# The Polish Book Market

2021



# The general state of the Polish publishing market

he Polish book market accounts for almost 7 per cent of the European publishing market<sup>1</sup>, while Poland's population accounts for 8.5 per cent of the total population of the European Union. At the end of 2020, in the ISBN database maintained by the National Library, there were 64,981 publishers registered in Poland, though not more than 2,000-2,500 of them are active (publishing several books in the course of the year).

There are many factors to imply that the extremely demanding creative sector represented by the Polish book market has significant potential for growth, including a relatively low level of readership, the strong role of prices as a basic tool for competition among the individual segments of the market, consistent growth in activity by institutional programmes, and financial contributions from the state budget for the development of readership and in support of the publishing sector.

At the same time, many internal market factors are limiting this growth potential. The most critical of these include: over-exploitation of the sale price of books to the end user as a basic tool for promotion and marketing, unequal commercial margins and sales wars between individual distribution channels, and also the low profitability of entities in the retail sector resulting from the aforementioned policy.

#### Market share in 2020

	Number in group	Market share in %
<b>Large publishers</b> annual income > € 4 million	38	71.0
<b>Medium-sized publishers</b> annual income from € 220,000 to € 4 million	260	25.6
Small publishers annual income < € 200,000, publishing at least two titles p.a.	Over 1,600	2.9
Irregular publishers producing occasional publications	Over 4,000	0.5

Rynek książki w Polsce 2020 by Biblioteka Analiz Sp. z o.o

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://fep-fee.eu/European-Book-Publishing-1089



# The positive impact of winning the Nobel Prize

The greatest event of the year 2019 in Poland, and not just on the publishing market, was when the Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to Olga Tokarczuk, the author of novels including Flights and The Books of Jacob. This is a major success for Poland, and it has led to enormous interest in Olga Tokarczuk's work. Sales of her books have been beating all the records. Just minutes after the announcement that she had won the Nobel Prize they began to sky-rocket, with not just printed editions but also e-books and audiobooks selling in vast numbers. Stocks of her books soon ran out, so her publisher, Wydawnictwo Literackie, immediately printed extra copies, doubling the original printruns. In the period from October 2019 to July 2020 1.37 mln printed copies of books by Olga Tokarczuk were sold, as well as 62,000 e-books, 40,000 mp3 audiobooks and 18,600 audiobooks on CD.

Undoubtedly, the Nobel Prize for Olga Tokarczuk has played a significant role in shaping the tastes of readers. In the past year a slight increase in readership has been recorded, which researchers ascribe to the decision of the Swedish Academy, which in their view has also led to an increase in the number of publications defined as ambitious literature, narrative fiction, novels and short stories, including works by contemporary Polish authors.

Interest in reading has also been boosted by screen adaptations, television serials and computer games, the best example of which is the success on Netflix of *The Witcher*, a serial based on the fantasy novels by Andrzej Sapkowski.

# The COVID-19 pandemic

At the start of the pandemic, when on 12 March 2020 the government introduced lockdown measures to contain its spread, there was a sharp drop in sales and most of the existing commercial outlets were closed. A further blow for the publishing industry was the lack of book fairs, literary festivals, public meetings with authors and other literary events. The pandemic obstructed every aspect of book selling and publishing. The publishers were forced to postpone publication dates, to sell books through their own online bookstores, and to include special offers.

Fortunately, books accompanied Poles in isolation, and the time spent at home was conducive to catching up on reading.

The market is changing because of online and mailorder sales (with an increasing number of personal pick-up points), and the COVID-19 pandemic has speeded up digitalisation processes and changed consumer habits, making people more willing to shop online.

There is a visible increase in both e-book and audio-book sales. There is growing interest in subscription services, including e-books and audiobooks. According to the research, 7 per cent of Poles use audio-books.

For the time being, the scale of economic and cultural change brought about by the ongoing fight against the global pandemic cannot be estimated. Despite the pandemic crisis, the book industry's financial performance for 2020 was unexpectedly good. Interest in books (in paper and electronic versions) has increased, subscription-based access to books is gaining popularity. Companies associated with the e-commerce industry can especially look to a positive future online, where the shopping traffic has moved.

# // The Polish Book Market 2021

#### Income from book sales

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Income from book sales at publishers' market prices (in zloty mln)	2,370	2,320	2,250	2,340	2,550
Percentage growth	-1%	-5%	-3%	4%	9%
Income in € mln	559	528	523	532	553

Rynek książki w Polsce 2020 by Biblioteka Analiz

In 2020 the value of the Polish book market totalled 2.55 bn zlotys in wholesale prices (at which publishers sell books to their distributors). Compared with 2019, when it totalled 2.34 bn zlotys, the market grew by 9 per cent.

In 2020 employment in the publishing sector remained steady at a total of 4,634 employees.

# Income from book sales by category (%)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Mainstream literature	12.1	12.8	14.5	18.0	21.1
Children's books	8.4	11.1	13.5	16.0	20.0
School set books	0.4	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0
School textbooks	28.0	26.6	27.5	25.0	25.2
Academic and professional books	39.8	37.2	31.2	28.3	22.4
Illustrated books	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.7	4.5
Religious books	3.6	3.4	4.2	3.8	3.6
Other (including musical scores and maps)	2.4	2.0	1.5	1.2	1.2

Rynek książki w Polsce 2020 by Biblioteka Analiz

The last few years have seen the growth of the commercial book sector, including (broadly understood) belles-lettres. The value of sales of general non-fiction has also risen by several percentage points, and there has been dynamic growth in the quantity and value of sales of books for children and young adults.



# **Number of copies sold**

In 2020 the total number of copies of printed publications was 100 mln, as estimated by Nielsen<sup>2</sup>.

The average print-run decreased by 3.7 per cent, from 2,208 to 2,126 copies.

# **Book production (number of titles)**

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
33,454	34,235	36,260	33,919	36,138	30,391

Polish Publishing in Figures 2020, National Library

From year to year there is strong growth in the popularity of self-publishing, now that book publishing has become accessible to the wider public in terms of both cost and technical requirements.

# **Belles-lettres** (number of titles)

	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Adult	Children's								
Published titles	6,814	2,717	7,201	3,073	6,970	2,819	6,747	3,098	6,041	3,002
First editions	6,338	2,605	6,670	2,893	6,590	2,719	6,355	2,977	5,688	2,816
Re-editions	476	112	531	180	380	100	392	121	353	186

Polish Publishing in Figures 2020, National Library

The range of publications is ever wider and more diverse. There is no lack of foreign literature, and domestic literature also enjoys a very strong position.

# Original books and translations (total)

	2016		2016 2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Adult	Children's	Adult	Children's	Adult	Children's	Adult	Children's	Adult	Children's
Published titles	23,279	7,068	24,294	7,534	23,007	6,914	22,890	6,855	19,079	5,963
Belles-lettres for adults	3,758	3,056	3,841	2,973	3,780	3,190	3,988	2,549	3,693	2,185

Polish Publishing in Figures 2020, National Library

 $<sup>^2\</sup> https://rynek-ksiazki.pl/aktualnosci/klienci-indywidualni-kupili-100-mln-egz-ksiazek/lienci-indywidualni-kupili-kupili-kupili-kupili-kupili-kupili-kupili-kupili$ 

# Average book prices

Retail price	2017	2018	2019	2020
Zlotys	43.5	43.9	44.03	45.52
€	9.5	9.59	9.62	9.94

Rynek książki w Polsce 2020 by Biblioteka Analiz

The last few years have been a period of rising retail prices, the result not just of objective increases in production costs (printing, paper, logistics, etc.) and rising inflation but also of a strong tendency to offer high discounts in retail sales, including the sale of new publications being issued for the first time.

Over the past few years, book prices have only risen minimally, yet many readers think of books as expensive. This impression is mainly based on the cover prices, which are artificially inflated because of the almost inevitable reductions that are very soon made at retail sales points. At the same time, the supply of so-called cheap books is immense (copies sold at a reduced price by the publishers or wholesalers).

In 2014 publishers' and booksellers' organisations alike were involved in taking action to introduce rules for the uniform pricing of books. A draft Book

Act was prepared, foreseeing the introduction of fixed prices for books, modelled on regulations that exist in France and Germany. In 2015 the draft was debated in the Sejm (the Polish parliament), but did not gain approval. The topic returned in the second half of 2016, underwent wide public consultation conducted by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, and in the first half of 2017 was submitted to parliament again, but has not proceeded to debate.

Recently, the suggestion has once again been firmly proposed to the government because of the need to find solutions to the critical situation prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed act would primarily protect independent bookstores by increasing their competitiveness compared with other sales outlets. Its assumptions include selling each title at a single price, whatever the outlet, for a period of six months from the original publication date.

# Poland's ten largest book publishers

- 1. Nowa Era / nowaera.pl
- 2. Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne / wsip.com.pl
- 3. Wolters Kluwer Polska / wolterskluwer.pl
- 4. Dressler / dressler.com.pl
- 5. Grupa MAC / grupaedukacyjna.pl
- 6. Pearson Central Europe / pearson.pl
- 7. C.H. Beck / beck.com.pl
- 8. Grupa Wydawnicza Foksal / gwfoksal.pl
- 9. Grupa Znak / wydawnictwoznak.pl
- 10. Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Oświatowe / gwo.pl

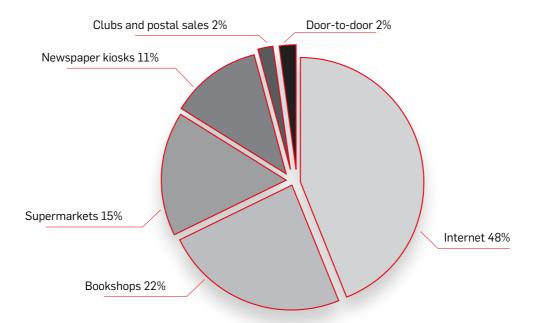
Rynek książki w Polsce 2020 by Biblioteka Analiz Sp. z o.o.

