

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON THE LITERATURE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY IN SPAIN

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Abstract

This study aims to highlight how the development of technology has affected the literature scene in Spain. In modern times, the world of literature is transforming through technological advances that make literature more accessible to all. Many technological systems such as eBooks, audiobooks, social media platforms and others are particularly popular with younger readers today. Moreover, technology has also contributed to the transformation of the writer's profession by enabling writing and editing literature in a shorter period of time. Also, social media platforms now offer writers themselves the ability to communicate more directly with their audience by promoting their work more easily and economically.

In this context, this study presents an analysis based on a literature survey on how technology has influenced today's literary world, while at the same time presents the results of a survey conducted in Spain on the preferences of the reading public today. The survey was conducted through questionnaires that were given to the reading public via publishing institutions. The aim of this research is to analyze the impact of technology in the field of literature and to capture the preferences of the Spanish readers today in order to highlight the extent to which technology contributes to a different literary reality.

Keywords: Technology, literature, publish industry, eBooks, Spain.

1 INTRODUCTION

The evolution of technology that has taken place over the last decades has really affected every area of human activity. The field of literature could not remain unaffected by this trend of the times. Technology has dynamically invaded the field affecting every aspect of it. It has brought about changes both in the way of creation and in the way of dissemination of the literature to the public. The subject of this research is how technology has influenced literary activity and production in Spain. At the beginning of the 20th century, Spanish publishing houses started to publish e-books and consequently, the sale of e-books immediately gained many fans, especially among the young audience. The advent of information and communication technologies has diversified and broadened the channels of distribution and dissemination of publishing products. Regardless of the publishing mechanism, authors themselves often use technology to develop interaction with their audience and in this way increase the sales of their books [1].

Technology has brought about many changes in the publishing industry in all aspects. It is worth noting that artificial intelligence can create high quality written content and very attractive and accurate texts, even entire books. There are a variety of tools based on the artificial intelligence on the market that can help any writer to improve the quality of his writing. Also, thanks to artificial intelligence, publishers can detect what kind of content is best suited to the interests and preferences of their readers. In this way, they can personalise their content to their readers. In addition, publishers can analyse data on readers' preferences and behaviours, in order to determine the best strategies to connect with them. Thanks to artificial intelligence, publishers will also be able to increase the amount of content in their communication strategy and connect with their readers in a more dynamic way. Certainly, the publishing industry is in the process of change and transformation. By relying on technological solutions, publishers will be able to offer their books in a short period of time and make them available at any time [2].

2 METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the use of two methodological tools, a literature survey and a quantitative survey. The literature survey has been carried out in order to present how technology has affected the field of books and literature. Then the method of quantitative research has been used to present the extent to which technology has influenced the book movement in Spain as well as the advantages and disadvantages of e-books for both readers and authors

3 THE EMERGENCE OF THE E-BOOK

If we look at the past, we will find that literature in Spain has a special significance and has played a crucial role in the definition and evolution of the country's cultural identity. Literature is the reflection of the soul of a people, and in the case of Spain, this statement takes on special relevance. Over the centuries, Spanish literature has played a crucial role in the definition and evolution of the country's cultural identity. Spanish literature, throughout the 20th century, lived, as at no other time in its history, under the influence and weight of the so-called 'literary generations'. Great names in Spanish literature who have also defined Spanish thought have left a great legacy that will never cease to be read by readers worldwide [3].

The end of the 20th century brought great changes for both Spain and the world literary scene. Spain emerged from a long period of dictatorship and began to seek its way as a democratic country on the world stage. It is gradually modernising, and with it, its literary scene. At the same time, the global development of technology is bringing about changes in the field of literature in developed countries, with computers making a dynamic entry into the field. When books began to be published on the computer, both writing and reading began in digital form. Digital publishing spread rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s, although reading large documents on computer screens at the time was inconvenient for the reader [4].

