

Britons shun ebooks due to 'screen fatigue'

27 April 2017



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 Lotinga, [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".

© 2017 AFP

APA citation: Britons shun ebooks due to 'screen fatigue' (2017, April 27) retrieved 23 September 2020 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-04-britons-shun-ebooks-due-screen.html>

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.