

Books and e-books - UK - September 2012

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“While e-readers are clearly regarded as the primary device people see themselves reading e-books on, tablets are part of a portfolio of other devices that book buyers would also consider, along with laptops and smartphones.”

– Michael Oliver, Senior Leisure & Media Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- Is print doomed as a book format?
- How important is it to consumers to be able to read e-books on multiple devices?
- Will the tablet become the reading device of choice?
- What are the opportunities for bundling together different types of book?

In the eighteen months or so since Mintel last reported on the market for books and e-books, the publishing landscape has changed considerably: the balance of power when it comes to the pricing of e-books has shifted very markedly in favour of Amazon, which has also managed to further increase its already dominant market share. A great deal of these gains can be attributed to the success of its Kindle platform within the e-book market. Publishers have been reporting stratospheric growth rates for sales of e-books and, with steady growth in the ownership of e-readers and tablet PCs, demand shows no sign of abating.

Meanwhile, the market has been taken by storm by the surprise growth in the popularity of erotica, with a single trilogy blowing away all book sales records, including those of bestselling authors like JK Rowling and Dan Brown.

Despite most of the focus of publishers and media attention being on e-books, print remains the dominant medium for books, and reports of its imminent demise are premature. In fact, this report identifies considerable support and demand for print among book buyers, which is likely to mean that the two formats will survive and thrive alongside one another, rather than one format replacing the other.

This report covers the purchase of books through all sources, and the total market sizes provided also include institutional book sales.

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