

The Global Publishing Industry in 2021

Preliminary release
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1. PUBLISHING SURVEY DATA

Mixed forces shaped global publishing activity in 2021. The spread of different COVID-19 variants throughout the world still caused hardship and widespread social distancing. At the same time, the rollout of vaccines helped to contain the pandemic's impact and enabled a recovery of the global economy, which grew by around 6 percent in 2021.¹ The preliminary release of data from WIPO's global survey of publishing activity shows that recovery extended to the publishing industry. Still, industry performance varies by country, reflecting the nature of book markets and other local economic forces.

Return to growth in sales revenue

The 2021 sales and licensing revenue data covering the trade and the educational sectors are available for 22 countries. An additional country provided revenue data for the trade sector only. The combined publishing industry revenue for these 23 countries was USD 71.6 billion in 2021. The United States of America (US) (USD 26.8 billion) reported the largest sales revenue, followed by Germany (USD 11.4 billion), Japan (USD 11.3 billion), the United Kingdom (UK) (USD 5.4 billion) and Italy (USD 4.1 billion) (table 1).²

Most countries – where 2020 and 2021 data are available – reported higher revenue in 2021 compared to the previous year. Among the top five countries, the US (+13.6%) and Italy (+12.2%) saw healthy growth in 2021. Japan (+7.5%), the UK (+5.1%) and Germany (+3.5%) also reported strong growth in revenue. Other countries with strong growth in revenue were Finland (+11.7%), France (+12.5%), Portugal (+15.3%) and Turkey (+10.8%). This is in contrast to 2020, where a considerable number of countries registered revenue declines between 2019 and 2020 – at height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trade sector revenue accounted for 50% or more of total revenue for 13 of the 19 countries for which data by sector are available – ranging from 50.4% in Norway to 94.3% in Hungary. Educational sector revenue accounted for over three-fifths of total revenue in Brazil (61.4%), the Netherlands (63.4%) and Mexico (75.1%).

* More complete survey results will be available in WIPO's forthcoming World Intellectual Property Indicators 2022 report.

¹ See the IMF's World Economic Outlook, available at <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO>.

² Germany reported a slightly higher volume of sales revenue than Japan. However, Japan's revenue data covers only print edition sales revenue and data for digital sales are unavailable. The 2021 revenue data for the Republic of Korea are unavailable; however, in 2020, revenue of USD 5.4 billion was generated in the Republic of Korea from books sales, which would place it among the top five countries for sales revenue.

Rising share of digital editions

The 2021 revenue by format data – print, digital and audio formats – are available for 15 countries. The digital/audio formats share ranged from 3% in Brazil to 37.8% in Japan. Digital/audio formats generated around one-third of total revenue in Finland (33.2%), Japan (37.8%) and Sweden (32.9%). The 2021 digital/audio formats share for those three countries is slightly higher than it was in 2020. For example, Japan's digital/audio formats share increased from 33.1% in 2020 to 37.8% in 2021. Similarly, Finland saw a five percentage point increase over the same period.

Online sales generated more than two-thirds of total revenue in the UK

Revenue data by sales channel – brick and mortar, online and others – are available for 14 countries for 2021. Online sales generated more than two-thirds of total publishing industry revenue in the UK (67.6%) in 2021. Finland (35.1%), Sweden (38.4%), Türkiye (36.0%) and the US (33.3%) also had a large proportion of their total revenue generated by online sales. While direct year-on-year comparisons are only possible for a few countries, they do not suggest a further increase in the share of online sales, as observed in 2020. If anything, this share declined in 2021 for the US, UK and Türkiye, while only marginally increasing for Denmark and New Zealand.

Mostly increases in the number of titles published

Data on the total number of titles published in 2021 covering both the trade and educational sectors are available for 29 countries. The UK reported a combined total of 167,267 titles published in 2021. Brazil (140,187), Italy (135,126) and France (109,480) reported more than 100,000 published titles in 2021 (table 2).

For 26 countries, it is possible to compare figures for 2020 and 2021. The majority of them registered increases in the number of titles published. Among the top five countries, France (+12.5%), Brazil (+10%), Italy (+7.3%) and Türkiye (+6.9%) reported a strong growth in titles published between 2020 and 2021. In contrast, the UK saw a 10% decrease.

