Frankfurt Through a Screen

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#FBM2020: Get More from Publishing Perspectives

Interactive Magazine

This digital magazine includes links on every page so you can click through to events, companies, and more information. Look for buttons and underlined text.

Online Coverage

We’re providing ongoing coverage of the 2020 Frankfurter Buchmesse throughout the week and beyond, including reports on events, announcements, and more

Event Recommendations

Visit our landing page of curated digital events taking place during the fair.

#FBMspecialedition Videos

Watch our video interviews with Juergen Boos and others involved in planning this year’s fair.

Email Newsletters

During the fair, we’re releasing special newsletter editions that include more stories, event highlights, and news from the fair.
News Briefs From the Publishing World

New ‘Green Book’ Consortium: Canada, USA, UK

The formation of the new International Green Book Supply Chain Alliance was announced on September 29 by BookNet Canada, the United Kingdom’s Book Industry Communication organization (BIC) and the United States’ Book Industry Study Group. The goal of the alliance, according to BIC executive director Karina Urquhart, is to “provide leadership in this critical area” of eliminating waste and reducing the book industry’s negative impact on the environment. In addition, the alliance is looking to expand internationally and involve other national organizations in their activities.

BISG executive director Brian O’Leary said, “We’re interested in bringing together companies and people with diverse perspectives on the issues and opportunities in front of us.” Some of the key elements the alliance plans to focus on include conducting environmental research, sharing best practices, offering resources to publishers, and hosting events. Read more »

Federation of European Publishers Announces New Leadership

In a changing of the guard at the Federation of European Publishers, the Brussels-based organization has elected Peter Kraus vom Cleff as president for two years; with Italy’s Ricardo Franco Levi as vice-president. Vom Cleff succeeds the outgoing Rudy Vanschoonbeek, who is concluding his two-year term.

Vom Cleff has been managing director of Rowohlt in Germany since 2008, and in 2016, he became COO of the Holtzbrinck Buchverlage group. Levi is president of the Italian publishers’ association (Associazione Italiana Editori, AIE). From 2006 to 2012, Levi was a member of the chamber of deputies of the cultural commission. Additional officers installed include Benedikt Föger, president of the Austrian Publishers and Booksellers Association as treasurer, and three board members: Catherine Blache of the Syndicat National de l’Edition in France; Elsevier’s Michiel Kolman of De Mediafederatie in the Netherlands; and Sakari Laiho of Findland’s Suomen Kustannusyhdistys. Read more »

International Release Date for Barack Obama’s Memoir, Vol. 1

A date of November 17 has been announced by Penguin Random House for the release of the first volume of Barack Obama’s much-anticipated presidential memoir.

Being produced by Crown Publishing, an imprint of Random House Publishing Group, the book is titled A Promised Land, and PRH CEO Markus Dohle has announced that the book will be released simultaneously in 25 languages. Obama will read his own text for the audiobook edition from Penguin Random House Audio. The memoir is divided into two volumes, and the English-language print edition is to run to 768 pages. A release date for the second volume has yet to be named.

Along with the release date announcement, Obama also released a statement, which reads, in part, “I hope more than anything that the book inspires young people across the country—and around the globe—to take up the baton, lift up their voices, and play their part in remaking the world for the better.” Read more »

Macmillan: Don Weisberg To Succeed John Sargent as CEO

Holtzbrinck in Stuttgart has announced “with great regret” that John Sargent will depart as CEO of Macmillan as of January 1. The reason for Sargent’s departure is described by the German corporation’s statement as “disagreements regarding the direction of Macmillan.”

Don Weisberg, who currently is president of Macmillan US trade, has been named to succeed Sargent. And Susan Winslow, until now the company’s general manager, becomes president of Macmillan Learning, effective immediately.

In an internal memo sent to Macmillan staffers, Weisberg writes, “While we are sad about John’s departure, we continue to be optimistic about the future and the importance of books in the world. Our relationship with you, as partners, is the cornerstone of what we do. Let’s share more great books with the world.” Susan Winslow’s promotion to president of Macmillan Learning makes her one of only a small number of women who lead education-al publishing companies. Read more »
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Meet Beat at the following events:

- Hof Uhr: Audio Futures: How To Own Your Audience And Forge Your Own Path
  Tuesday 29 September, 17:00-18:00 CET

- ReBoot Books, Business & Reading
  Tuesday 13 October, 16:30-17:00 CET

- Futurebook
  16-20 November

- Jakarta Content Week
  11-15 November
From the Editor: **Reflections on Future Frankfurts**

I’ve been mildly dismayed at this word “virtual” for so much of what Frankfurt and other major events this year are doing to keep everyone connected. The formats we’re using are digital, sure, but there’s nothing virtual about the speakers you’ll hear from, the colleagues you’ll communicate with, or the company you’ll keep during Frankfurt Week this year. Real people, real publishing, real books. Digital, not virtual—although I confess that I’m sorry we didn’t try out FrankVirt as some Special Edition branding.

Not only have many in world publishing this year become far more comfortable and adept with digital interaction, but some events are taking things further. The Bookseller’s fine FutureBook conference this year in London will be a paid-admission digital event. And they won’t be accepting virtual currency. There are several rock-solid points to be had here, even as we all keep panicking because we’ve forgotten to pack a suitcase.

First, we now have a better sense of what we cannot do in digital settings. And that makes the value of the great trade shows and book fairs and festivals of the world industry go up, not down. The importance of being able to gather physically now stands in sharp relief in our minds, like the colors of our tree in the Agora.

Second, who’s afraid of digital publishing? We’re adapting, we’re adopting; and for all the right reasons of keeping ourselves, our friends, our families, and our good colleagues safe and healthy in the face of a most extraordinary threat. One of our Publishing Perspectives Talks this week, in fact (Tuesday, 1800 CEST / noon ET) looks at “Digital Format Adoption and the Pandemic,” please join us. There are reasons to believe that some of our consumers, our readers, are adopting digital reading options faster than they were doing, because of the restrictions imposed by the coronavirus.

Third, like a landscape suddenly illuminated by lightning—or that tree, flaring in sunlight—all of us, ourselves, have been in the spotlight as they made their way through this year of contagion. Whether for entertainment during long spells of isolation or for analysis of wrenching political upheavals or for keeping the kids off the ceiling or for sheer escape, our coverage this year has followed not only deep plunges in retail but also buoyant resurgence in various markets, and a sense that the floor didn’t fully fall right out from under us.

And fourth, the international rights trade, the beating heart of the Frankfurt ecosystem, powers on. Licensing lives. Books are going into far-flung countries, markets, territories. Frankfurt Rights is game on.

There are hardships. But there are signs of forward motion, as well. And the racket hum of Halle 4’s escalators, the aroma from the pizza vendors, the double- and triple-booked meetings on our phones’ calendars, the five minutes away from it all by the little “canal” with its bridges, the cosplay kids in their joyous and inexplicable outfits, and the question of how long it will take to get through security?—it will all be there. We’ll appreciate it differently. Because for once, we don’t have it.

Here in our 2020 Frankfurt magazine, we bring you voices from many parts of the world business, input on an industry challenged by an unthinkable danger. We look at copyright, education, publishing’s decentralization, the load of releases in an autumn of delayed book launches, reports on the freedom to publish, fears for educational publishing in Africa, new energy in translation, and a globe-spanning awakening to the absolute imperative to achieve a diversified industry for a complex and multicultural consumer base.

None of this is virtual. It’s digital. And it’s a good thing we have these digital capabilities when we need them.

Porter Anderson
Editor-in-Chief
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Buzz on Books: What People Are Saying

Trevor Noah on Winning Book of the Year from the SA Book Awards

"I think we have some of the best stories to tell, some of the most amazing, inspirational stories to share with others. And if we write them down, people will talk about them, people will remember them.

“And that is the goal for South Africa. To be out there, the powerhouse, the way we always knew we could be.

“I’m going to go and celebrate this by not hanging out with anybody because of coronavirus.”

Trevor Noah is a South African comedian, political commentator, ‘Daily Show’ host, producer, and author.

Ali Arabzadeh on Reading During the Pandemic in Iran

“During the quarantine days in Iran, book reading increased, the statistics tell us. Ebook and audiobook sales went up. People got quickly adapted to the new conditions and replaced their old methods of book reading with the new ones. Many bookstores started selling online, and many people welcomed the new approach.

“So in general, the pandemic has led old-fashioned people to reconcile with new tools, which is a good thing.”

Ali Arabzadeh is the international rights director for Blue Circle, a literary agency based in Tehran, Iran.

Richard Charkin on Responding to the Pandemic

“Will new readers experiencing their stories through many different media return to the printed book itself?

“I’m an optimist. The book trade is resilient and has overcome many challenges. It will, I’m sure, pull through this time, too. But it’s surely going to require new thinking, new products, new distribution methods, and new courage.”

Richard Charkin is a former President of the IPA and the UK PA and for 11 years was Executive Director of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
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13 October, 11:00 AM EDT
Rights & Licensing Digital Day
COVID-19, Copyright and the Creative Economy

15 October, 11:00 AM EDT
B2B Session
Where Publishing and the Pandemic Meet

16 October, 3:55 PM EDT
Charleston Conference Meets Frankfurt Buchmesse
Artificial Intelligence, Copyright, and Privacy

Highlighting thought leadership from the following industry experts:

- Bodour Al Qasimi
  Vice President, International Publisher Association; Founder and CEO, Kalimat Publishing Group
- Tony Alves
  Director, Project Management, Aries Systems Corp.
- Rachel Burley
  President, Research Square
- Fathima Dada
  Managing Director of Oxford Education, OUP

Including CCC Executive leadership:

- Tracey Armstrong
  CEO
- Michael Healy
  Executive Director, International Relations

To learn more, visit copyright.com/frankfurt2020
The Rentrée Littéraire and the Pandemic

France’s fall literary season—and its deluge of new titles—is usually a frenzied time for booksellers and publishers. How is the pandemic affecting the industry during this important period for promoting and selling books?

