

World's biggest publishers' fair eyes safe future for books

October 11 2011



A stand attendant arranges books at the booth of German dictionaries publisher Duden on the eve of the launch the Frankfurt Book Fair. The world's biggest book fair, which opened Tuesday, wants to put paid to fears for the survival of the book in its traditional, bound form in the face of its digital rival's growing popularity.

The world's biggest book fair, which opened Tuesday, wants to put paid to fears for the survival of the book in its traditional, bound form in the face of its digital rival's growing popularity.

While electronic [books](#) and other gadgets have been all the talk of the Frankfurt Book Fair in recent years, industry movers and shakers say the future of ebooks and [printed books](#) is safe.

"The printed book and the digital book will both be at the centre of the

publishing place and the art of publishing," Gottfried Honnefelder, president of the German Booksellers' and Publishers' Association, said.

"In the coming years, they will come on together and not eat each other up," he told a news conference in this western German city ahead of the official opening of the five-day fair.

Although the ebook market in Germany is still very small, he said it was expected to jump from its current share of about one percent to between five and 10 percent in five years.

At a recent conference on the publishing industry's future up to 2025, participants had forecast growth for the book market, he said, adding however that sales were down by two to three percent so far this year.

The challenges thrown up by the upheaval in the book world will be a central theme at the fair, including for authors who once just had to deal with a publisher but must now also negotiate TV, film and gaming rights to their works.

Buying and selling of rights to works has soared by 30 percent in the last seven years, according to fair chief Juergen Boos, who urged authors and publishers to draw up [business strategies](#) that embrace multimedia interest.

"One has to consider in what way the book will be interactive," Boos told the news conference.

Experts and stars of film, the computer game industry and music world are also scheduled to take part in discussions on the convergence of media and its future landscape.

Iceland, as guest of honour, will shine a spotlight on its literature, past

and present, during the showcase of some 7,500 exhibitors which opens to industry insiders on Wednesday and to the public on Saturday.

"Iceland is a nation which always focused on story telling. We think something has not happened as long as it hasn't been written down on paper," Icelandic President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson told the fair's inauguration ceremony.

About 40 Icelandic authors will attend, including internationally known crime writers, Arnaldur Indridason and Yrsa Sigurdardottir, while a new German translation of the 10th and 11th century Icelandic Sagas will also feature.

Describing Iceland as a literary "giant", German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said "art and culture mirror the state of a society".

"Iceland has not only a big literary tradition but a living and exciting current literary scene," he told the opening ceremony, adding that about 200 Icelandic titles would appear in German during the fair.

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: World's biggest publishers' fair eyes safe future for books (2011, October 11) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-10-world-biggest-publishers-fair-eyes.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--