The trade sector share ranged from 25.3% in New Zealand up to 97.9% in Japan. In all the countries where data is available by sector, the trade sector accounted for more than half of all titles published, the exceptions being Belarus (44.8%), Mexico (42.7%) and New Zealand (25.3%). Like in Japan, the trade sector accounted for the vast bulk of titles published in Cuba (92.1%), Estonia (97.1%) and Italy (97.6%) (table 2).

In total, 18 countries reported data on the number of titles published by format (print, digital and audio) in 2021. The share of digital/audio formatted titles ranged from 2.1% in Croatia up to 65.9% in Brazil. Shares were largest in Brazil (65.9%), Finland (62%) and Sweden (55%), where more than half of titles were in digital/audio formats. In contrast, only around 2% of all titles published in Croatia and Serbia were in digital/audio format.

Publishing industry survey

The publishing industry survey was established in 2017 as a collaboration between the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the International Publishers Association (IPA). WIPO has strengthened its cooperation with Centro Regional para el Fomento del Libro en América Latina y el Caribe (CERLALC) and the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) in order to reduce the burden on respondents and extend the geographical coverage of the survey. CERLALC provided data for several Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) countries, while the FEP compiled and shared 2021 data relating to 14 European countries (FEP members). WIPO is grateful to CERLALC and the FEP for sharing their data.

The scope of the publishing industry survey is limited to (a) the trade and educational sectors and (b) those published materials (i.e., books, monographs, and so on) issued with an ISBN, a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) or any other book identifier. Every effort has been made to compile statistics based on the same definitions so as to facilitate international comparison. However, caution should be exercised when interpreting data, as some of the data points are incomplete and partial. For example, a number of countries provided revenue and/or titles published in print format only therefore any digital components are necessarily missing. Similarly, a few countries reported revenue data at market value calculated from retail prices instead of net revenue. Furthermore, for most countries, the respondents were national publishers' associations (NPAs), with the share of the total publishing industry represented by NPAs varying between countries.

2. LEGAL DEPOSITS IN RECOGNIZED REPOSITORIES

The highest number of books published and deposited in a national repository in 2021 was recorded by Germany (413,158), followed by the US (197,931), the UK (152,355), Japan (116,914) and the Republic of Korea (100,242) (figure 6.3). China's 2021 data are unavailable, but in 2020 the National Library of China received 414,409 books, similar in magnitude to Germany. Data for all countries where available are presented in table 3.

The top five national repositories – for which 2020 and 2021 data are available – received fewer book deposits in 2021 compared to 2020. The US saw the largest decrease in deposits, which fell from 263,674 in 2020 down to 197,931 in 2021. The UK (-17,141) and Germany (-12,166) also received substantially fewer book deposits in 2021 compared to the year before. Japan (-6,948) and the Republic of Korea (-1,076) reported a smaller decrease over the same period. Among the 66 countries or territories for which data for 2020 and 2021 are available, 44 reported an increase in books deposited in 2021, while the remaining 22 saw a decrease.

Legal deposits

Legal deposit is a statutory obligation at the national level requiring publishers to deposit a certain number of copies of published documents at a repository, that is, a recognized place of legal deposit. Ordinarily, national legal provisions require at least two copies to be submitted, although this varies across countries/ territories.

In some countries/ territories, legal deposits are required only for printed books, while in others digital publications and other formats are required also. Moreover, a number of countries reported items as having undergone a process of digitization recently, which has resulted in a more comprehensive data coverage, but also a significant increase in digital publications. In some countries, there is no legal obligation to deposit e-books, although this may be done on a voluntary basis. For this reason, care should be exercised when making cross-country comparisons.