By Olivia Snaije

You might expect this year’s rentrée littéraire—the preeminent literary season in France—to be different than in other years. After all, France went through one of the strictest pandemic lockdowns in Europe for two months last spring during which most bookshops were closed, except for a few that had a click-and-collect system in place a month before the end of lockdown.

But with 511 new rentrée books to be released this fall, the number is on par with most years, even if publishers regularly promise to reduce their production to lessen the autumn deluge of titles that booksellers must contend with.

To be fair, a number of these books were published in March or April. In a show of solidarity, publishers and booksellers worked together to integrate these books into the rentrée “as if they were new,” says Emmanuelle Robillard, the quality and project director of France’s largest independent bookshop, Librairie Mollat, in Bordeaux.

“Booksellers were able to defer their payments to publishers for books ordered in the spring,” Robillard says, “so that there were very few returns for stocks ordered in March.”

Still, booksellers are dealing with a tremendous number of books. And the challenge and uncertainty of what lies ahead with the advent of winter and a second or third wave of COVID-19 is greater than what booksellers have been accustomed to for years.

Coutelle: ‘Books Have Prevailed’

“The human capacity for reading is saturated with so many books,” says Pierre Coutelle, head of Librairie Mollat’s catalogue, “but our work remains the same, sorting through and choosing books.”

“Paradoxically the rentrée isn’t different, but the context is,” says Xavier Capodano, who runs a neighborhood bookshop, Le Genre Urbain, in the Belleville neighborhood of Paris.

“A bookshop is a business that follows the tide of events. Twenty-five years ago, there were 30,000 to 40,000 new titles a year. Now there are around 70,000. So we’re used to it.”

But Capodano says that his bookshop—which is part of a cooperative network of 13 bookshops in northern and eastern Paris called Librest—had to cancel a series of events they usually hold for the rentrée. For the past 10 years, Librest—in conjunction with the Théâtre de la Bastille—has run free events with readings, interviews, and book signings with authors for new books chosen by the member-bookshops. Some events will be held at the individual bookshops but the impact isn’t the same, says Capodano.

Literary agent Pierre Astier, speaking to Eve Roger on Europe 1 radio said he had expected fewer books to be published for the rentrée. The good news, however, is that high-quality debut novels expected in September have been pushed to a January release, Astier said, meaning they might not get lost in the shuffle. That might also mean a better distribution of books over the year.

Astier also said that independent publishers are “very present” and that, in general, the atmosphere seems dynamic.

Librairie Mollat’s Coutelle says he concurs that there are fewer debut novels this fall, adding that there’s less translated literature and a real demand for books on social issues.

“People want to understand the world and are using books to help them,” Coutelle says. “In the cultural sphere books have prevailed and it’s heartening.”

Bookstores Capodano and Robillard, however, say they’re worried about the Christmas season and how they can compete with online giants including Amazon, despite the fact that their two bookshops are very different.

next page »
Capodano: ‘The Evolution of the Social Fabric’

Le Genre Urbain has 140 square meters of space, and two or three booksellers engaged. By contrast, the Librairie Mollat has 2,700 square meters, and 110 employees, 55 of them booksellers.

“We’re a small bookshop, and we have to make choices,” says Le Genre Urbain’s Capodano. “I’m afraid fewer people will come and that people who are anxious won’t come at all. It’s up to us to find solutions.”

With the other member-bookshops of Librest, Capodano says, he’ll encourage customers to begin buying in November when Christmas books are released, so that they’ll think ahead, spread out their purchases, and not wait until the last minute in order to avoid standing in line in front of bookshops.

It’s possible to order books online through Librest and receive them by mail. But Capodano says, ‘Our philosophy is to say, ‘Come to the shop. There are no shipping fees. And if we don’t have your book, we can usually get it in under three hours’ from member bookshops.

He adds that he encourages people to shop locally. What COVID-19 has revealed in cities, he says, is the ecosystems of neighborhoods. In expensive neighborhoods in which boutiques have replaced local businesses, he says people are moving out.

“We’re lucky our neighborhood has so many inhabitants,” Capodano says. ‘Bookshops represent the evolution of the social fabric and stay alive because of it.”

Capodano says he’s well aware that most of his customers also shop on Amazon. But if out of 10 books his customers buy two in his shop, then, “I’m happy,” he says. “It’s difficult and complicated, but we must be vigilant and inventive.”

Robillard: ‘We Must Add Value’

The much larger Librairie Mollat has had an online presence for 10 years, complete with a YouTube channel and lively social media accounts. The store is known for its skilled posts on Instagram, on which its account has 91,200 followers.

But Robillard says she still worries, doubtless because of Mollat’s operating costs. “We’re very happy to have so much on offer in all categories, and to see our customers. But we’re extremely afraid of the health restrictions. The offer and demand exist, but access to the books will be difficult. There are big players on the Internet, and we must add value to our online sales.”

Mollat’s online sales usually constitute 5.5 percent of its turnover, but Robillard says they’re up 12 percent since the end of lockdown.

Moni: ‘Reading Should Be a National Plan’

Xavier Moni, a bookshop owner and president of the booksellers’ union, Syndicat de la Librairie Française, said recently to Patrick Cohen on Europe 1 radio, “Books are pillars of our society.

‘I hope we can work on offer and demand, and that we can make an ambitious plan to help readers.”

He said he hoped the French president, Emmanuel Macron, would carry through with his promise to provide substantial help to booksellers and the industry in general.

“Reading should be a national plan during 2021,” Moni said. “Everyone said that reading was essential during lockdown, but I think this needs to be reinforced.” •
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Social Impact at Penguin Random House

The world’s largest publisher—even while vowing to address its own workforce demographics—releases a new Global Social Impact site, bringing together its international programs in corporate responsibility.

Diversity and inclusivity issues have taken on new urgency this year. Summertime protests of systemic racism have roiled many book markets of the world, pumping new energy into publishers’ nonfiction lists dealing with equity challenges between genders, races, sexual orientations, and social-economic status.

The issues for publishing houses tend to fall into two camps: how much a publisher’s workforce reflects the society in which it operates, and how much its catalogue reflects the needs and interests of its consumer base.

In some cases, employee activism has prompted publishers this year to examine their own responses to these questions. In other instances, the national markets’ organizations have helped prompt the conversation forward, as the UK Publishers Association’s 10-point action plan for workforce diversity has done over a period of years.

As those critical efforts to evaluate and address these issues in the workplace and the output of the industry go forward, however, there’s a third approach available: corporate responsibility.

Late in the summer, Markus Dohle, CEO of Penguin Random House, wrote a memo to the PRH staff, announcing the launch of the company’s new Global Social Impact site, which outlines the publisher’s corporate initiatives in the areas of diversity and inclusion, environment and sustainability, and free expression and “joy of reading.”

Looking Both Inward and Outward

It may look to some as if Penguin Random House is better at corporate responsibility outreach than in handling its own internal staffing demographics. Certainly, it’s good that a dedicated plan to address workforce makeup is being instituted, and quite openly.

In September, PRH launched a consumer-focused site The Conversation, offering book lists, content, and resources focused on combatting racism and racial inequities in our daily lives.”

And part of the background in that effort has to do with the transparency the company has committed to, in announcing internal surveys of its workforce.

In the United States division’s nonwarehouse positions, 78 percent of employees were surveyed to be white, 7 percent Hispanic, 8 percent Asian, and 4 percent Black. By comparison, in warehouse positions, the breakdown was 80 percent white, 11 percent Hispanic, 4 percent Asian, and 3 percent Black.

Vowing to continue sharing its workplace demographics, the company holds up the kind of successes catalogued in the new Global Social Impact Site as a clear example of what it can achieve, within as well as without.

Q&A with Claire von Schilling

Publishing Perspectives has had an exclusive exchange with Claire von Schilling, Penguin Random House senior vice-president and director of corporate communications, about the release of the Global Social Impact Site, as well as the range and reach of the company’s international activities in corporate responsibility.

We begin by asking von Schilling to tell us about how responsive the various international programs are to their particular markets.

Claire von Schilling: That’s right. While of course our readers and teams are all around the world, we like to have our social impact work be locally driven. It’s decentralized, just like our publishing.

But we still need to align with our mission. So that’s why we have the three worldwide commitment areas: Diversity & Inclusion; Environment & Sustainability; and Free Expression & Joy of Reading.

You’ll see on the site that we broke these up into separate pages so visitors can really get a deep dive into the commitment areas. Diversity & Inclusion; Environment & Sustainability; and Free Expression & Joy of Reading.

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Publishing Perspectives: Each program seems driven by its team on the ground.

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to a business, especially when it comes to social impact.

Transparency and action-oriented commitments guide our decision-making at every level of the company. Even outside of PRH, we know that consumers are demanding that brands stand for something beyond their core business. That’s why our partnerships and programs are always tied with our mission and commitments.

I genuinely believe—and I think I can safely speak on behalf of my colleagues when I say this—that books inherently provide a service to society. I personally feel so fortunate to work for a company that is also, in many ways, a cultural institution. We all are.

So then, we have to strategically think about how we can go beyond the books to further support our communities. And throughout the process of working with our partners and creating our initiatives, we are always trying to hold ourselves accountable. And the site helps with that.

