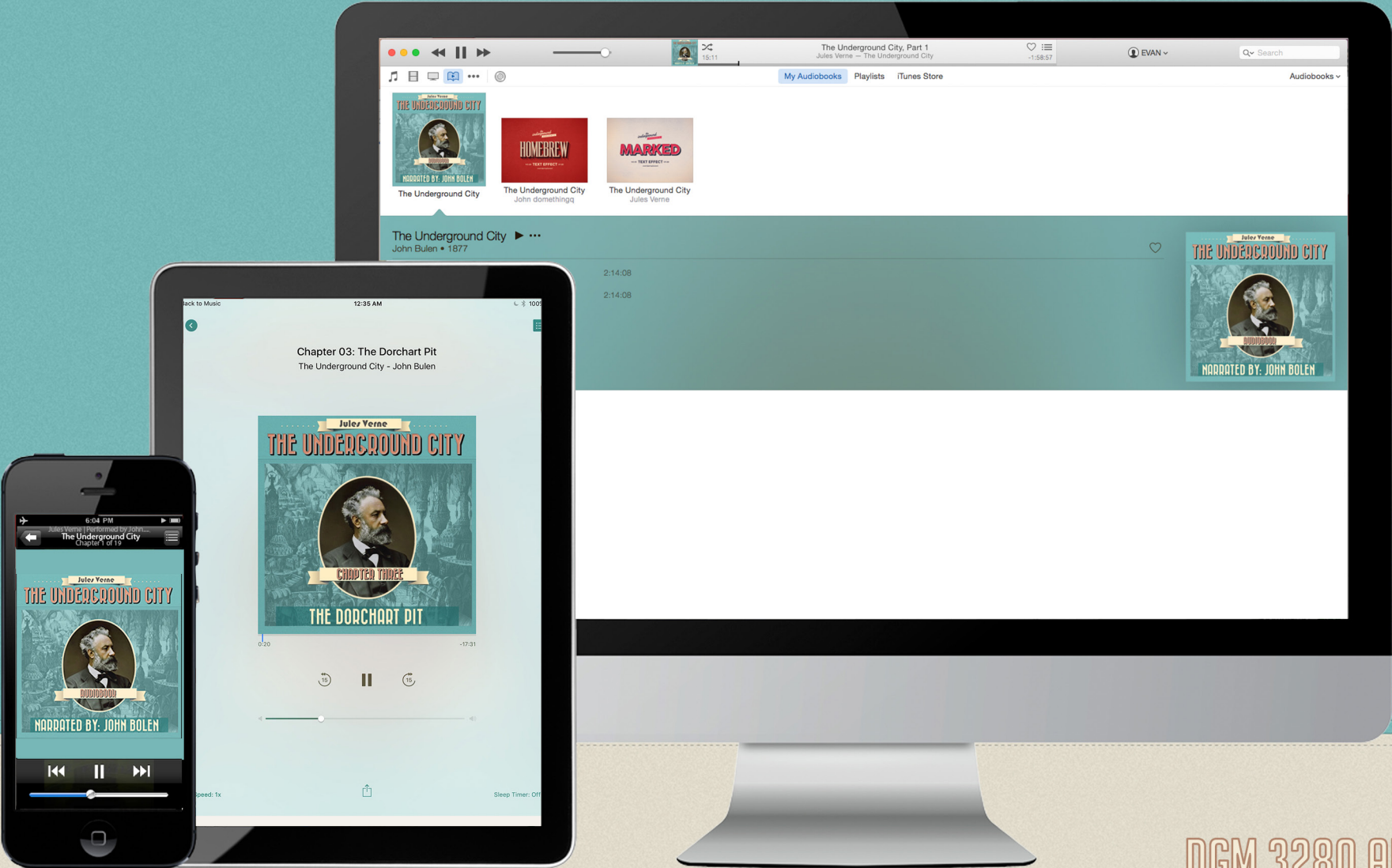


DATE:  10.5.15

AUDIOBOOK REDESIGN

JULES VERNE  
THE UNDERGROUND CITY



4 DISC AUDIO BOOK

REDESIGNED FOR ITUNES

UPDATED COVER ART

EVAN SORENSEN  
DGM 3280 AUTHORIZING FOR DIGITAL DEVICES



# CREATIVE BRIEF

Audiobooks have been around since the mid-seventies. The first commercial company to distribute audio books was a company called Books on Tape, which was established in 1977 by a man named Duvall Hecht. Hecht created the company out of a personal desire to listen to books during his daily California commute. Since most cars at the time were integrated with cassette players it quickly became the preferred place for listening to audiobooks. That trend continued when the cassette players gave way to compact disc players. In the very near future cars are going to be manufactured with neither cd players nor cassette players. It has been said that the car has been the most crucial technology of audiobooks. As the CD player goes the way of the cassette player to make way

