

Título Ebook vs. Printed Books in Buenos Aires: The Traditional Book Continues to Resist

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Ebook vs. Printed Books in Buenos Aires: The Traditional Book Continues to Resist

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ABSTRACT

Explores the features of the Argentinian book readers in both formats: traditional and digital. A qualitative and quantitative research was conducted at UADE Foundation, in order to understand the new trends of digital reading in comparison to the traditional ones. At the first part of the research, 28 individuals were consulted in-depth interview. Then a survey was conducted, with a sample size of 585 individuals living, studying or working in AMBA (Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires). The results shows differences on habits based on age: the younger readers prefer digital formats while people older than 50 years preferred traditional reading contexts. About the needs of information at the moment of working, reading for pleasure or studying, the use of both formats reached the highest level of mentions, as well as the smart phone as a device of reading. Also, a low use and level of spending in digital formats was evident. As Morales & Espinoza¹ said, also in AMBA the co-existence of print and digital reading books seems to be future of the reading trend in AMBA.

Keywords: E-book, printed books, digital reading, smartphone

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the research was to find the most relevant characteristics of the digital phenomenon about reading habits in electronic and traditional context.

Similar as what happened at music industry, the technologies born with Internet are beginning to have a significant impact at the new formats of reading, which had not undergone major changes for the last 450 years, since the invention of the printing press. In this way, the technological revolution brought new forms of reading: the Electronic reading (also known as e-reading or digital reading).

It is estimated that approximately the 93% of the information produced worldwide is published in electronic format. But electronic texts also present new challenges, such as the accuracy of reading comprehension. On the other hand, this new form offers the possibility of combining text, image and sound; nevertheless it also seems that this new format has some troubles to reach their clients.

That is why some authors presented arguments and proposals that support the idea that the coexistence of printed texts and electronic texts is possible, viable and also necessary. In this way, it can be considered that the ebook format is a kind of complement to traditional book.

Is it possible to the traditional book to continue to sustain the battle of the digital world, whose business model seems to be set at a lower cost to the user? How do the two formats co-exist in this context?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

E-books have been available for two decades, but researchers have only recently begun to evaluate the quality, benefits, and possibilities of this way of reading².

However, the change of format in reading seems to be inevitable. For example Amazon, the largest online book retailer in the United States, now sells more digital books than printed ones³.

Moreover, some authors claim that e-book sales outperform their printed peers at the United States of America and also United Kingdom markets⁴.

2.1. Cultural Consumers

A survey, dated in 2013, showed that the reading rates in Argentina are the highest in Latin America: the 73% of the population reads at least once a week a newspaper, and also the 56% of them read at least 1 book per year. The book readers are composed of 37% who read weekly, 11% do it monthly and the rest (8%) read less often than it.

According to the mention survey, digital reading is a considerable phenomenon at newspapers reading, but up to this point, electronic books are a marginal phenomenon: only 7% read in both formats and only 1% says read only eBooks⁵.

2.2. Formats

Some authors studied the use of devices at the moment of reading. In case of reading for pleasure, 33% uses the laptop and 32% the smartphone⁶.

Other authors studied the habits of reading and information consumption of students of the University of Zaragoza. The results shows that students frequently reads from a wide variety of types of information related to leisure, studies or journalistic information, being the Smartphone the most used device⁷.