

2020 China's Online Audio Sector Report



Definition: Online Audio Platforms

Fierce market competition contributes to the differentiation of the audio platform's market positioning

Online audio platforms mainly provide online audio content and related services. Single paid knowledge platforms such as iGet and Youshu Gongdu mainly rely on audio media to integrated services of paid knowledge. Audio is only one of the content carriers and display forms. To separate it from the paid knowledge industry, it is not in the category of online audio platforms defined in this report.

Due to the variety of audio content and forms, after years of development, audio platforms and services need to decide their market positioning and development direction in the fierce market competition, thereby promoting the development of audio platforms from homogenization to differentiation.

According to the audio content and business development directions, domestic audio platforms can be divided into two main types.

The Main Types of Online Audio Content Platforms in China in 2020

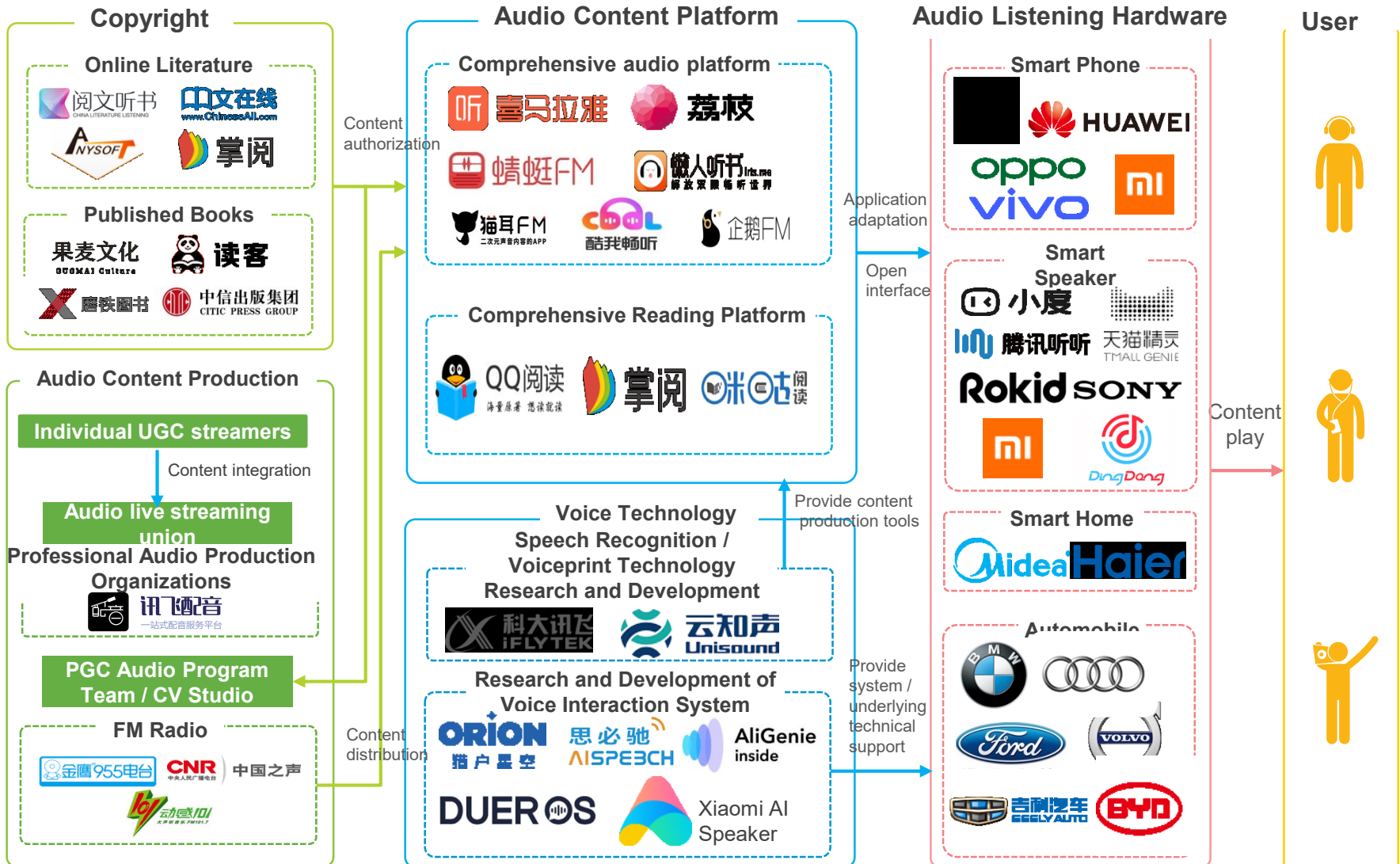
Comprehensive Audio Platforms

These platforms are huge and comprehensive. They provide all types of audio content or services including audio podcast programs, paid content, live audio, online radio, audiobooks, etc.

