Betting on the audiobook boom: JIC Ventures backs Elredo Voice as it takes AI-driven production to US publishers

The fund leads the round in a Czech startup rebuilding the economics of audiobook production – and heads to where the world's publishers are.



The team behind Elredo Voice, an AI-powered audiobook studio

BRNO, CZECH REPUBLIC, September 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- JIC Ventures has led an investment round in Elredo Voice, a Czech startup that has built AI technology for audiobook production while reshaping the economics of how those books are made and distributed. Elredo Voice raised more than €1 million to expand into the US, where most of the world's publishers are concentrated.

For publishers, AI-powered studio Elredo Voice builds the complete infrastructure for producing audiobooks and getting them to listeners. Its AI technology cuts both the cost and the time needed to produce books for listening, and it makes localisation far easier. That changes the maths: it now makes sense to produce titles that were never worth the traditional approach, or to create audio versions of entire back catalogues published anywhere in the world over the years. It was precisely this potential that caught investors' attention.

“Audiobooks are one of the fastest-growing segments of the book market. Elredo Voice stands out not only for the quality it can achieve, but above all for distribution tailored to publishers. And the market is enormous – it spans the books being published today and entire historical catalogues,” says on behalf of the lead investor Radim Kocourek.

The round was led by JIC Ventures. It was joined by investor Jiří Hlavenka, with further backing from the Central Bohemian Innovation Centre and Sweden's Bond Ventures. Existing investors Petr Sochora of 12bullets, Petr Bláha of Eurowag and Martin Ježek also confirmed their confidence in the company. Elredo Voice additionally secured a €200,000 grant from the

Technology Incubation programme of the CzechInvest.

“This round helps us scale our production faster and expand into further global markets. Demand for audiobooks is growing faster than conventional production can keep up with, and we want to help publishers solve that technological challenge,” says Matt Schmalz, founder and CEO of Elredo Voice, which started out in 2023 with its own consumer app designed to boost audiobook listening.

Expanding towards publishers

Elredo Voice's clients already include international houses such as Wiley and HarperCollins, alongside Czech publishers Albatros Media and Euromedia Group. The new capital is aimed at commercial development and further expansion across the Atlantic. It isn't about the American audience as such – what matters is the concentration of publishers. That is why the company has already moved part of its commercial, production and support teams to the US, specifically to New Jersey.

“With startups, we always look at the founder first. Matt has exceptional drive and a clear business focus. He has opened doors in the world of publishers in the US and the UK, and he's setting his sights on Arabic-speaking countries too. That's the traction that convinced us,” adds Miloš Sochor, Managing Partner of JIC Ventures.

Today Elredo Voice distributes to more than 160 sales channels worldwide and is building capacity for hundreds of audiobooks a month, with the technological goal of producing up to a thousand titles a month. The fund intends to help the company grow. Beyond capital, it offers access to a network of experienced founders, mentors and ecosystem partners built up over the past twenty years around the european innovation agency JIC.

JIC Ventures launched in April 2026 and plans to back around twenty early-stage technology startups in total, from the Central and Eastern Europe.

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