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We are trying to start again

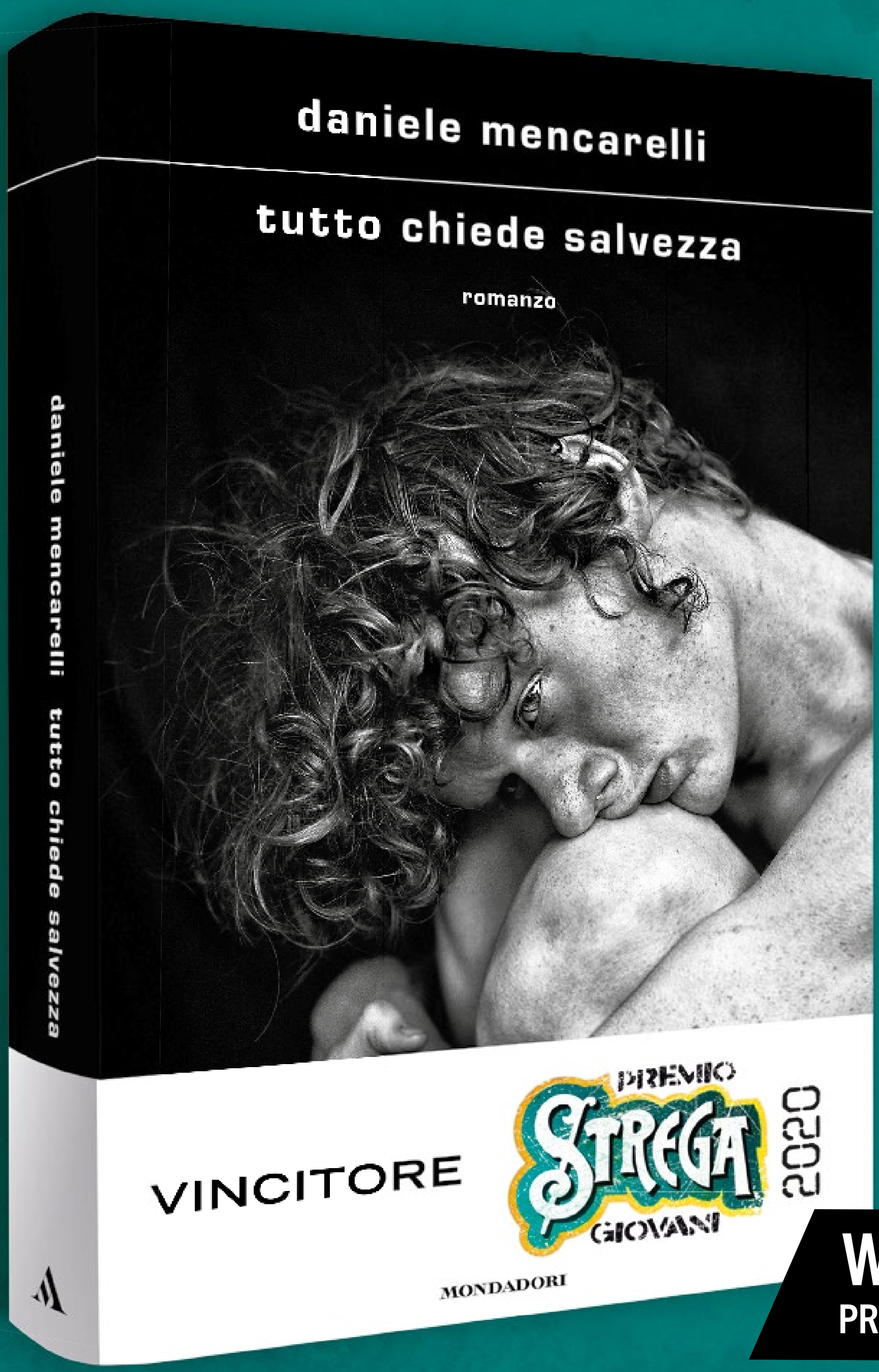
The data available basically show a halving of the reduction in sales recorded for general publishing in trade channels - those that are better and more quickly monitored - at the end of the lockdown. From -70% in the very darkest period to -20% in April and -11% in July. The following weeks show trends in line with or just above 2019, trends that have not yet made up for the lost sales in the first part of the year. Of course, this is an average figure. There are sectors that

CONTINUED ON PG.3

A TOUCHING AND SWEET NOVEL ABOUT A YOUNG MAN
AND HIS HARD TIME TO COME TO TERMS WITH LIFE

daniele mencarelli

tutto chiede salvezza



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WINNER 2020
PREMIO STREGA GIOVANI

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CONTINUES FROM THE FIRST PAGE

show much more negative results: tourism, the sectors linked to art exhibitions and museum bookshops, and the many publishers who usually find important sources of revenue at fairs and festivals. Nevertheless the underlying signal is one of recovery. Festivals in September have shown positive signs and new releases are being prepared for pre-Christmas and Christmas sales in a market that seems to have become anti-cyclical.
The presentation of the survey by the Cepell-AIE Observatory had given us an indication. The increase in the percentage of people who - in mid-May - expected to increase reading as part of their cultural consumption was the only value in positive territory: almost +5%. This is all the more significant because this request for a forecast of behaviour took place shortly after 4th May - the watershed date between Phase 1 and Phase 2 - when travel was permitted again but only within the region and bars and restaurants could only offer take-away services. Trade would reopen not on 11th May, as had been assumed, but on 18th May (although bookshops in some Italian regions had reopened on 14th April after closing on Thursday 12th March).
This was the context in which interviewees predicted that reading books was the activity they would do more than any other form of cultural consumption.
The recovery came with the boom in e-commerce, from online stores, but also from publishers' websites and some bookstores. Remembering that at the end of 2019 it had been worth 27% of the trade market, in April 2020 (January-April period, 16th week) it stood at 48%, after having reached much higher peaks in some periods, and dropped to 44% by the 28th week.
Physical channels, however, also recovered, especially the bookshops, which had developed some interesting ideas for innovation in their services: home deliveries, use of the website for ordering, online catalogues of available titles (about 700 bookshops were identified as being active by IE-Informazioni Editoriali).
The trend in January-February 2020 was initially in line with the previous year. But, starting from the sixth week (3-9 February), increasingly significant negative signs began to be recorded leading up to -70% in the week from 23 to 29 March. Then recovery started.
What is interesting to note is how from the 24th week (-0.7%) the 2020 curve begins to overlap with that of the previous year. This means that, if we also include Amazon sales, we would have already entered positive territory by that date. And by the 29th week, even without Amazon, the result is clearly +3%.
A new start is possible because there is room for recovery in the second half of the year by reclaiming all that negative area revealed by the trend of the two curves - provided that current conditions continue: reduction in contagion, absence of a significant second wave, trend in household expenditure etc. Something no less important seems to emerge from these data. The book seems to have returned to the anti-cyclical condition which had characterised it before the crisis of 2011, a crisis that ended only last year when the trade market had almost returned to 2011 values.
We are reasonably optimistic. The largely positive results of 2019 were a signal that the sector had regained its full operating capacity, had invested in training and updating and the reorganisation of processes as well as technological and editorial innovation. And we saw positive signs in the darkest months of the pandemic, with the rapid activation of smart working, changes in publishing processes, the launching of titles first as e-books and then - at reopened bookstores - in physical editions, the provision of digital teaching materials for students and schools, the growth of digital lending by libraries and the success of digital platforms for the sale and purchase of rights.
Now all we have to do is wait until Christmas to see how much more we can make up for what has inevitably been lost.

Questo numero del Giornale della libreria è il primo pubblicato esclusivamente e totalmente in lingua inglese. Quando lo abbiamo progettato e poi realizzato, le fonti ufficiali indicavano che la Frankfurter Buchmesse 2020 si sarebbe tenuta in presenza, nella sua consueta forma. Dopo i mesi più duri dell'emergenza sanitaria, pubblicare la nostra rivista in lingua inglese e portarla alla comunità globale dell'editoria riunita a Francoforte ci sembrava il modo migliore per ribadire la prospettiva sempre più internazionale della nostra editoria. Visto che lo spirito rimane intatto pur nel mutevole scenario attuale (e che i cambiamenti repentini degli ultimi giorni non ci consentono di fare altrimenti), manteniamo la versione in inglese nella fiduciosa attesa delle fiere che verranno. La traduzione in italiano di ogni articolo di questo numero è disponibile su www.giornaledellalibreria.it.

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MAGAZINE	WEBSITE	E-BOOK	TUESDAY NEWSLETTER	SPECIAL NEWSLETTER	«FUORI CATALOGO»
Paper and digital, published on the occasion of the most important events	To find out the news of the publishing sector every day	Thematic insights on publishing hot spots	The most important news of the week	Specifically designed for book fairs and events	The most important service for bookshops
5,000 copies circulated every year (4 numbers in 2019)	315 articles published in 2019 10,800 users reached per month		45 newsletters created in 2019 97,370 e-mails sent	9 thematic issues realized on the occasion of Più libri più liberi 2019 67,889 e-mails sent	1,460 registered bookshops

THE ITALIAN PUBLISHING NETWORK

AIE Associazione Italiana Editori DAL 1869

ITALIAN BOOK MARKET

2019 ends more than positively, but the unpredictable arrival of coronavirus changes everything

From growth to pandemic

We welcomed in 2020 with a market that, after almost a decade, had returned to turnover values very close to those existing pre-crisis. But on the evening of 9 March everything changed: lockdown was imposed on Italy and the effects of Covid-19 on the publishing sector did not take long to reveal themselves. While figures for the first 18 weeks of the year can only be viewed as unequivocally negative, the following months show signs which are less unequivocal - and perhaps even hopeful.

