

## Books and e-books - UK - February 2011

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### What is this report about?

The market for books is undergoing a fundamental change at present, driven primarily by the steady growth of e-books and declining print book sales but also in the area of distribution, with a move away from the high street towards online channels.

Nonetheless, for now the print book and high street bookstores still account for the largest shares of sales; the challenge for publishers is how to manage the process of change while still remaining profitable and keeping their authors, distributors and retail partners happy.

### What have we found out?

- The books market was worth £3.3 billion in 2010, little changed (+1%) on its level in 2005, although sales have been declining for the past three years since reaching a peak in 2007. In real terms, this equates to a decline in market value of 13%, while volume sales have dipped by 2%.
- Fiction (+11.8%, boosted by authors like JK Rowling, Stephanie Meyer, Dan Brown and Stieg Larsson) and academic/professional titles (+12.1% due to a rise in Higher Education enrolments and greater interest in continuing professional development) have been the main growth areas during the past five years.
- The poorest-performing sectors have been non-fiction/reference (-8.6% as a result of the increased availability of free information on the internet) and education/English-language teaching (-19%) due to pressure on education budgets and greater use of digital text books.
- E-book sales are estimated to be the equivalent of 1-3% of print book sales and growing rapidly, with one publisher reporting a tripling of sales in the first of its 2010/11 financial year. Sales are being driven by growth in device ownership, specifically e-readers and tablet PCs but also smartphones.
- Although the vast majority of book publishers are relatively small enterprises with fewer than four employees and turnover of less than £0.5 million, four companies – Hachette, Random House, Penguin and HarperCollins – collectively account for nearly half of total consumer book sales by value.
- The vast majority of adults (88%) are book readers, peaking among women, over-55s and people from higher-earning households. Briton's favourite place to read is in bed, followed by on holiday, in the living room and while commuting travelling, while nearly two-fifths read while on the toilet – particularly men.

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