Comprehensive Reading Platforms

These platforms provide digital reading content in various forms including online literature, published e-books, comics, and audio books, among which audiobooks are an important business component

Online Audio Industry Map



Note: Not all enterprises in each link of the industry chain are displayed.

Source: iResearch Consulting Group.

Types of Platform Enterprises

Audio Content or Services Provide by Chinese Online Audio Platforms in 2020

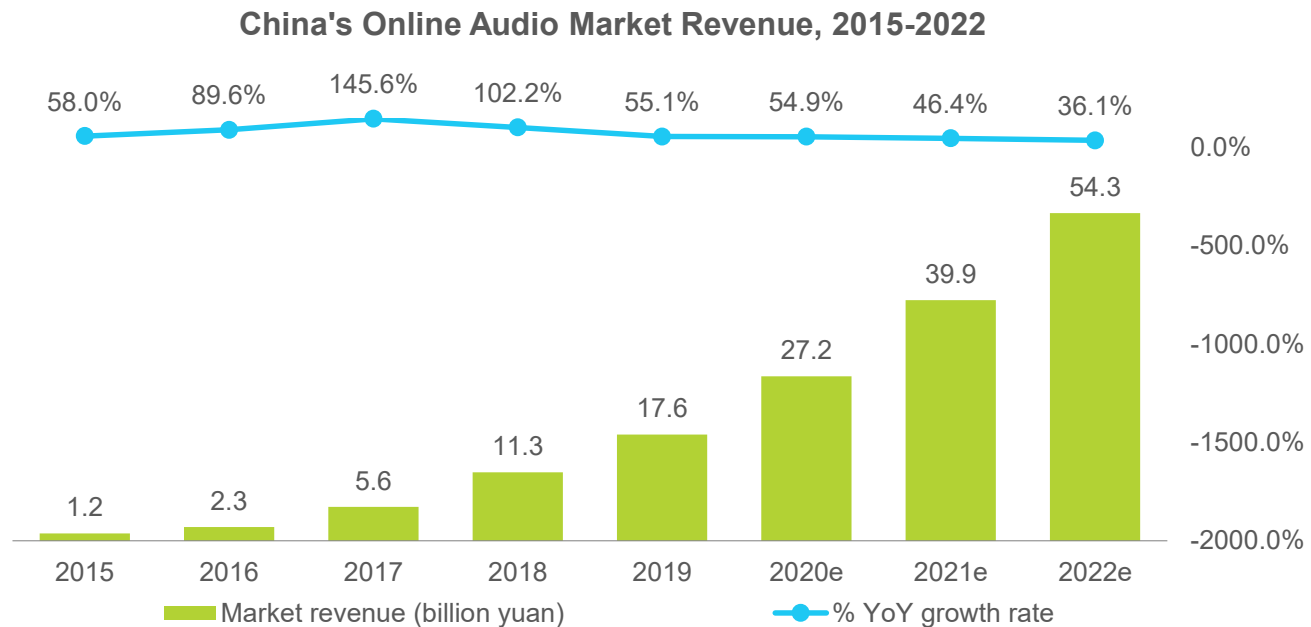
Type	Platform APP	Podcast (RSS audio programs)	Paid audio programs	Online radio	Audio live streaming	Audio books
Comprehensive audio platforms	Ximalaya	√	√	√	√	√
	Lizhi	√	√	√	√	√
	Qingting FM	√	√	√	√	√
	Kuwo Changting	√	√	√		√
	Qie FM	√	√	√		√
	Lanren Tingshu	√	√			√
	Miss Evan FM	√			√	√
Comprehensive reading platforms	QQ Reader		√			√
	iReader		√			√
	Migu Reading	√				√

Source: The public information is compiled by iResearch. The statistic time is up to May 2020.

Online Audio Market Revenue

The market revenue reached 17.58 billion yuan in 2019

In 2019, the market revenue of China's online audio industry was 17.58 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 55.1%. With the continuous development of the audio business, more and more head programs and high-quality content have been created, and the types of content have become increasingly rich, resulting in a large increase in the revenue from users' payment. The presentation models and interactive methods of audio content have been increasing, too. The optimized development of the audio live streaming model contributes to the combination of the audio industry and the business model of users' tips. The development of the full scenario ecology provides more imagine space for the whole online audio industry, which will promote further growth of the online audio market revenue.



Note: Focus on the audio business market, covering core business models such as virtual gifts and services, online advertising, content subscription, etc. Statistics include but are not limited to revenue from audio-related businesses such as online audio, video live streaming, online music and other platforms' income.