by **GIOVANNI PERESSON**

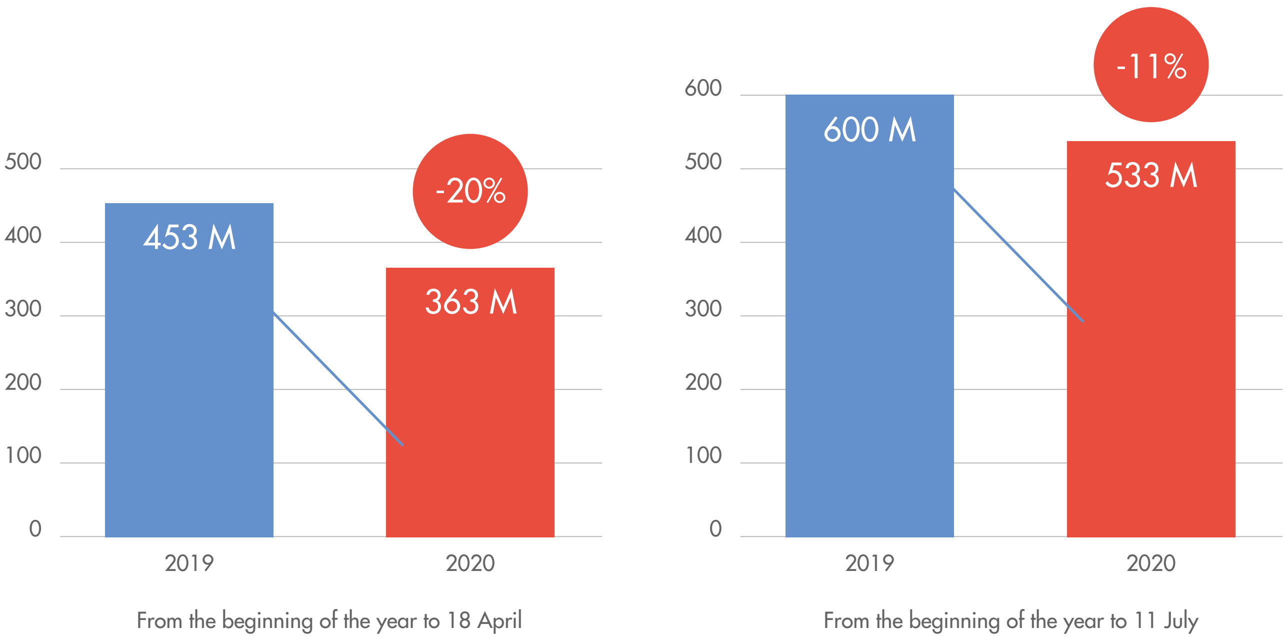
2019 ended with a highly flattering +4.8% in value for trade channels, in particular with a surprising +3.8% in terms of copies sold. It was the first time this had happened since the beginning of the long crisis that started in 2010. For the first time in almost a decade we were back to a value of trade sales very close to that of 2010 (1.422 vs. 1.488 billion euros). Even the 2019 estimate of the overall market (general, educational, digital, professional, export etc.) at 3.270 billion, was back to almost the value we had nine years ago: 3.321 billion.

When these figures were presented on January 31, in Venice, at the Umberto and Elisabetta Mauri School for Booksellers, the news about the spread of a new virus concerned a distant Chinese province, Hubei, and the city of Wuhan in particular. On 21 February, the first Italian cases were discovered in Codogno and Vo' Euganeo. On 24 February, the Civil Protection Authority began to publish daily updates on the progress of the new coronavirus and especially on the disease that it causes: Covid-19. Infections, cases of intensive care hospitalization, deaths. Then, on the evening of 9 March, the lockdown of Italy was announced. The country closed down and everything stopped except essential services until May 3.

It's all change. We enter the 21st century.

We have clear data on losses of sales, changes in purchasing behaviour and time devoted to reading in the first 18 weeks of 2020 thanks to the Covid-19 Observatory of the Italian Publishers Association (AIE), the spring survey of the AIE Observatory on reading and cultural consumption and the Cepell (Centre for Books and Reading) - AIE survey on purchasing behaviour and reading in March and April 2020. But this only concerns the "first half".

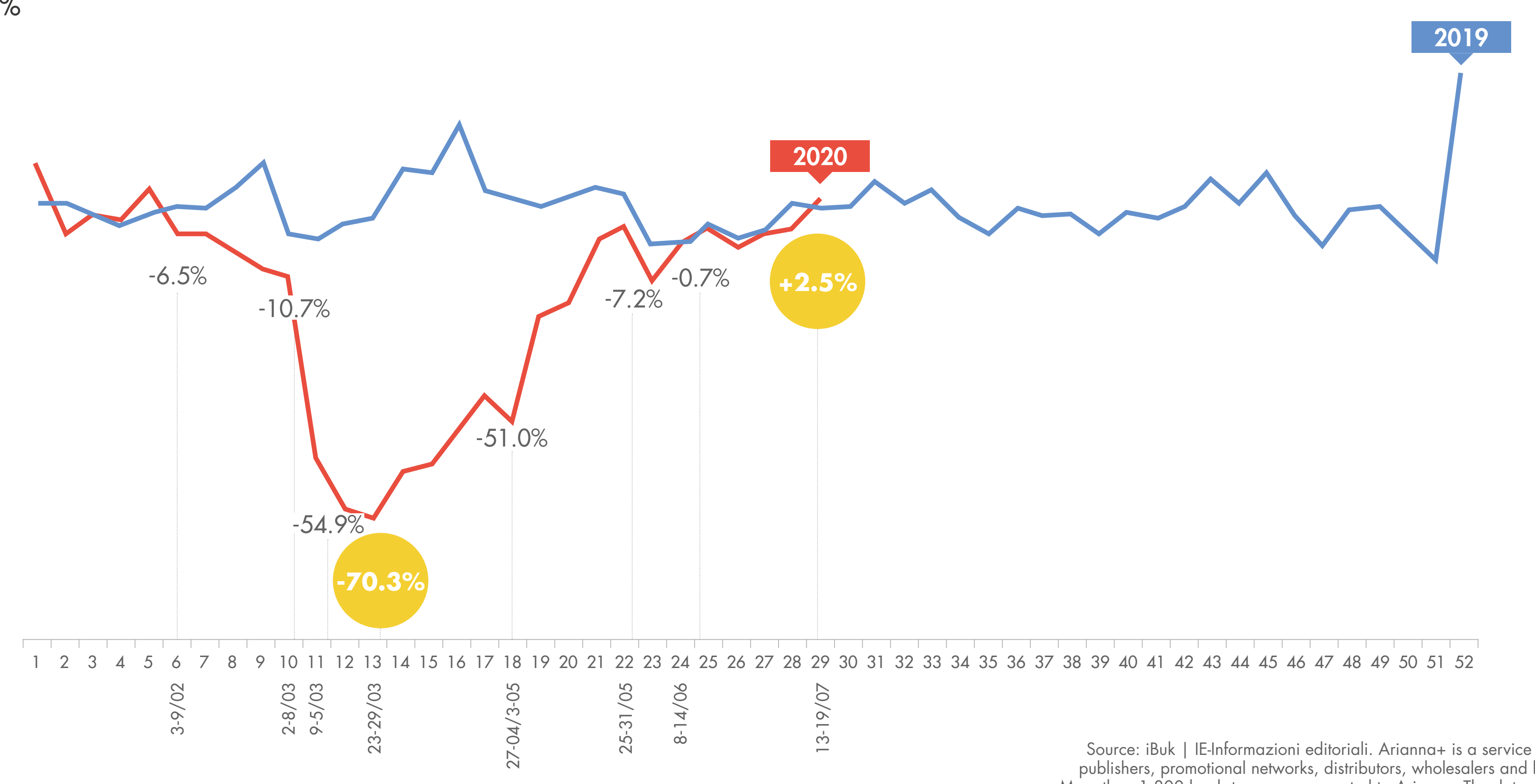
The loss of turnover is halved from April to July. Comparison of market trends in trade channels at 18 April and 11 July compared to the previous year
Values in millions of euros; AIE estimate for Amazon



Source: AIE research department estimate based on Nielsen data and indications from other publishers

Conceptually we are faced with two distinct periods, the first of which is now behind us.
The main feature of that first phase was the simultaneous blockage (or sharp slowdown) of supply - resulting from suspended release of new publications - and demand from readers - with the closure of bookstores, the main channel through which books are obtained (in the March 2020 survey 74% of readers said they had used it).
Data for the first 18 weeks of 2020 (AIE research dept, based on Nielsen data) indicated two things.
The first. In the "classic" trade channels (independent bookstores, chain bookstores, online stores, book sections of large scale retailers) there was a sales drop of 90.3 million euros and 5.8 million fewer copies sold than over the same period in 2019.
The second. If we also consider "marginal" sales outlets (small bookshops, stationery-bookshops); specialist bookshops (for example, those located within universities and closed due to the interruption of teaching activities); sales outlets with weekly sales of less than 350 copies; sales made at trade fairs, in museum bookshops or at art exhibitions - these are all sales outlets that are not surveyed by research institutes - we estimate a further loss of 44.6 million euros and at least 2.1 million copies, figures which need to be added to those above (https://www.giornaledellalibreria.it/news-mercato-i-tre-mesi-che-sconvolsero-il-mondo-del-libro-4160.html).
Adding them together means a loss for the trade general sector (over the first 18 weeks) of 134.9 million euros and 7.9 million copies, i.e. -19.9% and -22.0%. And there were sectors that were going through even more critical situations.
In this same period - from week 12 to week 18 - the launch of new books was down 66.3% compared to the same period in 2019 (Source: IE-Informazioni editoriali; https://www.giornaledellalibreria.it/news-mercato-dal-cambiamento-dellofferta-alla-resilienza-della-libreria-4159.html). There were titles where the progress of production - acquisition of rights, translation, editorial activities, page setting, pre-print or printing activities etc. - was held up by well over half, with postponements of launches. The loss of sales was compounded by the fact that companies had, to varying degrees, paid (or owed) fees to suppliers. This in turn generated an additional financial cost to the company, creating shortage of liquidity etc.
But what happens next? The sector attempts to relaunch and the data available at the 28th week of 2020 (11 July) show a halving of the reduction in sales that had been recorded at the sixteenth week for general publishing in trade channels (the best and most rapidly monitored).
From -20% compared to the corresponding period in 2019 (roughly mid-April, with lockdown still in progress), to -11% in the first ten days of July.
Certainly, it's an average figure. There are sectors that have had much more negative results: tourism, the sectors linked to art exhibitions and museum bookshops, the many publishers who find important sources of income at book fairs and festivals. But nevertheless the underlying signal is one of relaunch, a signal we had had in the presentation of the Cepell - AIE survey. The difference between the proportion of people who - in mid-May - expected to increase reading among cultural consumption was the only