**PP:** In light of US CEO Madeline McIntosh’s rollout of the American workforce’s demographic analysis, how does Penguin Random House move toward a kind of adoption or internalization of what the Global Social Impact curation of these efforts shows us?

**CvS:** Our mission, and our social impact work, is not independent from our business decisions. So I’d like to think that the internalization is already there. But we can always do more. And to best serve the needs of a market, we let our local teams lead the way. We share best practices across our company, and we remain committed to our mission.

**PP:** Is part of the plan behind releasing the Global Social Impact site aimed at stimulating more such ground-up efforts?

**CvS:** Absolutely—and we hope it does! We intentionally designed the site to have a similar look and feel to something like Instagram, so that we can showcase genuine stories as real-time updates and commitments in action. It’s really visually driven, and the short-form style of the stories and stats make it easy to digest, which we hope inspires even more ideas and initiatives from our employees.

All this said, we’re so lucky that we already have such engaged employees in all our territories. Seriously, there’s never a shortage of hands in the air when we put out calls for volunteers. And we’ve actually highlighted several of our employee-led grassroots efforts on the site.

**PP:** And in the cases of some of the stories, we see goal dates (as in environmental goals, for example) attached to various programs. How much can this kind of time-line structuring help to support achievement in reaching the results various programs address?

**CvS:** For years, we’ve been holding ourselves accountable with action-oriented benchmarks. For example, in 2016, we announced our 2020 social responsibility commitments. The ones focused on the environment are good examples of this.

The first commitment was to source 100 percent of the paper we use worldwide from certified mills. By the end of last year, more than 98 percent of our paper was purchased from mills that meet one of the two international standards. And, I’m happy to say we’re fully on track to reach our goal of 100 percent by the end of this year.

Our second goal was to reduce our carbon emissions by 10 percent, which we’ve already exceeded, so we should be able to further total reductions of 20 percent by 2025.

Earlier this year, we announced that we joined Bertelsmann in our commitment to being climate neutral by 2030.

And most recently, as we’ve previously discussed, we shared our US workforce demographics data. Like the UK’s Inclusivity Action Plan, our US company made a commitment to broadly share our data with all our constituencies, and published them on our company site.

We’ll continue to be open and transparent so we can create measurable progress. •

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**Atlases of Animal Companions**

Celebrities and heroes from the world of dogs and cats!

**Tracks & Homes**

Animal tracks and homes hidden under flaps.

**Can You Guess Who I Am**

Look through the cut-outs and guess who is it!

Questions?

Contact us at: foreignsales@albatrosmedia.cz
#FBMspecialedition: What to Watch

**Frankfurt Conference: 4 Tracks, 4 Days**

Discussions, Q&A sessions and brief talks with international experts are geared towards members of the international publishing industry.  
- 12 Oct.: Academic & Scholarly  
- 13 Oct.: Rights & Licensing  
- 14 Oct.: Publishing Insights  
- 15 Oct.: Audio

**B2B Program Highlights**

Complementing the Frankfurt Conference, this year's B2B program addresses a wide range of publishing topics and includes experts from across the globe. Here are just a few highlights:

**Improving Diversity in Publishing (organized with the IPA)**  
14 October at 10:00 - 11:00 CEST  /  [EVENT INFO](#)

**Women Publishing in Africa**  
15 October at 18:00 - 19:00 CEST  /  [EVENT INFO](#)

**IBBY’s Engagement with Children**  
16 October at 13:00 - 14:00 CEST  /  [EVENT INFO](#)

**IPA Prix Voltaire: Guerilla Publishing**  
15 October at 13:30 - 14:30 CEST  /  [EVENT INFO](#)

**Reaching New Readers**  
15 October at 13:00 - 14:00 CEST  /  [EVENT INFO](#)

**Curated Networking**

Frankfurt's digital program this year includes online networking events to help participants meet new people and extend their international networks. These sessions are organized topics, publishing segments, and regions. Registration is required to join, but is free of charge to all My Book Fair participants.

[REGISTER FOR NETWORKING SESSIONS](#)

**BOOKFEST Digital:**

Interested in hearing from authors? The digital program has made it possible for more authors from more countries to join Frankfurt's BOOKFEST events this year. Just a few of the authors participating include Elizabeth Gilbert, Jamie Oliver, Karin Slaughter, Shaun Tan, Kim Thúy, Peter Wohlleben, and many more.

On 17 October, the livestream will be available on the BOOKFEST webpage as well as on Frankfurt's YouTube and Facebook channels.
Canada: Virtual Program Highlights at Frankfurt

Carrying on with its “Singular Plurality” theme for its program, Canada’s presentation includes an online rights catalogue and a list of titles translated into German. A series of four “mini-documentaries” is to lead the digital programming:

**Conversation with Margaret Atwood**
An exclusive 60-minute conversation with Margaret Atwood, author of some of Canada’s most celebrated poetry, fiction, literary studies, essays and graphic novels. The discussion will be hosted by Charles Foran, prize-winning author of works of fiction and essays.

**Conversations: Hope Against Despair**
It often appears that humanity is tormented by a somber shadow, beset with environmental, social and political crises. What is the role of the artist in helping us face calamity? What do we require from our artists: resistance, empathy, insight or all of the above? Featuring Alix Ohlin, Jocelyne Saucier, and Joshua Whitehead.

**Conversations: We Contain Multitudes**
The idea that we as individuals create and inhabit different identities is widely accepted these days. But how do these identities affect a writer’s work, shape their readers’ responses and determine their position in the literary community? Does one identity become more predominant? Featuring Catherine Hernandez, Esi Edugyan, and Kim Thúy.

**The Move to 2021**
In our #FBMspecialedition video series, Publishing Perspectives discussed Canada’s Guest of Honor program with three people involved in negotiating the one-year postponement due to the pandemic. Below are some snippets from that discussion. You can watch the entire video here.

Juergen Boos, Frankfurt Book Fair:
“The backbone of the Frankfurter Buchmesse is having a Guest of Honor, having a translation program, having cultural events, presenting what’s happening in literature in this country.”

Julie Boyer, Canadian Heritage:
“A big thank you to the Frankfurter Buchmesse for deciding to still give Canada a chance to have a spotlight this year, and also to the next three guest of honor countries—Spain, Slovenia, and Italy—who each agreed to postpose their guest of honor participation by one year.”

Caroline Fortin, Canada FBM2020:
“A year ago, we were having a cocktail party at the Canadian collective stand, and it was really amazing to see how many more publishers were present … everybody was looking forward to the year in front of us. So when the pandemic started and we realized that our lives would be changed for a while, it was very scary.”

Accepting Fall 2020 Catalog Translation Rights Sales Inquiries, Indiana University Press Rights is also the Exclusive Foreign Rights Agent for the following University Presses:

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- Purdue University Press
- University of Missouri Press
- The University of Arkansas Press
- University Press of Kentucky

Register for our Rights Newsletter

Contact Rights Manager
Brian Carroll, bmcarrol@iu.edu
International Market Insights: Video Playlist

In cooperation with media partners and national publishers’ associations, Frankfurter Buchmesse has compiled a series of 50-minute market insights videos to present information on the book industry in 10 countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time (CET)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>5 Oct.</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30</td>
<td>Three well-known publishing houses will share their experiences on current trends and market developments. You will get the chance to visit a young bookstore and get introduced to four representative large publishing groups and their CEOs.</td>
<td>Tune in here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>6 Oct.</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30</td>
<td>11 experts from the national publishing industry give insights into traditional and e-book publishing, fiction and non-fiction trends, the children's and art book sectors, translation and film adaptation.</td>
<td>Tune in here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>7 Oct.</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30</td>
<td>This session discusses the future of Indonesian publishing industry from the sight of IKAPI as the country’s publishers association and also the biggest publishing industry in the country, Gramedia. Moderated by Laura Prinsloo.</td>
<td>Tune in here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>8 Oct.</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30</td>
<td>Slovenia, the Guest of Honour Country at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2023, has one of the highest numbers of published books per inhabitant in the world. The oldest still active Slovenian fiction writer is 107 years old, and Slovenia has a strong tradition of illustration.</td>
<td>Tune in here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>9 Oct.</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30</td>
<td>The panel discusses how UK booksellers, publishers and agents coped with the Covid-19 crisis and in particular the period during lockdown and afterwards – market data is provided by Nielsen BookScan with insights from publisher Will Atkinson and literary agent Isobel Dixon.</td>
<td>Tune in here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>12 Oct.</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30</td>
<td>We will discuss how the pandemic impacted the supply chain, sales channels, and consumer behavior; and highlight acquisitions and new efforts being made by publishers to improve diversity.</td>
<td>Tune in here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>13 Oct.</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30</td>
<td>Meet the five finalists of the Brazilian Young Talents Award. They will discuss the Brazilian book market’s pre-COVID situation and the impacts of the pandemic.</td>
<td>Tune in here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>14 Oct.</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30</td>
<td>The consequences of COVID-19 have been terrible for the Spanish-language book industry. Did we learn anything? How does the future of the sector look? Are independent publishers and small bookstores prepared to survive in this new scenario? Representatives from Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Spain discuss.</td>
<td>Tune in here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>15 Oct.</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30</td>
<td>The Finns’ love of books has remained firm despite socio-economic challenges. The rate of literacy is on a top level, and education is one of the cornerstones of the Finnish welfare society. The value of Finnish literature export increased in 2019. We believe in our superpower, but what are our visions for the future of reading?</td>
<td>Tune in here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>16 Oct.</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30</td>
<td>We will take a close look at print and e-book sales, the business of publishers and bookstores, and talk about the buying behaviour of German consumers. Furthermore, we'll discuss the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on this special sector and the changes and opportunities it has brought.</td>
<td>Tune in here</td>
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</table>
Spain Looks Ahead to Frankfurt 2022

Two key components come into play in Spain’s bid for greater traction for Spanish literature as Frankfurter Buchmesse opens—a new ‘Books from Spain’ rights portal and a new round of translation funding for international publishers.

