

PUBLISHING IN THE ARAB WORLD 2015-2019

Introduction by **Mohammad Rashad**
President of the Arab Publishers Association (APA)

Written by **Dr Khaled 'Azab** translated from Arabic
to English by **Yasmin Haj** and **Nourhan Tewfik**

The study Publishing in the Arab World, 2015-2019 was produced by the Arab Publishers Association in its original Arabic version and its translation into English was commissioned by iReMMO in the framework of the LEILA Research Project supported by the Anna Lindh Foundation. The English version of the report is published in partnership with the Arab Publishers Association and in cooperation with ArabLit and Literature Across Frontiers.

The LEILA Research project represents the initial research phase of the cooperation project LEILA - Arabic Literature in European Languages, coordinated by iReMMO and co-financed by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of its author and does not reflect the position of the Anna Lindh Foundation or the European Union.

Main funder of the translation



LEILA Research Project partners



The Anna Lindh Foundation is an international organisation which promotes intercultural exchanges and common projects among the civil societies of the Euro-Mediterranean region. www.annalindhfoundation.org

ArabLit, ArabLit Quarterly and ALQ Books are a translator-centred collective that produces a website, quarterly magazine, and a limited book series focused on Arabic literatures in translation. www.arablit.org

iReMMO - Institut de recherche et d'études Méditerranée Moyen-Orient is an independent research institute based in Paris. www.iremno.org

Literature Across Frontiers - European Platform for Literary Exchange, Translation and Policy Debate is based at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. www.lit-across-frontiers.org

Arab Publishers Association is a regional independent organization representing Arab Publishers in front of official Arab and International levels. www.arab-pa.org



Copyright © Arab Publishers Association / LEILA Research Project

The LEILA Research Project is part of the cooperation project LEILA - Arabic Literature in European Languages:

Co-funders of the LEILA project



LEILA partners



Publishing in the Arab World

2015-2019

Introduction by **Mohammad Rashad**
President of the Arab Publishers Association (APA)

Written by Dr Khaled ‘Azb

Table of Contents:

WHY THIS STUDY?	3
INTRODUCTION	5
THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY: CRISES AND POSSIBILITIES	7
CONTENT: ITS IMPORTANCE AND OBJECTIVES	12
<i>Academic content</i>	12
MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS	16
EVALUATING ARAB CONTENT	19
TRANSLATION	23
AUDIOBOOKS	33
LIBRARIES AND PUBLISHING	35
DIGITAL PUBLISHING AND LIBRARIES	39
BOOK MARKETING	42
BOOK FAIRS	46
FAIR DIRECTORS AND PUBLISHERS	49
REPORTS BY APA MEMBER STATES	61
KUWAIT	121
THE STATE OF PALESTINE	126
ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	139

WHY THIS STUDY?

The Arabic publishing industry is young. The printing press, invented by Johannes Gutenberg, was introduced to the Arab world in the Levant and Egypt nearly four centuries after its appearance in Europe. Such a gap has made the Arab publishing industry oscillate between rises and falls until this day. It is not a robust industry, and it still lacks many regulations that would guide the people involved (authors, printers, distributors), allowing publishers to cater to readers. When compared with other countries more advanced in the industry, the Arab publishing industry appears to lack the knowledge and data to help all involved parties. Globally, the Arabic publishing industry stands alone in lacking access to a database and information on the number of Arabic book publishers, authors, printing houses, illustrators, designers, and everyone who works in this industry.

The Arab Publishers Association has therefore made speedy efforts to address this situation, especially following a rise in recent problems and crises that have negatively affected the industry. As a result of these issues, many publishers have had to reduce the number of annual publications, lay off a number of workers at the publishing house, or temporarily quit the industry, which has exacerbated the publishers' suffering, which started many years ago. Likewise, many Arab book fairs, considered an important outlet for distributing publications, were cancelled or postponed in 2020-21.

This study on the state of publishing in the Arab world between 2015 and 2019 reveals and clarifies the core issues that hinder the Arabic-language publishing industry, the most serious of which is counterfeiting and piracy. This is not only carried out by individuals, but also by major international companies. As this phenomenon has proliferated, it has become destructive to the Arab publishing industry.

This study of publishing in our Arab world also tackles many of the issues faced by the Arab publishing industry, such as paper books, e-books, audiobooks, and their various marketing challenges. It covers the diminishing role of public and university libraries in supporting this industry, as well as the issue of translation from and into Arabic. This study of Arab publishing observes all these issues during the period 2015-2019.

Notably, the Arab Publishers Association has made great efforts to limit such problems, by meeting with Arabic book fair directors, as well as organising conferences, panel discussions, and professional workshops with the publishers.

As understanding the state of publishing in the Arab world is quite important, the APA has decided to prepare this study, appointing Dr Khaled 'Azb to do so. He is known for both his academic and practical expertise in the publishing industry, and can thus present the lived reality and problems of the publishing world as well as future hopes that publishers may entertain.

Finally, the APA offers this study, and its statistics, to publishers, researchers, and students to build upon with further studies, in the hopes of benefiting the publishing world. The Association will also organise panel discussions around the study and connect with decision-makers in the hopes of resolving and minimizing the problems that face the Arab publishing industry. The Association has decided that, by the end of 2021, it will prepare a study on the state of Arab publishing of the years 2020-2021—two years that included a Covid-19 outbreak, which has only exacerbated the crises and serious issues that Arab publishers already faced. The study will also seek out future possible ways of fostering growth in the Arab publishing industry.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to making this study, and special thanks to Dr Khaled 'Azb, as well as the administrative cabinet of the presidential offices, Nahed Mahmoud and Du'aa Mahdi.

I hope we have succeeded in this endeavour.

Mohammad Rashad

INTRODUCTION

The years 2015 until 2019 were transformative in the Arab publishing industry. They fluctuated between rising hopes and a gradual collapse in the sphere of book distribution. This study aims to observe the publishing conditions in the Arab world and pose, through the lens of publishing data analysis, some questions for discussion. The study is divided into several sections, each of which addresses a question that pertains to the publishing industry, with its particular challenges and possibilities. This study seeks to determine the nature of the challenges in order to resolve them with the proper planning. Major problems persist in the relationship between publishers, readers, and everything and everyone in between: such as public libraries, reading platforms, and distribution libraries. This, the study concludes, renders the relationships of the book world asymmetrical.

In the Arab world, we lack context for the publishing world, which is crucial to building a strong publishing industry and knowledge production, an industry that's vital to human advancement.

The publishing industry also faces restrictive laws, in addition to a lack of legal regulations, not to mention the sustained violation of intellectual property rights, especially the rights of authors, as well as the customs imposed on the tools of book production and books themselves.

Undertaking this study has been quite a challenge. Collecting accurate data has been largely one of the biggest challenges. While the support of the Arab Publishers Association and its persistent follow-up with national associations and publishers has been effective, doublechecking incoming data and numbers against the International Numbering System (INS) and Arabic bibliography found in many libraries and digital websites suggests that many Arabic books are published without a National Legal Deposit Number. Alternately, they may be printed in an Arab country different from that where the publishing house is located, either without a Deposit Number or with one that has been issued in the country where the book was published, rather than where the publisher is based. This confuses national numbers. Additionally, the process of issuing National Deposit Numbers is, in some countries, unregulated.

Furthermore, due to the scarcity of statistical studies and reports on English book publishing in the Arab world, many international reports have limited distribution in the Arab world.

Arab publishing houses face particular challenges with the transformations that have taken place in the digital sphere, the decline of academic books, the identification of print and digital content, and the surge in knowledge production in many Arab countries, which remains unaccommodated by the publishing world. Many Arab countries have reduced their role in supporting the Arab publishing industry, although some have taken an increasingly large role with new and unprecedented programmes, such as the Kingdom of Morocco, or have stepped up the pace of publishing, as in Somalia, where there has been a rise in Somali writers who publish in English and are welcomed by many foreign publishing houses. This study also remarks on the phenomenon of digital self-publishing, which requires its own independent study.

The numbers and data included in this study have been collected from multiple sources and closely analysed. Numbers of some reprints were thus excluded, as were those of information booklets, which were also issued their own deposit numbers. Books without a National Deposit Number were included in the report on an equal footing, which means that the published data here is a realistic representation of the publishing field in the Arab world.

Mohammad Rashad's proposed work plan for the APA, which includes creating a database for publishers and the Arab publishing field, is the beginning of building for the future. This study is thus predicated on such a vision.

I am flattered by the trust of the Arab Publishers Association in giving me this opportunity to prepare this study. Since the moment I was charged with this task, and to the point of its conclusion, the APA office in Cairo has given its full support. I would like to give special thanks to Nahed Mahmoud and

Du'aa Mahdi, who have both born many burdens with and from me during the latter part of the study, reviewing its multiple versions.

This study presents many issues, but these make up our inescapable reality. We must push our way into the future, overcoming the past and present, and all its pains.

Dr Khaled 'Azb

THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY: CRISES AND POSSIBILITIES

One of the first challenges faced by Arab publishing as a whole is a failure to acknowledge publishing as an industry, with laws that treat the industry as a producer of a tangible product, the same as food, clothes, tools, vehicles, and other tangible goods. While books are just as tangible, they can only be produced in a publishing house, which receives, or plans to receive, a creative product from its author. This must be introduced, edited, and proofread, then electronically typeset to go through the many stages of what can be called a book production line. Many hands are thus involved in the production of a book! Books go through at least six specialists, who check the book and direct its process, let alone those who print it. The underestimation of books and the book industry is a result of people's deficient understanding of the mechanisms of knowledge production. Publishing is a heavy, complex, profound, far-reaching, and extensive industry. One thus begins to understand why this complex industry receives insufficient attention.

It is a **heavy industry** because it involves multiple actors and requires several facilities. The production of one unit (a book) could take a year, rather than a day, an hour, or a minute.

It is a **complex industry** because it involves different specialists, starting with production directors (publishing), proof-readers, technical directors, printers, papermakers and ink-makers, software producers and operators, as well as marketers, bringing the product all the way to consumers, not to mention the authors, who share their intellect and knowledge, be it individually or collectively.

It is a **profound industry** because it requires intellect and knowledge, which must be original in every separately produced unit (a book). Products, here, are not repetitive; rather, each book contains its own topic. Variation is thus a feature of this industry. Each produced book is printed multiple times, copies of which the publisher promotes, trying to convince readers to buy. Here enters the function of marketing.

Challenges

The failure of Arab countries to acknowledge books as a complicated industry has resulted in a lack of clear data on the publishing industry's contribution to each Arab country's national economy. No specific numbers exist on the size of books' contribution to Egypt's national income, for instance, as it merges with printing, binding, and other book-production tools. Furthermore, while the Egyptian publishing sector occupies nearly 30 to 40 percent of Arab production, Lebanon occupies five percent; its industry thus receives little attention in Arab countries, which has led to a decline in its problem-solving and support.

Customs officials in Arab countries perceive ink, paper, and other production items as commercial goods, rather than as production tools for an essential industry—especially as paper and ink figure in other industries, such as binding, medical inserts, and cartons where many other goods are stored. Such overlap between book printing tools and those of other products creates problems in the taxation and customs duties applied to some of the revenues of printed books.

The years-long monopolisation of book production by some countries' governments has entrenched an impression that books are state-sponsored. In the public mind, then, books add no value to the national economy, even though some Arab countries have book exports, such as Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. Likewise, some Arab countries are slowly headed in that direction, like Saudi Arabia, which publishes many books, especially on folklore and religion. Since the 1980s, the book publishing sector has been growing in Saudi Arabia, and has seen no decline in recent years, thanks in particular to the role that the Saudi private sector plays in publishing, mainly centred in Riyadh and Jeddah.

The true crisis in book printing revenues is the result of imports. Arab countries use these revenues on imports, and Arab paper and ink production fails to cover the existing demand. Likewise, book printing machinery is also imported.

However, even if we were to exclude printing as a source of revenue, we would still face problems in the industry as a whole. To begin with, publishing directors are scarce; their job is to determine and decide publishing guidelines, choose book titles, converse with the author, and make edits to the book. They also must guess at a book's suitability to readers. Publishing directors are uncommon in most Arab publishing houses, not to mention developmental or mechanical editors. Their editorial processes impose technical and tactical frameworks that render the creative process, as any other experience, an amalgam of imaginative depths and solid linguistic, expressive, and structural guidelines. Editing sheds light where needed in a text and finesse spaces that require concision and brevity.

This process is more like a surgeon's knife, which uproots that which is superfluous in a text, and also like the knife of a plastic surgeon, which adds that which could attract the reader to a text. The process might be painful for authors, but could also light up their work and make it shine. The developmental or mechanical editors are tasked with preparing the author or the literary work for publication. Editors thus work closely with authors to ensure that a work is given a "perfect" final version, founded on the best aesthetic, creative, and artistic standards, devoid of inconsistencies and contradictions, cleaned of grammatical and typographical errors, and devoid of structural disparities.

Here, the publishing industry is one that requires careful deliberation throughout its different stages. The editor of a written text might thus prefer to start their work while the author writes the book, reading it chapter by chapter, as the author goes, commenting on them accordingly. The editor must also consider the differences between genres: there are many differences between books in the humanities or applied sciences vs. creative works, such as poetry and novels. **A preliminary assessment has revealed that 65 percent of Arab publishing houses fuse the role of the publishing house owner with that of its director, publishing director, and developmental editor, and content themselves with a mere proofreading, not to mention that some houses fail to even carry out any proofreading.**

This unveils a need to restructure the publishing industry in Arab publishing houses, 60 percent of which lack institutionalisation. This is due to **a shortage of professional training courses specialised in the publishing industry and, thus, a lack of clear academic studies that explain and elucidate its nature.**

Choosing a book topic is an art, in and of itself. However, only 40 percent of Arab publishing houses have a clear vision of their publishing agenda; the rest of the publishing houses are dependent on authors for input. Orienting a publishing house is an act that helps the publisher, author, and reader to pick and choose a certain publishing house, seeking topics in which it specialises. This leads us to the hurdles of marketing and distribution, which we shall address later. No feasibility studies exist for the publishing industry, upon which one might build further feasibility studies of specific topics and target audiences. Any book must target readers with the desire to purchase a certain type of book, which is what Amazon does, for instance; it tracks readers' book purchases, thereby carefully selecting others that may suit that reader's preferences. As such, Amazon builds readerships against which it could assess the scope and extent of demand for certain topics.

One of the hurdles of publishing in the Arab world is the cost of book production in its different stages. In the case of Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria, this hurdle has had a positive effect. To wit: translation, editing, copyediting, and proofreading cost less there than in Gulf countries and the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania). Accordingly, prices have been relatively low in the former countries, which has made some Gulf countries assign these tasks to people in Egypt or Lebanon. Still another issue in book production lies in cover design. A reader's eye is ordinarily caught by a good cover; book cover design, however, still needs professional training and practice in the Arab world. Twenty percent of Arab publishing houses choose colours that are no longer suitable in our day and age. Twenty-five percent of Arab publishing houses produce visually busy book covers, which are similarly ill-suited for our times, where the receiver's mind already suffers information overload. Likewise, even when it comes to digital books, Arab publishing houses still choose unappealing colours or ones that exhaust the eye.

Internal book layout has also become antiquated, and here we see the significance of a publishing director who closely monitors the development of book production as well as the psychology that

underlies the relationship between a reader and a book. Studies in that domain, which could inform publishing houses of useful recent innovations, are yet to be conducted.

All this raises questions about the extent of attention Arab countries accord the publishing industry as an industry capable of contributing a considerable percentage of national income. Global examples of countries that have given the publishing industry good attention include the UK, France, and the USA. France has founded a National Book Centre ([Centre National du Livre](#)) as has Canada, which established a [Canada Book Fund](#) to support publishers. In that sense, the Moroccan national vision for books, which it presented through a paper titled 'The National Programme for Books and Reading', prepared under the supervision of Dr Hassan al-Wazāni, remains the most prominent in the region. The study determined the issues that the book industry faces in Morocco, the goals envisioned for the development of this industry, and the direction it seems to be taking. Even if this plan is not fully implemented, the Moroccan Ministry of Culture has adopted an unprecedented programme to support the publishing industry in a systematic and successful manner. The study has revealed promising prospects for the development of the Moroccan publishing industry, if it were to consider Moroccan book markets abroad, where Moroccans in the diaspora, especially in Europe, may encourage such exports. The study equally affirmed the importance of the African market for Moroccan books, which here can coexist with Egyptian books. However, it is the state's direct support for publishing that has largely contributed to the increased publishing index in Morocco. Decree no. 200354, issued on 1 November 2000 regulates support for publishers, which pertains to the financial aid given to theatre and books. Likewise, an applied Decision no. 1224-02 was made in support of book publishing, where it would give financial aid that covers 50 percent of costs of a nominated book, in return for halving its sales price. One of the most prominent publications supported by the Moroccan Ministry of Culture was *Ma'alamat al-Maghreb*, which is an encyclopaedia of the Kingdom of Morocco that the Moroccan Association of Authors, Translators, and Publishers has published. Another was the book *Al-Istiqā li-Akhhbār Duwal al-Maghreb al-Aqsa* by *Annaṣiri*, published in eight volumes. Notably, the Moroccan project supports authorship by affirming that authors' rights are part and parcel of the given support. It also supports cultural domains and seeks to support new authors through a 'First Book' programme. This project stands out in its focus on supporting library and information science publications, which further serves the interests of the Moroccan publishing industry. Support for the industry has reached 500 books a year; a 120-page book receives 8-10 thousand dirhams, which enables the publishing house to produce 300-500 copies of the book.

More importantly, however, is the intellectual workforce in Morocco, which produces knowledge and culture. There are institutions that publish without governmental support and constitute the backbone of serious Moroccan publishing, such as Abdelaziz Ibn Su'ūd's Institute in Casablanca and Arrabita al-Mohammadiya lil-'Ulamā in Rabat: the former publishes on various topics, in both Arabic and French, while the latter focuses on religious culture from a modern perspective.

Even more importantly, we now have a clear understanding of actors in the publishing industry in the Kingdom of Morocco, as well as of an industry that now seems promising and animated, with a general discussion around beneficiaries and demands for the increase of governmental support.

Until now, Moroccan books have not been actively marketed in the Arab world. Rather, there has been a focus on the educated and intellectual strata in Morocco, and on exporting Moroccan books to Moroccan communities in the diaspora and in West Africa.

This leads us to a discussion of the role companies and banks can take in supporting the publishing industry. In truth, this domain receives little attention; awareness of the importance of culture and its economic role is still limited in the Arab region. There are, however, experiences to consider. The Jordan Ahli Bank supported the publication of anthologies by a number of Jordanian literary figures. It also helped publish intellectual, historical, and literary studies of creative works, which have reached, in a short period of time, more than fifty titles—a large number in the region.

In Egypt, the Housing and Development Bank fully supported the publication of a number of books in both Arabic and English, especially on urban planning and construction. The Shell Oil Company also supported the publication of cultural and archaeological books.

Such collaboration remains quite limited and requires guiding policies by financial institutions. Publishers also need to develop their own parallel policies, as they should be especially interested in this if they plan on receiving aid—publishing personnel have yet to be trained for grant application writing.

Application guidelines should answer a number of questions that drive funders to support the publication of a book, such as:

- The book's topic and its significance
- The impact the book will have on its target audience, and the nature of that audience
- How the book will benefit the funder

While the publishing industry intersects with many other industries, the biggest problem it faces is lack of acknowledgement by Arab countries, who fail to perceive it as an industry. It is therefore important to give it a proper definition, with a referential framework, accompanied by legislation that will serve the industry. Publishing must also not be limited to the purview of Ministries of Culture; this is an industry that also intersects with the Ministries of Industry, Commerce, Investment, Communications and Information Technology, Education, and Sports. We must therefore discuss possibilities whereby Arab publishing could benefit from export support funds, as well as from all forms of grants. This would also call for restructuring the publishing industry to keep up with rapid developments, through establishing a regional training centre.

Many Arab countries have seen a notable increase in the number of publishing houses and, subsequently, the number of published books. This is particularly noticeable in countries where the publishing industry has been, until recently, quite limited. These include Mauritania, where the number of publishers has reached 47; Somalia, with 49 publishers; Bahrain, with 128 publishers; and Jordan, with 140 publishers. Furthermore, publishing activity in Jordan has largely grown in the past ten years, and recently it has even attracted authors from outside Jordan. Likewise, Iraq has been taking advantage of its own geographic location and abilities to publish books, while the number of publishers in Tunisia has notably reached 150—a number that reflects relative stability of the publishing sector in Tunisia during the past five years. Yet more importantly, in this context, is taking the following into consideration:

- Population growth in the Arab world is not truly reflected in the number of publishing houses and published books. This imbalance must be discussed.
- The increased percentage of educated people is not reflected in an increase in publishing rates. Since the 1970s, the number of educated people in the Arab world has grown sharply, 500 percent higher than in the 1970s. This, too, reflects an imbalance in the publishing sector.
- Although the size of Arab economies has grown since the 1940s, the size of the publishing sector has not grown at a proportionate rate to the size of Arab economies. Such imbalance is the result of:
 - A failure to consider the contribution of the publishing industry to national incomes.
 - An imbalance in the Arab education system, indicated in readership turnout.
 - A failure to respect the cultural rights of Arab citizens—that is, the right to knowledge.

The growing number of private publishing houses in Kuwait (68 publishing houses) reflects an active readership among Kuwaiti youth and a strong governmental programme that provides good books. In the meantime, private publishing houses have been actively encouraging readership and book purchases. However, the fluctuating number of publishing houses is the result of a limited book market in Kuwait. Notably, Kuwait has a promising movement of book exports to a number of countries, besides quality publications in the English language.

Since the 1960s and until today, Kuwait has been home to solid publishing programmes, especially the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature programme (*‘Ālam al-Ma’arifa*, *Ibdā’at*, *Ālam al-Fikr*, *Athaqāfa al-‘Ālamiya*, *Silsilat at-Turath*) and a number of active publishing institutions, such

as the Abdelaziz Albabtin Foundation, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS), and the University of Kuwait. However, the number of private and public publishing houses keeps fluctuating.

CONTENT: ITS IMPORTANCE AND OBJECTIVES

While the book, in all its printed and digital forms, is a vessel that transmits knowledge, content functions as a book's beating heart. Content shapes a book, defines it, and leads to its dissemination.

Content: any knowledge-based product with potential to turn into a book, through which knowledge is transmitted. The importance of content is that it is the first publishing tool, upon which this industry is founded. Such content can be divided into the following:

Creative content

Story collections/Novel – Poetry – Plays – Arts

Arts Catalogues and Art Books

Academic content

Studies in Humanities– Applied Sciences

General content

Travel Guides – Political Books – Humanities and Social Sciences – Children's Books – Translated Books –Religious Books – Public Educational Topics

Magazines and periodicals|

General Interest Magazines – Specialised Magazines – Specialised Academic Journals – Cultural Magazines – Scientific Magazines

After scanning Arabic content, one notices shortage in certain topics and proliferation of others. There is no clear formulation of the nature and essence of the offered content, unless through official institutions, whose working and scope of funding is quite limited. Furthermore, creative literary works form the bulk of the published content in some publishing houses, while religious publications prevail at other publishing houses. No defined or clear innovative breakthrough has taken place in the Arab publishing sector, barring a few cases, such as the Arab Capital of Culture project, launched by the Arab League's Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO). Once launched, countries raced to produce unprecedented content for one capital or another, as happened when Sanaa was chosen as an Arab Capital of Culture, when Tlemcen was designated as the Arab Capital of Culture, followed by Algiers as the Arab Capital of Culture – historical, archaeological, and cultural books on Algiers were consequently produced – or when Constantine was designated as an Arab Capital of Culture in 2015, and about thirty titles were published for the occasion. Such events were a good and fruitful tool for mobilising book publishing, whereby new authors and knowledge were introduced, while the cities addressed in those publications were likewise promoted, thus enabling touristic growth and exposure.

Nevertheless, to build on this movement we must start with ministries of culture, tourism, and local administration, all the way down to publishers themselves.

However, the most important axis of content creation is children. Children who do not read books written specifically for them will not want to read books in the future. The children's book industry in the Arab world has significantly declined, at an incremental rate, estimated at 35 percent during the past five years, despite the fact that the children's book industry is considered the backbone of many publishing houses, especially in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. This is a generation of children who prefer online videogames, 3D software, and cartoons, not to mention gripping interactive programmes. While such outlets are not financially taxing to a household, the cost of children's books has been

increasing – children’s books need quality production, appealing colours, and illustrations tailored to every age group. Hopefully, publishers will adapt to such a situation by adding more excitement and creativity to children’s books, especially if combined with a digital product that the child could browse at home – thus making them want to purchase a story or a book that complements what they watch on screen. This is what Disney realised; it now offers cartoon films with book and game extensions – which all share the same content. The children’s book industry is complex and diversified and could be a conduit to a number of creative industries in the Arab region.

The general trend in the industry is toward printed novels. Such a direction has been increasing in recent years, especially since 2006. Perhaps the art of novels is the strongest urge that holds together the Arab publishing sector. The new generations that has been used to internet chats considers novels an appealing parallel world of stories. Some of the people who engage in the online world have moved from that sphere into printed books, which pushed new generations to also shift their focus to print books. This was evidenced at the Kuwait International Book Fair, the Sharjah Book Fair, and the Riyadh Book Fair. We have also remarked such an approach in Egypt, and that a number of publishing houses have adopted this path. The toughest question remains, however: Will this pattern have a future?

Truth be told, this type of literature is a temporary literature, whose books shall disappear with time. Here, we may recall literary phenomena that rose with Naguib Mahfouz’ works and literature; while Naguib Mahfouz’s literature remained, those phenomena dissipated. Some publishing houses have realised this, and they have organised workshops specialised in creative writing, with encouraging results.

Book clubs

Ever since their foundation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, literary clubs have been growing. They were incubated in Saudi Arabia, founded by students who returned after completing their educational missions abroad, some of whom had specialised in literary critique. These clubs developed in parallel with the emergence of modern literary influences, and, the more time passed, the more established and active these clubs became. As regards publishing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, clubs have been responsible for the publication of a number of literary creative works, critiques, and other works. The same has taken place in Bahrain, where, in 1969, the most prominent cultural club was founded, *Ussat al-Udabā wal-Kuttāb*, which comprised a minority of the best Bahraini writers and intellectuals, including Qassim Haddad, ‘Ali Khalifa, and Mohammad Jaber al-Anṣārī. The formation of these clubs reflects the significant role that the educated, literary, and intellectual civil society plays in effecting a movement of creativity and thought. In the Kingdom of Morocco, for instance, one of the backbones of the cultural movement and intellectual production is civil society. We could connect its development with the development of the publishing sector and, in parallel, knowledge dissemination.

But while novels grew, everything indicates that short stories have declined, while plays and innovation in playwriting have dwindled. On the other hand, we now see the infancy of art catalogues, especially plastic arts, as a number of exhibitions interested in this art have emerged, while fine art sales flourished. These have a special status in Egypt, Morocco, and Lebanon, but there is also a growing interest in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Naila Art Gallery, Pure Art Gallery, Darat Safeya Binzagr, and Misk Art Institute are pioneers, among others. Likewise, the UAE has been a pioneer in this domain, especially in Dubai, Sharjah, and Abu Dhabi, which mainly produce art catalogues in Arabic and English. This indicates that, if integrated, the creative industries could be mutually beneficial in both presence and role.

On the other hand, publishing in the applied sciences, such agriculture, engineering, medicine, and other sciences has been declining. It is expected that they will continue to decline; readers interested in this domain find an abundance of information on specialised websites, updated by the minute online. Therefore, at best, publishing in those domains will only be sustained when it comes to simplified books of science, as long as quality production is maintained.

The question of academic books, once the backbone of publishing in many publishing houses, stands out. In truth, many universities have turned to digital learning, and academic books have been tossed to the graveyard. Academic publishing houses have shifted to publishing digital learning content, which means that these publishing houses must now cooperate, to limit competition between dozens of them as they shrink to a smaller number, especially since the main cost of these websites begins with website development and gradually decreases to the point of basic website maintenance and updates.

This leads us to the humanities. In truth, demand for these types of books will continue; however, these days, the trend is to publish a book with more than one author. This has been tried by many international publishing houses, whereby an editor with expertise in the book topic is given the responsibility to bring together a number of authors, each with their own specialisation, to contribute to the book. Cambridge University has excelled in this approach; another example of such a model has been the published translations by the Centre for Arab Unity Studies in Beirut, like *Al-Madīna fil 'Ālam al-Islāmi*, which comes out in two volumes and *Al-ḥadāra al-'Arabiya fil Andalus*.

The National Centre for Translation in Cairo has translated the Arabic Literature Encyclopaedia that was published by Cambridge University in six volumes, to which a number of researchers contributed.

Sometimes, Arab publishing houses will resort to collective authorship, but they will launch it through periodicals, which undermines the value of the publication. Magazines like *Al-Mawred* and *'Ālam al-Fikr* publish solid features on specific topics and book reviews. One of the promising cases in this domain is *Kitāb Marāya*, of which 17 numbers have been issued since 2017. Although it is published by Dar Marāya in Egypt, it has stood out for commissioning Arab writers, like Tha'er Dīb from Syria, *Anas Ghanāyem* from Jordan, and Riyadh Hammadi from Yemen. One of the most prevalent topics of *Kitāb Marāya* has been *Women's Defeat... the Historical Roots of Men's Social Domination*, which is its third issue, and *Autobiographical Literature... Some Give us an Extra Life*, in its eighth issue. Issue No. 16 reveals maturity as opposed to previous issues, which shows how book editors can gradually develop their own performance – an important asset in the publishing world. The issue included the following articles:

- 'The Crisis that Intensified Job Market Pains'
- 'Pandemic Literature... Texts that Champion Survival Instincts'
- 'Socialism in the Time of Pandemics'
- 'Voyages between Four Walls: Reflections on Wellbeing and Solitude'

Notably, an author's rights in books that are collectively authored ends with their receipt of their research honorarium and their contribution to the book. This has been yet another incentive for Western publishing houses to uphold this type of publication; here, a publishing house holds all rights to the book for good. Furthermore, this form of collective authorship seems to be the future of publishing in the humanities. While individual creative publication in these domains will remain, an individual would not author more than one volume; what's more, the number of its pages must not exceed 400, and should preferably remain under 200. New data from the International Publishers Association suggests that readers can no longer finish books longer than this; thus, authors in the humanities must build their skills in reaching readers by focusing their knowledge and vision in no more than this number of pages.

In publishing domains, a relative boom has been noted in autobiographical literature, which leans toward narrating the events of the political world – as political events in the Arab world intensified and nostalgia for former leaders of some countries has grown. Politics and its discontents still attracts readers with their fast pace. Philosophy is the one innovation still in its infancy in the Arab world, and it is expected to draw in more readers in the shadow of crises of identity, the future, and ethnic and religious conflicts. Likewise, in tracing one's nostalgia for the past, social and historical books also have attracted more interest, whereas religious books continue to compete with novels in their prevalence over Arab publishing content.