From mid-June, bookstores return to 2019 levels. Weekly sales trends in physical and online bookshops belonging to Arianna+: comparison between 2019-2020 (does not include Amazon)
Values in %



Source: iBuk | IE-Informazioni editoriali. Arianna+ is a service connecting publishers, promotional networks, distributors, wholesalers and bookshops. More than 1,800 bookstores are connected to Arianna. The data refer to real and unexpanded sales of about 50% of the book market.

value in positive territory. 4.7 points separated those who said that they would "certainly" or "probably" increase their reading of books compared to those who expected to reduce this activity in the following months.
The figure is even more important because the request for a forecast of behaviour took place shortly after May 4 - the watershed date between Phase 1 and Phase 2 - when travel was again allowed but only within the same region; bars and restaurants could only offer take-away service. Trade would restart not on May 11, as assumed, but on May 18 (bookshops in some Italian regions had reopened on April 14 after closing on Thursday, March 12).
It was in this context, that interviewees predicted that reading books was the activity that they would carry out more than other forms of cultural consumption. Recovery came with a boom in e-commerce. From online stores, but also from publishers' websites and some bookstores. Whereas at the end of 2019 it was worth 27% of the trade market, by April 2020 (January-April period, 16th week) it stood at 48% and, after reaching even higher peaks at certain moments, it dropped to 44% at the 28th week.
The physical channels, especially bookstores, which in the survey at the end of April had already shown interesting innovatory activities during the hardest phase of the lockdown (home deliveries, use of the site to place orders, putting the catalogue of available titles online), saw their share grow by 4 percentage points from April to July: from 52% to 56% in the 28th week of the year (11th July).
What is happening can be clearly seen in the iBuk data from Informazioni editoriali. The data that lie behind the two curves of 2019 and 2020 up to the 29th week refer to real and unexpanded sales equal to about 50% of the trade market.
While the trend in January-February 2020 was substantially in line with the previous year, from the sixth week (3-9 February) significant increasingly negative signs began to be recorded, up to -70.3% in the week from 23 to 29 March. Then followed the slow recovery.
It is interesting to note that from the 24th week (-0.7%) the 2020 curve begins to coincide with that of the previous year. This means that, if we could also take Amazon weekly sales into account, we would certainly have entered positive territory from that date. And in week 29 the result is still +2.5% compared to the corresponding week of 2019.
Signs of recovery from July onwards are evident. There is hope of recovering, in the second half of the year (with all things being equal: reduction of contagion, absence of major second wave hotspots, positive trend of household expenses etc.) all that negative area revealed by the arcs of the two curves. An area that, especially with Christmas, we could hope to begin to fill again.
And the hope is not just rhetorical. The figures for July also indicate that books seem to have returned to the anti-cyclical condition that had characterized the market before the crisis of 2011.
All the more so because in previous months we had seen a rapid reorganization of publishing houses towards smart working, the restructuring of rights offices and professional fairs (for example, Bologna Children's Book Fair) as well as generalist fairs and the implementation by bookstores of home delivery services that have reduced their losses due to forced closure by 30%, etc. (https://www.giornaledellalibreria.it/news-mercato-unaltra-narrazione-e-possibile-4135.html).
We had therefore seen a prompt and reactive entrepreneurial system.
In the first phase, the negative impact on the sector was caused (mainly) not by a fall in demand (as indicated by 2019), but by administrative measures, made inevitable to limit the spread of contagion. We feared in the coming months (between now and December and probably throughout 2021) a completely different phase, with a significant and presumably persistent crisis in demand, difficult at the moment to identify and define in its absolute dimensions. A demand crisis attributable, on the one hand, to the reduced financial resources of households in the face of expenditures that cannot be squeezed; on the other hand, to the climate of uncertainty leading to the hoarding of any surplus money available.
These could be the distinctive features of the next phase and contribute to making forecasting even more complicated. In the meantime, let us be content with the fact that the book market has probably returned to what it was historically until 2010-2011. An anti-cyclic market.

READING IN ITALY

The Cepell - AIE survey monitored Italians' behaviour in the months of lockdown and in the months immediately afterwards

The emergence of reading in the health emergency

Reading, in Italy, has always been an emergency situation: with values blocked at around 40% in Istat's annual surveys, 60-62% in those of the AIE Observatory on reading and cultural consumption from 2017 onwards. We are last among the major European publishing industries. But what happens to reading in Italy when this well-known state of emergency is combined with another, of global health?

by **GIOVANNI PERESSON**

An attempt to answer this question is provided by the first *Cepell (Centro per il libro e la lettura) - AIE (Associazione Italiana Editori) survey: Reading in the months of the health emergency* (https://www.giornaledellalibreria.it/presentazione-la-lettura-in-situazione-di-emergenza-4203.html). "First" because, with the support of Pepe Research, after the May survey on behaviour in March and April 2020, a similar survey will be repeated in the autumn. In short, a way of monitoring Italians' behaviour in the weeks of the lockdown and then in the following months.

The first snapshot in a collection of images that will be acquired over time. In this way the images can be animated and provide us with answers, helping us to understand if, and to what extent, the behaviour observed between March and April will continue well beyond 2020. With all that this implies in terms of reading support policies and entrepreneurial policies, whether they be from publishing houses, sales channels or libraries.

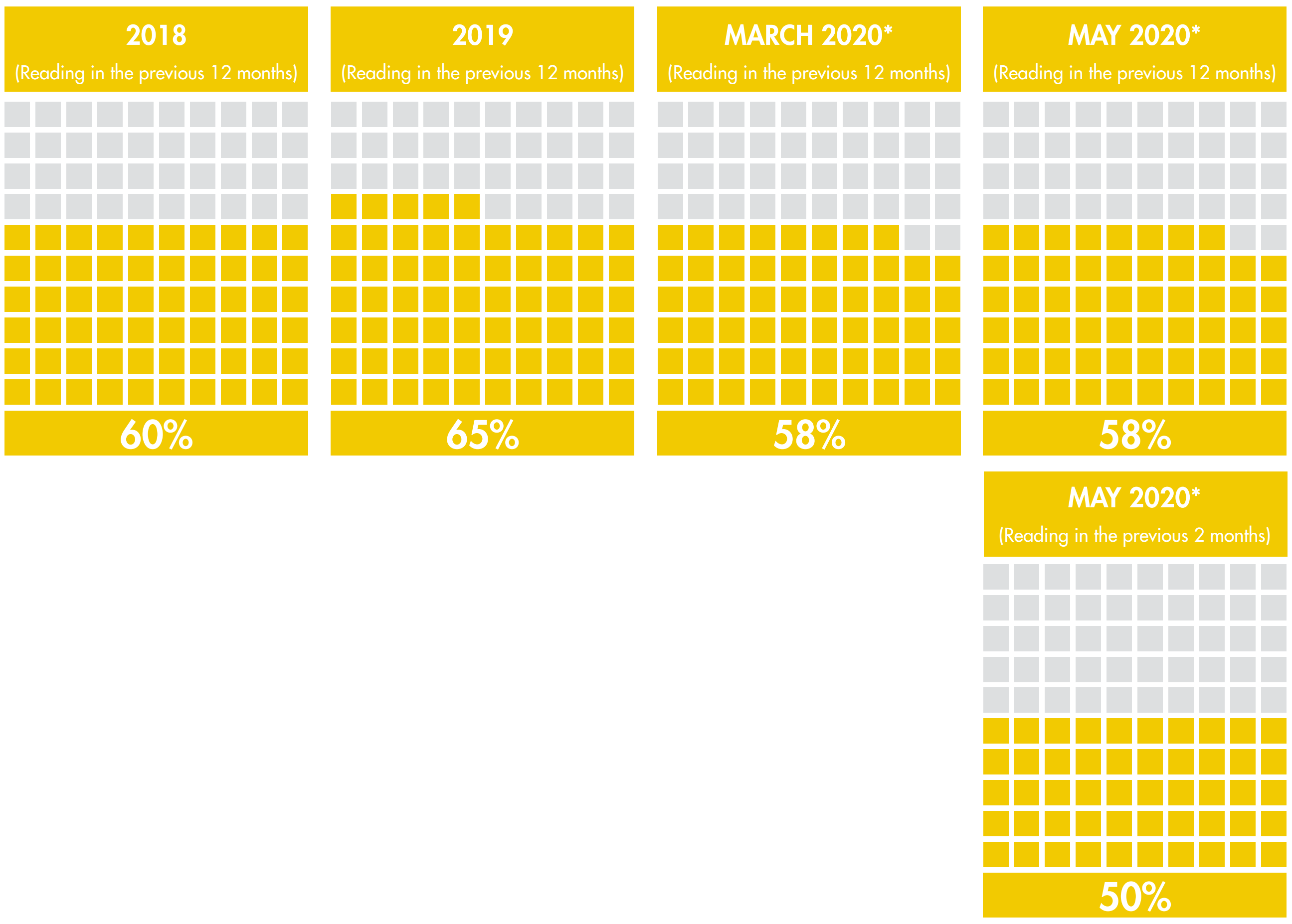
There are basically two questions that we ask. The first: when and how will the market recover? We have tried to formulate an answer in the previous article in this issue, where we found that, already between the end of June and the beginning of July, signs of resurgence had appeared. The second question concerns behaviours already present among readers but which, between the end of February and the beginning of March, saw a great acceleration linked to the current situation: growing use of e-commerce; reading e-books and listening to audio books; the shift from traditional to digital news media. Will they come back into line with the trends before lockdown? The data collected over the previous two months in this May survey - with regard to some puzzling aspects - should be included in a trend of surveys, not particularly long, but with a certain consistency in results, which had been gathered over eight surveys (spring and autumn) from 2017 onwards through a structure of research, formulation of questions and homogeneous sampling over the years, as part of the AIE Observatory on reading and cultural consumption.

