

Press Release

Sales of eBooks increasing rapidly

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Nuremberg, March 14, 2012 – According to GfK calculations carried out in view of the Leipzig Book Fair , eBooks constituted a share of almost 1% of the entire German book sales market in 2011. This equates to a total sales volume of EUR 38 million, which means that eBook sales have increased by 77% in comparison with the same period of the previous year.

Electronic books have so far been a niche market in Germany, but sales are rapidly increasing. In 2011, a quarter of all sales on the German book market were attributable to online shops, which are becoming an ever more important sales channel. In addition to printed books, many volumes are also available to download directly from the internet. The download market has clearly been gathering momentum since 2010. In 2011, this sector generated total sales of EUR 408 million through downloads of music, audio books, software, games, videos and eBooks, which is 34% more than in the previous year. Volume sales also rose considerably, by 32% to almost 125 million files. eBooks therefore comprised a 9% sales share of the overall download market.

Between January and December 2011, Germans spent EUR 38 million on eBooks (not including textbooks and specialist books) and around 4.7 million books were sold. According to the data, 1.2% of Germans over the age of 10 bought an eBook last year. A typical eBook customer is aged between 40 and 49, with above-average income and intermediate education. In contrast to the book market in general, the majority of eBook readers are male.

When it comes to the types of book there is a clear trend towards fiction. Of all eBooks sold at the moment, 85% are this genre, with suspense, science fiction and fantasy proving especially popular.

The potential for eBooks is currently rising and should become even greater as the range of available German titles increases further. A survey on the topic of eReaders found that in January 2012, 1.6 million individuals owned such a device, up from a much lower 380,000 in January 2011. Taking into account that it is also possible to read on tablet PCs, the number of potential eBooks readers in fact increases by a further 3.2 million.

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The survey

The analysis is based on findings from GfK Media*Scope, which continuously surveys 25,000 consumers in Germany (as at 2012) about their purchases, including the media market (music, games, cinema, videos, books). The results are used to generate projections for the whole German population over the age of ten. In January 2011 and January 2012, 25,000 people were interviewed in an additional ad hoc survey on the topic of the eReaders and tablet PCs.

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About GfK

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