

5th Bookwire.es Report 2019

Evolution of digital market
(ebooks and audiobooks) in
Spain and Latin America

 dosdoce.com

Bookwire 

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / MAIN FIGURES FOR 2018

This report, which has been drawn up for the fifth consecutive year by the Bookwire.es distribution platform, in close collaboration with Dosdoce.com, reveals key sales figures, trends and growth forecasts concerning the evolution of the digital content (ebooks and audiobooks) in Latin America and Spain.

The aim of this report is to help publishers, agents, booksellers, authors, the media and specialised professionals to understand the changes occurring in Spanish markets, as well as the business opportunities that those changes may provoke in the publishing sector.

An analysis of sales figures incurred in 2018 among over 400 Spanish and Latin American publishers involved in the distribution of ebooks and audiobooks via the Bookwire.es platforms has provided remarkably valuable information, making it possible to establish current trends and forecast in this market with the aid of other studies and reports.

Main conclusions 2018

- For the fifth consecutive year, publishers represented by the Bookwire.es platform, i.e. over 400 publishers in both Spain and Latin America, have yet again experienced an increase of over 50% in ebook sales. Just as there was a 52% increase in sales in 2017 with respect to the previous year, 2018 saw a 57% increase vis à vis 2017.
- Similarly to previous years, close to 50% of digital sales were generated outside Spain. Although 47% of digital sales occurred outside Spain in 2017, there has been a 2% increase in export figures, reaching a 49% increase in sales figures. As occurred in 2015, 2016 and 2017, Mexico boasts the highest sales figures of digital content published by Spanish publishers (15%) in 2018, whereas the rest of ebook sales (20%) are shared among other countries in the region (Argentina, Colombia, Chile, etc.). The US Latin American market has continued to experience an increase in growth and has almost generated a 10% increase in digital sales, as has the European market, which represents a total of 5% of digital exports.
- Although unit download sales via online platforms such as Amazon, Apple and Kobo, among others, continue to be the most relevant sales channels (80%) for Spanish and Latin American publishers, one of the main conclusions of the 2018 report suggests that sales via subscription platforms like Scribd, Nubico, 24Symbols and Storytel, are becoming increasingly significant for publishers, reaching a total of 17% of digital sales, in comparison with 7% in 2017, and no more than 5% in 2016.

- Sales figures for ebook licences to libraries is also on the increase in the book world, reaching 7% of total digital sales in 2018, compared with 5% in 2017 and 2% in 2016. According to the figures provided by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, ebook lending in libraries doubled in 2018 and increased from fewer than 500,000 to 1,000,000 digital loans.
- 60% of digital book sales among Spanish publishers were generally within €4.99 to €9.99 price range.
- Ebook pricing trends have changed in the last year. Prices have decreased in Spain and increased in Latin America. The average price of ebooks sold in Spain in 2018 dropped by 60 euro cents, reaching a total of €7.12 (including VAT), whereas in 2017 prices reached €7.72 euros (including VAT), compared with €7.57 (including VAT) in 2016. However, the average price of an ebook sold by a Latin American publishers in 2018 increased to €7.02 (including VAT), as opposed to €8.96 (including VAT) in 2016.
- It is foreseen that there will be more than 10,000 Spanish audiobooks available in 2019. As in the case of other international markets, audiobooks have become Spanish and Latin American publisher's main focus of attention with spectacular growth prospects for 2019. Readers had a choice of around 8,000 audiobooks in Spanish by the end of 2018, whereas only 6,000 audiobooks were available in 2017. All existing data suggests that the 10,000 Spanish audiobook figure will be surpassed in 2019.
- Audiobooks sales have already generated €5,000,000 in Spain. In 2017, various sources had already predicted that the audiobook market turnover would generate between €1,000,000 and €3,000,000. At present, most audiobook publishers estimate audiobook sales to have generated from €3,000,000 to €5,000,000 in Spain in 2018. As in the case of international markets, everything points to a 20% to 30% increase in audiobook sales in 2019, surpassing €7,000,000 in the Spanish audiobook market.
- In regards to business models, publishers currently selling audiobooks claim that subscription platforms such as Storytel, Audible and Kobo, among others, have become the main audiobook sales channels for Spanish audiobooks. They are followed by unit sale channels such as Google Play or iTunes and subsequently by streaming platforms such as Spotify, Deezer and the like. In contrast to English speaking markets, audiobook sales to libraries have barely been exploited as a sales channel in Spanish markets, making it the fourth channel to be borne in mind.
- Although the most relevant Spanish audiobook sales market in 2018 was the US Hispanic market, followed by Spain, it is foreseen that this reign will end in 2019. Current audiobook publishers have predicted that the most important Spanish audiobook market will be Spain, followed by Mexico and the US, and lastly Latin American countries.

1.1. Comparative analysis of evolution of digital sales from 2017 to 2018

In comparison with English speaking countries, where digital sales are allegedly at a standstill or in decline, the situation in the Spanish speaking market (Latin America, the US and Spain) is radically different since sales figures clearly point to a substantial increase both in the Latin American and Spanish markets.

Spanish publishers represented by the [Bookwire.es](https://bookwire.es) platform, over 400 between Spain and Latin America, experienced a 57% growth in ebooks in 2018 with respect to 2017.