In 2020 the share of the five largest publishing entities on the market (Nowa Era, WSiP, Wolters Kluwer, Dressler and Grupa MAC) totalled 40.9 per cent. A year earlier the figure was 43.8 per cent.

# **Distribution**

Wholesalers have a large, approximately 46 per cent share of the market. The total number of wholesalers is falling. The biggest firms with national scope are Ateneum, Platon, FK Olesiejuk, Azymut, and Edu Książka.

#### **Distribution market share**



here is dynamic growth in online sales, the value of which is rising above all at the cost of sales at physical outlets, especially independent bookstores, which since 2014 have been deprived of the opportunity to distribute a major part of their stock of school textbooks.

However, online sales are mainly driving competition on the basis of price, offering discounts on new publications equal to as much as 35-40 per cent of the retail price.

Stable sales are also being generated by newspaper kiosks and shops, which offer titles from the best-selling genres of women's literature and crime fiction, in cheaper, pocket-sized editions, and other top selling books. Sales in the supermarket sector have dropped slightly, above all thanks to the commercial activity of discount chains, and are driven by a combination of an attractive range of topics (popular fiction, nonfiction, manuals, educational books, children's books) at lower prices than the mainstream, on average 25-35 per cent lower. The largest contribution is being shown by the Portuguese firm Jeronimo Martens' Biedronka chain, whose permanent product range now includes cyclical promotional campaigns devoted to individual types of publications available

on the market. The chain has recorded its best results in sales of publications for children, self-help books, bestselling fiction (popular, crime-and-thriller, and romantic fiction) and non-fiction (mainly biographies and history books).

A new phenomenon is the sale of books at sales points where they were not previously on offer, e.g. at post offices. The Polish Post Office is filling gaps in the publishing market in many places where there are no competing shops representing the book industry. The Polish Post Office has more than 7,500 sites, including post office branches and agencies in very small towns and villages. In 2020 these outlets sold 3 mln books, including 2 mln books for children and young people.

Sales of books at press outlets and discount stores are also growing (the Biedronka chain of convenience stores annually sells approx. 12 mln copies, i.e. slightly more than one of the largest online bookstores, Bonito.pl).

Traditional bookselling is suffering a decline in comparison with other sales outlets.



# **Bookshops**

The number of independent bookshops is steadily decreasing as a result of various factors. As well as a general decline of interest in books, economic factors such as high rents for premises, strong competition from large retail firms (not just bookstore chains but also supermarkets) are having a notable effect, as are the price wars initiated by the largest market players. The decline increased distinctly in 2020, when online sales increased.

# Number of bookshops

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1,880	1,820	1,890	1,914	1,815

National Bookshop Database, obk.pik.org.pl

he Polish Book Chamber is carrying out a long-term project to develop a National Bookshop Database, financed by the Polish Book Institute. At the end of 2020, 1,815 bookshops were registered on the database. As a result of the increasing problems affecting traditional physical bookshops, in the course of 2020, 100 bookshops disappeared from the database.

Unfortunately, in 2020, because of the COVID-19 crisis more bookshops closed down, including stores that belonged to large chains located in shopping malls where visitor numbers have dropped, as well as small family-owned bookstores.

The present crisis on the retail market has forced many independent bookshops to set up online stores and to expand their product lines to include stationery.

The years 2016-2019 were a period of intense change in the chain store sector. Alongside the collapse of the Matras chain, there was dynamic growth for entities such as Świat Książki Bookshops, BookBook and MoleMole (which is financially associated with Empik, the market leader among physical bookshops). However, in May 2020 Empik decided to close the MoleMole bookshops, on the principle that in the present economic situation it could see no potential for the growth of this chain.

However, as these entities are tied to others in terms of capital and organisation, there is progressive nar-

rowing of sales in favour of the products offered by selected publishing firms and a gradual limitation of a product range fully representative of Polish book production.

Wholesale discounts average approximately 42-55 per cent. Bookstore chains work at discounts ranging from 42-50 per cent, yet in some instances direct cooperation is burdened by extra costs. Independent bookshops work at a discount of 27-35 per cent in the case of so-called colour books, and 15-20 per cent for textbooks. Booksellers supplied directly by the publishers buy at a discount of up to 35-47 per cent (apart from large bookselling chains such as Empik), on top of which the publisher may offer a higher discount in exchange for an increase in the sales of their books and greater commitment to promoting their titles. In addition, where there is direct cooperation between the publishers and the leading chains, the discount on the cover price for the retail bookseller can be as high as 60 per cent.

In 2017 the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage launched a grant programme called "Partnership for a book", focusing inter alia on support for bookshops and libraries through the development of professional skills via training, and also activities aimed at promoting bookshops and developing readership at public libraries. In 2017 almost 267 projects were implemented within the scope of the programme. Under the programme for 2020, about 300 applications received funding, for total financing of over 5 mln zlotys per year.

# Main bookselling chains

## Empik / empik.com

Empik is Poland's biggest bookselling chain and omnichannel leader, which now has almost 300 physical stores and the Empik.com online store. The company's complete range of goods includes 2.5 mln products, and the number is rising (books, CDs, DVDs, beauty products, computer games, stationery, electronics and household goods). The average number of books on offer is 435,000, with 23 mln copies sold in 2020.

In 2020 e-book sales rose by 34 per cent and audio-book sales rose by 47 per cent.

In 2019 the company started developing Empik Premium, a subscription service that reduces the cost to customers by providing free delivery, seasonal offers and permanent discounts on a wide range of products. In just one year since Premium was launched, the company's services portfolio has expanded. A new loyalty programme called Empik Premium Free has replaced its predecessor, Mój Empik, by providing customers with free delivery to pick-up points. Over 6 mln users are already taking advantage of the Premium and Premium Free programmes.

Towards the end of 2017, the company launched an app called Empik Go, which makes it easy to select and use e-books, audiobooks and podcasts, including Empik Go originals. In 2020 subscriptions increased by 273 per cent. In the first half of 2020 Empik introduced Empik Music, a new streaming service, which has further strengthened its position on the Polish music market.

The pandemic prevented Empik from holding its two regular combined literary festival-and-bookfair events "Apostrof" and "Przecinek i Kropka", and also caused the cancellation of promotional events such as meetings with authors, readings and signings. The company was quick to respond with a comprehensive programme of live-stream, interactive events and concerts, providing viewers with a unique opportunity to enjoy this entertainment at home during lockdown. The #PremieraOnline and #EmpikMusicLive series have become popular sources of domestic entertainment, attracting millions of viewers online.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to significant changes in consumer habits, including a major shift to e-commerce. In May, Empik organised its first Virtual Book Fair, combining the convenience of online shopping with the exclusive offers and meetings with authors that are traditional features of physical book fairs. The event was a success, achieving sales of 120,000 books and attracting more than 600,000 viewers to 33 events online. A second Virtual Book Fair was held in October 2020.

# Świat Książki / swiatksiazki.pl

This is one of the most rapidly developing bookstore chains. The owner of the chain is a company called Dressler, which in 2013 acquired 36 bookshops from Weltbild. In the years that followed it opened further stores, and at the end of 2020 had 125 outlets. The new bookshops are situated in shopping centres and malls as well as on the main commercial streets in their localities. Every year Świat Książki's bookshops are given high marks for the best customer service in

the bookselling industry on the Daymakerindex survey measuring customer experience. The company also runs its own online bookstore, swiatksiazki.pl. Its customers can collect their orders free of charge from the chain's bookshops. The chain's marketing policy involves two rotating promotional campaigns, one offering "A second book at half price" and the other "3 for the price of 2".



# BookBook / bookbook.pl

BookBook bookstores are part of the nationwide chain established by an enterprise called Dom Książki, which includes 45 shops. It is a joint venture between two individuals, six publishing houses (Czarna Owca, Helion, Prószyński Media, Publicat, Rebis, and Zysk i S-ka) and the book wholesaler Super Siódemka. This is the first occasion on which

a group of Polish publishers have joined ranks and taken over a chain of bookstores. In 2016-2018 most of the bookshops in this chain were rebranded and now operate as BookBook stores. Most of the chain's bookshops are situated in small localities, and their characteristics are determined by the purchasing power and preferences of the local consumer.

# Książnica Polska / ksiaznica.pl

This firm operates mainly in north-eastern Poland where it runs retail operations and owns 50 bookshops, as well as an online bookshop called Czytay. pl. The company performs 1.2 mln transactions annually and is visited by 5 mln customers. For several years the company has been developing

a partnership programme aimed at independent bookshops, which in exchange for a percentage of income offers to modernise the shops, supplement their product range, guarantee their orders and support their marketing and promotion efforts.

# Online book sales

Online book sales have noted a steady rise in value in recent years. Online bookshops offer not only new titles, but also a large selection of books from publishers' backlists, which are harder to find, and often not available in physical bookshops. At the same time, e-commerce in books is the arena for the fiercest price competition, which has an extremely strong effect on the entire book retail sector and the general state of the publishing industry in Poland.