The car is not the only place that people listen to audio books by any means. Audio books are available on a myriad of devices. However, just like the automobile industry, people are gravitating away from compact disc technology and steering towards smart devices and digital media. This shift in technology makes meta data immensely important. Gone are the days of having physical documentation of an audio books structure in the form of a jewel case insert. The new norm in audio book storage and distribution has no physical documentation. Files are passed and stored digitally and the devices used to store and play them can hold numerous different. This makes metadata more important than ever. The only thing worse than having six files on your device all named track one is having eight files all named track two. A proper naming convention can make all the difference in creating an enjoyable experience for the audience of an audiobook.

For this exercise, I was reviewing the development practices of media houses to understand where best-practices begin and failure ends in developing Audiobooks. Either I am easily impressed or I got a batch of well developed audiobooks, but I found that nearly every field of metadata was filled out (at face value) and had an obvious naming convention. I finally came across The Underground City by Jules Verne a four-disc audiobook. The first three CD's had no metadata at all and while the forth CD contained metadata, it wasn't very detailed.

While this exercise may be intended to take an audiobook with poorly executed metadata and make it better, I will learn just as much if not more taking an audiobook with a complete lack of metadata and creating it from scratch. This being the case, I cannot cite specific examples of things that need improvement, because everything needs improvement. However, there are some specific concepts that I must keep in mind in order to provide a satisfying, uncomplicated experience to anyone and everyone who listens to it. First optically-based, downloadable, and print-based media must be developed as a system—not as separate products! The experience must remain consistent between the media types. Additionally, chapter-based print organization must be present in the electronic files for practical reasons. Moreover, useful metadata must be utilized effectively to move participants in the experience and not at their expense. These are just a few of the important development issues to be outlined in this document.



## OBJECTIVES

**Identify** the areas of The Underground City that are in need of redesign to enhance the structure of the product and facilitate a more concise experience when played on hand-held mobile devices

**Improve** product cohesiveness by specifically tying print and digital media formats closer together in relationship to chapters, descriptive data, and visual identifiers

**Enhance** Information Design by considering the unique value of properly crafted text, use of the lyric field (metadata), and browsability of media structure when viewed in digital player UI: specifically iTunes for the desktop and iPod/iPad mobile devices



# WHO'S GOING TO USE THE AUDIOBOOK

*The audience for Jules Verne books is fairly broad. Often referred to as the "Father of Science Fiction," Jules Verne wrote his first novel, Five Weeks in a Balloon, at the age of 35. He went on to be the second most translated author on earth, writing books about a variety of innovations and technological advancements years before they were practical realities. His work has been around for a long time and therefore appeal not only to older generations who read his books when they were kids, but it also appeals to their children and their grandchildren.*

*The Underground City is however a fairly obscure book in the Jules Verne library and may be a bit too bland and dry to appeal to younger audiences who are not already familiar with Jules Verne's body of work. As a result I feel that the target audience for this particular audiobook will be a more mature audience. This audience could range from the tech savvy 20-45 year old to the 70+ year old who knows nothing about technology and everyone in between.*

*Moreover, when one considers the potential audience, such an audience would require a well thought out organized file structure and naming convention. Take for example the 20-45 tech savvy audience. This audience fully understands the technology and as a result they expect the developers of an audiobook to be just as tech savvy and to understand the importance metadata and file naming structures. This audience can be very unforgiving towards lay developers. One simple oversight could turn them off of your audiobook and possibly even get turned off of your entire publishing company all together.*

*Now consider the 70+-year-old non-tech savvy audience. They require well-developed metadata and file naming conventions for an entirely different reason. They are easily confused by technology. If that audiobook already has a poor file naming convention and missing metadata, it is going to be nearly impossible for this audience to use and/or enjoy.*