The results can be seen in the infographic both for reading as a whole (books, e-books and audiobooks) and for books only. Already in March 2020, in reading over 12 months (the survey is carried out in the second half of the month), we record a shift from 65% to 58% of "overall readers" (they were 58% already in October 2019, and they return to this in March 2020). In the Cepell - AIE survey in May, the value remains substantially stable.

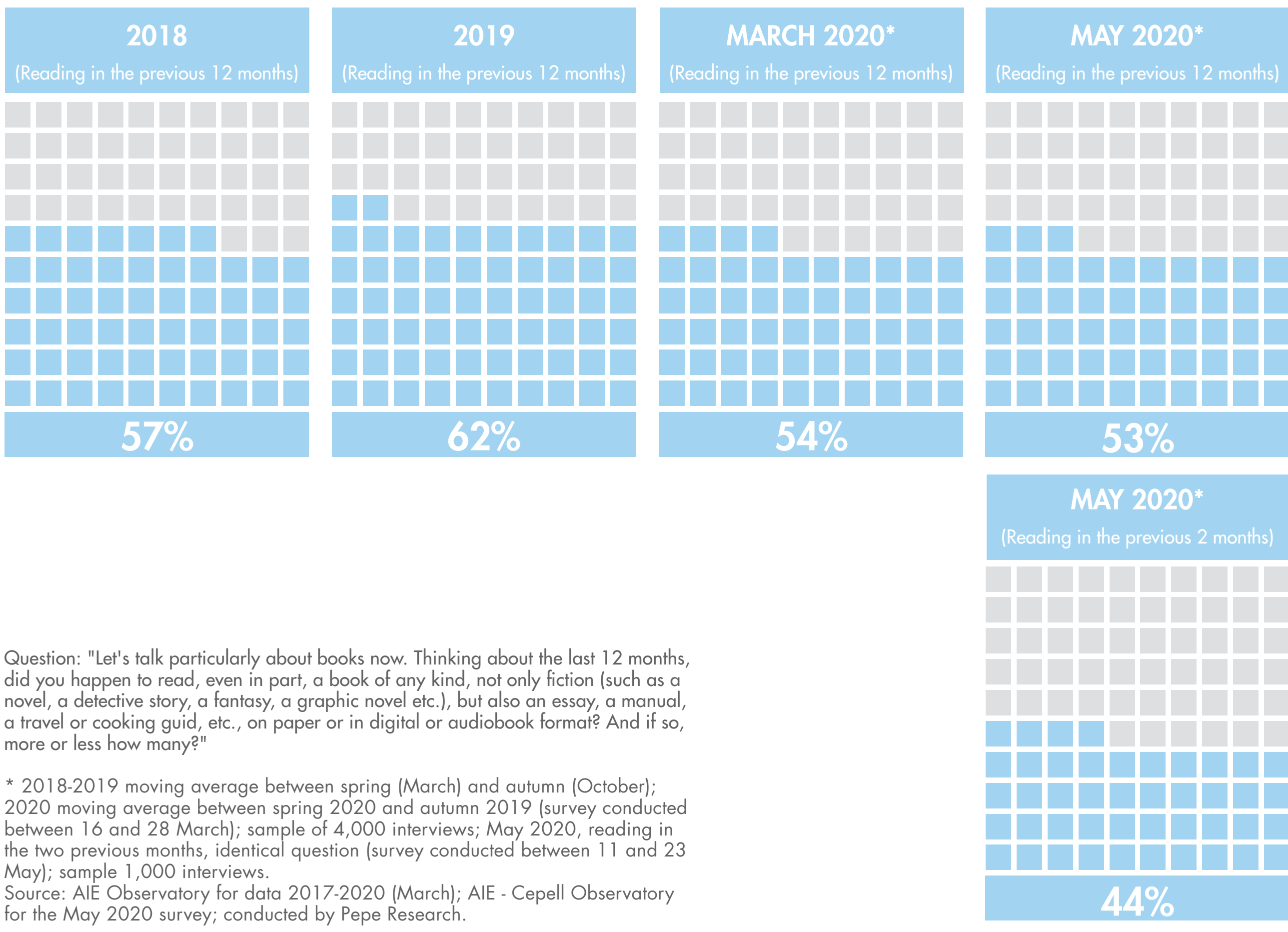
Interpretation of the data is not easy. The start of the Covid-19 emergency and lockdown as early as March seems to flatten the responses relating to behaviour in the "previous 12 months" to those closest in time to the survey. In May, the value remained substantially unchanged compared to March. It dropped to 50% when asked about "overall reading" behaviour, but referring to the previous two months. Obviously, we do not have the figure for a similar unit of time in 2019 with which to carry out a comparison.

We have significant changes between those who claim to have read paper books and those who claim to have also read digitally (e-books and audiobooks). The reading of books follows a similar

Trend in overall reading (books, e-books, audiobooks) between 2018 and 2020
Values as a percentage of the population 15-74 years old



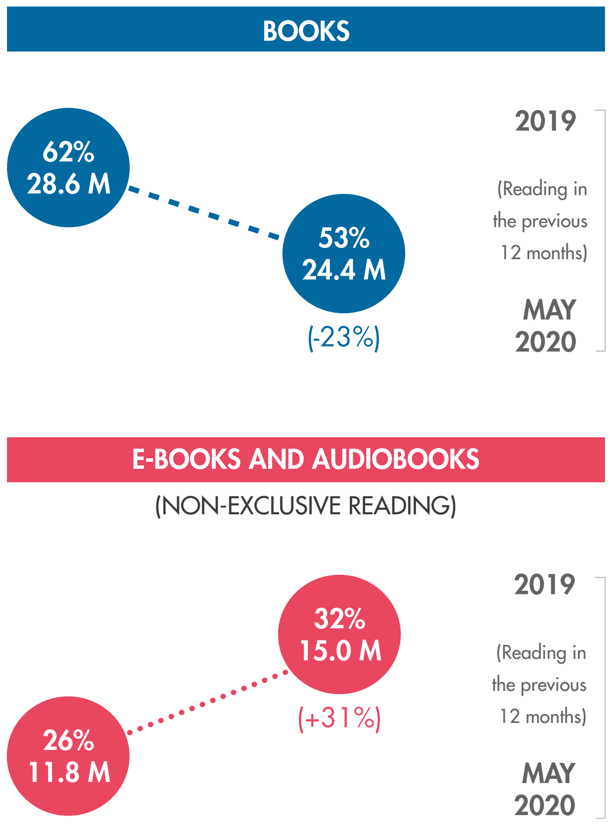
Trend in reading of books only between 2018 and 2020
Values as a percentage of the population of 15-74 years old



Question: "Let's talk particularly about books now. Thinking about the last 12 months, did you happen to read, even in part, a book of any kind, not only fiction (such as a novel, a detective story, a fantasy, a graphic novel etc.), but also an essay, a manual, a travel or cooking guid, etc., on paper or in digital or audiobook format? And if so, more or less how many?"

* 2018-2019 moving average between spring (March) and autumn (October); 2020 moving average between spring 2020 and autumn 2019 (survey conducted between 16 and 28 March); sample of 4,000 interviews; May 2020, reading in the two previous months, identical question (survey conducted between 11 and 23 May); sample 1,000 interviews.
Source: AIE Observatory for data 2017-2020 (March); AIE - Cepell Observatory for the May 2020 survey; conducted by Pepe Research.

Trend in overall reading (printed books vs digital) between 2019 and 2020
Values as a percentage of the population 15-74 years old



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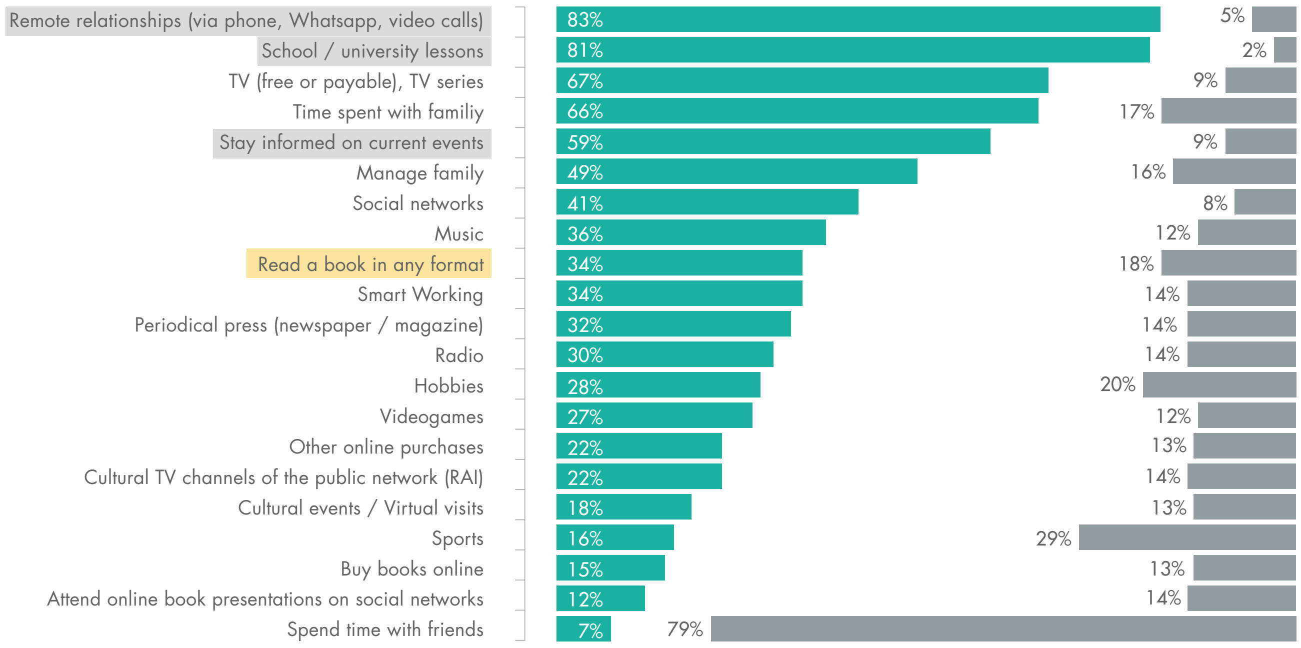
* 2018-2019 moving average between spring (March) and autumn (October); 2020 moving average between spring 2020 and autumn 2019 (survey conducted between 16 and 28 March); sample of 4,000 interviews; May 2020, reading in the two previous months, identical question (survey conducted between 11 and 23 May); sample 1,000 interviews.
Source: AIE Observatory for data 2017-2020 (March); AIE - Cepell Observatory for the May 2020 survey; conducted by Pepe Research.