Table 1. Total publishing industry revenue from sales and licenses, covering the trade and educational sectors (USD million), 2021

Country	Total	Trade	Educational	Share of total (%)	
				Trade	Educational
Austria	405.8	342.6	63.3	84.4	15.6
Azerbaijan (a)	22.6	22.6	..	..	..
Brazil	1,115.0	430.8	684.2	38.6	61.4
Canada *	860.9	529.4	331.5	61.5	38.5
Colombia	183.1	87.8	95.4	47.9	52.1
Czech Republic *	33.4	21.3	12.2	63.6	36.4
Denmark	305.4	127.9	177.5	41.9	58.1
Finland	327.6	195.2	132.5	59.6	40.4
France	3,467.8	2,562.8	905.0	73.9	26.1
Georgia * (a)	6.2	6.2	..	..	..
Germany	11,389.8	9,089.1	2,300.7	79.8	20.2
Hungary	156.5	147.6	8.9	94.3	5.7
Iceland	34.9	..	..	..	..
Italy	4,055.1	..	..	..	..
Japan (b)	11,324.7	10,484.3	840.3	92.6	7.4
Malta	4.3	2.9	1.4	68.1	31.9
Mexico	436.0	108.7	327.3	24.9	75.1
Netherlands	972.2	356.3	616.0	36.6	63.4
New Zealand	124.1	99.6	24.5	80.2	19.8
Norway	345.8	174.4	171.5	50.4	49.6
Portugal	308.1	201.7	106.4	65.5	34.5
Republic of Korea *	5,433.8	3,386.3	2,047.6	62.3	37.7
Spain	3,047.6	..	..	..	..
Sweden	378.5	244.0	134.6	64.4	35.6
Türkiye	1,023.1	446.5	576.7	43.6	56.4
UK	5,363.5	3,048.7	2,314.8	56.8	43.2
US	26,822.0	18,791.0	8,031.0	70.1	29.9

Note: Data for Austria, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain are at market value calculated from retail prices.

(a) trade sector only.

(b) print format only.

* 2020 data.

.. indicates not available.

Source: WIPO Statistics Database and Federation of European Publishers (FEP), September 2022.

Table 2. Total number of titles published covering the trade and educational sectors, 2021

Country	Total	Trade	Educational	Share of total (%)	
				Trade	Educational
Australia *	19,241	..	..	..	..
Austria	8,686	..	..	..	..
Belarus (b)	9,055	4,058	4,997	44.8	55.2
Brazil	140,187	84,253	55,934	60.1	39.9
Canada *	10,433	8,164	2,269	78.3	21.7
Chile *	7,058	6,085	973	86.2	13.8
Colombia	15,168	8,938	6,230	58.9	41.1
Croatia	7,538	6,776	762	89.9	10.1
Cuba	1,554	1,431	123	92.1	7.9
Czech Republic *	16,474	6,174	10,300	37.5	62.5
Denmark	11,859	..	..	..	..
Ecuador *	4,153	2,318	1,835	55.8	44.2
Estonia	6,085	5,906	179	97.1	2.9
Finland	9,651	8,058	1,593	83.5	16.5
France (b)	109,480	82,258	27,222	75.1	24.9
Georgia * (a, b)	1,542	1,542	..	..	..
Germany (b)	71,640	..	..	..	..
Greece	12,139	10,442	1,697	86.0	14.0
Hungary (a)	8,424	8,424	..	..	..
Ireland (b)	2,101	1,781	320	84.8	15.2
Italy	135,126	131,818	3,308	97.6	2.4
Japan (b)	70,551	69,052	1,499	97.9	2.1
Kyrgyzstan (b)	1,003	800	203	79.8	20.2
Latvia *	2,375	2,191	184	92.3	7.7
Lebanon	3,000	..	..	..	..
Malta	530	436	94	82.3	17.7
Mexico (b)	18,830	8,048	10,782	42.7	57.3
New Zealand	2,672	675	1,997	25.3	74.7
Norway	13,584	11,272	2,312	83.0	17.0
Peru *	6,885	5,699	1,186	82.8	17.2
Portugal	21,379	..	..	..	..
Republic of Korea * (b)	76,724	31,057	45,667	40.5	59.5
Republic of Moldova *	4,559	2,635	1,924	57.8	42.2
Serbia	19,856	17,121	2,735	86.2	13.8
Spain	79,373	..	..	..	..
Sweden (a)	8,118	8,118	..	..	..
Thailand	16,031	13,805	2,226	86.1	13.9
Togo	78	61	17	78.2	21.8
Türkiye	95,112	74,895	20,217	78.7	21.3
UK	167,267	101,812	65,455	60.9	39.1
Ukraine	16,786	10,213	6,573	60.8	39.2

(a) trade sector only.

