

**Report on the  
Spanish publishing sector  
Year 2022**

Federation of Associations of  
Publishers of Spain

February 2023

## Domestic Book Trade

Since 1989, the Federación de Gremios de Editores de España has been carrying out a study on the *Internal Book Trade in Spain*, which includes the main annual indicators of the Spanish publishing sector and its structure, as well as essential information on its changes and evolution in recent years, with the central objective of understanding the evolution and trends of its main indicators.

The study carried out in the year 2023 gathers the publishing and turnover data of the private and affiliated (to FGEE) publishing companies in Spain, referring to the financial year 2022.

The analysis of the data shows that in 2022 the book sector in Spain grew by 5.5% compared to 2021, which represents an accumulated growth of 15% over the last five years, i.e. the domestic book trade in Spain is now at figures much higher than before the pandemic, with growth in all book sub-sectors. It should be noted that this growth has not been based on price rises, which have moderated despite increases in production and logistics costs and the inevitable inflationary effects, but on the fact that four million more copies have been sold than in 2021. It should also be noted, once again, that bookshops and bookstore chains have consolidated their position as the main channel for book sales, with a share of 54%, which is an improvement on their previous figures.

The following is a summary of the data in the report:

	2021	2022	% 2022/2021
Private and affiliated publishing companies.	778	<b>794</b>	2,1
Employees (direct employment).	12.760	<b>12.789</b>	0,2
Titles published (TOTAL)	79.373	<b>83.091</b>	4,7
Published titles (PAPER)	55.197	<b>57.125</b>	3,5
Published titles (DIGITAL)	24.176	<b>25.966</b>	7,4
Copies produced (thousands)	198.132	<b>206.229</b>	4,1
Average print run (copies/title)	3.590	<b>3.610</b>	0,6
Live titles on sale	794.823	<b>841.533</b>	5,9
Turnover domestic market (PVP) (mill. Euros)	2.576,70	<b>2.718,52</b>	5,5
Turnover PAPER (Mills. €)	2.432,41	<b>2.569,30</b>	5,6
DIGITAL Turnover (Mills. €)	134,79	<b>139,30</b>	3,3
Copies sold (thousands)	174.100	<b>178.450</b>	2,5

One of the trends highlighted in 2022 was the increase in the number of private and affiliated publishers by 16 more than in the previous year, representing an increase of 2.1% over the previous total. In addition, a slight increase in the number of jobs in the sector has been observed, reaching 0.2% more than in 2021.

In terms of total title production, the sector managed to publish 83,091 titles in 2022, reflecting an increase of 4.7% compared to last year. Within these, titles published on paper increased by 3.5%, while digital publishing experienced a remarkable growth of 7.4%, significantly higher than in previous years.

The number of copies produced increased by 4.1% to 206,229 in total numbers. The average print run remains stable (+0.6%), rising from 3,590 in 2021 to 3,610 in 2022. The number of titles on offer increased by 5.9% compared to 2021, which means 841,533 live titles in the catalogue.

The overall turnover of the sector was 2,718.52 million euros, which implies an increase of 5.5% compared to 2021. This increase is reflected in both print (+5.6%) and digital (+3.3%) sales. The number of copies sold also represents an increase of 2.5%.

The ratio between copies produced and copies sold stands at 86.5% of the total number of copies produced (87.9% in 2021). The difference between copies produced and copies sold either go to the foreign market in the form of exports or are returned.

Turnover in paper was 2,569.30 million euros, an increase of 5.6% over the previous year (2,432.41 million euros in 2021). The average price per copy remains unchanged.

With regard to turnover by subject, we find the following results:

- *Non-fiction*: 29.6% of total turnover.
- *Non-university text*: 27.9% of total turnover.
- *Adult fiction*: 21.9% of total turnover.
- *Children and young people*: 17.3% of total turnover.
- *Comics*: 2.5% of total turnover.

This means that the two main subjects *Non-university texts* and *Non-fiction* account for 57.5% of the total turnover, more than half of it.

As for the marketing channels of the books:

- *Bookshops* have a turnover of 957.53 million and *bookshop chains* have a turnover of 509.46 million. They continue to be the main book sales channels, accounting for slightly more than half of the total turnover, totalling between them 1,466.99 million euros in 2022. These two channels increase their turnover with respect to 2021 by 5.5% and 6.1% respectively.