The year 1971 is a milestone in the history of e-books with Michael Hart's Project Gutenberg, which consisted of digitising existing books in order to create a digital library that could be accessed free of charge via the Internet. In 1995, Amazon started selling e-books on the Internet, which made it easier for the average reader to access this 'new' type of e-book. In 1996, the new e-Readers were created, which were small, lightweight, easily transportable, enabling the reader to read a digital book without the need for access to a computer. Then, in 2007, Amazon launched Kindle e-Readers with excellent features and low prices, which led to a significant increase in sales of this type of device. This resulted in an exponential increase in the number of books in Amazon's e-Library, which reached 400 000 titles in 2009. In 2010 there was concern that with the advent of tablets and smartphones Kindle-type e-readers would disappear, but these systems remain until today. As Amazon held a dominant position in the market, with about 90% of the total market share, the other major Internet technology companies Google, Microsoft and Apple tried to gain a position in the new e-book market. This effort focused not only on designing new and better devices, but also on mass digitalisation of books and the creation of corresponding e-bookstores [5].

4 THE SPANISH-LANGUAGE MARKET IN SPAIN

4.1 Electronic book (E-book)

Publishing companies in Spain started to offer the new services to the reading public. However, the preferences of the reading public remained on books sold by bookshops according to the following statistics. The following statistic presents the turnover of the book industry in Spain in 2022 and 2023, distributed by distribution channel. In 2023, book sales in bookshops generated revenues of approximately 1,020 million euros, an increase of around 63 million euros over the figure recorded the previous year. The e-book in 2023, that is in fifth place generated revenues of approximately 144 million euros, an increase of around 5 million euros over the figure recorded the previous year (Figure 1).

It is also worth looking at the variations in the percentage of readers who choose reading in digital format according to the official statistics of the Spanish Ministry of Culture (Ministerio de Cultura) from 2018 to 2023. At this period reading in digital format does not show significant variations. From 2018 to 2023, the percentage of the population reading in this format has remained at around 30% (29.7% last year) (Figure 2). The E-Reader (11.8 %), tablet (9.7 %) and computer (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 (Figure 3).

