
Embargoed until 00.01 GMT, Wednesday 4 February, 2026

BolognaBookPlus celebrates the continuing global strength of audio publishing with its 3rd Audio Forum in partnership with Beat Technology and a stellar line-up:

Spotify, ElevenLabs, Yoto, Dolby, Audible and Gallimard headline the 2026 programme

London, Bologna: Wednesday 4 February:

BolognaBookPlus is pleased to announce the **Audio Forum 2026**, taking place on **Wednesday 15 April** at the **BolognaBookPlus Theatre**. Created in partnership with **Beat Technology**, the forum will bring together global leaders from publishing, audio, and technology to explore the rapid evolution of the audiobook and spoken-word landscape.

With audio continuing to be one of the fastest-growing formats in global publishing, the programme will examine how technology, creativity, and commercial realities are reshaping how stories are produced, distributed, and consumed. The Audio Forum 2026 is proudly sponsored by **ElevenLabs, Bookwire, and ZebraLution**, whose continued support highlights the growing importance of innovation, accessibility, and scalability in audio publishing.

Programme Highlights

In Conversation with Duncan Bruce, Spotify

A keynote conversation offering insight into the platform's approach to audio growth, audience engagement, and the future of spoken-word content.

Tech & Innovation within Audio

From marketing and reach to processes and screenless devices to sonic superworlds, this session explores the continued revenue growth of audio through the lens of technological advancement. Panellists will discuss how innovation is shifting consumption habits, experiential expectations, and methods of audio creation.

Reaching Reluctant Readers via Audiobooks

Is the audiobook a ready-made bridge to reach reluctant readers? In the UK's National Year of Reading, this panel examines how publishers can use audio to engage everyone from disinclined children to time-poor adults, expanding access to great books across formats.

Creativity vs Affordability

New and mature markets have different ears and different needs. This international panel places actors and AI in direct conversation, addressing creative ambition alongside the demands for speed, availability, and affordability in a global audio market.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Duncan Bruce, Director of Partnerships & Licensing for audiobooks, Spotify
- Madeline Shue, Head of Publisher Partnerships, ElevenLabs
- Ben Drury, CEO and Co-Founder, Yoto
- Mathilde Davignon, Head of Audio, Gallimard
- Barbara Knabe, Head of Content Acquisition, EU and LatAm, Audible
- Richard Addis, Music, Podcast and Audiobook Partnerships, Dolby EU
- Robin Lai, SVP - Custom Shop, John Marshall Media
- Becca Souster, Head of Audio Sales and Strategy, Pan Macmillan

Full programme to be announced soon.

The Audio Forum 2026 is an essential event for publishers, producers, platforms, and technology providers navigating the next chapter of audio publishing.

Jacks Thomas, Guest Director BolognaBookPlus, comments: “Audio publishing opens up the pleasure and knowledge that books give to so many different people. It is wonderful to see the continued growth and success of this creative and ever-evolving format. Working with Beat Technology, with their expertise and global reach, it will, once again be a fantastic programme of speakers and content for the BolognaBookPlus audience. We hope to see you there!”

Nathan Hull, Beat Technology, said: “This forum offers a platform for intelligent debate around audio sub-topics that aren’t yet given air-time. The audio format is no longer leftfield or niche: it’s the financial or creative cornerstone in some markets and has the opportunity to be in newer ones. This year we have again an international mix of major voices in the field alongside newer markets and fresh faces, to give weight and balance as we deliberate the evolution of the spoken word and what it means to publishers.”

Ben Drury, CEO and Co-Founder of children’s audio platform, Yoto, commented: “Events like Bologna Book Plus play a vital role in bringing the industry together by creating space for meaningful conversations and facilitating the face-to-face connections that turn great ideas into long-term partnerships and collaborations. As a pioneer in the world of children’s audio we know that listening is one of the fastest-growing ways kids discover and enjoy stories. A huge part of our mission at Yoto is to help publishers and independent creators reach families all around the world through this powerful medium, helping to spark a lifelong love of storytelling for children everywhere.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS



**BOLOGNA
BOOK
PLUS**



About Bologna

Three global book events for international rights and licensing trading take place annually in the eponymous Italian city where culture meets style and commercial relationships are created. BolognaBookPlus, Bologna Children's Book Fair, Bologna licensing Trade Fair.



About Bologna Children's Book Fair (BCBF)

Bologna Children's Book Fair is the world's leading trade fair dedicated to publishing and content for children. Attended by 1,500 exhibitors, it attracts around 30,000 visiting professionals from almost 100 countries. Now in its 63rd edition, each year BCBF attracts an international public of publishers, agents, developers, illustrators, authors, booksellers, librarians and other professionals involved not only in the book industry, but also in multimedia and children's content licensing.



About Bologna Licensing Trade Fair/Kids (BLTF/Kids)

The Bologna Licensing Trade Fair/Kids is the leading Italian and European licensing event specifically for brands for children, teens and young adults. The event is aimed at fostering relationships between the worlds of publishing and consumer goods. BLTF/Kids is extending its activities to connect various different media by hosting two of BCBF's key initiatives: the TV/Film Rights Centre and the brand new Games Business Centre. In 2026, the event is holding its 19th edition and is an integral part of the Bologna Children's Book Fair (BCBF).

About BolognaFiere



BolognaFiere S.p.A. is one of the leading international trade fair organisers with an exhibition portfolio of more than 100 events organised both directly and in partnership each year at the Bologna Exhibition Centre and in 10 countries in Europe, Asia and America, spanning various sectors such as art, publishing, cosmetics, agri-food and design.