

Voices

2024 Audio Trends Report



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Each year, we publish an Audio Trends Report, showcasing and analyzing the latest trends in content creation, audio, and voice over. After surveying hundreds of clients, and analyzing internal data, it's clear that in 2024, audio and voice over continue to be a priority in content creation.

2023 saw generative AI make leaps and bounds in the public space, with these tools becoming widely available and integrated into many platforms. But with AI's ability to replicate human creativity so closely, authenticity and the human element within content creation is now more important than ever.

We connected with over 1,000 creative producers, freelancers, and in-house marketers to analyze the state of voice over today. In this year's Audio Trends Report, we'll look at the state of audio content in 2023, how AI is helping us create more, and why authenticity in content creation is more important now than ever.

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Audio Experiences Continue to Be a Priority in Content Creation

Over 40% of marketers expect to increase their voice over and audio budget next year.

Last year, we predicted that 2023 would be a milestone year for audio advertising and audio content. And it was! From smart home devices like Alexa, voice activated applications like Siri, and the growth in consumption of audio-focused media like podcasts and audiobooks, we wanted to make our routines and content accessible and convenient, and we wanted to be able to take it on-the-go.

This trend can even be seen in the performance of key players in the audio industry. For example, Spotify, the world's number one audio streaming platform, clocked record high new subscriptions and active monthly users in 2023. Their third quarter in 2023 saw the number of monthly active users grow to 574 million, up 26% YoY, with their subscriber base growing 16% YoY.

We can expect to see a similar upward trajectory in 2024, and producers and creators know this –41% of creative producers expect to increase their voice over budget in 2024.

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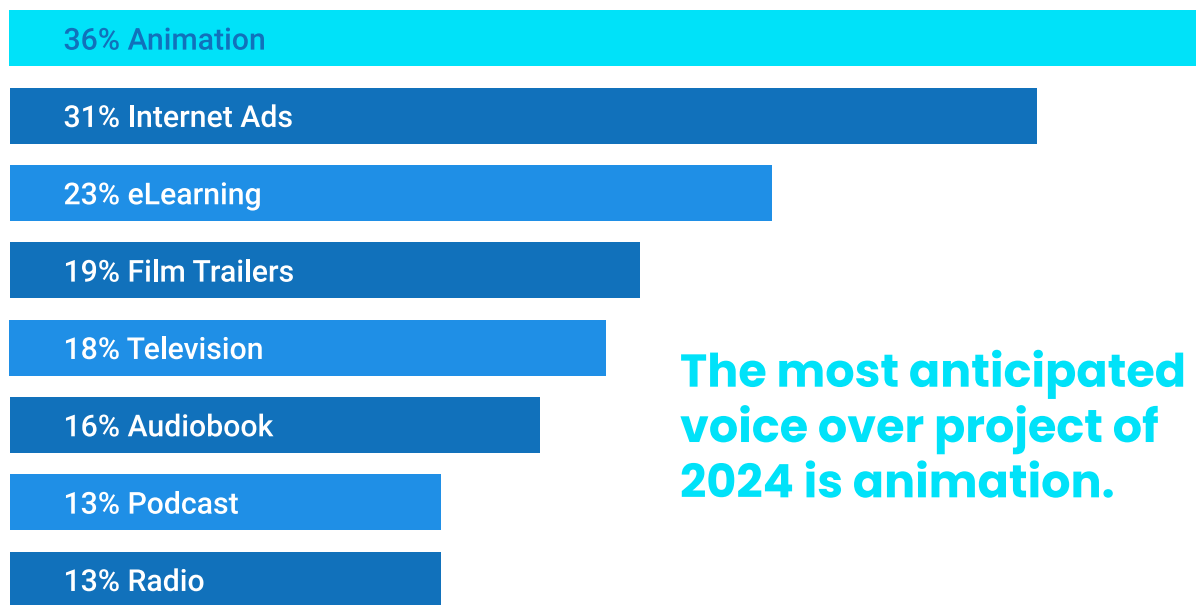


Voice over needs in 2024

With just under half of brands expecting to increase their voice over budget in 2024, what kinds of content are they planning for? According to our survey, video content is still the media format with the highest need for voice actors. When asked what forms of content respondents anticipated needing voice overs for in 2024, over half (52%) said short form videos, 38% said long form videos, and 30% said social media posts.

The most anticipated projects needing voice over were animation (36%), internet ads (31%), and eLearning videos (23%).

Half (50%) of brands hired voice actors at least once per month or more often, while the other half hired voice actors approximately once per quarter or a handful of times a year.



2024 Prediction

After seeing continued growth in consumption of audio media, the strong performance of audio advertising, and ongoing favor towards video content, short form and long form, it's no surprise to see many brands planning to increase their voice over budget in 2024.