One of the major trends typifying retail book sales in Poland is the rapid and progressive migration of customers from the physical sales sector (traditional bookshops) to online bookstores. At the same time, customers whose purchasing decisions continue to

be guided above all by price do not show loyalty to any particular e-bookshop but migrate between the various firms, choosing the best offers as and when they arise, based on the cost and conditions of delivery as well as the price of the book. Online sales, via the bookseller's own website, are now run by the publishers too, which gives them a source of direct income and an opportunity to sell their backlisted books.

Income from online sales of printed books in 2020 totalled over 1.2 bln zlotys. Currently there are several dozen firms active on the Polish market whose annual sales income exceeds 10 mln zlotys.

# Bookstores that package and deliver books abroad

// Allegro.pl // Gandalf.com.pl // Helion.pl // Swiatksiazki.pl
// Bonito.pl // Empik.com // Taniaksiazka.pl

# Online book sales

According to a survey entitled "E-commerce in Poland 2020. Gemius for E-commerce Poland", which describes the online sales market, the best-known brand involved in online book sales is Empik (61 per cent), followed by the Allegro platform (21 per cent) and Taniaksiazka.pl (7 per cent). Three other brands are recognised by no more than 4 per cent of those canvassed: Swiatksiazki.pl, OLX and Merlin.pl; and four others by 2 per cent: Bonito, Gandalf, Mediamarkt and Amazon.

## Allegro.pl

This is Poland's leading auction website and online platform for the book trade. Allegro is used on a monthly basis by 18 mln Poles. In autumn 2020 the company launched on the Warsaw stock exchange. Many market analysts now regard the Allegro.pl service as the country's biggest online bookseller too. However, its sales involve the primary market (new books) as well as the secondary one (used books). In recent years income totalling an annual

185-190 mln zlotys has been achieved from book sales via the Allegro platform. The share of sales of new books on Allegro totalled 83 per cent in this period. In 2020 Allegro sold a total of 18 mln books (a 73 per cent increase). Customers show the biggest interest in publications from the following categories: belles-lettres, popular literature, nonfiction, school textbooks, books for children and YA, and popular science books.

# Bonito.pl

This is Poland's biggest online bookstore, which has been in operation since 2006. It offers a range of 230,000 titles and processes 300,000 orders per month. It has the fastest growth in gross income, from 2 mln zlotys in 2009 to 216 mln in 2019. The company owes its growth to its aggressive pricing policy and the large range of services that it provides.

Its customers can receive their orders via the Polish postal service, via courier firms, and 47 company delivery points, located in 14 cities, including Warsaw, Kraków, Bielsko-Biała, Katowice, Poznań, Lublin, Łódź, Gdańsk, Rzeszów, Wrocław. Apart from its basic sales outlet, the owner of Bonito.pl also runs the discount online store, Aros.pl.

# Merlin.pl

Merlin.pl is one of the oldest Polish brands associated with online sales. For some years Merlin.pl was the leading online retail bookseller, with about 50 per cent of its profit resulting from online book sales. In 2017 the e-store became part of Merlin Group S.A.,

within which three brands operate: the Merlin.pl and Cdp.pl internet stores. Merlin Group is also the owner of the online stores Nieprzeczytane.pl, Profit24.pl, Mestro.pl and Smarkacz.pl.



# Taniaksiazka.pl

This is one of the most dynamically developing e-commerce companies, operating in north-eastern Poland. In its 15 years of activity this e-store has changed from a small family firm based in one little

room into a thriving bookshop with income of over 100 mln zlotys. It has more than 400,000 books on offer. It also has some retail outlets, in Białystok, Warsaw, Ełk, Grajewo and Suwałki.

# Amazon.pl

The Polish version of Amazon officially launched at the beginning of March 2021. The American giant's debut in Poland had been expected for a few years already – in autumn 2017, Amazon Germany started operating in Poland. Since spring 2021, users can buy and sell on the Polish version of the platform.

Amazon is developing gradually and methodically, analysing the situation in the market. In May 2021, the Amazon.pl website was visited by 4.2 million users.

# E-books

he share of digital publishing sales is estimated at 8.5 per cent of the total market value expressed as revenue at publishers' selling prices. The pandemic has led to a turnaround in the market for digital books. Platforms selling e-books recorded a significant growth in sales in 2020. Increasing activity by publishers and a change in the habits of readers, who now have a bolder attitude to e-books, are having major significance for e-readership.

The number of different e-books on offer is now in excess of 62,000.

Towards the end of 2019 there was a longawaited reduction in the rate of VAT on e-books, from 23 to 5 per cent. However, the overwhelming majority of publishers have not changed the prices of their e-books, which has allowed them to achieve greater income from digital products, and has encouraged them to broaden their range and to invest in new e-book catalogues.

According to research by the National Library, e-books and audiobooks do not compete with traditional printed paper books, but are supplementary to them. Readers choose the form in which they wish to receive a publication according to their current needs and preferences.

New publications with the highest sales potential are issued in three formats simultaneously: paper, e-book and audiobook. Most publishers have adopted the principle that all new publications are issued as e-books (as long as the licence allows for it, and not including illustrated publications), whereas on average 1 in 12 titles is also issued as an audiobook.

The estimated value of e-book sales in 2020 totalled 216 mln zlotys, representing growth of 32 per cent compared with 2019. Thus the sector maintained its two-figure growth trend. Publishing houses recording the highest value for digital product sales noted a rise in income of even 200 per cent.

The burden of market development lies on the one hand with the publishers, who are responsible for growth in the number of titles available in digital form in the Polish language, and on the other on retail vendors, whose marketing activities create demand and generate higher sales.

A sales model for digital books through subscriptions has been gaining ground in Poland since 2012. This form of distribution is an alternative to transaction sales, through which the reader becomes the owner of the digital book. By contrast, the subscription model provides temporary access to the relevant title in exchange for a fixed payment (e.g. for 30 days). There was a dynamic change in 2020, with more and more Poles using subscriptions.

The leader in this sector is a platform called Legimi, which since 2015 has also sold e-books in a package together with an e-reader for one zloty, within a subscription model that provides access to a database of more than 60,000 titles. The service is also available from Poland's biggest mobile phone operators (Plus, T-Mobile and Play), and audiobooks are also included. A similar service providing e-books and audiobooks on subscription is also now on offer from Empik Go. In Poland the distribution of e-books via subscription models (e.g. Ibuk, Legimi) to institutional customers, above all public libraries, is also gradually but consistently growing.

The biggest e-material providers are: Empik (Empik. com, Empik Go), Legimi, Publio.pl (which belongs to Agora), Woblink (part of the Znak group), Ebookpoint. pl (part of the Helion group), Ibuk.pl (part of the PWN group).



# **Audiobooks**

udiobooks accounted for 6 per cent of the entire market in 2020. Interest in audiobooks is growing, which is clearly the result of an ever-wider choice of audio publications. Publishers are choosing to produce audiobook versions of their new publications increasingly often, and are also recording titles from their backlists. This is also a result of the increasingly popular subscription model, which includes audio services.

According to estimates, in 2020 audiobook sales maintained their three-figure growth trend in terms of income achieved. The value of audiobook sales in retail prices grew by almost 89 per cent to a level of 153 mln zlotys.

The rapid growth of this sector of the book market in recent years is the result of dynamic competition between three companies in the audiobook online segment (Audioteka, Empik and Storytel) in their efforts to co-finance recordings and add new titles to their range.

There are now three main players on the Polish market – Audioteka, Storytel and Empik.

Audioteka, a platform and an app offering audio products, was founded in Poland in 2008. It now functions in 11 countries. It is a leader in audiobook sales in Poland, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Slovakia. It offers individual titles, its own productions, podcasts, and also the opportunity to subscribe.

The Storytel platform has been operating in Poland for four years, using the classic subscription model. It is also worth mentioning a project launched in 2017 by Storytel Polska called Storytel Original, which aims to produce original projects in the form of 10-part audio serials.

Under the Empik Go subscription programme, Empik offers five types of subscriptions. In 2020, it also began producing its own audiobooks and now offers 34,000 titles for listening (with podcasts). In 2020, users were most likely to listen to audiobooks (49 per cent). E-books were popular among 40 per cent of those using Empik Go. The application is used by over 250,000 users every month.

# Top literary publishers

# Albatros / wydawnictwoalbatros.com

(132 published titles)

Albatros was founded in 1994 by Andrzej Kuryłowicz, a passionate book lover. This company is known as a "bestseller factory". It publishes contemporary fiction and non-fiction, predominantly in translation from English, French and Spanish. It mainly publishes foreign bestselling authors such as Harlan

Coben, Nicholas Sparks, Stephen King, Graham Masterton, Ken Follett, Guillaume Musso, B.A. Paris, Mario Puzo, Frederick Forsyth, Ian McEwan, Marc Levy, and Nobel Prize winners Kazuo Ishiguro, Doris Lessing and Toni Morrison.