By Porter Anderson

As you may be aware, one of the myriad effects of the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic has been the postponement by one year of four guest of honor programs at Frankfurter Buchmesse.

Canada, while contributing solid programming this year, will have its fully rendered physical Guest of Honor Canada program on-site in the 2021 trade show. This, then, will be followed by Spain in 2022, Slovenia in 2023, and Italy in 2024.

And many who are watching final plans fall into place for the digital special edition of Frankfurt Book Fair (October 14 to 18) are impressed with the vigorous and savvy steps being taken by Guest of Honor Spain 2022.

Taking Spain’s Books to the World

Publishing Perspectives readers will recall that in July, the Federation of Publishers’ Guilds of Spain (FGEE) had the support of the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Acción Cultural Española (AC/E) to launch its new Books From Spain portal hosted on Frankfurt Rights, the digital rights trading marketplace in which Frankfurt holds controlling interest, with additional investments from Copyright Clearance Center and China South Publishing & Media Group.

Elvira Marco is the project director for the Guest of Honor Spain program at Frankfurt and has been named one of the top 500 most influential women in Spain for three years running.

She tells Publishing Perspectives that Books from Spain now offers international publishers "a selection of 500 titles covering all genres, an incredible selection from all around Spain. The titles on display for rights buyers, she says, are content produced by the gamut of the Spanish publishing industry, "from major groups to independent publishers and agents."

"The first call of these grants in 2019 has helped us refine the procedure and we're launching the 2020 call with a substantial increase in funds, from €200,000 (US$234,640) to €300,000 (US$351,960) for foreign publishers and covering up to 100 percent of translation costs with an additional grant for illustrated works."

"These titles are available for licensing and are subject to translation support from the specific AC/E Spain 2022 grants as well as the Ministry for Culture. There are specific sections on Books from Spain for Basque-, Catalan-, and Galician-language titles. All of this is found on the portal, inside Frankfurt Rights."

Special Translation Funding for Spanish Books

Not only is the Books from Spain portal immediately available, making Spanish work more discoverable, but a new translation fund program is also in place, ready, as Gálvez Salvador puts it, "to promote the translation and publication into foreign languages of both classic and contemporary literary works from Spain, content ‘deemed as outstandingly relevant from a cultural viewpoint."

"We want to spread both Spain’s written cultural heritage and Spanish literature around the world," she says.

In addition to translation grants, subsidies are available for marketing and publication costs, as well as support for authors to be at international literary festivals. Additional details are available here, and the period of application for the current cycle of grants runs to November 15.

Genres in which translation...next page»
funding grants are available include: narrative (fiction and nonfiction), essay, poetry, drama, children's and YA books, picture books, graphic novels, and comic books.

No funding is offered in this program for scholarly work, textbooks, exhibition catalogues, unpublished or self-published titles, travel guides, research studies, conference meeting minutes, manuals, digital-only, and/or print-on-demand works.

After the close of the submissions window on November 15, a list of accepted applications should be made available by December 18.

A final list of award recipients can be expected January 27.

Marco: ‘To Increase Visibility’

Marco has several points to make on plans to increase the reach of Spanish literature in the coming years.

"Spanish," she says, "is the seventh language of literature translated into Germany. We have more presence for Spanish than that in France and Italy. On the other hand, Spanish publishers are the third leading buyers of German translation licenses.

“We aim to increase the visibility of Spanish literature in the European Union, which is our first market closely followed by Latin American countries.

“The Spanish literary market and our readers are very open to other cultures, as 20 percent of our books are translations, and there's also an intense exchange with Latin America because we share a language spoken by 500 million people. Many authors are double nationals or residents.

"The languages promoted by this special line of translation grants created for the 2022 Guest of Honor Spain project were defined in agreement with the Spanish Publishers’ Association (FGEE) as German, English, French, Dutch, and Italian. Engagement with publishers from those markets can then help us reach other countries."

Events and Activities from Spain

With an eye to its turn as Guest of Honor Spain at Frankfurter Buchmesse in 2022, the Spanish industry has announced a five-day series of events for Frankfurt 2020 under the umbrella title "Spain: The Road to Books," in homage to the Spanish journalist and novelist Miguel Delibes (1920 to 2020), whose third novel was the influential El camino (The Road).

Hashtagged #MuchosLibrosPorDescubrir and #ReadAcrossSpain, the program is designed, organizers tell us, “to bring together authors, publishers, and experts to discuss the Spanish literary scene as well as latest trends in publishing, and how the sector envisages the challenges for the book industry in a post-COVID scenario.”

Those interested are asked to register here for access to the online programming, which is offered free of charge. Frankfurt's BookFest events can be found here.

Professional Program

‘Have a Look at Spain’

October 15 to 10 to 11 a.m. CEST

Facts and figures on the Spanish publishing sector from the 2022 Guest of Honor Spain leadership. Speakers:

• María José Gálvez Salvador (Spanish Ministry for Culture and Sports, general director for books and reading promotion )

• Miguel Barrero Maján (Federation of Publishers Business Union of Spain, president)

• Elvira Marco (commissioner for Spain’s participation as Frankfurter Buchmesse Guest of Honor 2022)

Additional offerings are to include 10-minute videos on young adult (YA) literature and emerging writers. It’s expected that professionals from Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial professionals may offer tips and that a session on grants and opportunities for international publishers will be offered, as well.

Literary Program

‘Women Write’

October 14 at 4 p.m. CEST

Women in Spain read more and they’re also writing more than ever, organizers say. This panel discussion will feature:

• Sara Mesa (Cara de Pan and Un Amor)

• Laura Freixas

• Elena Medel (Las Maravillas)

‘Written on Earth’

October 16 at 4 p.m. CEST

With landscapes having worked as characters in recent Spanish books, this panel will explore how your surroundings can influence your life, featuring writers:

• Author Sergio del Molino (Empty Spain)

• Irene Solá, winner of the European Book Award for Spain 2020

YA, comics, crime novels, and poetry: All are to be featured in talks with Spanish authors between October 14 and 18.

Young Voices: A presentation of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs featuring Gabriela Ybarra and Juan Gómez Báradena in the ministry’s “10 of 30” program.

Anniversaries

Panel discussions are planned around the work of two writers for whom 2020 represented a centennial footnote.

Benito Pérez Galdós, the 19th-century author, died in 1920 about nine months before Miguel Delibes was born. The work of Galdós has been compared to that of Tolstoy and Flaubert for its realism, while Delibes was engaged with issues of nature, ecology, and climate change.

BookFest

In the physical BookFest events in Frankfurt, author Fernando Aramburu—whose Patria is the basis for an HBO series about the separatist group ETA—talks with Rosa Ribas about how living outside your own country can influence your writing. This session is “Written From Afar” and is at the Cervantes Institute Frankfurt, October 16, 7 p.m. CEST.

In the BookFest digital lineup, philosopher Danniel Innerey discusses pandemic-era challenges to democracy with New York-based Marina Perezagua. They’re expected to touch on capital punishment in the United States, organ trafficking, and how they connect in Perezagua’s novel Seis Maneras de Morir en Texas (Six Ways to Die in Texas).
Best fiction from the top of Europe

“FINLAND-SWEDISH QUEEN OF CRIME”
Eva Frantz
Out of the Game
The bestselling author of The Eighth Maiden (awarded as the best Finnish crime novel and nominated for the Glass Key Award) Eva Frantz is back! In her new novel, the very pregnant Senior Constable Anna Glad has suddenly more than one crime to investigate. This time only, navigating in the complex network of past and present deeds proves to be riskier than ever.

“THE SHARPEST NOVEL OF THE YEAR”
Anu Kaaja
Katie-Kate
Katie-Kate is a societal collage that lurches in the footsteps of Vladimir Nabokov, Simone de Beauvoir, and Henry Miller—sometimes in glass slippers, sometimes in thigh-high latex boots. Mainstream porn, Cinderella stories, Princess Diana’s lovers, and Meghan Markle’s tights are all interconnected, with a lyrical inevitability. Katie-Kate is feminist, funny, angry and recklessly grotesque.

“A BULL’S EYE OF A NOVEL”
Piia Leino
Overtime
The new novel from the author of the awarded dystopian thriller Heaven (sold so far to 12 areas) asks a question we’ve all once asked: how would you live your life if you knew when you are going to die? A page-turning read, Overtime is both entertaining and deep, giving the reader a chance to ponder fundamental ethical problems—or just enjoy the ride.

“MAGIC REALISM WITH A LAPPISH TWIST”
Juhani Karila
Fishing for the Little Pike
Awarded with so far three literary awards and with rights sold to five areas, Fishing for the Little Pike is a linguistically virtuoso novel, at once a love story, a mythical fantasy and a fast-paced, action-filled story about a woman with a mission. It will make you choke with laughter one minute and turn deadly serious the next—and it will surely be unlike anything you’ve ever read before.

“ENIGMATIC AND FASCINATING”
Selja Ahava
The Woman Who Loved Insects
The awaited new novel from the awarded author of Things that Fall from the Sky (sold to 24 areas) tells a story of a woman who is fascinated by insects. With time, she gains a voice and authorship, together with the right to ponder the mystery of the origin of life. The beautiful novel shows man as a small part of nature, which is in constant change.

