

# Facts



**National Library Service  
for the Blind and  
Physically Handicapped**

**The Library of Congress**

Washington, DC 20542

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2009

[www.loc.gov/nls](http://www.loc.gov/nls)

## **Digital Audiobook Players**

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### **Introduction**

In 2009 the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), Library of Congress, will begin to distribute digital talking books (DBs) and digital talking-book players that will replace the analog audiocassette books and audiocassette players used today. While NLS moves forward with its digital talking-book program, many forms of audiobooks in a variety of digital formats are also emerging. To accommodate these books, an assortment of players has become available.

This factsheet addresses the following:

1. Audiobook players designed for use by blind or visually impaired individuals
2. Selected commercial off-the-shelf audiobook players with features that make them usable by blind or visually impaired individuals
3. Software programs that may be installed on a standard computer to enable users to play audiobooks without an additional device

This factsheet provides basic information about each product. The capabilities and supported formats of players change frequently. Therefore, features such as search functions, note-taking capability, and variable playback speeds should be verified at the time of purchase. A section titled "Contact Information for Sources of Audiobook Players" may be used to contact vendors for additional information about their products. (Please note that supported versions of the NISO Z39.86 and DAISY audiobook format vary among products, and books produced using later versions of these formats will not play on all products.)

In 2002 a NISO digital talking-book standard was approved and adopted as American National Standard ANSI/NISO Z39.86 (2002), "Specifications for the Digital Talking Book." Digital talking books and digital talking-book players under development by NLS will be compliant with the standard.

Audiobook formats covered in this factsheet include NLS [ANSI/NISO Z39.86 (2002)], Audible, Daisy 2.02 and Daisy 3.0 [ANSI/NISO Z39.86 (2005)], MP3, text,

and Windows Media Audio (WMA). The medium for each can be CD, CompactFlash, Secure Digital memory card, or a computer hard drive. A brief description of the formats and the media is provided in the glossary.

## **Disclaimer**

Items listed in this factsheet are not part of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped program. Their inclusion does not imply endorsement and many are not compatible with the digital talking book under development by NLS. Prices are subject to frequent change and should be verified with suppliers before ordering.

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## **Glossary**

### **ANSI/NISO Z39.86 (2002)**

A digital talking-book standard created under the umbrella of the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) and approved as an American National Standard by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). It is entitled “Specifications for the Digital Talking Book.”

### **Audible**

Proprietary compressed audio file format tailored for human voices. Developed by Audible.com.

### **CD**

Compact disc

### **CompactFlash memory card**

A small card that uses flash memory to store data. The card is used by such devices as digital cameras, music players, and some audiobook players.

### **DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System)**

A set of standards and software developed by the international DAISY Consortium for recording digital talking books designed specifically for people who are unable to read regular print.

### **Earbuds**

Small listening devices that fit in the ear canal. Earbuds may have one earpiece or two for stereo sound reproduction.

## Earphones

Listening devices, usually consisting of two small speakers connected by wires, often worn over or inserted into the ears.

## Flash memory

A type of nonvolatile memory that can be erased and rewritten.

## Keypad

A small keyboard, usually with no more than three or four keys in each row.

## Macintosh

Computer created by Apple Computer, Inc.

## MP3

MPEG-1 Audio Layer-3. A compression scheme used to encode audio files.

## Secure Digital (SD) memory card

A small card that uses flash memory to store data. The card is used by devices such as digital cameras, music players, and some audiobook players.

## WMA (Windows Media Audio)

Multimedia file or streaming audio format created by Microsoft Corporation and used to download and play files.

## Windows

A computer operating system created by Microsoft Corporation.

## **Audiobook Players Designed for Use by Blind and Visually Impaired Individuals**

Name	<b>BookCourier</b>
Producer	Springer Design, Inc.
Price	\$379
Format	Audible, DAISY, MP3, and text
Media	CompactFlash memory card (included)
Major features	headphones required, allows unlimited bookmarks, built-in speech synthesizer
Operation	operates on two AA batteries
Size	2.75" x 4.87" x 1"
Weight	6 oz.
Additional features	automatic shut-off sleep timer, automatic bookmark at the end of each reading session, built-in microphone, built-in talking user guide
Distributor(s)	Springer and Technologies for the Visually Impaired, catalog no. 757836

Name	<b>Book Port</b>
Producer	American Printing House for the Blind
Price	\$395
Format	Audible, DAISY, MP3, and text

