

**Report on the  
Spanish publishing sector  
Year 2021**

Federación de Gremios de  
Editores de España

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## Domestic Book Trade

In the year 2022, the Federation once again carried out the study on the internal book trade in Spain. This edition of the study once again collects the publishing and turnover data of private and member publishing companies in Spain, on this occasion, referring to the 2021 financial year, to reflect the current situation of the publishing market and the evolution and trends of the main indicators of the sector.

The data in this report are obtained through a systematic exploitation of questionnaires sent by the publishers and their analysis is carried out always taking into account the turnover group to which the publishing companies belong and the guild to which they are associated.

The main figures obtained for the activity of the private and affiliated publishing sector in Spain in 2021 are given below.

Private and aggregated publishing companies: 778

Employees (direct employment): 12,760

Titles published (TOTAL): 79,373

Titles published (PAPER): 55,197

Titles published (DIGITAL) 24.176

Copies produced (thousands): 198,132

Average print-run (copies/title): 3,590

Live titles on offer: 794,823

Domestic Market Turnover (PVP) (mill. Euros): 2,576.70

PAPER Turnover (Mills. Euros): 2,432.41

DIGITAL Turnover (Mills. €): 134.79

Copies sold (thousands): 174,100

Thus, the Spanish publishing sector continued its growth in 2021, reaching the highest increase in turnover so far this century as the study shows that sales of

Spanish publishers as a whole grew by 5.6% over the previous year, reaching 2,576.70 million euros invoiced. This increase is higher than that of the previous year, which was 2.4%. It is important to note that this increase is due to the growth in the number of copies sold in print, 174.10 million copies, 5.9% more than in the previous year.

On the other hand, the report reveals that in 2021 there was an increase of 6.4% in titles published compared to the previous year (8.9 in print and 1.2% in digital), reaching 79,373 of copies (55,197 in print and 24,176 in digital). The average print run was maintained (+0.4%) at 3,590 copies per title. The average price of paper titles last year was €13.97.

Likewise, during 2021 there were 13.49 million downloads of digital titles, up 1.7% compared to 2020. Digital books again increased their turnover by 6.8% to €134.79 million and remain at around 5% of total sales (5.2%). The number of titles published also increased slightly to 186,887 titles.

A relevant aspect that emerges from the report is that sales rose across the board in all book subsectors, except for textbooks (with 3.8% less turnover than the previous year). The subsector that grew the most in turnover was children's and young people's books, which with 17.8% over the previous year reached 432.24 million euros, remaining in first place, with around 60% of the total, followed by adult fiction (+8.2%), with sales of 548.90 million euros. Non-fiction books increased their sales by +7.7% to 770.92 million euros. In addition, the comics, comic books and graphic novels subsector grew by 6.7% compared to 2020.

Bookstores are positioned, following in the wake of previous years, as the leading book distribution channel, turning over around 900 million euros in 2021, which implies 35.2% of the total and 8.2% more than the previous year. This, added to the sales recorded by bookstore chains (18.6%), accounts for 53.8% of the total.

The greatest increase in the turnover of books in paper format occurred in the Internet channel, as was the case the previous year, since 51 million euros were invoiced through this channel, 10 million more than in 2020 and accounting for 2% of total sales.

## **Foreign Book Trade**

In 2022, the Association of Spanish Book Chambers promoted the thirtieth study of the Foreign Trade of the Book, corresponding to the activity of 2021, a working instrument that continuously shows the good work in foreign markets of Spanish book professionals.

In 2021, total book exports reached the figure of 388,909 thousand euros. This is substantially lower than in 2020 (391,756 thousand euros), after the significant rise that had occurred in 2018 (615,405 thousand euros) and a sharp drop in 2019 (529,967 thousand euros), exacerbated in 2020.

From a geographical perspective, Ibero-America continues to be the majority destination, 46.84%, and the American continent is the undisputed leader if we add the 4.63% represented by exports to the United States, as it exceeds 51%, followed by the European Union with 35.06%. The rest of Europe, which includes the United Kingdom, which is the main destination in this area, with 11.67% (44 million euros), Africa, Asia and Oceania are more irrelevant 1.09%, 0.47%, 0.24% and as always the publishing sector in all areas exceeds the chart, especially in America.

It is worth mentioning the United States in seventh place in total exports. If we focus on the export of books from the publishing sector (not fascicles), it is very positive that it is the fifth largest buyer, without forgetting that part of the books

imported from Mexico are from Spanish publishers established there and that a significant number of exports to the United States are made directly from Chinese printers by order of Spanish publishers.

As for the export of books, fascicles and kiosk material made by publishers in 2021, it amounted to 328 million euros.

Of this, 54.34% corresponds to "Books" and 45.66% to "Fascicles and Kiosk Material". Likewise, 85.14 million copies were exported, of which 23.65 million copies corresponded to "Books" and 61.49 million copies to "Fascicles and Kiosk Material".

By subject, "Social Sciences" (17.14%), followed by "Literature" (15.70%), "Religion" (13.82%), "Children and Young People" (13.59%), "Scientific-Technical" (11.90%), "Non-University Education" (11.67%), "Dissemination" (5.78%), "Dictionary and Encyclopedias" (4.75%).

By issues, "Religion" was number one with (24.47%), followed by "Children's and Juvenile" (15.97%) a percentage very similar to "Literature" (15.52%). These were followed by "Social Sciences" (14.32%), "Non-University Education" (11.43%), "Scientific-Technical" (4.76%), "Dissemination" (4.19%), and "Practical Books" (3.46%).

The average assignment price was 3.85 euros, with "Books" being 7.54 euros and "Fascicles and newsstand material" 2.44 euros. In total, 4.22 euros for America, 3.55 euros for Europe, Africa 0.94 euros, Asia 12.81 euros and Oceania 26.81 euros.