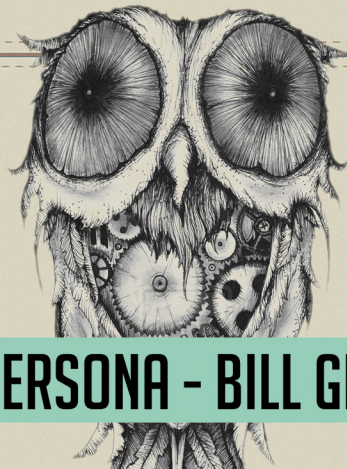
*With that in mind, no doubt the development of The Underground City digital form must be carefully designed to meet such high expectations. High use of iTunes/iPod technology would also suggest that such an audience is more attentive to how a high-fidelity product is delivered than to low-fidelity products.*

*Having considered some of the basic assumptions of the characteristics of the intended and actual audience of The Underground City I believe that both print and digital form are consumed by a more technologically adept audience than the norm and that development practices should focus on tightly integrating low and high-fidelity versions to meet demanding expectations.*

*iPod, iPhone, and iPad are only a handful of options consumers use to listen to and interact with Audiobooks. Limited Audiobook functionality exists on non-Apple devices.*







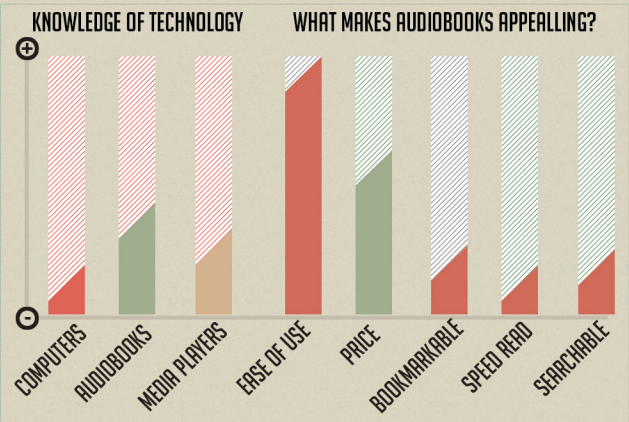
PERSONA - BILL GREY

LISTENER PERSONA

Bill Grey is a retired school teacher. Bill was always an avid reader of literature. Bill has been reading less and less as he is aging for several reasons including the fact that it strains his eyes to read for more than an hour at a time. Bills son recently gave him an iPad filled with audiobooks and music. This is the first smart device that he has ever used. Bill gets frustrated when he is trying to find an audiobook because his audiobook files are mixed in with music files. Unless Bills son is there to help him set up the audiobook he doesn't listen as often as he wants to.



- Age** 74
- Occupation** Retired
- Status** Widower
- Interests** Science Fiction and Literary Classics
- Favorite Book** 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea
- Time Listening** Min. of 25 hours weekly
- Key Characteristics**
  - Retired, spends a lot of his leisure time at home.
  - Diminishing eyesight has made it hard for him to read printed literature.
  - Easily confused by current technology.
- Goals**
  - Relax around the house but still keep his mind actively engaged.
  - Enjoy an audiobook without hasseling with confusing file structures.



FRUSTRATIONS & PAIN POINTS

- Chapters** will not show chapters properly and then I have no idea where to find my place in the book when I want to read!
- Music files** are mixed in with my audiobook files and I have no idea which ones are music and which ones are audiobooks. When I finish a chapter, instead of playing the next chapter, it starts playing music files. I love music and I love audiobooks, can't I have both files on my device without this hassel?

INFLUENCERS

- My children who set this up for me to use
- How easy the technology is to use
- Cover art and pictures
- How a book is read by narrator



# METADATA STRUCTURE

**Metadata** is one of the most crucial key areas in ensuring an enjoyable experience for aufrinres. Unfortunately it is also one of the key areas of Audiobook development that is consistently botched by creative developers as well as consistent structure of media assets. This applies to books that first begin in print and then moved to electronic audio format—as well as projects that first take form as an electronic medium. Regardless, the development principles remain the same. Experiences must be consistent in order to succeed!