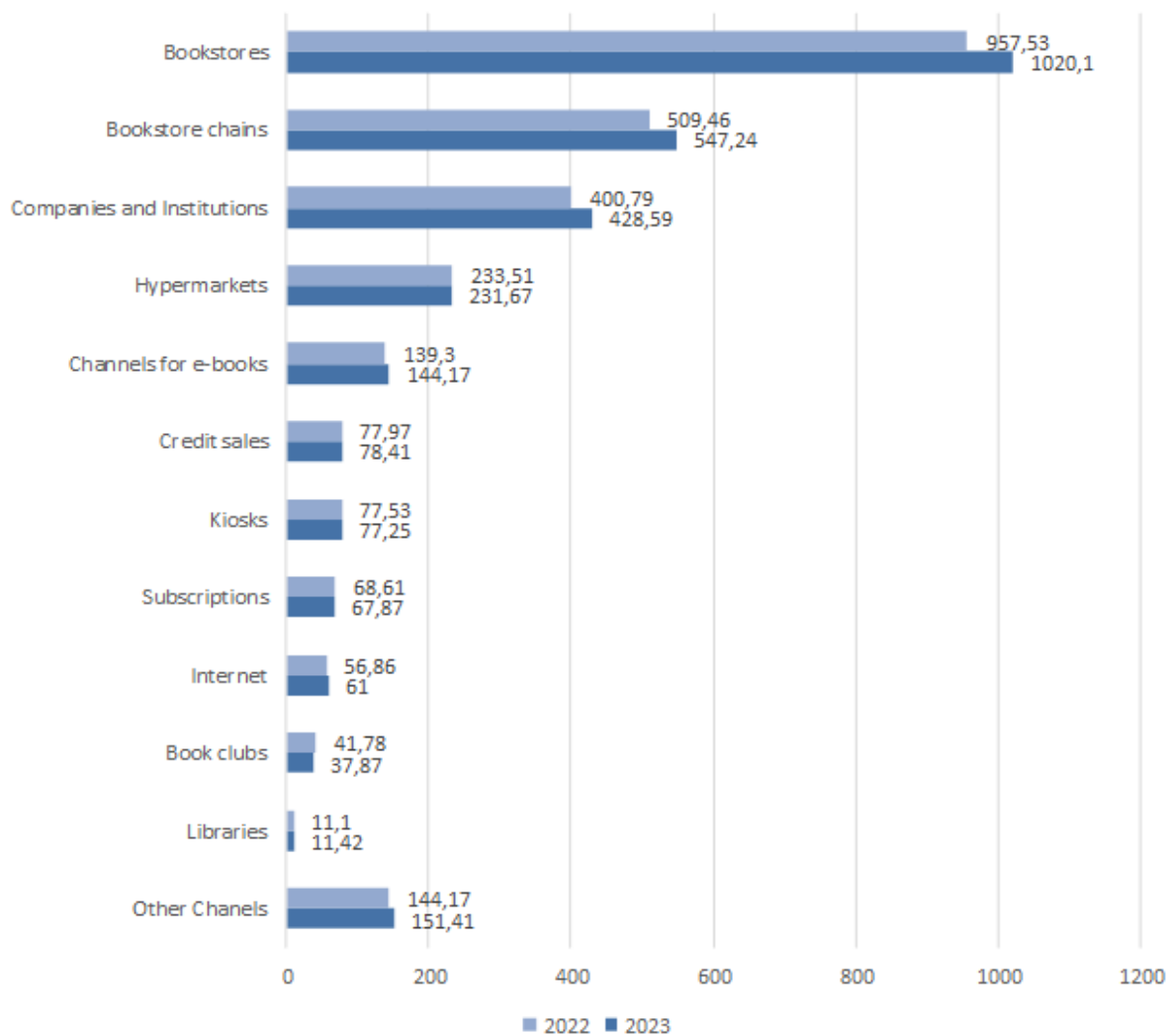


Figure 1. Revenues generated by book sales in Spain in 2022 and 2023, by distribution channel (in millions of euros)

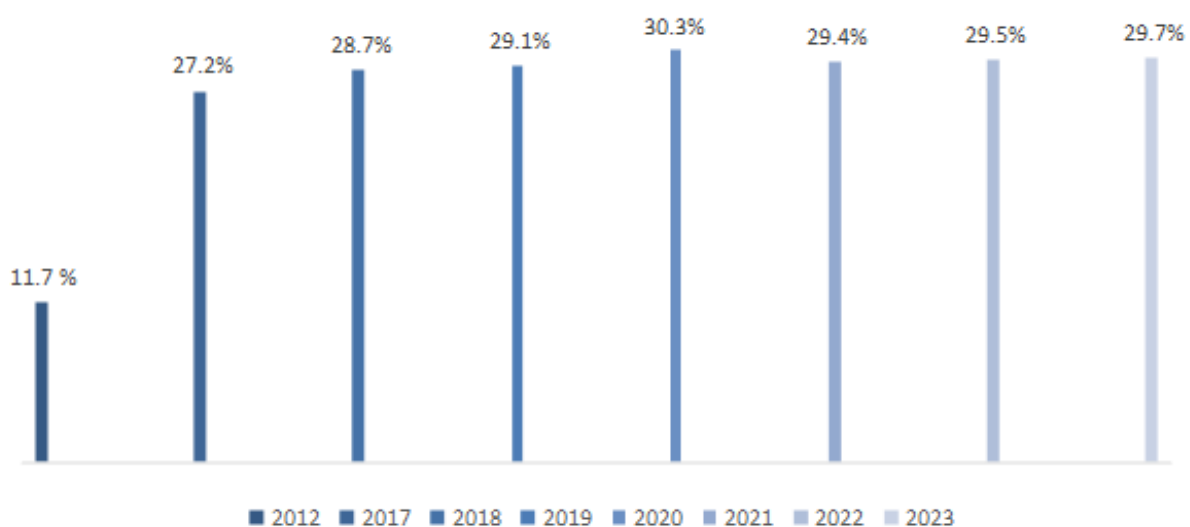


Figure 2. Reading books in digital format.