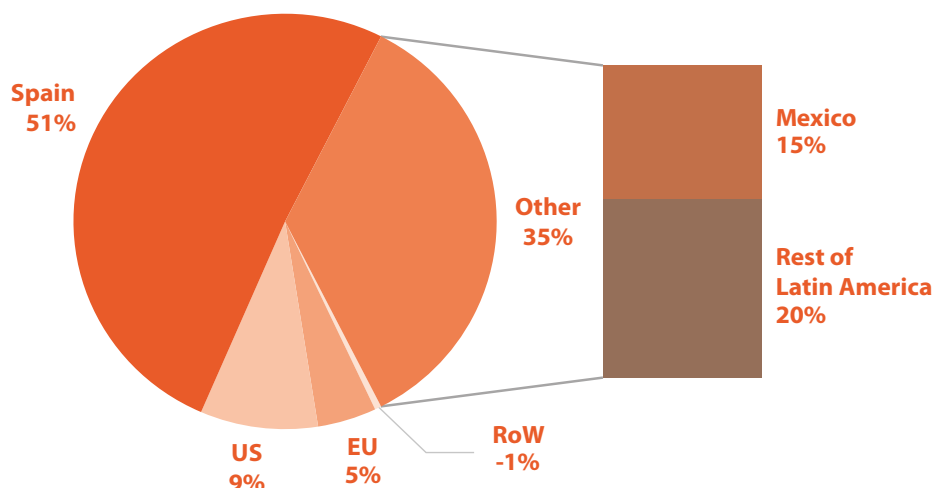
In the same period, Latin American publishers have experienced a 40% increase in sales due to the broader offer of ebooks and the local relevance of their catalogue for readers of the main Spanish speaking markets (Mexico, Colombia, US Hispanic market).

1.2. Digital export: 49% of digital sales are generated outside Spain

Apart from exporting large amounts in print format, Spanish publishers also export considerable digital content. 49% of digital sales are generated outside Spain, consolidating the export trend they have experience in previous years.

Throughout 2018, 51% of ebooks by Spanish publishers were sold in Spain, whereas the rest of sales occurred in Latin America (35%), the US Hispanic population (9%) and Europe (5%).

Breakdown Spanish publishers sales



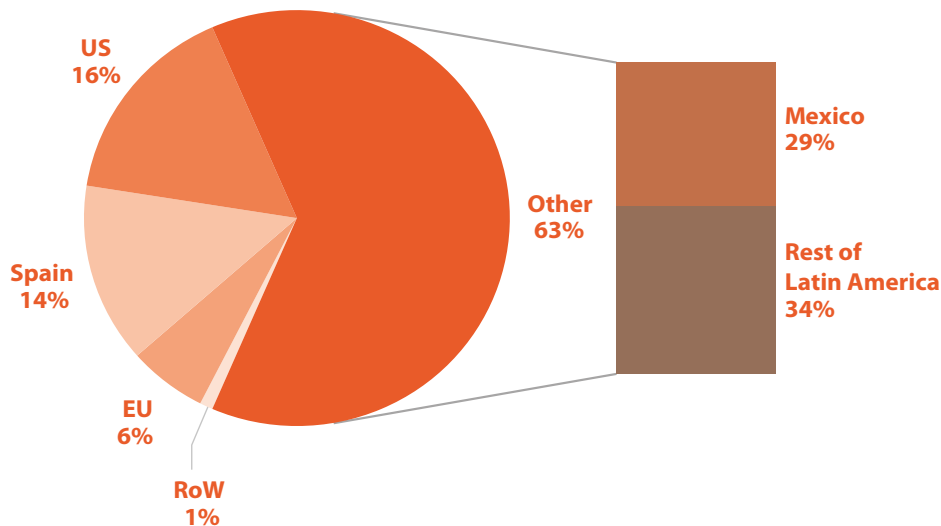
In line with the previous five year trend, Mexico has taken the lead in sales of digital content published by Spanish publishers (15%), whereas the rest of ebook sales was distributed among other countries in the area (Argentina, Colombia, Chile, etc.).

The US Hispanic market continues to represent almost 10% of digital sales, whereas the European market represents 5% of total digital exports.

1.3. Growth of digital Latin American market and boom in US Hispanic market

The number of independent Latin American publishers strongly supporting the distribution of books in digital format with a view to reaching readers all over the world is increasing daily. We are all aware of the obstacles and difficulties involved in the distribution of printed books. Fortunately, ebooks know no boundaries thanks to digital distribution. In this context, independent publishers such as [Rey Naranjo](#) or [Cangrejo Editores](#) in Colombia, [Amanuta](#) in Chile, [Mala letra](#), Almadía, [Grupo Océano](#) or [CIDCLI](#) in Mexico, among many others, have seen how their digital books are not only being sold in their countries of origin, they are also accessing markets which would be unreachable in paper format.

Breakdown Latin American publishers sales



According to the data analysed in the 5th Bookwire Report on the Evolution of digital books and audiobooks in Latin America and Spain, 63% of digital sales by Latin American publishers were generated in Latin American countries, whereas about 37% of sales occurred outside the region: 16% in the US, 14% in Spain, 6% in Europe and 1% in the rest of the world.

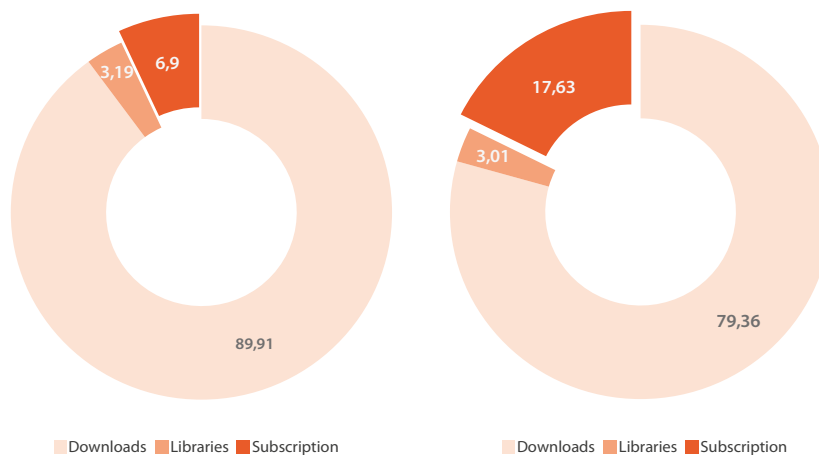
As per the last five years, the Mexican market topped sales of digital content published by independent Latin American publishers in 2018, 29% of which were produced in the entire region, whereas the rest of sales were distributed among the remaining countries (Argentina, Colombia, Chile, etc.).