Absence of travel guides from the agendas of many Arab publishing houses is yet another major issue, especially as these are considered lifesavers for the industry. The exception here is Morocco and, to some extent, Egypt and Tunisia. Arab publishing houses do not contribute to the production of travel guides and other touristic printouts in all the different languages, such as English, French, Italian, German, and Chinese. Travel-guide writing workshops must therefore be organised, as this is a genre that has its own requirements. Travel guides rely on a large distribution market as well as diversity and tourism in the countries they cover. Dubai, for instance, also produces a number of well-made travel guides.

The general international direction in the publishing world indicates the end of encyclopaedias. The age of the encyclopaedia is now over, as these are currently published online, with extensive and rapid search capacities, as one sees with the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Many Arabic websites have realised this, such as the Emirati Alwarāq, which includes more than one thousand books, including literary, poetic, and classical works, with access to free reading and a textual search engine. Many other websites have followed suit, as it is no longer useful to print *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, or *Fat'h al-Bāri bi-Shar'h Sa'hīh al-Bukhārī*, or *Tārikh at-Tabari*, and other such volumes. Thus, countries can redirect that capital previously pumped into encyclopaedias into new publishing spheres.

In general publishing domains, educational content will continue to be produced, but it should better be accompanied by parallel educational programmes on the publishing house's website. This is what print-digital role exchanges mean, and it would require a different content structure and, therefore, different operational structures for the publishing process and its participants within Arab publishing houses. Arabic calligraphy booklets will continue, as will interest in them, along with the demand for the different art books, architecture catalogues, and other types of visually focused books. The best model in this domain, in the Arab world, is the publications of the Kuwait Islamic Arts Centre. Those, however, are not distributed free of charge, and have no marketing strategy, despite their brilliance and precision. Instead, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Waqf puts it up for marketing through various channels.

When evaluating Arabic published content, Kuwait stands out as home to the best projects of knowledge dissemination in the Arab world until now. Its publishing ventures, which started in the 1960s and is ongoing, are considered excellent in terms of the content they produce. The *‘Ālam al-Ma‘arifa* series is now the best ongoing Arab series regularly published. In a steady manner, and ever since its first publication, it has focused on content, not authors. As regards authors' rights, the series upholds authors' rights clearly and properly. They enjoy an excellent reach and print 40,000 copies of each title. The quality of translated content has also been noted, in terms of the choice of topics and level of translation.

Jordanian Publishers by Specialisation						
General publishing	Digital publishing	Religious books, heritage books	School books	Academic books	Objective domains	Other specialisations
7	8	12	11	80	12	10

The prevalence of academic publishing houses in Jordan puts the future of these houses in question, as universities turn to digital publication. This also applies to 157 publishing houses in Alexandria in Egypt, where 90 percent work in academic publishing.

Book Publishing Tendencies in Jordan (2015-2019)									
Geography and History	Literature	Arts	Applied Sciences	Sciences	Languages	Social Sciences	Religions	Philosophy and psychology	General knowledge
749	322	291	993	222	439	3131	1227	479	186

From observing publishing tendencies in Jordan, one might note a relative balance. Such a balance reflects the presence and spread of Jordanian books in the study's five years, during which a number of Jordanian and Iraqi authors have been publishing in Jordan at a much higher rate than before.

Numbers of Books Published in Arab Countries

State/ Year	Number of published books				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
UAE	1436	1281	2061	2249	2968
Jordan	1936	1983	1254	2477	3920
Bahrain	301	420	370	280	265
Algeria	1177	2924	3316	1074	1504
Sudan	1004	1183	1347	1012	853
Somalia	743	872	1409	2000	1320
Iraq	7650	7900	8050	8200	8400
Kuwait	615	162	318	343	330
Morocco	2448	2807	3833	6000	4219
Yemen	130	334	253	355	495
Tunisia	1291	2291	2035	2240	2780
Syria	1211	983	1143	1480	1050
Oman	502	489	588	631	767
Palestine	356	207	720	1104	829
Qatar	417	488	677	811	1020
Lebanon	6453	7621	8536	8612	7479
Libya	1008	720	680	620	760
Egypt	22500	23900	24000	22000	23000
Mauritania	381	435	510	510	550

Number of Books Published in the Arab World

Year	Number of books
2015	54601
2016	59390
2017	63830
2018	66218
2019	70630

Magazines and Journals

There have been notable developments between 2015 and 2019 concerning magazines and periodicals in the Arab region. Prior to their analysis, we detail this category of publication:

Magazines and Journals

This includes: General Interest magazines - specialised magazines - specialised academic journals – cultural magazines – scientific magazines.

Academic journals

Firstly, printed academic journals are a thing of the past, and shall never be revived. International publishing tendencies have been leaning towards digital periodicals. This is the case in the most ancient of countries and those that publish the least of these journals. Some Arab institutions and publishers, however, still live in the past rather than the present, and their future vision of these periodicals is yet to be divulged. Arab universities, libraries, and cultural and scientific institutions have been strongly headed, since 2003, toward digital membership in journals. Should Arabs follow

the same path, it would effectively save many periodicals from perishing. Furthermore, it would subject them to strict academic standards, which would raise the level of Arab scientific research.

However, up until now, Arab universities and publishing houses have been generally lacking experts in this field that could maintain solid periodicals. Some Arab publishers have been digitally marketing these periodicals, much like their counterparts in Europe, the US, and Canada. Other good signs of this type may be seen in some countries, such as Algeria, which has launched the ASJP, a platform for Algerian scientific journals. At the time of this study's writing, ASJP includes 621 published journals. Its journals feature a variety of topics, from agriculture, to medicine, to all branches of the humanities. It stands out in digitising all versions of a published article, from its receipt, revision, acceptance, and publication; it equally makes feedback given by other researchers available. All information is thus rendered transparent and accessible, which will positively affect Algerian scientific journals in the long run. Likewise, Fayoum University's School of Archaeology has had a successful experience with its scientific journal *Shadt*, with strict publication standards and to international acclaim.

Notably, Arab research is regularly published in European or American journals to wide recognition. The issue remains a lack of Arab scientific journals that meet international standards. Some examples include the University of Kuwait periodicals; its department of literary journals, for instance, have been published for years and are now one of the most precise, serious, and committed Arab periodicals. The same applied to *Al-Mawred* journal in Iraq, although it has declined over the past two decades. Still, the aforementioned proves that Arabs could have serious and internationally esteemed scientific journals.

Publishing houses should establish platforms for such journals and launch specialist periodicals on them, in collaboration with scientific associations, such as the Union of Arab Historians, universities, or working groups of university professors. This seemingly tough undertaking demands daring publishers with serious efforts and clearly devised plans. There are plenty of Arab medical journals that publish in English, while Arab medical researchers also publish in European and American journals. Yet we need to build an Arab medical digital publishing industry that publishes in the English language, with credibility and reach, which would subsequently generate enormous financial revenues and even provide the money to invest elsewhere.

Magazines

There is no need to talk about general-interest magazines, as these have no future, and shall perish. Internationally and domestically, many general-interest magazines have been discontinued. The reason they are still in relative circulation is that some generations, which still use paper as its main tool to knowledge, consider magazines a readerly heritage. Furthermore, many countries and societies consider these magazines as part of their national makeup. Hence the question: What if the "paper generations" become extinct? Further: What if the coming generations give up on the idea that magazines were part of their national identity?

Magazines like *Al-Hilāl* and *Al-'Arabi*, cultural magazines still in print thanks to the support of the Egyptian and Kuwaiti governments, respectively, in the past have been considered part and parcel of the national cultural fabric. The future, however, may hold solutions to this problem, especially since many cultural or general interest magazines, like *Al-Wassat*, which used to be published in Beirut and London, have been discontinued. Likewise, *Al-Majalla* magazines, previously published in print since 1980 by the Saudi Research and Publishing Company, has now been switched into a digital publication. One still wonders: How long can these magazines hold out?

Specialised magazines have been recently trending. Examples include *Nisf ad-Dunya* magazine in Egypt, and *Laha*, published in Beirut, now digitised, and later followed by a TV channel linked to its website. This remarkable phenomenon, however, lies in the success of the Arabic version of the American *National Geographic*, published in Abu Dhabi; the British scientific *Nature* magazine has been equally successful, published in Arabic in King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology; it used to be a print magazine but has now been digitised, with a growing readership among Arab youth.

The future, then, is in specialised magazines. One important such magazine is *Thākirat Missr*, published by the Library of Alexandria; another is *Hurūf ‘Arabiya*, published in Dubai with largescale support, and which has caught the attention of many, as far afield as Europe and East Asia. The magazine published 12 issues between 2015 and 2019, and usually prints out 2000 paper copies. It enjoys a large base of subscriptions, which attests to the success of this type of magazine, and it is often gifted to others. It is distributed in the following countries: the UAE, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, and the USA.

Book fairs immediately run out of its issues, which is interesting to those who have been watching it closely. *Hurūf ‘Arabiya* is a magazine specialised in Arabic calligraphy, and is the only Arab magazine in this domain that publishes regularly, while also maintaining quality in terms of topics and production. This brings up another magazine published in Abu Dhabi, which is yet another specialised magazine, *Majallat Turāth*, printed and distributed in Abu Dhabi in the form of gifts and subscriptions; notably, it is available in a PDF version, which facilitates its spread throughout social media and online.

Magazines, Periodicals, and Newspapers in Iraq

Year	General Interest Magazines	Scientific Journals		Newspapers
		Revised	Non-revised	
2015	58	29	28	138
2016	58	29	28	138
2017	59	30	29	139
2018	59	30	29	139
2019	60	30	30	139

Until 1990, Iraq had its own collection of distinguished magazines and journals, some of which have recently resumed regular publication. Most notable are: *Majallat Somar*, *Majallat al-Majma’a al-‘Ilmi al-‘Irāqi*, *Majallat at-Turāth a-Sha’abi*, all of which have contributed considerably to Arab culture.

EVALUATING ARAB CONTENT

With a few exceptions, limited to the new generation of novels that started as online blogs, a look at Arab content reveals stark failure to revolutionise its content. It also eschews an in-depth understanding of the nature of the structure of novels in the digital sphere, which could be explained as such:

In the digital sphere, the world of novels will acquire a new dimension. It is an interactive dimension through which a novelist will collaborate with their readers to write their novel; readers will share their suggestions or even write directly into the manuscript. Some will most likely pick up on new writing techniques, and narrative techniques will undoubtedly change. We now stand before a landscape of fiction that will be home to documentary filmmaking, with a strong presence of documents, pictures, and illustrations. A manuscript here will not be just another written script; rather, other tools will factor in to complement and provide it with other dimensions. A novelist may even pictorialize the events of their novel or the locations in which their novel takes place. In this case, the novelist would interact with their surroundings, until those become part of the novel.

The digital sphere in novels will depend on short sentences and quick responses, as well as on a structure of escalating events. Here, the receiver does not consume a text, but is rather involved in it.

Publishers must therefore urgently build platforms for interactive novels. The question remains, however: will novels in their traditional form disappear? They cannot disappear; individual creativity will endure and remain, especially since much of it is inspired by the past. However, its production in a 3D interactive format (3D animation) would be much easier and cost less. This means that much of what we read in the world of printed novels will be easily transported to the sphere of screens, where events could be visualised, as the production costs of such formats have been declining.

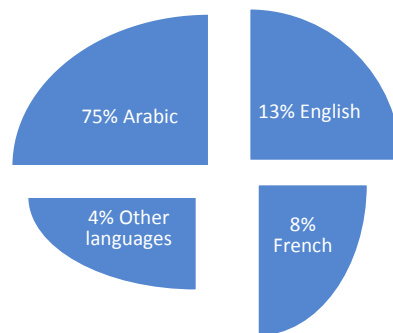
There are also low-profile institutions with their own staunch readership, like *Bayt al-Khayl al-'Arabi* in Kuwait, which prints in both Arabic and English. While the number of its publications is quite limited, one may deduce that topics like horses and camels and so on still arouse interest and have their own audience and buying power. This is what the Saudi Dr Badr al-Wehibi realised; an author specialised in horses, he began self-publishing stories about Arabian horses, and he has found success. The question is: does this only pertain to Arabic novels, or are there other forms of content? The grounds for comparison here are not large sales so much as variation in content and innovation, which revitalises the publishing sector. Should one follow Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press which, contrary to many US-owned university presses that have shut down, are still active? Examples of such presses include that of Eastern Washington University, Southern Methodist University, and the University of California.

Similarly, the University of Missouri downsized its workforce by half. The diversification and regeneration of topics and ideas, as well as the realisation that they had a worldwide market, have helped both Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press endure and flourish up until now. This brings up the question of publishing schedules in Arab universities. There are those with publishing schedules, like those in the University of Kuwait, which is home to regularly published quality series and publications, and also King Saud University in Riyadh, also home to good publications and translations. However, and contrary to the American University in Cairo, both have failed to develop their publishing schedules in a way that transforms them into an economic tool that benefits the university and its employees.

University presses could be a tool used to support the publishing industry in any Arab country and even activate it. Such is the case of the University of Khartoum Press, founded in 1967. It quickly set itself up with editors, readers, proofreaders, and designers, followed by a UNESCO-donated printer. The press grew and contributed to providing academic books; it modernised distribution outlets throughout the different university locales and began to produce cultural books. In fifty years, from 1967 to 2017, the house published 600 titles of the most prominent intellectual and creative streams in Sudan. This regenerated Sudanese cultures and introduced great creative names, like *Nathir*

Dafaallah, Naṣr al-Haj 'Ali, Mu'āwiya Muhammad Nūr, Muhammad al-Mahdi Majthūb, 'Arafāt Muhammad 'Abdallah, and Mustafa 'Hassan Is'hāq. In the early 1980s, the press began holding and organising quality book fairs. It co-organised the first book fair with the General Egyptian Book Organisation in Khartoum. The publishing industry in Sudan is then still in need of further efforts, especially with the presence of creative minds that are rather celebrated outside Sudan, like Jumhū Zbāra and Taj Assirr Hassan, who have both emerged from Cairo. Furthermore, Sudanese marketing of cultural and knowledge products is still limited.

The biggest shortcoming of the publishing sector across the Arab region is the relative absence of foreign-language publishing. The American University in Cairo is still the best source of publishing in foreign languages in the Arab world. Some other disparate publishing efforts exist, but the shadows of the colonial era are still traceable in the foreign language published in each Arab country. As such, the majority of English-language publications are found in the Gulf region, French is mainly published in the Maghreb, while Egypt is home to both English and French publications, although English is relatively more prevalent. In terms of numbers, Arabic-language publications make up 75 percent of publishing in the Arab world, English language publications constitute 13 percent of publications in the Arab world, and French language publications constitute 8 percent of overall publications in the Arab world. Four percent of publications are dedicated to other languages, like Spanish, Italian, German, and Russian.



Private Arab publishing houses have limited interest in publishing in foreign languages, which prevents them from exporting their books to many research centres and universities interested in Middle East studies. In the meantime, 6 percent of France's publications are dedicated to Middle East studies, as are 8 percent of Britain's publications. One may deduce, then, that we have a promising market should we begin producing and publishing in those languages.

Content challenges (technical-legal challenges)

To keep up with recent developments in content production, preparing content now requires advanced software, sophisticated technology, and highly trained professionals. Besides, such content must be adaptable to both digitised access and print. Content must also be secured against online theft. As the publishing industry turned toward publishing in two spheres (print and digital), the publisher's task became more difficult. One aspect that has made it so is online piracy, followed by the reprinting of pirated material. This corners publishers from both ends, decreases publication revenues, and destroys publication economies in the Arab world. Access to digital content therefore requires double-checking, securing it against theft, and inventing new ways to manage it. This would boost its revenues. Likewise, legislation against digital piracy of copyrighted material should be urgently introduced, which requires regulations and rules that determine the nature of digital access, duration, and revenues. Those laws would render this digital sphere as flexible, rather than rigid, where, in the latter case, internet users are forced to find detours to access digital books or content.

Books: digital and print

The invention of writing has been the most important technical achievement in human history. It changed humans' relationship to the past, as it flung the door wide open before writing as an active force throughout the ages.

Papyrus scrolls, clay tablets, stone engravings, and writing on bones and parchment paper have all been tools that transferred knowledge. It brought humanity out of oral monolingualism to a more cumulative culture – through a tool that enabled a stable transfer of knowledge.

When books appeared to replace scrolls, the concept of reading changed. Readers could now turn pages that comprised connected texts and separate words, paragraphs, and chapters, not to mention tables of contents and indexes, which facilitate the process of reading and, subsequently, understanding.

In turn, the book changed with the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, by using moveable type, or individual letters. Printing made books accessible to the widest possible number of readers; printing also enabled knowledge breakthroughs, making knowledge accessible to all. It was the strongest tool for the advancement of science and facilitated learning. The twentieth century introduced the internet, which, since its inception in 1947, has become yet another tool that breaks through more hurdles that block the transfer of knowledge. Seventeen years later, internet search engines were introduced, thus enabling faster access to information.

Despite paper's appeal, effect, and high capacity for interacting with memory, reading is now increasingly becoming a digital experience. Digital book sales have been annually growing ever since 2012, when they surpassed printed book sales for the first time in the United States.

Here, one must distinguish between producing a book in a digital format and transforming a paper book into a digitised format (e-books and PDFs). The latter is now more prevalent in the Arab world, while the former comes when one subscribes to websites with hundreds of books made available digitally. The Anglo-Egyptian Library has been experimenting with this format. These types of libraries allow for neither printing nor downloading books. Subscriptions to books vary between specialised domains or to the entire collection of available books. Such a format has the following features:

- Much lower cost than paper books and faster access than to paper books.
- Available at any time.
- Easily carried: If you're travelling, how would you carry fifty books around? In this case, though, you have thousands of books you can reach.

One of the major problems with digital books is what can be called the passive reception of knowledge, which comes through browsing, or even scanning through the text for only that which you need to know. Our knowledge will therefore remain incomplete and deficient: it will revolve around only that which we now want. Reading to build other kinds of knowledge is now under question, whereas, reading paper books forces you to read them completely, in order to reach what you seek. The latter provides you with further knowledge that you had not considered, which becomes a wealth of knowledge through a process of consecutive accumulation. This can later make up a novelist, artist, intellectual, or philosopher, or at least give us a reader with extensive information in a number of domains.

The survival of paper books is a rather emotional challenge, tied to the emotional connection between readers and paper. In his book, *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future*, Robert Darnton notes the following:

Even if the image on the computer screen is accurate, it will fail to capture crucial aspects of a book. For example, size. The experience of reading a small duodecimo, designed to be held easily in one

hand, differs considerably from that of reading a heavy folio propped up on a book stand. It is important to get the feel of a book—the texture of its paper, the quality of its printing, the nature of its binding. Its physical aspects provide clues about its existence as an element in a social and economic system.

Books also give off special smells. According to a recent survey of French students, 43 percent consider smell to be one of the most important qualities of printed books—so important that they resist buying odorless electronic books. CaféScribe, a French online publisher, is trying to counteract that reaction by giving its customers a sticker that will give off a fusty, bookish smell when it is attached to their computers.’

Anne Mangen, of the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, has explored the effect of paper by comparing paper-book readers’ performance with screen readers’ performance.¹ Her conclusion is that e-reading has resulted in a lower comprehension capacity, and that is due to the material restrictions of the text, which force readers to scroll up and thus disturb their reading process. Lack of spatial stability is an important factor; having a fixed spatial representation of a text’s material design results in a better understanding of the script. It has been proven that reading from a book helps with memorization of the spatial placement of the information provided in the text; there is a connection between the material form and the understanding of the read text.

Recent studies based on multiple data have also revealed that the increasing time spent in e-reading has been (increasingly) widening the gap in reading and writing skills. Digital reading behaviour is characterized by quick browsing and reading, picking out the main words, one-time reading, non-linear reading, and unfocused reading. Distractions coming out of the screen make readers lose their focus and capacity for understanding, and thus they hasten to browse. The durability of words printed on paper helps readers, providing fixed and unequivocal signals that assist with text memory and memorization.

Such was the conclusion of extensive studies carried out at the University of Gothenburg.

Printed pages and digital pages have a considerable impact on visual ergonomics. The visual-spatial process of comprehension depends on textual clarity, which, in turn, relies on the discovery of letters and, therefore, words. It depends on luminosity and font size. Studies have concluded that the eye cannot maintain the same quality or regular transfer of knowledge to the brain, due to visual exhaustion. Furthermore, extensive e-reading can impact vision.

On the other hand, hypertexts online facilitate easy access to information. Therefore, the relationship between print and digital in the Arab region must now be seriously addressed. For the time being and for years to come, we cannot give up on paper books – until technical solutions to the problems of comprehension, understanding, and information storage in human memory within digital media are found. Books and screens could become complementary, rather than competitive objects: like books and films, radio and television, and bicycles and cars.

The development of printing technology has led to the emergence of printing on demand. This has helped publishing houses print a limited number of copies and therefore save on storage. It has also helped avoid wasted capital pumped into books that are currently out of demand. The problem, however, remains in taking advantage of such technologies to help in cross-Arab reprinting. A book could thus be published in Morocco but sold in Bahrain, having been printed there through this technology; there would be no need to ship it and would therefore cut costs. No companies in the Arab region have yet enabled the use of such unconventional models of book distribution, which would resolve many of today’s problems.

¹ Mangen, Al, Walgermo, B. K. and Bronnick. ‘Reading Linear Texts on Paper Versus Computer Screen: Effects on reading comprehension.’ *The International Journal of Educational Research*, pp. 58, 61.

TRANSLATION

When it comes to statistics about translated books in the Arab world, even those provided by international institutions such as UNESCO remain approximate. In the case of Egypt, the UNESCO translation index shows that 5399 books have been translated between 1979 to 2019, while the Egyptian National Centre for Translation alone had already published 3700 books during that same period. If we were to add the second One Thousand Books Project and the many publications by Egyptian institutions, such as the Library of Alexandria and the Egyptian Public Committee for Information, *Al-Abrām*, and translation projects funded by France in Egypt, as well as the translations produced by private publishing houses, we would find that this number was lacking and requires proper analysis and comparison with facts on the ground.

The same applies to Kuwait, where the UNESCO Index Translationum has noted 451 translated books between 1979 and 2019, while the National Council for Culture and Arts alone had produced nearly 400 translated titles. If we were to add the translated works of *‘Ālam al-Ma‘arifa* series, translated and published by the University of Kuwait, as well as the published translations of the *International Culture* magazine, which only publishes translated works, and which had published more than seventy issues, as well as the publications of KFAS, along with established Kuwaiti publishing houses, like Thāt as-Salāssel, such a number would also need to be reviewed.

Between 2000 and 2020, we could count more than 5000 translated books published by three Arab institutions, in the following manner:

- 3700 books – the National Centre for Translation, Egypt.
- 1033 books – Kalima Initiative, Abu Dhabi, 237 of which are books for young readers.
- 300 books – the Arab Organisation for Translation, Beirut.

Between 2000 and 2009, published works in Beirut reached nearly 3000 translated books. While these numbers have been slowly growing in Beirut, they have not increased by much.

Translation standards in the Arab world are still lower than they should be. Contrary to the common belief that it is states that have taken on the biggest responsibility in the domain of translations, analyses reveal that private publishing houses publish 74 percent of books translated into Arabic. Translation in the Arab region is mainly centred in Cairo, Damascus, Riyadh, Beirut, the UAE, Kuwait, Morocco, and Algeria, in that order. Book translations in other parts of the Arab region remain limited.

At the 2016 book fair in Bahrain, the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquity launched the “Transfer of Knowledge” project, which has since produced 35 translated books, available both in print and digital format for free. The Tunisian intellectual Tāhar Labīb oversees the project, selecting translated books focused on modern humanities and intercultural studies, which enjoy a high quality of translation and production.

There are new actors in the Arab scene, activating translations from and into Arabic. For years, Japan has supported translations from Japanese into Arabic. However, its role has dwindled with China’s rising presence – as China wishes to promote Chinese culture in a manner that matches its rising economy and its farsighted Chinese vision. China supports translations from Chinese into Arabic through five programmes:

- The Silk Road Project for translated Chinese books.
- The Global Chinese Books Promotion Project.
- The Translation Fund Project by the China Writers Association.
- The Chinese Classics Project.
- The Academic Translation Project.

In parallel, a number of Arab publishing houses produce translations from Chinese into Arabic:

*Ad-Dār al-‘Arabiya lil-Ulūm (Beirut)	*Al-Mustaqbal ar-Raqami (Beirut)
*Dār al-‘Arabi (Egypt)	*Difāf (Lebanon)
*Al-Ikhtilāf (Algeria)	*Panda: Children’s Books (Beirut)
*Jīl in Chinese (Egypt)	*The Chinese Intercontinental
*The Publishing House in Foreign Languages (China)	*Bayt al-‘Hikma (Cairo)

Chinese to Arabic Translations

Year	Number of translated books
2015	250
2016	300
2017	300
2018	330
2019	400

At the same time, Chinese books translated into Arabic have grown in sales in the region at a 50 percent rate in 2018 then another 50 percent in 2019. One of the contributing factors in this context has been the launch of Chinese-language departments in many Arab universities, in Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Morocco, and the UAE. Still, Egypt is considered to be at the forefront of Arab countries in learning the Chinese language. All this predicts an increase in Chinese books in the region. This has also been helped by interest in Chinese novels and novelists, such as Nobel Prize winner Mo Yan, as well as Liu Zhenyun and Qu You. The latter has seen six of his novels translated into Arabic and found unprecedented popularity among Arab readers.

As regards state support for translation of a country’s works into Arabic, we must note two other cases that stand out. The first is French to Arabic translations, as France considers the dissemination of its culture to be part of its identity and international role. France supports translations through a number of different programmes. The most prominent and flourishing period of French to Arabic translations was the time when French Arabist Richard Jacquemond ran this project from Cairo. However, the French have now developed the Taha Hussein Project of translations into Arabic; this initiative covers 80 percent of costs, funds copyrights and, in some cases, printing costs. The translation of French knowledge production into Arabic, supported by this funding, is subject to a number of criteria:

- The quality of the selected work and its significance to contemporary French thought and creativity.
- The publisher’s commitment to a long-term policy of translating and publishing francophone authors.
- Providing a translation sample.
- The publisher’s commitment to promoting and distributing the book.

The National Book Centre in France also supports the translation of some works proposed by French publishers. It offers them copyrights, which is why publishing houses insist on demanding translation rights – as they often depend on funding support given by the state supporting the source language they would translate.

The most prominent case in the field of translations in recent years is the translation programme of German literature into Arabic. The German programme is extremely clear and precisely outlined; it is currently undertaken in Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Iraq, the Gulf countries, and Sudan.

The project is based on encouraging Arab publishers to translate German literature, which is part of Germany's identity. Publishing houses in countries other than those listed cannot apply for translation rights of German literature.

Translation here stipulates a direct translation of the original text, which promotes German language and its Arab speakers in the Arab region.

This support only funds the process of translation, not printing the publication. Support is only given after the quality of translation is inspected as well as the professionalism of the publishing house.

The publisher then provides the Goethe-Institut an epub version to make it available as part of its digital loan services.

Beyond this role, the Goethe-Institut now supports Arabic publishing programmes and workshops, with an aim to produce new generations of German to Arabic translators. One of the workshops has produced ten young translators, who translated Christoph Peters' novel *Selfie mit Sheikh*, supervised and reviewed by Dr 'Ula 'Adel.

Between 2015 and 2019, the Arab world saw many languages enter the world of books translated into Arabic, even if in limited numbers. It is, however, a breakthrough that has been building a good movement for the future. Languages include Portuguese and Czech, as well as a return to Armenian-to-Arabic translations. And yet many languages are still rarely translated into Arabic, like Dutch, Norwegian, Ukrainian, and others.

Established in the nineteenth century, one of the oldest colleges specialised in languages in the Arab region, the Faculty of Languages in Ain Shams University, teaches 17 languages.

The world of translations in the Arab world has seen a considerable improvement and growth in the past few years, partly thanks to the efforts of:

The High Arab Institute for Translations (Algeria): an educational and scientific body affiliated with the Secretariat General of the League of Arab States, whose headquarters are in Algeria. Ever since its opening in 2005, it has aimed to occupy a high rank among scientific and cultural institutes, both Arab and international, as well as to collaborate with them on developing and teaching translations in the Arab world.

Its tasks include:

- Producing and amplifying translations from and into the Arabic language, as a professional activity. Providing education that produces high quality output.
- Preparing research and academic studies that would enrich the field of translation, facilitating the tasks of its researchers, and expanding on the science of translation and linguistic technology, such as automatic translations and terminology.
- Establishing relations with other bodies, institutes, and research centres that share the same objectives within the Arab world and beyond, holding conferences, and organising study circles and short-term professional training in textual translations and simultaneous interpretation.
- Introducing Arabic and Islamic heritage and rendering new and significant works of literature and sciences in Arabic.

Studies

The Institute provides three higher education programmes over a period of two years:

- Textual translation
- Oral translation
- Translation technologies

Graduates finish their courses with a Master's degree from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Algeria, while students from the rest of the Arab world take professional training courses throughout their studies and beyond for a period of one to six months.

Admissions criteria

The prospective student must hold a Bachelor's degree, or its equivalent, in translation or in both English and French languages, or in any other academic specialisation.

They must be proficient in the Arabic language, literature, and culture and one of the taught languages, which are currently English and French.

For more information on admissions and required documents for the application, please visit the institute's website.

Translation services

A team of the institute's translators is at your service to carry out the translation of all forms of documents (academic, technical, literary, and others) from and into these three languages: Arabic, French, and English.

The institute provides the services of its team, including excellent live interpreters to work in all forms of conferences, meetings, and panels.

Teaching languages

The institute offers language consolidation courses to the public (in Arabic, French, English, and Turkish) to anyone who wishes, from beginners to advanced courses.

The institute also has many different cooperation agreements:

- A cooperation agreement with the New Sorbonne University.
- A cooperation agreement with the University of Alicante (Spain).
- A framework agreement of cooperation with the Sichuan International Studies University (China).
- A cooperation agreement with the Stendhal University (Grenoble).
- A cooperation agreement with the Muhammad Bin Rashed Al Maktoum Institute.
- A cooperation agreement with the Yarmouk University (Jordan).
- A scientific cooperation agreement with the High Institute for Translations and Live Interpretation at Damascus University.
- A cooperation agreement with the Lebanese University.
- A memorandum of understanding with the General Egyptian Book Organisation.
- Local cooperation agreements.

Institute publications:

- Pierrepont, A. Izard, M. (2006) *Dictionnaire de l'ethnologie et de l'anthropologie*, Beirut: Majd Institute. [Translated into Arabic].

- More than 120 books translated from French, English, and Tamazight as part of projects carried out under the auspices of Algiers as the Arab Capital of Culture
- The publication of *Nūr 'ala Nūr* book, which aims to highlight tolerance in Islam, premised on humanitarian values found in the Quran – translated into five foreign languages, finely produced and printed.

Translation of books, documents, studies, and reports:

- Bray, M. (2009) *Confronting the Shadow Education System*. The International Institute for Educational Planning; UNESCO.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2010) *The Second National Report on Development Objectives in Algeria*. Algeria.
- Assembling and preparing a terminological dictionary for international conferences (in print).

The organisation of an academic and cultural symposium:

'Translation and its addenda: The current status of the Arabic language'

Providing translators from among the institute's graduates for many national and international symposia and panels.