Media CompactFlash memory card (included)  
Major features headphones required, allows unlimited bookmarks, built-in speech synthesizer  
Operation operates on two AA batteries  
Size 2.25" x 4" x 1"  
Weight 7 oz.  
Additional features automatic shut-off sleep timer, automatic bookmark at the end of each reading session, built-in microphone, built-in talking user guide, CD with software and 1,700 digital books to transfer from a computer, audiocassette instructions, note-taking capability, level 1–5 navigation  
Distributor(s) American Printing House for the Blind, catalog no. 1-07440-00

**Name Braille+ Mobile Manager**  
**Producer** American Printing House for the Blind  
**Price** \$1,395  
**Format** NLS, Audible, DAISY, MP3, and text  
**Media** mini SD memory card and internal hard drive  
**Major features** braille keyboard, allows unlimited bookmarks, built-in speech synthesizer, internal speaker  
**Operation** operates on a built-in rechargeable battery or AC adaptor (included)  
**Size** 3.35" x 5.09" x .97"  
**Weight** 7.4 oz.  
**Additional features** automatic bookmark at the end of each reading session, built-in microphone, 30 gigabyte hard drive, built-in talking user guide, automatic shut-off sleep timer, wireless capability, word processor  
**Distributor** American Printing House for the Blind, catalog no. 1-07450-00

**Name Icon**  
**Producer** LevelStar, Inc.  
**Price** \$1,395  
**Format** NLS, Audible, DAISY, MP3, and text  
**Media** mini SD memory card and internal hard drive  
**Major features** allows unlimited bookmarks, built-in speech synthesizer, internal speaker  
**Operation** operates on a built-in rechargeable battery or AC adaptor (included)  
**Size** 3.35" x 5.09" x .97"  
**Weight** 7.4 oz.  
**Additional features** automatic shut-off sleep timer, automatic bookmark at the end of each reading session, built-in microphone, 30 gigabyte hard drive, built-in talking user guide, wireless capability  
**Distributor(s)** LevelStar, Inc.

**Name Milestone 311 Voice Recorder and MP3 Player**  
**Producer** Independent Living Aids, Inc.  
**Price** \$369  
**Format** DAISY and MP3  
**Media** SD memory card  
**Major features** earbuds, internal memory, internal speaker  
**Operation** operates on a built-in rechargeable battery or AC adaptor (included)  
**Size** 3.35" x 2.13" x .55"  
**Weight** 1.7 oz.

Additional features built-in microphone, note-taking capability  
Distributor(s) Independent Living Aids, item no. 757828

**Name** **Plextalk PTN1 DAISY Player**  
**Producer** Plextor LLC  
**Price** \$350  
**Format** DAISY, MP3, and standard audio  
**Media** CD  
**Major features** allows bookmarks, built-in speaker  
**Operation** operates on rechargeable battery or AC adaptor (included)  
**Size** 8.66" x 6.77" x 2.2"  
**Weight** 2.65 lbs.  
**Additional features** automatic shut-off sleep timer; PTN1 Pro has a keypad  
**Distributor(s)** EnableMart; Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic

**Name** **Plextalk PTR2 DAISY Player and Recorder**  
**Producer** Plextor LLC  
**Price** \$895  
**Format** DAISY and standard audio  
**Media** CompactFlash memory card (included)  
**Major features** allows multiple bookmarks, built-in speaker  
**Operation** operates on rechargeable battery or AC adaptor (included)  
**Size** 1.6" x 3" x .8"  
**Weight** 4.3 oz.  
**Additional features** automatic shut-off sleep timer, built-in microphone, recording tools to record and edit DAISY books  
**Distributor(s)** EnableMart; Innovative Rehabilitation Technology, Inc.; Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic; Technologies for the Visually Impaired

**Name** **Telex ezDAISY CD Player**  
**Producer** Telex Communications, Inc.  
**Price** \$349  
**Format** DAISY, MP3, and standard audio  
**Media** CD  
**Major features** headphones required, LCD screen to display disc details  
**Operation** operates on four AA batteries or AC adaptor (included)  
**Size** 5.25" x 6" x 1.59"  
**Weight** 0.65 lbs.  
**Distributor(s)** Independent Living Aids, Inc.; Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic; and Telex, catalog no. 301329

**Name** **Telex Professor**  
**Producer** Telex Communications, Inc.  
**Price** \$249–\$299  
**Format** DAISY, MP3, and standard audio  
**Media** CD and 4-track audiocassette  
**Major features** allows multiple bookmarks (from the CD), built-in speaker  
**Operation** operates on 6-volt DC rechargeable battery pack or AC adaptor (included)  
**Size** 11" x 6.75" x 10"  
**Weight** 6.2 lbs.

