to want to hear the rest, and can be a dramatic, or ‘cliff-hanger’ moment