

# Japanese publishers organise to discuss e-books

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This image obtained in 2009 shows the Sony Reader ebook. Japan's top book publishers Wednesday formed an alliance to harness the growing e-book market as Amazon's Kindle and e-book readers by Sony and other companies are set to battle for market share.

Japan's top book publishers Wednesday formed an alliance to harness the growing e-book market as Amazon's Kindle and e-book readers by Sony and other companies are set to battle for market share.

The [Electronic Book Publishers Association of Japan](#) was launched with 31 members to discuss formats for Japanese [e-books](#), legal issues related to the expanding industry, and to analyse what people like to read digitally.

"We cannot ignore the impact which the expanding market for electronic books has on the publishing industry," said Yoshinobu Noma, vice president of publisher Kodansha and the leader of the new association.

The Japanese electronic book market is now estimated to be worth 46 billion yen (about 500 million dollars), with most titles distributed via [mobile telephones](#) and conventional computers.

Japanese major electronics companies including Sony and Panasonic have introduced e-book readers in the past but they have yet to win the hearts of Japanese readers.

Amazon now sells its popular Kindle [e-book reader](#) in Japan, but has yet to introduce Japanese-language books for the device.

Japanese publishers have long voiced worries that Amazon or other makers of e-book readers may offer high royalty payments to popular authors for exclusive rights to distribute their work.

The new association will not serve as a negotiator for the publishing industry, should manufacturers of e-book readers approach individual publishers for the rights to distribute their titles.

"Our aim is to ensure the synergy between paper and electronics. We aim to expand paper and electronic books and expand the market," Noma said.

"The mission of [publishers](#) is to find writers and future writers, nurture them, and to make investments. This will not change whether you deal with papers or e-books," he said.

"If people find value in what we do, I don't think we will be left behind."

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