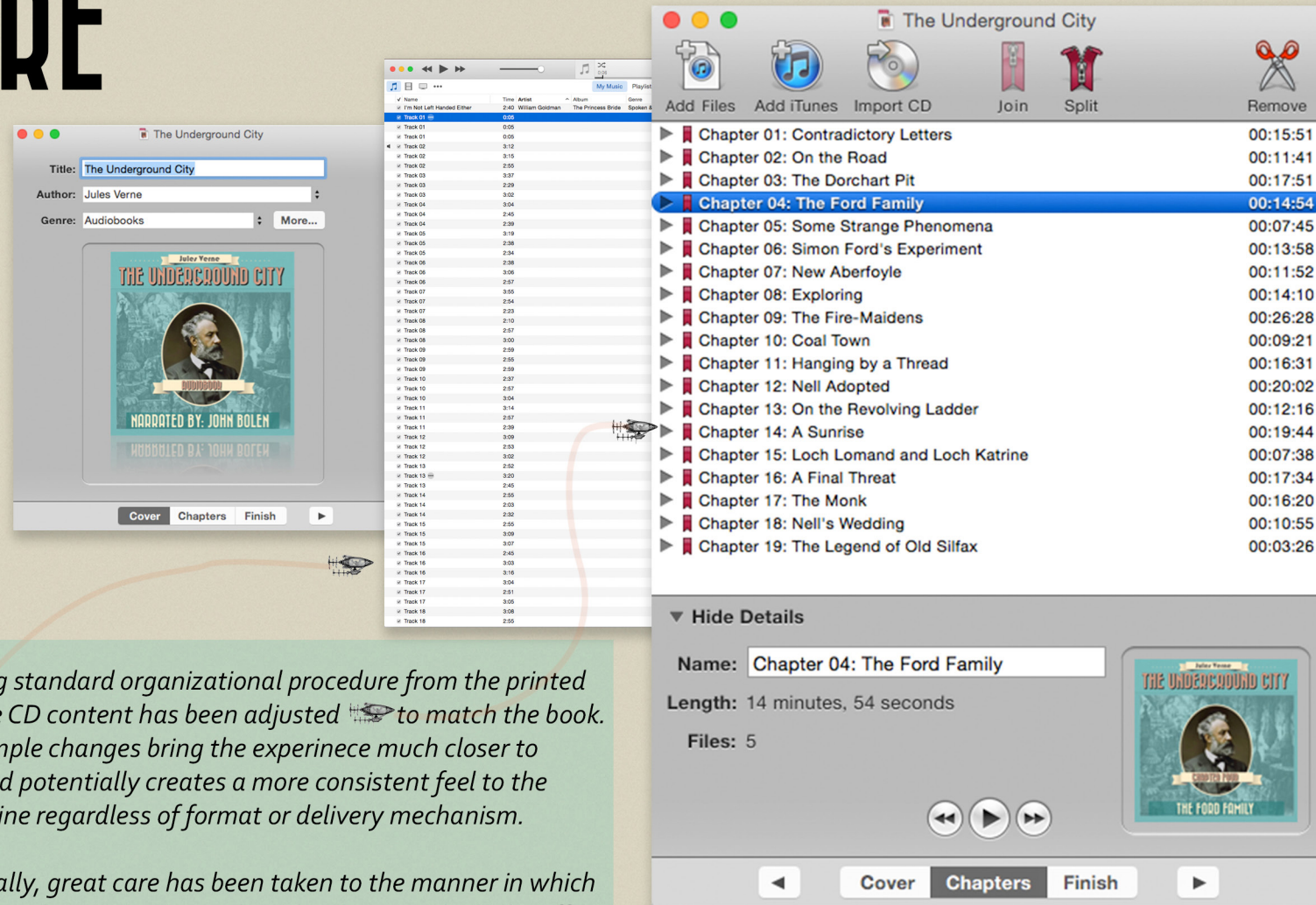
To be sure, printed books have been, and are still, a most convenient form of reading experiences. The timeless organizational structuring of books has been perfected by hundreds of years of refinement that cannot be dismissed—even in our electronic age. With the advent of electronic reading and listening devices, traditional organization can, and should, be utilized to develop products. Within this framework interactivity within projects can be supported with ease. Even then, timeless organizational principles remain in place as the best way to create proper structure for readers or listeners regardless of format.