(b) print format only.

* 2020 data

.. not available.

Source: WIPO Statistics Database and Federation of European Publishers (FEP), September 2022.

Table 3. Total number of books deposited in recognized repositories, 2021

Country/territory	Total	Print	Digital	Other formats
Andorra	108	74	34	..
Argentina (a)	1,505	1,505	..	..
Armenia (a)	3,736	3,736	..	..
Austria (a)	22,201	22,201	..	..
Azerbaijan	6,543	6,364	179	..
Belgium (b)	20,050	18,562	1,488	..
Belize (a)	26	26	..	..
Canada (c)	15,169	5,328	9,837	4
China *	414,409	408,860	..	5,549
China, Hong Kong (SAR) (a)	14,559	14,559	..	..
Colombia (d, e)	16,860	..	..	..
Costa Rica	1,996	1,102	894	..
Croatia	8,437	7,433	477	527
Cyprus (a)	42	42	..	..
Czech Republic	14,462	14,134	..	328
Denmark	40,380	13,167	22,313	4,900
Ecuador (a)	670	670	..	..
Estonia	6,228	3,208	3,011	9
Finland	34,554	9,329	25,180	45
France * (a)	64,121	64,121	..	..
Georgia	2,537	2,505	32	..
Germany	413,158	100,689	295,140	17,329
Ghana	1,056	1,039	17	..
Greece (c)	17,709	16,898	798	13
Hungary	25,666	18,853	6,778	35
Iceland	7,104	4,341	798	1,965
Ireland (a)	1,744	1,744	..	..
Israel *	10,954	8,845	2,109	..
Italy (a)	57,840	57,840	..	..
Jamaica	367	359	8	..
Japan (a, c)	116,914	116,914	..	..
Jordan	6,712	6,004	708	..
Latvia	3,466	2,698	688	80
Lithuania	8,646	7,614	1,032	..
Luxembourg	1,828	1,421	407	..
Malaysia	13,305	11,827	492	986
Maldives (a)	106	106	..	..
Malta (a)	521	521	..	..
Mauritius (a, c)	1,027	1,027	..	..
Mexico	15,034	2,026	13,007	1
Monaco * (a)	109	109	..	..
Montenegro * (a)	1,338	1,338	..	..

Mozambique (a)	141	141	..	..
Myanmar (a)	2,047	2,047	..	..
Namibia (a, c)	288	288	..	..
Netherlands (e)	32,339	15,504	16,789	46
New Zealand (c)	9,680	3,369	6,309	2
Norway	14,508	9,222	5,108	178
Pakistan (a)	1,895	1,895	..	..
Panama	526	491	35	..
Paraguay (e)	841	693	120	28
Peru	7,653	7,113	540	..
Philippines	930	845	85	..
Poland	37,510	33,957	2,865	688
Portugal (a)	13,293	13,293	..	..
Republic of Korea	100,242	72,381	23,406	4,455
Republic of Moldova	3,118	2,900	218	..
Serbia	11,508	11,500	..	8
Seychelles (a)	215	215	..	..
Singapore	14,852	13,111	1,741	..
Slovakia	6,086	5,361	695	30
Slovenia	10,028	8,070	1,842	116
South Africa * (c)	5,758	5,455	303	..
Spain	91,050	64,385	24,524	2,141
Sri Lanka (a)	2,425	2,425	..	..
Sweden	21,686	20,336	286	1,064
Thailand	10,098	9,400	698	..
Türkiye	91,822	80,199	11,352	271
Uganda (a)	1,483	1,483	..	..
United Kingdom (c)	152,355	47,755	104,600	..
United States of America	197,931	16,000	181,931	..
Viet Nam	29,301	26,287	2,203	811

* 2020 data.

(a) print format only.

(b) digital deposits are collected on a voluntary basis.

(c) 2020-2021 fiscal year

(d) it is not feasible to separate data for books, audio, film and video. Hence data are not comparable to other countries.

(e) deposits are on voluntary basis as deposits are not covered by legislation.

.. not available.

Source: WIPO Statistics Database, September 2022.



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