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Additional download instructions for your particular device can be found on our page of digital downloads of frequently asked questions Get a deal on the audiobook and e-book of our national bestsellers with these bundles! Podcasts and audiobooks are two of the most popular forms of audio entertainment. Both are readily available on your smartphone or computer, but you may not be familiar with the differences between them. In this article, we'll look at the differences between podcasts and audiobooks. We will look at the format, prices, availability, and how to choose between the two formats. Podcasts vs. Audiobooks: A general definition first, let's define these two environments before we go for detailed comparisons. At its core, podcasts and audiobooks are digital audio files designed to be listened to, but that makes it easier. A podcast is a episodic series of audio content run by one or more hosts. It can take a lot of formats, from quick round-ups to news to roundtable discussions and more. Typically, the podcast shows a release on a regular basis and allow subscribers to get new episodes right away. An audiobook is a professional audio recording of an existing text, usually a book. The content of audiobooks almost always exists in another non-audio format, meaning that they provide an alternative way to consume the same content. Unlike podcasts, audiobooks are released as a single product and are not episodic. There may be a slight overlap with them in the form of narrative podcasts where the host tells one story in segments or reads several stories in an episode. However, we will look at other differences between podcasts and audiobooks that make the distinction clear. Audiobook and Podcast Prices If you don't want to spend money on auditory entertainment, podcasts are the way to go. Most podcasts are available on free charging, and with so many available, you'll never run out of free content to enjoy. Of course, podcast creators have to make money somehow, so a lot of them include sponsorships are sprinkled here and there. It's a small price to pay for otherwise free content, plus they're easy to miss if you don't want to hear them. Some podcasters also charge for additional content or bonus episodes, either as a one-off or or monthly subscription to something like Patreon. Audiobooks are a different story in terms of cost. Writing the cost of an entire content book is not a cheap venture, so publishers usually charge more for an audiobook than a Kindle edition or physical copy. For example, take a popular name like Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. At the time of writing, the prices for the various formats on Amazon were: Kindle: \$8.99 Hardcover: \$11.99 Paperback: \$6.89 Audiobook: \$29.99 This is a stark difference, meaning that if you listen to a lot, audiobooks can become expensive. Savings on audiobooks if you're interested in audiobooks, chances are you'll be looking at the Amazon Audible service first (more on that later). A basic Gold subscription costs \$14.95/month and gives you one credit each month that can be repaid for any audiobook on the service. Those who listen more can look at the platinum plan, which provides two loans a month at a price of \$22.95. While Audible members also get free audio originals every month and discount on audiobook credits, you should be aware of other ways to find audiobooks for cheap too. You can find a free choice at your local library or even on Spotify. While they're probably not as polished as paid audiobooks, they can keep you up to your next loan. Podcasts vs. Audiobooks: Convenience Trying to Decide Between Getting Into Podcasts and AudioBooks? You can make a call depending on how practical they are for your workflow. Podcasts tend to have less commitment time involved. Although their length can vary quite a bit, many podcasts fall somewhere in the range of 30 to 60 minutes. This makes them easy to consummate during a commute or workout session. Audiobooks are a different story. The first Harry Potter book we mentioned earlier lasts about eight hours in the form of an audiobook. Longer work can be several times longer than this, requiring 20 or more hours to listen in full. Whether it is for or against depends on your listening habits. Listening to a 20-hour book in 15-minute pieces will take a long time and will probably be unsatisfactory as you struggle to follow the story. Chapters make for natural stop points, but you can't always stop listening exactly where the new chapter starts. However, when you have a great chunk of time, digging into an audiobook is more likely to be more interesting than listening to a ton of podcast episodes back-to-back. Audiobooks allow you to experience works that you wouldn't have read otherwise while you're cooking, driving, or performing other tasks. But podcasts are easier to penetrate when you have a few minutes without committing a whole book. In general, podcasts are easier to access than audiobooks for several reasons. First, many audiobooks are protected by DRM, or digital rights management. This means that when you buy a book on Audible, you have to use the Audible app to listen to it. You can't export an audio file and listen to it in another app of your choice. Choice. DRM-free audiobooks exist, most popular retailers (who sell books that you probably want to hear) provide some level of DRM. It's not a huge deal if you only buy from one seller, but it becomes a hassle to manage DRM-protected audiobooks from multiple sources. Audiobooks may also be affected by regional restrictions. You are probably familiar with this if you live outside the U.S., since many forms of online media for U.S. markets are not available in other regions. This way, you won't be able to access a particular book simply because the publisher doesn't make it available in your area. Compare these limitations with podcasts that have few obstacles to entry. With a podcast app on your phone, computer or even a web app, you can subscribe and manage podcasts from multiple sources. Most podcasts don't suffer from any regional restrictions, either. Since many shows are created on their own, they want to reach as wide an audience as possible. Chances are you can easily access any podcast you're interested in, even if you have to check out a few services for it. How do you get started with audiobooks or podcasts decided that you want to give one or both of these types of entertainment a try? It's easy to start listening to both and decide if you love them. For audiobooks, a great way to get started is by subscribing to the free Audible trial. This allows you to try the service for 30 days with one free audiobook that is yours to save. Take a look at our recommendations for audiobooks to grab during the free Audible trial for some ideas. If you don't like the Audible experience or find it too expensive, it's easy to cancel an Audible subscription before it resumes without paying anything. To get started with podcasts, you'll need a podcast manager and some shows to try. If you use Spotify, you'll be glad to know that it is home to a ton of podcasts in addition to music. Check out the best podcasts on Spotify for a good starting point. Don't want to use Spotify? Take a look at our guide to get started with podcasts for more ways to listen. 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