#1 BESTSELLER
Kari Hotakainen
Story
In the new novel by the author of internationally phenomenal The Unknown Kimi Räikkönen, the countryside is turned into a Recreation Area and everyone is forced to move to the City, where a brutal playoff begins. Who can tell the most appealing story? Outrageous, wildly funny and slyly moving, Story has sold over 20,000 copies in five weeks.

AN AWARDED LITERARY DEBUT
Antti Rönkä
Off the Ground
In the praised coming-of-age story, a young man has chosen his way, but the past traumas don’t keep in the past. With precision, lightness and ambition, the author lets the reader feel the shame, guilt and hope his main character is experiencing and see the world through another person’s eyes. Awarded with the bookseller’s prize, the novel is a literary gem.
DISCOVER OUR WINNERS

**The Lilac Girl**
Ibtisam Barakat - Palestine / USA

**The Penultimate Cup**
Moncef Ouhaibi - Tunisia

**I Dream of Being a Concrete Mixer**
Hussain al Mutawaa - Kuwait

**The Self**
Bensalem Himmich - Morocco

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What African Students Need from Publishers

Ghanaian publisher Akoss Ofori-Mensah takes stock of the pandemic's impact in her market and the importance of the Africa Publishing Innovation Fund's program to help.

That task falls to the Africa Publishing Innovation Fund committee, a group of publishing executives from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tunisia, and South Africa. Here are familiar faces: Brian Wafawarowa, Gbadega Adedapo, Lawrence Njagi, and Mohamed Saleh Maalej. And leading the team is Bodour Al Qasimi, the UAE-based publisher and vice-president of the IPA.

"The response this year," Bodour says, "has been far beyond anyone's expectations, thanks partly to a streamlined online application process and communications push. But the level of interest and the range of ideas coming in is further proof that Africa is bursting with entrepreneurial spirit and innovative ideas."

"With the Africa Publishing Innovation Fund's support, some of these ideas will become reality and have a lasting positive impact on education where it is needed."

A shortlist of potential grant winners is anticipated around the end of October, Publishing Perspectives is told.

Akoss Ofori-Mensah: 'A Disastrous Blow to the Book Industry'

As the group works over these hundreds of proposals for funding, we've had an opportunity to have an exchange with a committee member: Akoss Ofori-Mensah is managing director of Sub-Saharan Publishers, established in Accra in 1992 to specialized in children's books on environmental issues.

Sub-Saharan Publishers is now a member of the African Books Collective based in Oxford, and Ofori-Mensah is on the collective's management council. Her company's list has expanded now to embrace scholarly books, research, history books on the transatlantic slave trade, and African literature.

In an achievement any publisher would love, Ofori-Mensah's first picture book from Sub-Saharan Publishers won UNESCO's 1999 first prize for Children's Literature in the Service of Tolerance. The book, Sosu's Call by the prolific Meshack Asare, was also listed in 2001 by IBBY, the International Board on Books for Young People, among its Outstanding Books for Young People With Disabilities.

With such an auspicious start, Ofori-Mensah and her publishing house have gone on to prominence, and she has a keen eye for the impact of this year's extraordinary pandemic on her market and the complex industry in Africa's nations.

We've asked Ofori-Mensah what she sees as the most immediate effects of the pandemic on her market.

"The virus has dealt a disastrous blow to the book industry in Ghana," she says. "First, because lockdowns have meant schools have been closed since March. And in Ghana, schools won't reopen until January. So there's a sharp decrease in sales. Neither students nor government are buying any books.

"That means orders for textbooks will be long in coming," Ofori-Mensah says. "Publishers have invested lots of funds in developing textbooks for the schools. The books have..."
been evaluated and approved by the ministry—but no orders are in view. Hence publishers are hurting.”

She says that digital formats are not the helpful alternative for consumers and publishers that they’ve been in many markets.

“Publishers who do ebooks are few in Ghana,” she says, “and few people have the necessary reading devices. The Ghana Library Authority has set up e-reading facilities in their libraries but these are available only in the regional capitals.

“Reading and learning online are possible for young people who have the necessary devices—tablets, phones, etc. But in some rural areas in Ghana, there’s no electricity, so the question of e-learning doesn’t even arise.”

One bright spot is the San Francisco-based Worldreader program, which Ofori-Mensah says “is doing well with e-reading on tablets.” The nonprofit partners with her press, Sub-Saharan Publishers, for content.

“But even Worldreader is hurting,” she says. “We sent them some new materials and the following is their response: ‘We were making arrangements to do another batch of acquisitions but with the COVID situation, a lot has been put on hold and we have halted acquisitions.’”

“I believe practically all publishers in Africa are hurting,” Ofori-Mensah says, “because of the pandemic and, more importantly, because ebooks and e-reading are not well developed on the continent.”

And thus the Africa Publishing Innovation Fund’s intervention, she says, “is most welcome.” And from the number of applications received, it’s clear, she says, that these grants will arrive at an opportune time.

The only snag she’s seeing in some of the proposals, she says, is that some are from companies “already in the ebook and audiobook trade,” and they’re not fully aware of how limited the infrastructure to support their proposals may be.

Nevertheless, she says, she like the “adventurous and open-minded” spirit she sees in many applications. And it’s leading her to an idea.

“Maybe, the Africa Publishing Innovation Fund,” Akoss Ofori-Mensah says, “could organize some training for African publishers, to help them learn how to do ebooks. That might help a lot of the publishers and encourage them to develop ebooks.”

It almost sounds like Ofori-Mensah needs to make a proposal to the fund, herself. •
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World Copyright Updates

In some cases driven by the pandemic, copyright changes are underway in many regions to meet the evolving needs of publishers and consumers.

By Porter Anderson

The copyright landscape in many parts of the world publishing has been shifting for years. Despite the extraordinary reach the world of electronic media provides, many users now also look for ways around copyright protection—some “exceptions” are valid and others potentially damaging to rights holders.

We had a chance to talk with Michael Healy—the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) executive director for international relations—and to record a conversation with him for CCC’s Beyond the Book podcast hosted by Christopher Kenneally.

The story on copyright in 2020 has to do with publishers making content available during the pandemic and the difficulties encountered by collective management agencies and reproduction rights organizations.

CMOs and RROs: ‘How They Can Help’

“We live in a world of acronyms when we talk about copyright and licensing,” Healy says. CMOs are collective management organizations, and RROs, reproduction rights organizations, are a specific type of collective management organization working in the text-publishing sector.

“Collective management organizations, or CMOs,” Healy says, “are doing exactly what you’d expect, given the label, which is managing and operating collective licensing schemes of various kinds and various types around the world, depending on the local legal jurisdiction—but they’re operating collective licensing services on behalf of rights holders.”

“Reproduction rights organizations around the world vary greatly, but many of them, of course, operate licensing services aimed at schools, colleges, universities, institutes of higher education. The pandemic has disrupted teaching and learning everywhere. So unsurprisingly, the reproduction rights organizations themselves have seen to varying degrees their own operations disrupted.”

“What’s really noticeable,” Healy says, “is how many of those collecting societies, how many of those RROs, have stepped forward to work with local stakeholders, with government, to see how they can best help facilitate access to educational resources, research resources, when teaching, learning, and research have been disrupted globally.

As an example, Healy points to how education shifted to online learning during the pandemic. “The most immediate requirement,” he says, “was to extend the copying limits for schools and universities. So the RROs in places like the United Kingdom, in Ireland, in Denmark, in Canada, all increased, usually on a temporary basis, the limits of what could be copied so that remote learning, distance learning, hybrid learning, could continue relatively uninterrupted.”

In other markets, he says, the priority was changing the licensing terms to give easier access to digital content. In Scandinavia and Germany, he says, licenses were modified “very, very quickly and very flexibly” so schools could get lawful access to digital content.

Vast Variations in Capabilities and Responses

“What we mustn’t lose sight of,” Healy says, “is that we have RROs operating in sub-Saharan Africa, in parts of Latin America, where schools, colleges, universities never had the resources—technological, financial, economic—to pivot on a dime to a new way of teaching and a new way of learning.

“In those parts of the world,” Healy says, “you have reproduction rights organizations now in stasis, in limbo, because the universities locally, the schools locally, the colleges locally are all closed, and they haven’t been able to move to remote learning.”

In consulting with friends in Uganda, Zambia, and Kenya recently, he says, “The institutions are likely to stay closed for several months. That means collective licensing has stopped. That means the collection of royalties has stopped. And therefore, further down the creative value chain, publishers and authors don’t receive the royalties they would typically have expected to receive from this licensing activity.”

next page »
EU: ‘Harmonizing’ the Digital Single Market Legislation

The pandemic isn’t the only factor influencing copyright in some regions. Healy points to the two-year time frame—now about halfway done—in which member-states of the European Union must implement elements of the Digital Single Market directives in their own national legislative structures.

“This is a highly important and sensitive process,” Healy says, “because it will significantly shape copyright law in European Union countries going forward. The rights holder community—including RROs, as well as organizations willing to see copyright protections weakened—are engaging in discussions at the national level in the context of public consultation efforts. The legislative efforts are at different stages in every country.”

As an example, he points to Ireland, where a new education license becomes approved and enforceable during the autumn. “Pretty much wherever you shine a light in the European Union,” he says, “you’ll find the national legislatures now really busy getting this done ahead of the deadline.”

Australia: ‘Newspapers and Tech Platforms

Healy says, “Newspapers and their relationship with large tech platforms have also been in the news in Australia.

“A high-profile announcement was made recently by the Australian competition and consumer commission, saying that it intends to introduce a mandatory code designed to address ‘acute bargaining power imbalances’ between Australian news publishers on the one hand and Google and Facebook on the other.

“A process of consultation with stakeholders was set to close on August 28.”