Ever since 2015, the institute has been clearly developing. Its graduates have started playing new clear roles in the arena of translation in the Arab region.

The translation industry has much improved, as we find a new generation of translators into Arabic, with better qualifications and experience. This is clearly evident even when it comes to more established translators, like Dr Mohammad 'Anāni, who expanded on his expertise through a number of studies and books published in Beirut and Cairo. Those include:

- *Fann at-Tarjama* (The Art of Translation)
- *Murshed al-Mutarjim* (The Translator's Handbook)
- *At-Tarjama al-Adabiya bayna an-Nathariya wa-Tatbiq* (Literary Translation: Between Theory and Practice)
- *Nathariyat at-Tarjama al-Haditha* (The Theory of Modern Translation)

Dr Mohammad 'Anāni's translations are role models in terms of understanding the context, meaning, and accurate expression of the author's intention in the written text.

On the other hand, the role of **the Arab Translators Association in Beirut** has stood out in consolidating the translation industry, the role translators, and rights, through a number of campaigns. It has also provided a preliminary scan of translated books between 2000 and 2009. Its role is gradually developing.

A new generation of translators has also been rising, tackling complex topics and locations. One of those may be *Lu'ay 'Abdel Majid*, who has Arabicized digital terminology. He did so through two books he translated in the *'Ālam al-Ma'arifa* series. *Dār al-Madār al-Islāmi* has also produced a number of highly qualified translators, such as *Riyad al-Milādi*, *Aḥmad as-Sādiqi*, Ahmad Mouslali, and *'Abbās 'Abbās*. The Lebanon National Library in Beirut stands out as one of the most prominent Arab publishing houses to work with translations.

Interest in translating Arabic novels has been rising since 1988, which is the year when Naguib Mahfouz won the Nobel Prize for Literature. It thus provided a space for Arab novelists to explore publication beyond the Arab landscape. This has had its positive effects, whereby *Khayāl* publishing house has published Algerian novels translated into English. In the same vein, Belqassem Mezghūshen submitted an English translation of 'Aïcha Bennour's *Women in Hell*, after which her other novels

were translated into French and Spanish. Literary translations are also a gateway into translating Arabic studies in the humanities into foreign languages.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched a number of ambitious programmes to publish Saudi literature in translation. The Research and Communication Centre translated two Saudi novels into Uzbek, in collaboration with the Uzbek Awqituji Publishing House:

- *Thaman ad-Dahiya* by Hāmed ad-Damanhūri
- *Saqifat as-Safā* by Hamza Bouqri

However, Saudi Arabia will only see its great transformation with the foundation of the Literature, Publishing, and Translation Commission.

Publishing in the Arab world in foreign languages has yet to take any mentionable steps, but has been increasingly growing by the year, as learning in foreign languages becomes more widespread in Arab schools and universities. We have even begun to see English language take up a much bigger space in countries where French had prevailed for years, like in Algeria and Morocco. The American University in Cairo Press is still leading the rest of Arab publishing houses that publish in languages other than Arabic, along with some foreign centres and institutes, like the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology in Cairo and Damascus. Likewise, many institutes have been publishing in foreign languages, like the Library of Alexandria, the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh, and the Qatar Museums institute. Furthermore, many Arab publishing houses have shown interest in publishing in languages other than Arabic, like Al Farābi Publishing House in Beirut, which publishes in English and French. Publishing in English in the Arab region is expected to surge in the upcoming years, as the number of people proficient in both speaking and writing English has been increasing, not to mention the emergence of a new generation of Arab novelists who creatively write in English.

Here, one must pause at the issues that translation faces in the Arab region:

Although these are positive signs, there still is a major gap between what should be translated into Arabic and what is translated from Arabic into other languages. This further separates Arabs from global culture and even contributes to outdatedness in a number of domains.

While the level of translation and translators has been advancing, their numbers are still not high enough to enable a major Arab renaissance in the field of translation into and from Arabic. Furthermore, training translators is a complicated process, as the question is not about proficiency in both languages, but rather in understanding the nature and context of each language.

Translation in the Arab region is a highly chaotic field. It is tragic that many inaccurate translations of Shakespeare's plays are published, even though both *Mohammad Anāni*, *'Abdel Qāder al-Qatt* and *Jabra Ibrahim Jabra* have provided high quality translations of them. This is considered a waste of time, energy, and money, as there is no need to retranslate those plays. Three Arabic translations have been found of Thierry Meyssan's *The Big Lie*: two in Cairo and one in Beirut.

The lack of active translation programmes from Arabic into other languages (which, although they exist, are limited in comparison with those in other languages) demands the establishment of Arab book marketing programmes and centres to market intellectual property rights in accordance with international standards. This sort of programme would help in the discovery and development of literary agents, which is a key role in marketing the translations of Arabic books. In 2020, the Arab Voices project, funded by the European Union, emerged. It selected 32 Arabic novels to be translated into a number of different languages, and these titles were showcased for the first time at the 2020 Frankfurt Book Fair.

Here, we must mention a few Arab prizes in the field of translation. Although they play an important role, a closer look at these prizes and their rules reveals a bias toward books translated from English,

followed by French, not to mention important translations that have failed to garner any prizes at all. Prize-granting criteria should therefore be announced, for the sake of transparency.

Arab Translation Prizes

Country	Prize	Notes
UAE	The Sharjah Prize for Translation The Sheikh Zayed Book Award	Sheikh Zayed prize includes a translation grant
Syria	The Sami Droubi Translation Award	
Oman	Sultan Qaboos Award for Culture, Arts, and Literature	
Qatar	The Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding The Katara Prize for Arabic Novel	
Egypt	Refaa Al-Tahtawi Translation Award	
Saudi Arabia	The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Award for Translation The University of Arkansas Arabic Translation Award	Saudi translation awards are also available locally, like the Riyadh Fair Translation Award
Britain	The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation	Prize for Arabic translations into English
ALECSO and OIF	The Ibn Khaldoun-Senghor Translation Award	

One of the important dimensions of the translations scene in the Arab world can be seen in Morocco, where a slight increase has been recorded for 2016-2017. One hundred and eighty-one titles were published that year, as opposed to the preceding year, when 160 titles were published. This affirms the incremental direction of the translation industry in Morocco.

Morocco as an example:²

French notably prevails over 63 percent of these translated books (84 titles), followed by Spanish at 14 percent with 19 titles, English at 8 percent with 11 titles, while other European languages, such as Russian, German, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, and others cover a marginal space at eight percent, with 11 titles altogether. We must also note that the processes of translating from foreign languages into

² In researching the Moroccan scene, the writer of this study has referred to Publishing and Book Report in Morocco, published annually by King Abdelaziz Al Saud Institute in Casablanca.

Arabic are often carried out through an intermediary language, French in Morocco's case, for historical reasons (the French Protectorate in Morocco, 1912-1956).

Moroccan translations from Arabic into foreign languages were 33, in addition to two titles translated into Tamazight. Four books were also translated from European languages into Tamazight.

When we move to 2017-2018, we find an important increase of translated texts: a 67 percent rise, to 302 translated books. This is significantly higher than the previous year. The same applies to digital publications, of which 65 titles were published, at a 21.5 percent increase, all of which were produced by the Believers (Mo'uminūn) Without Borders Institute.

Translation into Arabic covered 243 titles, 135 were from French, at 44.7 percent. Those were followed by English, with 56 translated titles, covering 18.54 percent of translations in Morocco, Spanish, with 17 titles, at 5.62 percent, whereas other languages like Russian, German, Italian, Portuguese, and others have covered a marginal percentage of translated books, with 16 titles, at 5.29 percent.

Moroccan translations from Arabic into foreign languages that year were 39, along with six titles that were translated from European languages into Tamazight, which is, overall, a limited number.

Translated Books in Morocco by Subject (2017/2018)

Subject	Number of Translations (print)	Number of Translations (digital)
Literary works	88	-
History	32	2
Society	25	15
Philosophy	18	18
Literary studies	14	-
Islamic studies	12	10
Arts	10	-
Geography	9	-
Politics	7	1
Languages	6	1
Law	4	2
Economics	3	-
Education	3	1
Other religions	3	6
General interest publications	1	-
Sciences	1	2
Total	237	65

By glancing at this table, one might note that the domains of literature, history, philosophy, and society are the leading domains when it comes to translation. This also applies to translated books in Beirut and Cairo that same year. Does this indicate a certain Arab need? Is it merely dependent on translation tendencies determined by institutions? Or have these titles been suggested by translators themselves?

These are questions without clear answers. Translation statistics and studies in the Arab world have yet to address these points.

When we move to 2018-2019, we see that Morocco saw a drop in the number of translated books, down to 298 titles. Twenty-seven percent of these were digitally published by the Believers without Borders Institute. Out of the overall translations in Morocco, 251 books were translated into Arabic. 136 titles were translated from French, covering 45 percent of translated books that year, followed 65 titles translated from English, covering 21.8 percent, whereas other European languages, like Spanish, Russian, German, Italian, Portuguese, and others, covered a trivial percentage of translated books,

with 66 titles. Books translated from Tamazight were six, while books translated into Tamazight from other languages were 11.

Furthermore, the King Abdelaziz Al Saud Institute Report for 2018-2019 noted the following:

152 books were translated by Moroccan translators

27 books were translated by Tunisian translators

16 books were translated by Egyptian translators

While there were translators of other nationalities too, translations in Morocco affirm that civil society institutions and private publishing houses are the biggest actors in the translation industry. The Believers without Borders Institute contributed to the translation of 91 titles, followed by Toubkal Publications, with 13 titles, and finally the Cultural Centre for Books, with 13 titles.

Translated Books in Morocco by Subject (2018-2019)

Subject	Number of Translations (print)	Number of Translations (digital)
Literary works	87	-
History	27	3
Society	26	18
Philosophy	13	28
Literary studies	8	-
Islamic studies	10	9
Arts	10	1
Geography	5	-
Politics	10	11
Languages	5	1
Law	2	1
Economics	3	-
Education	5	-
Other religions	1	7
General interest publications	3	-
Psychology	1	-
Sciences	1	2
Total	217	81

By looking at this table, one will note that literature is leading in translations, followed by history, society, and philosophy. During the same year, historical studies, autobiographies, and philosophy were closely matched with literature in terms of translated topics in Beirut and Cairo, even though literary translations had been topping Arab translation charts.

The King Abdelaziz Library report failed to include the publications produced by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (ICESCO), even though those were many, in Arabic, English, and French languages. It also failed to mention the works published by the ALECSO affiliated Arabization Coordination Bureau in Rabat. One question that comes up here regards the categorisation of works published by regional institutes: Would those be considered part of the national publications of the country where the institute's headquarters are, or, in the case of the Arab region, should those be independently categorised, as regionally published works, affiliated with regional organisations? My guess would be the latter.

Publishing in Arabic and Foreign Languages in Algeria

Year	Language	
	Arabic	Foreign
2015	816	361
2016	1702	1222
2017	2409	907
2018	898	176
2019	1210	294
2020	1030	454

Publishing in French covers a large percentage of the publications in foreign languages in Algeria. It must also be noted that, prior to 1970, publishing in Algeria was mainly in French. Later, Arabic-language publishing gradually increased, as publishing rates in Algeria increased, thanks to a number of breakthrough publishing programmes that launched after 2000.

Printed Books in Arabic and Foreign Languages in Tunisia

Year	Number of books in a foreign language	Number of books in Arabic
2015	447	844
2016	637	1654
2017	514	1513
2018	510	1625
2019	1911	773

In Tunisia, publishers mainly produce works in French, and, to a smaller extent in English, and this covers 40 to 65 percent of overall publications in Tunisia. This is due to a number of different factors, including:

- The research centres in Tunisia that work in the publishing field.
- The publishing houses' interest in publishing in French, taking into consideration francophone readership in Tunisia, besides marketability in francophone countries, mainly France.

Number of Books Published in Jordan (by language of publication) (2015-2019)

Arabic	English	French
10552	387	30

Publishing in English in Jordan was notably higher than the years preceding this study, showing a 24 percent increase – all books were of a high quality.

Books Translated in Oman

Year	Number of books translated into different languages	Number of books translated into Arabic
2015	16	6
2016	15	8
2017	15	8
2018	20	12
2019	8	8

AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks launched in a few countries in the 1930s and developed through the 1990s. In the Arab region, audiobooks have a limited reach. Poetry is one of the most prominent forms of audio performance. This explains why voice recordings by Mahmoud Darwish, Ahmad Fouad Negm, Abdel Rahman el-Abnudi, and others are so widespread. While printed clubs of poetry sales have declined, good poetic performances online are followed enthusiastically. Therefore, one of the growing sources of audiobook revenue is poetry. Furthermore, until today, radio is still one of the important tools for the transfer of knowledge. Listening is important in Arabic culture, especially for employees, whose work enables them to listen as they go about their job. This explains the success behind Quranic broadcasts in many countries, as well as songs and other radio shows. The enduring presence of some Arab on-air voices, such as Farouk Shousha's, reveals that listening culture is still strong. The question here is this: What do these listening audiences want, and how can we fill these desires through Arabic audiobooks? The second question is: What are the hurdles that have prevented the spread of audiobooks? And, finally: What about financing audiobooks?

These questions are closely linked to the competence of audiobook makers to evaluate audience needs and provide a good process for production, accessibility, and marketing.

During the course of this study, a preliminary scan revealed that audiobook culture, in its many forms, is still limited in the Arab world. And yet there has been great response to it, which means that this is a field with its own growing audience. In this regard, one must especially note the following:

People with visual impairment: Perhaps the visually impaired have a bigger capacity to comprehend knowledge. Among the most famous of visually impaired authors is Dr Taha Hussein. A group of Arab youth have launched an initiative The Audiobook for the Blind, and they have reached more than 14,366 followers on Facebook. Despite their voluntary and individual efforts, their interaction with both people with visual impairments and the visually abled has revealed audiobook readers' tendencies, which is a crucial point in determining the future of such books.

What do Arab readers look for in an audiobook?

This is the crucial question. Perhaps Arab listeners' turn to fantasy or horror literature would be at the top of their list of demands. Here, names like Ahmad Khaled Tawfik, Nabil Farouk, Wael Raddad, and others come up. Following the fantasy and horror genre, we find novels in general, but poetry remains a leading domain in this context. Audiobooks in the field of humanities are also in demand, especially if well-narrated. One must note, then, the need for a narration when presenting books, regardless of their topic.

We shall recall the experience of the Rawaq website, which presented the book *One Thousand and One Nights* as an audiobook: 1,334,876 people listened in, which is a record number.

Big literary names play an important role in the promotion of audiobooks. We therefore find many free Arabic websites providing famous writers' books for free. The question remains, however, whether the author, or those responsible for their copyrights, has given permission to publish their work in an audiobook.

Religious topics have played the biggest role in audiobooks. Some religious audiobooks have had more than 100,000 listens, such as those available on the [Islam's Way](#) website and others.

Goethe-Institut's offices in the Arab region have also rendered German novels into audiobooks, in an attempt to encourage Arab listeners to interact with German literature.

Arabic websites

Many Arabic websites are interested in publishing audiobooks. Kitab Sawti was the leading audiobook streaming service, later acquired by the global company Storytel, to create an entry point into the Arab region. It allows Storytel to access a number of different platforms, including book fairs.

Storytel's entry into the Arabic market, then, has shifted the approach to audiobooks. Most notable in this acquisition is the introduction of new standards of quality and marketing tools in audiobook production. This has revived Arabic audiobook marketing, which has grown in the past two years at rates from 15 to 25 percent. Notably, nearly 20 percent of Storytel subscribers are English book listeners, a rate that matches its counterpart of English print readers. This is the natural result of bilingual education in the Arab region, whether in Arab or other foreign-education systems.

The Dhad website for audiobooks is considered an Arab success story, especially considering its management's selection of voice actors. They have also managed to build strong interactive marketing campaigns through social media. One of Dhad's biggest successes is making its audiobooks accessible on Saudia airlines.

The future of audiobooks in the Arab region is promising, and it is an innovative solution to knowledge activation in the Arab world.

LIBRARIES AND PUBLISHING

Libraries and their policies are the backbone of publishing industries all over the world. In this section, we shall give an overview of the relationship between libraries and publishing, which will help analyse it and its prospects.

Libraries in the Arab world are divided into:

- National libraries
- Public libraries, such as:
 - The Library of Alexandria
 - King Abdulaziz Centre (Dammam)
 - King Faisal Centre for Research and Studies (Riyadh)
 - Neighbourhood libraries
 - University libraries
 - Libraries affiliated with civil society institutions

In many countries, the relationship between libraries and the publishing world are based on a direct supply of new publications to libraries, through predetermined annual budgets. The problem with this framework, however, is that it is applied by a very small number of institutions, such as:

- The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research (Abu Dhabi).
- The American University in Cairo.
- King Fahd National Library (Riyadh).
- University of Kuwait Library.

These are inconclusive examples, but the majority of Arab institutions seem to wait for book fairs for their book supplies. Moreover, they sometimes purchase very few Arabic publications, or their budgets are hidden for no specific reason. On the other hand, school libraries in most Arab countries are not adapted to the school curricula, while new publications are not supplied through a set of clear rules and processes. In some countries, library-book supplies have been halted for the past five or ten years. Under these circumstances, Arab publishing has declined. The publishing sector in places like Britain, France, Germany, and the United States bases its work on publishing estimates; a publisher knows that certain libraries will purchase no fewer than 200 copies of a publication in one of the oddest specialisations, for instance, and, 500 to 3000 copies of other publications. Publishers can therefore discuss clear numbers when speaking about prints in France, Britain, or even countries with small populations, like Norway, and the way forward is clear to all.

The Library of Congress, for instance, follows a clear policy for a regular supply of Arabic books from Cairo. Such a policy is lacking in Arab libraries, an issue that needs a general discussion.

Thus, any book published in the Arabic language is a risk that publishers take, with unknown consequences, and money is pumped in without any clear cycle of working capital. Subsequently, authors also cannot depend on intellectual and creative production for their livelihood, which is the case in many countries.

Worldwide, public library services are offered, without any preconditions, in the following manner and ratios:

City	Number of libraries per 100 thousand capita	Country
Amsterdam	3.3	The Netherlands
Barcelona	2.6	Spain
Brussels	1.2	Belgium
Buenos Aires	2.8	Argentina
Cape Town	2.6	South Africa
Dakar	4	Senegal
Edinburgh	5.5	Ireland
Milan	5.4	Italy
Moscow	3.2	Russia
Paris	8.5	France
Seoul	11	South Korea
Stockholm	5.9	Sweden
Warsaw	11.5	Poland

Source: World Cities Culture Forum

To begin with, the data provided in the previous table is widely available; however, when turning to Arab countries, we shall note the following:

Egypt: the number of public libraries is 1154 libraries. This number does not include municipal libraries, however, which are considered the oldest in the Arab world. An accurate count of public libraries is yet to be provided, such as the Library of Alexandria, founded in 1892 and home to rare books and magazines, Damanhour Public library, and others. And yet, the ratio of public libraries to population numbers reveals the need for building more libraries. In general, the group of Egyptian libraries established as a result of an Egyptian-German cooperation seems to be better at management, with clear supply policies and determined supply budgets.

Tunisia: the Tunisian population has reached nearly 11 million, while the number of public libraries is 404, including the National Library. Notably, the number of public libraries increased in 2016, reaching 403, as opposed to 302 libraries in 2010.

Jordan: The first public library in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was founded in 1957 – the municipal library of Irbid. The number of public libraries in Jordan is 104, and the library of Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation is considered most effective.

The Emirates: Sharjah and Dubai are among the Emirati cities that care most for libraries. This has positively impacted supply policies in Sharjah's public libraries, especially through the Sharjah International Book Fair. The Sharjah Public Library, founded in 1925, is the leading library there. In Dubai, the city is home to eight public libraries and seven children's libraries, with a capacity for 2653 people and 11,000 members. This is thanks to the Dubai's libraries' conditions, clear standards, and the relationship between urban spaces and libraries, as well as Decree No. 9, issued in October 2003, which regulates libraries and their work. The number of public libraries in the UAE is 96.

Many urban spaces in Arab cities lack access to a public library. Arab citizens, then, lack cultural justice. Libraries are not places of entertainment, but rather institutes that contribute to one's cultural upbringing and formation. Many statistics are also unavailable, whereas 50 public libraries may be found in Yemen, no statistics may be found of the number of libraries that carry out community events.

In this sense, it would be more important to note the conditions in which many national libraries are found in a number of Arab countries. Examples include, but are not limited to:

The Lebanese National Library has suffered several hurdles. While the building was supposed to be inaugurated in 2014, it has yet to be opened. In 1999, the premises for the library were designated in Sanayeh, in the Faculty of Law and Sciences building. This building was first founded in 1905 and

finished in 1907, to become a school for arts and crafts. The blocking of its inauguration, however, resulted in a number of issues in its performance as an institute, which impacts its work cycle, which is linked with the national deposit numbers of Lebanese books. This is further linked to the liveliness of the Lebanese publishing industries, one of the most important and active Arab publishing industries.

The Somali National Library was established following a decision made in 1975. Its doors remained closed to the public, however, until 1986. As the Somali government collapsed, and as a result of the civil war, the library closed its doors again in 1991, for 27 years, during which it was looted. Nonetheless, 27 years later, it reopened partially, and construction works are still ongoing to restore the library building, which has started to play an active role in Somalia. In 2019, it supplied five public libraries in the cities of Beledweyne, Garoowe, Baidoa, and Luuq with five thousand books. The library must therefore be supported, so that it can return to its active role.

The Sudan National Library was established in 1999, but did not reach its full potential, with many hurdles that blocked its activity, which disturbed the publishing world in Sudan. It faced dozens of obstacles, including those related to granting Sudanese publishers national deposit numbers. Since its establishment, it has been operating from a temporary headquarters, although 11,000 square meters were designated for its construction. In 2020, the Sudanese governments began solving this library's problems by changing its management, followed by new legislation that specifically addressed it, and the activation of its national role, which could positively impact the publishing world in Sudan. While the number of public libraries in Sudan is limited, some of them are particularly active, like the King Faisal Cultural Centre Library in the Riyadh neighbourhood in Khartoum, which is also funded by the Faisal Bank in Sudan.

Arab national libraries face many problems. The national library in Moroni in the Comoros Islands has fewer than one thousand Arabic books. On the other hand, there are signs of a renaissance in some libraries, as the cornerstone of the national library in Djibouti has been placed in a 16,5000 m2 area, with costs estimated at 38 million dollars projected for a building that would house 500,000 books, funded by China. The Abdullah Bathib National Library in Aden in Yemen, established with Kuwaiti support, is suffering badly under the current circumstances. The National Library of Yemen in Sanaa has also faced some obstacle; the new national library building, granted \$50 million US in funds by China, has been severely impacted, as has been all library life under the current circumstances.

In the past five years, hopeful signs have emerged in the Arab library landscape. For example, Ithra Cultural Centre (King Abdulaziz Al Saud) was inaugurated in Dhahran in Saudi Arabia, with Aramco's support. It was opened in 2018 and built on an area of 80,000 m2. Another example is the opening of the Qatar National Library in 2017, in accordance with the top international standards, with ambitious plans and programmes. In the meantime, Dubai is preparing to open its own library (Mohammad Bin Rashid Library), to become a cultural stronghold.

The role of private libraries is not limited to generating deposit numbers and shelving books. They enable the practice of library sciences; they therefore serve all book production, publishing, and distribution processes. National libraries all across the world play this role, and such efforts may be observed in the Moroccan National Library and the King Fahd Library in Riyadh. Meanwhile, there are library services that, if deficient, could negatively impact the publishing industry, as with national deposit numbers, which many national libraries fail to give out, or do so after some delay, or cannot do so in the first place, as this service is non-existent. This affects the status of Arabic books in terms of ISBN databases and international marketing platforms, and negatively impacts Arabic book distribution.

Seventy-five percent of Arab national libraries fail to produce their own national bibliography, which is a record of all intellectual production in the country. Bibliographies provide comprehensive information about the books published in that area: author's name, title of the publication, the print, number of pages, and volumes. Examples of national libraries that update their bibliographies almost regularly are Dar al-Kutub in Egypt, the National Library of Jordan, and the King Fahd Library.

In that regard, there have been several positive signs. The Library of Alexandria has launched a website for Arab library standards in both Arabic and English, providing the standards and tools that libraries may need, thus helping Arab libraries quickly access information resources and establish a solid framework.

The launch of the Unified Arabic Catalogue has been a founding event that paves the way for a new phase of cooperation between Arab libraries. This non-profit project aims to develop Arab library infrastructures that will empower them to achieve an active exchange of information, especially catalogue records, as well as dissemination of knowledge in Arab societies, by limiting the automation of published intellectual Arab production. The catalogue contains a full bibliographic description of the Arabic book collections available in Arabic libraries, in the form of a standard database. This, in turn, impacts library budgets, as it would allow libraries to exchange cataloguing information and book categorisation, and thus save money on repetition. This was the case for Saudi libraries, where 55 million riyals have been saved by referring to the unified catalogue, as books were no longer repeatedly purchased. This has also helped improve library performance and increase demand for Arabic knowledge production. The catalogue was launched at the King Abdulaziz Public Library in Riyadh, and currently lists 5000 Arab libraries, as well as 2,350,000 entries of all forms and types of information vessels, such as books and periodicals.

The launch of Abjjad app in Jordan in 2012 also meant a new reading platform, which presented books as exciting products. The platform reached one million followers, and it currently lists more than 30,000 Arabic books. Furthermore, readers are the ones who suggest books and review them, and the application also lists some authors' bios.

Libraries in Oman

Year	Libraries	
	Public	Private
2015	26	63
2016	28	67
2017	29	68
2018	30	71
2019	32	64

This table shows an increasing growth in the number of Oman's libraries. Oman has launched many state-sponsored and civil-society initiatives that encourage reading. Libraries throughout Oman make reading available for free, including an initiative by the *'Omān al-Ma'arifa* platform: *Qirā'at Kitāb*. A book is read by one of the members of *Omān al-Ma'arifa* to the public in public spaces, followed by a topical discussion related to the book. This initiative was launched in 2017.

Digital Publishing and Libraries

Digital publishing is considered a major issue; up until now, we have no national deposit numbers for digital publications. This has been threatening many publisher and author copyrights. The real crisis unfolds, however, in the limited capacity of the Arab publishing world to absorb Arab knowledge production. As such, many authors, especially young researchers, resort to publishing their works online. This type of publishing began with the rise of the internet (as reported in 2013, when observing this phenomenon on Facebook), but is only increasing by the year. Whatsapp groups have now joined such phenomena, such as the Arab Historians group. The limited capacity to contain such production has revealed a deficient or incapacitated publishing industry in countries like Iraq, Mauritania, Sudan, and Yemen. The problem has relatively lesser impact in countries like Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Tunisia.

Thanks to the establishment of the Academic Publishing Centre in Manouba, Tunisia is considered the country least troubled by such issues. The centre was founded in 1973 and restructured in 1996. Notably, it prints only 500 copies of each book, and the author's copies are limited to 25 percent of all first edition books and 15 percent of second edition books. The centre has introduced many new names to the Tunisian and Arab scene, and thus effected an unprecedented breakthrough. It publishes in both Arabic and French, but its presence in the digital sphere or e-book industry is quite limited.

The question of Arabic e-books needs discussion. Arab countries have now expanded their digital library services and extended them to researchers and audiences alike, while Arab digital libraries have spread in an unprecedented manner. Examples include the Digital Saudi Library, which is home to 310,000 books that it acquired from 300 publishers, 5,200,000 academic dissertations, and 461,000 multimedia items. It is also home to more than 24,000 titles. The Library of Alexandria has also launched the Digital Arab Library (DAR) and contains more than 24,000 titles. The Sharjah Public library has made 3008 print and audio books available on its website, while the National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco also provides digital book services, as do several Arab universities.

Many problems remain:

Several Arab libraries have ventured into book digitisation and digital accessibility without receiving the author's, publisher's, or copyright holder's permission.

Arab libraries also prefer to subscribe to e-books through international platforms, rather than pass through Arab or national platforms.

Lack of set and clear e-book pricing regulations. Print book costs, pricing, and discount rates are known. What, then, about digital books?

The mechanisms for making e-books available online and the number of reading cycles allowed are still unclear.

There are a limited number of Arab platforms that make books digitally accessible.

Digital piracy of print books online is a bigger issue. Print books are rendered into digital formats and pirated online. The estimated number of fully pirated books online is nearly 53,000 books at the least, according to publishers and authors. Some have established personal digital libraries online. Those include:

- *Maktabat Nūr* www.noor-book.com
- *Maqḥā al-Kutub* www.kutubpdfbook.com
- *Maktabat Tariq al-'Ilm* www.books4arab.com
- *Maktabat Tolaitila* www.tolaitila.com
- *Maktabat* www.Top4top.iq

- *Maktabat* www.freshbook24.com
- *Maktabtak Ma'ak* www.pinterest.com
- *Maktabat al-Foulak* www.foulakbook.com
- *Maktabat Shababik* www.shababy4us.com
- *Maktabat lil-Qirā'aa* www.4read.net
- *Maktabat Bustān al-Kutub* www.bostanekotob.com
- *Maktabat Arib* www.arib.com

Similarly, Google has digitised thousands of Arabic books without prior permission or copyright.

There are many more such examples on different platforms, such as Telegram, Facebook, and Twitter.

The internet brims with hundreds of libraries that make thousands of Arabic books freely available, but where intellectual property rights have been violated. Piracy is thus widely practised, and raises a number of issues:

- Arab difficulties in handling digitised access and digital reading, which is constantly growing.
- Lack of laws and regulations for digital access online.
- A growing desire for digital reading in the Arab world, especially since some of these libraries receive interest from the number of reading clicks.
- Lack of understanding of the variables of knowledge production and access among ministries of communication and information technology in Arab countries. Here, there are always issues related to the fact that those in charge of Arab digital content formatting are the same people who work as IT engineers and are not specialised in knowledge or sciences.
- Shortage of realistic digital publishing programmes in the Arab region which could keep up with the requirements and variables.

Nonetheless, many digital Arab platforms are slowly paving the way for an Arab presence in that domain. Those include:

Dār al-Manthūma, which was established in 2004. In 2015, the publishing house launched database platforms specialised in research and bibliography. These platforms are:

- **Edu Search database**, which includes most Arab educational periodicals, hundreds of conferences and seminars, and covers the majority of what has been published in Arabic in this field since 1928. Universities, foundations, and institutes subscribe to this database, and it is considered a good model to draw on.
- **Academic dissertations database**, which includes 150,000 dissertations. It received publishing rights of 103,000 of those, while the remainder are available as 24-page excerpts of each dissertation.
- **Al-Manhal** has one of the strongest Arab books and periodicals databases. It has books in 16 subjects, with a collection of 22,982 books, which is growing at a rate of nearly 30 percent per year. The periodicals database also includes 478 journals, including 86,585 articles, which appear in 621 publications, growing at a rate of 30 percent per year. Finally, the academic dissertation database has 6000 dissertations.

