

# Audio Books

---

## Background

One of the roles of the National Centre for Innovations in Distance Education (NCIDE) at IGNOU is to promote innovations in distance education. As such the NCIDE is also to act as a facilitator for identifying and developing innovative mechanisms for delivery of content by the faculty of IGNOU through training programmes. To acquaint the faculty with the latest developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and techniques to create audiobooks, NCIDE organised a workshop of the IGNOU faculty members in October 2013. The training aimed to develop competencies in the faculty members to design and develop pedagogically sound audiobooks. The faculty members were expected to create 10- 15 short 5-7 minutes audio content. Each audio was expected to deal with one concept and would be complete in itself. This would facilitate their reuse. The workshop also focused on how to use these audio content to create visually effective multimedia and e-learning content.

A total of 15 prototype audio books were developed. The audiobooks and interactive multimedia were bilingual, both in English and Hindi. In addition to the voice recording by the faculty members themselves to create the audiobook prototypes, an open source software was also used by the NCIDE team to create an audiobook prototype. The content of the audiobook prototypes could be used as Reusable Learning Objects for e-learning as and when required.

## Need of the Innovation

The profile of ODL learners is diverse. Some are in defence services, some working people who travel to work, some are housewives. The distance learner faces the constraints of time and pace for learning. Many such learners would be benefited by an audiobook while they are on the move. A housewife, while she is working at home, could conveniently listen to an audiobook and learn. Similarly, a working person who is travelling to and from work could use the travelling time beneficially by listening to an audiobook. Audiobooks are an effective mechanism that could allow these learners to complete the understanding of their study material through audio mode at their own time and pace. The audiobook is a flexible mechanism that could allow the learner to replay and listen to what has been said in the book, thereby strengthening her learning. The audiobook is also a very useful tool for the visually challenged learner. The idea was proposed by Dr. Moumita Das and the NCIDE designed and developed prototypes of audiobooks in collaboration with the IGNOU faculty members in a workshop mode.

## Description of the Innovation

The audiobooks were designed and developed in such a way that the structure of the audiobook was the same as the structure of the IGNOU Self Instructional Material (SLM). The outline is as follows :

1. Title of the Course, Block and Unit (1-2 min)
2. Structure of the Unit (1 min)
3. Introduction (2 min)
4. Objectives (1 min)

5. Section 1.1 (3-5 min)
  6. Sub section 1.1.1 (3-5 min)
  7. Check your progress (1-2 questions) (2 min)
  8. Section 1.2 (3-5 min)
  9. Sub section 1.2.1 (3-5 min)
  10. Check your progress (1-2 questions) (2 min)
  11. Conclusion (2 min)
  12. Questions (2nos) (2 min)
  13. Glossary (3 min)
  14. Answers to Check Your Progress (2 min)
  15. Suggested reading (2 references) (1 min)
- The total duration of each audiobook was approximately 40 minutes which could be customized depending on the need and nature of the topics.

The participants were given the scope for creativity and innovation in the choice of topics, to be flexible with the structure, e.g. except the title of the audiobook, all other components mentioned above could be customized suitably. Further, the audio formats, such as narration (autobiography of a famous personality, story, news, case study, etc.), interview, role play, discussion, quiz, question and answer, music, surrounding sounds of an environment, locations such as a park or a market place etc., could be used creatively in the audiobooks.

The audio content has to be appropriately created and designed for developing an audiobook. The faculty members were trained in development of audio content.

The recording was done using the audio recording and editing tool Audacity.

The NCIDE had used an open source software "Yakitome" to develop an audiobook. This software converts text to speech. A 40 minute audiobook on the topic "Foundations of Open Learning and Distance Education" was prepared as a prototype by the NCIDE.

## Innovative Features

The innovation lay in the concept that audiobooks could be developed for the ODL learners. There is, at present, no audiobook for the learners. It is therefore a *new* product in the ODL system. It is indeed *useful* to a wide range of learners. The auditory learners would stand to benefit the most. However, the students with other learning styles could also use the audiobooks at their own convenience to learn. The visually impaired learners of the ODL system would find audiobooks most useful. With the pedagogy for audiobooks in place and the easy availability of audio-recording tools on the computer, a teacher can effectively create audiobooks for his or her learners. Developing audiobooks is therefore *feasible*. Creating audiobooks by this method costs very less, and therefore such audiobooks are *cost-effective*. The *scalability* and *sustainability* of audiobooks are high.

## Achievements

Under this project, total 13 products were developed. These products developed by the faculty members may be considered as prototypes of audiobooks. The topics of the thirteen audiobooks were varied and the duration ranged from 2 minutes to 20 minutes

approximately. Additionally, one audio prototype was prepared by the resource person Dr. Sutapa Bose, and another by the NCIDE team comprising Madhav, Neelam and Pawan, using the open source text to speech converting software called Yakitome.com. The details of two selected audio modules are presented below :

## **I Types of Heart Failure**

- i. Course Name : Common Cardiovascular
- ii. Unit Name : Heart Failure
- iii. Prepared by : Dr. Biplab Jamatia
- iv. Summary : There are various types of heart failure (HF) observed in clinical practice. They include left sided HF, RF sided HF, systolic HF, Diastolic HF, Acute HF, Chronic HF, etc. This audio programme is for PGDCC students for understanding the various types of HF. It can be sent to students via e-mail. It can be used for multimedia. It can be a part of an audio book.

## **II Concepts and Process of Community Health Nursing**

- i. Course Name : Community Health Nursing
- ii. Unit Name : Introduction to Community Health Nursing
- iii. Prepared by : Dr. Neerja Sood
- iv. Summary : Audiobook emphasized on reviewing the basic concepts related to community health nursing; meaning of terms like community, community health, community health nursing; explained community identification and community diagnosis and steps of CH nursing process including C-IP. Students can listen to audiobook and understand the basic concepts which will be beneficial for them to apply during practical sessions and field work. Audiobook can be a reference for them to review.

Besides the above, the participants were trained and empowered to develop such audiobooks. These audiobooks could be used as reusable learning objects for multiple uses for the purpose of more effective teaching-learning at IGNOU.

## **Applications and Uses of the Innovation**

The audiobooks could be created and provided to the ODL learners for study. The stand-alone modules of the audiobooks could be re-used to create other audiobooks. The reusable modules of the audiobooks could be used in creating multimedia. These audiobooks could be used in e-learning. Audiobooks could be delivered to the learners in their mobiles. The University could broadcast the audiobooks through its radio services *Gyan Vani*. The audiobooks could also be uploaded on the University website for the learners to read.

## **Way Forward**

The audiobooks are capable of filling the huge gap area of the ODL system, namely the lack of time with the learners for study the print material. The audiobooks have a bright future in not only the ODL system, but in the conventional system as well. The design and development of audiobooks needs to be taken up in the right earnest by the University.

## Coordinators and Innovators

**Dr. Moumita Das**

**Dr. Sutapa Bose**, Associate Professor, SOE, IGNOU, New Delhi

**Dr. Neerja Sood**, Assistant Professor, SOHS, IGNOU, New Delhi

**Dr. Biplab Jamatia**, Assistant Professor, SOHS, IGNOU, New Delhi

**Dr. Mukesh Kumar**, Assistant Professor, SOA, IGNOU, New Delhi

Period : 2013-2014