Legislative Change: Japan, Australia, China

Lastly, Healy points to this year’s copyright stories in Japan, Australia, and China, in terms of legislative actions. And some of it, he says, is attributable to the impact that the pandemic has had globally in education.

Japan: “The Japanese government decided to bring forward—a year earlier than planned—a statutory license covering specific reuses of copyrighted content. In recent weeks, Japan’s agency for cultural affairs has announced its intention to consult stakeholders about possible further copyright exceptions for libraries.”

Australia: Paul Fletcher, who is minister for communications, cyber safety, and the arts, “recently declared his intention to consider reforms to existing copyright laws,” Healy says, “saying, ‘The need for change has been further highlighted during COVID-19, with schools, universities, cultural institutions, and governments moving more services online.’

“The minister’s remarks were made after two years of industry consultation came to an end—a process that was originally launched after the productivity commission made a series of legislative recommendations in 2016. “The creative sector in Australia, which organized itself very effectively to respond to many of the changes proposed by the productivity commission, is watching these developments,” Healy says, “as is the local RRO, Copyright Agency Ltd. It’s likely we’ll see more governments reviewing their copyright legislation if traditional teaching and learning methods continue to be disrupted.

“If that’s the case,” Healy says, “RROs and others will be monitoring the developments closely for evidence of potential harm to the interests of publishers and authors.”

China: A long-awaited copyright law reform, Healy says, is moving ahead now, with two draft amendment bills from the National People’s Congress being put out for public consultation in recent months.

“The reform,” Healy says, “is intended to modernize the copyright framework in China, clarifying important concepts and increasing the level of protection for copyright owners. However, concerns have been expressed by some in the international rights holder community about the broadening of certain exceptions and limitations to exclusive rights.”
Sheikh Zayed Book Award: Impact of Translation Grants and Industry Outreach

Financial support has proven to be a crucial element of success in the award’s ongoing push to see more Arabic writing published in other languages.

By Hannah Johnson

Since the Sheikh Zayed Book Award launched its translating grant initiative in 2018, the number of the award’s winning titles that are now available in other languages jumped, proving something Arabic-to-English translator Sawad Hussain said about literature from the Arab world during a recent virtual event with Publishing Perspectives: “If a book comes with funding, you’re much more likely to publish it.”

Funding for translation, Hussain said, “is a huge issue” in terms of getting more Arab authors published internationally. And the funding infrastructure for Arabic is still in development, she said, especially “compared to my colleagues working in other languages, say Korean or Swedish.”

This makes the grants that the Sheikh Zayed Book Award and other prizes are offering that much more important.

The Zayed award’s translation grants, in combination with its ongoing and very international outreach initiatives, has gotten the attention of publishers. In the past two years, six of the award’s literature and children’s book winners have been translated into five languages, and more deals are on the way.

Publishers like Robert Morgan of Bookland Press in Canada understand this dynamic all too well. Bookland publishes in both French and English, and has a burgeoning list of books in translation. And on this list now are two Zayed award-winners: Hatless by Lateefah Buti and I Dream of Being a Concrete Mixer by Hussain Al-Mutawaa.

Receiving support from the Sheikh Zayed Book Award is part of what has enabled Morgan to continue his mission to bring more world voices to his readers.

“By publishing translated books from the Arab world, we are able to introduce readers in North America to new voices, fresh perspectives, and innovative ideas,” said Morgan to Publishing Perspectives.

“I believe that bringing translated literature from the Arab world to North American readers enriches our own literature and our own culture.”

The Sheikh Zayed Book Award offers generous translation grants of up to $10,000 per title for its literature and children’s book winners. Additional grants are available for marketing and production, a big bonus for publishers introducing their readers to new voices and authors.

The uptick in rights deals has taken place parallel to a rise in the number of submissions for the award, highlighting the impact of the award’s ongoing outreach both within and outside the Arab world. The 2020 cycle recorded its highest number yet: 1,900 submissions from 49 nations—22 of them Arab countries.

On making this number public, Dr. Ali Bin Tamim, the award’s secretary general, said the result “reaffirms the award’s resounding success achieved year-on-year.”

But in an interview with Publishing Perspectives, Bin Tamim also acknowledged that challenges still remain, and that grants and support programs like the Sheikh Zayed Book Award need to continue their work.

“The orientalism movement has definitely helped immensely in breaking long-standing misconceptions and stereotypes about Arabic culture and literature,” said Bin Tamim.

And yet what remains as the real issue is a lack of enough support and investment in creative works that bring together Eastern and Western cultures.”

Hussain echoed this sentiment, speaking about the role that literary prizes play in getting books published in translation.

“The Sheikh Zayed Book Award is definitely doing what needs to be done,” she said. But, she added, “There’s still a lot to be done in order to encourage Arabic literature in translation, because there’s still so much of it that is yet to be translated, including classics.”

Rights Deals for SZBA Winners

Children’s Books

Hatless by Lateefah Buti
- English: translated by Nancy Roberts, published by Darf Publishers
- French: translated by Hana Jaber, published by Bookland Press

I Dream of Being a Concrete Mixer by Hussain Al-Mutawaa
- English: translated by Sophia Vasalou, published by Bookland Press
- French: translated by Hana Jaber, published by Bookland Press
- German: translated by Suleman Taufig, published by Sujet Verlag

The Dinoraf by Hessa al Muhairi
- English: translated by Kahled Al Masri, published by Marcos y Marcos
- French: translated by Muria Sammer and Melanie Qesson, published by Marcos y Marcos
- Italian: published by Marcos y Marcos

Literature:

The Madmen of Bethlehem by Osama Alayya
- French: translated by Francois Prokhorovych and published by Belleville Editions
- Ukrainian: translated by Bohdan Horvat and published by Anetta Antonenko Publishers

Remorse Test by Khalil Sweileh
- Ukrainian: translated by Oksana Prokhorovych and published by Nora-Druk Publishers

The Autumn of Innocence by Abbas Beydoun
- Ukrainian: translated by Bohdan Horvat and published by Anetta Antonenko Publishers
Amazon Crossing: A Decade of Translations, With More to Come

In its 10th year, Amazon Crossing has more than 400 titles out in 26 languages and is bringing Françoise Sagan’s unfinished book into English.

By Porter Anderson

Not long after the digital edition of Frankfurter Buchmesse closes, Amazon Crossing will reach the 10th anniversary of its first publication. By November 2, the translation imprint of Amazon Publishing will have produced more than 400 works from 44 countries and six continents written in 26 languages.

Taking the position that a good story may come in any genre, the imprint—which officially added its Arctic tern logo during Frankfurter Buchmesse 2019—has translated not only literary work, but also romance, mystery, historical, fiction, fantasy, and more into and out of English.

It’s a range that takes the team from Lisa Reinhardt’s translation of the German author Oliver Pötzsch’s Faustus-inspired The Devil’s Pawn coming in April to Zhang Ling’s A Single Swallow, which was just published in its first English translation (by Shelly Bryant) on October 1. The newly released Chinese novel of World War II is a classic of profound wartime romance, the woman for whom it’s titled being the love of three men she brought together. While Pötzsch is best known for his runaway bestselling series The Hangman’s Daughter, non-stop suspense for lovers of historical thrillers.

This year handily falling in mid-April when a lot of readers were looking for lockdown reading, the program offered free copies of nine titles, from Turkey, South Africa, Sweden, China, Germany, Israel, Spain, Brazil, and Argentina. For the first time, a children’s book was included—Daniel Hahn’s translation of Along the Tapajós (Brazil) by Fernando Vilela. The new Amazon Crossing Kids imprint was behind that one.

Ahead of Frankfurt this year, we’ve had a chance to speak with Amazon Crossing’s senior editor Liza Darnton about several key works ahead.

One of the key acquisitions Darnton and her team are talking up this season is Four Corners of the Heart—a lost novel by Françoise Sagan, who wrote Bonjour Tristesse. A highly regarded translator, Sophie Lewis—who ran the UK office at Dalkey Archive Press and works from French and Portuguese—has been attached to the book.

The translation is scheduled for a 2022 publication, and the book was published in France a year ago after her son Denis Westhoff discovered Les quatre coins du cœur in a drawer as a two-part unfinished story of some 200 pages. Sagan, who died in 2004, ended up hounded by tax collectors, a youth-rebel hedonist who entertained mid-20th-century French culture with her excess and her debt for describing the wealthy infamy of her “female playboy” lifestyle.

“It’s absolutely quintessential Sagan,” Darnton says, “and it is, actually, unfinished. The plot is a love triangle, and the relationships are basically what many people would call inappropriate. And then she dissects that inappropriateness. It’s a joy to watch her kind of inevitable characters head toward their fates.”

Also of note, Darnton mentions the following forthcoming titles:

Your Story, My Story, releasing on January 1, is a Dutch retelling of the Ted Hughes-Sylvia Plath relationship from Hughes’ point of view. The book is by Connie Palmen and is translated by Eileen J. Stevens and Anna Asbury.

The Ardent Swarm by the Tunisian author Yamen Manai is a modern-day parable and a beekeeper’s allegory about his country in the aftermath of a revolution. This one, releasing on February 1, is translated by Lara Vergnaud, who translated the nightmarish Moroccan work by Ahmed Bouanani, The Hospital from New Directions.

And I’m in Seattle, Where Are You?—also set for February 1—is the Iraqi writer Mortada Gzar’s tale of following a lover to the United States. William Hutchins translates this one, and it’s close to Darnton’s interests, it turns out, because she has a particular affinity for Arabic.

“I’ve lived in Jerusalem and Dubai,” she says in interview, “and I’ve always had an interest in the Arab world and the very strong and poetic literary tradition there.