With that in mind, why is it then that so very many creative development houses and corporations such as Audible, continue to break intended experiences by not following traditional affordances when dealing with Audiobooks?

The Underground City had no metadata on 3 of the 4 cds. Each track was imported as track# as can be seen from the import of the CD into iTunes. There was also no cover image. After an intensive search through the internet, I could only find very small images of the cover. I also did not care for the cover image on the case of the audiobook. So, I decided to create my own simple cover.

Following standard organizational procedure from the printed book, the CD content has been adjusted to match the book. These simple changes bring the experinece much closer to parity and potentially creates a more consistent feel to the product line regardless of format or delivery mechanism.

Additionally, great care has been taken to the manner in which the chapter description (metadata) has been applied. The affordances between print and electronic are consistent. From these small but important changes an end participant will find greater clarity in how the product should be used. From such, we then can also assume that the participant will see the product organization as logical, never giving a second thought as how the product is organized.

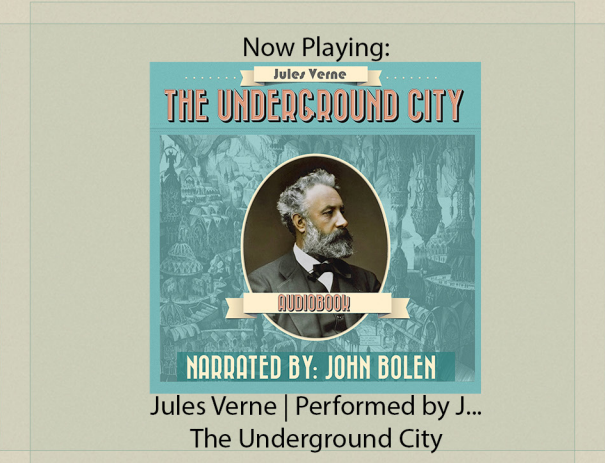


**Markers 1-2:** Simple adjustments have been made to the naming convention after 'Joining' seperate chapter tracks to better organize chapter content. Screen captures are of Audiobook Builder v.1.5.3 and iTunes 12.3.0.44



DESCRIPTIVE DATA IMPLEMENTATION

The following Descriptive Data, known as metadata, has been outlined for inclusion (embedded) in the final Audiobook media file. Various adjustments have been made to best represent the title, some items being borrowed from the media, while other data was either adjusted from online publisher material or created from scratch.

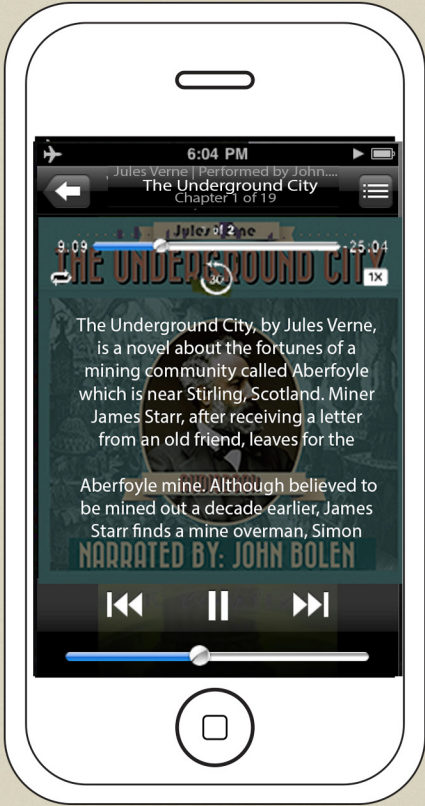


All descriptive data was extensively tested in iTunes, iPod, and iPad environments; even among non-chapter compatible players, to understand how such data would be viewed when played. Adjustments to the data were made after consecutive assessments and with adjustments subsequently included in the final development phase. Special attention was paid to where each metadata field [ tag ] was used in the interface—duplicate information being adjusted to better display information in the User Interface (UI). Eliminating replication of metadata adds polish to the product offering a more seamless experience for the end-participant.