Increase or decrease in activities following the Covid-19 emergency: May 2020

Values in % of total population, in order of 'more than before'; aggregate variables

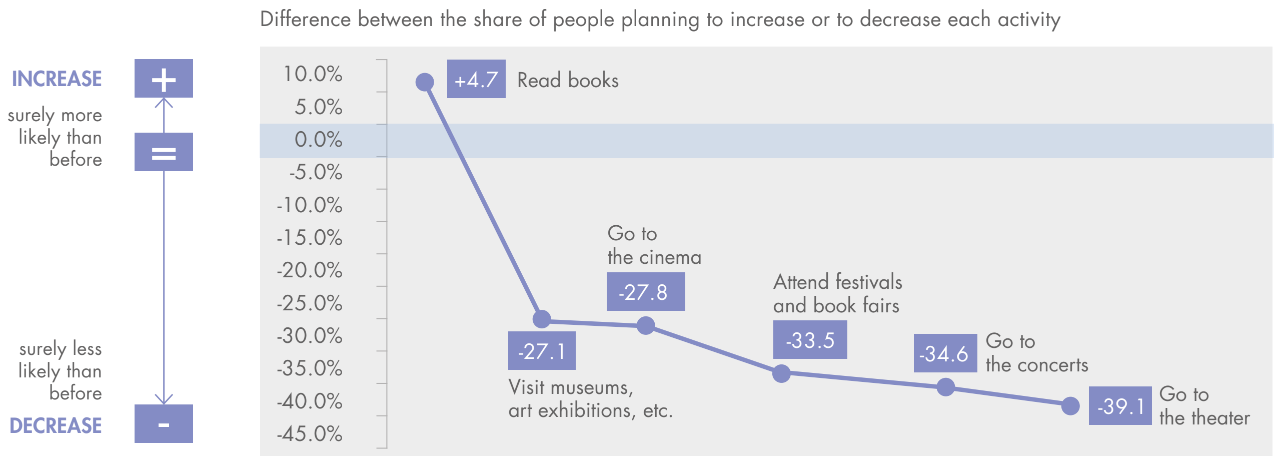


Question: "In the last few weeks as a result of the coronavirus emergency, how much more time would you say you've spent than before on...?"

Source: Cepell - AIE Survey: Reading in the months of the health emergency. Conducted by Pepe Research

Italians' forecasts on future cultural consumption: May 2020

Difference values in percentage points; total population, in order of "more than before"; aggregate variables



Question: "During quarantine we changed much of our behaviour. Do you think you will change some of your behaviour compared to pre-quarantine times? Do you think you will do the following activities more or less than before?"

Source: Cepell - AIE survey: Reading in the months of the health emergency. Conducted by Pepe Research

pattern to the overall trend, although with more pronounced losses. The reasons for this are obvious: the closure of bookshops and libraries (both public and non-public), restrictions on entry to large-scale retail outlets and the suspension of trade fairs and book fairs. Only e-commerce is fully "open" (but with some problems of logistics and restocking) .

The shift in reading behaviour is evident: -23% of people who "in the previous 12 months" declared themselves to be readers of books; +31% of those who have read (or listened) digitally integrating their diet with more e-books and audiobooks, at the expense of reading on paper. And the three-figure growth in digital lending by libraries is the most striking indicator.

Data from the Cepell - AIE survey helps to better focus on many of the new challenges that will need to be addressed in guiding public policies to support reading and the publishing industry.

We assumed that in the days and months of lockdown at home people would read more. But reading is an activity that requires tranquility, a suitable place and time. Reading requires habit, and building a strong national reading index requires a large majority of the population to view reading as rooted in their everyday behaviour. None of these conditions occurred between March and April (or even February). Moreover, we should remember that reading a book (or an e-book, or listening to an audiobook) is an activity to which - even in normal times - Italians mainly devoted less than an hour a day, an activity that was already more and more occasional and that in these months more than ever found itself submerged at home among so many others: seeking information, following programmes on television (free-to-air or paid), using smartphone and apps intensively, participating in social networks, instant messaging platforms and teleconferencing services. These have become activities that absorb an increasingly large share of our time. Moreover, in March and April, new activities also entered the home environment: distance learning and smart working, while there was intensification of care activities and a lengthening of the time needed to carry out essential activities outside the home, such as shopping.

Of the 21 behaviours monitored in the research, with reference to the last two months, 34% of respondents indicate reading among the activities they have done "more often", 16% less. The most interesting data is that "reading as a whole", between March and April, is between eleventh and sixteenth place for all age groups, in terms of time consumed. Almost half (47%) of those who, between March and April, did not read any book or e-book and did not listen to any audiobook, indicate lack of time as the primary reason; 35% the lack of a quiet space (at home) to read; 33% cite worry, which "took away the desire to read"; 32% say they spent more time reading newspapers and magazines (paper and online) than books.

At home, during the lockdown, reading books (e-books, audiobooks) was therefore squeezed by other activities; it required effort to carve out some space. But to some extent it has succeeded.

The 34% who say they spent more time on reading shows a positive jump of 18 points. Of course, it probably became an even more fragmented form of reading than before, which affected fewer people than before. All the more so because Italians have at the same time discovered other uses of digital, including platforms to communicate online: 16% used Skype for the first time, 16% Zoom, 14% Hangouts... Will this phenomenon, along with others, be only temporary?

An initial answer can perhaps be glimpsed from other data collected by the Cepell - AIE survey.

Interviewees were asked for a prediction on how they foresaw some behaviours in the future. With all the necessary caution required in dealing with forecasting surveys, especially in a fluid and still uncertain situation like the one we are experiencing, a question was asked about which of the surveyed activities are expected to increase in the coming months, and which to decrease. From the answers emerged one piece of data - a weak signal - which helps to better understand what subsequently happened in the market in the following weeks. In fact, book reading was the only activity in the positive area, by almost 5 percentage points.

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INTERNATIONALISATION

Two instruments through which institutions are encouraging dialogue between our own and other publishing industries. Even with the enormous difficulties of the pandemic

If Italian books are a brand

The subject of internationalisation is increasingly strongly felt. Both from an economic point of view, since it is a source of oxygen for publishing industries like ours whose customer base coincides with the linguistic-geographical perimeters of the nation; and from a cultural point of view, insofar as accessing the publishing production of other countries is an invaluable source of knowledge. A centrality that - from the publishing sector outwards - affects the whole national state-system, involving above all the institutional apparatus.

by **ALESSANDRA ROTONDO**

The fact that in the last few years there has been growing international interest in Italian authors is undoubtedly due to the quality and consistency of their writing (as well as the increasingly thorough scouting carried out by publishing houses). But it is also thanks to a centralised system of measures, actions and tools deliberately aimed at internationalisation. A system which in our country - although it may not be on a par with that of other comparable major European publishing industries - is gradually acquiring definition and perspective.

The long road to internationalisation is one of the clear priorities of the Italian Publishers Association. From exploratory missions directed at new markets and countries to a growing commitment and presence at major international book fairs. From the establishment of a genuine Rights Centre at Più libri più liberi to the consolidation (and expansion) of relations between our publishers and the global context.

On the other hand, it is a priority that can only be pursued in collaboration with the other players involved in the process, as is in fact the case: on one side, the entrepreneurial and creative fabric at the heart of our publishing industry; on the other side, our public and political institutions.

"Every year the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation purchases books for the libraries of Italian Institutes and schools abroad and awards prizes and grants for the translation of Italian books all over the world," says Minister Plenipotentiary Roberto Vellano, Vice General Manager of the General Directorate for the Promotion of the Country System and Central Director for the Promotion of Italian Culture and Language. "By way of example, about 100 Italian titles were published last year in foreign languages thanks to these contributions".

"This year, in the face of the health emergency and its serious consequences for our economy, extraordinary allocations have been made for further purchases of books and for the activation of a special provision, valid for the current year, to support the sale of rights for Italian books, thanks to which contributions can be made, through the network of diplomatic representatives abroad (embassies and consulates) and Cultural Institutes, to foreign publishers who can prove they have acquired rights to the translation of Italian works".

The provision of these extraordinary contributions - offered to foreign publishers who, in the period between 1 June and 25 September 2020, have signed a rights acquisition contract or an option to purchase translation rights for a work by an Italian author already published in Italian in paper format - suggests that the publishing industry will play a central role in the recovery of our country from the worst months of the pandemic.

And this is linked to another institutional initiative recently aimed at internationalisation: the opening of the *newitalianbooks* platform. Promoted by Treccani with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Centre for Books and Reading, in collaboration with the Italian Publishers Association, the project aims to exploit "all possible synergies between the multiple components of the sector and the opportunities offered by Italian institutions abroad," says Paolo Grossi, Manager of the Cultural Promotion section at the General Directorate for Promotion of the Country System and curator of the platform.

"A great showcase for Italian books, *newitalianbooks* is primarily directed at foreign publishers and agents to whom it offers complete and up-to-date information on the latest Italian publishing news through a series of fact sheets provided directly by publishers in two languages" continues Grossi. "Each sheet is accompanied by a sample text, in the original and in translation, a biographical profile of the author and contact details for the rights managers".

