

# Britons shun ebooks due to 'screen fatigue'

April 27 2017

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Britain's sale of ebooks fell three percent to £538 million, continuing a trend already observed in 2015

British sales of ebooks are waning, trade figures revealed Thursday, suggesting readers were suffering from "screen fatigue".

Britain's publishing industry had a record-breaking year in 2016, with sales of books and journals recording their fastest year-on-year growth in a decade to reach £4.8 billion (\$6.2 billion, 5.7 billion euros), their highest ever level.

But sales of ebooks fell three percent to £538 million, continuing a trend already observed in 2015.

"There is generally a sense that people are now getting screen tiredness, or fatigue, from so many devices being used, watched or looked at in their week," Stephen Loting, [chief executive](#) of The Publishers Association trade organisation, told The Guardian newspaper.

Most impacted by the decline were consumer ebooks—comprising fiction, non-fiction and children's titles—which dropped 17 percent year-on-year to £204 million.

Despite the drop in [ebook](#) sales, digital sales overall still rose by six percent due to sales of audiobooks (up 28 percent) and academic/professional digital books (up six percent).

Overall, digital sales made up 35 percent of total revenues.

Meanwhile sales of physical [books](#) rose by eight percent on the year to £3 billion, their highest level since 2012 with consumer titles increasing by nine percent.

A statement from The Publishers Association argued that "striking front covers" and the "resurgence" of bookshops in town centres were the reasons behind the jump in physical [sales](#).

In any case, it said, "a book is already the ultimate portable device".

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Citation: Britons shun ebooks due to 'screen fatigue' (2017, April 27) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-04-britons-shun-ebooks-due-screen.html>

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