In 2024, we predict audio-focused content will continue to surge, and the ways we interact with audio and where we access this content will evolve. For example, notable developments in 2023 include the introduction of audiobooks on Spotify to new markets, with Spotify even granting complimentary titles to paid subscribers on their platform. And don't forget the launch of their AI DJ, who plays a list of songs curated to your taste, interspersed with commentary from the AI DJ whose voice is modeled after their own Head of Cultural Partnerships. While this DJ isn't voice activated, one day it might be. Overall, we can expect to see greater integration of voice assisted applications, pushing us deeper into a hands-free world.

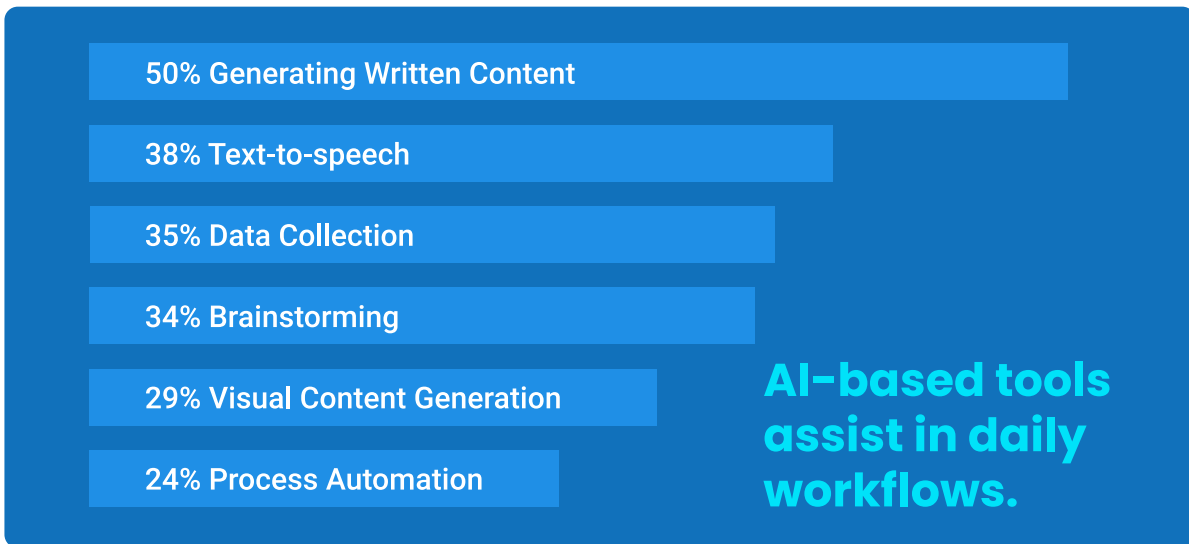
With audiobook sales seeing [double digit growth](#) each year, and with the growing number of users on audio streaming platforms, it's clear that there is still significant untapped potential in the realm of audio content.



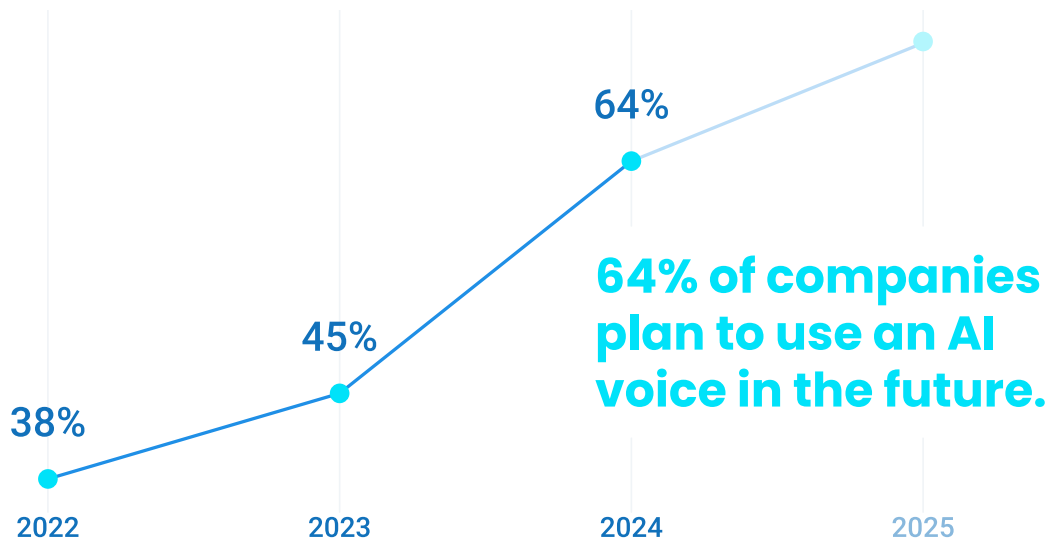
AI Will Be a Useful Tool in Supporting Your Brand Voice

If we were to pick out one technological trend that defined 2023, it's the rise of generative AI. What once was a new tool that was explored with caution, not even one full year later is now an integral part of many people's day-to-day lives. And professionals in marketing, creative, and voice acting industries are no exception.

