

Books and the book trade in figures, 2013

The importance of books

Just as in the previous year, books rank a strong eleventh in the list of the Germans' favourite leisure activities, which includes 50 activities in all. 20 per cent of German citizens over the age of 14 "especially like" to spend part of their evening reading – the same number as in the year before.

In general terms, the overall appetite for traditional media among readers is still quite healthy in the digital age. This is evident not only in the popularity of books; reading newspapers ranks sixth on the list, and magazines are also well liked at tenth.

As was the case last year, watching television, meeting friends, spending time with children or grandchildren, listening to music and going out to eat (positions 1 to 5) are all more popular than reading. Likewise more highly ranked than reading, from seventh to ninth respectively, are using the internet and computers, and driving a car.

Consumption habits related to socio-demographic factors remain almost unchanged. This year it is once again evident that women are more interested in books than are men. 45 per cent of women, and just 30 per cent of men (which is at least one per cent more than the year before) use a book every day or a few times a week.

In all, 59 per cent of those questioned said they had bought books themselves in the previous year. An especially pleasing trend is the development among the age groups. 58 per cent of young people between the ages of 14 and 19 bought books in 2012, which repeats the good result from the year before.

43 per cent put three or more books in their shopping basket, 26 per cent five or more, and 12 per cent even took 10 or more books home with them in the course of the year. Men appear to be on the rise among those who buy a lot of books. In 2011, the proportion of male customers who bought 20 books or more rose from 3 to 4 per cent. In 2012, this value remained the same. In all, some 66 per cent of women purchase books and as such they still represent the most important group of buyers for the book trade (men: 52 per cent).

The fact that gender differences are less evident when it comes to using e-books is possibly due to the still very small share of e-book buyers in the German market. In 2012, 2.3 per cent of Germans bought e-books for their private use (excluding school books and text books). The year before, the number was 1.2 per cent. In this respect, there is no difference between men and women. However, disparities are seen between different age groups, income groups and occupational backgrounds. Above average numbers of e-book readers are aged between 40 and 49 (3.7 per cent), have completed Abitur (A-level schooling) or hold a degree (2.7 per cent), and enjoy a net household income of 3,000 euros or more (3.7 per cent).