PRIMARY METADATA FIELDS

- Title:** The Underground City
- Artist:** Jules Verne | Performed by John Bolen
- Album Artist:** John Bolen (Narrated By)
- Album:** The Underground City
- Grouping:** No
- Composer:** No
- Description:** The fortunes of a mining community called Aberfoyle which is near Stirling, Scotland.
- Comments:** For information on Jules Verne visit <http://www.online-literature.com/verne/>
- Year:** 2006
- Track Number:** 1 of 2 / 2 of 2
- Disc Number:** No
- BPM:** No
- Genre:** Audiobooks
- Part of Compilation:** No
- Volume Adjustment:** No
- Equalizer Preset:** No
- My Rating:** No

**Lyrics** Miner James Starr, after receiving a letter from an old friend, leaves for the Aberfoyle mine. Although believed to be mined out a decade earlier, James Starr finds a mine overman, Simon Ford, along with his family living deep inside the mine. Simon Ford has found a large vein of coal in the mine but the characters must deal with mysterious and unexplainable happenings in and around the mine.



iPhone Lyric implementation. Note that Apple has kept the Lyric metadata centered; creating some issues with formatting. Special attention to details is critical to fine tuning descriptive data to display properly.



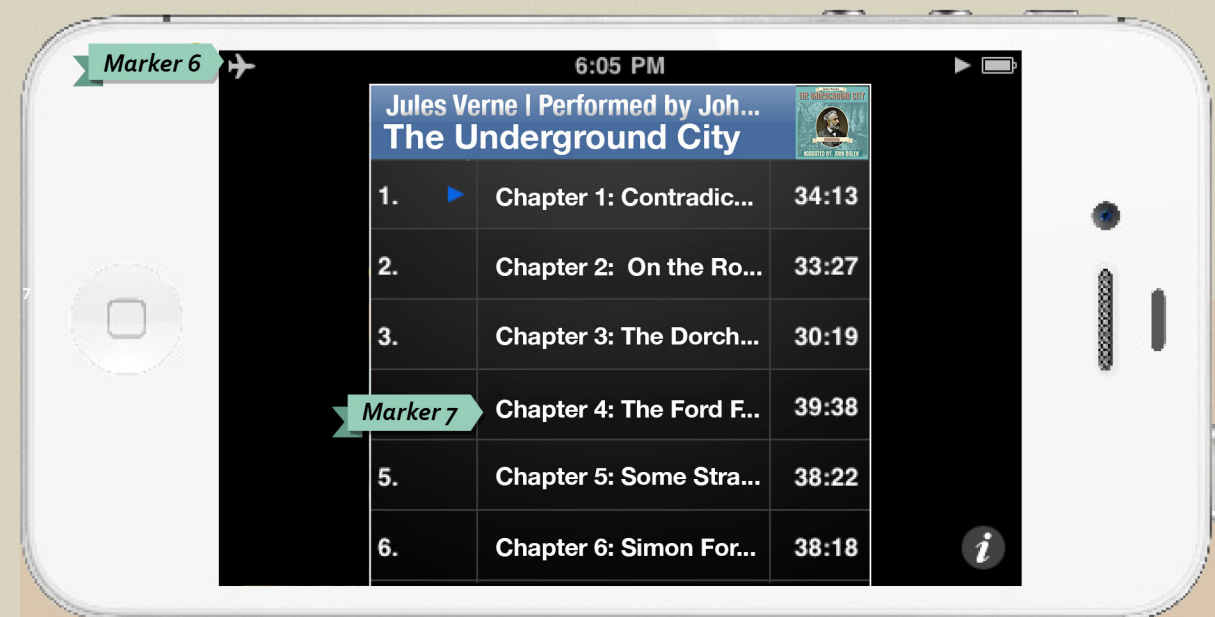
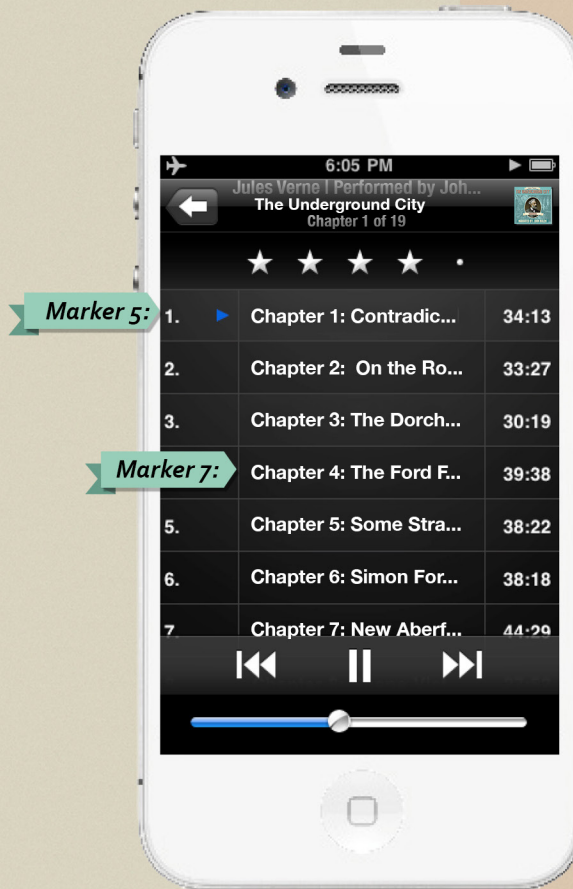
# DESCRIPTIVE DATA – CHAPTER TITLE DEVELOPMENT