## Amber / wydawnictwoamber.pl

(160 published titles)

This publishing house was established in 1989 as one of Poland's first privately owned firms. It specialises in fiction (both popular and crime), especially in translation from the US and UK markets. It responds quickly to reading trends, and in recent years has become one of the main publishers first of vampire and dystopia books for young adults, and second of erotic books. Its authors include:

Sebastian Fitzek, Sharon Bolton, Clive Cussler, Walter Lucius, Danielle Steel, Jayne Ann Krentz, Isabelle Broom, Kristen Proby, Jodi Ellen Malpas, Julia Quinn, Eloisa James, Veronica Roth, Erich von Däniken, Andrew Collins, William Breuer and Simon Beckett. Two years ago, Amber launched an imprint called Amberek, which publishes illustrated books for children aged from 3 to 5.

# Czarne / czarne.com.pl

(95 published titles)

Founded in 1996, Czarne publishes European fiction and non-fiction and is a leading reportage and travel writing publisher. Already well-known for publishing the work of new Eastern and Central European authors, a wide range of non-fiction, essays and memoirs as well as first-rate fiction, Czarne is now adding history and social science to its range.

Its authors include: Andrzej Stasiuk, Krzysztof Varga, Yurii Andrukhovych, Herta Müller, Paul Theroux, Jean Hatzfeld, Jacek Hugo-Bader, Wojciech Tochman, Paweł Smoleński, Mariusz Szczygieł, Svetlana Alexievich, Lidia Ostałowska, Liao Yiwu, Colin Thubron, Karl-Markus Gauss, Martin Pollack and Thomas Bernhard.

# Grupa Wydawnicza Foksal / gwfoksal.pl

(535 published titles)

This group was formed in 2012 from the merger of three publishing houses: W.A.B., Buchmann and Wilga. In recent years the group has expanded its range by establishing several new imprints, including Uroboros (fantasy books), YA! (young adult literature), Lipstick Books (erotica), and FoxGames

(board games for children and young adults). Although its list includes many well-known foreign authors, it also publishes Polish authors (including Jacek Dehnel, Zyta Rudzka, Witold Szabłowski and Zygmunt Miłoszewski). W.A.B. has promoted most of the newer names in Polish literature.

#### Muza / muza.com.pl

(379 published titles)

Founded in 1989, this firm publishes fiction and essays, and is a major buyer of foreign rights. It publishes a large number of leading foreign authors including Roberto Bolaño, Haruki Murakami, Carlos

Ruiz Zafón, Daniel Silva, Vladimir Nabokov, Gabriel García Márquez and Arturo Pérez-Reverte. Muza also publishes the work of bestselling crime writer Katarzyna Bonda.

# Prószyński Media / proszynski.pl

(135 published titles)

This firm has been active since 1990 and has successfully launched a large number of new authors of popular Polish literature. It also publishes some of the best-known science fiction, crime fiction and non-fiction, as well as popular science books. Its authors include: Virginia C. Andrews, Orson Scott

Card, Diana Chamberlain, Jeffery Deaver, Ursula K. Le Guin, John Irving, Henry James, Dennis Lehane, Stephen King, Jodi Picoult, Terry Pratchett, Nora Roberts, John Steinbeck, Amy Tan and Anaïs Nin. The company's publication list includes crime novels by Katarzyna Puzyńska.

# Rebis / rebis.com.pl

(240 published titles)

This publishing firm has achieved success by continuously broadening its range. Fiction accounts for about 60 per cent of its output, but in recent years it has published an increasing amount of non-fiction, self-help books and popular science. Rebis has been consistently building its position as one of the leading players in the history book sector. Like other

publishers of fiction, it produces most of its books in extensive series. Its authors include: Salman Rushdie, Amos Oz, José Saramago, Frank Herbert, Elizabeth Gilbert, Robin Cook, Graham Masterton, Jay Asher, Carla Montero, Bernard Minier and Mons Kallentoft.

#### Sonia Draga / soniadraga.pl

(170 published titles)

This company has been on the publishing market since 2000. Its list mainly consists of a broad range of literary novels (novels of manners, historical fiction, historical romance, crime and thrillers), and it also publishes non-fiction. It owns several imprints including Non Stop Comics (graphic novels), Post Factum (non-fiction), Debit (children's books) and Młody Book! (YA books). It has built its market position on

the long-term success of the biggest bestsellers of the past decade, including the novels of Dan Brown and E.L. James's erotic series. Its authors include: Charlotte Link, Chris Carter, Lisa Gardner and James Ellroy. It also offers ambitious, award-winning literature, by authors including Elena Ferrante, Jonathan Franzen, Patrick Modiano, Jeffrey Eugenides, Hans Fallada and Javier Marías.

# Świat Książki / wydawnictwoswiatksiazki.pl

(91 published titles)

Founded in 1994 by the Bertelsmann media corporation, Świat Książki was later incorporated into the German group Weltbild. It now belongs to Dressler Dublin. It publishes books by some of the most popular Polish authors (Manuela Gretkowska, Janusz Głowacki), but its entire list has a much wider range,

in which the major genres are fiction and non-fiction. It publishes the work of authors including: Julian Barnes, Paul Bowles, Oriana Fallaci and Carlos Fuentes. This firm's most popular books in recent years have been novels by Paula Hawkins, Jojo Moyes, Kristin Hannah and Virginia C. Andrews.

## Wydawnictwo Literackie / wydawnictwoliterackie.pl

(90 published titles)

Founded in 1953, this company is connected with the international publishing firm Libella. It publishes many leading Polish authors and promotes new titles by foreign and Polish writers including Stanisław Lem, Witold Gombrowicz, Jacek Dukaj and Ignacy Karpowicz. As well as serious literature it also publishes history books, popular science books, YA literature, thrillers, crime novels and women's romantic

fiction. Wydawnictwo Literackie's authors include winners of all Poland's top literary prizes, such as the NIKE Literary Award, the Kościelski Foundation Prize, the Janusz Zajdel Polish Fandom Prize, the "Polityka" Passport, the Gdynia Literary Prize and many others. It also publishes the work of Olga Tokarczuk, who won the 2018 Nobel Prize in Literature.

#### Znak / wydawnictwoznak.pl

(538 published titles)

Founded in 1959, this company publishes literary fiction and non-fiction as well as children's literature. It publishes some of Poland's most famous authors, including Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska, Wiesław Myśliwski, Paweł Huelle, Magdalena Tulli and Małgorzata Szejnert. Znak is known as a "the Nobel stable". As well as the work of Czesław Miłosz and Wisława Szymborska, it has published books

by writers including Joseph Brodsky, J.M. Coetzee, Mario Vargas Llosa and Samuel Beckett. Its best-selling novelists include Wiesław Myśliwski, Zadie Smith, Eduardo Mendoza and Marek Krajewski. It has several different imprints, including Znak Literanova (fiction), Znak Emotikon (children's books), Znak Horyzont (history books). It has established a separate publishing house called Wydawnictwo Otwarte.

# Zysk i S-ka / zysk.com.pl

(142 published titles)

This company makes about 80 per cent of its income from adult fiction. It also promotes Polish writers, including Małgorzata Kalicińska, Elżbieta Cherezińska and Wojciech Cejrowski. It is one of the leading publishers of fantasy on the Polish market. Its foreign authors include: George R.R. Martin, Chimamanda

Ngozi Adichie and Peter Ackroyd. About 30 per cent of its entire range of publications are popular or specialised science books (by authors including Stephen Hawking, Allan Bloom, Saul Bellow, Francis Fukuyama, Alvin Toffler, Edward O. Wilson, Roger Penrose, Carl Sagan and John Gribbin).



# **Polish Literature Abroad**

he tradition for translation of Polish literature into foreign languages goes back to the sixteenth century. In that era the works of Poland's Renaissance poets were translated. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some classic Polish novels enjoyed popular success abroad.

Translations from classic Polish literature include the works of Henryk Sienkiewicz (4,909 whole books and 128 stories in anthologies), Adam Mickiewicz (645 and 255 respectively), Władysław Reymont (588 and 87 respectively), Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (376 and 46 respectively), Bolesław Prus (347 and 93 respectively), and Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (147 and 48 respectively).

Of the modern authors, the most frequently translated include Stanisław Lem (1,585 translations of whole books and 144 stories in anthologies), Andrzej Sapkowski (1015 books), Ryszard Kapuściński (656), Witold Gombrowicz (636 and 76 respectively), Czesław Miłosz (548 and 263 respectively), Janusz Korczak (471), Sławomir Mrożek (398 and 141 respectively), Wisława Szymborska (381 and 243 respectively), Olga Tokarczuk (356), Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (231 and 263 respectively), Bruno Schulz (225 and 70 respectively), Zbigniew Herbert (224 and 188 respectively), Tadeusz Różewicz (200 and 268 respectively), Karol Wojtyła (166 books), Andrzej Stasiuk (154), Tadeusz Konwicki (143) and Hanna Krall (115).

The satirical crime novels of Joanna Chmielewska (613 books) are extremely popular in Russia, where they achieve high sales figures.

The most popular authors by the number of languages into which their works have been translated are Wisława Szymborska (53), Czesław Miłosz (51), Janusz Korczak (50), Tadeusz Różewicz (49), Zbigniew Herbert (48), Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (44), Stanisław Lem (43), Olga Tokarczuk (43), Jerzy Andrzejewski (43), Sławomir Mrożek (43), Witold Gombrowicz (41), Ryszard Kapuściński (41), Bruno Schulz (37), Karol Wojtyła (37), Adam Zagajewski (34), Andrzej Sapkowski (31), Andrzej Stasiuk (30), Tadeusz Konwicki (28), Andrzej Szczypiorski (29), Paweł Huelle (26), Antoni Libera (24), and Marek Krajewski (22).