In 2018, *e-Ma'arifa*, a publishing house interested in digital publishing, launched an important project that will chiefly impact digital publishing. It founded the Arab Citation and Impact Factor (ARCIF), which collects data on Arab periodicals. This consolidates Arabic periodicals' presence in international academia, amidst the international marginalisation of their scientific production, as they lack categorisation standards and academic indices. Arab academic production and research would therefore adopt international quality standards, followed by international presence. Arab academics shall then stand out.

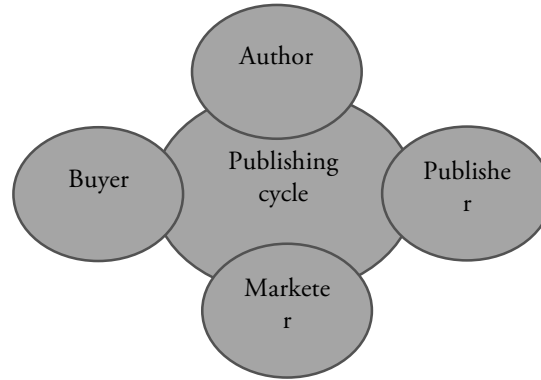
Two Egyptian researchers, Ghadir Abdul Wahab and Mahmoud Abu al-Majd, have launched the **Arab Periodicals Index**, which has managed to list 319 Arab periodicals and 150 academic publishers from 18 countries. Its online presence is still in its infancy.

Many initiatives by young Arabs have been improving the prospects of digital publishing and distribution online. *Nadi al-Kitāb* is a Saudi youth initiative, launched in 2014. As its services developed, it turned into a digital store in 2017, followed by a turning point in 2019. Its services range from offering a platform for publishers to a platform for authors. Books come with their own abstract, and they categorise books by topic in order to facilitate researchers' and readers' access.

In this sense, Arab digital content seems to be developing at multiple levels and multiple projects. Nonetheless, such a movement must be turned into a creative industry that generates revenues, and thus be able to provide free services to researchers.

Book Marketing

Book marketing in the region is considered one of the problems facing the advancement of Arabic publishing. Most Arab publishing houses have no clear book-marketing plans, except for academic books, which have become a relic of the past, as previously mentioned. Looked at from another vantage, this is tied to an imbalance in the economic viability of Arabic publishing, in the absence of a clear framework for the publishing cycle:



This cycle is complete when book distribution reaches a certain minimum number of distributed copies, whether print or digital. Therefore, taking an extra percentage of the book price to cover publicity and marketing would raise the cost of the book, and here we must note gaps in the purchasing power in different Arab countries. Book publicity and marketing have thus depended, until now, on self-marketing efforts, either through the publishing house on its website or social-media platforms, or through the author's efforts. Likewise, many websites are considered good gateways to introduce a book, which was a previously unavailable marketing method. Some offer readers the chance to evaluate books, and therefore give a first impression that could help promote the title. One of these is the GoodReads website, an international website where the Arab userbase has been growing each year. Its capacity for introducing books and the readership's strong interaction has turned it into a great marketing platform for any book. Twitter and Facebook are also considered important marketing platforms. Some pages have found popularity among Arab readers, like Khaled Wa'hsh's Facebook page. Here, individuals may play an important role, far from the spotlight. Similar pages abound in Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, where some publishers consider them book-promoting platforms. This is especially the case if these pages are specialised in a certain genre, such as novels, poetry, or history. Such is the case of Tunisian researcher Lutfi Bin Milad's page, while the page Friends of Books (*Asdiqā al-Kutub*) in Algeria has had a strong following and effect in Algerian readership. Algeria Reads (Al-Djazair Taqra) has just as strong a following, even if the latter has become increasingly active in the past two years. Many book websites with accurate book databases and information have also emerged, most prominent of which is Google Books.

On the other hand, the role of print newspapers in book critique, review, and introduction in the Arab world has been declining. This is the case either due to economic pressures that have reduced its page numbers, or a general decline in the standards of these newspapers. Some newspapers have been able to keep specialised review pages, like the books page in the Emirati *Al-Bayān* newspaper, and the Jordanian *Al-Ra'i*, as well as the Lebanese *Annahār*. Otherwise, *Annashir* weekly magazine, launched by the Sharjah Book Authority in 2017, bridges a gap in the number of magazines specialised in publishing, books, and reading questions.

In Egypt, *Al-Ahrām* dedicates pages specialised in books, as do *Al-Akhbar* and *Akhbar al-Yawm*. Books have also received special attention from *Akhbār al-Adab* magazine.

Television programmes specialised in books are quite limited; rather, many channels cancel their book programmes under the pretext that they are unappealing to their audiences. This has been the case with cultural programmes to some extent, as Al-Jazeera Channel cancelled the programme *Al-Kitāb Khayru Jalīs* (A Book is Best Company) at a time when Qatar TV had dedicated an entire programme for books. Sharjah's interest in books has also been reflected in Sharjah TV in multiple ways, while BBC Arabic and France 24 Arabic have both dedicated programmes to Arab books, hosting Arab authors as they launch their books.

Recent years have witnessed a new phenomenon, which responded to the misconception that culture has no place in the Arab world, or that reading has no space in Arabic societies: the BookTube phenomenon. Those are increasingly rising channels, especially since 2015, nearly reaching a 25 percent growth rate. These channels include:

- **ReadTube** (Jil Yaqra), launched by Mahmoud Sharif in 2017, with more than 600,000 subscribers and 12 million views.
- **Thill al-Kutub (The Shadow of Books)**, a channel by Sami al-Batati, with 115,000 subscribers and more and 2 million views.
- **Dūdat Kutub (Bookworm)**, a channel by Nada El Shabrawi, with 70,000 subscribers and one million and a half views.
- **Alzatoona (The Olive)**, by Michael Rasher, with 650,000 subscribers, and one million views.
- **Kotobji Channel**, a channel by Abdul Hamid Hussein, with 28,000 subscribers and 600 thousand views.
- **Kotobji Channel**, which features interviews by Abdul Hamid Madani, in which he hosts people with reading projects and also reviews books.
- **Mulakhaṣāt Kutub (Book Summaries)**, a channel that recapitulates the most important books published in Arabic and translated languages, with 90,000 subscribers and more than one million views.

Arab publishing houses have not capitalised on this domain nor employed it in book marketing and publicity.

This begs the question: Does the publishing industry in the Arab world have a plan for publicity and promotion?

The answer, in fact, is no. By sampling and scanning a few cases throughout the years of preparing this study, it seems that the farthest publishing houses have reached is:

- Gifting books to journalists and media outlets, sometimes with short abstracts about the book.
- Creating social media pages or accounts.
- Creating some limited databases for journalists.

In the age of digital platforms, however, databases are considered an important factor. Many companies like Amazon and others have been building databases about their consumers through their websites and multiple database-collecting media. Should you understand your readers' interests—be they in literature, literary critique, or architecture—you could reach out to them whenever a book that falls into one of their interests is published.

The creation of journalistic content has become multifaceted and multidirectional. Therefore, training Arab publishing-houses cadres to collect databases and use them, as well as building promotional policies that match our times, has become crucial, in light of the case of GoodReads. The website ranked Egypt as 11th highest in usage statistics, with more than 30 million users; Saudi Arabia is ranked 13, with more than 432,000 users; the UAE ranked 26, with more than 263,000 users; Algeria ranked 31, with more than 206,000 users; Morocco ranked 33, with more than 202,000 users; Iraq ranked 50, with more than 114,000 users; Jordan ranked 51, with more than 206,000 users; Tunisia ranked 54, with more than 95,000 users; Lebanon ranked 59, with more than 87,000 users; Kuwait

ranked 66, with more than 69,000 users; Oman ranked 68, with more than 57,000 users; Palestine ranked 69, with more than 58,000 users; Syria ranked 70, with more than 57,000 users; Qatar ranked 71, with more than 56,000 users; Sudan ranked 72, with more than 29,000 users; Bahrain ranked 80, with more than 35,000 users; Libya ranked 92, with more than 29,000 users; Yemen ranked 119, with more than 13,000 users; Mauritania ranked 151, with more than 3500 users.

These statistics have been collected from 2018—one of the middle years of this study. Still, those numbers show that readership and interest in books exists in the Arab world. Should views of YouTube book channels be added, we would find a huge gap in Arab's passion for reading and the distribution and marketing of Arabic books.

The crisis of distribution and marketing comes up here, which is in dire need of non-traditional solutions. First estimates indicate that education levels in the Arab world have risen. Some programmes that encourage reading have had a positive impact. Two examples of extremely positive projects are:

Maktabat al-Ussra, which was launched in Egypt three years ago. We therefore now have three reading generations in Egypt thanks to this currently discontinued programme.

- The Arabic Reading Challenge, launched by Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum in Dubai.
- The project urges school pupils to read throughout the Arab world and through a number of different stages. It aims to grow a new generation of readers. The project was launched in 2016 and had its third edition in 2019, with 10.5 million pupils. The Sudanese student Hadil Anwar was announced the champion of the Reading Challenge, along with a few other winners from Arab countries. The project, besides its generous awards, did not stop there. It supplied a number of Arab libraries with books, such as the 3000 books given to *Shahīdat al-Qirā'aa* Library in Algeria. The Reading Challenge Project, then, is considered one of the Arab projects that is most supportive of the publishing industry in the Arab world.

In the past five years, with the development of digital payment processes in Arab banks, online buying and selling rates have increased. This promising market trend has activated book sales. There are, however, a few obstacles that stand in the way of this market:

- The waiting period between ordering a book and receiving it, ranging between three days and two weeks.
- Shipment costs can sometimes reach three times the original book price.
- Lack of experts in book marketing websites, which market more than one product, so as to properly present books amidst thousands of products.
- Book competitiveness as an unequal good when compared with others. This is particularly the case as most publishing houses do not offer any packages or discounts on such websites. Websites specialised in book sales still cater to their loyal readership and do not venture beyond it, whereas general interest websites have the ability to appeal to new readers.

Websites that stand out in marketing:

Neel wal Furat website is one of the most important Arab websites. It also lists books of interest on the same screen, offering books topically related to the one the reader is busy ordering. The website also has a large network of Arab publishing houses.

Jumia website is a general website that offers a host of goods. Books enjoy a special status there.

Souq website, acquired by Amazon, is the most visited in the Arab region, and has steadily grown in the past three years. Books should be promoted and publicised through this website, which would make a difference in those books' distribution.

One of the problems that websites specialised in books face is the website interface, its appeal and browsing speed. **Bookbuzz** has addressed this issue; they now offer thousands of books, a number that grows by the year, and are moving beyond Arab distribution into international distribution.

The Arab world has seen a developing phenomenon in some countries: new chain bookstores have opened, like Naji Mega Bookstore in Algeria. This was the first highly organised centre for book sales, spread over 1300 m². Notably, the day it opened, young and old readers were lined up, queueing to go inside. The number of books on display was 1400. Such an event in Algiers will surely reverberate throughout the rest of Algeria in the upcoming years. Kuwaiti bookstore chains have been home to increasing activity, including the most established chains and the newest, like Platinum. Its library chain activity has grown to the point of opening a branch in Bahrain. The Ahram Institute is also home to a bookstore chain, as is Dār al-Ma'ārif Institute.

Notably, publishers rely on their own efforts for marketing and distributions. The Arab region is devoid of strong companies specialised in book marketing and distribution. Most publishing houses therefore own bookshops, which encompasses 92 percent of bookshops in the Arab region. In Egypt, the private sector owns 92 percent of book sales and distribution centres.

Some tax and customs authorities have tried to impose taxes and customs on books. The concept was even applied to books mailed to an individual by an individual, rather than by a company to an individual. The most egregious of those cases happened in Iraq in 2017, when the Iraqi government imposed a 15 percent tax on imported books, which raises their prices at a time when readers were already burdened with life's daily expenses. This led Dr Abdul Wahab Rādi, Head of the Iraqi Publishers Association, to address the issue with the Iraqi Prime Minister. Such taxation has also bothered researchers, university lecturers, and intellectuals in Iraq.

BOOK FAIRS

Book fairs in the Arab world are the real key to Arabic book marketing. The most important feature of Arab book fairs is that they are regularly recurring annual events, which makes readers wait in anticipation to purchase books, allocating their personal budgets toward them. Some main notes on Arab book fairs held between 2015 and 2019 are as follows:

- The prevalence of cultural and artistic events during the fairs, which turns them into cultural festivals, to the point that these events eclipse the book fair itself, thus distracting the audience. This is the opposite of how things should be, where cultural and artistic events build on book displays and connect with them, thus increasing their sales. This is justified by saying that this is what the audience desires, which reveals the shortage of cultural and artistic events in the Arab region, which people crave all year long. As such, the concept of the civil right to culture comes up, or what some call cultural justice.
- The emergence of a more competent generation of book-fair directors in organising and managing fairs, starting with ensuring a consistent book fair location, finalising all arrangements connected to participation, and using digital applications to feed them with the book titles on display, especially recently published books, and creating digital maps and outlines of the book fair. This has helped readers reach their books, while strict measures have been applied against pirated books at fairs. Notably, some book fairs were able to keep a record of their book sales, thanks to electronic applications. This is a good index by which we could, for the first time, actively size up the Arabic book market. Some applications have also interacted with audiences in a way that helped readers quickly reach what they were looking for.

A new generation of book fairs has sprung up in more than one city. Some of them managed relative success: The Jeddah Book Fair, Al-Qassim Book Fair, the Alexandria Book Fair, and others.

Arab book fairs continue to focus on Arabic. European, US, and Asian entries—even if through Arab publishing houses, institutions, or cultural centres—still reveal the relatively small size of foreign book sales in Arab book fairs. This raises a few questions, in light of the increasing quantities of imported books in some countries. In many Gulf countries and in Egypt, demand for British, American, or translated books from other languages into English, is on the rise, while some of the foreign entries in book fairs are mere symbolic participation from cultural centres or institutions with a presence in the same country as the fair. Notably, foreign publishing houses have been increasingly attending the Sharjah Book Fair, thanks to cultural policies implemented in Sharjah.

Book fairs have clearly featured a new generation of young writers, whose popularity was noticeable during book-signing events, while some authors have maintained their status. Sales numbers have also shown that novel sales have surpassed religious books, which is a new phenomenon. There has also been a rise in memoirs. Humanities specialisations (psychology, social sciences, history) have equally seen a growing demand, though at a slower pace than others.

E-book sales have also increasingly grown in Arab book fairs during the past five years. This has been clear, for instance, in both Riyadh and Sharjah Book Fair.

Children's books have also become a necessity. This is what those in Kuwait realised, when they launched an initiative called Little Readers, Future Leaders, sponsored by KidZania, which is an entertainment venue that has affirmed its role in organising delightful activities for kids.

Book fairs are currently a lifeboat for children's books and a strong tool to recruit future print book readers. Some book fairs thus accord children's books special attention. Tunisia has thus designated Sfax Book Fair as a children's book fair. In its 25th edition in 2018, 15 countries participated in the fair through 45 publishing houses. In 2019, that is, in its 26th edition, 45 publishing houses from 14 countries participated. A hundred thousand people visited the fair. Children's books initiatives have been decisive in the success of a number of Arabic book fairs. This was clearly the case in Sharjah, in

Beirut (where 452 schools visited through organised school trips in 2015), and in Kuwait (with 720 school trips in 2019), all of which are annual phenomena at these fairs. Were we to examine a book fair in light of its relationship with schools, we would also notice rising numbers:

Schools that visited Beirut Book Fair

Year	Number of schools
2015	452
2016	480
2017	605
2018	622

The Riyadh Book Fair has also counted 14500 children who visited it in 2017.

Moreover, the Emirati reading challenge, which has supported book fairs in the Arab region by distributing coupons to children and schools to buy books, has had a major role in encouraging children to buy and read books.

The Etisalat Award for Arabic Children's Literature has been yet another lifeboat thrown to children's books. The award was launched in 2009, to accompany the Sharjah Book Fair. The award was divided between the publishing house, the author, and the illustrator, until 2013, when the award was repackaged and relaunched, comprising five categories: Children's Book of the Year, Young Adult Book of the Year, Best Text, Best Illustration, and Best Production. This has revived the award. Entries in 2016 reached 161, from 53 publishing houses hailing from 13 countries. They submitted 87 books to the Children's Book of the Year category and 64 books to the YA Book of the Year.

The award became even more effective when it saw several winning books, now acclaimed and award-winning, distributed to the schools of the United Arab Emirates, which promote Emirati efforts to encourage its children to read.

This in turn has affected the number of children's visits to the Sharjah Book Fair, and the number reached 230,000 pupils in 2019, which is a record number when compared with the size of the Emirati population.

Up until now, no clear image exists of how Arabic book fairs approach integrated information technology and book digitisation. A question for the future, then, would be: What if paper books decline? What will book fairs look like then?

Sustained book censorship in some Arab countries raises questions around freedom of expression. As those very censored books are digitally available, how is censorship or approval still relevant?

Many Arab countries lack book fairs, like Mauritania, Djibouti, and the Comoros Islands. They have also been suspended in Yemen, which is yet another loss of markets with readerships. Poetry is highly regarded in Mauritania, a country with an abundance of intellectuals. Somalia, on the other hand, has seen relative stability in the past few years, which encouraged book fairs.

The following are a few book fairs, in an overview of their impact and significance to the books sector:

Cairo Book Fair celebrated, in 2019, the fair's fifty-year anniversary. That year, the fair hosted the League of Arab States and was moved into a new advanced exhibitions hall, which had more effective services to offer. This has impacted the number of its visitors, which exceeded three million that year, an unprecedented record-breaking number in the history of Arab book fairs. Throughout 2016 and 2019, the Cairo Book Fair resorted to the 'Am Amin (Uncle Amin) mobile app to help the public reach their publishing houses and desired books. Used book vendors (from Sour Al-Azbakeya) were also among the participants in the Cairo Book Fair, while strict organisation helped limit pirated books in the fair. The fair has also helped promote used books as an important circle for book

marketing. The Author-Translator section was also remarkable, as it presented translators for the first time as cultural actors, while it offered many important foreign books translated into Arabic.

Riyadh Book Fair is considered one of the strongest Arab fairs. Notably, in its 2017 edition, the fair comprised 260,000 print books, as well as 900,000 e-books. Novels, especially those printed in Egypt and Lebanon, followed by Saudi Arabia, topped the sales charts. Humanities research publications have also emerged and occupied a considerable space at the fair, especially with Saudi and Lebanese publishing houses responsible for the production of such books, like the Arab Network, Jadāwel, and others. While the phenomenon of publishing houses that work in more than one country started between Cairo and Beirut, we are now seeing them proliferate, such as Dār al-Tanweer, which works between Beirut, Cairo, and Tunis. Such collaborations enrich the Arab publishing world.

Sharjah Book Fair: with the establishment of the Sharjah Book Authority, tasked with the organisation of the Sharjah International Book Fair, we saw an important shift in the fair: interest in publishing as a cultural industry. During the Sharjah Fair in 2017, 1239 contracts were signed between publishers, a record number, unseen throughout all previous five editions of the professional programme. However, the numbers at the fair reflect its importance in the Gulf. In 2019, the fair had 20 million books of 1.2 million titles, 80,000 of which were new titles, in a number of different languages. Such linguistic diversity is the result of foreign communities in the UAE, who are supplied with books from the Sharjah Book Fair on a yearly basis. Likewise, some Indian, Pakistani, Persian universities interested in Arabic books acquire them in a number of different ways from the Sharjah Fair. Further, Sharjah is considered the centre of book publishing in the UAE, with a regular flow of publishing activity from new publishers, including the Sharjah Heritage Institute, which operates at both Arab and international levels.

Casablanca Book Fair has experienced a qualitative leap in the number of its visitors in 2018, reaching 520,000 – double the number of visitors in 2017. This is thanks to the publicity campaign for the fair – which is one of the results of combining both ministries of culture and communication in one ministry. Morocco has a strong base of researchers, university professors, and intellectuals, which renders the book fair even more important to Moroccans. This is evident from social media platforms, where visitors share their impressions of the books and the fair: complimenting, praising, and critiquing everything throughout the fair days. The Casablanca fair is also a preferred destination for Mauritanian intellectuals, who miss having a book fair in their own country.

Tunis Book Fair saw a number of positive points in 2016, the most important of which was the absence of pirated books from the fair. The fair also provided services that encouraged attendance and helped the publishers. However, that year, book sales declined. In 2017, on the other hand, the fair took yet another leap, as it became the first fair to respond to joint seminars between Arab book-fair directors and the Arab Publishers Association—where Arab publishers were given a 20 percent discount off the rental costs of book fair wings.

Fair Directors and Publishers

The series of meetings between the Arab Publishers Association and Arabic book-fair directors is considered one of the important tools that have contributed, since 2016, to limiting problems common to Arab book fairs. Those meetings have also produced fruitful discussions, as well as reaching a shared vision of Arabic book fairs, while encouraging research studies.

The Library of Alexandria hosted an Arab Book Fair Directors and Arab Publishers Association conference on 5 and 6 September 2016. By the end of the conference, a few decisions were proposed:

- Adopting a new name for the Committee of the Arab Book Fair Directors and Arab Publishers Association, which would hold periodic meetings.
- Issuing clear standards for Arab publishers' participation in book fairs. Applications submitted by members of the Arab Publishers Association should be signed by the book fair management and commercial records should be demanded from publishing houses wishing to participate—to ensure their legality and real-life presence.
- Allowing publishers to pay attendance fees during the fair. Any publisher that does not commit to paying shall be blacklisted from attending any Arab book fair.
- Coordination between Arab book fair directors to avoid any overlap in start and end dates with other book fairs.
- Finding new channels to limit over-censorship of books, which prevents offering some books in demand.
- Strict implementation of measures that prevent the violation of intellectual property rights, and adoption of decisions made by the Arab Federation for the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights into the Arab Publishers Association.
- Commitment to cancel noneducational entertainment, performances, and children's games, as well as any noneducational audio and visual recordings.
- Taking care of publicity and announcing the fair in due time.
- Providing all means of communication and internet services at the fair.

Such decisions, as well as others, have been implemented to varying degrees among book fair management teams, each of which reveals the issues faced by Arabic book fairs.

The following meetings took place in Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, and Cairo, in that order, with equally good outcomes.

Arabic Book Fair Statistics: 2015

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
UAE (Sharjah)	40	1585		1,200,000	11 days		645 foreign publishing houses
UAE (Abu Dhabi)	63	1181			7 days		Set up on an area of 31,962 m ²
Jordan (Amman)							Fair was not held this year
Bahrain							Fair was not held; it is held once every two years.
Algeria	47	910		1,573,000			290

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
							publishers from Algeria; 620 publishers from abroad; 250,000 book titles
Sudan (Khartoum)	15	200		65,000	13 days		
Iraq (Baghdad)	14	120		1,000,000	10 days	95	5,000 incoming packages; nearly 2,500 returned packages
Kuwait	28	508		310,000	11 days		446 local publishing houses; 640 schools visited it; 2.1 million Kuwaiti dinars in sales
Morocco (Casablanca)	46	281	12	340,000	10 days	459	
Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)	29	915			10 days		Fair area: 23,000 m ²
Tunisia	19	692	19	250,000	10 days		
Oman (Masqat)	25	498		704,312	10 days	179	Number of publishing houses also includes number of rights contracts; 180,000 book titles
Palestine	The Palestine book fair is held once every two years, depending on the political situation and the Israeli Occupation authorities. Book fair was held in 2016.						
Qatar (Doha) 7-17 January 2015	29	432	5	350,000	11 days	28	25,000 received packages; 5,500 returned packages; nearly 15 million Qatari riyals in sales
Qatar (Doha) 2-12 December 2015	26	455	5	350,000	11 days	19	27,000 received packages; 6,000 returned

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
							packages; nearly 16 million Qatari riyals in sales
Lebanon (Beirut)	6	261	13	150,000	14 days		188 publishers from Lebanon alone; 452 schools and 17 universities visited it
Egypt (Cairo)	26	850	28	3,000,000		350	100 Azbakeya stalls

Arabic Book Fair Statistics: 2016

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
UAE (Sharjah)	41	1681		1,200,000	11 days		732 foreign publishing houses
UAE (Abu Dhabi)	63	1261			7 days		Set up on an area of 31,962 m ²
Jordan (Amman)	15	200	15	150,000	10 days	150	Palestine was a guest of honour
Bahrain	22	345	30	150,000	11 days	150	175,000 Bahraini dinars in sales; a 70% increase in sales compared with 2014
Algeria	50	963		1,535,000			298 publishers from Algeria; 665 publishers from abroad; 400,000 book titles
Sudan (Khartoum)	15	250		65,000			
Kuwait	30	565		300,000	11 days		503 local

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
							publishing houses; 695 schools visited it; 2 million Kuwaiti dinars in sales
Morocco (Casablanca)	44	276	15	370,000	9 days	392	
Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)		500			10 days		1,200,000 titles
Tunisia	23	810	21	257,000	10 days		
Oman (Masqat)	27	650		682,187	10 days	115	Number of publishing houses includes number of rights deals too; 250,000 titles
Palestine		400		400,000	10 days		Number of participants includes rights deals; set up on an area of 3,000 m ² ; 500,000 book titles
Qatar (Doha)	33	480	8	500,000	11 days	31	30,000 received packages; 5,000 returned packages; nearly 18 million Qatari riyals in sales
Lebanon (Beirut)	5	233	8	165,000	14 days	11	171 publishers from Lebanon alone; 480 schools and 18 universities visited it
Egypt (Cairo)	35	850	30	3,500,000		300	118 Azbakeya stalls

Arabic Book Fair Statistics: 2017

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights	Remarks
UAE (Sharjah)	60	1690		2,280,000	11 days		400 foreign publishing houses; set up on an area of 14,625 m ² ; 1239 publisher deals (record number)
UAE (Abu Dhabi)	65	1320			7 days		Held on an area of 53,148 m ²
Jordan (Amman)	17	185	17	150,000	10 days	165	Held on an area of 3,250 m ²
Algeria	52	972		1,700,000			260,000 titles
Sudan (Khartoum)	16	270		78,000	13 days		
Iraq (Baghdad)	18	153		1,200,000	10 days	105	6,000 received packages; 2,400 returned packages
Kuwait	30	482	59	330,000	11 days	125	423 publishing houses; 160,000 participating titles, 11,000 of which were 2017 editions.
Morocco (Casablanca)	54	353	22	345,000	10 days	349	
Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)	25	500		404,212	10 days		72 million riyals in sales; 260,000 print books; 900,000 e-books; 2.2 million website visitors; 38,000 purchases
Tunisia	29	748	25	350,000	10 days		
Oman (Masqat)	28	757		826,006	10 days	173	Number of publishing houses includes

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights	Remarks
							number of rights deals; 450,000 titles
Qatar (Doha)	29	355	8	500,000	7 days	24	26,000 received packages; 3,500 returned packages; 18 million Qatari riyals; set up on an area of 23,500 m ²
Lebanon (Beirut)	6	258	6	160,000	14 days	11	190 publishers from Lebanon; 605 school visits and 21 university visits
Egypt (Cairo)	35	700	38	3,500,000	14 days	300	119 Azbakeya stalls

Arabic Book Fair Statistics: 2018

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
UAE (Sharjah)	77	1874		2,230,000	11 days		417 foreign publishing houses
UAE (Abu Dhabi)	63	1350			7 days		Set up on an area of 35,148 m ²
Jordan (Amman)	17	165	16	170,000	10 days	140	
Bahrain (Manama)	26	400		200,000	11 days		18,000 website visitors 9,000 students visited the fair
Algeria	47	1015		2,200,000			276 publisher

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
							s from Algeria; 739 publishers from abroad; 300,000 titles
Sudan (Khartoum)	16	250		58,500	13 days		
Iraq (Baghdad)	22	255		1,400,000	11 days	164	6,000 packages; 2,400 returned packages
Kuwait	26	369	35	330,000	11 days	136	87,246 titles, 12,200 of which are from 2018
Morocco (Casablanca)	45	305	24	520,000	10 days	404	
Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)	27	520		911,653	11 days		340,701 books; 11,943 purchases
Tunisia	24	752	28	389,000	10 days		Participating countries : Tunisia (121), Egypt (49), Syria (28), Lebanon (22), and foreign countries (11)
Oman (Masqat)	28	783		1,000,060	10 days	180	Number of publishing houses also includes rights deals; 500,000 titles
Palestine		500		500,000	10 days		Number of

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
							publishing houses includes the number of rights deals; set up on an area of 5,000 m ² ; 60,000 book titles; 1,200,000 USD in overall sales; unfortunately, the Israeli Occupation prevented Arab publishing houses from directly participating in the fair
Qatar (Doha)	30	427	10	500,000	10 days	30	30,000 received packages; 5,000 returned packages; nearly 19 million riyals in sales
Lebanon (Beirut)	8	232	7	170,000	14 days	11	622 schools and 19 universities visited it
Egypt (Cairo)	27	867	3,500,000	38		350	117 Azbakeya stalls

Arabic Book Fair Statistics: 2019

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
UAE (Sharjah)	83	2,000		2,520,000	11 days		443 publishing houses
UAE (Abu Dhabi)	76	1,067			7 days		Set up on an area of 26,148 m ²
Jordan (Amman)	19	195	19	170,000	10 days	155	250,000 titles
Algeria	36	1,030		1,265,000			298 publishers from Algeria; 732 publishers from abroad; 250,000 titles
Sudan (Khartoum)	16	220		65,000	13 days		
Iraq (Baghdad)	26	344		1,400,000	12 days	176	7,000 packages; 2,500 returned packages
Kuwait	30	490		350,000	11 days		500,000 titles, 13,000 of which were of 2019. Fair area was 18,500 m ² ; visited by 720 schools; 3.6 million Kuwaiti dinars in sales
Morocco (Casablanca)	42	302	22	560,000	10 days	418	
Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)	30	450		600,000	10 days		
Tunisia	23	663	27	392,000	10 days		
Oman (Masqat)	30	828		1,000,212	10 days	253	Number of publishing houses also includes number of rights deals;

Country	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
							523,000 titles
Qatar (Doha)							Fair was not held this year
Egypt (Cairo)	35	741	38	3,800,000	14 days	525	6 Azbakeya stalls; 60,310 received packages

Data appearing in the above tables was received from book fair directors.

Book Piracy

Between 2015 and 2019, the Arab world saw an increasing amount of Arabic book piracy, both in print and digitally. Journalist Sayyid Mahmoud wrote an article in the Egyptian newspaper *Shurouk*, strongly warning against pirating books. Novelist Ahlam Musteghanemi tweeted that 90 percent of her books circulating in Egypt are fake. The rise of such a phenomenon is the result of a lack of countermeasures that would prevent people from pirating books. It is also the result of a legislative failure to treat this phenomenon across the Arab world, not just in Egypt. Although the 2002 Law No. 82 is clear in its articles and implemented regulations, book piracy in Egypt has continued, or, rather, is on the rise. In Egypt, things have gotten to a point where the book pirate himself held a book fair in Markaz *Mit Ghamr* in the Dakahlia Governorate. He was issued an official report No 1650 at the Dakahlia Mit Ghamr police department in 2019. Dr Khaled 'Heif examined piracy in the Arab world, revealing a bigger picture around this problem. He categorises it as follows:

- The most common form of piracy is when counterfeiters try to take an entire work, from back to cover, keeping the book title and publishing house untouched, altering neither form nor content. However, the pirated copy is normally of lesser quality than the original, although it sometimes matches it, so that no one discovers it as fake.
- The second form of piracy depends on stealing the contents of an entire book and ascribing it to another author, which is the worst type of piracy. This is double theft, whereby the publisher's and author's profits are stolen as are the literary contents of thought and creativity, snatched away from the original creator and given to an underserving other.
- The third form of piracy is a mixture of the first and second, where an entire book is written and ascribed to a known author in an act of falsehood and slander, in an attempt to find the desired success and publicity, as well as generate the most revenue possible.

