

# Audiobook retailer Audible infringed on patent

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Created 25/03/2005 - 3:37pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Friday 25th of March 2005 03:37:49 PM Filed under [Software](#) [1] [Legal](#) [2]

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All the lawsuits relate to a patent Digeo acquired in 2002 from a St. Louis company called Microtome. The patent describes a method of sending information from a central information bank to a user's storage system for later access. The downloaded information would automatically be erased after a designated time.

The patent also describes a self-service information vending device called a "Book Bank," which would download encrypted information to a user's storage system. The patent specifies that the information could also include music, videos and computer software.

Audible's sales have soared recently, partly because of its tie to the popular iPod music player. The company provides audiobook downloads for Amazon.com and Apple Computer's iTunes music store, and reported \$34.4 million in sales last year ? a 78 percent increase over the year before.

Digeo's lawsuit claims that Audible's method of selling and distributing audiobooks is "functionally indistinguishable" from the electronic book distribution system described in its patent. The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Seattle, asks that Audible be barred from selling any products that infringe on the patent. It also asks for unspecified damages, and that those damages be trebled in accordance with patent law.

[Full Story](#) [3].

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