1.4. Consolidation of subscription culture in Spanish markets

Although single ebook download sales via online platforms such as Amazon, Apple and Kobo, among others, continue to be the most relevant sales channels (80%) for Spanish and Latin American publishers, one of the main conclusions of the 2018 report suggests that sales via subscription platforms like Scribd, Nubico, 24Symbols and Storytel, are becoming increasingly significant for publishers, reaching a total of 17% of digital sales, in comparison with 7% in 2017, and no more than 5% in 2016.

Sales figures for ebook licences to libraries is also on the increase in the book world, reaching 7% of total digital sales in 2018, compared with 5% in 2017 and 2% in 2016. According to the figures provided by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, ebook lending in libraries doubled in 2018 and increased from fewer than 500,000 to 1,000,000 digital loans.

Subscription platform sales increase



For the first time ever in Spain, leading digital platforms ([24Symbols](#), [Kobo](#), [Leemur](#), [Lektu](#), [Nubico](#) and [Storytel](#)) agreed to share user information for an infographic entitled **Profile of Spanish Digital Reader** presented at the [V Ebook Congress of Barbaastro](#).

According to the infographic, there are more female than male digital readers (57% versus 43%), most of whom fall within the 25 to 45 age range. The urban areas with most male and female digital readers are Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Sevilla, Malaga, Zaragoza and Bilbao.

The most popular months for reading digital material are the pre-summer months (April, May, June) and the summer months themselves (July, August and September). Searching for and choosing reading material is generally conducted at weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) and chosen material is read during the week (from Monday to Thursday).

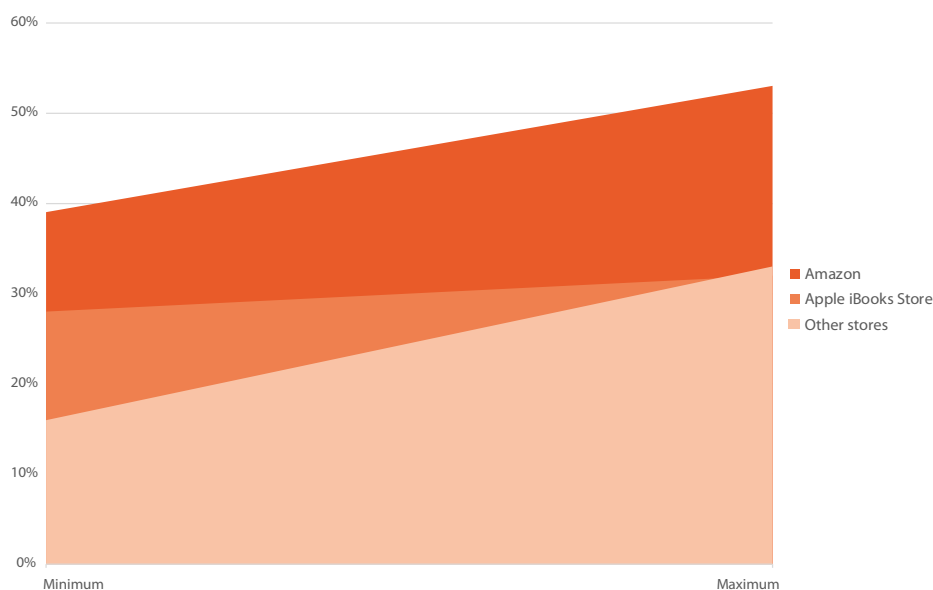
At the moment, the most popular device on which to enjoy digital content is the smartphone, both for reading ebooks and listening to audiobooks, preferably while commuting to work and back home (8.00 to 9.00 a.m. and 6.00 to 8.00 p.m.) and late evening and night (from 10.00 p.m.).

Digital booklovers are avid readers, with an average of 20 digital books a year, almost doubling print books (at an average of about 11.6, according to the most recent Barometer of Book Reading and Purchasing Habits. The genres of preference are fiction (romance and erotic novel, followed by suspense, "whodunits" and thrillers) and non-fiction (self-help and personal development) as well as children's and young adult literature.

1.5. Analysis of best selling categories in most relevant bookstores

Although several international reports indicate that 60% to 75% of the major publishing groups' ebook unit download sales are generated by the Amazon platform, independent publishers have achieved a more balanced distribution of digital sales during the last five years via the principal international channels (Amazon and Apple). In other words, independent publishers do not exclusively depend on one channel to reach their readers.