- *Internet* has increased its turnover by 10.3% compared to the previous year, from 51.54 million euros to 56.86 million euros.
- *Companies and institutions* have a turnover of 400.79 million euros, increasing their turnover compared to the previous year (+10.1%).
- Hypermarkets have a turnover of 233.51 million, with a 7.4% increase in sales.
- The *channels for the digital book* sector have a total turnover of 139.30 million euros, increasing their turnover (+3.3%).
- *Kiosks* achieve a total turnover of 77.53 million euros in 2022, which is -0.3% less than in the previous year.
- *Credit sales* remained stable, repeating a very similar result to last year. It increased slightly (+1.5%).
- *Subscriptions* reached 68.61 million euros (down 0.1%).
- *Book Clubs* continues its downward trend, falling by 3.4%, being the channel with the biggest drop.
- *Libraries* is the channel with the lowest turnover, at 11.01 million euros, an increase of 1.0% compared to the previous year.

## Foreign trade in books

The Association of Spanish Chambers of Books, as an association of exporters which includes the Chambers of Books of the Basque Country, Catalonia and Madrid, plus the Spanish Federation of Graphic Industries (FEIGRAF), the Spanish Federation of Publishers' Associations (FGEE), the Federation of National Associations of Publishing Distributors (FANDE) and the Spanish Confederation of Booksellers' Guilds and Associations (CEGAL), carried out in 2023 the thirty-first edition of the study of the *Foreign Trade of Books*, a working instrument that reflects, in a reliable way, the importance of the world of books in general and publishing in particular, and which shows that the publishing industry is one of the most internationalised sectors of the Spanish economy, in terms of intensity and age.

During all the years that the study has been carried out, the export activity of Spanish publishing has strengthened, which is not only the country's leading cultural industry but also practically the only one that contributes a positive balance to our balance of payments, largely due not only to the export activity in goods and services but also to the strong presence in America and other continents of our extensive network of subsidiaries. This activity has been maintained despite the fact that there have been many changes in trade in recent years, not only because the installation of a publishing house in another country increases production in that country but reduces physical exports from Spain, but also because technologies allow printing on demand at little cost. But despite these structural changes, our publishing houses, especially the small and medium-sized ones, continue to be leaders in many markets.

After two years in which foreign trade figures were falling as a result of the pandemic and restrictions on the mobility of people and goods, exports began to recover in 2022, especially in the graphics sector. In overall sales on foreign markets, the book sector recorded an increase of 3.64% to 403.10 million euros. Exports in the book sector grew by 1% to 348.50 million euros. Those of the graphic arts sector, which suffered a

greater fall during the pandemic, recorded an increase of 24.33% to 54.55 million euros.

By geographical area, Latin America continues to be the main area of Spanish exports. In 2022, the book sector (publishers and graphics) exported goods and services, mainly books, worth 182.43 million euros, 0.98% more than in 2021. For its part, the sector exported to the European Union to the value of 146.302 million euros, 7.29% more than in the previous year.

It is also important to highlight that there have been increases in exports to countries in the rest of Europe, 47.48 million euros (4.06% more), to North America, 18.98 million euros (1.14% more) and to Africa, 5.8 million euros (5.06% more).

By country, Mexico remains the top destination for Spanish exports with 63.49 million euros. It is followed by France, with 61.71 million euros; Argentina, 31.29 million euros; Italy, 23.12 million euros and the United Kingdom, 18.13%. Exports grew in all these countries.

By subject, book exports in 2022 showed the following percentages: Social Sciences, 17.09%; Literature, 15.70%; Religion, 18.85%; Children and Young People, 13.60%; Scientific and Technical, 11.91%; Non-University Education, 11.63%; Popular Science, 5.76%; Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias, 4.76%; Practical Books, 3.61%; Law and Economics, 1.20%; Comics, 0.38%; and Others, 0.50%. The average price was 7.54 euros.

There was also an increase in imports. In 2022, the book sector imported goods and services, mainly books, to the value of 121.36 million euros. The balance of trade balance remains positive and reached 281.68 million euros.

In summary, the figures for foreign trade in books published in Spain in 2022 indicate the following:

- Both exports and imports of goods have grown, and export growth, unlike last year, has been in both the publishers and graphics subgroups.
- This growth, however, as usual, resulted in a trade surplus of 281.68 million euros.
- The sale of foreign language rights continues to increase slowly but steadily and now exceeds 72 million euros.
- America continues to be the most important market for Spanish publishing companies; followed by the European Union and the United Kingdom.
- More books and fewer print orders go to America, while print orders, books and booklets are imported into Europe.
- The export of the Spanish for foreigners market is maintained, but it is not growing at the expected rate. Literature, religion, children's and young people's literature and social sciences are the most exported subjects.
- The increasingly important role of the North American market.