In the period from 2011 to 2020 the largest number of translations of Polish literature were into Russian (786), English (633), followed by German (418), Ukrainian (410), Spanish (355) French (339), Czech (318), Italian (276), Serbian (204) and Chinese (196).

In recent years Polish books for children and young adults have become increasingly popular around the world and have been translated into 41 languages. Of the modern authors, the most frequently translated include Aleksandra and Daniel Mizieliński (211 books and 30 in cooperation with other authors), Przemysław Wechterowicz (67), Grzegorz Kasdepke (52), Piotr Socha (51) and Iwona Chmielewska (44).

# Foreign literature in Poland

Foreign publications account for a large share of the market. In 2020, of a total of 30,391 published titles, translated books accounted for 19.6 per cent (5,963).

Original language	Titles	Including belles-lettres for adults
English	3,264	1,238
French	514	177
German	490	133
Japanese	431	235
Italian	240	48
Norwegian	124	94
Spanish	111	39
Swedish	106	35
Russian	83	31

# Literary awards

# The Kościelski Foundation Prize

# // koscielscy.org

Awarded annually since 1962. Based in Geneva, the Kościelski Foundation is one of the oldest Polish cultural institutions. The prize is given to writers under the age of 40, for their entire output to date or for a specific work.

2019 // Aldona Kopkiewicz2018 // Joanna Czeczot

2017 // Urszula Zajączkowska

2016 // Maciej Płaza

2015 // Szczepan Twardoch

# Wisława Szymborska Award

# // nagrodaszymborskiej.pl

An international prize awarded by the Wisława Szymborska Foundation for the best volume of poetry published in the Polish language in the preceding year (including collections written in Polish and translated into it). The award was founded at the bequest of Wisława Szymborska, who won the 1996 Nobel Prize in Literature. Offering prize money of 200,000 zlotys, it is Poland's most valuable literary award. The prize for foreign poetry in translation includes an additional 50,000 zlotys awarded to the translator.

**2021** // Rośliny mięsożerne (Carnivorous Plants) by Genowefa Jakubowska-Fijałkowska

2020 // Animalia by Anna Adamowicz

2019 // Mordercze ballady (Murderous Ballads) by Marta Podgórnik

**2018** // Psalmy (Psalms) by Julia Fiedorczuk

Przejdź do historii (Turn to History) by Linn Hansén (translated by Justyna Czechowska)

2017 // W by Marcin Sendecki

2016 // Drożdżownia (The Yeast Factory) by Jakub Kornhauser Niespieszna żegluga (Leisurely Navigation) by Uroš Zupan (translated by Katarina Šalamun Biedrzycka and Miłosz Biedrzycki)

**2015** // Świat był mój (The World Was Mine) by Roman Honet Przez sen (Through a Dream) by Jacek Podsiadło

# **The Silesius Wrocław Prize for Poetry**

# // silesius.wroclaw.pl

An award for the best works of Polish poetry and their authors. The prize was founded by the Wrocław City Council, and since 2008 has been awarded annually in three categories, for the entire body of a poet's work, for book of the year, and for debut of the year. The prize consists of a statuette and a cheque for: 100,000 zlotys for the entire body of work, 50,000 zlotys for the book of the year, and 20,000 zlotys for the debut of the year.

- 2021 // Entire body of work Ryszard Krynicki
- **2020** // Entire body of work Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki
  Book of the year *Kalendarz majów* (The Maya Calendar) by Konrad Góra
  Debut of the year *Chyba na pewno* (Definitely, I Guess) by Jakub Pszoniak
- 2019 // Entire body of work Ewa Lipska Book of the year – Cele (Targets) by Adam Kaczanowski Debut of the year – wsie, animalia, miscellanea (villages, animalia, miscellanea) by Maciej Bobula
- **2018** // Entire body of work Bohdan Zadura
  Book of the year *Puste noce* (Empty Nights) by Jerzy Jarniewicz
  Debut of the year *Raport wojenny* (War Report) by Agata Jabłońska
- **2017** // Entire body of work Andrzej Sosnowski
  Book of the year *Włos Bregueta* (Breguet's Hairspring) by Jacek Podsiadło
  Debut of the year *Pamięć zewnętrzna* (External Memory) by Radosław Jurczak

# **The ANGELUS Central European Literary Award**

# // angelus.com.pl

This prize, founded by the Wrocław City Council, is given to the author of the best Central European work of fiction to be published in Polish each year. It is one of Poland's biggest literary prizes, worth 150,000 zlotys.

- 2020 // Goran Vojnović for Moja Jugosławia (My Yugoslavia), translated by Joanna Pomorska
- **2019** // Georgi Gospodinov for *Fizyka smutku* (The Physics of Sorrow), translated by Magdalena Pytlak
- **2018** // Maciej Płaza for *Robinson w Bolechowie* (Robinson in Bolechów)



# The NIKE Literary Award

# // nike.org.pl

A prestigious prize for the best Polish book of the year. It involves a three-stage competition, in which at the first stage the jury nominates 20 titles in May, at the second a shortlist of seven finalists is announced in September, and then the winner is chosen from this group. The prize is usually awarded in October. The author of the winning book is given a NIKE statuette sculpted by Gustaw Zemła and a prize of 100,000 zlotys. First awarded in 1997, the NIKE prize has mainly been won by novelists.

2020 // Baśń o wężowym sercu (The Tale of the Serpent's Heart) by Radek Rak
2019 // Nie ma (Not There) by Mariusz Szczygieł
2018 // Rzeczy, których nie wyrzuciłem (Things I Didn't Throw Out) by Marcin Wicha
2017 // Żeby nie było śladów (Leave No Trace) by Cezary Łazarewicz
2016 // Nakarmić kamień (To Feed A Stone) by Bronka Nowicka

# **Gdynia Literary Prize**

# // nagrodaliterackagdynia.pl

An annual award initiated in 2006 by the Mayor of the city of Gdynia. Presented in four categories (novel or short story, poetry, essay, translation) to the best literary works published within the last year. The award is worth 50,000 zlotys (in each category).

- 2021 // Fiction Pomarli (The Dead) by Waldemar Bawołek Poetry – Karapaks (Carapace) by Natalia Malek Essay – Odmieńcza rewolucja. Performans na cudzej ziemi (A Misfits' Revolution: Performance in a Foreign Land) by Joanna Krakowska Translation – Magda Heydel for Opowiadania (Short Stories) – a Polish translation of selected stories by Katherine Mansfield
- 2020 // Fiction Pustostany (Empty Houses) by Dorota Kota Poetry – Bailout by Tomasz Bąk Essay – Patyki, badyle (Sticks and Stalks) by Urszula Zajączkowska Translation – Piotr Sommer for Co robisz na naszej ulicy (What Are You Doing in Our Street) – a Polish translation of selected poems by Charles Reznikoff
- 2019 // Fiction Krótka wymiana ognia (A Brief Exchange of Fire) by Zyta Rudzka Poetry – Sny uckermärkerów (The Uckermärkers' Dreams) by Małgorzata Lebda Essay – Wyroby (Manufactures) by Olga Drenda Translation – Bogusława Sochańska for Alfabet, a Polish translation of Alphabet by Inger Christensen
- 2018 // Fiction Mikrotyki (Microtics) by Paweł Sołtys
  Poetry Pawilony (Pavilions) by Dominik Bielicki
  Essay Rękopis znaleziony na ścianie (Manuscript Found on a Wall)
  by Krzysztof Mrowcewicz
  Translation Sława Lisiecka for Chodzenie. Amras, a Polish translation of Walking and
  Amras by Thomas Bernhard

# **Conrad Award**

# // conradfestival.pl

The Conrad prize is Poland's most important award for first-time authors of fiction. Qualifying books will have been published in the previous year. The award is sponsored by the Mayor of Kraków, and is a joint initiative of the Polish Book Institute, the "Tygodnik Powszechny" Foundation and the Kraków Festival Bureau, which is in charge of Kraków's status as a UNESCO City of Literature. The winner is awarded 30,000 zlotys and a month-long residency in Kraków sponsored by the Polish Book Institute.

2020 //	Pustostany (Vacancies) by Dorota Kotas
2019 //	Psy rasy drobnych (Dogs of Minor Breeds) by Olga Hund
2018 //	Po trochu (Little by Little) by Weronika Gogola
2017 //	Ma być czysto (Clean It Up) by Anna Cieplak
2016 //	Dom z witrażem (The House with the Stained-Glass Window) by Żanna Słoniowska
2015 //	Alicyjka (Little Alice) by Liliana Hermetz

# The "Polityka" Passport

# // polityka.pl

A prize established in 1993 by the weekly newspaper "Polityka" for performers in six categories: literature, film, theatre, classical music, popular music and the visual arts. Since 2002 there has also been a special prize for achievements in disseminating Polish culture.

#### Literature

2020 //	Mira Marcinów
2019 //	Dominika Słowik
2018 //	Małgorzata Rejmer
2017 //	Marcin Wicha
2016 //	Natalia Fiedorczuk-Cieślak
2015 //	Łukasz Orbitowski



# Józef Mackiewicz Literary Award

# // jozefmackiewicz.com

This is a major prize awarded to Polish authors for books that promote Polish culture, history and tradition in a significant way. The award was founded to commemorate the life and work of the prominent writer, novelist and political commentator Józef Mackiewicz. A shortlist of about ten nominees is issued during the summer, and the winner's name is announced at an award ceremony held each year on 11 November, Polish National Independence Day. The winner receives a prize of US\$ 10,000. The award has been granted annually since 2002.