Market sales quota first channel

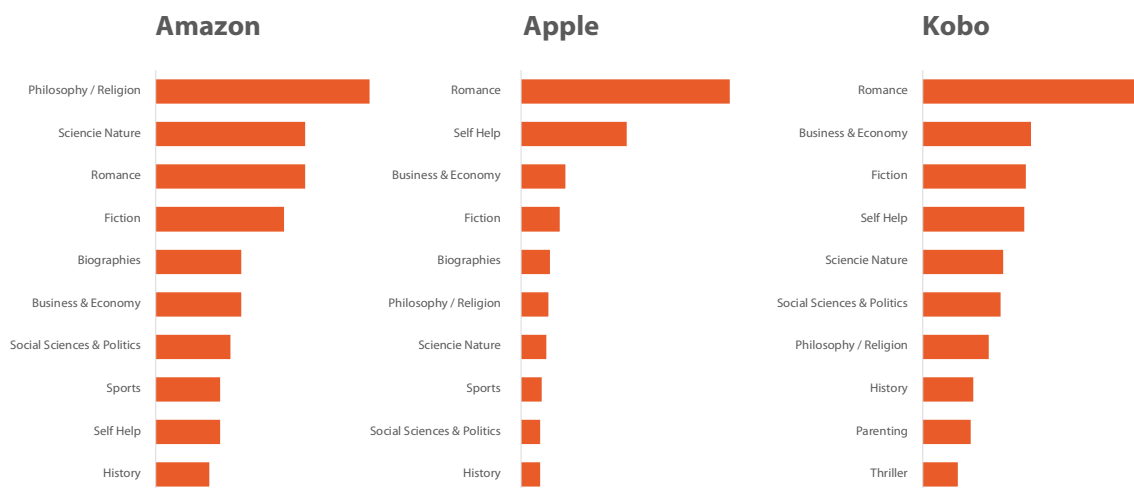


According to the figures published in the preview to the Bookwire report, between 39% and 53% of digital sales by independent Spanish and Latin American publishers are generated via Amazon, whereas 28% to 32% are prompted by Apple; remaining digital sales are distributed among the remaining channels (Casa del Libro, Gandhi, Kobo, FNAC, etc.).

For the first time ever in this report, we have analysed the best-selling categories via the major channels (Amazon, Apple, Kobo, etc.) with a view to helping publishers ascertain their behaviour and the differences between readers' preferences.

The following charts show how romance novels are in high demand in stores such as Apple and Kobo, whereas non-fiction categories like philosophy, religion and science are far more popular on Amazon.

Most read categories per channel



1.6. Spain has the highest ebook prices in Europe

After three years of continuous price increases in Spain, this trend changed in 2018 resulting in a drop in prices. However, there has been an increase in prices in Latin America.

The average price of ebooks sold in Spain in 2018 decreased by 60 euro cents, reaching a total of €7.12 (including VAT) by the end of the year, whereas in 2017 they had reached €7.72 euros (including VAT), compared with €7.57 (including VAT) in 2016.

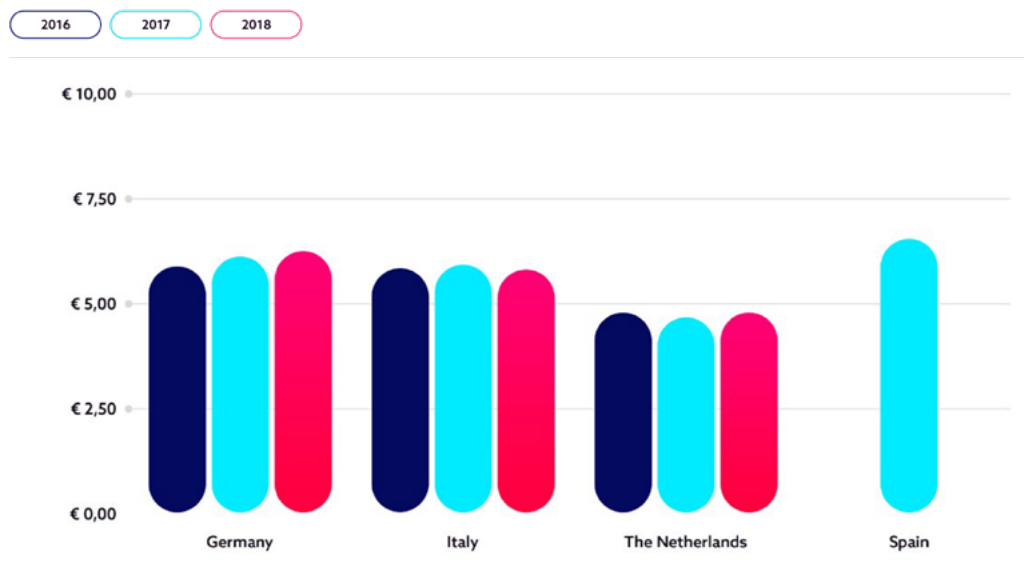
However, the average price of an ebook sold by Latin American publishers in 2018 increased to €7.02 (including VAT), in comparison with €6.92 (including VAT) in 2017 and €8.96 (including VAT) in 2016.

The first [European eBook Barometer](#), coordinated and produced by [Rüdiger Wischenbart Content and Consulting](#), was published last October. It provides an analysis of ebook prices in different European countries.

This Barometer provides further sales figures in the book market, supplied by the most important ebook distribution platforms in Europe such as [Bookwire](#) (with sales figures and prices from Germany, Spain and Latin America), [CB](#) (formerly Centraal Boekhuis, the Netherlands), [edigita](#) (Italy), [Librandia](#) (Spain) and [Readbox](#) (Germany).

The price comparison in the report, excluding VAT, (please see chart below) clearly indicates that Spain has the highest ebook prices in the whole of Europe, a fact [Dosdoce.com](#) has been drawing attention to as one of the main reasons for the lower demand in ebooks.

