

Kindle+ locks out Royalty Share audio and auto-enrolls AI. Here is your playbook.

Reading and listening now share one fund

Pages read

Pages listened

One KDP Select Global Fund

Each page pays once per customer, read or listened.

Per-page KENP rate: forecast for the next 60 to 90 days



On October 22, Amazon retired the Kindle Unlimited name, launched **Kindle+**, and plugged audiobooks directly into the KDP Select Global Fund.

For audiobook narrators and ACX producers, this overhauls how indie authors hire you and how your backlist earns. On day one, a free AI audiobook sits inside Amazon's \$11.99 subscription while your Royalty Share productions sit outside behind a paywall or credit gate. Meanwhile, pay-for-production is the only path for human-narrated books to enter Kindle+ at launch. This shift puts your backlist royalties and your studio pipeline on the line today.

The facts that matter to narrators

- **Royalty Share audiobooks are locked out at launch:** Human-narrated ACX titles must opt in to Kindle+ manually. To qualify, the ebook must be in KDP Select, the audio must be Audible-exclusive with Whispersync turned on, and the rights holder must have used a **pay-for-production** deal. Amazon says it is "exploring" adding Royalty Share later.
- **Virtual Voice (AI) audio is automatic:** If a KDP Select ebook has a Virtual Voice edition, Amazon automatically enrolls that AI audio into Kindle+ and Audible Plus. There is no audio-only opt-out for AI. To pull a Virtual Voice title out of Kindle+, the author must unpublish the audiobook or pull the ebook from KDP Select (which locks them in until the end of their 90-day term). Sold individually, Virtual Voice titles earn a 40% royalty and must be priced between \$3.99 and \$14.99.
- **One pot of money pays for reading and listening:** Kindle+ costs \$11.99 a month in the US with a 20-book borrow limit (the Kindle+ name is global, but audiobook borrowing is US-only on Amazon.com right now). Audio listens draw from the KDP Select Global Fund, which historically paid about \$0.004-\$0.005 per page (approx.). Each page pays **once per customer**, whether they read it, listen to it, or do both. Amazon is adding an undisclosed amount of money to the fund.
- **ACX kills its legacy royalty model on December 31, 2026** (*reported by secondary sources; verify before acting*): Every title moves to Audible's "member value" model. Audible claims creators earn more on average, while indie author groups report a sizable share of authors earn the same or less.
- **New audio marketing tools are live** (*reported by secondary sources; verify before acting*): ACX added audiobook pre-orders and unlocked Amazon Ads for audiobooks in early October. Meanwhile, Spotify is rolling out audiobooks across more than 180 markets.

Why men's romance and harem narrators beat AI: Amazon's Virtual Voice rules list 17 eligibility requirements, and zero of them ban sexually explicit content - unlike Apple, which locks erotica out of AI narration. Steamy books qualify for automatic AI audio in Kindle+. However, voice and heat sell men's romance and harem. Putting flat AI narration on a steamy book risks bad reviews from listeners expecting your real performance.

Our 60 to 90-day predictions

- **We predict 0% of Royalty Share audiobooks will gain Kindle+ eligibility in the next 90 days.**

Why: Splitting a fluctuating, half-cent-per-page payout between an author and a narrator requires an accounting and contract overhaul on ACX that Amazon has not built yet.

- **We predict Virtual Voice titles in Kindle+ will at least double within 90 days.** Audible already lists over 50,000 "Narrated by: Virtual Voice" titles (reported). *Why:* AI creation is free, and Kindle+ now hands those titles a subscription audience with no extra step.

- **We predict the per-page KENP rate will drop by 5% to 15% over the next 60 to 90 days** (from the historic approx. \$0.004-\$0.005 range). *Why:* auto-enrolled Virtual Voice listening adds new pages to the fund faster than Amazon's undisclosed top-up grows it.

Disclaimer: These predictions are forecasts based on early public information and KDP mechanics, not reported results. Nobody has real numbers three days in. We will publish real Vault data every month for the next four months and correct our forecasts openly when the numbers come in.

Your narrator playbook this week

1. **Pitch pay-for-production deals now.** Pay-for-production is the only door into Kindle+ for human audio today. Use that fact when negotiating Per Finished Hour (PFH) rates and booking new studio work with indie authors who want the option to test Kindle+ later.
2. **Call your Royalty Share authors this week.** Make sure your partners know Royalty Share titles are locked out right now. Calm the waters so nobody panics, tries to break a working contract, or rushes to buy you out before seeing real data.
3. **Update your demo reels to sell what AI cannot fake.** Push distinct character voices, comedic timing, emotional pacing, and heat to the front of your samples. Human performance wins listener reviews, and reviews drive the algorithm.
4. **Protect your voice in every contract.** Read every new production agreement carefully and strike any clauses that grant rights for AI voice training, voice cloning, or synthetic derivatives of your recordings.
5. **Audit your legacy ACX payouts.** If you have Royalty Share titles on the pre-member-value contract, audit their last 6 months of payouts before the December 31, 2026 cutoff so you know your baseline on January 1.