These three categories apply to both print and digital piracy. Should we categorise Arab countries by the number of pirated books, Iraq would top the charts. In 2018, Iraqi intellectuals, publishers, and bookshop owners launched a strong collective campaign against pirating books. Among its slogans were 'Piracy is an ethical crime', 'Piracy is an ethical and professional crime', 'Beware pirated books'.

In the press and among social media platforms, one finds a general notion that the danger of a pirated book does not lie in its impact on Arabic or foreign books imported to Iraq, but rather in the threat posed to the structure of the publishing industry in Iraq. Depriving an Iraqi author or publisher of remuneration for their efforts would lead to the collapse of a promising publishing industry in Iraq, a country that has a wide base of universities in most of its major cities. It also has a developed education structure and a voracious population of readers. New Iraqi names have been recently

emerging in novel writing, like Ahmad Saadawi, author of *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, which topped the bestseller charts of Arabic novels on Amazon. In 2014, it won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction. Ever since, this novel has been through largescale piracy attempts within Iraq and in a number of other Arab countries. The widespread phenomenon of piracy in Iraq has resulted in Iraqi authors immigrating abroad, like Dr Ali al-Jabbouri, the Iraqi archaeologist who has published in both Abu Dhabi and Alexandria. As such, the publishing industry in Iraq faces an existential threat. This is what Iraqis from all walks of life have realised, and so they have turned to pressure, to organise, and to support this industry. Iraq used to have solid state-owned publishing houses, like Dār A-Shu'ūn A-Thaqāfiya, which used to be the biggest publisher in Iraq, but stopped for years as a result of all the events that Iraq has lived through. Later, it resumed activity, as did Al-Mutanabbi Library, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiya, Makatabat al-Amīr, and others. However, publishing's stumbling blocks in Iraq never stood in the way of a relative rise in publications in Iraq. The piracy phenomenon, though, has raised many questions and hurdles before the publishing world in Iraq.

In Sudan, piracy has constituted a gateway into profits made by what Sudanese intellectuals call the 'Ghost' Publisher, which is an address-less and nameless publisher that constantly shifts his location. The most pirated publications in Sudan have been Mansour Khaled's works, Paolo Coelho's translated works, Mahmoud Darwish's poetry, and Tayib Salih's works, among others. This has weakened the book marketing movement in Sudan and negatively impacted public book sales at the Khartoum International Book Fair. Further, the book distribution network is quite frail in Sudan, as are the supply budgets of Sudanese universities. All these are indications of the state of the publishing industry in Sudan, which requires a fundamental restructuring, to make way for real creativity, thought, and knowledge.

The Egyptian Publishers Association's pursuit of pirates has born its fruits by cornering them, to a certain extent. One such "cornering" was the confiscation of 3399 pirated copies in 2018. However, as counterfeiters leave major cities that have been leading the publishing world in Egypt (Cairo, Alexandria, Mansour), this has made pursuing them quite difficult. The strictness shown against piracy at the Cairo Book Fair throughout 2016-2019, with effective measures against pirated content, has been quite fruitful. Still, counterfeiters will always have networks to work through. Here, the crisis between publishers and newspaper street vendors in Egypt also emerges, as does the crisis of mixing original used books and pirated books, which is one of the outlets for pirated book vendors. Resolving these issues has become a crucial need, as the size of the pirated book market in Egypt has reached 100 million Egyptian pounds, at its smallest estimate. Recently, however, Egypt has been able to limit book piracy through the use of particular measures.

In Syria, book piracy amidst war and economic depression is a rough situation that far exceeds that in other Arab states. The publishing industry and prospects in Syria would therefore require a different study, which would also examine the potential tools needed to revive the industry.

Muhammad V Street, considered one of the most vibrant streets of the Moroccan capital, has seen the rise of pirated books on a large scale—of both Moroccan and Arab authors. Those include Abdullal al-Arwi, Hanna Mina, and Ahlam Mosteghanemi, and others. Other contributing factors are shared by many other countries, too:

- Weakened distribution networks all across the territory of every Arab state, from Kuwait to Morocco, whereby some specialised bookshops have had to shut down or turn to other activities in recent years. Therefore, reader accessibility has become a crucial question that must be resolved.
- Price increases in print books. This is the case because most of the industry's inputs aren't manufactured in Arab countries, to which we can add the exorbitant taxes and customs imposed on such items. Some Arab countries also impose taxes and fees not just on the materials used to make books, but on books in their final state.
- Books by some authors are not available, which creates a gap for counterfeiters to fill. Some of those books include those authored by such well-known authors as: Zaki Najib Mahmoud, Nizar Qabbani, Amin Ma'alouf, Hamad al-Jassir, Mahmud Shakir, Yusuf Sibai,

Suheil Thakkar, and Abdel Rahman Badawi. Those are some examples of rare publications, either in their home country or in others, where demand for their books is high.

- When it comes to e-books online, these are accessible by the thousands and have been stripped of both publisher and author rights—a phenomenon exacerbated by the day, with hundreds of websites making those books available for free, or for some profit. Meanwhile, no one has proposed a clear idea of how to deal with these websites' existence, whether they should be handled by the Ministry of Communications or legally is yet to be determined.
- Failure to categorise publishing as an industry in the Arab world has resulted in a weakened legal approach to pirated books on all levels.
- The ambiguity that engulfs a publisher's and author's rights to their books, among many concerned authorities in Arab countries, has rendered dealing with cases of piracy a bureaucratic complication, intertwined with the bureaucracy of those authorities.

REPORTS BY APA MEMBER STATES

The United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s publishing industry, both print and digital publishing, has grown over the past ten years. This growth materialized through a number of catalytic initiatives in publishing and reading. Moreover, the UNESCO's selection of Sharjah as World Book Capital in 2019 echoed this growth.

Several publishing centres exist in the UAE today. The Emirates Publishers Association (EPA) regulates the relationships between Emirati publishers and provides them with a number of services; according to its statistics, there are 100 publishers.

The UAE is also home to 185 public libraries, which are distributed among its different cities and provide quality services to their readers, including digital reading services accessible from home, which are similar to those offered by the Sharjah Public Library. University libraries in the UAE also offer numerous services to their readers, one example being the library of the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), thanks to the university administration's clear intention to provide these services ever since the UAEU's establishment. The diversity of cultural organizations, including both state and civil society entities, has given vigour to the Emirati cultural movement. At the national level, there is also the Emirati Writers Union, which comprises 200 Emirati nationals and 185 affiliate members. The union has a publishing record, having published a total of 65 books across various fields, to date. It also translated 40 books in the fields of poetry, short fiction, theatre, history and critical studies, into English, French and Portuguese. Currently, the union is collaborating with the Sharjah Book Authority (SBA) on the translation of 60 books into Hindi and Italian.

The launch of the SBA was a significant moment in the history of Emirati publishing, especially as the Sharjah International Book Fair (SIBF) and many of Sharjah's initiatives for reading and libraries followed in its wake.

The Sharjah Department of Culture and Information (SDCI) is also an important actor in the Emirati publishing scene and has been publishing at an increased rate. This growth, along with the diversity of the department's publications and in the nationalities of its authors, has allowed it to transcend its local parameters and spread across the Arab region.

Publications from the Department of Middle Eastern Culture

Year	Number of books
2015	80
2016	86
2017	113
2018	130
2019	132

The SDCI also has a number of regular publications, including *al-Rāfid*, *al-Maşrah*, *al-Sharjah al-Thaqāfiyah*, and *al-Qawāfi*.

Two additional Sharjah institutions have come on the publishing scene during the past five years: the Sharjah Heritage Institute, which published a series of books on Arab folklore as well as two journals, *Murāwid* and *Mawrūth*; and the Arabic Language Academy (ALA) in Sharjah, which publishes the *al-*

‘Arabīyah Lisānī journal. ALA also made a digitized version of the *Historical Dictionary of Arabic* available on its website.

Many print and digital publishers exist in Dubai. A particularly prominent publisher is al-Hudhud, which specializes in children’s publishing and has been able to communicate the Khaliji spirit to children through its publications.

Another prominent publishing house is Darul Qalam, which has published a total of 1000 titles since 1976, yet released no more than 16 titles in 2015. In Dubai, there is also the Fusion House for Publishing and Distribution, which focuses on educational curricula. Recently, Dubai has also established the HBMSU Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University Publishing House.

Dubai’s publishing and cultural momentum was created by three main institutions: The Cultural and Scientific Association, al-‘Owais Cultural Awards Association, which publishes a number of art catalogues and books, and the Juma al-Mājid Centre for Culture and Heritage, which publishes heritage and history books.

Since the establishment of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, Abu Dhabi has witnessed an increased interest in the book industry as a whole. The city’s multiple programmes aim to transform it into a vibrant publishing centre. In the last 10 years, the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research has emerged as a prominent publisher in the UAE, adding a significant number of original works and translations to the Arabic library. Meanwhile, the centre’s library has been distinguished by its frequent addition of Arabic and foreign titles to its shelves.

Books published in the UAE

Year	Number of books
2015	1436
2016	1281
2017	2061
2018	2249
2019	2968

Translation

A number of translation projects have contributed to the UAE’s regional success in the field of Arabic translation. These projects are marked by their diversity, and they have given a qualitative stimulus to the field of Arabic translation.

The Sharjah Translation Grant is a great example of support for publishers and translators in the Arab region. It has pushed the Arabic translation movement forward across the region. Established in 2011, it gives publishers a maximum of USD 4000 for general books, and USD 1500 for children’s books. The grant focuses on specific fields: fiction, memoirs, history books, cookbooks, books for children and teens, as well as poetry, and it offers grants for translation from Arabic into other languages. In 2020, it received 48 applications for translations from Arabic into Turkish, 39 into English, 35 into Portuguese, 19 into Macedonian, 26 into Armenian, 12 into Serbian, nine into Georgian, seven into French, five into Russian, and three into Spanish.

The diversity in applications reveals how a single grant for Arabic translation has managed to fill a major gap in the field.

The grant also offers financial support for Arabic translations from any language into Arabic, and received 281 applications for translations from Turkish, 226 from English, 54 from Spanish, 6 from French and 34 from Russian, among other applications.

The large number of applications indicates an overwhelming Arab interest in Arabic translation. Prior to the introduction of this grant, then, lack of available funding was an obstacle to publishing Arabic translations.

The Muḥammad bin Rashid al-Maktūm Knowledge Foundation also supports translation at the Arab and international levels. It provided support to the High Arab Institute for Translation (HAIT) to publish 34 subsidized books.

In the past 10 years, the Kalimah Project for Translation into Arabic, implemented by the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT), came to the fore. This project has several advantages:

- Its selection of themes and the way its covers different areas of Arabic translation.
- The quality of translation and of the art direction of its translated books.
- The diversity of its translated source languages.
- An interest in translating book series by publishers that have been recognized for their quality content.

Kalimah has aimed to become a comprehensive project. It also organizes an annual translation conference, which has helped its organizers gain a clear understanding of the problems and developments in the field of translation. Kalimah has also built a database of 600 Arab translators.

Digital translation

The UAE is turning to digital space at an increased pace. Several initiatives are headed in that direction, including those by the Muḥammad bin Rashid al-Maktūm Knowledge Foundation. The foundation established the Digital Knowledge Centre, a cutting-edge digital platform promoting a reading culture, and which includes a collection of Arabic books, both original works and translations into Arabic, across all areas of life. The platform includes both Arabic and foreign books, as well as periodicals, lexicons, translations, biographies, photos, and maps. Currently, the platform includes 200,000 titles in different fields. Finalizing this platform as planned will ensure its increased efficiency.

There is also the Sharjah Public Library, which offers digital reading services for books, for which they have acquired digital rights. Another publishing approach is that of the Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities Department in Dubai, which allows full access to its digital publications. Meanwhile, the Jūma al-Majid Centre for Culture and Heritage has digitized some of its books and made them available for free access and download via its website, especially its *Afāq al-Thaqāfah Wa al-Turāth magazine*.

Cultural initiatives

‘A Thousand Titles and Titles’

“A Thousand Titles and Titles” is a cultural and intellectual initiative launched in February 2016 under the slogan, “We support literary thought.” As part of its attempt to encourage knowledge and intellectual production in the country, the initiative planned to publish 1001 Emirati books in its first phase. In November 2017, it announced the conclusion of its first phase.

In January 2018, the initiative’s second phase was launched. Its objectives included: publishing a first edition of some 1001 Emirati titles; 700 titles by publishers that fall under the umbrella of the Emirates Publishers Association (EPA), and 301 titles by Emirati authors.

To date, more than 1800 books have been published, thanks to financial support of more than AED 9 million during the first two phases of the initiative.

The ‘Culture Without Borders’ Initiative

The “Culture Without Borders” initiative was launched to encourage adults and children to read. It aims to establish a library in every Sharjah home and to equip Emirati families with a selected collection of Arabic-language books. More than 42,000 families in various regions of Sharjah are benefiting from this project.

“Culture Without Borders” was launched under the generous auspices of His Highness Shaykh Sultan bin Muhammad al-Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, and with follow-up by Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan bin Muhammad al-Qasimi, head of the organising committee of Culture Without Borders. It aspires to spread awareness among members of society and to reinforce the importance of reading as a pathway to knowledge and development.

Culture Without Borders aims to establish Sharjah as the cultural capital of the UAE through the organization of an intensive programme of lectures, workshops, and educational activities in schools, universities, and libraries. The initiative also works to promote reading as part of children’s intellectual development, and to increase general knowledge. So far, 42,366 free libraries and 2,118,300 free books have been distributed through this initiative.

Cultural projects

The Poetry Encyclopaedia is one of the most remarkable projects implemented by the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism. It was launched in 1998 and is considered the first online encyclopaedia for Arabic poetry. A website update was announced in April 2016 as part of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF), which added more than 3090 new poetry collections from different schools of Arabic poetry to the encyclopaedia. The encyclopaedia has also responded to readers’ requests by introducing the following sections: ‘An al-Qaṣīdah,’ ‘An al-Dīwān,’ ‘Mīn al-Turāth,’ and Qaṣīdat al-Yawm, Maqāl al-shahr, and Zaw fyyat al- ist ima’, the latter comprising a significant number of audio poems recorded by a select group of poets and artists. There’s also the Maktabah Turāthīyyah section, which includes 488 resources featuring the most popular and important Arabic literature encyclopaedias and lexicons. This project is a good example of a digital publishing platform that can be built upon in the future. Project Qalam, also launched by the Department of Culture and Tourism, aims “to develop, support and encourage talented” Emiratis in the field of writing. This project aspires to develop and assist youth by “publishing, distributing and promoting their literary works”.

Sharjah International Book Fair

The Sharjah International Book Fair (SIBF) is one of the key Arab book fairs. It was launched in 1982 and was a seed that helped launch the Sharjah cultural project. More than 1547 publishing houses from 64 countries participated in its 2015 edition, and more than 1.5 million books in 210 languages were exhibited. The fair’s staggering success was recognized, as when the Sharjah Book Authority (SBA), the fair’s organiser, won bronze for ‘Best Strategic/Creative Development of a New Brand,’ at the 2016 Transform Awards MEA. SBA also received the Cultural Personality of the Year Award at the 2016 Sultan Bin Ali Al Owais Cultural Awards.

SIBF offers a number of awards every year, which sets the fair’s tone and also attracts the interest of many countries. The fair’s momentum can be attributed to the variety of its awards, as follows:

The Best Emirati Novel Award, valued at AED 100,000 and only for UAE nationals. Over the years this award has introduced a number of talented Emiratis to the literary scene.

The Best Emirati Academic Book, valued at AED 100,000.

The Best Emirati Creative Book Award. This award is annually allocated to one of the creative fields and is valued at AED 50,000.

Sharjah Award for the Best Arabic Novel, valued at AED 150,000.

Sharjah Award for the Best International Book, one in fiction and another in nonfiction, each with a value of AED 50,000.

SIBF was also eager to support Arab and international publishing, in terms of both quality and content, through three awards: The Best Local Publisher Award, The Best Arab Publisher Award, and finally The Best International Publisher Award, with each award valued at AED 25,000.

Sharjah International Book Fair

Year	Number of participating states	Number of publishers	Associations, organization, committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the book fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
2015	40	1585		1,200,000			Number of foreign publishers: 645
2016	41	1681		1,200,000	11 days		Number of foreign publishers: 732
2017	60	1690		2,280,000	11 days		Number of foreign publishers: 400 Staying on surface of 14,625m ² , 1,239 deals between publishers (record number)
2018	77	1874		2,230,000	11 days		Number of foreign publishers: 417
2019	83	2000		2,520,000	11 days		Number of foreign publishers: 443

Figures in the table are from the fair management.

Abu Dhabi International Book Fair

The Abu Dhabi International Book Fair was first launched in 1981 and held at the premises of the Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation. Between 1981 and 2015, when the fair celebrated its silver jubilee, it underwent a number of transformations. It marked its jubilee by holding sessions that centred the life-story of the late great Shaykh Zayid bin Sultān al-Nahyān, former president and founding father of the UAE, who inaugurated the fair's first edition, and offered to buy the books exhibited at this edition, which became a kernel for the emergence of the UAE Public Library and Cultural Centre and many other public libraries in the UAE. Fifty publishers participated in the first edition of the fair, while a total of 1181 publishers took part in its 2015 edition. This increase is a reflection of Abu Dhabi's growing interest in the book industry.

Abu Dhabi aspires to become one of the main publishing centres in the Arab world. One of the fair's competitive advantages is the smooth integration of cultural, artistic, and intellectual activities with the exhibition spaces. This allows activity-seekers to check out exhibited books whilst giving readers

who are looking to purchase books the chance to access and attend activities. This blend was designed with meticulous attention.

This also explains why the number of fair visitors in 2015 hit a total of 265,000 visitors in seven days, a record, especially when considering Abu Dhabi's population. But what really gives the fair its momentum is the distribution of the Shaykh Zayed Book Award, the different categories of which amount to a total of AED 7 million. The award's categories are Literature, Translation, Contribution to the Development of Nations, Arabic Culture in Other Languages, Children's and YA Literature, Literary and Art Criticism, Young Author, Cultural Personality of the Year, and Publishing and Technology. The award enjoyed considerable respect in previous years, which in turn gained it extensive media attention.

Also linked to the Abu Dhabi Book Fair is the awards ceremony of the International Prize for Arab Fiction (IPAF) (the so-called Arabic Booker), which is organised by the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism in partnership with the Booker Prize in the UK. Since its launch, this award has enjoyed the respect of writers, critics, and audiences alike. Its different stages, starting with the longlist all the way to the announcement of the winning novel, receive extensive Arab attention. The award also organises writing workshops for young and talented Arabs.

The Abu Dhabi Book Fair also offers translation grants to support translation from and into Arabic and has programmes to support digital and audio publishing.

Abu Dhabi International Book Fair

Year	Number of participating states	Number of publishers	Associations, organization, committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the book fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
2015	63	1181			7 days		Exhibition space: 31,962m ²
2016	63	1261			7 days		Exhibition space: 31,962m ²
2017	65	1320			7 days		Exhibition space: 35,148m ²
2018	63	1350			7 days		Exhibition space: 35,148m ²
2019	76	1067			7 days		Exhibition space: 26,148m ²

Figures in the table are from the fair management.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Book-production knowledge in Jordan has grown rapidly in the past ten years, especially in the fields of print and digital books. For its part, Jordan has learned from the experiences of both Egypt and Lebanon, creating its own publishing sector. The retreat of publishing in Iraq since 1990, together with the migration of many Iraqi university professors and researchers to Jordan, contributed to the growth of Jordanian publishing. Other reasons include the presence of an educated Jordanian intelligentsia, as well as university professors at Jordanian universities. Palestine's dependence on Jordan for its book supply is also a contributing factor.

Jordan's private publishing houses play a significant role in the Jordanian publishing industry. Mainly concentrated in Amman, most of them have their own bookshops for distribution and rely on social media to communicate with their readers.

There are many promising examples among Jordanian publishers. We'll mention two of them:

Dar Al-Shorok: This house was established in 1979, but began to publish actively as of 1985. Thus far, it has published more than 1000 titles in various fields. It selects its titles with considerable attention. This publishing house is one of Amman's landmarks, and it has a branch in the West Bank. It is also the leading publisher in Jordan, Iraq, and Palestine, and is considered by some as an Arab, rather than Jordanian, publishing house. Al-Shorok communicates with its audience across several outlets, including its Facebook page, which has 27,148 followers.

Dar El-Shorok's publications 2015 - 2019

Year	Number of titles
2015	28
2016	35
2017	33
2018	52

Dar Osama for Publishing and Distribution: It emerged in the last five years through its publishing program, releasing many special titles, which included 48 lexicons, 141 encyclopaedias, 16 novels, and 212 children's books. To date, it has published a total of 1113 titles. Dar Osama has a digital bookstore and a Facebook page with 33,881 followers. It communicates with its audience across several outlets.

Dar Osama's publications 2015 - 2019

Year	Number of titles
2015	84
2016	59
2017	39
2018	42
2019	41

The Jordanian book industry is in good shape, and a new generation of Jordanian readers has emerged thanks to the "Reading for All/Jordanian Family Library" project, which provides Jordanians with affordable books.

Number of editions and copies at the “Reading for All” festival

Session	Year	Number of titles	Number of copies for children's books / 1000 copies	Number of copies for adults' books / 1000 copies	Total number of copies
First	2007	50	50	200	250
Second	2008	75	100	275	375
Third	2009	100	100	400	500
Fourth	2010	50	50	200	250
Fifth	2011	50	70	200	270
Sixth	2012	50	70	200	270
Seventh	2013	50	70	200	270
Eighth	2014	50	50	120	170
Ninth	2015	50	50	120	170
Tenth	2016	51	55	120	175
Eleventh	2017	51	55	120	175
TOTAL		627	720	2155	2875

This project's publications vary in terms of their topics, but they are mainly focused on the following:

- Literary Studies and Heritage
- General Culture
- Arab-Islamic Heritage
- Thought and Civilization
- Jordanian Literature
- Arabic Literature
- World Literature
- Children's Books

Twenty-three percent of Jordan's total publications are directed at children. With its different components, this project strives to create a wide readership base. Jordan has begun to reap the rewards of its efforts in this direction, manifested by the contributions of a growing readership to the progress of publishing in Jordan.

Moreover, Jordan's Ministry of Culture has adopted several projects that point in the same direction, including The Arabic Heritage Project, which publishes Jordanian literature digitally. That said, one of the most promising projects that is still in the works is The National Thesaurus Project, a knowledge repository for popular vocabulary from all Jordanian areas of life. The project will collect folk vocabulary and briefly explain it, along with indexing terms and categorizing them prior to publishing them in a lexicon.

The Jordan Academy of Arabic is a distinguished publisher in this field. The academy has numerous publications, and it has also launched a podcast on its website to attract a wide audience. It publishes two journals, *The Journal of the Jordan Academy for Arabic*, an academic journal; and *al-Bayān al-'Arabī*, a cultural journal dealing with issues in modern Arabic language, especially its teaching, while

also attempting to simplify it and interact with it. It has also released a number of lexicons, most notably its *Dictionary of Economic Terms*, and also makes a number of digitized publications available on its website for free. Moreover, it comprises an index for Arabic scientific terms and their equivalent in English.

Publishers in Jordan

Type of publishers	Number
Private publishing houses	128
Governmental publishing houses	12
Total	140

Specialization of Jordanian publishers

General publishing	Digital publishing	Quran and heritage	Academic books	Collective works	Themed magazines	Other specialties
7	8	12	11	80	12	10

Book publishing trends in Jordan 2015-2019

Geography and History	Literature	Arts	Applied Sciences	Pure Sciences	Languages	Social Sciences	Religion	Psychology and Philosophy	General knowledge
749	3222	291	993	222	439	3131	1227	479	186

Digital publishing

Digital publishing in Jordan receives considerable attention that grows year after year. That explains why Jordan launched the “Kutba” website. Kutba was the goddess of writing and lived in al-Kutba temple in Petra. The Nabateans accorded high status to writing in their civilization, and so enshrined a god, Kutba, to safeguard books. Al-Kutba was developed as a free reading platform for Jordanian and other Arab books. The platform also includes a number of Jordanian publications, such as Afkār magazine, as well as books in a range of topics from literature to religions to geography, history, biographies, and the arts.

Al-Manhal

Al-Manhal is one of the most prominent Arabic databases in its field and across the Arab region. Based in Dubai, it has succeeded in producing solid Arab digital content. The database’s content has some comparative advantages, including:

- Full-text search
- Contextual linking, highlighting and annotating
- The ability to build personal bookshelves
- Multiple ways to access data and information

Al-Manhal’s digital library includes 18,270 titles from 228 publishers covering the Arab world and some Islamic countries. It also includes specialized collections of quality books, including books in

Islamic economics. Among its most remarkable collections is a Middle Eastern strategic studies collection that is available on the Internet.

Al-Manhal offers a number of digitized periodicals, especially in the fields of humanities and social sciences, as well as in medical and technical sciences, including chemistry, biology, hydrology, mathematics, and agriculture.

Al-Manhal has ventured into developing digital teaching apps for children, especially for teaching the Arabic language. In so doing, it is trying to reach out to teachers, families, and schools.

It also has a dissertations database, including some 6000 theses from the following universities: University of Jordan, al-Bayt University, Birzeit University, Jadara University, Middle East University, The World Islamic Sciences and Education University, and Amman Arab University for Graduate Studies.

Al-Manhal also maintains one of the best book and journal databases. Its databases comprise 22,982 books covering 16 fields of knowledge. Al-Manhal's collection has an annual growth rate of about 30 percent. Its journal database includes 478 journals, with 86,585 articles in 621 fields, and a 30 percent annual growth rate.

Number of books published in Jordan

Year	Number of books
2015	1936
2016	1983
2017	1254
2018	2477
2019	3920

Number of books published in Jordan by language, 2015-2019

Arabic	English	French
10552	387	30

It is evident that English-language publishing has witnessed a 24 percent increase compared to the years prior to the study, and that English publications are of good quality.

Book piracy

Cases of book counterfeiting, copying, and piracy have been recorded in Jordan in previous years. Counterfeiting is carried out by organized networks which started out copying books by Arab publishers, before moving on to books published by Jordanian publishing houses, particularly choosing publishers with a large Jordanian and Arab following. These include, but are not limited to, the Yazouri publishing house. For its part, the National Library of Jordan is trying to put a limit on this phenomenon. Three thousand one hundred and twenty counterfeiting cases were filed in the period between 2009 and 2019. This figure includes counterfeited books, multimedia, and digital programmes. In 2016, 317 more cases were registered, followed by 62 cases in 2017. Counterfeiting remains a pressing topic in Jordan as it threatens the country's publishing industry.

Amman International Book Fair

Each year, the Amman International Book Fair witnesses new developments. In its 2019 edition, 350 Arab and foreign publishing houses from 22 countries participated in the fair. Poet Amjad Nasser was honoured and received the Cultural Personality of the Year Award. Nasser also won the State Appreciation Award in 2019. The fair designated Tunisia as guest of honour that year.

The International Publishers Association's (IPA) regional conference, held in collaboration with the IPA, was organized on the margins of the fair. The conference discussed ways in which publishers could advance the Arab world's cultural renaissance, and reviewed challenges faced by writers in reaching new generations.

Amman International Book Fair

Year	Number of participating states	Number of publishers	Associations, organization, committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the book fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
2015							Did not take place in 2015
2016	15	200	15	150,000	10 days	150	Palestine as guest of honor
2017	17	185	17	150,000	10 days	165	3,250 square meters of fair
2018	17	165	16	170,000	10 days	140	
2019	19	195	19	170,000	10 days	155	250 000 titles participated

Figures received from the regional federation.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania

To date, 40,000 manuscripts have been discovered in Mauritania, but experts suggest the real number is much larger. Mauritania is a country of science. Chinguetti is its scientific city, and it has produced more knowledge than any other city. This explains why encyclopaedias tracing the scientific movement in Mauritania have long been in existence. One of these earliest encyclopaedias was by Ahmad Ibn al-Amīn al-Shinqīti, who died in 1913. He wrote *al-Wasīt fīh tarraḡ īm udabā' al-Shinqīt* in 1911. A continuation of this work can be found in *Muḥammad al-Mukhtār wuld Abāh's book, al-Sh i'r wa al-shu'arā' fī Mūrītānyah*. Following that, Dār al-Madhab in Nouakchott published *ishām al-Ulamā' al-Shanāqittah fīh ḥarakat al-nahdah al-ūrūb i'yah fīl mashr iq wal maghr ib*, which was co-authored by a number of scholars. In 2018, Mauritania launched one of its first digital projects, the Chinguiti-pedia which "aims to introduce the science and scientists of Mauritania, and will include maps, short films, books, research studies, audio files, and statistics." Launching this digital project will no doubt serve as a catalyst for launching many other digital publishing projects.

Mauritanian publishing is dogged by a number of problems, and digital publishing is one possible solution that could encourage publishing in the country. For its part, Mauritania's cultural community has recognized the country's publishing potential, launching a cultural website and digitizing a number of books, including poet Al Mukhtar Al Salem Ahmed Salem's poetry collection titled *al-Qirmān al-Dāmīyah*, Amā 'Alī ḥajīb's poetry collection *Kharbashāt Tifl*, and a novel by Mohamed Bin Tetta titled *'Awlād um Hāne'*.

The educated Mauritanian class is very active, a result of the strong oral culture present among the educated and uneducated alike, and their vivid collective memory, which has kept poems and prose texts alive from generation to generation. It would be incorrect to say that there is a high illiteracy rate in Mauritania, because while there is a reading and writing illiteracy, there is no cultural illiteracy by any means. Mauritania is truly the 'Land of a Million Poets.' The Mauritanian spirit is evident in the work of late novelist Mohamed Weld Abdi, whose splendid book *Murītanya: Balad al-M ilyūn Sha'ir* (Mauritania: Land of a Million Poets) was published by the Department of Culture and Media, and was a big success.

The limited size of Mauritanian publishing pushed a number of Mauritanian thinkers and writers to publish in Beirut, Cairo, and in the Gulf. It is in this context that the poet Khadeem Rasool Allah Bin Ziyad printed his poetry collection *'Arba'ūn Qas idah f ih hub al Muṣṭafa*, and *al-Sharīf al-Yamanī al-Badr* published his *al-Aḥḍal f ih al-Qahirah*. Furthermore, the Nama Centre for Research and Studies in Beirut published an important book by researcher Abu Al Abbas Ibrahim titled *'Alāf al-Siinīn f ih al-Sahara'* which traces Mauritania's history since early times.

There is also an increased interest in publishing about Mauritania, its heritage and culture, in other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Morocco. In 2016, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina published an English book about Mauritanian rock art by Hamdy Abbas.