Additional features AM/FM radio with audible station notification and ability to preset stations

Distributor(s) Independent Living Aids, Inc.; Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic; and Telex, catalog no. 3016480000

**Name** **Telex Scholar Digital Talking Book Player**

Producer Telex Communications, Inc.

Price \$249

Format DAISY, MP3, and standard audio

Media CD

Major features headphones required, allows bookmarks, LCD screen to display disc details

Operation operates on four AA batteries or AC adaptor (included)

Size 5.25" x 6" x 1.59"

Weight 1.65 lbs.

Additional features retains its location in a commercially available CD audiobook when stopped

Distributor(s) Independent Living Aids, Inc.; Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic; and Telex, catalog no. 301267-xxx

**Name** **Victor Reader ClassicX**

Producer HumanWare

Price \$375

Format DAISY, MP3, and standard audio

Media CD

Major features built-in speaker

Operation operates on rechargeable, factory-installed batteries or AC adaptor

Size 9.3" x 8.2" x 2.1"

Weight 2.42 lbs.

Distributor(s) HumanWare

**Name** **Victor Reader ClassicX+**

Producer HumanWare

Price \$375

Format DAISY, MP3, and standard audio

Media CD

Major features allows multiple bookmarks, built-in speaker

Operation operates on rechargeable, factory-installed batteries or AC adaptor (included)

Size 9.3" x 8.2" x 2.1"

Weight 2.64 lbs.

Additional features allows skipping of elements such as page numbers and footnotes

Distributor(s) Beyond Sight, Inc.; HumanWare; and Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic

**Name** **Victor Reader Stream**

Producer HumanWare

Format NLS, Audible, DAISY, MP3, and standard audio

Media SD memory card

Major features allows bookmarks, built-in microphone, built-in speech synthesizer,

Operation	operates on built-in rechargeable battery
Weight	6 oz.
Additional features	variable speed playback, built-in user guide, audio tone control
Distributor(s)	EnableMart; HumanWare; and Independent Living Aids, Inc.
<b>Name</b>	<b>Victor Reader Vibe</b>
Producer	HumanWare
Price	\$219
Format	DAISY, MP3, and standard audio
Media	CD
Major features	earbuds, allows bookmarks
Operation	operates on two AA rechargeable, factory-installed batteries
Size	5.5" x 5.5" x 1"
Weight	0.65 lbs.
Distributor(s)	Beyond Sight, Inc.; HumanWare; Independent Living Aids, Inc; and Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic

<b>Name</b>	<b>Victor Reader Wave</b>
Producer	HumanWare
Price	\$249
Format	DAISY, MP3, and standard audio
Media	CD
Major features	earphones required, allows multiple bookmarks
Operation	operates on two AA rechargeable, factory-installed batteries
Size	5.82" x 5.43" x 1.14"
Weight	0.65 lbs.
Distributor(s)	Beyond Sight, Inc.; HumanWare; Independent Living Aids, Inc; and Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic

### **Selected Commercial Off-the-Shelf Audiobook Players**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Iofy Player</b> (formerly Audiofy Player)
Producer	Audiofy Digital Audiobooks
Price	\$49.95
Format	Audiofy audiobooks
Media	SD memory card (included)
Major features	headphone required
Operation	operates on two AAA batteries
Size	3.9" x 2.5" x .5"
Weight	2.8 oz.
Distributor(s)	Iofy Corporation

<b>Name</b>	<b>MuVo Mix</b>
Producer	Creative Labs
Price	\$70
Format	Audible, MP3, and WMA
Media	built-in flash memory; requires a computer to load content
Major features	earbuds

Operation	operates on one AAA battery (included)
Size	2.8" x 1.3" x .6"
Weight	1.3 oz.
Additional features	audible feedback in the rewind and fast-forward modes
Distributor(s)	Creative Labs

Name	<b>Playaway</b>
Producer	Findaway
Price	\$30–\$55
Format	Preloaded, self-contained audiobook
Major features	earbuds, allows bookmarks
Operation	operates on one AAA battery (included)
Size	2" x 3" x .5"
Weight	2 oz.
Distributor(s)	Findaway

Name	<b>Soul Player</b>
Producer	Brilliance Audio, Inc.
Price	\$149.99
Format	MP3, standard audio, and WMA
Media	CD
Major features	forward and reverse by book, chapter, or page
Operation	operates on two AA batteries, with a built-in battery charger
Size	6" x 5" x 1"
Weight	11 oz.
Additional features	auto-resume function
Distributor(s)	Brilliance Audio