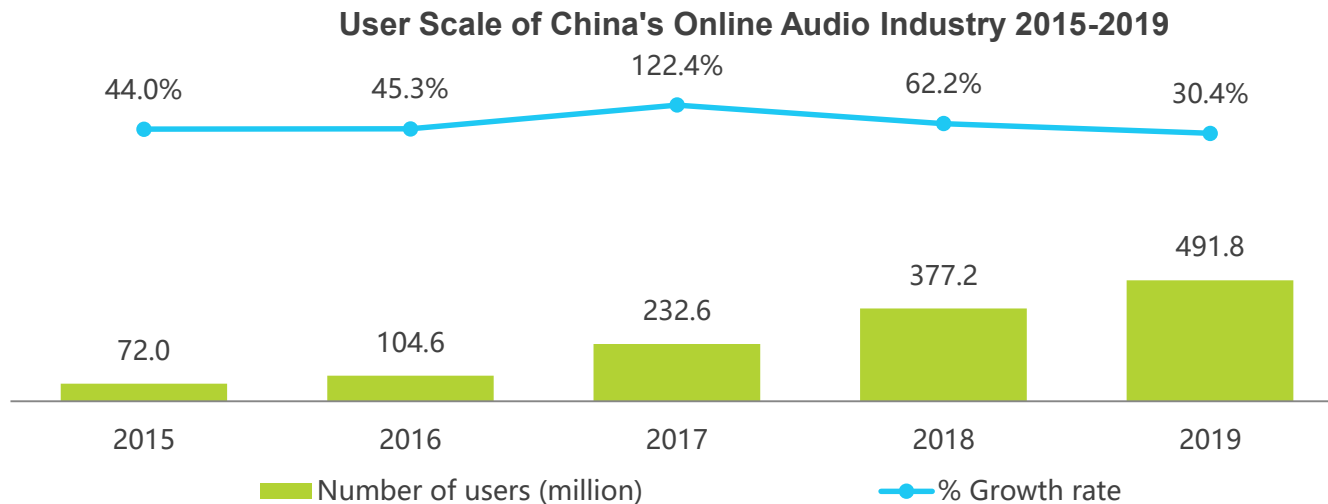
Source: Online public information, interviews with industry expert and corporates' financial reports. The calculation is based on iResearch statistical model, for reference only.

Number of Users

Diversified content distribution channels continuously expand the coverage of audio users

The unique media attributes of online audio can release usage scenarios, and attract users to meet their content and entertainment demand by listening to audio content. The audio business can be connected to many other scenario ecologies to provide users with audio services together. Now the large audio platforms keep expanding their content distribution channels, reach ecological cooperation with mainstream brands of mobile phone manufacturers, super apps, smart speakers, Internet TV and OTT, smart home and wearable devices and other Internet of Things and Internet of Vehicles manufacturers, and continuously expand the coverage of users by providing high-quality content and refined joint operation services.

Against such a background, the number of Chinese online audio users increased again and reached 490 million in 2019, injecting endless vitality into the development of the industry.



Source: Online public information, interviews with experts in the industry. The calculation is based on iResearch statistical model, for reference only.

Main Business Models in Online Audio Industry

Common development of multiple business models

After years of development, China's online audio industry has become increasingly mature and the construction of multiple business models is gradually deepening. Now the main businesses in the industry, including users' payment, users' tips, advertising and marketing, and hardware sales, etc., have become the base for the continuous innovative development of the industry. A profit acquisition channel between platforms, content, and users is created through the active construction of the industry and its platform ecology. As the business models have their own focuses and target development features of the platforms, they can effectively promote the sustainable development of the platforms' business.

Main Business Models of the Online Audio Industry



Users' payment includes one-time payment and membership subscription. In the first model, users buy specific high-quality content. In the second model, users are continuously provided with high-quality content while enjoying a series of member privileges.



Users tip high-quality content or streamers besides payment, which is mainly through recharging on the platform to gain the rights to send various gifts. This is a manifestation of the fan economy



With large-scale users and traffic, the audio platforms carry out relevant advertisement and marketing activities for advertisers and brands to gain revenue, which is an important monetization method of the streamers and audio platforms.



Gain revenue by selling audio hardware products. Besides providing users with high-quality experience and increasing user stickiness, the hardware terminals also enrich the business models of the audio industry.

Refined operation of audio content, multi-channel expansion of user groups

In the future, the audio platforms will further strengthen their content advantages. While keep producing high-quality head content, they will also keep exploring the content layout in vertical fields, cultivate famous streamers, find characteristic streamers in vertical areas, and expand subdivision content categories to meet the different needs of different users. Meanwhile, the platforms will improve the refined operation mode, and iterate the products while performing individualized and refined operations. They will expand multi-dimensional content distribution channels and match the corresponding content according to different ecological characteristics to increase the content reach efficiency, thereby continuously acquiring audio content users.