Newitalianbooks is not only a platform for exchange and dialogue between professionals in the sector, designed to promote the sale of rights to Italian works around the world, but also, as a result of the wealth of information provided (databases on publishers and translators, trade fairs and festivals,

Italian and European programmes in support of translation), it aims to become "a point of reference for all those who, for whatever reason, operate in the book supply chain, in Italy and abroad (booksellers, librarians, translators, Italian language teachers and so on)". It implicitly underlines how making a book is a task involving many hands and many minds, the result of the shared and joint commitment of a variety of professional skills.
Moreover, in Minister Vellano's view, "translators are the most important cultural mediators in the publishing field: in most cases, they are the ones who suggest to publishers in their own countries which books to translate. They are therefore key figures, whose role is often not sufficiently valued, not even by the publishers themselves. Much more can be done to recognise their decisive function as *passeurs* between cultures".
"We could follow the example of France," continues Vellano, "which hosts translators into French every year from the most diverse countries in the world. In Italy, a first step has been taken by Cepell together with the Casa delle Traduzioni in Rome and with the collaboration of some cultural institutes. We are looking into how we, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, can also contribute to this initiative, whose impact on the sale of Italian book rights could be of great significance".
At a time when book fairs in most parts of the world have had to cancel, reschedule or redesign their events due to the global pandemic and many fairs have tried to digitally convert the spaces dedicated to buying and selling rights, the launch of *newitalianbooks* becomes more significant than ever. And the welcome that both large and small publishers have given to the initiative seems to confirm this. Grossi reports that in the weeks leading up to the opening, in June, more than eight hundred new books were presented by publishers. "And the flow continued unabated even in the days following the portal's debut. Paradoxically, of course, we were assisted in this by the health emergency situation. But I believe that this response should be interpreted, above all, as a need strongly felt by all publishers for visibility on international markets: in short, a sign of vitality and momentum towards wider horizons".
Vellano reminds us that two important goals await our publishing industry in the near future: "Two major trade fairs in the publishing sector in which our country will be the guest of honour, the Salon du Livre in Paris, in 2022, and the Buchmesse in Frankfurt, in 2024. In anticipation of these two events, we are working with the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities to ensure that the *newitalianbooks* portal will have two new versions, in French and German, so as to reinforce its international impact".
Another important occasion for the promotion of our "literary inheritance" abroad is represented by the *Week of the Italian Language in the World*. This year the 20th edition, scheduled from 19 to 25 October under the patronage of the President of the Republic, will have as its theme "Italian from word to image: graffiti illustration comics" and will thus pay particular attention to genres in which our publishing industry is distinguished by its strong international presence (illustrated children's books, comics and graphic novels). "While complying with current restrictions on international mobility," comments Vellano, "the Italian Language Week will be an important opportunity for our entire network abroad to convey a richer and more articulated image of a sector in which, thanks also to major international trade fairs such as the Children's Book Fair in Bologna and Lucca Comics and Games, we are recognized as leading figures all over the world".
Finally, with regard to the paths to internationalisation of our publishing industry, Minister Vellano points out that the process guiding institutional choices is an attempt to respond "to the requests and expectations that come from both the business world and our network of offices abroad. It is clear that the largest countries, where the main international trade fairs are held and where the most commonly used languages are spoken, are those where the largest number of our initiatives are concentrated, but we also devote a significant amount of attention to smaller peripheral locations, where our country often plays a significant role, both economically and in terms of cultural visibility".

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What do the data collected in these months by the Federation of European Publishers reveal?

The impact of the pandemic on publishing in Europe

The book sector felt very strongly the impact of the Covid-19 crisis. The Federation of European Publishers activated its network of members right at the beginning of the crisis to set up a daily exchange of information on the effects of the pandemic on the book market.

by **ENRICO TURRIN**

Enrico Turrin is the Deputy Director of the Federation of European Publishers (FEP)

This allowed us to draw an early picture of the situation - patchy and uneven, but still meaningful - and to keep it reasonably up to date throughout the worst of the emergency. The exercise highlighted the value of such a network in these difficult times, as a means to collect and share information - information that was the object of a publication back in July and upon which the present article is based.
So, what did the data collected reveal? Clearly, the immediate and most visible effect of the situation was the closure of bookshops in many countries, something unprecedented. This was the case in the five biggest markets in Europe - Germany, the UK, France, Italy and Spain - as well as in many other territories, from Portugal to Bulgaria, from Romania to Ireland.
The impact on sales was instantaneous and dramatic. Brick and mortar bookstores are everywhere the main channel for book sales, and the one most used by readers (in Italy, for example, they generate 66% of sales and are used by 74% of readers). The chilling effect on demand was obvious: sales in bookstores dropped anywhere between 75% and 95% wherever a lockdown was in place.
The impact was felt already strongly on the sales of March, despite closures having come about mid-month: in France, larger bookstores and culture superstores) had a reduction of sales of more than 50% for the whole month, and in Germany bookstores lost more than 30% of sales; by the end of March, for the lockdown period, booksellers' sales in Italy had shrunk 75%; around the same time, sales were down 78% in Portugal, 80% in Spain and 85% in Romania.
The whole value chain expected losses of 500 million € per month in Germany, and 200 million per month in Spain. The loss of the main distribution channel, plus the restrictions to movement and activities, meant for many publishers a massive reduction in the level of work, and in numerous cases a total cessation.

This meant the postponement or cancellation of many planned new titles - which in turn further affected revenues. Once again, a few examples: in the second half of March alone, French publishers postponed publication of 5,236 new titles and new editions, and by mid-May they planned to postpone on average 18% of titles scheduled for 2020 altogether; title production dropped 75% by end March in Greece, and the estimate for the whole year is a reduction of around one fifth of the total; Czech publishers postponed some 15% of their titles so far. Most strikingly, in Italy by the end of March some 23,200 titles had been cancelled or postponed (about one third for the yearly production), corresponding to 48.9 million fewer copies printed, and during the whole lockdown period title production was down two thirds. Pretty much all countries experienced some kind of disruption in publication plans.
Moreover, this happened after a series of costs had been already sustained and could not be recovered: rights acquisitions, translations, promotion, logistics and so on. Some publishers were also affected by disruption of supply chains and by a decrease in exports. A further consequence of the situation was the impossibility to organise public events, which meant that book fairs could no longer take place - nor public readings, festivals and other events that are key for authors' revenues and sales of books. Fairs affected so far include Paris, London, Bologna, Prague, Antwerp, Tallinn, Thessaloniki, Budapest, Turin, Gothenburg, Lisbon, Rome and a few more, and there is uncertainty for other events scheduled for the autumn and winter.
By the time April arrived, the book sector had basically ground to a halt in many countries, and with bookstores still closed for most if not all of the month in most areas, the crisis had its biggest impact. Sales in larger bookshops in France were down 96%, 89% for smaller local bookstores. Retail bookselling lost 47% in value in Germany (bookshops reopened on 20 April in most regions), while in Italy, by mid-month, sales in bookstores were down 85% on average since the beginning of the lockdown. By early May, booksellers in the UK were making on average 18% of their normal sales, and publishers experienced a reduction of 60% in turnover (90% for the small ones relying mostly on bookshop sales).
The booksellers that managed to keep selling books throughout the lockdown did so by strengthening their presence online, but also by finding creative ways to still reach their customers - and this was not even always possible at the worst of the crisis.
Of course, online sales increased sharply in many countries: they were up 52% in March and 180% in April in Flanders; many online platforms doubled or tripled their sales in France in early April; in the year up to mid-April, online sales in Italy for the first time ever overtook sales in stores, reaching a 47% share, and by June they had become 40% of total book sales in Romania. In the UK, in April, WH Smith's in-store sales dropped 85%, whereas online sales went up 400%.
E-book and audiobook sales also increased significantly in many countries. However, in none of the countries where bookstores had to close did online or digital sales compensate for the loss of sales in shops. Even cultural superstores, which usually have a well-established online presence, managed in most cases to contain the losses, but not to improve their sales - in France, for example, their turnover was down 30% in March and 50% in April.
What about the countries where bookstores did not have to close? The crisis still had an impact on the book market there, too, as safety measures and the reluctance of many people to go into shops translated into lower sales. Physical sales were down 30% in Denmark in March and April; and by the end of April, one of the largest bookstore chains had gone bankrupt. From March to May, sales in bookstores were down 40% in Finland, with individual stores ranging from -20% to -90%. In Latvia, where bookstores were closed on weekends, in April and May sales were down 42.3%, and 45% fewer titles were published. In Norway, by mid-April, physical sales from publishers