**Marker 5:** Chapter selection screen on an iPhone. Screen captures are of iOS 4.3.5 (8L1)

## Satisficing in the UI

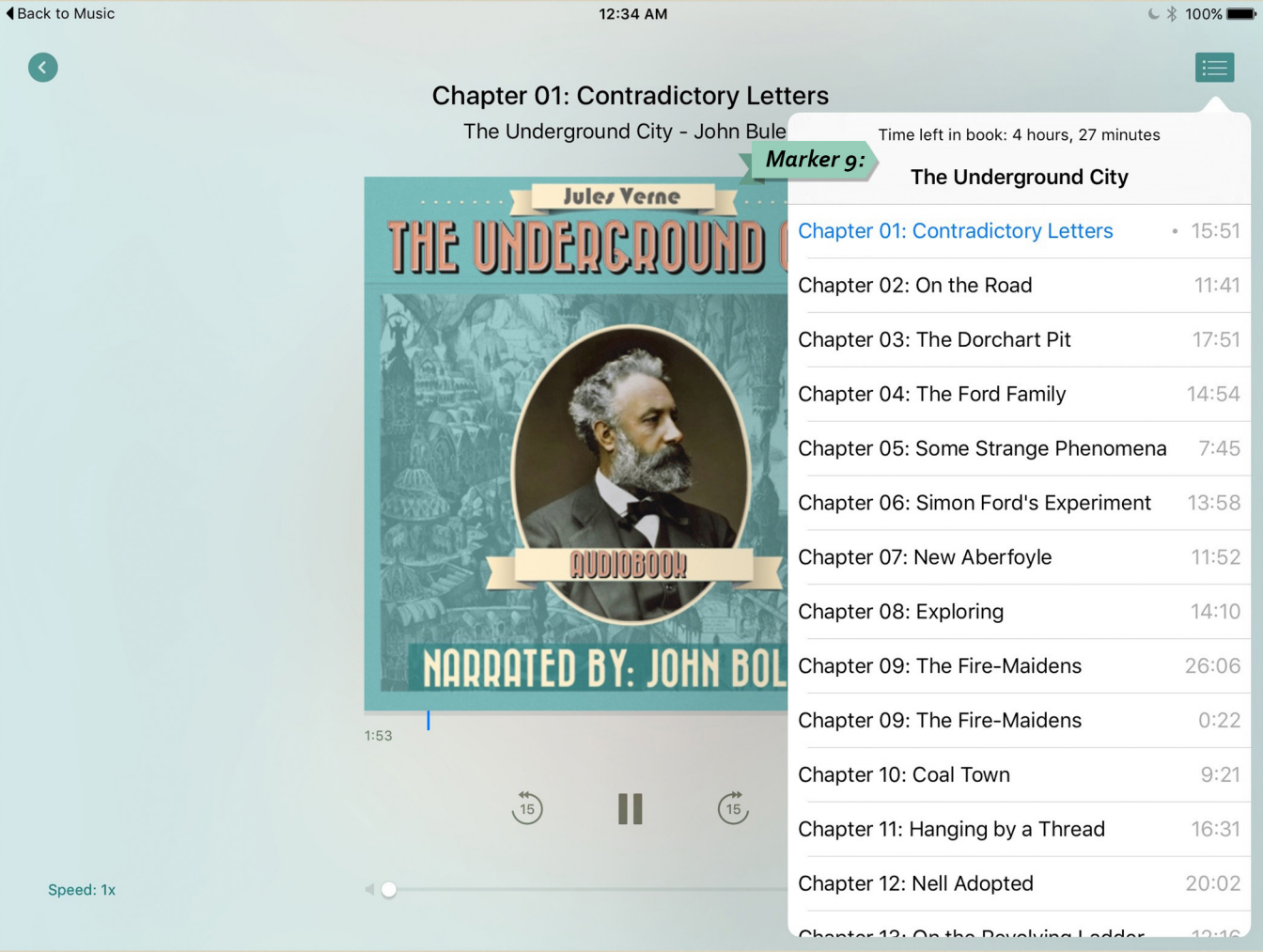
**Marker 7:** Title length in the chapter selection screen results in a non-optimal reading situation. As can be seen truncation of chapter titles will occur, which then creates an all-too-often undesirable effect that may make readability less than ideal for the end-participant.