## Selected Software Programs for Playing Audiobooks

Name	<b>AMIS</b>
Producer	AMIS Project
Price	Free (download)
Format	DAISY and MP3
Major features	allows bookmarks
Distributor(s)	AMIS

Name	<b>Book Wizard Reader</b>
Producer	American Printing House for the Blind
Price	\$49 CD, \$39 download
Format	DAISY and MP3
Major features	allows bookmarks
Distributor(s)	American Printing House for the Blind

Name	<b>EaseReader</b>
Producer	Dolphin Audio Publishing
Price	\$55–\$75
Format	DAISY and text



Major features	allows unlimited bookmarks, includes speech synthesizer and audio user guide
Distributor(s)	Dolphin
Name	<b>eClipseReader</b>
Producer	Innovative Rehabilitation Technology, Inc.
Price	\$59.99–\$84.88
Format	DAISY, MP3, and text
Major features	allows unlimited bookmarks, speech synthesizer
Distributor(s)	Innovative Rehabilitation Technology, Inc. and Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic
Name	<b>eReader</b>
Producer	CAST
Price	\$85–\$229
Format	DAISY and text
Major features	available in both Windows and Macintosh versions, speech synthesizer
Distributor(s)	CAST
Name	<b>FSReader</b>
Producer	Freedom Scientific
Price	\$79.95
Format	DAISY, MP3, and standard audio
Major features	allows unlimited bookmarks
Additional features	auto-resume function allows CD to resume playing at the last stopped
Distributor(s)	Freedom Scientific
Name	<b>gh Player 2.0</b>
Producer	gh, LLC
Price	\$149–\$299.99
Format	DAISY and text
Major features	allows bookmarks, speech synthesizer
Distributor(s)	Enable Mart and MaxiAids
Name	<b>Katieplayer</b>
Producer	Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic
Price	\$18 (basic)
Format	DAISY
Major features	operates on a Macintosh computer (not Windows)
Additional features	automatic shut-off sleep timer
Distributor(s)	Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic
Name	<b>Kurzweil 1000</b>
Producer	Kurzweil Educational Systems
Price	\$995
Format	text-based DAISY
Major features	allows bookmarks, speech synthesizer
Additional features	scans paper documents then opens, reads, and stores them in DAISY format
Distributor(s)	HumanWare and Kurzweil

Name	<b>Victor Reader Soft</b>
Producer	HumanWare
Price	\$79–\$150
Format	DAISY
Major features	allows bookmarks; some versions include a speech synthesizer
Distributor(s)	Beyond Sight; HumanWare; and Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic

## Contact Information for Sources of Audiobook Players

American Printing House for the Blind (APH)

1839 Frankfort Avenue  
Louisville, KY 40206-0085  
(502) 895-2405  
800-223-1834  
(502) 899-2274 fax  
info@aph.org  
www.aph.org

AMIS (Adaptive Multimedia Information System)

info@amisproject.org  
markusgy@users.sourceforge.net  
http://dsidtb.sourceforge.net

Audio Corporation, see Iofy Corporation

Beyond Sight, Inc.

5650 South Windermere Street  
Littleton, CO 80120  
(303) 795-6455  
(303) 795-6425 fax  
support@beyondsight.com  
www.beyondsight.com

Brilliance Audio, Inc.

1704 Eaton Drive  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
(616) 846-5256  
800-854-7859  
(616) 846-0630 fax  
consumerhelp@brillianceaudio.com  
www.brillianceaudio.com

CAST (formerly Center for Applied Special Technology)

40 Harvard Mills Square, Suite 3  
Wakefield, MA 01880-3233  
(781) 245-2212  
(781) 245-9320 TT  
(781) 245-5212 fax

cast@cast.org  
www.cast.org

Creative Labs  
1901 McCarthy Boulevard  
Milpitas, CA 95035  
(408) 428-6600  
800-998-1000  
(405) 624-6780 fax  
<http://us.creative.com>

Dolphin Computer Access, Inc.  
231 Clarksville Road, Suite 3  
Princeton Junction, NJ 08550  
(609) 803-2171  
866-797-5921  
(609) 799-0475  
[info@dolphinusa.com](mailto:info@dolphinusa.com)  
[www.yourdolphin.com](http://www.yourdolphin.com)

