

Books and e-books - UK - July 2019

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“2018 was another positive year for the print book market and Mintel’s research shows the strength of people’s affection for bricks-and-mortar bookstores, whether part of a chain or independent. Waterstones continues to make acquisitions to better position itself against Amazon, particularly with the looming threat of Amazon potentially opening its own bookstores.”

– **Rebecca McGrath, Senior Media Analyst**

This report looks at the following areas:

- **People want to support chain bookstores nearly as much as independent ones**
- **Interactive audiobooks could be next opportunity**
- **Apple could challenge Amazon’s dominance with cross-media subscriptions**

2018 was a good year for print books following a slightly stagnant year in 2017. The success was driven by some standout titles from debut authors including Gail Honeyman’s Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine and Adam Kay’s This is Going to Hurt. The current divisive political environment in both the UK and US also fuelled the print market in 2018, with a boom in sales of political books such as, notably, Michael Wolff’s Fire and Fury.

Waterstones acquired Foyles in September 2018 in order to further protect itself from the threat of Amazon, while Waterstones’ parent company Elliott Management purchased major US chain Barnes & Noble in June 2019. Independent stores, meanwhile, grew in number once again. While still a far cry from independent stores’ heyday, this increase indicates a generally more favourable current environment for physical bookstores.

While e-book sales continue to struggle, the value of audiobooks grew further. Advancements in AI and voice assistants are presenting both book formats, but particularly audiobooks, with opportunities to experiment with interactive storytelling.

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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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Independent bookshops grow in number for second year

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UK government faces calls to remove VAT on e-books
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 Apple Books introduces reading goals
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 Amazon opens pop-up shops but not yet bookshops

The Consumer – What You Need to Know

Increase in number of people buying books
 More digital readers/listeners are using a subscription
 Home is the main location people listen to audiobooks
 Only one in four would give an e-book as a gift
 Familiarity with author the main driver of book choice
 Two in five are not buying e-books because they don't have an e-reader
 People want to support bookstores
 Nearly half of print buyers have bought from an independent bookstore

Book Buying Habits

Increase in number of people buying books

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