2020 // Roztrzaskane lustro. Upadek cywilizacji zachodniej (The Shattered Mirror: The Fall of Western Civilisation) by Wojciech Roszkowski
2019 // Północ i Południe. Teksty o polskiej kulturze i historii (North and South: On Polish Culture and History) by Marek Cichocki
2018 // Nad Zbruczem (On the River Zbruch) by Wiesław Helak
2017 // Sarmacja. Obalanie mitów (Sarmatia: Debunking the Myths) by Jacek Kowalski
2016 // Biografie odtajnione. Z archiwów literackich bezpieki (Declassified Biographies: From the Literary Archives of the Secret Police) by Joanna Siedlecka
2015 // Dzieje Polski. Skąd nasz ród (History of Poland: The Land We Come From)

# **Identitas Literature and History Award**

by Andrzej Nowak

# // identitas.pl

This award is for works that belong to the broadly defined category of humanities. The jury awards one main prize to a single winner, and also from one to three special prizes, one of which may be for work accomplished in a format other than printed book form. The first edition of the Identitas Award took place in 2014, and it is granted annually between September and December. From 2020 this prize has new criteria, and will now be awarded to authors under the age of 41.

#### **Literary Award**

2020 //	Miasto wewnętrzne (Inner City) by Marcin Cielecki
2018 //	Nad Zbruczem (On the River Zbruch) by Wiesław Helak
2017 //	Palus sarmatica by Krzysztof Koehler
2016 //	Koniec lata w zdziczałym ogrodzie (The End of Summer in a Wild Garden) by Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz
2015 //	Krew z mlekiem (Blood and Milk) by Marta Kwaśnicka

# Marek Nowakowski Literary Award

# // nagrodanowakowskiego.pl

This award was established in 2017 by the National Library and honours a short story or a collection of short stories "that shows unconventional views, courage and precision of thought, as well as fine writing". It is named after the Warsaw writer and journalist Marek Nowakowski. The award is granted annually and the winner receives a cash prize of 100,000 zlotys.

2021 // Wojciech Kudyba for *I co dalej?* (And What's Next?)
2020 // Marta Kwaśnicka for *Pomyłka* (Mistake)
2019 // Rafał Wojasiński for *Olanda*2018 // Paweł Sołtys for *Mikrotyki* (Microtics)
2017 // Wojciech Chmielewski for his entire oeuvre

# The Janusz A. Zajdel Polish Fandom Prize

# // zajdel.art.pl

An annual award for fantasy literature. The prize is awarded by fans of fantasy to the authors of the best Polish titles, in two categories: novels and short stories.

2019 //	Novel – <i>Baśń o wężowym sercu albo wtóre słowo o Jakóbie Szeli</i> (The Tale of the Serpent's Heart) by Radek Rak Short story – <i>Chomik</i> (Hamster) by Marta Potocka
2018 //	Novel – <i>Każde martwe marzenie</i> (Every Dead Daydream) by Robert M. Wegner Short story – <i>Pierwsze słowo</i> (The First Word) by Marta Kisiel
2017 //	Novel – <i>Różaniec</i> (Rosary) by Rafał Kosik Short story – <i>Szaławiła</i> (Giddyhead) by Marta Kisiel
2016 //	Novel – <i>Czterdzieści i cztery</i> (Forty-fourth) by Krzysztof Piskorski Short story – <i>Wywiad z Borutą</i> (An Interview with Boruta) by Łukasz Orbitowski and Michał Cetnarowski



# The IBBY Polish Section "Book of the Year" Competition // ibby.pl

Awarded to the best Polish children's books, for both their literary and artistic qualities. There are three categories: Best Writer, Best Illustrator and Best Promoter of Children's Literature.

**2020** // Best Writer – Justyna Bednarek for *Zielone piórko Zbigniewa. Skarpetki kontratakują!* (Zbigniew's Green Feather)

Ewa Nowak for *Orkan. Depresja* (Orkan: Depression)

Best Illustrator – Anna Kaźmierak for Turonie, żandary, herody. Wiejska maskarada (Turons,

Zandars, Herods: A Folk Masquerade)

Maria Strzelecka for Beskid bez kitu (Best of the Beskids)

**2019** // Best Writer – Marta Kisiel for *Małe Licho i anioł z kamienia* (Little Devil and the Stone Angel) Agnieszka Wolny-Hamkało for *Lato Adeli* (Adela's Summer)

Best Illustrator – Monika Hanulak for *Homo Lector. Kalendarz na 13 miesięcy* (A 13-Month

Calendar)

Jacek Ambrożewski and Zosia Frankowska for *Podróżnicy. Wielkie wyprawy Polaków* (Travellars: Great Polich Expeditions)

(Travellers: Great Polish Expeditions)

**2018** // Best Writer – Michał Rusinek for *Jaki znak Twój? Wierszyki na dalsze sto lat niepodległości* (What's Your Emblem? Verses for the Next 100 Years of Independence) illustrated by Joanna Rusinek

Joanna Jagiełło for Jak ziarnka piasku (Like A Grain of Sand)

Best Illustrator – Krzysztof Gawronkiewicz for Beneficio, text by Michał Kalicki

Robert Czajka for Wszystko widzę jako sztukę (I See Everything As Art), text by Ewa Solarz

# **Orpheus**

# Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński Poetry Award

# // orfeusz-nagroda.pl

A literary award established in 2011 for authors of the best volumes of poetry written and published in Polish during the preceding year. The award is granted in two categories: Orpheus – for the best volume of the year, and Masuria Orpheus – for the best collection by an author from north-eastern Poland.

- 2020 // Sonety, ody, wiersze dla Marianny (Sonnets, Odes, Poems for Marianna) by Andrzej Kopacki
- 2019 // Siostra (Sister) by Piotr Mitzner
- 2018 // Basso continuo by Jarosław Mikołajewski
- **2017** // 37 by Joanna Kulmowa
- 2016 // Matecznik (The Lair) by Małgorzata Lebda
- **2015** // Koniec lata w zdziczałym ogrodzie (The End of Summer in a Wild Garden) by Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz

# **The Wings of Dedalus Literary Award**

# // bn.org.pl

This prize, founded in 2015 by the National Library, is awarded annually for a single book or for an author's entire oeuvre, with special emphasis on fiction, literary and art criticism, history, or broadly defined social issues. The winner receives a cash prize sponsored by the National Library.

2020 // Małgorzata Musierowicz (for her entire oeuvre)
2019 // Piotr Nowak for *Przemoc i słowa. W kręgu filozofii politycznej Hannah Arendt* (Violence and Words: In the Sphere of Hannah Arendt's Political Philosophy)
2018 // Wojciech Tomczyk (for his stage plays)
2017 // Andrzej Nowak (for his entire oeuvre)
2016 // Marta Kwaśnicka for *Jadwiga*Renata Lis for *W lodach Prowansji. Bunin na wygnaniu* (The Frozen Wastes of Provence: Bunin in Exile)

# The Zbigniew Herbert International Literary Award

# // fundacjaherberta.com

Established by the Zbigniew Herbert Foundation, this prize is awarded annually to a living author for lifetime achievement in the field of poetry. The aim of the award is to recognise outstanding artistic and intellectual literary achievement on the world stage. Judged by a jury of eminent authors and literary experts, the prize is awarded in Poland. The winner receives a sum of US\$ 50,000, sponsored by the PZU Foundation.

2021 // Yusef Komunyakaa
2020 // Durs Grünbein
2019 // Agi Mishol
2018 // Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill
2017 // Breyten Breytenbach
2016 // Lars Gustafsson



# The Ryszard Kapuściński Prize for literary reportage

# //kulturalna.warszawa.pl/kapuscinski.html

This prize was established by the Warsaw City Council in 2010. It aims to distinguish and promote the best works of reportage that address important modern issues, that prompt debate and deepen our knowledge of foreign cultures. It also aims to pay tribute to Ryszard Kapuściński, a Warsaw resident for more than 60 years. A prize of 50,000 zlotys is awarded to the author of the year's best work of reportage, and a prize of 15,000 zlotys goes to the translator of the year's best foreign work of reportage to be published in Polish.

- 2020 // Strup. Hiszpania rozdrapuje rany (Scab: Spain Scratches Its Wounds) by Katarzyna Kobylarczyk
   2019 // Dom z dwiema wieżami (The House with Two Towers) by Maciej Zaremba Bielawski, translated by Mariusz Kalinowski
- 2018 // Sendlerowa. W ukryciu (Irena Sendler in Hiding) by Anna Bikont
- **2017** // Delhi. Stolica ze złota i snu (Capital: The Eruption of Delhi) by Rana Dasgupta, translated by Barbara Kopeć-Umiastowska
- 2016 // Diabeł i tabliczka czekolady (The Devil and a Bar of Chocolate) by Paweł Piotr Reszka

# **The Witold Gombrowicz Literary Award**

# // nagrodagombrowicza.pl

Sponsored by the Mayor of Radom, this prize was established in 2015. It is awarded to a debut, defined as an author's first or second work of literary fiction in the Polish language. The winner is given a cash prize of 40,000 zlotys.

