The Global Publishing Industry in 2021

WIPO

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

This fourth edition of the Global Publishing Industry Report presents a comprehensive overview of publishing industry data. The aim is to make this information accessible to the user community. The report highlights the challenges faced by those producing statistics in ensuring that data is both consistent and comparable. Unfortunately, publishing industry data are not unified under a single authority, making it necessary to gather data from various sources in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the industry. However, the drawback to this approach is that it may result in conflicting information regarding market size and industry trends, due to differences in methodology and market coverage.

The report presents publishing statistics from various sources, namely: (a) a publishing industry survey, (b) a legal deposits survey, (c) Nielsen BookScan data, (d) the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) Agency and (e) the Web of Science database. The publishing industry survey was a joint effort between the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Federation of European Publishers (FEP), with support from Centro Regional para el Fomento del Libro en América Latina y el Caribe (CERLALC). The legal deposits survey was conducted by WIPO alone, while CERLALC and the International ISBN Agency compiled the ISBN data. The Nielsen BookScan company kindly provided data for 10 countries covering the 2018–2021 period.

To facilitate cross-country comparison, every effort has been made to compile statistics based on consistent definitions. It is important, however, to exercise caution when interpreting the data, as some may be incomplete or partial. For instance, several countries submitted only revenue and/or title data for print format publications, meaning digital components were missing (see Annex C for data coverage). In some countries, legal deposit data is only available for physical publications, as legislation regarding legal deposit has not been updated to capture digital publications. Additionally, some countries reported revenue data based on market value derived from retail prices rather than net revenue.

The compilation of data from multiple sources allows users to validate and/or complement the information gathered through surveys. It is our belief that the data presented in this report will serve as a valuable resource for the publishing industry.