“And it’s fascinating to me today there is a very vibrant and thriving world of Arabic literature that many of us know nothing about. So much of it is just translated and unknown to English readers.”

And Darnton makes a point that can be missed about translated work and how Amazon Crossing approaches it. “We’re actually really, wildly, unabashedly interested in the fact that these works are translated,” she says.

The point she’s making is that in some cases, translated work may be valued primarily for its origin and then quietly placed on sale by publishers who don’t want to scare off readers by making it too obvious that the work wasn’t born in a home-market’s tongue. Not so with the Crossing team.

“In my mind,” she says, “I’ve been to a party when reading translation. It’s not just me and the author. It’s me and the author and the translator. That’s an added element—not the same thing as the original book and the original language. It’s very close, but it’s something else.” •
It is truly one of the most rewarding and enriching professional programmes I have taken part in, offering unique opportunities for making contacts in new territories and areas.
HarperNorth Launches Under Lockdown

The new HarperNorth team in Manchester, UK found itself working digitally together without ever having worked first in a physical setting.

“We probably check in more than most remote teams which already have these kinds of shorthand with each other,” Pegg says. “So, for us, it’s very important to do check-ins that aren’t a fixed meeting. They’re our kind of making-a-cup-of-coffee, and you need to have those conversations. I know the names of their cats and even what color they’re going to paint their living rooms.”

The ‘North’ in HarperNorth

The question for cynics is how much North is there actually in HarperNorth. When the BBC opened its studios in the city of Salford, near Manchester, so many of its presenters were commuted from London rather than live in Manchester that it became something of a joke.

“We’re not slingshotting people from London to a strange and unknown land” at HarperNorth, Pegg says. “It was about finding a bunch of people who feel connected to the place and were either already living here or were in the process of moving anyway.”

Pegg was born in Liverpool and grew up in North Wales. She gave up her job at Orion near Manchester and begin a new stage of her career, this time as a freelance editorial consultant.

“I kept having conversations with people like, ‘Oh, you live up in Cheshire now. One day publishing will catch up.’ It was only at the start of this year that the conversation felt different, like there was a sort of commercial aspiration to it, as well.”

“Publishing in the North has its own traditions,” she says. “There’s already an amazing tradition of the university presses and a bevy of really bold and inventive independents who are blazing a trail. There are also a lot of indie authors who’ve not gone down the traditional publishing route. There’s a lot of artistic energy here.

“We want to work with organizations already on the ground, like Writing on the Wall, which has an incredible, rich history of bringing writers through from non-tradition-anal backgrounds. Or the Writing Squad, which specializes in younger voices. We want to learn best practices from people already here.”

Northern:Lite and the Community

Pegg says it’s also important to establish a relationship between writers, readers, and staff members.

“Unless we can attract new readers,” she says, “then publishing is heading for obsolescence. The kind of stories we’re looking for are those that take readers to places they don’t usually see on the page. What we want is that moment of familiarity for those who think ‘lives like mine’ aren’t featured in the pages of a book.”

Pegg says that it’s important that her staff—reflect its community.

“We’re going to throw open our virtual doors with a digital program called Northern:Lite,” she says, “that will let people see how we work and get a look at the building blocks of a publishing business.”

Northern:Lite is billed as a series of digital learning days for anyone interested in beginning a career in publishing. No experience is necessary.

And for those who mutter that as soon as economics run the wrong way, a new venture like HarperNorth will be quietly folded, Pegg has weathered a startup that seems to counter that pessimism.

‘I felt the pandemic would have been the perfect time to say, ‘let’s kick this into the long grass,” she says. “And if HarperNorth wasn’t considered an intrinsic part of the business then it would have been.

“When there’s a pandemic, and they said, ‘Yes, we’re going to open the office, and we’re going to start commissioning and do so with a real sense of ambition,’ then that for me was my trust vindicated.”

Pegg says she’s clear about what success will look like to her.

“It will be a list that reflects the rich cultural wealth and differences of the region,” she says. “With a sales history to match.” •
Denmark’s Saga Egmont Creates New Jobs for a Rise in Digital Releases

Saga Egmont’s Lasse Koresemann Horne is hiring more digital publishing staffers to meet the growing demand in multiple world regions for digital books.

By Jaroslaw Adamowksi

With digital formats playing an increasingly important role in its expansion strategy, Denmark’s publishing house Saga Egmont has announced that its parent group is creating around 40 new positions to facilitate the release of more digital books in a number of markets in the coming years.

“We see a new golden age for the book out there in the shape of the digital book,” says Lasse Korsemann Horne, publishing director at Saga Egmont. “And the highest possible number of authors should benefit from this global development, hopefully through us.”

Horne says that half the new staffers will be employed in countries in which Saga Egmont already has a presence, with the remaining 50 percent of new hires to be based in markets in which the company hopes to establish traction in the digital book market.

“We’re looking for young people who think it’s cool to work with digital books,” says Lasse Korsemann Horne, publishing director at Saga Egmont. “And we’re looking for people who can put together entire publishing programs, curate content, produce, market, and sell our books.”

“And above all, we’re looking for new colleagues with non-Nordic backgrounds. We need local knowledge and language skills in all the main languages.”

Saga Egmont’s team, Horne says, hopes to reach a total of 100,000 digital publications within the next few years, benefiting from the rapid expansion of the global digital book market, which posts growth rates ranging between 15 and 25 percent annually in various regions across the world.

The Coronavirus Accelerates the Trend Toward Digital

Asked whether the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic has bolstered the growth of digital book formats, Horne says, “COVID-19 has accelerated a development that was already underway. More readers want more flexibility.”

“In Denmark,” he says, “we have a special situation, because the digital book market is very well developed. Many readers have embraced both the ebook and the audiobook, but there’s no large selection of ereaders. Some readers import Kindles, but have to struggle with converting the ebook files themselves. That’s why it’s actually the digital public library that’s the largest ‘retailer’ of ebooks for students who read these on smartphones, tablets, and laptops.”

Horne says that “after various countries chose to close down physical stores,” in efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus, “digital sales and the lending of books increased. The tighter the shutdown, the greater the increase in digital book sales. The same trend has been seen in online shopping, including with physical books.

“What can we deduce from that? People actually really want to read books.”

As part of its ongoing expansion in digital, Saga Egmont this year took over the Spanish audiobook publisher Sonolibro, becoming the largest audiobook publisher in the Spanish market. But, as Publishing Perspectives reported in September, there’s new competition in audiobooks in Spain, with the arrival of two new subscription services, Podimo and Audible.

For Horne, adding more international markets to the publisher’s portfolio is seen as a crucial element of its re-orientation toward digital.

Saga Egmont is part of Lindhardt & Ringhof, the second largest publishing house in Denmark after Gyldendal Forlag. The company’s self-described mission is to serve as a vehicle build a digital revenue stream for the group.

“Digital books are primarily a competitor to cheap paperbacks,” Horne says. “And the audiobook meets a need: to read on the go. If your book doesn’t exist as an audiobook, then the consumer is listening to a podcast instead. He or she does not necessarily buy the book to read it the old-fashioned way. Books have always been exclusive goods, and in the digital age, a book must be super-exclusive: canvas, lacquer, design make a visual and tactile work of art. And this is how Lindhardt & Ringhof think of books: print editors create the country’s most beautiful books, and Saga publishes the best digital books.”

Saga’s goal, Horne says, is to generate enough digital revenue “that our authors can make a living from digital books alone in the future.

“That’s why we translate and publish authors in more than 30 languages—to create more and bigger markets for our writers.” •
Outlook for India’s Education and Academic Publishing Prospects

Managing director of Taylor & Francis India Nitasha Devasar describes the near-term prospects and long-term opportunities for publishing in India.

By Porter Anderson

Among so many world publishing markets struggling with the impact of the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, India is one of the two suffering the most severely.

In October, India’s total caseload rivals that of the United States, each country moving toward a potential 10 million cases, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center’s figures. By late September, India was seeing around 95,000 deaths in its population of 1.4 billion.

Nitasha Devasar is managing director of Taylor & Francis in India and South Asia, and she’s vice-president and commercial lead for South Asia and Africa for the corporation. She’s also a two-term president of the Association of Publishers in India, and the author of Publishers on Publishing: Inside India’s Book Business (All About Book Publishing, 2018).

Ask her how things look from her vantage point on the ground in New Delhi, and Devasar has a philosophical answer.

Nitasha Devasar: The late [British economist] Joan Robinson once said about India, “Whatever you can rightly say about India, the opposite is also true.” And that’s truer in today’s uncertain times than ever before.

It’s bad and yet there’s a push to keep going forward. In terms of the infection’s growth here, the last 1 million new cases arrived in just 11 days.

The geographies of the virus within India are shifting though. Recoveries from illness continue to be high, but deaths have crept up slightly. GDP [gross domestic product] contracted 23.9 percent in Q1, and the Asian Development Bank expects the Indian economy to contract 9 percent in 2020-2021, following an earlier estimate of 4 percent.

Publishing Perspectives: How do you see some of these effects playing out for publishing?

ND: The fortunes of the publishing industry are closely tied to the educational sector, as 95 percent of Indian publishing is educational.

The government has announced its new education policy, which promises allocating 6 percent of GDP to education spending. This, despite the fact that in 2020-2021 budgeting, the government spent only 3.2 percent of GDP on education—down from 4.14 percent in 2014-2015. While it will be implemented in a phased manner, the government has generally pushed for exams, admissions, classes, and degrees to go on, in an offline, online or hybrid format, as possible.

The percentage of the relief package relative to education is meager, only 2.2 percent of the total program. Economic packages for supporting small- to medium-sized enterprises in publishing are almost nonexistent. There’s a need for larger industry intervention and government support for book publishing, which is battling these challenges because of ongoing closures among their largest customers, the educational institutions.