EnableMart Sales Office  
c/o MRN, Inc.  
5353 South 960 East, Suite 200  
Salt Lake City, UT 84117  
(360) 695-4155  
888-640-1999  
888-254-1712 fax  
[sales@enablemart.com](mailto:sales@enablemart.com)  
[www.enablemart.com](http://www.enablemart.com)

Findaway  
(440) 893-0808  
877-893-0808  
(440) 893-0809 fax  
[www.playawaydigital.com](http://www.playawaydigital.com)

Freedom Scientific  
11800 31st Court North  
St. Petersburg, FL 33716  
(727) 803-8000  
800-444-4443 or 877-775-9474  
(727) 803-8001 fax  
[www.freedomscientific.com](http://www.freedomscientific.com)

gh, LLC  
1305 Cumberland Avenue  
West Lafayette, IN 47906  
(765) 775-3776  
866-693-3687 (866-MY-3-DOTS)  
(765) 775-2501 fax

sales@gh-accessibility.com  
www.ghbraille.com

HumanWare  
175 Mason Circle  
Concord, CA 94520  
(925) 680-7100  
800-722-3393  
(925) 681-4630 fax  
us.info@humanware.com  
www.humanware.com

Independent Living Aids, Inc.  
P.O. Box 9022  
Hicksville, NY 11802-9022  
(516) 937-1848  
800-537-2118  
(516) 937-3906 fax  
service@independentliving.com  
www.independentliving.com

Innovative Rehabilitation Technology, Inc. (IRTI)  
13465 Colfax Highway  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
(530) 274-2090  
800-322-4784  
(530) 274-2093 fax  
info@irti.net  
www.irti.net

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One Crescent Drive, Suite 304  
Navy Yard Corporate Center  
Philadelphia, PA 19112-1015  
(215) 848-8000  
866-472-8346  
(215) 790-6200 fax  
support@audiofy.com  
www.audiofy.com

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100 Crosby Drive  
Bedford, MA 01730-1402  
(781) 276-0600  
800-894-5374  
(781) 276-0650 fax  
info@kurzweiledu.com (general inquiries)  
sales@kurzweiledu.com (sales)  
customerservice@kurzweiltech.com (customer service)  
www.kurzweiledu.com

LevelStar, Inc.  
1500 Cherry Street, Suite D  
Louisville, CO 80027  
(303) 926-4334  
800-315-2305  
(303) 926-1787 fax  
info@levelstar.com  
www.levelstar.com

MaxiAids, Inc.  
42 Executive Boulevard  
Farmingdale, NY 11735  
(631) 752-0521  
800-522-6294  
800-281-3555 TT  
(631) 752-0689 fax  
sales@maxiaids.com  
www.maxiaids.com

Plextor LLC  
830 Hillview, Suite 210  
Milpitas, CA 95035  
(408) 719-3000  
(408) 719-3030 fax  
sales@plextalk.com  
www.plextor.com

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D)  
20 Roszel Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
866-732-3585  
800-221-4792  
custserv@rfgd.org member services  
www.rfgd.org  
Plextalk reseller to Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic members only

Soulmate Audiobooks, Inc., see Brilliance Audio, Inc.

Springer Design, Inc.  
6350 Clark Avenue  
Dublin, CA 94568  
(925) 242-0310  
sales@bookcourier.com  
www.bookcourier.com

Technologies for the Visually Impaired  
9 Nolan Court  
Hauppauge, NY 11788  
(631) 724-4479 voice and fax  
866-689-5672

contact@tvi-web.com  
www.tvi-web.com

Telex Communications, Inc.  
Talking Book Players  
8601 East Cornhusker Highway  
Lincoln, NE 68507  
(402) 467-5321 (service)  
800-898-6723 (technical support)  
800-553-5992 (service)  
(402) 467-3279 (fax)  
info@telex.com  
www.telex.com

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Large print. \$24.95.

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Proceedings of the Center on Disabilities, Technology and Persons with Disabilities  
Conference, California State University at Northridge (CSUN), 2006. Northridge, CA: 2006.  
Also available online at [www.csun.edu/cod/conf/2006/proceedings/2812.htm](http://www.csun.edu/cod/conf/2006/proceedings/2812.htm).

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Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, 2005. 8p.  
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Crabb, Nolan. Now you can take your reader everywhere! *Dialogue*, v. 42, winter 2003: 71–76.

Dresner, Ann. A pocketful of sound: a quick start and buyer's guide to accessible books and  
music players. Boston: National Braille Press. \$14. Available in ACSII, braille, and portabook  
formats. Also available online at [www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/POCKET.html](http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/POCKET.html).

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