

Brainprint

Wellbeing of customers



Objective in 2024

Help more than 1.15 million people consume one book per month.

Customer Empowerment

Storytel is on a mission to help people discover the right stories at the right time, promote reading and make books more accessible and compatible with everyday life. Stories improve our wellbeing as the brain releases the “feel good hormone” oxytocin¹, and can help people relax and unwind². Stories also provide tools that empower people in emotionally and practically challenging times. Whether a person wants to learn something, find a moment of comfort, or just feel less bored, Storytel gives them the power to do so. Storytel wants to help people read more, and our purpose is to empower and enhance the wellbeing of people through stories.

Opportunities & Risks	Primary Stakeholders	Steering Documents
+ Brand strength	Customers	Code of Conduct
+ Customer Attraction & Retention	Partners	Brand Platform
+ Partnerships		
- Loss of subscribers		

Storytel offers the best stories for me. It is time well spent.

Whether you are looking for entertainment or simply want to learn something new, Storytel is the place to be. We create captivating original stories, and with over a million stories in all genres, we have something for everyone.

Brand values

Progress

We constantly strive to change things for the better.

Passion

We love stories and are passionate about letting more people discover them.

Empathy

We build our relationships on empathy and respect.



¹ *How Stories Change the Brain* by Paul Zak in the Greater Good Magazine, 2013. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_stories_change_brain

Storytelling increases oxytocin and positive emotions and decreases cortisol and pain in hospitalized children by G. Brockington, A. Gomes Moreira, M. Buso, S. da Silva, E. Altszyler, R. Fischer and J. Moll, 2021. <https://www.pnas.org/content/118/22/e2018409118>

² *Reading can help reduce stress according to University of Sussex* by Any Chiles in The Argus, 2009. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/4245076.reading-can-help-reduce-stress-according-to-university-of-sussex-research/>

A product that enables people to consume more books

Storytel's goal for the core user experience is to make it easy for as many people as possible in the world to consume at least one book per month. Our guiding metric is the number of people consuming stories for 10 hours or more per month, which roughly translates to one book.

Amounts in thousands	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 Goal
Number of people consuming stories for 10 hours or more per month (Q4 average excluding Audiobooks.com)	680	828	909	994	1,150

On a global level, the average user spends ~30 hours per month on the Storytel platform, which means that Storytel is a truly integrated part of users' everyday lives. In the Nordic region, +40% of all paid subscribers listen to Storytel every day.

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Subscribers who read more books with Storytel	80%	81%	82%	82%
Subscribers who read books more often with Storytel	80%	81%	82%	81%
Subscribers who explore new genres with Storytel	60%	60%	62%	62%

The Storytel survey was sent out on an ongoing basis throughout 2023 to a total of 23,616 users across Storytel's geographic markets.

Product Missions

Storytel's product teams have two missions for the core experience: To help users find the right stories, and to help users enjoy those stories. The product missions guide Storytel's product development, and assure prioritization is in line with the overarching missions.

To help users find the right stories, Storytel works to deliver a great mix of algorithmically personalized and editorial recommendations to provide an inspiring and engaging story-exploration experience. In 2023, big investments were made into upgrading the infrastructure of our recommender to make sure we can keep scaling and improving the relevance of each user's book recommendations. Also, Storytel has focused on creating a more immersive exploration of stories to lower the threshold of finding the next great book, for example through the introduction of video trailers.

To help users enjoy their stories, our focus is on providing a reliable and seamless reading and listening experience that makes consumption of stories both easy and delightful. A highlight from this category in 2023 was the introduction of Voice Switcher. An innovation that aims to solve the

fundamental problem with audiobooks that different users have different tastes in narrator voice. Voice Switcher is a new feature that lets users personalize their listening experience by seamlessly switching the narrator voice to one of their liking. Made possible through the use of generative AI and speech synthesis, and currently available for a selection of titles in English, Swedish and Polish.

Research Study GIH

In 2021, Storytel partnered with a research project led by The Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences, GIH, which aims to understand how physical wellbeing is connected to mental wellbeing. In phase 1 of the study in 2022, 2,700 14–15 year old Swedish students got a prolonged school day by 60 minutes three times per week to do physical activities such as audiobook-walks provided by Storytel. The students were then evaluated on sedentary time, physical activity, cognitive functions, mental health, self-esteem and motivation. In 2023, the study was conducted on a bigger scale and final results will be presented in 2024.

Accessibility

Storytel works to develop products that are inclusive and accessible. Developing the Storytel product with accessibility criteria considered is an integral part of product development as the company prepares for compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. Recent developments include conducting an accessibility assessment of the Storytel app, introducing new digital ID colors with sufficient color contrast, and accessibility training for app developers and testers.