Average price by country '16/'17/'18



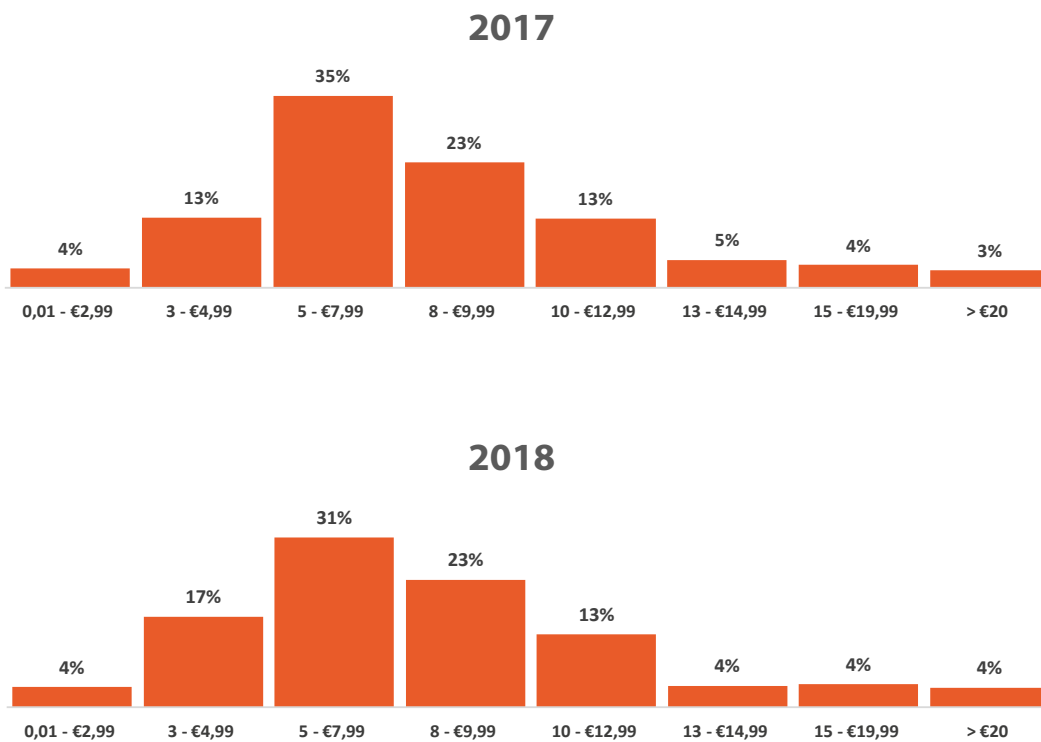
60% of digital book sales by Spanish publishers range from €4.99 to €9.99, indicating that pricing has an effect on revitalising the market.

We believe that an attempt to protect print book sales by increasing the price of digital versions is a suicidal business strategy in the mid term, since most consumers will naturally make other, more reasonably priced content and entertainment choices.

1.7. Comparison of sales prices among Spanish Publishers between 2017 and 2018

According to the charts below, sales figures and prices among Spanish publishers are almost identical in 2017 and 2018.

Spanish publishers sales prices breakdown



The figures confirm that the sale of books under €9,99 surpassed that of books above that psychological price range. 60% of digital book sales among Spanish publishers generally fell within €4.99 to €9.99 price range, whereas they represented 57% of sales in 2017.

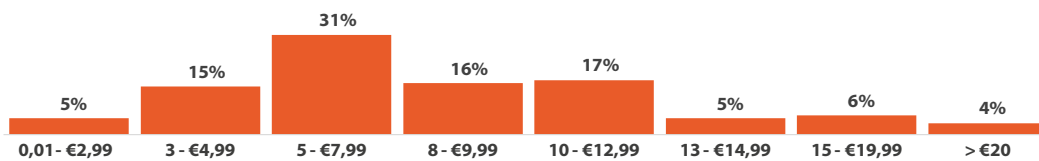
According to the report, there was a slight 1% increase in 2018 in sales of ebooks costing over €10.00 euros, but they referred mainly to academic and technical books, as well as specialised categories such as art, cookery and architecture.

1.8. Comparison of sales prices among Latin American publishers from 2017 to 2018

This year's Bookwire report clearly revealed an increase in ebook prices among Latin American publishers as a way of adapting to the socio-economic reality of various countries in the region.

Latin American publishers sales prices breakdown

2017



2018



In 2018, 26% of ebooks were priced between €10.00 to €12.99, while in 2017, these prices only represented 17% of the catalog.

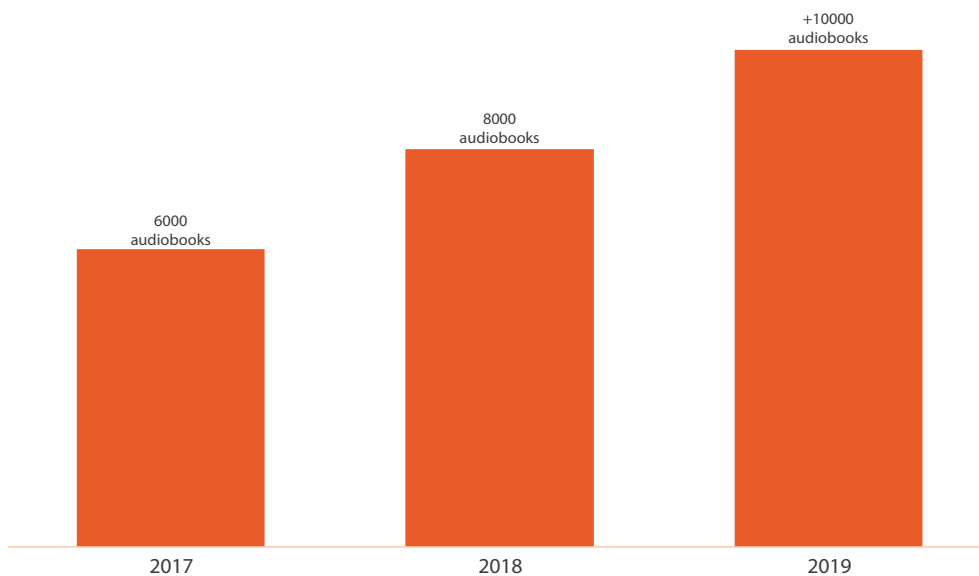
On the other hand, ebook prices within the €5.00 to €7.99 range represented over 31% of sales in 2017, whereas in 2018 they have dropped to 25%.

