

Books and e-books - UK - May 2016

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“Reports of the death of print, as Mark Twain might have said, have been greatly exaggerated. For those who predicted an inexorable decline of physical books, the past 18 months have necessitated a re-think. Far more than in other media sectors, book buyers and readers maintain an emotional connection with pre-digital formats.”

– John Worthington, Senior Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- Price is key but experiential factors remain a core strength for bookshops
- Digital reading may be in transition but there is no mainstream challenger to e-ink on the horizon
- Scope for a challenger platform and a packaged alternative for digital readers

Following several years of decline 2015 and 2016, to date, have seen a strong revival of print book sales and the sudden flattening in the e-book segment following previously high rates of growth – reversing the, by now, familiar narrative seen across much of the media/entertainment world of ‘physical down, digital up’. Amazon retains dominance of distribution right across the market, but bricks and mortar sellers are learning to adapt to this reality and playing more to their own particular strengths, although they appear to have effectively abandoned the digital space to the online giant.

The short-term future, assuming UK economic growth (now slowing) continues, looks brighter for the book trade than for some time, but in the longer term all those with a stake in the market – publishers, retailers, authors, educators, librarians etc – face the challenge of engaging new generations of digital natives who have so many distractions and alternative forms of content to choose from other than books.

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DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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