

The Book Chain

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Creation

The author writes the text. If there is a collaborative work, there may be several authors.

The author gives or not the rights for use of his work to a publishing house which is in charge of the broadcast, depending on the jurisdiction.

An endless supply of writers?

At the writing level, it must be distinguished between the essays of creative works on one hand, and works ordered by publishers on the other hand. The essays address technical and scientific fields or current events. The one and the other can be subject of order by the publisher for competent specialists or recognized writers, or contract with a person with exclusive access or having the results of his research. For spontaneously proposed works to publishers, which are essentially works of imagination, a situation of oversupply dominates. Thus, large Anglophone publishing houses receive from 10,000 to 15,000 manuscripts a year, and, in France, Gallimard received 5,834 treaties in 1998. It must be remembered that the scientific and academic publications are rarely the result of publishers' orders.

The magnitude of the authors seeking publication gives the publisher the role of selection in a virtually inexhaustible supply.

Production

The editor has three functions: intellectual, economic and technical.

He selects from the many manuscripts he receives those he deems worthy of publication, possibly after modification or adaptation. This judgment is based on the qualities he finds in the text, but also on the success it assumes that know the book and therefore the profitability of the editorial operation. When the editor thinks there is a market for a certain type of book, it is he who can find an author whom he spent a write command.

The publisher, on behalf of his publishing house, took most of the financial risk of publishing (layout and model, if necessary, translation, printing and distribution) and profit sharing between the author, distributor and bookseller.

With the production manager, he coordinates all the players to the completion of the book: the author, corrector, the printer and the jobber or industrial binder.

Now, books can be sent directly to publishing houses on the internet as a digital book. Some are free and others with a fixed or variable price.

Publishing contracts

In general, the publishing contract stipulates a percentage of the sales amount due to the author (often 10%) and a share of the net profits, usually 58% for the author and 42% for editor, although there are a diversity of contracts. Furthermore, in most cases, the contracts provide for an advance, sometimes substantial, on the expected revenue from the sale of the book in preparation. However, it is not the same for the scientific and technical publications: some of them are doing well under the repayment of a percentage of the amount of sales, sometimes only beyond a certain threshold (eg after the first 500 copies), but most do not pay the author rights (especially for scientific, monographs, proceedings of scientific conferences ...).

However, this solution does not exhaust the contractual problems between authors and publishers. While the latter have an interest in maximizing value from the sold copies (for which they receive a share), the author has an interest in maximizing the dissemination of his works, which guarantees related revenues and better prospects for its future publications, but also, in the case of researchers, provide career progression and their national and international position in their field of study.

Marketing

Once the book is done (printed, bound ...), it is put on the market by the distributor and the bookstore. Meanwhile, his promotion comes from various media reports. Book marketing is governed by the law in many states.

Other forms of secondary spread

In recent years, the book had a second life in the form of reading aloud. This is called public readings of published works, with the assistance of professional readers (often known actors) and in close collaboration with writers, publishers, booksellers, librarians, leaders of the literary world and artists.

Many individual or collective practices exist to increase the number of readers of a book. Among them:

- * abandonment of books in public places, coupled or not with the use of the Internet, known as the bookcrossing;
- * provision of free books in third places like bars or cafes;
- * itinerant or temporary libraries;
- * free public libraries in the area.

Evolution of the book industry

This form of the book chain has hardly changed since the eighteenth century, and has not always been this way. Thus, the author has asserted gradually with time, and the copyright dates only from the nineteenth century. For many centuries, especially before the invention of printing, each freely copied out books that passed through his hands, adding, if necessary, his own comments. Similarly, bookseller and publisher jobs have emerged with the invention of printing, which made the book an industrial product, requiring structures of production and marketing.

The invention of the Internet, e-readers, tablets, and projects like Wikipedia and Gutenberg, are likely to strongly change the book industry in the years to come.