2. MORE THAN 10,000 SPANISH AUDIOBOOKS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN 2019

The increasingly strong investment by agents and publishers into this new format and the emergence in Spain and Latin America of platforms specialising in the marketing of audiobooks such as Audible, Storytel, BookChoice, Kobo, Google, among others, coincides with trends in other markets where this format has registered a 20% annual increase in sales during the last five years, becoming the fastest growing digital model in the entire book world.

According to the latest study conducted by Dosdoce.com on the evolution of audiobooks, more than 10,000 Spanish audiobooks will be made available for sale by the end of 2019. With a view to assisting Spanish speaking publishers on both sides of the Atlantic to achieve a better understanding of the evolution of this format, Dosdoce.com has conducted a survey among the most important publishers in Spain and Latin America currently producing and distributing audiobooks in Spanish. The publishers who have participated in the survey collectively represent 95% of those currently producing audiobooks in Spanish.

Evolution of Spanish Catalogue

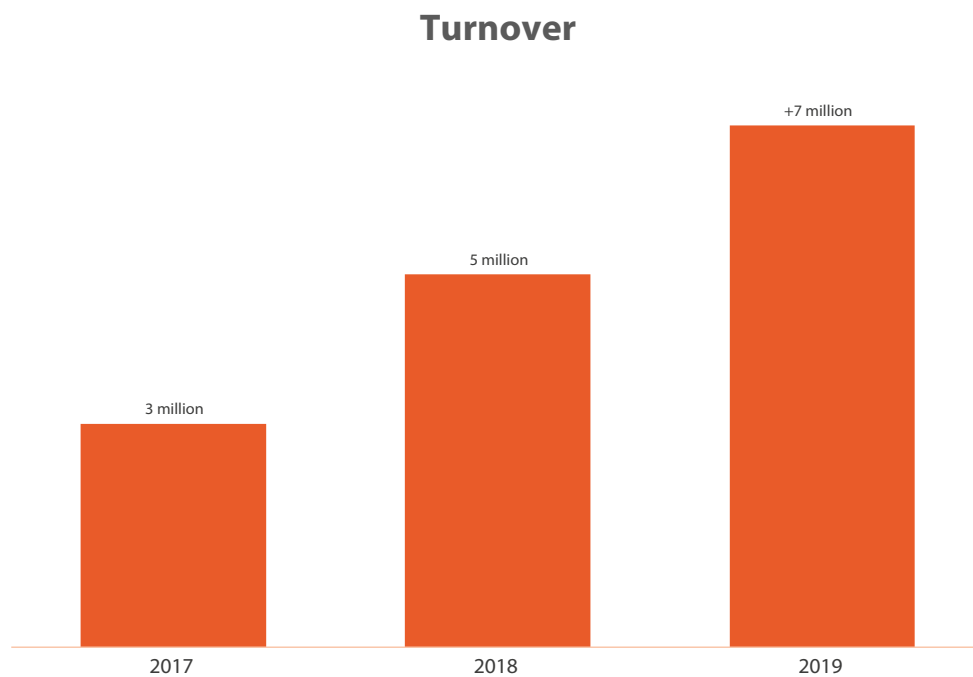


By the end of 2018, readers had access to about 8,000 audiobooks in Spanish, whereas under 6,000 had been available in 2017. Everything points to the possibility of surpassing the figure of 10,000 Spanish audiobooks by the end of 2019.

Though Spanish publishers admit to having transformed around 700 books from their catalogue into audiobooks in 2017, the figure increased to almost 1,700 in 2018. A 250% increase is expected in 2019 with respect to 2017, thus resulting in the production of over 2,300 new audiobooks in Spanish.

2.1. Audiobook sales have already generated almost €5,000,000 in Spain

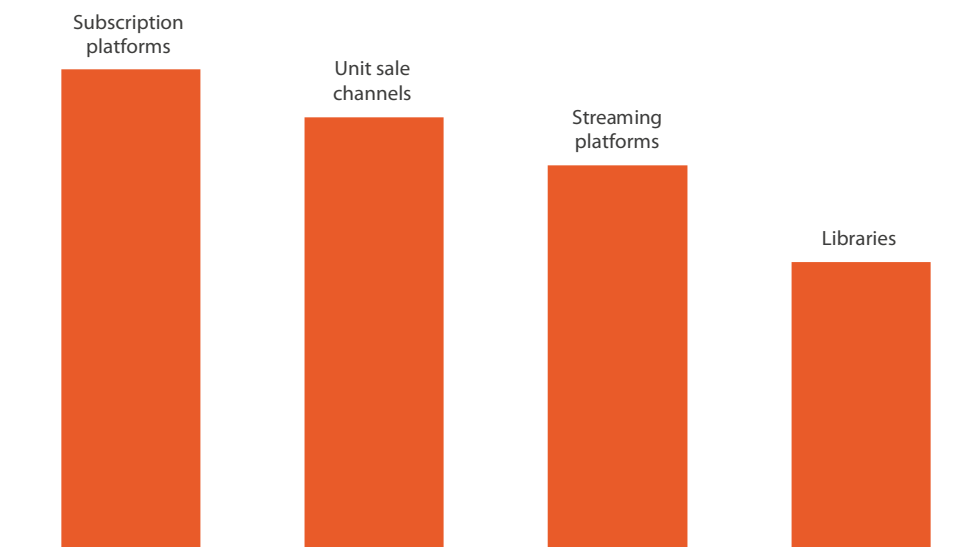
In 2017, various sources had already predicted that the audiobook market turnover would generate between €1,000,000 and €3,000,000. Most of the audiobook publishers participating in the most recent survey by Dosdoce.com have estimated audiobook sales to have generated from €3,000,000 to €5,000,000 in Spain in 2018. As in the case of international markets, everything points to a 20% to 30% increase in audiobook sales in 2019, surpassing €7,000,000 in the Spanish audiobook market.