Promoting children's reading (Storytel Books)

The Great Reading Challenge, Sweden's largest reading competition, was organized for the third time in 2023. A record number of fourth-grade classes participated, with an impressive 45,000 fourth graders crossing the finish line—approximately 40 percent of the country's students, and a remarkable 60 percent more than the previous year. Together, they read over 1,000,000 hours, averaging 20 minutes per day per student throughout the competition period, from September 15 to December 1. Participating classes reported a more than 60 percent increase in reading time during the fall. The goal of *The Great Reading Challenge* is to support the promotion of reading fitness and contribute to making reading a daily habit. The competition offers numerous activities with competition leaders, participating authors, and selected idols, along with comprehensive digital materials and, not least, an attractive prize pool as motivation. In 2023, all participating classes were also provided with a physical book and inspiration package, thanks to a generous grant from Skandia Ideas for Life. The initiative was made by Rabén & Sjögren and today we cooperate with Adlibris, Bonnier Carlsen, and Natur & Kultur.

During 2023 Rabén & Sjögren and B. Wahlström continued its inspirational events 'Läslust' (Reading Passion) held throughout Sweden, specifically targeted at those working with children and reading in grades 1–6. Librarians, teachers and school librarians meet authors and illustrators who share insights into their work, their books, and engage in discussions on how we can encourage children to love reading and explore new worlds. The events are free of charge.

Content Responsibility

Organizations that create and distribute content hold a powerful position in society through the impact and influence of that content. Storytel has a broad catalogue of content, which is a mix of content produced by companies within the Storytel group across all of the local markets, and of licensed content from third parties globally. This makes Storytel both a publisher and distributor of content. Storytel has responsibilities pertaining to human rights, such as freedom of expression, and through diversity and pluralism in its content, Storytel aims to facilitate understanding and cultivate empathy in its readers, while being compliant with local laws and regulations.

Opportunities & Risks	Primary Stakeholders	Steering Documents
+ Trust & Safety for users	Customers	Content Guidelines
- Reputational damage	Authors	Content Sensitivity Mapping
- Legal proceedings	Publishers	Content Contingency Plan
- Failure to protect content rights		

Content Guidelines

Storytel's Content Guidelines consist of two parts. The first part are Technical Criteria, which refer to the technical and editorial quality of audiobooks and e-books. For example, each title must have proper credit, a registered publisher and correct metadata. The second part are the Content Principles, which refer to the compliance of the content with legal and ethical standards. For example, Storytel does not accept toxic content such as hate speech, disinformation or misinformation, encouragement or idealisation of self harm, suicide or solicitations to commit crime. If a title breaches the content guidelines, Storytel can remove it from the service.

To complement the content guidelines, Storytel has performed a content sensitivity mapping to better understand topics that are culturally sensitive in each local market, and to assure appropriate considerations related to that. Storytel has also developed a content contingency plan to guide

Storytel employees in critical situations connected to the content in the service. The plan points out three broad areas of risk, and how to handle these:

1. Breach of rights
2. Ethically questionable content
3. Harmful content

Content Committee

The Content Committee within Storytel is the decision-making body on content-related issues. This group works to mitigate risks related to handling and monitoring content from an integrity and safety perspective. They are responsible for updating the Content Guidelines toward publishers and authors when necessary, and they work to resolve content-related issues both proactively and reactively. Users, employees, partners or other stakeholders can report content on the service, allowing the Content Committee to reactively review complaints. The Content Committee is a collaboration between various departments in the organization to give a collected Storytel view on content reported as illegal, unethical or in other ways unsuitable for the service. The Committee also assists local Storytel markets in making well-informed decisions with regards to freedom of expression as well as local laws, culture and politics.

Curation

At Storytel, curation is the process of aggregating, selecting, arranging and exhibiting content with the main goal of engaging customers to find their next great book. Curation can also be used to quickly withdraw a reported title while it is being investigated by the Content Committee, and is awaiting a formal decision.

Storytel has a function called Kids Mode in the app, which serves as a parental control. When the Kids Mode is switched on, content is restricted to the Kids category, and remains that way until a parent enters a passcode. This filter allows children to explore stories safely on the Storytel platform.

Protecting Intellectual Property (IP)

At Storytel, IP serves as the foundation on which the business can thrive. Storytel takes a strict and consistent approach against activities that infringe upon proprietary and licensed third party rights. To ensure a high quality level is persistent, Storytel conducts awareness training related specifically to trademarks and copyrights, and consistently works to ensure the use of high-level license template agreements, especially in the area of copyright and neighboring rights license agreements. Storytel strives to be a safe place for publishers and creators to harbor their rights – and works to protect the integrity of each title. We invest in the security and technology that is necessary to honor its contractual obligations and prevent misuse of the streaming service, copying and illegal file sharing.