- 2020 // Barbara Sadurska for Mapa (Map)
- **2019** // Olga Hund for Psy ras drobnych (Dogs of Minor Breeds)
- 2018 // Marcin Wicha for Rzeczy, których nie wyrzucitem (Things I Didn't Throw Out)
- 2017 // Anna Cieplak for Ma być czysto (Clean It Up)
- **2016** // Weronika Murek for *Uprawa roślin południowych metodą Miczurina* (Growing Southern Plants the Michurin Way)

# **The High Calibre Award**

# // festiwal.portalkryminalny.pl

Established in 2004, this is a prize for the best crime novel or thriller published by a Polish author in the preceding year. It is awarded at the International Crime Fiction Festival held in Wrocław.

2021 //	Wiosna zaginionych (Spring of the Missing) by Anna Kańtoch
2020 //	Roztopy (The Thaw) by Jędrzej Pasierski Zygmunt Miłoszewski (for his entire oeuvre)
2019 //	Skaza (Flaw) by Robert Małecki
2018 //	Tylko umarli wiedzą (Only the Dead Know) by Ryszard Ćwirlej
2017 //	R.I.P. by Mariusz Czubaj
2016 //	Czytanie z kości (Reading Bones) by Jakub Szamałek
2015 //	Przejęcie (Takeover) by Wojciech Chmielarz



# Readership

esearch by the National Library's Book and Readership Institute indicates an improvement in book reading in 2020. 42 per cent of Poles confirmed that they had read at least one book, representing a rise of three percentage points compared with 2019, and the best result for six years. There are grounds for cautious optimism, but still, nearly 60 per cent of adult Poles are not interested in reading.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Readers [%]	37	38	37	39	42
Buyers [%]	30	34	38	41	45

National Library

The most frequently read books were crime literature (24 per cent), literary fiction (20 per cent), but also biographies, memoirs and historical books about the 20th century (19 per cent).

# How many books have you read over the last 12 months? (% of population)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Non-readers	63	62	63	61	58
Readers of 1-7 books	26	29	28	29	31
Readers of 7 or more books	10	9	9	10	11

National Library

# // The Polish Book Market 2021

#### **Sources of books** (percentage of readers who named a book from the given source)

Source of books read	Percentage of readers who named a book from the given source
Purchase (also via internet)	45
Gift	34
Borrowed from friends or family	32
Home book collection	20
Library	23

National Library

Readers prefer paper books. Only 5 per cent of readers switched from paper books to e-books (read from the screen of a computer, e-reader, phone or tablet).

As for the method of obtaining e-books, a relatively high percentage of readers (28 per cent) used e-books available via a paid subscription service.

The most frequently read authors in 2020 were: Remigiusz Mróz, Olga Tokarczuk, Stephen King, Harlan Coben, Adam Mickiewicz, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Andrzej Sapkowski, Szczepan Twardoch, E.L. James, Jo Nesby, J.K. Rowling, Blanka Lipińska, Heather Morris, Mikhail Bulgakov, Camilla Läckberg, Katarzyna Nosowska, Wojciech Chmielarz, Sophocles, Bolesław Prus and Carlos Ruiz Zafón.



# Libraries

he number of libraries in Poland is systematically decreasing. According to data from the Central Office of Statistics, in 2020 there were 7,782 public libraries in operation (about 1.3 per cent fewer than in 2019), which ran 873 departments for children and young adults (about 2 per cent fewer than in 2019) and 867 branch libraries (about 12.9 per cent fewer than in 2019).

According to the Educational Information System there are also 19,784 school libraries. In addition, there are almost 1,480 church libraries and 139 prison libraries active in Poland. Altogether there are about 29,000 outlets providing library services.

# **Public libraries**

The book collections at public libraries totalled 125 mln volumes (about 1.6 per cent fewer than in 2019), which means approximately 300 volumes for every 100 citizens. 4,919,300 users were recorded (about 18 per cent less than in 2019). There was an average of 4,917 citizens for every public library. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, library activity was limited. The average borrowing rate was 15.75 library books per user in the course of the year.

# Library activity

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Public libraries	7,984	7,953	7,925	7,881	7,782
Branch libraries	1,260	1,210	1,083	995	867
Users	6,096,300	6,020,700	5,953,100	5,983,700	4,919,300
Book loans per million volumes	110.2	105.4	101.9	102.7	77.5

Central Statistical Office

Most libraries (65 per cent) operated in the countryside.

The largest group of users were in the 25 to 44 age group, who are the most professionally active.

# Purchases for public libraries (number of volumes per 100 citizens)

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
8.8	8.8	8.8	9.54	9.6

In 2020, 3,627,512 items were bought, including library books, sheet music, cartographic publications, and books written in Braille, representing 9.6 items per 100 citizens. Libraries also bought digital novelties – access to publications delivered electronically (almost 75,000 access codes and over 28 mln pages). Expenditure on the purchase of books for public libraries in 2020 totalled 84,609,862 zlotys (including subsidies – 26,296,140 zlotys). Expenditure on the purchase of books per user in 2020 amounted to 17.20 zlotys.

In Poland public libraries are mainly financed out of local council budgets. In addition, within the scope of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage's programme "Purchase of new publications for public libraries", which is part of the state-funded National Programme for the Development of Readership, libraries receive financial support to increase their collections. The sum earmarked for buying new publications in 2020 totalled 26,500,000 zlotys, and a solid rule of the programme is the obligation to use one third of the grant to buy new publications for children and young people.

In 2020, 2,457 libraries took part in the programme.

Public libraries are expanding their offer with services provided with the use of new technologies. Online catalogues were made available by 5,789 libraries (2.2 per cent more compared to 2019). Access to collections (electronic books and journals, databases and other electronic collections) was offered by 2,343 libraries. Public libraries have websites where they provide, inter alia, content, e-books and links to materials from other libraries or network services.

More than half of public libraries and their branches (51.4 per cent) have social media pages.

The number of persons employed at public libraries totalled about 23,000.

For many years, the Ministry of Culture has run projects aimed at transforming local libraries into modern facilities providing access to knowledge and culture by constructing and modernising library buildings, and also by providing computers, internet access at libraries, librarian training and the implementation of a national cataloguing system called MAK+.

A special service has been launched called Szukamksiążki.pl, which is designed to help readers find particular books and the nearest library where they can borrow them. At present, 25 mln copies of books are available from 2,501 libraries.

The budget for the current National Programme for the Development of Readership for 2021-2025 totals 635 mln zlotys (€ 140 mln). Under this programme 228.5 mln zlotys (€ 50.7 mln) have been assigned to the renovation, rebuilding, expansion, new construction and equipping of public libraries.

Another important programme supported by the Polish Book Institute is IBUK Libra Light, a free internet platform designed to provide access to books for the blind and the visually impaired (libralight.pwn.pl). Run in cooperation with PWN Academic Publishers, the Central Library of Labour and Social Security and the Polish Book Chamber, the platform was launched on 1 February 2017.

Since 2007, in cooperation with district public libraries, the Polish Book Institute has been running a Book Discussion Club programme. It is aimed at people who like to read and to talk about books, and to discover new authors and literary genres. The number of clubs operating in Poland has grown successively from 299 in 2007 to 1,770 at the end of 2020. Of these, 609 are for children and young adults and 1,161 are for adults. In 2020, 24,001 volumes were purchased for the use of the clubs. The subsidy for 2021 is 1.8 mln zlotys



# **Book fairs**

s throughout the world, in 2020 the book fair calendar was interrupted. The largest events were called off, in other words the Warsaw Book Fair and the International Book Fair in Kraków, as were the smaller regional fairs.

In some instances only the literary events planned to be held at these fairs were still run online. In the first half of 2021, most of the planned events took place in a hybrid form – online and offline. The Warsaw Book Fair was held outdoors and the International Book Fair in Kraków is expected to be held as normal in 2021.

# Previous editions:

# Warsaw Book Fair / targi-ksiazki.waw.pl

The 11th edition of the Warsaw Book Fair took place from 9 to 12 September – in the open air, in front of the Palace of Culture and Science. This was the first international fair to be held in Europe after a year-and-a-half break, and also includes the "Academia" Academic and Scientific Book Fair. It met with great interest from readers, although it was smaller than the previous edition. In total, nearly 200 exhibitors presented their offer. The Czech Republic was the Guest of Honour and 13 writers came to Warsaw. In total, the Fair was accompanied by over 500 events.

800 exhibitors from 27 countries took part in the 10th Warsaw Book Fair, organised in May 2019 and held at the National Stadium. It attracted more than 80,400 visitors. In 2019 an event called "Meet Point" was held for the first time – a YouTuber and computer game festival, the aim of which was to reach a new audience, above all for companies in the internet and computer sector, and to attract as many young people as possible. Warsaw has a long tradition of book fairs, having regularly hosted the International Book Fair in Warsaw since 1956.

# International Book Fair in Kraków / ksiazka.krakow.pl

The 23rd International Book Fair in Kraków, held in October 2019, confirmed the rising status of this event. It is now an essential fixture in the autumn calendar for all the significant Polish publishing houses. Almost 600 exhibitors from 20 countries as well as more than 800 authors took part in the 2019 book fair, which attracted 68,000 visitors. Since 2014 the fair has been held at Expo Kraków.

