

The New Explosion in Audio Books

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The Wall Street Journal:

Cory Wilbur, a 25-year-old software engineer in Boston, never used to read much. He barely cracked a book in college and would read one or two a year on vacation, at most.

But in the past year, he's finished 10 books, including Dan Brown's "Inferno," Walter Isaacson's biography of Steve Jobs and George R.R. Martin's fantasy series "A Song of Ice and Fire." He listens to audio books in snippets throughout the day on his iPhone during his morning workout, on his 20-minute commute to work, and while he's cooking dinner or cleaning up. Before he falls asleep, he switches to an e-book of the same story on his Kindle, and starts reading right where the narrator left off.

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Daniel Willingham, a psychology professor at the University of Virginia who has studied reading and listening comprehension, said that multitasking compromises a listener's attention, unless the task is truly automatic. Jogging on a treadmill would probably be fine, but running on a trail might be too distracting to fully absorb the text, he said.

Read the whole story: [*The Wall Street Journal*](#)