2.2. Ranking of the leading audiobook business models

In regards to business models, publishers participating in this study indicated that subscription platforms such as Storytel, Audible and Kobo, among others, have become the main audiobook sales channels for Spanish audiobooks. They are followed by unit sale channels such as Google Play or iTunes and subsequently by streaming platforms such as Spotify, Deezer and the like. In contrast to English speaking markets, audiobook sales to libraries has barely been exploited as a sales channel in Spanish markets, making it the fourth channel to be taken into consideration.

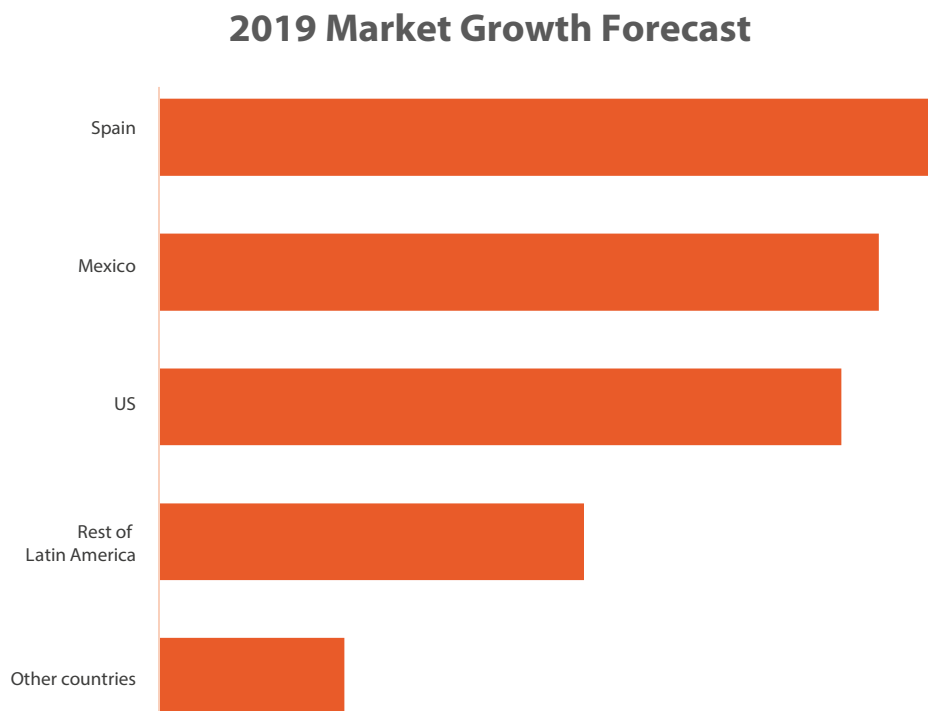
Audiosales channels ranking



According to the publishers participating in the survey, subscription platforms will continue to be the most relevant audiobook marketing channels in 2019, whereas unit sale channels will drop from second to third place, paving the way for streaming platforms which will be the second, most relevant channels. Libraries will remain the same as in 2018, i.e. in fourth place.

2.3. Main sales markets for Spanish audiobooks

Although the most relevant Spanish audiobook sales market in 2018 was the US Hispanic market, followed by Spain, it is foreseen that this reign will end in 2019. Audiobook publishers participating in the survey have predicted that the most important Spanish audiobook market will be Spain, followed by Mexico, the US, and lastly Latin American countries.



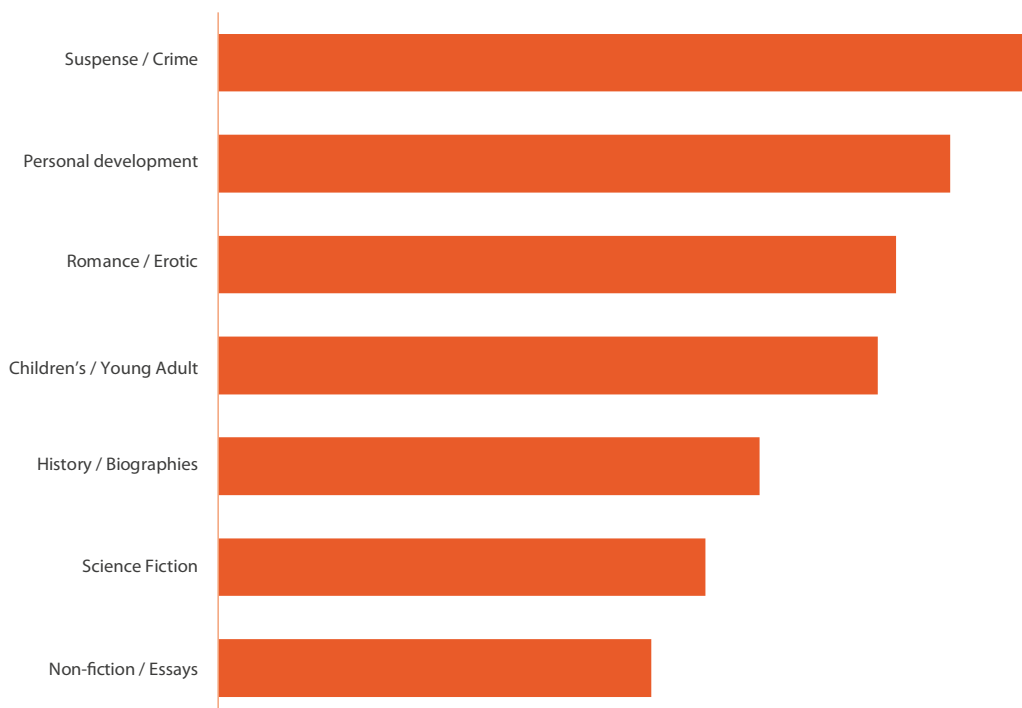
2.4. Production of Spanish audiobooks in Latin American versus Castilian Spanish accents