# Reading and Book Buying Habits

## (Year 2023)

As in previous years, in 2023 the Spanish Publishers' Federation carried out the study on *Reading Habits and Book Purchasing in Spain*, with the fundamental objective of finding out about the reading behaviour of Spaniards at the present time and obtaining information that facilitates the formulation and evaluation of reading policies and plans, since this study gathers information on the reading index, reading by minors, reading and book purchasing habits, library activity, attitudes towards reading, digital books, etc. On the other hand, the study also offers socio-demographic information (sex, age, type of household, marital status, educational level, employment status, occupation, social class) and on the technological and cultural equipment of the household (number of books, Internet connection, number of computers, tablets, etc.).

Thus, in 2023, the percentage of Spaniards reading books remained stable compared to 2022, at around 68%, after the sharp increase recorded during the pandemic. According to this study, the percentage of people in Spain who read books in 2023 reached 68.3%. In addition, the percentage of those who read in their free time for leisure stood at 64.1 % and 21.3 % read books for work or studies (a lower figure compared to 2022).

The number of leisure readers is slightly lower than in 2022 (from 64.8% to 64.1%) but if we analyse since 2012, the percentage of readers who read in their leisure time has increased by five percentage points (from 59.1% to 64.1%) and in the last five years, this percentage has increased by 1.9 percentage points, so that reading is consolidated as one of the main leisure and free time activities.

The study shows that the percentage of frequent readers (those who read at least once a week) stood at 52%, slightly lower than in 2022 (52.5%), although this figure has remained stable in recent years. However, in the last five years, the percentage of

frequent readers has grown by two points, and if a comparison is made with 2012, this figure is 4.8 points higher than that recorded that year. In more detail, 33.4% read every day or almost every day.

The average number of books read in 2023 is 10.2 books per year.

Taking into account reading both books and comics in leisure time, 65.9% of the population have read in the last three months.

Novels and short stories (literature) account for 70.6% of readers (last book read). For 51.4%, the last book they read was in paper format (paperback), 30.9% in paperback, 16.8% in digital format and 0.9% in audiobook.

### **Why don't Spaniards read?**

Spain still has a significant percentage of non-readers: 35.9% of Spaniards say that they never or almost never read. This is a significant percentage that requires us to redouble our efforts to reduce these figures, so that the fact that one in three Spaniards do not read books ceases to be a constant in our society.

Four out of ten Spaniards say that lack of free time (44.3 %) is their main reason for not reading books. This figure rises to 54.4 % among 55-64 year olds. 31.1% say they prefer to spend their free time on other leisure activities. On the other hand, 29.7% of non-readers express a lack of interest and 1.6% do not read for reasons of sight or health.

### **Reading rates by geographical location, gender, age and educational level**

The 2023 Barometer shows that imbalances in reading rates persist between:

- The different autonomous communities (eleven communities are below the Spanish average and the communities with a larger urban population have a higher percentage of readers): only six are above the Spanish average, which reached 64.1% last year. These communities are: Madrid (73.5 %), Catalonia (68.2 %), Navarre (68.1 %), Basque Country (67.8 %) La Rioja (66.6 %) and

Aragon (64.4 %). Between the average and 60.0 % are: Comunidad Valenciana, Asturias, Baleares, Cantabria, Castilla y León, and Galicia. Below 60.0 % were Murcia (59.5 %), Andalusia (59.0 %), Castile-La Mancha (58.9 %), the Canary Islands (58.3 %) and Extremadura (54.4 %).

- Women and men: Women who spend their free time reading books outnumber men in all age ranges, with the 25-34 and 55-64 age groups standing out, with percentage differences of 17.5% and 13.4% respectively. Between 25 and 35 years old, the percentage of women is 73.4 %, while the percentage of men is 55.9 %.

This difference is lowest in the over 65 age group with 5.9 % (women 56.2 % and men 50.3 %).

Overall, 68.6% of women read books in their free time compared to 59.3% of men. Over the last few years, this gender gap has remained stable.