In 2023, nearly half (46%) of creative producers said they use AI-based tools as part of their workflow. According to respondents, the most common uses for AI are: creating or editing written content (50%), voice overs or text-to-speech (38%), and the collection and analysis of data (35%).



In the world of voice over, AI voices and text-to-speech generators have gained notoriety and are increasingly becoming more mainstream. In 2023, 45% of companies said they have used an AI voice. This is up seven percent compared to 2022, where 38% said they've used an AI voice. The survey found that companies have significant interest in AI voices: 64% of companies said they would use an AI voice in the future. Those interested in experimenting with AI voices are either looking to try it out for the first time, or have used one in the past and would use one again. Just under one quarter of respondents (24%) have not experimented with AI voices in the past and aren't interested in them in the future.



AI Voices: Voice Clone vs Composite Voice

Did you know that there are different types of AI voices? One type is a 'voice clone,' which is a copy of a single human's voice, created with their consent for a specific brand, project, or purpose. In contrast, a 'composite voice' is a combination of multiple voices combined into one. A composite voice is unrecognizable as any distinct individual. When we refer to AI voices, we're referring to a voice clone of a single individual's voice.

2024 Prediction

In 2024, we expect to see growing use of AI voices in the creative process. But the AI voice doesn't have to be in the final product—many respondents who have used AI voices have used it in the pre-production phase to determine timing.

Despite our prediction for increased use, we don't anticipate AI voices to suit every voice over need anytime soon. Creatives are increasingly open to experimenting with AI voices, but the majority remain hesitant to make AI the final voice choice for their projects. Many will continue to prefer a balance between AI and human voices.



"2024 is gearing up to be a year where AI integration becomes the norm. Creatives are leaning on AI-powered tools to assist with content creation, helping them create more content at a faster pace, without sacrificing quality. And similar to how a writer might turn to ChatGPT in the brainstorming or editing stage, AI voices will help producers in the production process."

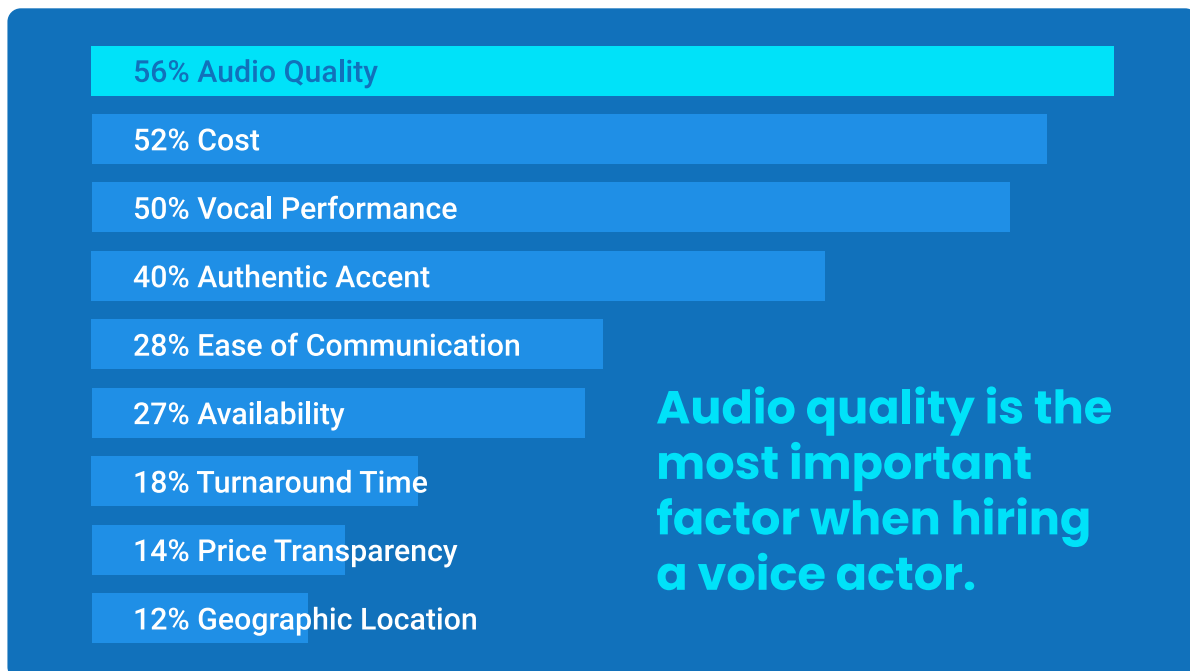
Tara Parachuk, Senior Manager, Brand Communications

Authenticity and Quality Wins Over Cost and Convenience

We now know that AI voice adoption is growing, with more creative producers open to experimenting with AI voices than in the past. But even with the rise of AI, brands who hire voice actors will prioritize real, authentic, and good quality voice acting over cost and convenience.