to bookstores were down 59%; sales were down 29% overall in April. In Sweden, between mid-March and mid-April, sales in physical bookstores were down 36.3%. In the Netherlands, most bookshops remained open or reopened shortly after the crisis outbreak; however, physical sales were affected, too, shrinking by 30% in the first two months of the emergency.
In all these countries, too, online sales experienced sharp growth, as did digital sales - in the Netherlands, for example, online sales were up 30% from the beginning of the crisis until the end of April, when they overtook offline sales for the first time. However, reports consistently pointed out that the spike in online and digital sales was not enough to compensate for the loss of physical sales.
Between April and May, bookshops were allowed to reopen almost everywhere - in UK and Ireland they had to wait for June. By then, a huge damage had been done: by end May, book sales were down 22.1% in France, 11.9% in Germany (17.5% in brick and mortar bookstores) - where turnover during lockdown shrunk 50% (70% in brick and mortar bookstores); bookstore sales had lost 38% in Spain.
Sales picked up somehow when bookstores reopened, but in most cases remained lower than pre-crisis levels, except maybe for the first week - occasional spikes in sales did not last long. So, for example, sales in May were down 20% in France, and 2.2% in Germany (-6% in retail bookselling). The first week of deconfinement, sales more than doubled in value in France in comparison with the previous week, and were also 2.7% higher than the year before; however, they dropped 8% the following week, being also 11% lower than the year before. The first week of full reopening, sales were up 0.5% in Germany through all channels - but still at -6.8% in brick and mortar bookstores. The first week of June, bookshop sales were up 37.5% in Spain compared to the previous week, but still 5.2% lower than in 2019. The week bookshops reopened in the UK, sales were up 30.4% year on year in value, and 9.3% the following week - a 14.1% value drop-off week on week. By the end of June, this slow recovery process had brough sales in Germany at -8.3% compared to the previous year (-13.9% in brick and mortar bookstores).
In countries where bookshops did not close - or not completely - the situation remained difficult, especially for brick and mortar bookstores. The total market was down 5% in May in Norway, and 4.6% in Sweden.
Still, in a few of these countries the value chain managed to limit the damage quite significantly, or even to maintain a positive result overall, thanks to the shift in sales. In Finland, growth in online sales, and in particular e-books and audiobooks, ended up more or less offsetting the losses in physical sales. In Sweden, by early June, it appeared that the market, including the ever-growing subscription services for audiobooks, had been at the level of the previous year altogether. And in the Netherlands, the market for trade books between mid-March and mid-June was down just 1%, with online sales up 33% and offline sales down 24%; Dutch books were up 1%. Altogether, sales until mid-June for trade books were up 2% by value, and 4% for Dutch books; online sales were up 20%, and offline sales were down 11%. In those countries, in any case, bookshops suffered a lot, and this may affect them in the mid- to long term.
It is difficult as yet to make forecasts for the whole year, but it is clear that the crisis has damaged the sector severely, introducing an element of great fragility in an industry that had a healthy but delicate balance. On one hand, there is the loss of sales and revenues that has already materialised, often very significantly. On the other, there are the wider range of dynamic effects of this fragility and of other circumstances related to the crisis, that might further disrupt the sector, including in countries so far left relatively unscathed.
Estimates of the possible impact for the whole of 2020 have been attempted in a few countries; the earliest estimates, made in March and April, give an idea of the gravity of the situation when the pandemic hit many European countries full on. In Spain, initial estimates pointed at potential losses of 50% of the yearly turnover in the home market, plus 70% of exports. In early May 66% of French retailers anticipated a loss of turnover of 20 to 40% over 2020.
With the easing of restrictions and the relative improving of the situation, expectations became less pessimistic, but the outlook remained worrying: according to market surveys, the annual trend for sales in France is -7% by value, but a recent government study estimates the loss for the year rather at 23% for publishes and 24% for booksellers; in Greece, annual sales are estimated to shrink by between 10 and 30%; in Slovakia, brick and mortar bookstores' turnover is deemed to take a 15% drop. In Italy, a country hit particularly hard, it was estimated in May that the entire book industry could lose between 650 and 900 million € for 2020, i.e. 20 to 30% of the total market for the year.
The reprise of activity has been difficult for many bookshops and sales outlets, with falling demand from readers and insufficient financial resources identified as the main factors of fragility for the resumption of activity. If many bookstores end up shutting down for good, the damage will be both amplified and made more permanent.
The shift of sales towards online and digital channels, in addition to not compensating in most cases for the loss of physical sales, means that a higher volume of sales stems now from less profitable segments. The postponement of many titles will also have lasting effects on the market, with the choice often being between a crowding of new releases, to the detriment of individual titles, and further delays and cancellations, which will eventually dampen the overall production for years to come.
Finally, the overall economic situation will also play an important part in how the sector is affected in the coming months. If many people lose their jobs and salaries, a reduction in consumption will be inevitable and will significantly affect book sales. Publishers indicate this as a reason for concern in many countries, including those in which the market has not experienced significant downturns.
For the time being, the only thing certain is that the book sector has sustained a serious blow from the Covid-19 pandemic, of which the precise amplitude is not yet clear. Targeted support measures would greatly help to address the fragility of the value chain and to bolster the sector's resilience, because the impact of the crisis will be felt over the months and maybe years to come. It is indispensable for public authorities to take appropriate measures to repair the damages and rebuild the future. FEP, and many of its members - AIE has been at the forefront on this - have made several suggestions to this end to decision-makers at national and EU level.

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Book fairs in the age of Covid-19

They have had to change their plans: delay, disrupt, experiment. And they have done so while continuing to engage with each other through the ALDUS network. Because in the scenario reshaped by the emergency, the functions of the network appear intact and even strengthened: to make innovation a vital tool for the achievement of the objectives periodically identified and to seek international openness as a space for dialogue.

by **ALESSANDRA ROTONDO**

In October 2019, the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) organised in collaboration with Boek.be - the book industry association of Flanders - the ALDUS event *Focus on book fairs*, during which numerous professionals from European publishing associations were able to share their experience in the organisation of book fairs belonging to the network. An excellent summary of the shared information which emerged as a result is the report by FEP Deputy Director Enrico Turrin, published in January 2020 in the K-Hub section of aldusnet.eu.
The event, moreover, epitomised the operational approach, spirit and function of ALDUS: a physical and digital platform to team up human and professional resources cooperating in global publishing. Infrastructure to link up national and international approaches, sharing problems and solutions. An opportunity to arrange rendez-vous across multiple schedules in which to articulate ideas - but above all to structure and systematise the discussion. An opportunity to work on the shared definition of a method of comparison and make it a tool for action and innovation.
October 2019 seems a lifetime ago if we think about what 2020 would soon have in store for us. In the first weeks of March, with a rapid sequence of book fairs cancellations, the coronavirus made its unequivocal entry into the publishing world.
Not just a concrete sign of the health emergency - and a stark anticipation of the socio-economic effects it would have - the cancellation of these events in many corners of Europe soon made us aware of how global the scale of what we were about to face was.
In October 2019, the book fairs of the ALDUS network communicated with each other by sharing innovative formats tested, objectives achieved and those to be aimed at. From their experiences, innovation emerged as a transversal framework through which to interpret and build the future: publishing

content, the community of readers, the involvement of both the general and the professional public and the infrastructure of the fair itself. From these accounts, ALDUS was confirmed both as a network for sharing innovation formats and as an intrinsically innovative player, through the events, conferences and initiatives organized under its name at the various European fairs. These are all features that appear intact and strengthened, despite the upheaval of recent months. It is as if the ALDUS model was implicitly preparing us for something we could not have foreseen would happen. But it did happen.

It was in this context that the brochure *European Book Fairs. Facts and Figures 2020* was published in early May. While, on the one hand, it could only reflect the uncertainty and peculiar nature of the period, on the other hand it reaffirmed the importance of this space for dialogue between the book fairs and the will to keep it alive. The update collects profiles of the 18 fairs belonging to ALDUS (now 19, with the arrival of Book World Prague), distributed across 14 European countries. Editorially completed just before the beginning of the health emergency, it gives a snapshot of the infrastructure of book fairs in Europe in a pose that they would have to abandon soon afterwards.

Among the many cancellations and postponements, many entities immediately began to explore alternative solutions to try to get around the restrictions introduced by the spread of the new coronavirus: from the opening of digital platforms designed for internationalisation to the partial reconfiguration online of the programming of initiatives, both for the general and professional public. Once again, ALDUS is both witness and incubator of these processes, and by facilitating comparison between the solutions experimented so far already helps us to grasp constants and glimpse trends.

On the subject of digital rethinking of meeting formats, the special edition of the Bologna Children's Book Fair took place at the beginning of May and was "visited" by over 60,000 users with a total of 470,000 page views and 2,000,000 impressions recorded on the event's social channels. A partner of ALDUS and pioneer of the spirit of the network - at the intersection between local and global themes and experiences, traditionally accustomed to reading and experiencing publishing content through the framework and tools of innovation – the online edition of Bologna Fair featured two initiatives organised in the framework of ALDUS. One is the BCBF Global Rights Exchange, a virtual hub for buying and selling publishing rights to allow exhibiting publishers and literary agents to present their titles, make and receive offers and schedule video meetings. This platform will remain active until the end of 2020. The other is the online edition of the *Dust or magic* masterclass, a consolidated appointment dedicated to anyone involved or interested in digital media for children and teenagers

A few days later - from 14 to 17 May - the Turin Book Fair also offered its public a special digital edition: the Salone Extra. In four days, 140 guests from all over the world had more than 60 meetings, naturally through streaming (the contents were watched in total for more than 64,000 minutes). More than 200 bookstores throughout Italy joined the SalTo in Libreria initiative simultaneously and 360 "restart books" were reported by publishers who would have been present at the event, ideally participating with the covers of the titles by means of which they will be aiming for a recovery. The digital experience of the Salone also generated a summer spin-off, the SalTo Notte. "In a historic moment in which the possibility of movement is returning to the world, but the direction to take is not clear", this is a trip to Italian cities to discover sites of culture and literature, streamed through the fair's website and channels late at night on Tuesdays.

An interesting virtual experience within the network has been piloted by Book World Prague (cancelled this year) which kept the dialogue with its audience alive through a calendar of meetings with writers. These were streamed from 8 April to 4 May, having as a stage the same historical building that would have hosted the fair. The initiative was linked to the Donio crowdfunding platform, through which users could send donations to support local publishers through the purchase of books, then donated to less well-off sections of the population.

The Leipzig Book Fair, due to be held from 12 to 15 March but cancelled for 2020, instead focused on a mix of initiatives undertaken by different stakeholders - partly autonomous and partly coordinated by the Leipzig Fair and Börsenverein. On the one hand, this leveraged the active role of the media (digital and traditional) already supporting the initiative, which used the slots and spaces planned to cover the fair to bring meetings, readings, interviews with authors live on air or online so that that the public could enjoy remotely. At the same time, it drew on the social involvement of exhibitors, bloggers and influencers of the book world, which has often followed spontaneous and autonomous paths both in the development of formats and contents by setting up hashtag campaigns, virtual readings and events.

The appointment with the Lisbon Book Fair was confirmed, but postponing the dates from June to 27 August - 13 September 2020, and introducing special measures to ensure health safety. The event, which this year celebrates its 90th anniversary, continues the collaboration between the Portuguese Association of Publishers and Booksellers (APEL) and the City Council of Lisbon, confirmed until 2022. Renewing the previous agreement signed in 2017, this collaboration translates into financial support of 120,000 euros per year for three years and a strengthening of synergies with the fair, publishers' association and local government aiming to achieve the same goals: first and foremost the promotion of reading. The partnership also has the objective of ensuring stability over time to the event, preserving its organizational structure and having particular regard for the "educational" function of the fair, in collaboration with the network of municipal libraries of Lisbon, aimed at the involvement of younger audiences, children and young people.

At the time this article was written, autumn schedules have been confirmed for Napoli Città Libro (8 - 11 October) and the Vienna International Book Fair (11 - 25 November), while the International Istanbul Book Fair (originally planned from 31 October to 8 November) is postponed to new dates to be announced.

In Spain, the difficulties arising from the pandemic made necessary adapt the format of LIBER (originally planned from 7 to 9 October in Barcelona) and to move its dates to 27-29 October. LIBER 2020 will combine a face-to-face format with a virtual one organised by the Spanish Publishers' Federation and Fira de Barcelona. Instead of the traditional Exhibitor's Fair, a different participation format will be offered to exhibitors. Institutional events will be structured around the face-to-face format, while the agenda of commercial meetings and professional events will be organised virtually.

