

ACX AND PODFICCERS (feel free to leave comments)

A couple of people were interested on Twitter earlier today, so I thought I would write a thing.

A couple of months ago, a fellow podficcer directed me to ACX.com, a website run by Audible that hooks up rights holders of fiction and non-fiction titles (this can be indie authors or publishing houses) and narrators (ie. PODFICCERS), in order to produce more audiobooks, which they then sell on iTunes, Amazon, etc.

Here is their intro page for narrators: [https://www.acx.com/help/narrators/200484550 ...](https://www.acx.com/help/narrators/200484550...)

Essentially, it's an opportunity to make money from the skills we have developed as podficcers.

Here are some things I have learned in the two months I've been on ACX:

HOW TO:

- Search for titles on offer, choose ones you're interested in, and audition.
- If the rights holder thinks you're the right fit for their book, they'll make you an offer to produce the audiobook
- Success! Record the audiobook!
- Once you complete the whole audiobook, profit!

HOWEVER

- Only US or UK residents can take full advantage of everything ACX has to offer, as they require US or UK tax information and proof of residency to pay you
- Non-US or UK residents are limited to projects that are paid directly from the rights holder, that

is to say, projects that are paid per finished hour. It's not possible to produce projects that offer royalty share payments (sadly, that is the majority of offered titles) or projects that come with stipends, as these two payment options require US or UK Tax information.

- IF you want to go about getting US Tax information, this a guide for writers

(<http://catherineryanhoward.com/2012/02/24/non-us-self-publisher-tax-issues-dont-need-to-be-taxing/>) that's a very useful research start point for podficcors looking to get an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) or an Employer Identification Number (EIN). (Note that the EIN will require you to register a business in your home country, but the friend who looked into getting an ITIN would have had to mail to her passport to the US and had it held there for at least several weeks. Make the decision that's best for you!) Please note that this will not allow you to fill out form W9, required by ACX, as W9s "serves a dual role of providing an SSN and of establishing the fact that the filer is a U.S. person." However, they are supposedly working to open up their service to foreigners, so this information may come in handy one day!

WHY YOU MAY WANT TO DO THIS:

- you are awesome at making podfics
- you enjoy making awesome podfics.
- you want to see whether someone would actually pay you to make the thing. With actual money.
- I don't know for sure but maybe this means you can say you're a professional audiobook narrator?

WHY YOU MAY NOT WANT TO DO THIS

- due to the nature of the open auditions, you may not get an offer to produce the audiobook,

and this can feel very disheartening. Just remember there are many narrators using the site just like you - so be prepared for rejection, maybe a lot of it. Some rights holders will send you a message personally to let you down quickly, while others will let the system notify you - which could take months. If you're a podficcer who works only with blanket permission authors, this may not be for you.

- the rights holder has the final say on the audiobook, so you do not have complete creative control. BUT, if they didn't enjoy your direction, they wouldn't have offered you the project! They can ask for revisions twice after you're done, and in my experience, the revisions come in the form of 'can you pronounce x word this way?' and not 'I want you to re-record the thing'. But if you don't like the idea of not having complete creative control, this may not be for you.

- you usually only get an excerpt of the project to audition with, so short of buying the title yourself off of amazon etc, you usually can't read the whole work and decide whether or not you'd really like to spend all that time recording it to your amazing standards at the audition stage. There may be triggers or do-not-wants that you're unaware of until after you've agreed to do the project. You can of course, request the whole text once they offer you the project and decide whether you want to produce the audiobook after all, but if you don't like the idea of producing a recording that has content you don't endorse 100%, this may not be for you.

- in direct correlation to the last point, it might not be worth your effort financially. Paid Per Hour projects fluctuate between \$0-400 per finished hour, so if you know that it takes you 5 hours to produce 1 finished hour of audio, and you're being offered \$75 PFH, you're essentially working for \$15 p/h, perhaps recording a story you don't love that much. Royalty share agreements mean that money trickles in, and while it could be very lucrative, it could also not be. However, if you build up a big royalty share back catalogue, there is a potential to profit for a long time. In short, depending on how long it takes you to record and edit, ACX may not be for you.

- finally, these projects comes with deadlines. You can give the rights holder an estimate of how long you think the recording will take you, and normally they are quite loose, with expectations of a finished product usually around 8-14 weeks. If you don't like the idea of being confined to a schedule though, this may not be for you.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

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We've all heard of fans filing off the serial numbers and selling their fic, and we know artists and crafters can make a buck on the side too. Before ACX, I don't think there was a way for podficcers to do this, but the future is now and the opportunity exists! I've been on ACX for 2 months and experienced moderate success, and I reckon any other podficcer who wants to, can too.

(And this literally would never have happened if not for the generosity and support I have received from the podfic community, because you guys are the freaking best, seriously. Without your support and guidance over the past few years, no way in hell would I have had the confidence to venture onto this platform. To every listener, kudo-er, commenter, whatever - thank you so very, very much.)