The resonance of Mauritanian culture in the Arab world can be seen in the Arab Writers Union's choice of *Madīnat al-riyāḥ* (The City of Winds) by Mauritanian novelist Moussa Ould Ebnou as one of 100 Best Arabic Novels, as well as in Mohamed Fadel Ould Abdel Latif's receipt of the Naguib Mahfouz Award, presented by Egypt's Supreme Council of Culture.

Limited publishing-incentive programmes in Mauritania have meant that the country's vibrant cultural scene is not matched by an equally high rate of publishing. Yet many efforts are being made by Mauritanian publishing houses, among them Dar Al Qarnayn, which is a good example of Mauritanian publishing and its trends. In a country that believes in the importance of poetry, Dar Al Qarnayn published the debut prose poetry collection of Mauritanian poet Al Mokhtar Al Salem Ahmed Al Salem, titled *Dīwān al-Yāfūr* in 2016. It also published *al-Kinz* (The Treasure) by novelist Samīra Hamadi Fādil, as well as a translation of *The History of Portuguese Raids on the West African Coast* by Gomes Ayanees and translated by Ahmad Weld al-Muṣṭafa. It also published verified heritage books of the likes of *Manḥ al-Rab al-Ghafūr f i Dhikr 'ahlāmahu sāhib Faṭḥ al-Shakkūr*, verified by Muhammad al-Amin Bin Hamadi. This diversity is telling of the current publishing trends in Mauritania, which are mainly oriented towards literature, poetry, history, and heritage books. Islamic books are also vividly present thanks to several Mauritanian publishers. However, applied sciences books are limited, so are books on philosophy, psychology, and library sciences.

Mauritanian publishers are keen on promoting their books. One example is al-Adāb Library, which sells its books through its Facebook page. The National Association for Writing and Publishing also started a good initiative by launching Avaq Fikria, a new digital website.

A new publishing experience began in Nouakchott with the opening of Dār Qimam in 2019. The publishing house has already launched an ambitious publishing and translation program and plans to organize annual competitions, but it's still too early to assess this experience. Due to the limited number of libraries, especially public ones, in Mauritania, Mauritanian civil society launched the *'Iqrāa Ma'i*, ("Read with Me") initiative, starting a modest public library that offers books to Mauritanian youth. Efforts are also being made at the institutional level in Mauritania. The Mauritanian Centre for Strategic Studies launched a book series titled *Bināa' al-Insān al-Mūrītānī f il Qarn al-Wāḥid wāl 'ishrīn*. It also released a number of publications in both Arabic and French, including, *al-hakāmah f ih mūrītānīa*, *islāḥ Manzūmmat al-ta'līm*, *Thaqāfat al-Silm wal i'tidāl f ih mūwājahat al-taṭarūf al'anīf* and *Manzūmmat al-Qīyām*. The centre also regularly publishes forum and conference agendas, including, its *'A'māl Mūtlaqa Marākīz al-Dīrasāt al-Istrāṭijīyah f i al-Maghrib al-Arabī*.

In another arena, the Mauritanian Writers and Authors Association has published several creative works by its members. The publications were so well received that Ahmad Wild al-Wālid's poetry collections were printed in two editions. For its part, the Mauritanian Institute for Research and Material Heritage, a subordinate to the Ministry of Culture, published *al-Wasīt* Magazine, albeit not regularly. It also published multiple manuscript and book catalogues, including *'Aādāt al-Zawāj*, *al-'Amthāl* and *al-bikayyāt*.

There are also many books documenting Mauritania's historic cities, the most prominent of which are the works of Ahmad Mawlūd al-Hilāl, professor in the University of Nouakchott. Al-Hilāl is an active publisher of studies and books in several countries, including in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates.

The University of Nouakchott is considered a true repository of intellectual production in Mauritania. It is a dynamic publisher of many scientific journals, most notably the *Faculty of Arts* journal. It also has published a few books. The Chinguitt Modern University also has published several scientific journals, and it has increased its publishing activity in both French and Arabic. It also ventured into publishing manuscripts, launching its manuscripts project with *Dalīl al-mahfūdhat fih Chinguitt*, thereby turning to publishing verified manuscripts and studies, albeit with a focus on history and religious studies.

Number of books published in Mauritania

Year	Number of publications
2015	381
2016	435
2017	510
2018	510
2019	550

Periodicals

Scientific journals published by public institutions	Newspapers and other periodical journals
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal of Historical and Social Studies, published by the University of Nouakchott, College of Literature and Human Sciences 2. Journal of Mauritanian Studies, published by the Mauritanian Centre for Strategic Studies and Research 3. Annals of the Chinguitt University 4. Mauritanian Journal of Political Sciences 5. Journal of the Mauritanian Institute of Research 6. Annual report of the Sahara's Institute 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jarida Al Shaab 2. Horizon 3. Jarida Al Amal 4. Al Tawassul 5. Ashtari 6. Rénovateur 7. L'Éveil 8. Le Calame 9. Le Quotidien de Nouakchott 10. Nouakchott Info 11. Points chauds

Languages of books published in Mauritania 2015-2019

Language			Remarks
Arabic	English	French	
2000	20	500	Including textbooks

Books translated from other languages into Arabic in the period between 2015 and 2019 totalled 40 books. *Dār al-Qarnayn* and *Dar Jusūr ‘Abdul’azīz* both played a significant role in book publishing in Mauritania.

Book publishing trends in Mauritania

YEAR	General Knowledge	Philosophy and Psychology	Religion	Languages	Humanities	Pure sciences	Applied sciences	Arts	Literature
2015	30	-	65	30	15	22	22	20	32
2016	27	-	70	30	15	22	22	17	32
2017	27	-	71	30	15	22	22	17	32
2018	25	-	95	45	16	25	25	17	32
2019	30	-	90	50	15	35	27	15	30

The Republic of Tunisia

The state of Tunisian publishing is a reflection of the country's history. Tunisian publishing was a tool of resistance against the colonial power, then became subject to the authority of a strong state in the post-independence era, rippling with transformations and shifts. Today, Tunisian publishing is impacted by the doubts of the post-2011 era.

Tunisia's publishing history cannot be told without mentioning al-Manār Bookstore. Founded by al-Tijānī al-Muḥammadi, al-Manār published works by many of Tunisia's most famous writers, including Hasan Husnī ‘abd al-Wahhāb and al-Tahir ibn ‘Ashūr. It must also be noted that Hasan Husnī ‘abd al-Wahhāb's books have transcended Tunisia, and were also published in Egypt and Iraq. Al-Manār Bookstore also published religious books, which were exported to other countries in Africa.

Founded by Muḥammad Khoja, the Sharqīyah bookstore published literary and religious books. There's also al-Najāh bookstore, which was established by al-Hadī ‘Abd al-Ghanī near Ez-Zaytūna, before relocating to Habib Bourguiba Avenue, Tunis's main thoroughfare. Al-Najāh published the poetry collections of Aboul-Qācem Echebbī, whose poetry appeared in Egypt's *Apollo* journal and had considerable resonance there.

Tunisian publishing, precisely Alī al-‘Asslī's bookstore and publishing house in Ez-Zaytūna, continued to lead the country's cultural movement. Al-‘Asslī was the first Tunisian publisher to ever reach Beirut. But Tunisian publishing opened up regionally with Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad Qarrū, who studied in Baghdad and cooperated with Cairo and Beirut, establishing a Tunisian publishing house that published works from Algeria, Morocco, and Palestine.

It can be deduced that Arabic publishing was present during Tunisia's colonial era; however, there is no accurate estimate of it to date. The future threat is that many of the earliest Tunisian publications may be lost, especially with many of these publications holding no ISBN. This is a Tunisian phenomenon that continues to this day. The number of annual publications in Tunisia ranges from 650 to 800 books a year, while a close look at publications released outside the national bibliography's framework reveals at least 100 to 250 more annual titles that have no ISBN numbers. Some of these books are printed at their authors' own expense, and not by publishers. They appear as references for research studies, or on social media. This phenomenon needs to be addressed. It must also be noted that publishing in Tunisia does not correspond to the knowledge produced by Tunisian intellectuals, thinkers, and professors in the country. This explains why Tunisian writers are leaving, especially for publishers in Beirut, and more recently to the Gulf and France.

The establishment of the Tunisian House for Publishing and Distribution during the Habib Bourguiba era somewhat overshadowed publishing in Tunisia and led to its operation only within the orbit of the Tunisian state. This allowed for the birth of a generation of Tunisian writers while Tunisia's private publishing sector was not permitted to grow. However, in the 1970s, Tunisian companies began to establish printing presses, encouraging many intellectuals and thinkers to publish at their own expense. This is when authors, university professors, and creative individuals started a new publishing movement in the country, whose impact is felt to this day across many publishing spaces in Tunisia.

Dār al-Sabāḥ was a media institution with its own printing press, which allowed its rise to prominence in Tunisia's publishing industry following its establishment in 1969. However, its prominent role would not actually materialize until the mid-1970s. The relationship between media and the publishing field can be traced in several Arab countries. Examples include al-Ahrām and al-Akḥbār in Egypt, as well as Dār Tabr al-Zamān. Yet, the important transformation in Tunisian publishing happened with the inauguration of the University Publishing Centre in Manūba, which in 1996 released eight book series in the fields of humanities, medicine, engineering, the economy, and more.

Several Tunisian publishing houses came to be associated with influential figures. For example, Muḥammad al-Masmūdī, a Tunisian intellectual, who was born in 1934 and died in 2013, became associated with Dār al-Janūb, one of Tunisia's most established publishing houses, which tried to build a connection with its readers by publishing several book series. It first released its *'Oyūn al-Mo'asirah* series. Yet its most significant publications were its playtexts. Dār al-Janūb's boldness is demonstrated by its choice to publish the complete works of Tunisian playwright Ali Dū'ajī. Several Tunisian authors emerged thanks to this publishing house, including al-Habib al-Salmī, Tawfiq bin Brīk, and Amnah al-Rimaylī.

Dār al-Janūb and al-Dār al-Mutawasita also revived public publishing in different fields in Tunisia, as opposed to Dār Sahnūn, which chose to focus on Islamic studies and published multiple titles that were well received outside Tunisia.

Tunisian publishing houses continue to publish across different fields of knowledge. This diversity reflects Tunisian society, which is more liberal than other Arab societies. This is evident in the publications of Dār Kalimah, and its book series in the fields of philosophy, novels, linguistics, and humanities. Another example is Dār Kunūz, Tunisia's most prominent publishing house, which specializes in children's literature, and interacts with the world of children through its smart phone apps.

After 2011, publishing in Tunisia became more dynamic to keep pace with the Tunisian political scene, as well as the political controversies of the moment. Biographies, history, books about political Islam and philosophy, as well as new novels, emerged on the Tunisian publishing scene. For example, see Sotimedia, a Tunisian publishing house whose list of releases echoes all of the above. Among its publications was *al-Raml: Tafakkur fih Ma'arakat al-Intiqāl al-Dīmūqrātī 2011-2014* by 'Adnān al-Munṣir, professor of Modern History at the University of Sousse. It also published Tariq al-Kaḥlāwī's *Aḥmad bin Saleḥ: Sirat Za'im Ijtimā'i Dīmūqrātī*. We cannot end this review of Tunisian publishing without also mentioning the Bayt al-Hikmah cultural foundation, a publisher of an array of significant books, most notably the *Tunisia Encyclopaedia*, a comprehensive encyclopaedia about Tunisia, in addition to its verified heritage manuscripts and valuable books in the field of humanities. For its part, the National Tunisian Library makes constant efforts to promote books and is the publisher of the national bibliography. It currently operates the Khaldunian Library, a digital library with a focus on the fields of indexing and cataloguing, which has positively contributed to Tunisian publishing.

With its thinkers and novelists, Tunisia remains a strong candidate for advancing in the publishing field, especially in the presence of individuals with great potential and expertise, including 'Abd al-Majīd al-Sharafi, Hishām Ja'it, Amal Qarāmī, 'Abd al-Salām al-Masdī, Ibrahīm Shabūḥ, as well as other figures in the cultural field.

Today, there are 150 publishing houses in Tunisia. This number is expected to rise in the coming years, along with the number of bookshops in Tunisia. While it is evident that some websites in Tunisia have already tapped into digital marketing and are offering book delivery services, it will take time before this digital experience can prove its efficiency.

Books published in Tunisia

Year	Number of books
2015	1291
2016	2291
2017	2035
2018	2240
2019	2780

Books published in Arabic and in foreign languages

Year	Number of books in foreign languages	Number of books in Arabic
2015	447	844
2016	637	1654
2017	514	1513
2018	1625	510
2019	1911	773

Tunisian publishing is predominantly in French, followed by English, peripherally so, with other languages making up between 40-65 percent of the size of Tunisian publishing. This is due to a number of factors, including:

- Research centres that operate in the publishing field in Tunisia.
- The interest of several publishers in publishing in French, given the existence of a high percentage of French readers in Tunisia. Besides, Francophone countries, primarily France, publicize books released in French.
- Tourism flows from France, Belgium, Switzerland, and other countries to Tunisia.

Tunis International Book Fair

The Tunis International Book Fair provides a chance for many Tunisians to stock up on Arabic books. Publishers from Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, among other countries, actively participate in the fair. Since its establishment in 1981, the fair has continued to bring new developments to Tunisia every year. It offers six awards: Tawfiq Bakār Appreciation Award, Nūr al-Dīn bin Khazr Award (Best Publisher), ‘Abd al-Qādir bin al-Shaykh Award (Children’s and YA), Abd al-Hamīd Bilkahya Award (Art Books), Alī Douajī Award (Creative Writing: Short Story), Faṭmah Haddād (Philosophy), Bechīr Khirayif Award (Creative Writing: Novel), Tahār Haddād Award (Humanities), and the Sādoq Mazīgh Award (Translation). The awards are named after pioneers in each of the covered fields, a smart move which gives the award weight among the followers of each field, making the annual awards ceremony a much-anticipated event among Tunisia’s cultural community.

The fair celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2019. Between 2015 and 2019, it made several attempts to revive book promotion in Tunisia, efforts that must be built upon in the future.

The Tunisian Book Fair

Year	Number of participating states	Number of publishers	Associations, organization, committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the book fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
2015	19	692	19	250,000	10 days		
2016	23	810	21	257,000	10 days		
2017	29	278	25	350,000	10 days		
2018	24	752	28	389,000	10 days		Participating states: Tunisia 121, Egypt 49, Syria 28, Lebanon 22, Foreign countries 11
2019	23	663	27	329,000	10 days		

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

The start of Algerian publishing has been linked to Algerian Independence in 1962. That year, the first national program was launched to encourage book publishing in Algeria through the following:

- The launch of the National Company for Publishing and Distribution
- An exemption from import duties on books
- Adoption of copyright law

But in 1965, a debate erupted in Algeria, determining the country's cultural policy. Algerian cultural policy now encouraged book publishing while giving importance to public culture through audio-visual material. Until then, private publishing hardly existed. In 1966, Algeria launched the National Institute for Publishing and Broadcasting, publishing some 175 titles in the period between 1966 and 1975 and printing a total of 200,000 individual copies. The number of productions by the Société Nationale d'Édition et de Diffusion (SNED) did not exceed 50 titles until 1983, when it was restructured. In 1962, and for years after, several private publishing houses were established, including Dahlab, La Fumique, Dār al-Nahḍah and Tha'libiyyah.

In 1970, there was a newcomer to the Algerian publishing scene, namely the Office des publications universitaires (OPU), which was established to keep pace with the educational growth in Algeria.

Publications from the Office des publications universitaires (OPU) 1990-2000

Year	Number of published books
1990-1991	220
1991-1992	182
1992-1993	139
1993-1994	74

Year	Number of published books
1994-1995	160
1995-1996	121
1996-1997	28
1997-1998	21
1998-1999	123
1999-2000	72

This table is copied from “al-Mumārasāt al-Mihaniyah fih Tawzi’ al-Kitāb fil Jazā’ir” (“Distinguished Arts, Professional Practices in Book Distribution in Algeria”), a Master thesis by Finūn Rashīdah, Oran University, 2016.

For years, book production in Algeria remained limited. Both the government and cultural sectors in Algeria were fully aware of this. The Algerian cultural sector was restructured in 1982, resulting in the establishment of two important publishing institutions: The National Book Institution and the National Institution for the Distribution of Press Publications.

However, these institutions did not significantly contribute to Algerian knowledge production, and certainly not in a way that corresponded to the size of a country like Algeria that is home to several ancient cities, as well as a rising number of universities. These were some of the obstacles facing the Algerian publishing sector, the biggest of which was in a lack of expertise in printing and publishing. But a qualitative shift happened with Khalidah Tūmī’s appointment as Algeria’s Ministry of Culture (2002-2014). Tūmī introduced several programmes to promote publishing, which coincided with the selection of a number of Algerian cities as cultural capitals. This revived the Algerian publishing scene, which saw 1382 new Arabic titles, in addition to 623 foreign-language titles published in 2011; this demonstrates a decline in publishing in French, and a rise in Arabic publishing. In 2012, the number of publications in Algeria jumped to a record of 4503 titles.

But we should also appreciate the role of Algerian private publishers, whose defiance helped create the momentum for publishing in the country. The emergence of Algerian writers very early on necessitated the development of an Algerian publishing industry. For how was it possible that the works of writers like Yasminah Khadrāh, Malik Bennabī, Tahir Ouētār, Nina Būrāwī, and Mūfdī Zakariyah, largely published abroad, would not land in the hands of Algerian readers? Also, the rise of Algerian writers in the Arab scene had a positive impact on Algerian publishing and encouraged new generations in Algeria to create and write. These writers include Waciny Laredj and Aḥlām Mustaghanamī, whose novels were published in multiple editions across many Arab countries.

There are 300 publishers in Algeria today, at least 40 of which are active. A large percentage of publishers and bookshops are concentrated in Algiers. No other Algerian cities are as promising when it comes to publishing, not even Oran, even though Oran’s publications dominate the field of educational books. Examples include *al-Tufāḥāt al-Thalāth*, *Al-Qārī’ al-Saghīr* and *Umm al-kitāb*. Other publishing houses operating in the field of public-sector publishing include al-Quds al-‘Arabī, Dār al-Gharb, Dār al-‘iza Wa al-Karāmah, Dār al-Basā’ir, al-Alfiyah al-Thālithah and Ibn al-Nadīm. There are also publishing houses divided across a number of Algerian cities albeit on a smaller scale, such as Bajāyah, Yatzi Ozzo, Qusantīna and Tilmīssān. The link between publishing and universities is evident in these cities, demonstrating that universities have played a positive and a catalytic role in Algerian publishing.

Several Algerian publishers have begun to establish vertically integrated publishing houses to ensure streamlined book manufacturing. Established in 1989 in Algiers, Dār al-Shihāb owns a printing press, where a cadre of workers prepare books for publishing, and also a distribution bookshop. It aims to acquire all needed publishing tools.

Dār al-Shihāb started off by publishing university textbooks, then underwent a qualitative shift in 2000 when it entered the literary world and began publishing short stories and novels. Since its establishment, Dār al-Shihāb has published more than 850 titles.

Dār Alfā was set up in Constantine in 2001 and is a good example of a publishing house located outside Algiers. Alfa's publications are diverse and have increased over the past five years. Besides their variety, what distinguishes this house's publications is how they introduce a new generation of Algerian writers capable of high-quality writing. Its publications include: *Awraq Iqtisādīyah* by Maḥbūb Murād; *Jubūd Muḥammad 'Abdullah Drāz fīl Taḥsīn al-Mawḍū'ī* by 'Abd al-ḥalīm al-Hādī. *Tamwīl al-Mashrū'āt al-Saghīrah wa al-Mutawasitah* by Yūsif Muṣṭafa; *Bayūlūjya al-Khalīyah* by Salīḥ 'Atallah and *Tajalīyāt al-Waql fī al-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir* by Imān Sa'id.

Dār Alfā also publishes novels by new and emerging writers on both the Algerian and wider Arab scenes, as well as several children's books.

Dār Alfā publishing releases 2015-2019

Year	Number of releases	Number of books translated
2015	3	0
2016	3	0
2017	27	0
2018	181	0
2019	291	0
Total	505	0

It is evident that publishing has continuously evolved at Dār Alfā, which is also indicative of the growth of writing and publishing in Constantine.

Dār al-Qasbah is one of the most established Algerian publishers. It was founded in 1992 by Isma'il Amizyān, and its publications are impressively diverse. It publishes in the fields of history, biography, arts, literature, and lexicons, and has brought out work by a group of prominent thinkers, intellectuals and novelists in Algeria, including Jilālī Khalās, Muṣṭafa Lashraf, Mawlūd 'Ashūr, Hasan bin Mu'allim, Mahnad 'Akelī bin Yūnis, 'Abd al-Hamīd bin Hadūka, Maryam Qumāsh, and others. Children's and educational books also occupy space among Dār al-Qasbah's publications.

Dār al-Hudda is a publishing house with considerable experience in printing, publishing and distribution. It was established in 1987 and began work in partnership with national and private publishers. In late 1989, it began to publish books on its own. In an attempt to widen its scope of activities, it is currently finalizing the building of an industrial press. Dār al-Hudda has published more than 3250 titles to date, across all fields and specializations.

Another way Dār al-Hudda has tried to widen its activity is by acquiring, for its headquarters, a space that's more than 1276m², with two floors used in both its administrative and its commercial work. The headquarters is located in Algiers, specifically in Awrās Bachīr Boulevard in the Bāb al-Oued Neighbourhood. Dār al-Hudda also acquired another location over an area of 1000m² on the west side of central Oran on Zighūt Yūcif Boulevard. Both headquarters were previously owned by the Algerian National Company for Books (ENAL).

Any survey of Algerian publishing necessitates a review of Dār al-Hikmah, a publishing house that has ventured into the publishing of MA and PhD dissertations. In so doing, it introduced new generations of researchers to the Arab scientific and cultural movement. It also entered the digital publishing sphere; this in addition to its diverse publications across many subjects.

Dār Tlātinqīt is another good example of publishing houses located outside Algiers. It operates from Bijayah, which has given it a unique position among both readers and writers. Dār Tlātinqīt introduced new writers to the cultural scene, including young writer Ziwi Yahya by publishing two of his works, both of which were widely read: *Ajmal al-Qisās*, and *‘ala Khutta al-Anbiyāa’ wal Salihīn*. Dār Tlātinqīt also gave attention to history books, publishing *al-Yawmīyāt* by Mawlūd Fir’un. It also republished several Arabic books of the likes of *Charles wa ‘Abd al-Rahman* and *‘Azrāa Qūraysh* by Jurji Zaydan. Dār Tlātinqīt also lends importance to world literature and heritage books.

The Algerian publishing industry has many problems. The limitations of its distribution networks has negatively impacted publishing. Furthermore, printing presses, in terms of their number and capacity, fall short of what is required to improve publishing in the country. There is a surplus in intellectual, knowledge, and scientific production in Algeria, despite the fact that digital publishing has encouraged new generations, especially with the success of the online portals of scientific journals in Algeria. Algerian publishing remains a promising industry due to the presence of a reading audience that needs more public libraries and reading incentives.

Books published in Algeria

Year	Number of books
2015	1177
2016	2924
2017	3316
2018	1074
2019	1504

Publishing trends in Algeria

YEAR	General Knowledge	Educational books	History and Geography	Literature	Social Sciences	Religion	Housekeeping books	Children’s books
2015	137	185	190	245	149	316	8	149
2016	596	684	379	290	217	301	91	366
2017	369	510	328	556	543	588	169	253
2018	164	213	87	289	91	112	13	105
2019	1	157	87	518	239	129	1	118

Publishing in Arabic and in foreign languages in Algeria

Year	Languages	
	Arabic	Foreign
2015	816	361
2016	1702	1222
2017	2409	907
2018	898	176
2019	1210	294
2020	1030	454

Publishing in French represents a significant proportion of foreign language publications in Algeria. It is also evident that prior to 1970, French publications were the most dominant in Algeria in sheer

numbers. Eventually, publishing in Arabic grew, as did the scale of publishing in Algeria, thanks to a number of publishing programmes that transformed the Algerian publishing scene post-2000.

Algiers International Book Fair (Salon International du Livre d'Alger or SILA)

The fair in Algiers was launched in 2001, and it continues to develop year by year. The fair's website offers a wide range of services to publishers and audiences alike. Quality cultural activities are held in parallel to the fair, attracting audiences from all over Algeria. Weak book distribution networks, and the lack of Arabic and foreign books in Algeria, render this fair a good opportunity for Algerian readers to stock up on needed books. In the future, more international book fairs can be held in Algeria, especially in cities like Oran and Constantine.

The Algerian Book Fair (SILA)

Year	Number of participating states	Number of publishers	Associations, organization, committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the book fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
2015	47	910		1,573,000			Number of publishers from Algeria: 290; from abroad: 620.
2016	50	963		1,535,000			Number of publishers from Algeria: 298; from abroad 665.
2017	52	972		1,700,000			
2018	47	1015		2,200,000			Number of publishers from Algeria: 276; from abroad: 739.
2019	36	1030		1,265,000			Number of publishers from Algeria: 298; from abroad: 732.

The Syrian Arab Republic

Today, books in Syria have contradictory features and characteristics. While the demand for books has increased, the actual number of publications, along with the number of copies of each title, has shrunk, a contradiction that has intrigued observers of the Syrian publishing scene.

Presently, there are 300 publishers in Syria. Surveying the publications released between 2015 and 2019 reveals that 17 publishing houses are still able to function amid the current war situation in Syria, while 60 publishing houses are relatively functioning, relying on about 30 to 50 percent of their actual publishing capacity, compared to pre-2011 levels. Syrian publishing has endured a state of anxiety and unrest since 2011. It partially resumed operation in 2016, regaining part of its capacity in 2018. Two basic features characterize Syrian publishing:

Syrian publishing houses are strongly involved in the Arab publishing scene. Throughout the 20th century, Syria was an essential part of the Arab publishing scene due to two main factors: 1) a decent publishing infrastructure, highlighted by the printing of books and their preparation for publication, and 2) the presence of a resourceful knowledge-producing class. As such, Syria has come to occupy central presence in all Arab book fairs. With the retreat of publishing in Syria, however, book exports

declined, as did the size of Syrian participation in Arab book fairs. But some Syrian participation remained, and has been steadily regaining its vigour since 2016.

Syrians are good readers, but there are two levels of reading in Syria. On a first level, there are the Syrian intellectuals and university professors who have their own home libraries and who have contributed to the growth of the Syrian publishing industry. The second level includes a huge reading spectrum, whose members prefer quick commercial readings. They rely on magazines and short novels of the likes of *Riwayāt ‘Abīr* which have spread in Syria, as well as on mystery books, among other types.

In the post-2011 era, however, Syrians developed an interest in political, intellectual, and philosophical works, as well as in novels and history books. Most of these books were printed or reproduced via Riso printers in Syria.

For years, Syrian publishing was directed by a number of state institutions, headed by the Syrian General Organization of Books, which was established in 2006. The organization publishes several magazines across different fields, including the *Ussāma* children’s magazine, as well as *al-Ma’rifa*, *al-Hayāh*, *al-Musīqīyyah*, *Jusūr al-Thaqāfah*, and *al-Khayāl al-‘Ilmī*. The organization’s publications list includes titles in different branches of knowledge that are sold at discounted prices. It also offers a number of awards that aim to encourage publishing in the country, including:

The Hanna Mīnā Arabic Prize for Fiction/ Best Novel Award for Syrian and Arab writers based in Syria.

- First Place Award: LS 500,000
- Second Place Award: LS 400,000
- Third Place Award: LS 300,000

Samī al-Drūbī Award for Translation into the Arabic Language

- First Place Award: LS 500,000
- Second Place Award: LS 400,000
- Third Place Award: LS 300,000

Applicants should submit their not-previously-published works in their original language, except if they’ve been translated from Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or Portuguese. Submitted works are limited to the fields of literature, arts, and humanities.

Short Story Award for Children’s Literature. This award is directed at Syrian and Arab writers based in Syria and aims to encourage authors in children’s literature to publish their quality stories as well as to discover new talents.

- First Place Award: LS 500,000
- Second Place Award: LS 400,000
- Third Place Award: LS 300,000

While Syrian universities continued to publish their journals on an almost regular basis, they also began to digitize these publications and made them available to their readers for free. One of these established publications is the *Journal for Health Sciences*, published by Damascus University. The journal is published in Arabic, with English abstracts. Several Syrian research centres are also still printing their journals, even following their digitization. These include the *Syrian Journal of Agricultural Research*, published by the General Commission for Scientific Agricultural Research, a quarterly journal that publishes its research also in Arabic.

On the other hand, several Syrian scientific associations have shifted from print to digital publishing. These include the Syrian Studies Association, which publishes *Kalamoon* journal, as well as uploading

a digitized version on its website, along with articles and research studies. It is worth noting that some of these scientific associations still print limited copies of their publications.

The Damascus-based Arab Writers Union also prints a number of publications. For years, it was regularly publishing its own journal, before opting to digitize and making them available for free online. Among these journals are *al-Adāb al-‘ālamīyyeh*, *al-Fikr al-Sīyāsī*, *al-Turāth al-‘Arabī*, *al-Mawqif al-Adabī*, and *Shām Lī al-Tufūlah*.

The union has its own publishing program, which has shrunk slightly. But its publications remain plentiful and include novels, children’s literature, poetry, short stories, plays, and studies.

The union has also directed its attention to translation, publishing several translations of works such as *The Cleft*, a novel by British author Doris Lessing, who won the 2009 Nobel Prize for Literature.

What distressed Syrian publishing the most was the flight of many talented Syrian writers to either Europe or other Arab countries, and their shift to publishing in these countries. One example is a collection of works by Syrian writers that was published by London’s Saqi Books. The collection was published with support from the Prince Claus for Culture and Development Fund in the Netherlands, under the title *Syria Speaks: Arts and Culture from the Frontline*.

Several Syrian publishing houses were able to survive the economic pressures, but most publishers did so while reducing the print runs of each of their titles down to 250 copies. Prior to the war, for example, Dār Kan’ān published some 40 titles a year. Now this number is down to 20. Dār Attakwīn also paused the release of any new titles for one and a half years, but resumed publishing amid a decline in the number of books sold in Syria by an estimate of 60 to 80 percent, compared to what was sold in the past.

Several Syrian publishing houses stand out for their diverse trajectories. One is Dār al-Hāfiz, which produced high quality audio books and uploaded them to its website, in turn creating a demand for audio books and establishing an audio-book market in Syria. Several Syrian publishing houses of the likes of Dār al-Fikr, Dār Ibn Kathīr, and Dār al-Raḍwān, among others, have maintained publishing traditions in Syria.

Books published in Syria 2015-2019

Year	Number of books
2015	1211
2016	983
2017	1143
2018	1480
2019	1050

Damascus International Book Fair

The Damascus International Book Fair ceased its activities for four years before reconvening, on a smaller scale, in 2016. In its 2017 and 2018 editions, the fair was more dynamic, and it witnessed the participation of Lebanese publishers. In its 2019 edition, it celebrated poet Abū al-‘Ala’ al-Ma’arri, and a total of 237 publishers from Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, and Iraq participated.

