

Report on the State of Publishing in Italy

Consolidated 2025 – Summary

by the AIE Research Office

In 2025, Italian publishing saw a slight contraction in the domestic market, while sales of translation rights reached their highest level since 2001, the year the Italian Publishers Association (AIE) began its surveys.

Total sales came to €3.198 billion, down 1.2 percent from the previous year. These figures include the trade market, educational publishing, professional and academic publishing, export, and sales to libraries. The decline was driven by variation in demand-support measures, a drop in educational sales that also reflects the demographic crisis, and the difficulties facing academic publishing, caught between piracy and changes in the way students study.

Over the twelve months, 8,645 contracts were signed for the sale of translation rights, 1.9 percent more than in 2024 and nearly five times the 2001 figure (1,800).

These are the main figures for Italian publishing, captured by the *Report on the State of Publishing in Italy 2026*, edited by AIE and presented at the Frankfurter Buchmesse.

The Market in 2025

The €3.198 billion total in 2025 includes €1.699 billion for the physical and digital trade market (-2.1 percent). This comprises sales of print books in the trade channels, meaning physical and online bookstores and supermarkets (€1.484 billion); sales at fairs, festivals, and other minor points of sale (€101 million); e-books (€84 million); and audiobooks (€30 million in subscriptions). Educational publishing is worth €773 million (-2.2 percent), professional publishing €462 million (+4.8 percent), and academic publishing €140.8 million (-7.6 percent).

Internationalization

In 2025, 8,645 contracts were signed for the translation of Italian titles abroad, the best result since AIE began its surveys in 2001. Titles sold abroad in 2025 were mainly children's and young adult books (3,133), fiction (1,753), general non-fiction (1,585), specialized non-fiction (697), illustrated books (541), practical manuals and self help (380), religious books (348), and comics (208).

Europe is the main market for sales of rights to Italian titles (5,401), followed by Asia (1,088), the Middle East (748), Latin America (660), North America (440), Africa (56), and the Pacific area (44). In 208 cases, the geographic area was not specified.

As for translation rights purchased from abroad, there were 9,470 contracts in 2025, down 3.5 percent from the previous year. Italian publishers mainly buy fiction (3,547 titles), followed by children's and young adult books (2,115), comics (1,385), general non-fiction (1,211), specialized non-fiction (613), practical manuals (362), religion (134), and art and illustrated books (103).

Production

In 2025, publishers released 67,692 titles for the trade market and 3,048 educational titles. Adding 13,997 self-published titles brings the total to 84,737 print titles in one year.

The catalog of available titles remains above 1.5 million titles (1.53 million). In addition to the print titles published in 2025, there were 33,284 e-books published during the year.

Innovation and Artificial Intelligence

Three out of four publishers (75 percent) report using artificial intelligence tools within their companies, according to a survey AIE conducted among its members at the end of 2025. Use mainly concerns process innovation and back-office activities. Of the publishers that use AI, 92 percent use it in editorial areas, 49 percent to support the translation of internal materials, and 44 percent in sales, marketing, administrative, and management activities. Use for product innovation is more limited but already significant, cited by 33 percent.

In dealings with Big Tech, caution prevails: 28 percent of publishers say they have received requests to license their content to a large language model (LLM), but only 4 percent of them report having already concluded one or more licensing agreements.

Reading and Consumption

The number of readers in Italy is growing: in 2025, 33.7 million people between the ages of 15 and 74 read at least one book in the past twelve months, even if only in part and not for study or work (AIE Reading Observatory), equal to 76 percent of the population. In 2024, the figure was 73 percent. Average weekly reading time, at 4 hours and 7 minutes, is in line with the previous year, but frequency has worsened: the share of readers who read at least once a week fell (from 69 percent to 61 percent), while the share of those who read only a few times a month rose (from 17 percent to 22 percent), as did those who read a few times a year (from 13 percent to 16 percent).

Italians who say they buy 12 or more print books a year make up 9 percent of the population between the ages of 15 and 74; 11 percent buy between 7 and 11, 17 percent between 4 and 6, and 30 percent between 1 and 3, while 33 percent buy none. The first group, the 9 percent of heavy buyers, alone generates almost half of the market (43 percent).