- Different age brackets. By age, the age group with the highest reading population is between 14 and 24 years of age (74.0 %). The 25 to 64 and 65 and over age brackets recorded 65.8 % and 53.7 %, respectively. It should be noted that the 65 and over age bracket has shown constant growth since 2012, with an increase of 15.5 percentage points (53.7 %); moreover, this is the age bracket in which there is the smallest difference between the two sexes.

Reading falls dramatically from the age of 65 onwards. However, it is precisely in this population group that the upward trend has continued over the last decade.

- Educational level. Book reading, closely related to educational level, improves at all levels, although somewhat less so among those with secondary education. As the level of education attained increases, so does the proportion

of people who read books for leisure. This year the upward trend of the indicator is interrupted at all levels of education.

The university-educated population is still the one with the highest percentage of leisure time readers: 86.1 % of university students read in their free time. In the population with secondary education the figure is 61.6 %, while in the group with up to primary education the percentage is 38.1 %. Compared to 2012, increases were recorded at all levels, with the most notable increases being four percentage points in the up to primary level and 3.8 percentage points in the university level.

### **How are children and adolescents doing?**

Reading to children is still very much in the majority. In 76.3% of households with children under 6 years of age, parents read to their young children. 86% of children aged 6 to 9 read in their free time. However, compared to the 2022 Barometer, there is a slight decrease in the time spent reading during the week, 2 hours and 39 minutes, compared to 2 hours and 48 minutes (for under 6s) and 3 hours and 5 minutes compared to 3 hours and 17 minutes (in the 6 to 9 age group).

Among adolescents, there is a marked decrease in the proportion of frequent readers and in the average number of books read for leisure as age increases.

Thus, reading among minors has remained relatively stable in recent years. Among adolescents aged 15 to 18, there was a drop compared to the previous year, equalling the figure for 2019.

### **Digital reading and audio books**

Digital reading does not show significant variations with respect to previous years, and seems to have reached a plateau. From 2018 to 2023, the percentage of the population reading in this format has remained at around 30% (29.7% last year). E-readers (11.8 %), tablets (9.7 %) and computers (9.7 %) are the devices most used for reading digital

books, while reading on mobile phones has stabilised at 8 %, reaching 8.4 % in 2023, after several years of growth.

In terms of how they obtained digital books, 61.7% of digital book readers said they obtained books for free from the Internet, while the percentage of those who paid for books was 14.0%.

When analysing the evolution of the different trends, it can be seen that the group of the population over 14 years old who downloaded books for payment decreased by almost 1 percentage point, reaching 38.3% in the past year, while those who downloaded books for free reached 64.6%, compared to 66.3% in 2022. Only 14.0% always pay.

67.7% of respondents who download e-books for free stated that they know exactly when the download is not legal and the vast majority can distinguish between illegal and non-legal download sites.

The percentage of audiobook users tripled in the period 2018-2023 (2.4% 2018 → 6.9% 2023). 6.9% of the population over 14 years of age listens to audiobooks and 3.5% do so frequently (weekly). It is worth noting that the highest proportion of these users are between 25 and 34 years old (12.7% of the population).

### **Purchase of books**

With respect to the purchase of books, 63.9% of the Spanish population aged 14 and over bought a book in 2023 (textbook or non-textbook). The percentage of the Spanish population that has bought a book (non-textbook) in the last year has been increasing since 2012, and in 2023 the figure stands at 53.2% (12.9 percentage points higher than ten years ago), so that 6 out of 10 Spaniards aged 14 and over bought a book in 2023, while 5 out of 10 were non-textbook buyers. The average number of books purchased reached 10.4 books (a similar figure to that reflected in 2022).

The traditional bookshop continues to be the main channel of purchase of non-textbooks (70.1 %) chosen by Spaniards, followed by the Internet (44.9 %) and bookshop chains (33.1 %). It is also important to mention that the Internet is the main purchasing channel among younger people (aged 25-34), accounting for 55.6% of book purchases. Internet shopping (as the usual place) **is the** second most common shopping channel for the total population.

### **Libraries**

With regard to library attendance over the last year, the results of the Barometer of Reading Habits show that one in four people over the age of 14 (26.0 %) visited a library in 2023. It is worth noting that 90.2% of library visitors went to a public library, while 9.8% went to a university library and another 4.7% to a school library. In total, 26% of the population made use of a library or bookmobile. Users give a high mark to their usual library (8.4).