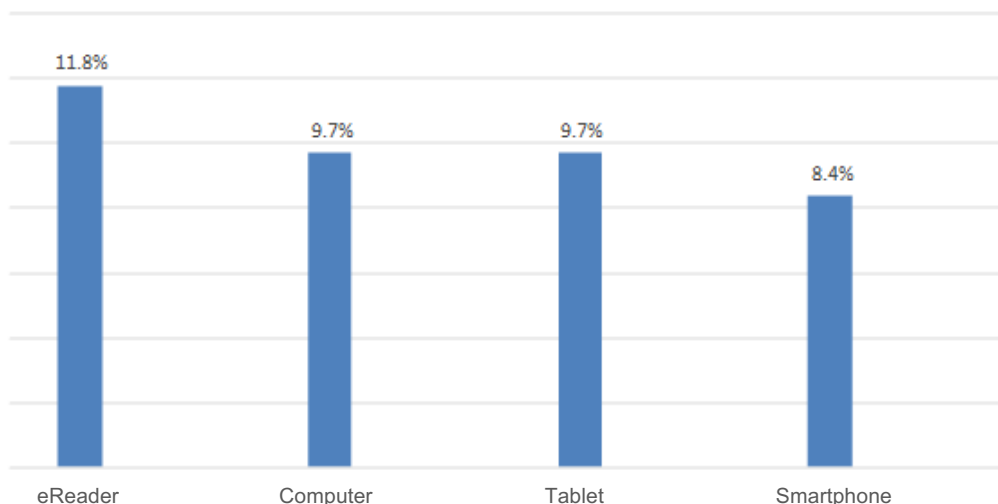


Figure 3. On which devices do they read digital books?

After 2020, which brought with it an increase in digital reading never seen in the last decade as a result of the pandemic, 2021 of stability and 2022 of significant increases, the year 2023 has marked a year of significant growth for the Spanish-language digital book market, which increased by 12% globally and by 9% in Spain.

Within the e-book market, there are alternatives offered by the various distributors and shops. On the one hand, there are the internet 'classics' (Amazon, Ebay or Google), which control 78% of the digital book market; on the other hand, the smaller or independent platforms and, finally, shops such as El 'Corte Inglés', FNAC and La Casa del Libro. These large book chains have experienced a drop in recent years, from 17.7% to 12.5%. The most striking aspect of this market is the growth of subscription platforms, which generate 5.2% of the business. Subscription platforms are internet services that offer customers the ability to read everything in their specific catalogue in exchange for a flat monthly fee. An example of a subscription platform in Spain would be the Nubico platform, which belongs to an 'ad-hoc' group created by Telefónica, Planeta and Círculo de lectores. Through this platform the user can access thousands of e-Books.

The industry of e-books published in Spain from 2009 to 2023 is presented below using information from "Statista 2025". The turnover of e-books in Spain was around 144.2 million euros in 2023, an increase of almost five million euros over the figure recorded the previous year (Figure 4).