The Lebanese Republic

When it comes to publishing in the Arab world, Lebanon is a very special case. Lebanon is a gauge of the production and content quality of Arab publishing, due to the liberties in the country, which

made it the publishing capital of the Arab region ever since its independence. Many Arab publishers have either settled in Lebanon for a while or remained there indefinitely, with Lebanon becoming their haven.

This resulted in an ever-increasing growth of the publishing sector since the 1950s. In Lebanon, books are not only a means of communication and a way to transfer knowledge, but are also an expression of Lebanese culture and its surroundings. Lebanon was introduced to printing as early as 1610. The spread of education in the 18th century, and of several printing presses which were limited to printing Christian books, had an impact on Lebanon. The establishment of the American University in Beirut (AUB) in 1866 and of the Catholic Saint Joseph University in 1874 also impacted competition among publishers and their attempts to attract pioneer writers and publish their works. For its part, Saint Joseph University focused on publishing linguistic, literary, and grammar books, as well as lexicons and selections of new and old literature. Many of its publications are still in circulation today. For its part, the AUB chose the path of scientific books and lexicons. With the proliferation of printing presses in Beirut, the AUB began to publish magazines, newspapers, and literary works, including novels and translated plays that were somewhat new to Arab society. The spread of education, the increase in the number of readers, and the eased censorship of books all contributed to the establishment of a strong publishing industry in Lebanon. We see this leap happening with Jurjī Yanni's (1856-1941) publishing of *Kitāb Tarīkh Suriyah* in 1881. The Makassed Philanthropic Islamic Association of Beirut and its schools also played an additional role through their scholars, among them Shaykh Yūsūf al-Asīr, who authored several religious books, as well as books on Arabic language and linguistics. In Lebanon, authors were also publishers. They published at their own expense or supported one of the publishing foundations.

Historically, censorship of printing by the Ottoman state was put in place in 1875 and became more stringent starting in 1885. This led many Lebanese nationals to relocate to Egypt due to the relative prevalence of freedoms. With the arrival of Lebanese subjects in Egypt, the Egyptian publishing industry flourished. Later, Lebanon's independence would bring life back to the Lebanese publishing industry, which peaked in the 1940s with the appearance of Dār al-Makshūf, then Dār Sādir Rihani and Dār al-'Ilm Lil Malāyīn, which printed the Mawrid English-Arabic dictionary, one of the most popular lexicons in the Arab world. Lebanon soon became the centre of the publishing industry, and of printing for other Arab countries, due to the following:

- Ease of shipping and customs clearance.
- Road transportation to several Arab countries, which reduced shipping costs, especially to Iraq and the Gulf States.
- Inexpensive, high-quality printing, and good quality of binding in all its forms.
- A wide base of editors and proofreaders with a wealth of experience in preparing books for publication.

The number of publishing houses in Lebanon is currently at 650. Most of them are based in Beirut, with others found in Tripoli and Sidon. The total number of titles printed in Lebanon annually range between 7500 and 8500. Lebanon is the second largest Arab country in terms of the number of published titles. This number does not include books printed in Lebanon for export to several other Arab countries. We must also draw attention to the fact that several publishing houses operate between Beirut and other countries. Dār al-Tanweer is one example. It operates between Beirut, Cairo, and Tunisia. Several other publishing houses operate between Beirut and Saudi Arabia, or Beirut and Morocco, or Beirut and the UAE. Publishing in Lebanon is not tied to the state. In other words, Lebanese publishers are the main, self-perpetuating force behind the country's printing industry.

It is difficult to boil down Lebanese publishing to just one or a few publishing houses, because a substantial number of Lebanese publishing houses have developed into comprehensive institutions with distinct book lists. We can, however, shed light on publishing in Lebanon through a few specific Lebanese publishers, including:

Dār al-Adāb

Dār al-Adāb's publications are a result of the literary movement, especially toward novels, globally and in the Arab world. It was founded by Suhayl Idrīs in 1953, beginning with al-Adāb magazine, one of the best Arab literary magazines, and one of those with the widest reach. In 1956, Idrīs established the publishing house per se, which went on to publish novels, plays, and literary studies. Dār al-Adāb occupies a solid position in the humanities. It has also published memoirs, biographies, lexicons, and more.

It also publishes translations of world literature that are diverse, well-chosen, and distinguished by the accuracy of their translations. It publishes novels by prominent Arab writers such as Waciny Laredj, Alawiyyah Sobh, 'Abdallah bin 'Arafah, Saḥar Khalifeh, Basma al-Khatīb and Muḥammad Yiḥyawī. Its annual publications vary from 40 to 45 titles a year.

Arab Scientific Publishers (ASP)

The Arab Scientific Publishers (ASP) is, structurally speaking, a good example of a comprehensive publishing house. It has a diverse publications list as well as multiple publishing partnerships. It too is an echo of publishing in the Arab world today, both in terms of structural and publishing trends. ASP publishes in languages other than Arabic, including in French. Some of its published topics are unique to the house, and these include the *Dalīl al-Jayb* series of translated guidebooks, a field that hasn't received much attention from Arab publishers. ASP has also digitized some of its translated books and put them on its website for free browsing, especially its Chinese translations. It offers some educational services, also without a fee.

ASP has received several awards. In 2015, it won the Sheikh Zayed Best Publisher Award. Also, Amīr Tāj al-Sir's novel *366*, published by ASP, was awarded the Katara Award in 2016. *Harb al-Kalb al-Thāniyah* (Dog War II), a novel by Ibrāhīm Naṣrallah, also published by ASP, won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction in 2018.

Saqi Books

Sāqī Books was established in London in 1979 and opened the door to Arabic publishing in the United Kingdom. In that regard, it has had staggering success. In 1991, Saqī was also established in Beirut, and currently it publishes across multiple disciplines and fields of knowledge. However, it is best distinguished by the controversial nature of its original works and translated books alike, at the political, intellectual, and cultural level. This is perhaps why Saqī became a centre of attention for the Arab cultural milieu. Saqī also awards the Mai Ghüssüb Novel Award with the stipulation that the award, which includes the publication of the winning novel, goes to unpublished authors.

Releases from Dar el Saqi 2015-2019

Year	Number of titles
2015	64
2016	60
2017	66
2018	50
2019	45

Dār al-Fārābī, or the Lebanese Publications Company, was established in 1956 and is notable for the importance of its publications. The company's publications now stand on the shelves of the world's leading bookstores. Al-Fārābī publishes in Arabic, as well as in foreign languages, including French. It carefully chooses its humanities titles, and its authors are from several Arab countries, a reflection of

the cultural and intellectual diversity in the Arab region. Many of its books are used as scholarly sources for academic studies in Arab universities as well as by the Arabic Studies and Middle East departments in Western universities.

Releases from Dar Al-Fārābī 2015-2019

Year	Number	Translated	Languages
2015	170	16	3 Spanish 4 French 3 English 3 Armenian 3 Russian
2016	200	15	6 Spanish 5 French 3 English 1 German
2017	167	17	9 French 2 English 3 Turkish 4 Russian
2018	157	3	2 French 1 Turkish
2019	125	16	8 French 7 Russian 1 Turkish

Many Lebanese publishing houses have succeeded through the publication of verified heritage books, and then have gone on to publish Arabic heritage encyclopaedias. This is to the credit of Lebanese publishing. This, in turn, made Lebanon a refuge for Arab editors of heritage books. For their part, Lebanese publishers also relied on fact-checkers from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt.

Books published in Lebanon 2015-2019

Year	Number of books
2015	6453
2016	7621
2017	8536
2018	8612
2019	7497

Beirut International Arabic Book Fair

The Beirut International Arabic Book Fair is one of the Arab fairs that stimulates the country's quest for newly released books. The fair usually includes interactive cultural events, and its 2019 postponement was a shock for intellectuals both in Lebanon and the Arab region. The fair has a large number of visitors who come from outside Lebanon, especially since several Arab universities source much-needed books from it directly.

Year	Number of participating states	Number of publishers	Associations, organization, committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the book fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
2015	6	261	13	150,000	14 days		Number of publishers from Lebanon: 188; 425 schools and 17 universities visited
2016	5	233	8	165,000	14 days	11	Number of publishers from Lebanon: 171; 650 schools and 18 universities visited
2017	6	258	6	160,000	14 days	11	Number of publishers from Lebanon: 190; 605 schools and 21 universities visited
2018	8	232	7	170,000	14 days	11	622 schools and 19 universities visited
2019	Postponed						

Libyan Arab Republic

Libya is one of the promising Arab countries in the field of publishing. After the Libyan uprising that began in February 2011, the country witnessed intensive activity by intellectuals and university professors. Libyans now owned the public sphere, and it became possible to debate anything. This was followed by the emergence of several publishing houses, the rise in Libyan creativity across multiple disciplines, and Libyans' interest in acquiring books and in reading. Reading trends mainly centred on history, biography, and political books, as if Libya was re-discovering itself. In 2015, a total of 1008 titles were published in Libya, which quickly dropped to 720 titles in 2016 followed by 620 titles in 2018, before the rate of publishing rose again in 2019, with the dissemination of 760 titles that year. This retreat in publishing by nearly 35 percent was a result of civil war in the country, as well as the state of instability and the Libyan economic situation.

A quick survey of Libyan publishing suggests that the future of the industry is dependent upon the following factors:

- Printing presses: For decades, Libya depended on both Cairo and Beirut to print its publications and did not have enough presses to support a large publishing industry.
- Training: The country needs skilled workers specialized in all stages of book publishing. Libya has many talented workers who are specialized in book-cover design, for instance, and has introduced skilled designers in recent years.
- Distribution outlets: The vastness of the Libyan nation has hindered any attempts to advertise books across the entire country. Online marketing could potentially solve this problem.

Moreover, the National Library of Libya still does not have a clear role to play with regards to encouraging the publishing industry's innovations and preserving Libyan intellectual production.

This leads us to the General Authority for Culture, which has also yet to introduce sufficient incentive programmes for publishing or to the book industry, despite having published a limited number of books in past years.

The emigration of a significant number of Libyan novelists and writers from Libya after 2011, especially to Egypt and Tunisia, took its toll on Libyan publishing, especially as these writers began to publish outside Libya.

The history of Libyan publishing can be traced through the Fergiani bookstore, which was established in 1952 and took a special interest in Libyan history, carefully selecting its topics and authors. The bookstore was nationalized in the 1970s, after which they moved operations to London, then Cairo, before returning to Libya in the early 1990s with the relative reopening of the Libyan private sector.

Fergiani published more than 1000 titles across various fields of knowledge. After 2011, it underwent a qualitative paradigm shift and began to publish more dynamic works. One of Fergiani's Tripoli branches experienced an incursion in 2015, and armed men confiscated some of their books. The bookshop was also shut down for a time due to false reports, an event that points to the emergence of a new kind of censorship in the country, beyond the official one. Tripoli International Scientific Bookshop was also exposed to the same kind of censorship, albeit in a limited manner.

What catches one's attention about the books sector in Tripoli and Benghazi is the obvious growth of a second-hand books market. One example is Fergiani's focus on rare books. Second-hand books are popular in Libya due to years when hundreds of titles were unavailable. This is how the phenomenon of second-hand booksellers came to life in several Libyan cities. Second-hand booksellers usually operate through small and humble outlets. However, this phenomenon is now in need of thorough analysis, which leads us to the Benghazi bookshop in Benghazi, a bookshop that's more than forty years old, and which successfully fulfils book-order requests.

The emergence of several Libyan publishing houses is indicative of partial growth as a result of publishing incentives in the country. Dār al-Bayān for Publishing in Benghazi was established in 2018, and this publishing house printed more than 20 titles that first year. Some of its books were printed in several editions, with a book like *al-Jīrab* by Ahmad Yūsif 'Aqīlah printed three times. Dār al-Bayān tries to offer its books at reasonable prices, with prices ranging between LD 3 and 5 per book (less than one euro). For its part, al-Sha'ab Library demonstrates publishers' increased ability to attract both writers and readers, as well as their ability to publish versatile titles. This has allowed the publisher to properly represent Libyan culture during its participation in book fairs outside Libya.

During the past five years, several publishing houses have come to the fore in Libya, including Oea Books, Dār al-Saqīyah, Bīnḥamūda, Dār al-Walīd, and al-Faḍīl. Might this suggest that private Libyan publishers will lead the future of the industry in the country?

In reality, printing was introduced in Libya as late as 1955, later than many Arab countries, which, as mentioned earlier, has left behind book-manufacturing tools in dire need of renovation. A restructuring of the Libyan publishing industry is currently underway.

State publishing was in control of the books sector until 2011, yet we cannot overlook the important role played by several Libyan universities in publishing good-quality books in the period between 1970 and 2011. In fact, Libyan universities introduced many Libyan university professors to the Arab scientific and cultural scenes. One example is Garyounis University (also known as Benghazi University), which published Ali Hassi's book on the history of ophthalmology in Arab-Islamic civilization, in addition to other books. For its part, the Libyan state also released a number of Libyan journals that rose to renown, including *al-Tūrah al-Sha'bī*. Here, it must be mentioned that the universities spread across Libyan cities form a solid pillar of the future of Libyan publishing, despite their limited publications and the fact that most of them lack comprehensive publishing programmes. The University of Tripoli was established in 1955 and evolved over time to currently include some 20 faculties, 75,000 students, 3000 faculty members, and 200 programmes of study. The University of Benghazi has just ventured into publishing solid scientific periodicals, the first of which is the *Libyan Journal for Science and Technology*; in addition to establishing a three-story central library over an area of 26,000 metres that can accommodate up to three million books and 3,000 students.

Yet digital publishing in Libya remains quite limited and official state programmes in the field are only just emerging. Therefore, promoting this field is necessary for the development of the publishing industry. Some problems also underlie the National Bibliography of Libya, as well as the estimation of the size of publications in the country. Libyan books printed in Cairo, Beirut, or Malta do not, in some cases, receive ISBN numbers. This is one of the dilemmas of Libyan publishing. On the other hand, and given the Libyan readers' thirst for books, pirated books have found their way to Libya through Egypt, an issue that needs to be addressed by the Libyan authorities.

Books published in Libya 2015-2019

Year	Number of books
2015	1008
2016	720
2017	680
2018	620
2019	760

Libyan Publishers

Year	Number of private publishing houses	Number of governmental publishing houses	Total
2015	80	30	110
2016	80	30	110
2017	80	30	110
2018	75	30	105
2019	75	30	105

It is evident that due to the exceptional circumstances in Libya today, publishing has regressed compared to the years leading up to 2011. Publishing in Libya is mainly concentrated in Tripoli, Benghazi and Misrata. The private sector is currently bearing an essential share of Libyan publishing, due to the retreat of several publishing houses in the country during 2018 and 2019.

Magazines, periodicals and newspapers in Libya

Year	Scientific periodicals		General magazines	Newspapers
	Not peer-reviewed	Peer-reviewed		
2015	8	12	6	35
2016	35	10	5	20
2017	4	8	5	20
2018	3	8	4	15
2019	1	9	2	10

The table shows a huge relapse in the number of magazines, periodicals and newspapers published in Libya in the years between 2015 and 2019, in addition to a huge decline in the number of publications compared to pre-2011 publishing levels.

Book fairs

Unfortunately, no international book fairs have been held in Libya since 2013, when the 11th edition of the Tripoli International Book Fair took place. But a few local fairs did take place inside universities and colleges with the participation of various publishing houses, universities, and a few research centres:

- The Secondhand Book Fair took place on 3 May 2017 with the participation of several publishing houses at the fairground of Tripoli International Book Fair. Thirty publishing houses participated in this edition, exhibiting more than 2000 titles comprising both old and new books. The turnout was very high.
- Al-Zantan Book Fair was held between 18 and 20 May 2017 in collaboration with the Libyan Publishers Union. Together with the union, five publishing houses participated in this edition, and more than 800 titles, mostly new releases, were exhibited.
- The Book Fair of Mīsrata University was held between 29 April and 3 May 2018, in collaboration with the Libyan Publishers Union. More than 20 publishing houses took part in this edition, and more than 1000 new books were exhibited. The edition was well organized and received the university's support. It was marked by the number of visitors and enjoyed a large turnout.
- The Daffat al-Qīra'ah Book Fair by the College of Arts and Media in Misrata featured more than 1000 titles at their event held on 9 October 2018.
- The Book Fair of Misrata University was held between 30 March and 4 April 2019 with the participation of 158 publishing houses and more than 700 titles.
- Al-Zantan Second Book Fair took place with the participation of five publishing houses, and sponsored by the General Authority for Culture, and with around 800 new titles.
- The Zuwarah Book Fair took place in in Zuwarah, with the sponsorship of Zuwarah Book Club and with the participation of 7 publishing houses and 1000 new titles.
- The Second National Book Fair in Misrata city, sponsored by the General Authority for Culture, was held in Mīsrata's exhibition grounds. The fair was held between 25 December 2019 and 5 January 2020, with the participation of around 70 publishing houses, and the exhibition of 5000 titles in different disciplines and areas of knowledge.
- The Third National Book Fair was held between 24 and 31 December 2020, with the participation of 70 publishing houses and a wide selection of new books, exceeding 5000 titles. It was held at the exhibition grounds of Tripoli's International Book Fair with the sponsorship of the General Authority for Culture and saw a large turnout.

This is in addition to the 2020 Benghazi Book Fair in Benghazi, which was attended by several publishing houses. There was also a book fair in Derna in 2021, and it witnessed the participation of several Libyan publishing houses in the eastern region of the country.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also shows promise in the realm of publishing. The country's publishing industry has grown steadily in the past twenty years and its value is currently estimated at more than SAR 4.5 billion. This growth can be attributed to the following factors:

- The multiplicity and diversity of publishing entities in the country, which vary between private, state-owned, and civil society entities. The number of publishing houses in Saudi Arabia has risen to 500.
- The emergence of more Saudi universities, from the 1970s to present, along with clear policies and budgetary provisions, which have in turn helped create a strong private publishing sector.
- Government support for Saudi publishing, whether through the government's direct purchase of books or through incentive policies.

- The rise in the number of libraries across the Kingdom, be they run by government bodies, civil-society organizations, or the private sector. This indicates the presence of a stimulating publishing environment in the Kingdom, which has led to an expansion of the number of topics about which there is published content. For example, until 2005, Islamic books made up about 75 percent of the Kingdom's total publications. But the increased variety, as well as the increased number of published books, means that Islamic books currently make up only 48 percent of total publications in the Kingdom. This is reflected in the distribution of Saudi books, which for years depended on free distribution of books to many authorities and bodies in the Kingdom. Today, the economics of Saudi books and the growth of the publishing industry have opened up new avenues for producing and exporting Saudi books.

Private publishing

Private publishing houses in Saudi Arabia are the engine of the industry. They are mainly concentrated in Riyadh and Jeddah, followed by Medina and Mecca.

There are numerous publishing centres in the Kingdom, three of which deserve consideration:

‘Obeikān: ‘Obeikān is a comprehensive, vertically integrated publishing house. It is a multidisciplinary publisher that responds to the needs and requirements of publishing in the Kingdom, as well as across the Gulf region. ‘Obeikān has opened up multiple avenues for Saudi books outside the country. Its publications are characterized by high quality of printing and art direction. The array of authors who publish with ‘Obeikān, who range from university professors to novelists and intellectuals, has made it the focus of attention of Saudi cultural circles. The fact that they have a bookstore chain to distribute their publications, as well as those of other publishing houses, has given ‘Obeikān a competitive advantage. ‘Obeikān also launches book promotion campaigns on social media and via its website, in addition to running special offers. For example, ‘Obeikān offers some 10,000 titles at prices ranging from SAR 5 and 10 per title (around 1 to 2 euro), which has highly stimulated book selling. ‘Obeikān’s marketing campaigns merit close consideration.

Obeikan’s publications

Year	Number of titles released
2015	136
2016	145
2017	58
2018	142
2019	60

Jarīr is another vertically integrated publishing house, both in terms of its publishing infrastructure and advertising strategies. It is a multi-subject publisher that is not confined to a single field, and Jarīr increasingly attempts to venture into the digital marketing of books. Its Facebook page has more than 300,000 followers. It also owns a bookstore chain, which delivers signature works to readers. Jarīr extends even beyond the Kingdom, with branches currently open in Kuwait, Bahrain, the UAE, and Qatar. As such, the movement of Jarīr’s books across different areas is a measure of its popularity.

Dār al-Minhāj emerged in the past five years in the field of verified heritage and Islamic books, as well as in manuscript catalogues. It rose to prominence as one of the biggest bookshops selling key manuscripts. Dār al-Minhāj’s published catalogues include:

- Dār al-Masnavi Library’s Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts
- Suleymaniye Library’s Catalogue of Manuscripts
- Rāghib Pasha’s Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts
- Al-Azhar’s Library Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts
- The Austrian National Library’s Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts

These catalogues were published according to strict criteria. The same is true of Dār al-Minhāj's books, which is what has allowed Dār al-Minhāj to figure prominently in this track. This is also echoed in the network of distributors circulating al-Minhāj's publications, which can be found in the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Indonesia, Morocco, France, Algeria, Qatar, UK, Dagestan, India, Chad, Malaysia, Iraq, South Africa, the USA, and Pakistan. Furthermore, Dar al-Minhāj always has a significant presence at several Arab book fairs, especially the Cairo International Book Fair.

These examples are from the Kingdom's private publishers, who play a significant role in the industry.

University presses

Universities in Saudi Arabia are always eager to establish their own presses, which positively impacts their international rankings. There are three types of university presses that can be studied. They can be found at: Um al-Qurra University in Mecca, Taibah University in Medina, and King Saud University Press in Riyadh, which is the most distinguished among them. King Saud University Press publishes 14 scholarly journals across several scientific specializations. Yet, what distinguishes this press the most is its translation of nearly half of the total number of translated works in the Kingdom, be they books or works that address challenging scholarly topics. Its list of published translations includes:

- *Hydrology and Floodplain Analysis* by Philip Bedient, Wayne Huber, and Baxter Vieux, translated by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Aazba.
- *World Health Systems*, by Mark Scott, translated by Alī Muḥsin al-Hazmī.
- *A Dictionary of Chemistry* by Richard Rennie, translated by 'Abdullah al-Qaḥṭānī.

Besides its list of translated publications in different areas of the humanities, King Saud University Press also publishes books, covering all other fields, that are authored by Saudi and Arab writers. It also pays good attention to the nature of its published content, which usually results in its publishing of new and fresh content.

Civil society:

There is a strong cultural movement in Saudi Arabia, but the King Faisal Foundation and the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies remain the most distinguished entities in the field.

With its multiple categories, the King Faisal International Prize gave momentum to the Kingdom's cultural role. This prize gained credibility due to its capacity to evaluate winners across different fields, with some writers awarded Nobel prizes after receiving the King Faisal Prize. The number of award recipients across 43 editions held in the years between 1979 and 2021 are 275 individuals from 43 nationalities. Awards in the fields of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language and Literature were given to individuals whose intellectual and creative production merited this recognition. Past winners include Raḍwān al-Sayid and Bashār 'Awwad.

Another example is the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies, the foundation's academic arm, which has a website in both English and Arabic, which has allowed for a high level of interaction internationally.

The centre's research units in the fields of cultural, social, economic, African, and Asian studies all contributed to its international status. The centre also publishes several journals, including the *Journal of Linguistic Studies*, *al-Fayṣal Magazine*, and the *Journal of Humanitarian Studies*, in addition to research series like Dirāsāt (KFCRIS Papers), Qirā'āt (KFCRIS Humanities Papers), and Special Reports.

The centre is active on social media, and a total of 20,532 Facebook followers interact with it. The books, journals, and reports published by the centre are advertised as part of a marketing scheme,

which has given the centre a strong Arab presence. Also, some of its publications are acquired by universities and research centres across the world.

The Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts (SASCA) was established in 1973 and has 16 branches. It is one of the earliest Saudi civil society organizations which enjoys a solid cultural presence. Saudi cultural societies that were established in the mid 1970s played a major role in the advancement of publishing in the Kingdom. These 17 clubs, which operate under the Ministry of Culture and Information, have encouraged the publishing of literature in all its forms through their own publications. All of the above demonstrates the vigour of these societies, which have existed in other forms as well. Examples include:

- The Ithnainiyah by Abdul Maqsum Khojah, Jeddah.
- The Ahadīyah by Rashīd al-Mubārak, Riyadh.
- Usbu'iyat 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Qahtānī, Jeddah.
- Ahmadiyat al-Mubārak, al-Ahsa.
- Tuesday Cultural Forum, al-Qatif.

Libraries and institutions

The Kingdom is also home to several bookshops and institutions that play a vital role in the publishing field. These include:

King Fahd National Library: Saudi Arabia's national library is a good example in terms of its integrative model and the evolution of its services, which have helped advance the Saudi publishing industry. Among the library's outstanding digital services is the ability to request to register a printed item. It allows users to register intellectual or creative productions, or translated works, and to receive index cards during the publishing process.

This is in addition to the library's database of Saudi authors, as well as its annual report and national bibliography. The library also encourages publishing in the Kingdom by contributing to the growth of publishing, by giving publishers, distributors, and authors, as well as government bodies, the ability to exhibit their latest publications on its website. It also purchases these exhibited books and adds them to its general collections. In addition, the library also publishes books, mainly in the field of library and information sciences. These include:

First series: Literature concerned with the development of the field of library and information science in the Kingdom. So far, a total of 104 books have been published within this framework.

Second series: Studies and research that fall within the general framework of library and information sciences. To date, 89 books have been published as part of this series.

Third series: Publishing bibliographies, indexes, manuals, and catalogues. Fifty-eight books were published as part of this series so far.

The fourth series (al-Hūrā): Documentation studies. So far, 58 books on the intellectual and cultural life of the Kingdom, in both the past and present, have been published.

In order to ensure high-quality publications, the library publishes a work only after obtaining the approval of the Scientific Publishing Committee, then presenting it to arbitrators to assess its scientific validity, and to determine whether it meets the publishing requirements. The library also publishes scholarly periodicals and bulletins, the most prominent of which are:

The *Journal of King Fahd National Library*, a peer-reviewed scholarly journal published twice a year since 1995. To date, the journal has released 44 issues in 22 volumes where several studies have been published. The magazine has a scientific and administrative body that oversees the editing and peer-

review processes, as well as the communications and monitoring of printing, in collaboration with the Research and Publications Committee.

For its part, the committee publishes the *Library News Bulletin* in coordination with the public relations department. This is a news and scholarly bulletin that covers the library's activities as well as its participation in international and local fairs. It also sheds light on the library's newly acquired publications, including manuscripts, rare works, and historical photos that make up the library's national archive. Furthermore, it publishes articles and research studies by expert scholars in the field of information technologies.

To date, the library has released 54 issues of this bulletin. The financial year 2016-17 saw the release of 11 publications that were handled by the Research and Publications Committee, indicating that work is already underway on a number of forthcoming publications. The following list outlines the library's releases during 1437-1438 H (2016):

- *Journal of King Fahd National Library*, Volume No. 22, Issue No. 1.
- *Journal of King Fahd National Library*, Volume No. 22, Issue No. 2.
- *Masīrat Niṣf Qarn fī al-‘Alam*, Book.
- *The National Index of Saudi Serials*, Volume 20.
- *The National Index of Saudi Serials*, Volume 30.
- *The National Index of Saudi Serials*, Volume 18.
- *Saudi National Bibliography*, Part 30.
- *National Library News Bulletin*, Issue No. 53.
- *National Library News Bulletin*, Issue No. 54.
- Annual Report, 1436-1437 H (2015).
- *Index of Arabic Manuscripts in Pakistan*, Parts 1-10.

King Abdulaziz Public Library

The King Abdulaziz Public Library publishes books and a number of journals, but it also plays a more prominent role in sponsoring and implementing the Unified Arabic Index, as well as the KSA Encyclopaedia, which will be digitized and published on its website. In so doing, the library keeps up with changes in the publishing sphere. Realizing its role in serving the publishing field and encouraging reading, the library also launched a cultural project that aims to renew readers' relationships with books. This project is implemented through the following:

- The National Cultural Reading Project.
- Raising awareness about the importance of reading and making its benefits known across all levels.
- Establishing a positive attitude towards reading among the young generation.
- Disseminating and promoting a culture of reading among all segments of society.
- Developing the skill of reading across all segments of society.
- Fostering a spirit of competition over reading among students.
- Providing the suitable books in public libraries as well as in all waiting areas.
- Activating the role of clubs, as well as social, cultural, and scientific institutions in the field of reading.

Conducting research to examine the reasons certain segments of society are averse to reading, and the ways this can be treated, as well as the means of developing positive attitudes toward reading, in addition to identifying the reading areas preferred by different segments of society.

King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darah)

The King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darah) mainly focuses on the history of the KSA and Arabia, predominantly publishing in these two fields. Darah publishes the following digital encyclopaedias:

- Encyclopaedia of Literature and Novelists.
- Encyclopaedia of Names and Places.
- Encyclopaedia of Geographic Names.

The foundation gives two annual awards: The first is the King Abdulaziz Book Awards, which has eight categories. Each category winner receives SR 100,000. The award categories focus on Saudi Arabia, especially its history, archaeology, society, and culture, with the exception of the award category that focuses on Islamic history and civilization.

The Darah also presents a second award, namely the King Salman Prize for Studies and Research on the History of the Arabian Peninsula. The foundation also set up a digital store for its publications, a realization on its part of the importance of efficient book circulation, as well as the need to respond to modern technology.

This takes us to the content of Saudi publications, which mainly varies between the religious, literary, and historical, which dominate Saudi publications. Saudi Arabia was also influenced by the bestseller phenomenon, and the degree to which books are popular on social media, especially Twitter. This phenomenon also exists in a number of other Arab countries, including in Egypt and Kuwait. One Saudi writer who has combined popularity on social media with large-scale distribution is Sultān al-Mūsa, who has 111,000 Twitter followers. Al-Mūsa is specialized in religions and civilizations, and among his publications is a novel by the name of *Aqūmu Qīlan*.

There is also Fahd al-Aḥmadī, a columnist for *al-Riyadh* newspaper. Al-Aḥmadī has 153,000 Twitter followers, and a book that brings together 100 of his articles has been published.

Muḥammad al-Rutayyān is one of Saudi Arabia's most prominent novelists. His publications include a novel titled *Mā Tabagga Min Awraq Muḥammad al-Waṭbān and Waṣāya*. He has 1 million followers on Twitter.

All indicators suggest that the content of Saudi publications will experience more changes in the coming years, whether in the field of humanities or applied studies. These shifts can largely be attributed to the increased translation activity in the Kingdom.