Our [2023 Audio Trends Report](#) found that audio quality, vocal performance, and cost were the top considerations when hiring voice actors. In this year's survey, we asked companies the same question. Audio quality still remains the most important consideration. But this year, more brands are considering cost, with over half (52%) saying cost is one of their top considerations, compared to last year when only 35% said cost was an important factor.

- Top considerations when hiring voice actors were audio quality (56%), cost (52%), and vocal performance (50%).
- But when looking at brands who hire voice actors very frequently, averaging hiring once a week or over 50 times a year, "authentic accent" was the second most popular consideration, just after audio quality but overtaking "cost".



Financially speaking, 2023 threw everyone for a loop. Industries slowed down and projects were paused, so it's no surprise that across the board, cost is consistently an important consideration. But the bottom line is that production houses and agencies are looking for good voices to bring their projects to life, and paying for a skilled actor is worth the cost.

Authenticity Defined

The word “authentic” gets thrown around a lot. But what does authenticity mean in the context of content creation? Let’s take the definition provided by Merriam-Webster: not false, not an imitation, but true to one’s own personality, spirit, or character. With this definition in mind, authentic content is content that aligns with the person or brand’s core values and essence. No matter what format or type of content your company creates, being authentic means the content you put out is honest, transparent, and true to your values and core message.

Authenticity in Content Creation

Ensuring that your content consistently aligns with your brand values and feels authentic to your audience isn’t just a nice-to-have, it’s a key factor in connecting with audiences and driving engagement. Strong brand trust will drive organic growth and brand awareness – a [2021 study by Edelman](#) found that 61% of consumers are willing to advocate for and promote a brand they trust, and brand trust is actually a top purchasing consideration among consumers.

Wondering how brand trust comes to life? It all starts with authenticity. Whether it’s in your brand messaging, actions, campaigns, or content, people connect most when it’s relatable, true to your values, and, to put it simply, human. In an era where generative AI can almost mirror human outputs, the genuine human element becomes even more valuable.



2024 Prediction

The value that real, human voices bring will only increase as AI-generated creations become more popular. AI voices have a time and a place where they’re best suited, and not every voice-related project will need outstanding voice acting. But when the novelty of AI voices dies down, quality vocal performance and strong acting skills will be sought after to stand out in the crowd.

Beyond just a well-executed voice over, brands who work with voice actors value the experience of working with a real person. It allows the opportunity to give nuanced direction, observe how feedback is understood, and effectively communicate subtle variations in instructions.

As AI becomes used more in creative works, we might discover a trend where art, writing, subjects, and even sounds become more similar. Human touches and the qualities that come with the performance of a good voice actor will benefit brands, agencies, and audiences alike.

We’re in an age where the tools for content creation are available to everyone, and there are many automated tools out there to speed up the content creation process. But if your end goal as a brand is to drive awareness and sales, there needs to be a human element that your audience can connect with. Relatability and authenticity will be a huge factor in building trust with the consumer, and that’s something that we don’t think AI will be able to take over anytime soon.



What does this mean for 2024?

Throughout this report, we've learned a few things:

- Audio content and audio routines are not slowing down anytime soon. If anything, we can expect more consumers to turn to audio experiences (like podcasts or audiobooks), and see more emphasis from creators and producers on the audio elements of their projects.
- Generative AI is not a fast fad—it's here to stay, and we expect it to become deeper integrated into platforms and softwares. It will be a useful tool in building your brand's voice, but it's not the be-all end-all.
- Finally, as AI takes a larger role in content creation, authentic and relatable content will be needed for brands to stand out in the crowd.

Methodology

Voices deployed a qualitative survey targeting registered client users of Voices, ranging in industries from advertising, broadcast media, entertainment, film, education, and training. The survey looked to understand current market trends and how the landscape of the voice over industry has changed over the last year.

1083 survey respondents participated in the survey that consisted of 12 questions. The survey opened on October 10th and closed on October 18th. There was an incentive of the chance to win one of three \$100 Amazon gift cards for the completion of the survey.

About Voices

Voices is the world's #1 voice marketplace with over 4 million registered users. Since 2005, the biggest and most beloved brands have entrusted Voices to help them find professionals to bring their projects to life. Voices has worked with major clients including Shopify, Microsoft, The History Channel, The Discovery Channel, Hulu, Cisco, the biggest ad agencies and thousands more small businesses.