The Development Trends of Content Ecology in the Online Audio Industry

Focus on head content



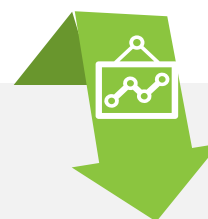
Keep producing high-quality head content, cultivate famous streamers, and build content accumulation barrier to improve influence and form prominent market competitive advantages.

In-depth development of vertical areas



Find featured audio streamers in the vertical areas, increase investment in the vertical content of the audio market, and expand subdivision content categories to meet the different needs of different users.

Refined operation



Promote more refined operation of the platform contents, using big data and other technologies to tap the interactive behaviors in the audio value chain, and iterate the products while performing individualized and refined operations.

Multi-channel promotion



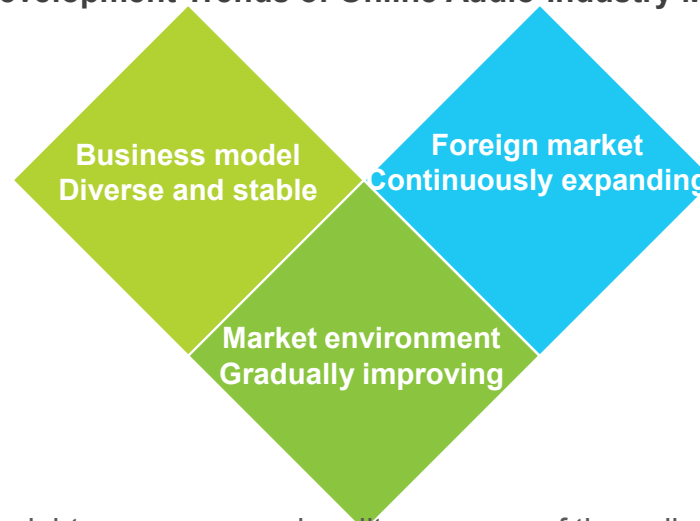
Expand multi-dimensional content distribution channels and match the corresponding content according to different ecological characteristics to increase the reach efficiency of content, thereby continuously expanding the coverage of the audio content user groups.

Continuous optimization of industrial model and construction of a benign market environment

After years of development, while focusing on the main businesses, the audio platforms also explore the development of many business segments, trying to contribute to the diversity and stability of the business models of the entire audio industry to form a larger-scale industry layout. Judging from the market environment construction of the entire industry, copyright awareness, and team review resources have been largely improved. The continuous improvement in content regulation effectively promotes the gradual optimization of the overall market environment and the standardized industry development. The head audio platforms start overseas market layout, expand foreign users, and attach importance to the overseas Chinese market, to gradually integrate into the global industrial chain.

Development Trends of Online Audio Industry Models

While focusing on the main business, the audio platforms also actively develop multiple subdivided businesses, and try to make the business model of the entire industry more diversified and stable.



The head audio platforms begin to enter overseas markets, expand overseas audio content users, pay attention to the Chinese market in foreign countries, and gradually integrate into the global industrial chain.

The copyright awareness and audit resources of the online audio industry have been greatly improved. Effectively promote the optimization of the overall market environment through continuous improvement of content supervision

Ecological deepening of all audio scenarios; Continuous improvement of service experience.

The continuous development of IoT will bring new development opportunities for the entire audio industry. Improve the synergy and linkage effect of devices through continuously improved technologies, comprehensively expanding, and enriching audio content deployment scenarios. The development of intelligent technology has enlarged the development room of the audio service models. As new technologies are applied to various devices, the interactivity of audio is further enhanced, voice recognition capabilities are further improved, and the audio content will be more intelligently. The design of audio products can better meet the needs of users, and the types of product functions are more diverse. Create a sustainable cycle of audio content ecology based on technology, improve the experience of content production, content distribution, content presentation, and so on, and increase monetization opportunities.

Technological Development Trends of the Online Audio Industry



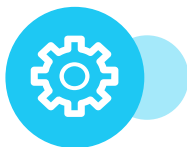
Deepen whole scenario ecology

The continuous development of 5G and IoT will bring new development opportunities for the entire audio industry. Improve the synergy and linkage effect of devices through continuously improved technologies, comprehensively expanding and enriching audio content deployment scenarios.



Intelligent service models

The development of intelligent technology has enlarged the development room of the audio service models. As new technologies are applied to various devices, the interactivity of audio is further enhanced, voice recognition capabilities are further improved, and the audio content will be more intelligently.



Product experience upgrade

The design of audio products can better meet the needs of users, and the types of product functions are more diverse. Create a sustainable cycle of audio content ecology based on technology, improve the experience of content production, content distribution, content presentation, and so on, and increase monetization opportunities.

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