Although accents for Spanish audiobooks in 2018 were equally distributed between the Castilian Spanish accent and the neutral Latin American accent, it is foreseen that there will be a significant increase in the production of audiobooks with a Latin American accent, comprising 60% of new production. This increase clearly shows the interest in exporting this content to different Latin American countries, as well as the US Hispanic market, where audiobooks are experiencing a continuous annual growth of 20% in the last 7 years.

2.5. The most listened audiobooks categories in 2018

Suspense novels, thrillers and crime were best sellers in 2018, with a rating of 6 out of 7. They were followed by the personal development, self help and wellbeing genres, with a ranking of 5.4 out of 7. Romance and erotic novels came fourth, almost at the same level as children's and young adult literature which were rated 5 out of 7. History and biographies were the sixth most popular audiobook genres, whereas science fiction, fantasy and adventure came seventh. Lastly, the less popular non-fiction genre scored 3.25 out of 7.

Most listeners categories ranking



2.6. BASS feature: Technical innovation in the audiobook world

Bookwire, distributor of over 50,000 audiobooks worldwide, has recently launched an innovative feature to enable the marketing of audiobooks in the main streaming portals such as Spotify, Deezer and Napster.

The new feature “BASS – Bookwire Audio Stream Snipping – allows publishers to “snip” audiobooks with long track runtimes to generate a higher income in the main streaming portals.

Many audiobooks had considerably longer runtimes in comparison with music recordings and were therefore unable to generate fair income for this type of content. The new Bookwire Audio Stream Snipping (BASS) feature is a technical solution that “snips” individual audiobook titles into smaller track units allowing publishers the possibility of generating higher incomes on increasing the number of tracks. In terms of technology, Bookwire applies the same settlement logic that streaming services use for music titles and lays the foundations for optimum exploitation of audiobook content in these new models of consumption of digital content.

The new BASS feature is based on an algorithm that divides audiobooks into logical tracks during delivery. This feature was developed by Bookwire’s in-house team of IT experts at the company headquarters in Frankfurt (Germany). Bookwire publishing clients will be able to use the BASS feature at no extra cost and without internal technical know-how. Streaming is another way of generating income for publishers, specially via audiobooks, which is why Bookwire is offering a practical and easy-to-use technical solution to enable their publishing clients to make full use of these new distribution channels.

3. CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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About Dosdoce.com

Dosdoce.com is a portal engaged in analysing the use of new technologies in the book world. From its origins in 2004, Dosdoce.com's objective is to encourage publishers, bookstores, libraries, museums, foundations, etc., to use technology of all kinds and to provide a better understanding of the digital era we are living in.

Throughout these years, Dosdoce.com has compiled over 100 studies and reports on the use of new technology in different spheres of the cultural sector.

More information at: <http://www.dosdoce.com>

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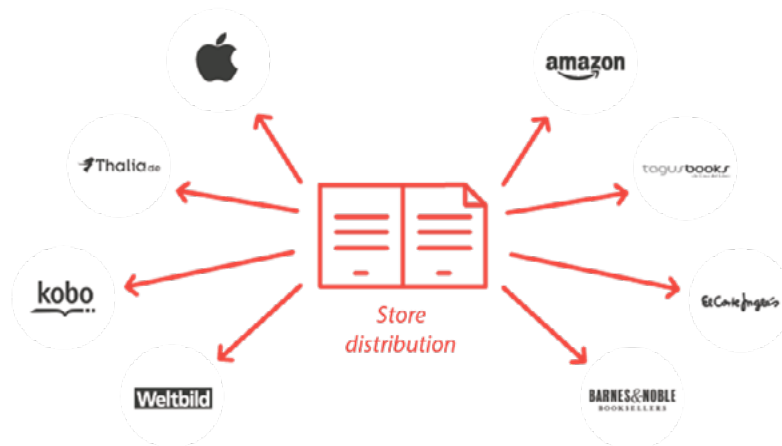
About Bookwire.es

Founded in Germany in 2009, Bookwire is an eBook aggregator specialising in marketing digital content (eBooks, audiobooks, print on demand) via over 600 sales channels worldwide.

Bookwire offers a full services package of delivery, reporting, quality management, shop marketing and conversion. The company distributes over 200,000 eBooks and 50,000 audiobooks for over 1,000 publishers from 30 countries.

In the Spanish speaking market, Bookwire has branches in Spain, Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Peru and Brazil.

Its platform distributes almost 30,000 eBooks in Spanish for over 400 renowned publishers in Spain and Latin America, such as Harper Collins Ibérica, Acantilado, Edhasa, Herder Editorial, Alrevés, Páginas de Espuma, Plataforma Editorial, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Nórdica Libros, Impedimenta, Siruela, Antonio Machado Libros, Grupo Océano, Ediciones Rey Naranja, Paidotribo and Gedisa Editorial, Metaforic, among many others.



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