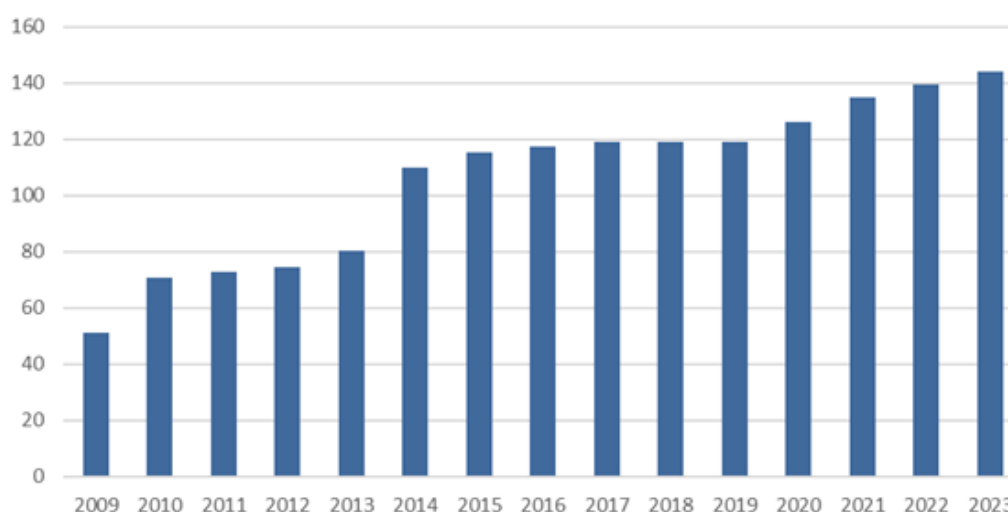


Figure 4. Annual evolution of the turnover of the e-book industry in Spain from 2009 to 2023.

4.2 Traditional book

According to the 'Comercio Interior del Libro en España' features, the paper book market in Spain has been characterised from 2010 to 2016 by a decrease in sales. However, the traditional book has experienced a growth, although slow, in the number of sales since 2014. Regarding the turnover of traditional books, the following graph shows a downward trend between 2010 and 2013, mainly due to the economic crisis that began in 2008. From 2014 onwards, a slow growth can be observed, from around 2000 million euros in that year to 2300 million euros in 2016. Finally, in 2017, the paper book sector had a turnover of 2317 million euros, which was only 0.1% more than the previous year (Figure 5).

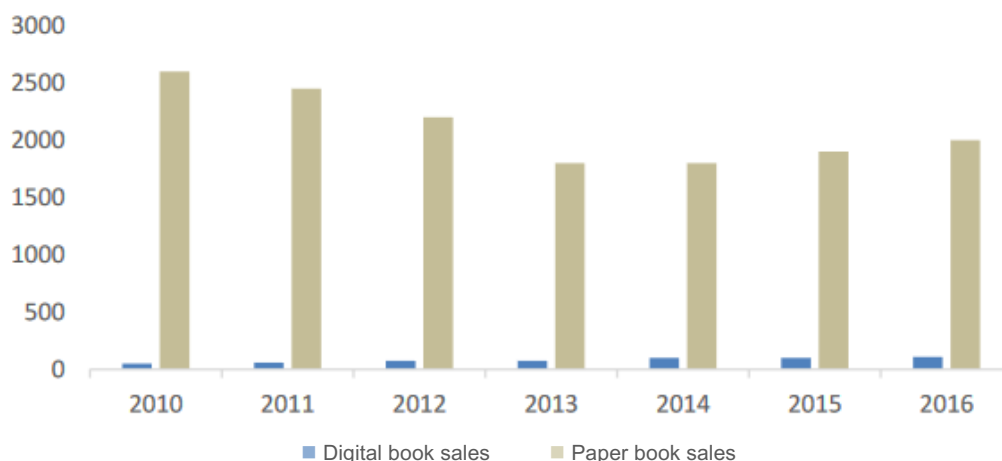


Figure 5. Turnover of books in paper and E-book as a proportion of total turnover, 2010-2016

According to the 'Comercio Interior del Libro en España' and as we can see below for the years from 2018 to 2022, the number of titles published in print shows an increase in 2019 and then a decrease in 2020 due to the pandemic. In the following years there is again an increase, but the numbers have not reached those of the years before 2020 (Figure 6).