PP: In the academic sector, is there a shift toward digital? If so, do you see it reversion after the pandemic? And what are the trends that Taylor and Francis sees in this space in India?

ND: Despite periods of complete lockdown and closed higher-education institutions, there was continual and growing demand for digital resources, both in ebooks and journals in past months for Taylor & Francis in India.

Once reopenings were initiated and some supply chains were partially restored, the demand for print via Amazon and other online retailers picked up and has remained steady, fueled by student and professional demand.

In the traditional supply chain, print customers who have encountered distribution issues have asked for digital alternatives, which we’re able to supply.

Another interesting trend has been seen among Indian researchers especially in STEM—a steady increase in submissions to, and acceptance by, our global journals, including open access journals. At Taylor & Francis, submissions of scientific and medical research papers from India in the past few months exceeded submissions from the United States and were second only to those from China.

We’ve also published two COVID-19-related books from India, one each in STEM and humanities. And we’ve sped up the review and publication of scientific papers related to the pandemic to support ongoing research. As educational institutions start opening up this month, we expect some print demand to return in that market.

‘The Demand for Print’

PP: How about predictions for the future?

ND: We need to take control of our fortunes and respond to the trends I’ve outlined by exploring:

• Format and forms of publishing: not just print and ebooks but also short-form data, video, audio, digital-first, blended and/or immersive and/or interactive

• That will require partnerships: public and private; technology and content; authors and publishers and end-users

• More innovation and entrepreneurship letting go of a lot of holy cows and responding to felt needs

• That also means more diversity: in all its hues and an effort to be inclusive

• Building sustainable publishing models: including copyright and intellectual property protection as an explicit part of the government’s policy on research and development

And in India, we’ll celebrate 75 years of Indian publishing in 2022. It will be about both resilience and adaptability.
State of Publishing: New Reports from IPA

Research originally prepared for the International Publishers Congress will be introduced in a session on October 15 in Frankfurt’s special edition.

By Porter Anderson

One of the many publishing events canceled in the springtime onset of the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic was the International Publishers Association’s (IPA) 33rd International Publishers Congress, which had been scheduled for May in Lillehammer, Norway. While that congress now has be re-cast for late 2022 in Jakarta, the canceled congress in Norway isn’t without its benefits.

On Frankfurt Thursday—October 15 during Frankfurter Buchmesse—the IPA team will introduce a series of a “State of Publishing” reports, covering a range of areas interest to the publishing industry.

This is that suite of specially commissioned and created research that was initiated originally for the planned Lillehammer congress.

At a glance, the seven reports—the first six of which were exclusively commissioned for the Lillehammer event—are:

1. Publishers and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals,
2. Freedom to Publish: Challenges, Violations, and Countries of Concern
3. Ambitious Literary Policies: International Perspectives
4. ‘Reading Matters’: Surveys and Campaigns—How To Keep and Recover Readers
5. IPA Global Report on Copyright and Publishing
6. Paper and Digital: Current Research into the Effectiveness of Learning Materials

In a prepared statement, the IPA president Hugo Setzer is quoted, saying, “It really is a testament to the work of the Norwegian Publishers Associations to have commissioned and developed these extremely valuable reports. We’re looking forward to presenting them to our members and building on these strong foundations for future work.”

Kristenn Einarsson, who leads the Norwegian Publishers Association (as well as the IPA Freedom to Publish committee), says, “We are delighted to be publishing the ‘State of Publishing’ reports in Frankfurt. There’s such a wealth of information in these reports that publishers and publishers’ associations around the world can use in their work and in their interactions with local governments.”

Information on the New Reports

Publishers and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals

This report looks at all 17 of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and what publishers around the world are doing in terms of what they publish and how they operate as businesses. While publishers might be expected to be focused on SDG4, which is based in education, the report actually show that publishers are trying to tackle many of the goals. There are best practices and some inspirational examples from many publishers. With the UN hoping to achieve the goals by 2030, this report can act as a baseline for publishers to use in the coming decade of action toward the goal year of 2030.

Freedom to Publish: Challenges, Violations, and Countries of Concern

This report takes stock of reports from around the world to focus on individual cases, and also to build a picture of the main violations against the freedom to publish, the main challenges publishers face, and which countries are of particular concern.

Ambitious Literary Policies: International Perspectives

This report is a call-to-arms for active literary politics and serves as an introduction to cultural policy measures that shape literature and publishing industries in various states and regions around the world. It argues that literary policies should be understood as part of a complex and flexible field of politics that can be identified at national, regional, and international levels of governance, across several policy areas. Literary policies are based on the premise that the book and other forms of written expressions are not just commodities but have a special value to society.

‘Reading Matters’: Surveys and Campaigns—How To Keep and Recover Readers

“Reading Matters” was the original slogan for the International Publishers Congress. This report gathers together the results of multiple surveys from many parts of the world that look at reading habits as well as initiatives to encourage people to read more. The analysis of surveys looks at the different methodologies but tries to bring the results together to create a clear picture of which groups in society are reading more or reading less. More than just a snapshot, the report builds on this analysis and best practices to look to the future.

IPA Global Report on Copyright & Publishing

This report is the ultimate reference document for copyright laws that impact publishers. It analyses the copyright laws in the 69 countries in which IPA has members and highlights the elements most relevant to publishers’ activities including exceptions and limitation; enforcement regimes; and notice and take-down provisions. The legal analysis is complemented by on-the-ground insights from IPA members in a number of countries.

Paper and Digital: Current Research into the Effectiveness of Learning Materials

This report brings together the work of multiple researchers looking at how pupils and students learn. It considers whether the format of the learning resources has an impact on educational outcomes. It also looks at a practical recent example of the implementation of a new curriculum in Norway and how publishers prepared to provide a blend of physical and digital resources.

Licensing Practices in a Global Digital Market

This report presents a comprehensive overview of how licensing actually works in different publishing sectors and regions. It includes chapters from international experts in K-12 education and STM publishing, as well as input from regional experts in Africa and Asia and perspectives from authors and reproduction rights organizations, typically referred to as RROs.
BIEF’s Outlook for Frankfurt: Wait and See

French publishers whose collective stand is a longtime fixture at international fairs, are in a wait-and-see position on Frankfurter Buchmesse’s special edition this year.

By Olivia Snaije

The collective stand for French publishers organized by the Bureau international de l’Édition française (BIEF) each year at Frankfurter Buchmesse is one of the fair’s largest, spread over 640 square meters (6,889 square feet).

Nicolas Roche, BIEF’s managing director, says that until late this summer—although the Hachette group had announced in early June that it would not be attending the fair—120 publishers had planned to join the collective stand. And it would have been even larger than usual for social distancing measures.

“We thought for a long time that Frankfurt would go ahead,” Roche says, “and that it would be the one time this year that the French could meet with their international colleagues.”

BIEF had offered free space to smaller publishers with annual sales revenues under €750,000 (US$878,778), and significant discounts for those with revenues under €7 million (US$8.3 million). Big groups that usually have their own stands had decided to join the collective stand, because they’d be sending fewer people to the fair.

But when Germany classified the Ile de France region (where the majority of publishers are located) as a red zone on August 24, “Everything became super-complicated,” Roche says.

“I was very impressed by Juergen Boos’ team, which tried its best. But in the end, we had to face the facts.” It’s improbable, Roche adds, that a physical collective stand will be held at any fair before the end of the year.

And will BIEF participate in a collective way in cyberspace on the Frankfurt platform?

“We’ll be watching the virtual fair very closely,” Roche says. “However, the virtual fairs held over past months were not always very successful, whether it was due to complex administration, or user experience and the fact that there were often sellers, but no buyers. So I’m waiting to see what the added value of these platforms are.”

Roche says the publishers who previously had decided not to travel to Frankfurt had scheduled their appointments far in advance, “And of course you don’t need a platform for that.”

Waiting to See What Will Be on Offer

In the future, BIEF will have a role to play at virtual fairs, Roche says, but it may be more focused on organizing events or master classes that might be interesting for publishers.

“Even if most of the business at fairs is carried out by the bigger publishers,” he says, “it’s a moment when smaller publishers can meet people and take advantage of workshops and such.”

There’s been some buzz around the matchmaking tool that Frankfurt is offering, Roche says, which can be interesting for publishers coming to the fair for the first time. However, Roche says, “Publishers like Glénat or Gallimard don’t really need that. They already have their contacts.”

For now, Roche says, everything is on hold and people are waiting to see what will be on offer.

“We’ll have a meeting with French publishers following the fair to see what we can put into place with the organizers.

“What this crisis has highlighted,” he says, “is that publishing remains a business where human contact is very important. We’re not always able to communicate virtually our enthusiasm about a title or meet potential new partners. It’s a new world, it’s an interesting one, and we’re trying out new systems with webinars with foreign publishers, and so on. But it will be a difficult year for rights sales, and not just for the French.”

In 2019, he says, foreign rights were sold for approximately 13,000 French books.

And for the moment, BIEF is putting into place a system of cooperation with French Institute offices abroad in cities including Moscow and Guadalajara, where book fairs are coming up.

Books will be sent to the French Institutes along with a catalogue in English—and when required in Chinese or Arabic—for local publishers. When a French bookshop is located in the city, it will be invited to sell books to the public, so that it will be a semi-professional event open to the public.

An exception will be made, Roche says, for the China Shanghai International Children’s Book Fair scheduled for November 13 to 15, in which the organizers have given BIEF a physical stand at a discounted rate. The French book office in Beijing will play a large role, he says, in coordinating the event.

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