The most expensive subject is "Scientific Technical" with 26.74 euros, followed by "Law and Economics" 16.89 euros, "Social Science" 11.43 euros, "Dissemination", 10.42 euros, "Dictionaries and Encyclopedias" 8.10 euros, "Literature", 7.16 euros, and "Children's and Young People's" 6.11 euros.

The average price was identical to 2020 but increased slightly for books and also fell slightly for "Fascicles and newsstand material".

With regard to exports by geographical area, as is traditional, publishers' exports are mainly directed to two areas, America and Europe, which account for 98.58% of the total in value and 96.59% of the copies. The third zone is Africa, with 0.78% of the value and 3.21% of the copies, followed by Asia and Oceania.

As for imports, the main area of origin is Asia, with 38.80 million euros and 12.67 million copies, the vast majority of which are orders from Spanish publishers for the Spanish market itself, accounting for 48.41% of the total, followed by Europe with 36 million euros and 6.57 million copies, 44.92%. In terms of the number of copies, Asia represents 64.19% and Europe 33.29%.

As a conclusion, the study on the foreign book trade for the year 2021 reflects:

- There has been a disparate behavior in exports, there is a slight increase in the publishing sector and a reduction in the export of graphics.
- There has been a notable reduction in imports, especially due to the fall in printing orders to the Far East, which represents an opportunity for the Spanish printing industry.
- As a result of the above, there has been an increase of 12.84% in the trade surplus, now a traditional 83.95 million euros.
- America continues to be the main market for Spanish publishing companies, followed by the European Union.
- The European Union confirms itself as a key destination. America is the number one destination for the book sector, the European Union the second, and for Graphics, the European Union is the number one.

- The figures for sales of rights to other languages are maintained, the first of which is English, which makes it necessary to work intensively in these new markets.
- The export of Spanish textbooks for foreigners is maintained, but is not growing at the expected rate, among other factors, due to the absence of coordinated policies for the introduction of Spanish as a compulsory language in official education.
- North America, in line with recent years, remains and is growing as a reference market, one of the most important in the Americas for Religion and Children's and Young People's Books.
- Literature, Religion, Children and Young Adults and Social Sciences are the most exported subjects.

## **Reading and Book Purchasing Habits** **(Year 2022)**

The study "Reading Habits and Book Purchasing in Spain" corresponding to the year 2022, offers the following results:

- 68.4% of the Spanish population reads books, 64.8% reads books for leisure in their free time (a stable figure compared to 2021 although maintaining a slight upward trend) and 22.6% reads books for work or studies (which increases compared to 2021 and interrupts the downward trend observed since 2019). The average reading rate is 10.1 books per year.

- Taking into account leisure reading of both books and comics, 66.2% of the population has read a book or a comic book in the last three months.
- The number of frequent readers remains stable: 53.5% of the population reads on a weekly basis.
- The percentage of women who read books in their free time is significantly higher than that of men in all age groups (especially from 25 to 34 years of age).
- The higher the level of educational attainment, the higher the proportion of leisure book readers. There is also a slight decrease in the reading rate at the lowest level of education.
- Madrid, Catalonia, Navarre, the Basque Country, La Rioja and Aragon are the Autonomous Communities with a higher than average ratio of leisure readers. On the other hand, Valencia, Asturias, the Balearic Islands, Cantabria, Castilla y León, Galicia, Murcia, Andalusia, Castilla-La Mancha, the Canary Islands and Extremadura obtain values below the national average.
- Lack of free time is the main reason why 44% of occasional/non-readers do not read more frequently. Nearly one in three say that they do not read more because of lack of interest and because they prefer to spend their free time on other leisure activities.
- For 70.6% of readers, the last book read was literature (novels and short stories). 53% read in paper format (paperback), 28.5% in paperback format and 18% in digital format.
- Reading in digital format remained stable, with 29.5% of the population aged 14 and over reading books in digital format at least once a quarter.



- The E-Reader (12.9%) and the Tablet (10.3%) continue to be the most used devices among digital book readers, although the cell phone continues with a growing trend.
- Half of the digital book readers always get their books free of charge (52.5%). Only 11.4% always pay for digital books. 36.1% do so both for free and for a fee.
- 66.3% of readers of digital books download them for free, a jump from 2021, while 39% pay for accessing content.
- 67% of respondents who download e-books for free know when the download is not legal. One in five cannot distinguish whether the download is legal or not.
- After the increase observed in 2021, audiobook users stabilize in 2022. 5.4% of the population listens to audiobooks at least once a quarter and 2.7% do so weekly. The percentage of users is clearly higher among those under 35 years of age. In the last 5 years, the number of audiobook users has more than doubled (from 2.4% in 2018 to 5.4% in 2022).
- 63.8% of the population aged 14 and over have bought a book (text or non-text) in the last 12 months (a stable figure over the last 5 years) and the number of non-text book buyers continues to increase (52.8%).
- The traditional bookstore remains the most common channel for the purchase of non-textbooks. This is followed by the Internet and chain bookstores. Internet shopping as the usual place of purchase is the second purchase channel for the total population and is the first option for the youngest buyers (between 25 and 34 years of age).
- 26.2% of the population has been to a library in 2022, with the public library being the type with the most visits (89.7%). In addition, public libraries receive a very good rating (8.3 out of 10).

- The percentage of households with children under 6 years of age in which children are read to reaches 75.9% in 2022. However, the time spent reading by these minors is reduced by 35 minutes on average compared to 2021.
- Among minors aged 6 to 9 years, both the number of non-textbook readers and the time spent reading have increased: 85.3% and 3 hours and 17 minutes.
- Among adolescents, as age increases, both the proportion of frequent readers and the average number of books read in free time in the last year decrease notably.