Thus, special attention to design principles is necessary, specifically the use of 'Satisficing' to achieve acceptable goals when dealing with descriptive data.



**Marker 6:** Chapter selection screen on an iPhone in landscape mode. Screen captures are of iOS 4.3.5 (8L1)





*Solution: What can be done to counter the truncation of chapter titles on an iPhone/iPod Touch? Unfortunatley not much! After several attempts at dealing with the problem, taking into account the original book titling scheme, and multiple tests on devices, it was decided that truncation is a fact-of-life with satiafcing ruling the day. The issue of truncation is a direct result of screen size and resolution of small devices.*

*The iPad on the other hand is a trooper when displaying chapter selections. Ample space in character counts is given, which provides for a much more detailed experience for the end-participant. Interstingly enough, portrait and landscape modes reamin fairly consistent unless extremely large chapter titles occur.*



**Marker 8:** Chapter selection screen on an iPad in landscape mode. Screen captures are of iOS 9.0

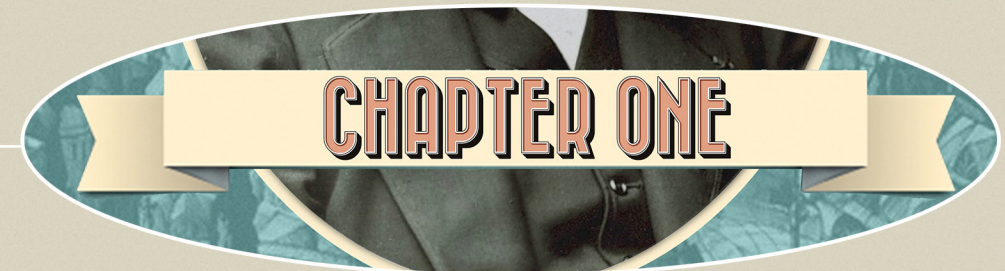


# AUDIOBOOK COVER REDESIGN



19 Chapters

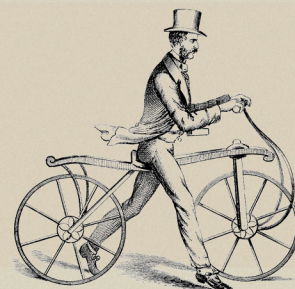
Yeah, this is a dropshadow, a very thick one too Sorry Harper



**CHAPTER INDICATOR:** Each chapter has it's own chapter indicator. With a quick glance users can see a visual indication of what chapter they are currently listening to



**CHAPTER TITLE:** Each chapter also has the chapter name.



The "Dandy" Horse

*The original cover of the audiobook looked as though it was thrown together with WordPerfect clip art - circa 1994. So I HAD to redesign it!*



**Annex:** Content displayed in this document is based off of a template provided to students enrolled in the DGM 3280 Authoring for Digital Devices course. Although I created a lot of the content, I still used a lot of the pre-laidout elements. In some cases I borrowed word-for-word as it applied to my project. This is something that I will change before putting in my portfolio, however, as far as this assignment goes I chose to do this due to lack of time and lack of copywriting skills.

