

Press release

Book sales trends in 2021: mangas booming, guidebooks slowly picking up

The comic book segment, guidebooks, lifestyle guides and cookbooks have posted particularly strong growth in the past nine months. The travel book market is slowly recovering.

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Baden-Baden, October 22, 2021. - What genres have developed particularly well this year? A special cross-national survey carried out by GfK Entertainment prior to the Frankfurt Book Fair both provides insights and shows that the book markets in many places are carrying the regained momentum forward for the upcoming Christmas trade. The survey is based on sales data for eight regions and was produced for the period January to September 2021.

Here is an overview of the main results:

Mangas double their sales

The comic book segment has posted particularly strong growth in the past nine months, largely due to sales of mangas and manhwas. In France, Spain, Switzerland and Belgium's Walloon region, for example, they more than doubled, while in Portugal almost three times as many Japanese and South Korean comics were sold as in the same period last year. The most popular series include *Demon Slayer*, *Naruto* and *My Hero Academia*.

- **Cookbooks on the boil**

The way to a man's heart is through his stomach, and apparently many people have (re)discovered their love of cooking during the coronavirus pandemic. Double-digit growth rates for the "Food & Drink" product group, such as in Italy (+24%), Spain (+22%) and Switzerland (+20%), speak for themselves. In French-speaking France and Wallonia, cookbook sales even grew by 48 and 74% respectively. Regional authors in particular are whetting their readers' appetites.

- **Lifestyle and medical guides in demand**

Guidebooks are becoming increasingly popular in today's challenging times, especially on the subjects of lifestyle and personal development (+48% in France, +25% in the Netherlands), finance (+25% in Italy) and health (+31% in Brazil, +24% in Portugal). Popular titles are perennial favourites such as Mark Manson's *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck* and Robert T. T.

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Kiyosaki's *Rich Dad Poor Dad*, as well as new publications such as *Corona natürlich behandeln* ("Treat Corona Naturally") by Dr Johannes Wilkens and Dr Frank Meyer.

- **Esoteric books make strong gains**

Esoteric books might be a comparatively small genre, but this market is one of the biggest winners so far in 2021. The gains in French-speaking countries amount to as much as 73% (Wallonia) and 60% (France), followed by a no less impressive 40% in Brazil. Inhabitants of Flanders (+29%), Switzerland (+20%) and the Netherlands (+19%) too are currently snapping esoteric books off the shelves.

- **Travel guides recover but sales still down**

The travel industry has been and remains particularly hard hit by the pandemic, which naturally also has a direct impact on the travel book market. Following the easing of restrictions in the last few months, it is slowly recovering but at a low level. Whereas the drop in sales a year ago was 44% in France, for example, the first three quarters of 2021 saw an 8% rise. However, sales in the travel guide subcategory are still in the red there (-6%), as they are in Switzerland (-13%) and Flanders (-6%), for example.

- **Sales trend spurred by higher prices**

The increase in turnover in the first half of 2021 was almost always accompanied by higher average prices. Although sales also posted positive growth for the most part, growth rates were lower than for turnover in eight of the nine regions surveyed.

The survey: The evaluation is based on the physical book market figures for the first three quarters of 2021 using trade panel data for Belgium (Flanders/Wallonia), Brazil, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland.

If you would like further information and data on the international book market, please contact Senta Wolf at senta.wolf@gfk.com.

About GfK Entertainment

GfK Entertainment is an official charts and market research data supplier to the Books, Music, Games and Video industries. The company works closely with all industry trade bodies and is currently active in over 30 countries supplying official charts, tailor-made sales-, market- and product data analysis reports to content holders, retailers and trade body groups for all products, physical, digital and social media related in the entertainment sector.

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