Narrator CTA: [Join as an industry professional](#) and watch [Casting Calls](#) to connect with authors booking pay-for-production work.

What authors are being told (so you can anticipate client questions)

We are advising authors to hold their fire for 30 days and wait for the first post-Kindle+ fund payout before changing their audio strategy. Expect your clients to bring up three main topics this week:

- **"Should we convert our Royalty Share contract to PFH for Kindle+?"** We are telling authors *not* to rewrite Royalty Share contracts or buy out narrators just to force a book into Kindle+. Remind them that protecting their cash and keeping your working relationship intact beats chasing unproven page-read rates.
- **"Should I put my pay-for-production books into Kindle+?"** We are telling authors to hold back profitable human-narrated audiobooks until we see whether half-cent page reads cannibalize full-price ACX credit and retail sales. Their KENP dashboard now separates pages read from pages listened, and we are telling them to track that split every Monday.
- **"Why did my ebook income dip?"** Because any shortfall between Amazon's undisclosed fund top-up and new audio consumption cuts the per-page rate for every author in Select, we are telling authors to budget for a 10% lower KENP rate this winter. Weak launches will get crushed, while authors who invest in high read-through and strong production will survive. We are also telling them to check their KDP Bookshelf and unpublish any forgotten Virtual Voice editions they don't want draining the fund.

Also since our last issue

- **KDP cut weekly title creation by 80%.** You can now create 2 titles per format per week, down from 10, and drafts count. That's 6 a week across ebook, paperback and hardcover, down from 30. Amazon changed this quietly in September with no announcement. *Takeaway:* plan box sets, translations and format launches a week or two ahead.
- **ACX upgraded audiobook publishing.** Authors can now set up audiobook **pre-orders**, download **shareable promo cards** sized for social media, and advertise audiobooks with **Amazon Ads** in the US. New titles also go live faster. *Takeaway:* put your next audiobook on pre-order and run a small Amazon Ads test on launch week.
- **ACX's legacy royalty model ends December 31, 2026** (reported). Every title moves to Audible's member-value model. *Takeaway:* save your last six months of ACX statements now so you have a baseline on January 1.
- **Meta's new business terms let it crawl websites linked to business Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp accounts**, starting October 30 (reported by Nieman Lab). After pushback, Meta removed the word "train." Legal experts say the terms still allow broad use. *Takeaway:* if your author site is linked from a business account, block Meta's crawler in your site's robots.txt file.
- **The \$1.5 billion Anthropic settlement got final court approval** on July 20. Payouts haven't started, and no date has been announced. *Takeaway:* if you filed a claim, watch the settlement administrator's site, not social media rumors.
- **Publishers and authors are suing Meta over AI training.** Five publishers and Scott Turow filed a class action in May, and textbook authors filed one in July. *Takeaway:* no action needed yet. We'll report if a class forms that covers indie fiction.
- **Goodreads added half-star and quarter-star ratings** in early October (reported). *Takeaway:* expect slightly lower average ratings as readers who used to round up start using 3.5 and 4.5.

- **Libby announced filters to hide AI-written and AI-narrated books**, relying on publishers to label their own content. We haven't confirmed it has shipped. *Takeaway*: label AI use honestly at your distributor. Library readers will be able to filter on it.
- **Spotify is expanding audiobooks to more than 180 markets** (reported) and keeps accepting ElevenLabs AI-narrated audiobooks through Findaway Voices. *Takeaway*: wide audio just got a bigger map, but so did the competition from AI.
- **YouTube is reportedly in talks with publishers** about audiobooks in YouTube Premium as early as 2027 (Wall Street Journal). *Takeaway*: nothing to do yet. Keep your audio rights clean so you can move when it opens.

How we are tracking the truth

We built the Vault to track real market numbers, not forum rumors. As of October 25, we upgraded the Vault to record **daily audiobook sales rank, price, review counts, and Kindle+ status** alongside our existing ebook data. We are also backfilling historical audio data to July 2026 so you can see the exact before-and-after impact of Kindle+ on human-narrated and AI titles.

For the next four months, we will publish a monthly Kindle+ Data Report showing what this shift actually does to ebook and audio sales in our genres.

Monthly Kindle+ Tracker

Got early numbers or client questions of your own? Reply to this email and let us know what you are seeing on ACX. You will help the whole booth community spot the trend faster.

Sources: Amazon KDP Help (Kindle+ and Virtual Voice pages), Written Word Media, Digital Trends.