On the other hand, the Göteborg Book Fair (24 to 27 September) opted for an entirely digital format, with a streaming programme broadcast through several channels and media to reach a wider and more diverse audience, a new online platform and a partnership with the country's major bookstores (the Akademibokhandeln chain and the online store Bokus) for the sale of books. There are two thematic containers. The Göteborg Book Fair Bildung Hub, in the first two days, is dedicated to topics at the intersection between the world of books and the world of school. It addresses professionals from the fields of didactics, teaching and libraries but is equally appealing to members of the general public interested in social issues. Among the dominant themes of the Göteborg Book Fair Bildung Hub's programme

is the promotion of reading and digital culture. Then follows the Göteborg Book Fair Literature Festival, from 26 to 27 September, more traditionally focused on presenting recently published books to the public. But there is no lack of space dedicated to poetry, theatre and translation.
The Madrid book fair, after being postponed from May to October, has been cancelled for this year; a digital programme will be held in the same days the fair was supposed to take place (2-18 October).
Similarly, following the cancellation of the Antwerp Book Fair - scheduled for November - the Flemish national radio and television broadcaster VRT and Boek. be have joined forces to organise an alternative fair from Sunday 1 to Wednesday 11 November with a packed programme of television and radio events putting books, readers and authors at the centre of the schedule. It is also worth mentioning "the book marathon" that radio host Tom De Cock is "running" in the Antwerp studios, interviewing over 300 Flemish and international authors in ten days. This is backed up, all over Flanders, by a flying reporter gathering instead the thoughts of readers (as well as other authors) encountered in book-centred locations: bookstores, schools, libraries, cultural centres.
Frankfurt Buchmesse (14-18 October 2020) will take place this year with an extensive digital programme for publishing professionals, exciting online events at BOOKFEST digital for an international readership, as well as live events in Frankfurt on the ARD Book Fair Stage in the Festhalle and some 80 events as part of BOOKFEST city. The book fair's traditional on-site exhibition is being cancelled this year due to the corona pandemic. The fair has received public support of 4 million Euros. The funds will be used to enable users to participate in the wide-ranging digital formats provided by Frankfurter Buchmesse. This includes Frankfurt Rights, the platform for the international exchange of rights and licenses where publishers can present their company and titles and create a catalogue of available rights. Operators interested in buying can browse the platform using filters and keywords, looking for promising titles and new business partners from all over the world. Thanks to the funds, editors and rights and licensing managers will be able to use the platform free of charge and will have continued free access for nine months after the fair is over. THE ARTS+ also goes digital, with a programme of presentations, masterclasses and pitches aimed at promoting partnerships and advancing business at the intersection between the publishing industry and creative industries.
BOOKFEST, the festival of reading and culture that animates the city of Frankfurt during the days of the fair, takes place physically and, for the first time, virtually as BOOKFEST digital. So alongside this wide-ranging event, which brings poetry competitions, readings, artistic performances and debates onto the streets of the city, the new BOOKFEST digital offers a digital programme with contributions from various continents, broadcast from morning to evening on Saturday, 17 October 2020, on the Buchmesse website and its social channels, freely accessible to viewers from all over the world buchmesse.de.
After 18 consecutive editions, Più libri più liberi, the national fair for small and medium publishing in Rome, organized since its inception by the Associazione Italiana Editori, is for the first time skipping its appointment. "Until the last possible moment we studied the feasibility of carrying out the fair in safety, but a sense of responsibility had to prevail," says the President of the event Annamaria Malato. While awaiting a fully fledged relaunch in 2021, once again in the splendid Fuksas' Cloud, at the Eur, the AIE has joined *Insieme - lettori, autori, editori*, a book festival promoted by Roma Capitale, the Lazio Region and the Centre for books and reading (Cepell), in Rome from 1 to 4 October. "A special event for a special year, designed specifically for the situation we are experiencing" comments AIE President Ricardo Franco Levi. "It's nice to know that in such a difficult moment, books and reading offer the chance to create a system in the interests of the whole community".
The Covid-19 pandemic has shocked the world, our world, and redesigned our interpretive categories. It weighs on our industry's accounts and on the sustainability of creative industries, on their capacity to continue to do their work with dignity, making our lives fuller and more beautiful. Having a space for international exchanges - to discuss what has happened, the solutions that have been tried, the paths that have been taken, the needs that have been felt, the know-how that has been deployed and that needs to be developed - is essential to raise awareness of what is happening and to rethink the future. Such international dialogue will continue with ALDUS Up: the new project phase, co-funded in the framework of Creative Europe programme and starting in September 2020 will further develop the book fairs network to reach a pan European dimension and broad its scope to cope with core topics for the book sectors.

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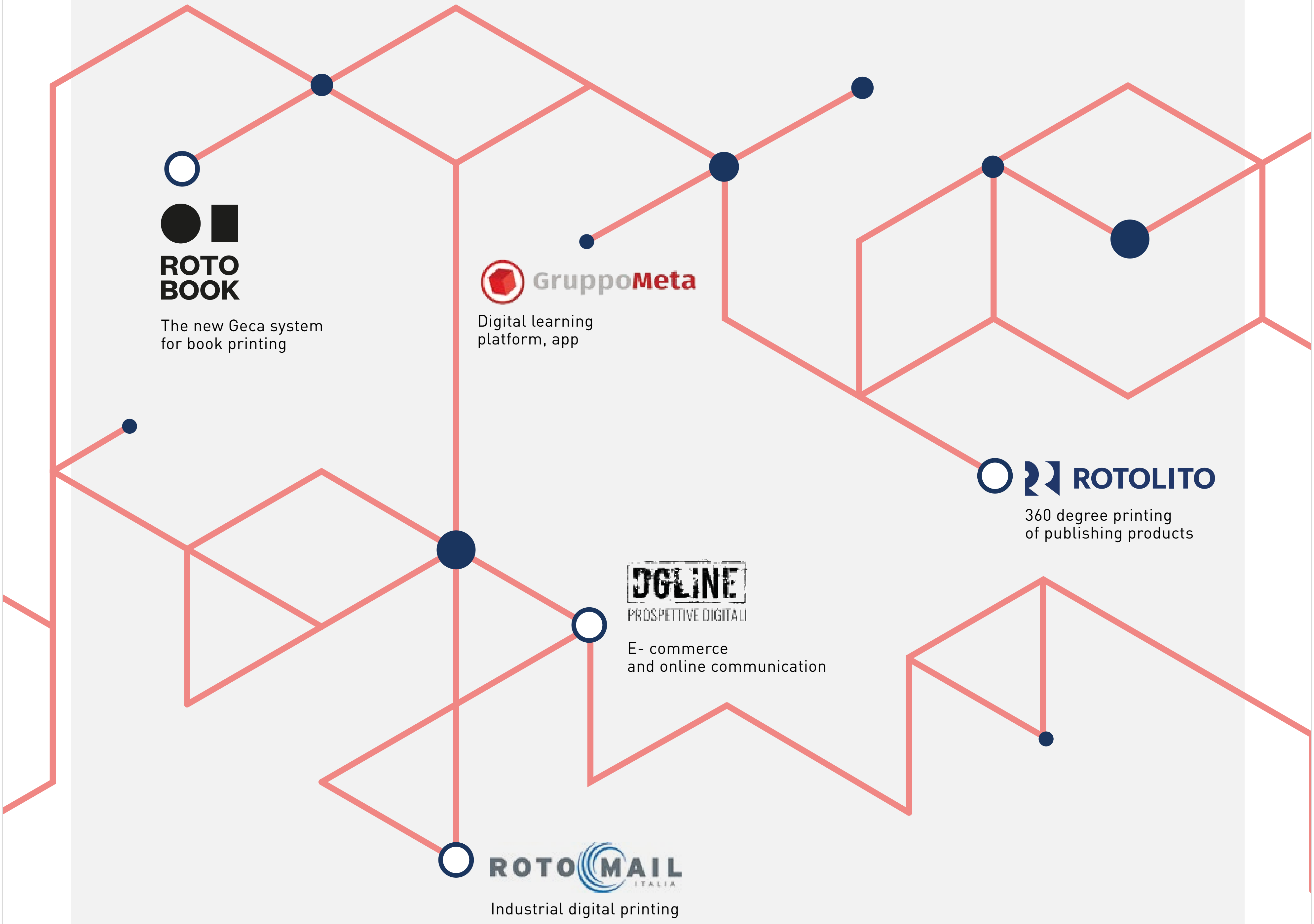

DGLINE
This is a web agency, Google Partner and Google Apps Authorized Reseller. It develops web projects, online marketing and communication strategies for publishers. It offers e-commerce solutions, cloud management, consulting and courses on Google Adwords, Google Analytics, Facebook Ads, online marketing and social networks..
www.dgline.it

GRUPPO META
Designs and develops learning environments and platforms for major publishing houses involved in education and training. Digital solutions consisting of liquid books, pdf readers, exercise environments, apps for web and mobile content consultation, virtual classes.
www.gruppometa.it

ROTOBOOK
The new platform created by Geca and tailored for publishers. It is a highly efficient book printing system that combines speed, print and binding quality with a high level of customer service.
www.rotobook.it

ROTOLITO
For over 40 years Rotolito has produced every type of printed book, in colour or black and white, in small and large runs. Thanks to a wide range of technologies, including digital presses, flatbed offset machines and rotary presses, we are able to meet the book printing needs of small and large publishers worldwide.
www.rotolito.com

ROTOMAIL
This is a digital printing company that develops and supplies software and hardware solutions in the printing field. It has developed a portal for publishers that enables them to manage the entire Print on demand process: www.podrotomail.it for all publishers, www.podeditori.it for publishers distributed by Messaggerie libri.
www.rotomail.it

* AIE Network is a service which since 2014 has helped publishers to get to know technology companies offering innovative services and solutions for various activities in the paper/digital ecosystem. The companies - screened by AIE (Italian Publishers Association) - offer particularly advantageous economic conditions to publishers associated with AIE to access their services. Companies in the network, in turn, can benefit from a channel and forms of privileged dialogue with publishers.
For information: segreteria@aie.it

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