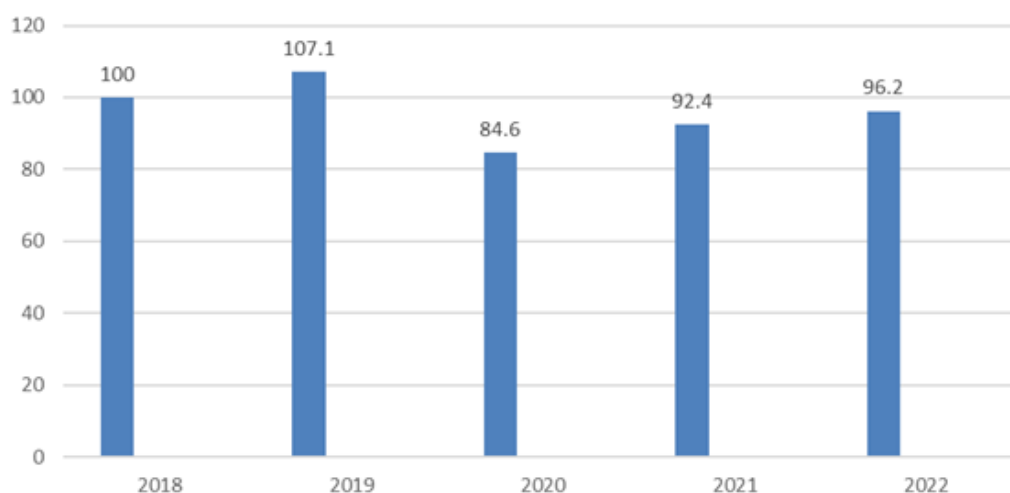


Figure 6. Evolution of the number of traditional books printed between 2018 and 2022 in Spain.

5 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF E-BOOKS

Through a survey carried out with the help of large Spanish publishing companies we tried to record the opinion of the reading public about the advantages and disadvantages of e-books. Starting with the advantages of the e-book for the reader e-books do not take up physical space. This avoids the inconveniences related to their storage. The large memory capacity of e-books can store hundreds of titles that can be accessed quickly. The loss of a paper book is relatively frequent and is more expensive than e-book. Also, e-books are always available, while paper books may have a limited number of

copies. Finally, new technologies provide the e-book with several capabilities and features. For example, it allows you to resume reading, search for quotes, etc. In terms of disadvantages for the readers, the use of digital books requires a minimum knowledge of new technologies. The person must be able to connect to the internet, search for a book and download it. Moreover, not all books have been digitized. Finally, eBooks lack certain qualities that are very appreciated by the readers such as the feel or the smell of a new book.

As for the author, one advantage of the e-book is the fact that it is relatively easy to disseminate a digital book on the internet and to achieve a certain international media impact, which would be almost impossible to achieve with a traditional book, unless you have the support of a major publishing company. By using the right techniques, it is easy to reach millions of people through the internet. Distribution problems and shipping costs are significantly reduced and, in some respects, almost entirely. The corresponding printing and other costs that usually add to the price of the paper book, are almost eliminated. A major disadvantage is that some consider the digital book as a minor format. Many authors still think that if their book has not been published in hardcover, it is because their book has not achieved sufficient importance in terms of sales and critical acclaim. However, this element is not important. Perhaps the greatest benefit for the author is the elimination of many processes in which the publisher, the distributor and the point of sale are involved.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The evolution of technology has had a particular impact on the field of books and literature both globally and in Spain. It offers several advantages to readers and authors but by no means is it able to displace the paper book. Especially literature lovers choose even today, when technology has invaded every aspect of life, to hold the traditional paper book in their hands. Spain continues to be a country with a close relationship with the world of books and literature. It follows global developments and offers its readership every new form of material, allowing them to decide on the future of anything new. Certainly, in this area technology has a long way to go to approach the paper book in the preferences of the public.

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