# **Major international literary festivals**

Name	Profile	City	Website
Big Book Festival	fiction	Warsaw	bigbookfestival.pl
Bruno Schulz Festival	fiction, essay	Wrocław	brunoschulz.dybook.pl
Children's Literature Festival	children's literature	Poznań, Gdańsk, Kraków	fldd.pl
Conrad Festival	fiction, essay	Kraków	conradfestival.pl
Crime Writing Festival	crime, mystery, thriller	Wrocław	festiwal.portalkryminalny.pl
Capital of the Polish Language Festival	literature	Szczebrzeszyn	stolicajezykapolskiego.pl
Found in Translation Festival	literary translation	Gdańsk	odnalezionewtlumaczeniu.pl
Mountains of Literature Festival	literature	Nowa Ruda	@festiwalgoryliteratury
International Festival of Comics and Games in Łódź	comics	Łódź	komiksfestiwal.com
lzabelińskie spotkania z książką	literature	Izabelin	planetaizabelin.pl
Sopot by the Book Festival	focus country	Sopot	literackisopot.pl
Miedzianka Fest	literary reportage	Miedzianka	@MiedziankaFest
Miłosz Festival	poetry	Kraków	miloszfestival.pl
Non-Fiction Festival	literary reportage	Kraków	nonfiction.pl
Looking East	literature	Buda Ruska	patrzacnawschod.pl
Zakopane Literary Festival	literature	Zakopane	literackifestiwal. zakopane.eu

Representatives of summer literary festivals held all over Poland have formed a Coalition of Summer Literary Festivals. Its main aim is for the organisers of these events to exchange experience and to cooperate. This initiative proved its value during the COVID-19 pandemic, when there was a sudden need for a new approach. Thanks to combined efforts, solidarity and joint promotion, almost all the planned events were successfully run in the open air and broadcast online, with foreign guests taking part remotely via the internet.



# The Polish Book Institute

he Polish Book Institute is a national institution established by the Polish Ministry of Culture. It has been running in Kraków since January 2004. The Institute's basic aims are to influence the reading public and to popularise books and reading within Poland, as well as to promote Polish literature worldwide. These aims are accomplished by:

- // promoting the best Polish books and their authors
- // organising study visits for translators and foreign publishers
- // increasing the number of translations from Polish into foreign languages with the help of the © POLAND Translation Programme and Sample Translations ©POLAND
- making information on Polish books and the Polish publishing market accessible to foreign consumers

The Institute organises literary programmes to promote Polish books at international book fairs, appearances by Polish writers at literary festivals, and within the scope of programmes designed to promote Polish culture worldwide, it publishes an annual catalogue "New Books from Poland".

The Polish Book Institute is also the publisher of cultural journals covering mainly literature and theatre (Akcent, Dialog, Literatura na świecie, Nowe Książki, Odra, Teatr, Teatr Lalek and Twórczość).

# **Selected Polish Book Institute programmes**

# The **©POLAND** Translation Programme

The Book Institute provides financial support for publishers aiming to publish works of Polish literature in foreign-language translations.

The Book Institute can help cover the costs of publishing the following types of works:

- // literature prose, poetry and drama
- // works in the humanities, broadly conceived, whether older or contemporary (with particular regard for books devoted to the culture and literature of Poland)
- // literary non-fiction (literary reportage, biographies, memoirs, essays)
- // historical works (essays and popular history, barring specialist and academic works)
- // literature for children and young people
- // graphic novels

The financial contribution of the Book Institute is designed to support the following publication costs:

- // translation
- // copyright license
- // printing

# Sample Translations ©Poland

The aim of this programme is to encourage translators to present Polish books to foreign publishers.

The programme may cover up to 20 pages of the translation. The translator must have published a minimum of one translation in book form before making an application.

Full information on our programmes, including a list of grants awarded to date and a funding application form can be found on the Book Institute's website, www.bookinstitute.pl.

For further information please contact: Elżbieta Wierzchowska: e.wierzchowska@bookinstitute.pl.

# The Transatlantyk Prize

Awarded by the Book Institute since 2005 to outstanding ambassadors of Polish literature abroad. Its aim is to promote Polish literature on the world market and to provide a focal point for translators of Polish literature and its promoters (publishers, literary critics, academics and organisers of cultural events). The prize is worth  $\[mathbb{e}\]$  10,000.

#### Recent winners:

2021 // Tokimasa Sekiguchi 2020 // Ewa Thompson 2019 // Hendrik Lindepuu 2018 // Antonia Lloyd-Jones 2017 // Lajos Pálfalvi 2016 // Constantin Geambaşu

#### The Found in Translation Award

Given to the translator(s) of the finest book-length translation of Polish literature into English published in the previous calendar year. The winner receives a prize of 16,000 zlotys and a one-month residency in Kraków. The Book Institute has presented this award in partnership with the Polish Cultural Institutes in London and New York on an annual basis since 2008.

#### Recent winners:

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2021 // Ewa Małachowska-Pasek and Megan Thomas for The Career of Nicodemus Dyzma by Tadeusz Dołęga-Mostowicz
2020 // Anna Zaranko for The Memoir of an Anti-Hero by Kornel Filipowicz
2019 // Madeline G. Levine for Collected Stories by Bruno Schulz
2018 // Jennifer Croft for Flights by Olga Tokarczuk
2017 // Piotr Florczyk for Building the Barricade by Anna Świrszczyńska
2016 // Bill Johnston for Twelve Stations by Tomasz Różycki
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# The Translators' College

This programme provides study visits for translators of Polish literature. During their residency, which takes place in Kraków or Warsaw, the translators are provided with suitable conditions for their work and assistance with their translations. The college has been active since 2006. By 2020, more than 140 translators from 37 countries had already taken part.

# The World Congress of Translators of Polish Literature

This event has been organised every four years since 2005. Around 250 translators from all over the world attend meetings with writers, critics and academics. The Congress provides an opportunity to find out more about Polish literature, meet colleagues from other countries and exchange information, ideas and opinions.

# **Seminars for Foreign Publishers**

Since 2006, the Book Institute has invited groups of publishers from various countries to Kraków to show them what Polish literature has to offer. During the study visit, they attend meetings with writers, publishers and critics to encourage them to publish Polish literature.



#### THE POLISH BOOK INSTITUTE

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# **Useful links**

# Biblioteka Narodowa / bn.org.pl

The National Library

The National Library of Poland is the country's central library and one of its most important cultural institutions. Its mission is to protect the national heritage preserved in the form of handwritten, printed, electronic, recorded sound and audiovisual documents. The primary task of the National Library of Poland is to acquire, store and permanently archive Polish intellectual output, including the works of citizens living on Polish territory, the most important foreign works, and publications related to Poland and published abroad.

The ISBN database (e-isbn.pl) includes information on all the registered publishing companies in Poland. The National Library prepares annual reports on readership and libraries in Poland.

# Cyfrowa Biblioteka Narodowa Polona / polona.pl

Polona National Digital Library

Polona was created for all libraries and internet users. Its mission is to provide wide and easy access to the National Library's digital collections, including the most important works of literature and scientific materials, historical documents, journals, graphics, photography, musical scores and maps. The main aim is to present Poland's cultural heritage, its ancient traditions and achievements, and also to show the wide range of the National Library's collections. At present, Polona is one of the world's most modern digital libraries and also the largest of its kind in Poland. At the end of 2020 its resources included 3,469,699 digital publications.

# Narodowy Uniwersalny Katalog Centralny / nukat.edu.pl

The Union Catalogue of Polish Research Library Collections – NUKAT

The NUKAT catalogue includes 4,776,153 descriptions of books, periodicals and e-books, as well as sound recordings, musical scores, cartographic and iconographic documents and films collected from 176 cooperating academic and scientific libraries.

# Polska Izba Książki / pik.org.pl

The Polish Book Chamber

Polska Izba Książki, established in 1990, is a commercial self-government institution associating publishers and bookshops, book warehouses, printing houses as well as all other enterprises related to the book market. At present it has 146 associated members.



# Culture.pl / culture.pl

Culture.pl is the flagship brand of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute – a national cultural institution promoting Poland and Polish culture worldwide. Featuring over 51,000 articles in Polish, English and Russian, Culture.pl features the best of Polish literature, design, visual arts, music, film and more, with over 6 mln visitors a year across 80 countries.

# Elektroniczna Biblioteka / ebib.pl

**Electronic Library** 

The Polish Librarians Association website – first stop for any librarian.

# Lubimy czytać / lubimyczytac.pl

We like to read

Lubimyczytac.pl is the largest book-related website in Poland aimed at the general reading public. With over 1 mln subscribers, more than 23 mln ratings and reviews, and over 3.2 mln individual visitors per month, it provides an open forum for the discussion of numerous topics related to literature. It organises the country's most popular public vote, the "Lubimyczytać.pl Book of the Year", in which readers cast an annual average of 250,000 votes. Its subscribers also have the opportunity to review and rank any book they've read, find book-related news and buy publications. Lubimyczytac.pl has been gaining in popularity and appreciation among both cultural and commercial consumers.

# Stowarzyszenie Tłumaczy Literatury (STL) / stl.org.pl

Polish Literary Translators Association

STL brings together translators of fiction, non-fiction and audiovisual works. It aims to integrate the community of literary translators in Poland, protect their interests and support their development. It also campaigns for the promotion of literature and reading in general, for high standards in the publishing industry, and for raising language awareness.

# Biblioteka Analiz / biblioteka-analiz.pl, rynek-ksiazki.pl

Biblioteka Analiz concentrates all sorts of data about various sectors of the Polish book market. At present it is the only company in Poland with such a large collection of data on the Polish book market. It is also the largest and best-known consulting firm operating in this branch. The site covers archival information about key players on the Polish book market.

