

Multimedia creates the buzz at Frankfurt book fair

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A visitor looks at an advert on the eve of the 62nd Frankfurt Book Fair. The Frankfurt Book Fair will this year focus on the digital sector -- as the show seeks to arrest a decline in exhibitor numbers.

The world's biggest book fair was inaugurated on Tuesday, with an increased number of exhibitors expected to focus on the digital and multimedia sectors that are rapidly transforming the industry.

The fair expects 7,533 exhibitors from 111 countries, a three-percent increase on the previous year, the exhibition's director Juergen Boos told reporters.

"Well-told stories are the engine of the [book fair](#) and new technologies ensure one thing above all: the demand for content is increasing," he said.

Gottfried Honnefelder, president of the German publishers and booksellers association which organises the fair, said only about one percent of the 9.6-billion-euro German book market was currently made up by digital offerings.

However, he said he could see the market rising to 10 percent in the near future.

To highlight the growing importance of the digital and [multimedia](#) sectors, the fair will host a separate section -- "Frankfurt Hot Spots" -- devoted to the new technologies taking the book world by storm.

And British author Ken Follett is expected to present a multimedia version of his bestseller "The Pillars Of The Earth" at the fair.

As ever, this year's fair will be sprinkled with a galaxy of star names plugging their offerings. US star author Jonathan Franzen will read from his new novel "Freedom" that has wowed reviewers around the world.

Works by stars from the non-literary world are also expected in Frankfurt, including singer David Bowie, whose book "Object" features 100 items from the musician's [personal life](#).

This year's guest of honour is Argentina, likely to be less controversial than China, which caused a flap over freedom of speech at last year's book fair.

Argentine President Cristina Kirchner and German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle will officially open the fair at 5:00 pm (1500 GMT).

The fair is aimed at professional visitors from Wednesday to Friday before the doors are thrown open to the public at the weekend. It closes on Sunday.

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