Translation

In the last ten years, Saudi Arabia has witnessed increased translation into Arabic, as well as into foreign languages, especially in English. This can be attributed to a number of factors, including the multiplicity of university departments that offer specialized translation certificates, meaning that Saudi Arabia now has a wide database of translators. This is in addition to the establishment of a translation centre at King Saud University. Other universities with an interest in the field of translation include:

- Al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Saud University, College of Languages and Translation
- King Saud University, College of Languages and Translation
- Najrān University, College of Languages and Translation
- King Khālid University, College of Languages and Translation

This wide interest in translation led to the establishment of the Saudi Observatory on Translated Publications, which provides important data about translation. The observatory also coordinates between relevant Saudi authorities in the translation field and provides a number of translation services. According to a report by the observatory, a total of 130 government and private agencies are

currently operating in the field of translation. In 2010, a total of 643 books were translated in Saudi Arabia, a record in the history of translation in the country. The observatory was established by Fayiz al-Shahrī, and it delivered a detailed study on the state of translation in Saudi Arabia, documenting a total of 8233 books that were translated from and into Arabic in the country. This documentation was done through monitoring two separate periods:

- First level: Between 1932 and 1994 (62 years)
- Second level: Between 1995 and 2016 (22 years). During this period, 4814 translated books were published, with a rate of 218.8 books published per year. Between 1932 and 2016, 5364 books were translated in Saudi Arabia. According to estimates by the Saudi Observatory on Translated Publications, the translated works could be classified by area/field as follows:
 - The humanities, which represented 83.8% of translated works.
 - Sciences, which accounted for 3.9% of translated works.
 - Health sciences, which accounted for 12.3% of translated works.

Language	English	French	German	Farsi	Turkish	Spanish	Urdu	Albanian	Italian	Portuguese
Number	5272	31	19	1	11	3	17	2	3	1
Ratio	98.28	0.58	0.35	0.02	0.21	0.06	0.32	0.04	0.06	0.02
Total	5364									

Books translated in Saudi Arabia

Year	Number of translated books
2015	243
2016	111

Moreover, Saudi Arabia endorsed the biggest yet Arab prize for translation, awarded by King Abdul Aziz Public Library. The library gives six translation awards across six different fields:

- A Translation Award for the Efforts of Institutions and Bodies.
- The Award for Translation in the Humanities from other languages into Arabic.
- The Award for Translation in the Humanities from Arabic into other languages.
- The Award for Translation in the Natural Sciences from other languages into Arabic.
- The Award for Translation in the Natural Sciences from Arabic into other languages.
- A Translation Award for Individual Efforts.

There is also the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS) in Saudi Arabia, which gives an annual award in the field of translation and publishing.

Publishing indicators in Saudi Arabia point to an upsurge following a relapse from one year to the next. But in the end, there is a threshold for the decline in publishing from one year to the next. Also, book series published in Saudi Arabia are sustainable. The same applies to several cultural and scholarly journals, which have enjoyed stability over the years. As such, publishing figures in KSA can be outlined as follows:

Year	Number of books
2015	3042
2016	2390
2017	2730
2018	4220
2019	8121

Deposit numbers coming from the King Fahad National Library

Year	Number
2015	9563
2016	10324

Source: King Fahad National Library annual report

There has been an increase in the number of ISBNs released in 2016, reaching a total of 716 numbers.

Classification of information media

Information sources	Year	
	2015	2016
Books	5950	6369
Periodicals	26	28
Computer programmes	25	56
Sound and Visual sources	--	--
Maps	23	26
Board	13	--
Total	6047	6459

Digital publishing

Saudi Arabia's digital infrastructure helped ease the digital transformation in the Kingdom. Most institutions and universities are now taking the digital route, whether for commercial purposes or to distribute their publications for free. Moreover, Saudi institutions are currently sponsoring a number of digital intellectual, research, and cultural projects. The Saudi Digital Library (SDL) is the biggest digital publisher and sponsor of digital publishing in the country. It is an open-source library, allowing access to more than 400,000 articles from 1900 journals covering 62 specializations. This in addition to the e-Marefa Arabic Database, which comprises articles and research studies in Arabic, in addition to 150 dissertations, plus other knowledge and research tools.

There are also contributions by the Saudi private sector in the field of digital publishing. One of the successful examples in that regard is Dar Al-Manzuma, established in 2004. It operates in the field of building and developing scientific databases in research and academic fields. It collaborates with institutions and universities on both Arab and international levels. Its clients include Sultan Qāboos University, The American University of Beirut, al-Aqsa University in Gaza, The University of Jordan, the Egyptian Knowledge Bank, United Arab Emirates University, as well as a number of Saudi universities.

Dar Al-Manzuma owns several databases, the most prominent of which are:

Theses and Dissertations Database, which includes 70,000 dissertations from all universities across the Arab world. Thirty thousand of these are available in their entirety, while the rest are abstracts plus the first 24 pages of each thesis.

Dar Al-Manzuma also has an index of dissertations from Arab universities, which determines and registers dissertations. So far, it has calculated a total of 200,000 dissertations. The index also helps researchers follow dissertation topics.

Dar Al-Manzuma's databases

- Edu Search/Educational Information Database

This is an information portal covering all Arab educational and scholarly periodicals and journals, as well as the proceedings of, and studies by, conferences and lectures in the field of education. It also covers works published in this field since 1928 up to the present. It is regularly updated, an advantage that contributes to its rising popularity.

- Eco Link/ Economics and Management Information Database

This database covers all scholarly periodicals and journals, in addition to annual specialized periodicals published in Arabic, as well as the proceedings of, and studies by, Arabic conferences and lectures since 1931 up to the present.

- Islamic info, Islamic and Legal Sciences Database

This database includes all periodicals, scientific journals and periodic annual books that are specialized in the Islamic and legal sciences and published in Arabic. This is in addition to the proceedings of, and research by, conferences and lectures in Arabic since 1924 up to the present.

- Arab base, Language and Literature Information Database

This database includes Arab scholarly periodicals and journals in the fields of language and literature. This is in addition to conferences and lectures held between 1921 and now. This is a unique database and is one of Dar Al-Manzuma's most prominent. Its topics include: grammar, lexical and linguistic semantics, applied comparative linguistics, Arabic literature, poetry, and prose and criticism.

- Human, Humanities Database

This database includes Arabic journals and periodicals since 1927 until now, and spans different fields like history, translations, biographies, geography, philosophy, archaeology, public relations, and media.

Riyadh International Book Fair

Year	Number of participating states	Number of publishers	Associations, organization, committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the book fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
2015	29	915			10 days		23,000 square meters
2016		500			10 days		Participation of 1,200,000 titles
2017	25	500		404,212	10 days		
2018	27	520		911,653	10 days		Participation of 340,701 titles and 11,943 transactions
2019	30	450		600,000	10 days		

The Riyadh International Book Fair witnessed a huge transformation in its ninth edition, which took place in 2015. By introducing technical developments to its different pathways, it managed to keep pace with both its readers and with the book industry as a whole. The fair was able to absorb and accommodate more publishers, introduce digital marketing services, and help the audience acquire books, in addition to increasing book signing events and cultural activities. It also held workshops and several activities, both of which contributed to increased book sales.

Currently, there are several book fairs in the Kingdom. In 2019, 400 publishers from 40 countries participated in the Jeddah Book Fair. The fair was held on an area of 30,000 m².

Kingdom of Morocco

Today, the Kingdom of Morocco is reaping the rewards of years of unparalleled government support of the publishing industry. The Moroccan Ministry of Culture had launched an inimitable and comprehensive publishing and reading program aimed at supporting publishers, authors, public libraries, and readers through an annual national competition that receives applications in all supported fields. A look at the data of the 2020 competition reveals the following:

The competition's committee reviewed 3468 applications requesting financial support. Of these, it accepted 1735 applications, which received a total of MAD 9,324,919 (around €890,000) distributed as follows:

MAD 4,712,210 were allocated for the acquisition of 546 titles, totalling 78,090 copies from 43 publishers.

MAD 1,768,509 were allocated for the acquisition of 1064 titles, totalling 22,765 copies from 31 bookshops.

MAD 1,078,000 were allotted for the support of 48 reading incentive programmes.

MAD 1,010,500 was allocated for the support of 47 issues of cultural magazines.

MAD 5,22,700 was allocated to support 21 people participating in international book fairs.

MAD 153,000 was allocated for the support of the travel and accommodation of seven Moroccan authors.

MAD 80,000 was allocated to support digital publishing of cultural magazines.

This program resulted in the doubling of book production in Morocco in just a few years. It also generated a comprehensive vision for the publishing industry, which is now considered the best in the Arab world. The Moroccan Ministry of Culture has a clear plan for this industry, outlined in its manual about the main actors in the book industry. Statistical data on the field's main actors are as follows:

There are 130 publishers, 72 printing presses, 406 public libraries, 499 authors, and nine distributors.

The manual, in its current state, suggests that one problem underlying the Moroccan book industry is the distribution networks for printed books. One thing that should be noted, however, is that the manual is still at an early stage. For example, the manual estimated the number of writers in Morocco to be 499, which is far from being an accurate reflection of the reality of literary, cultural, and scientific life in the country. Nor does this number correspond with the number of professors at the Muḥammad V University in Rabat, or the University of Hassan II University in Casablanca. Both universities have solid and prolific academic competencies, especially in the field of the humanities, which was also reflected on Morocco's receipt of several cultural and scientific awards on the Arab level over the past five years.

Multiple incentives for the book industry were introduced in Morocco. These include the Morocco Book Award, which covers the following fields: poetry, prose, humanities, social sciences, literary and artistic studies, linguistics, translation, Amazigh cultural studies, Amazigh literary creativity, and children's and YA books.

Entities active in the Moroccan publishing scene vary between government bodies, civil society organizations, and individuals. At the governmental level, several governmental bodies in Morocco are involved in publishing, especially the Ministries of Culture and Religious Endowment, and the National Library. Each of these entities publishes in their area of work. But the current approach in Morocco is specifically toward the digitization of cultural journals, such as *al-Manāhil*, *al-Thaqāfah al-Maghribīyah*, *al-Funūn* and *Iqrā'* which is published by the Moroccan Ministry of Culture. This interest also allowed for the digitization of some issues of *Afāq*, a journal by the Moroccan Writers Union, itself an active actor in the Moroccan publishing field. The union publishes poetry collections, novels, plays, as well as research and papers of conferences organized by the union, in addition to translated books.

Here the King Abdul Aziz Foundation in Casablanca stands out as both a print and digital publisher in Morocco. This is a prominent foundation, which lends importance to cultural, intellectual, and heritage publications. It also publishes an annual report on the publishing and book industry in Morocco.

For its part, the National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco in Rabat publishes several books, as well as the national bibliography. It also launched the Moroccan Digital Library, which is visited by some 6,000 users daily who access and read books for free.

Many Moroccan publishing houses follow clear publishing strategies. These include *Dār Tobqāl* in Casablanca, which was established 1985 by a group of Moroccan writers and university professors. *Dār Tobqāl* publishes across several fields, including historical knowledge, philosophy, literature in all its forms, social sciences, science, and technology. The diversity of its publications has given *Dār Tobqāl* a special Moroccan and Arab presence.

This brings us to an analysis of the nature of Moroccan publishing. In 2016, for example, Moroccan publishers brought out a total of 710 creative works, which included a range of short-story collections, playtexts, and novels, as well as 429 law titles, 366 history books, 283 books in literary studies, and 271 books in Islamic studies. Interest in these fields is itself a reflection of the scale at which they are studied in Moroccan universities. Meanwhile, those interested in archaeology, anthropology, economics, or psychology are turning to publishing outside Morocco, and especially to publishing in French. This raises questions about the extent of these fields' disengagement (or lack of engagement) from the Moroccan vision and methodology vs. the French one. When it comes to novels, there is now a significant Moroccan presence in the realm of Arabic literature. However, at the level of archaeological and anthropological studies, it's a different case. This phenomenon became evident in the following years in reports by King Abdul Aziz Foundation in Casablanca.

This leads us to the rise of literature in Moroccan publishing, which now represents 26 percent of the country's publishing sector. This percentage increases or decreases within a limited scope from year to year. The following table, the data in which was derived from the King Abdul 'Aziz Foundation in Casablanca, can help us read the current situation of Moroccan literary publishing:

Novels

Year	Arabic	Amazigh	French	Other languages	Total
2016	159	9	68	2	238
2017	142	5	58	--	205
2018	180	10	62	2	254

Short stories

Year	Arabic	Amazigh	French	Other languages	Total
2016	116	19	15	2	152
2017	94	10	16	1	121
2018	81	12	16	1	110

Poetry

Year	Arabic	Amazigh	French	Other languages	Total
2016	234	28	18	5	285
2017	233	15	41	3	292
2018	206	17	40	1	264

Novels, short stories, and poetry are the genres that dominate the Moroccan literary scene, both in terms of production and scale of publishing, while in the field of theatre for example, only 27 plays were published in 2016, followed by 23 plays in 2017, and 25 in 2018.

These stats could also be drawn for several other Arab countries. For example, publication of creative works has significantly declined in Egypt and Iraq compared to the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

The transformation of Morocco into a centre for Islamic studies, especially in the Maliki doctrine as well as in jurisprudence, opened up new prospects for the export of previously unavailable Moroccan books, due to the emergence of several Moroccan scholars in the Islamic world. Moroccan trends in modernizing Islamic thought present significant insights. This explains the strong presence of Islamic Moroccan books, either through organizations like: Mu'miīnūn Without Borders, or al-Rābita al-Muḥammadiyya Lil-l-'Ulamā', or by mainstream publishers in Morocco like Afrīqya al-Sharq, Dār al-Amān and Abū Riqrāq. Analysis of Moroccan publishing suggests a strong presence of the Arabic language, which makes up more than 75 percent of the publications released in the years between 2015 and 2019. Significantly, the relative decline in French publishing comes at the same time as a slow rise in English publishing. The following table based on data derived from the King 'Abdul Azīz Foundation in Casablanca confirms this observation:

Year 2018

Language	Printed books	Digital books	Total	Ratio
Arabic	2436	439	2875	78.18
French	420	255	675	18.35
English	18	50	68	1.85
Amazigh	45	--	45	1.22
Spanish	12	--	12	0.36
Portuguese	1	--	1	0.02
German	1	1	1	0.02

The variety of published languages in Morocco may not necessarily result in the release of guidebooks for Moroccan cities such as Fez and Marrakech. A large number of these guidebooks are either published outside Morocco, or in Morocco but without ISBN numbers.

The following table reveals the size of publishing in Morocco:

Books published in Morocco

Year	Number of books	Number of magazines
2015	2448	320
2016	2807	376
2017	3833	380
2018	6000	380
2019	4219	430

It is notable that the peak of Moroccan publishing was in 2018. While Morocco is distinguished by its culture and art magazines, it is also the leading Arab publisher in the Maghreb, or western North Africa.

Casablanca Book Fair

The fair is held in February of each year. Many Moroccan and Mauritanian researchers rely on this fair to stock up on Arabic books, especially because they are far from Arab publishing centres such as Cairo and Beirut, which renders this fair an opportunity for them to secure required books.

Furthermore, the libraries of Moroccan universities also source their annual book supplies from the

Year	Number of participating states	Number of publishers	Associations, organization, committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the book fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
2015	46	281	12	340,000	10 days	459	
2016	44	276	15	370,000	10 days	392	
2017	54	353	22	345,000	10 days	349	
2018	45	305	24	520,000	10 days	404	
2019	42	302	22	560,000	10 days	418	

fair. Perhaps the most striking phenomenon in Morocco is the emergence of an annual second-hand book fair in Casablanca, with the turnout growing year after year.

Republic of the Sudan

“A book is known by its title” is a famous saying repeated by Sudanese intellectuals. It is difficult to find an educated Sudanese citizen who doesn’t have their own home library. Yet the state of Sudanese publishing does not correspond to the Sudanese people’s love for reading and culture. The first ever modern bookshop in Khartoum was established in 1902 under the name of “Sudan Bookshop.” For the most part, creative Sudanese authors saw Cairo as their window into publishing and fame.

Analysing Sudanese publishing requires a visit to al-Dār al-Sudāniyyah lil-Kutub in al-Baldīyah street, established in the late 1990s by ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Mikkāwī. The bookshop is a five-story building that hosts some 30,000 titles and is at the forefront of Sudanese and Arabic book production in Sudan.

Sudan’s presence in Arab book fairs has remained limited. For years, it was mainly represented by the International Company for Printing and Publishing. But a new generation of Sudanese book publishers has emerged over the past years, boosting the participation of Sudanese publishers in Arab book fairs. These include: Dār al-Muṣawarāt, al-Rīm, al-Sharīf Academic Cookshop and Dār ‘Azzah, which has been operating for over 51 years.

In Sudan, we can stop at the ‘Abd al-Karīm Mirghani Cultural Centre, a non-profit community centre which launched the al-Tayib Salih Prize for Literary Creativity in 2002. This prize gained much credibility and was awarded to several Arab novelists, including ‘Ammār ‘Alī Hassan for his novel *Bayt al-Sīnnarī*, as well as a number of Sudanese novelists, becoming a gauge of Sudanese literature. The centre also publishes works by a new generation of Sudanese writers, and its most important publications are in spoken-word and folk poetry. It has also become a supporter and guardian of a new generations of Sudanese poets, in addition to publishing Sudanese novels and stories.

Certain novelists may be considered immigrants, a result of the departure of Sudanese intellectuals from the country. However, with the emergence of Sudanese publishing houses in a new guise, the publishing sphere has been able to better represent Sudanese literature. These publishing houses include Dār al-Muṣawarāt, which has published works by leading writers such as ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Barakah Sakin, Amīn Tāj al-Sir, Hammour Ziada, Sarah al-Jak, and Umar al-Sāyyim. It also presented the work of distinguished Sudanese-Egyptian-British novelist Laila Aboulela, whose work was published in different languages. Her novel, *Lyrics Alley* is considered one of the novels that best portrays Sudan and its people through the life story of Sudanese poet Hasan ‘Awad Aboulela. The novel is set between Sudan, Egypt, and Britain. That is to say that the portrayal of exile in the Sudanese novel seems to be its door to the world, similar to al-Tayib Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*.

Madārik is a good example of a new kind of publishing in Sudan, something that probably led to problems with the Sudanese government in 2016, when a security force raided its headquarters and confiscated multiple books and desktops. Madārik’s publications come with high-quality covers and the publishing house gives considerable attention to art direction. Madārik is considered a gauge of literary creativity in Sudan. It is, for example, the publisher of Sudanese novelist Isa al-Hilu’s works.

Academic publishing is almost non-existent in Sudan outside Sudanese universities. Yet the Sudanese Studies Centre (SSC), which was established in Cairo and is currently based in Khartoum, is a good example of an academic publishing entity whose model should be built on in the future. The centre has published 220 books as well as 12 editions of its annual ‘Sudan Strategic Report.’ It also publishes its *Kitabāt Sūdāniyyah* magazine, whose first issue came out as early as 1922. It also published Sudanese novelist Abkar Adam Isma’īl’s debut novel.

Does Sudan have a state programme that supports the publishing industry?

In reality, government support for this industry is very limited, which has in turn affected the nature of the industry and its available tools. The Khartoum University Publishing House, which celebrated its 50th year anniversary in 2017, is a good example of government publishing in Sudan. It has published more than 600 titles across different fields. It also had significant impact on Sudanese publishing. It was established in 1965 to cater to the university’s needs and its academic role. It quickly finalized building its component parts, from setting up an editorial department, which included proof-readers and editors, to establishing a publishing committee, followed by instituting a printing press. Between 1967-2017, this publishing house brought out 600 titles. It published works by Sudan’s most prominent writers, including al-Nazīr Dafaalla, Naṣr al-Hāj Ali, Mu’awīyah Muḥammad Nūr, Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Majzūb, ‘Arafāt Muḥammad ‘Abdallah and Muṣṭafa Hassan Ishāq.

The number of books published by most publishers in Sudan range between 10 and 25 titles a year, with a limited number of publishers publishing between 40 and 60 titles a year. A number of Sudanese publishers rely on publishing university textbooks for Sudanese universities. Making up about 15% of publishers in Sudan, these publishers print at their own presses. The rest publish their titles in either Cairo or Beirut, and in some cases Khartoum. This, coupled with the limited production of book manufacturing tools, including paper and ink, which are exported from outside Sudan, suggests that the publishing industry has yet to take hold in Sudan.

In terms of category, Sudanese publications are mainly comprised of literary works, followed by political then religious books, and finally books in other topics. This indicates the scarcity of applied sciences books, in addition to the evident lack of children's literature.

Sudanese writers face several problems, including the scarcity of distribution centres in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, which are vanishingly rare in other Sudanese cities. There are, however, non-traditional solutions to this problem. Yet, another problem remains, and that is the phenomenon of the ghost publisher who forges and copies books, appearing and then disappearing. Forged books are a phenomenon that threatens the Sudanese publishing industry, and anecdotal reports suggest it is constantly growing, although there is no accurate estimate of its size. But it is indeed noticeable in several cities, especially in Khartoum and Port Sudan.

Sudanese books released 2015-2019

Year	Number of books
2015	1004
2016	1183
2017	1347
2018	1012
2019	853

Khartoum International Book Fair

The Khartoum International Book Fair is considered a breathing space for Sudanese readers, through which they are able to source non-Sudanese books. This explains why the fair's turnout increases every year, bringing in visitors from all over the country. Sudanese universities also depend on the fair for their book supply. In 2015, Khartoum was selected the Arab Cultural Capital, which in turn increased the government's interest in the fair.

Year	Number of participating states	Number of publishers	Associations, organization, committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the book fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
2015	15	200		65,000	13 days		
2016	15	250		65,000	13 days		
2017	16	270		78,000	13 days		
2018	16	250		58,500	13 days		
2019	16	220		65,000	13 days		

The Federal Republic of Somalia

The Republic of Somalia deserves our attention, because it has defied all circumstances, managing to publish some 2000 titles in 2018, which is a record for the country. Several publishing houses are currently active in Somalia, and they amount to 49 publishers. Of these, one publisher is a member of the Arab Publishers Association.

Somalia is a promising market for Arabic books. Despite the country's economic problems, it imports the equivalent of USD 5.7 million worth of books from Arab markets. It imports books totalling USD 3.7 million from the KSA alone. The gradual opening of the National Library of Somalia was an incentive for Somali publishing. However, the library was demolished in 1991, only to partially re-open in 2018. It is evident that a new generation of writers in Somalia has emerged, including, for example, novelist Zahrah Marsl whose two novels, *Amīrah Ma' Waqf al-Tanfīdh*, published 2012, and *Ajūran 'Ayn Afr īqyah*, published 2015, garnered critical acclaim. Marsl picks up the torch, continuing the path of female Somali writers of the likes of Warsan Shire, a young Somali poet, as well as the inimitable Somali novelist Nuruddin Farah.

This increased production by Somali writers, novelists, and thinkers stimulated the publishing scene in Somalia, in turn leading to a relative growth in the number of Somali publishing houses. Somalia mainly depends on Egyptian and Lebanese printing presses, although these past five years have witnessed the beginnings of a publishing industry in Somalia, which will contribute to the growth of publishing in the country. These also comprise several research centres that became active during the past five years, including:

Mogadishu Centre for Research and Studies: This centre publishes quality studies, reports and books. Its publications include *the Mu'jam al-Mu'all ifn al-Sūmalīyīn*, authored by Muḥammad Husayn Mo'allim. The glossary includes the biographies of 661 veteran and contemporary Somali authors. It also published *al-Tarīqah al-Tījan īyyah Wa Adwariha al-Sīyās īyyah fī Afr īqyah al- Gharbīyah* by Abdullahī 'Issa, as well as *Wīlāyat Janūb Gharb al-Sūmal:al-Nash'ah Wal Takwīn*, by 'Umar Muḥammad Hasan.

Al-Kitāb Centre for Research and Studies: It was established in December 2018 by a group of Somali intellectuals and writers with the aim of encouraging reading and knowledge-seeking in Somalia through several programmes implemented by the centre. These programmes include the following titles, all of which were high-quality publications: *Muḥmal tarīkh al-Sīnīghāl* by Abdullahī 'Isa, as well as *al-Hāf īz al-Imām al-Dhahabī Wa Fīkrih al-Naqdī* by Anwar Aḥmad Mbū.

Several Somali writers succeeded in publishing in Arab countries, which has given their works a decent presence in Arab culture. These include 'Abd al-Raḥman Shaykh Maḥmūd al-Zel'ī, who published an important book called *al-Sūmaāl: Urūbatīha wa Haḍarat īha al-Islamīyyah*, published in 2018 by Dār Qindīl publishing house in Dubai.

Digital publishing is still limited in Somalia, although there is widespread circulation of digital books among researchers and intellectuals in the country. Also common are forged books due to their low cost. Meanwhile, the number of public libraries in Somalia remains very limited.

Books published in Somalia

Year	Number of books
2015	743
2016	872
2017	1409
2018	2000
2019	1320

Somali publishers participate in a number of international and Arab book fairs, but their participation is mainly determined by the support of host countries or lack thereof. Their participation is made possible by the unity of Somali publishers and their standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the Somali Publishers Association, an active association that plays an important role in liaising with libraries as well as Arab publishers to support publishing in Somalia. For its part, this association participated in a number of Arab book fairs, including the Cairo, Beirut, Sharjah, and Abu Dhabi international book fairs.

On the bright side, there are promising beginnings for a number of book fairs in Somalia, and analysis reveals they may have not received much-deserved recognition until 2015. While some of these fairs claim to be ‘international,’ a claim that needs to be assessed, multiple book fairs have emerged in Somalia:

In March 2006, Mogadishu witnessed its first book fair organized by al-Ihsan Library, which enjoyed considerable success. The Mogadishu Book Fair was established thanks to intellectuals and writers in Somalia, as well as a number of publishers. Its success was an incentive for the organization of another fair in October of the same year. Also, another book fair was held in Mogadishu in 2015.

Hargeisa Book Fair was established in 2008. Yet its 2016 edition was the most successful in terms of turnout and organization.

- Garoowe Book Fair, 2016
- Kismayo Book Fair, 2017
- Burco Book Fair, August 2018
- Adado Book Fair, August 2018
- Borama Book Fair, August 2019

Also, the cultural movement in Somalia, through the “Aregthawdakh” forum for dialogue, held in Mogadishu’s Darrul Salam Garden on 22 November 2018 drew attention, namely for how it encouraged Somalis to read and acquire books. The fair included 1000 Arabic titles and 150 Somali ones.

An interesting phenomenon is the emergence of a number of Somali writers who write and publish in English. This phenomenon finds its roots in the huge Somali diaspora, beginning with the civil war in the early 1990s, and the many Somalis who live outside Somalia, across Europe and the US. Today, there is a generation of Somalis who was taught in, and writes in, English. Some Somali writers have gained popularity on both scholarly and cultural levels.

The Republic of Iraq

In the years between 2015 and 2019, Iraq witnessed the increased activity as well as growth of its book industry, compared to the years between 2003 and 2014. This can be attributed to the emergence of a new generation of Iraqis who are passionate about reading, as well as a new generation of novelists and creative writers who are generating knowledge and want to have a strong presence in the publishing sphere. These changes were echoed in the rate at which Iraq publishes as well as in the number of publishers and the nature of publishing. Yet despite all of the above, there are obstacles facing the publishing industry in Iraq. If not addressed properly, they will continue to have a negative impact on knowledge production in all its forms in this ancient land.

These problems can be summarized as follows:

- State printing presses are in complete control of book printing in Iraq, and furthermore there is a shortage in the number of workers at these presses. This results in books with poor printing quality. The breakdown of old printing machines is also a contributing factor.
- Poor book design and art direction skills, even with the spread of digital techniques capable of performing these tasks.

- Most book production materials are imported from outside Iraq. For their part, businesspeople import cheap materials, which sometimes stands in the way of producing good-quality books.
- The retreat of the Iraqi state in supporting the book and publishing industry: The government no longer recognizes the importance of culture the way it did in the 1970s and 1980s, when production of Iraqi books was at its peak.
- The inability of Iraqi publishers to accommodate the large body of scientific, intellectual, and literary Iraqi production today: Many authors are now having to bear the costs of publishing themselves. In most cases, print runs do not exceed 500 copies per book, which does not even allow the book to spread inside Iraq, much less to be exported.

Yet, despite these challenges, there are bright spots, which include, first and foremost, a strong Union of Iraqi Publishers addressing publishing-related problems as well as launching several campaigns to support this industry. Also, the General House of Cultural Affairs, a long-standing government institution, has once again resumed publishing. More notable than its return, however, is its introduction of new ways to support the publishing sector in Iraq. This is evident in its production of multiple publication series, such as the *Sard* short-story collections, which includes *Karrāt Thalj*, a collection of 17 stories by Isma'il Sakrān, an Iraqi novelist born in 1949. It also published Haytham Tayyib's *Aḥyanan Bīla Ma'na*, a collection of 22 stories written in an exciting and smooth way. The publishing of Iraqi short-story collections is especially significant, especially given the reluctance of several publishing houses to publish this genre. The General House of Cultural Affairs also gave poetry a space through the *Bassamāt* series, which includes the *Qatarrāt Min Ghazal* anthology by Samīrah al-Fartūsī, and Ra'd al-Basari's *Maa' Muḥalal Bī*. This series inspired Iraqi poets to unveil their creativity.

The General House of Cultural Affairs' introduction of a new generation of Iraqi writers was also an incentive for these writers to keep writing. It introduced Athīr 'Adil Shoaway's *Tiqnīyat Taqdīm al-Shakhsīyah fī al-Rūwāyah al-īraqīyah*, thereby introducing an Iraqi critic with a solid critical methodology.

On another hand, the house succeeded, to some extent, in quenching the Iraqis' thirst for history books by running a series on Iraq's ancient history. It also published a trilogy by Rashīd al-Salihi about the history of Mesopotamia, as well as translated the book, *Al-Hayāh al-Yawmīyah fīl 'Iraq al-Qadīm, Bilād Bābil Wa'ash Ur*, translated by Yasmīn Khidr Maḥmūd.

For their part, children's literature and books were largely absent from Iraqi publishing. But publishers' interest in the field injected it with new vigour, introducing new works, which are a cause for hope. These include efforts by al-Barāq for Children's Culture. What stands out about al-Barāq's publications is its colour choices and how it's geared toward children, as well as the Arabic Iraqi spirit that characterizes its publications. Al-Barāq was established in 2003, but quickly transformed into a comprehensive platform for children's culture, which in turn helped it formulate a clear vision for its publishing program titled *Bīl Qirā'ah Naṣna' al-Muṣtaqbal*. It also introduced a number of writers of children's literature, including Basim al-Anṣarī, Warith al-Kindī, Jalil Khaz'al and Rida al-Haydarī.

Al-Barāq also paid attention to the needs of children and their families, releasing publications focused on improving children's handwriting, as well as teaching letter combinations in Arabic and English (images and letters). It also entered the digital world by setting up an al-Barāq digital app for children.

Al-Barāq has a network of distributors in Iraq, in Baghdad, Baṣrah, Kūfah, and Najaf, as well outside Iraq, in Bahrain, the UAE, Amman, Lebanon, Germany, and Australia.

YEAR	General Knowledge	Philosophy and Psychology	Religion	Social sciences	Languages	Natural sciences	Applied sciences	Arts	Literature	Geography and History
2015	780	830	1875	430	350	480	550	700	1950	2350
2016	800	835	1700	435	360	490	560	650	2000	2350
2017	800	830	1650	450	350	510	550	690	2100	2520
2018	850	870	1650	470	320	495	570	710	2150	2480
2019	880	890	1660	490	370	505	565	730	2300	2550

This table reflects Iraqis' reading interests and trends. Because Iraq is home to a rich history, its publications are dominated by works of history and geography, followed by literary works. Iraq has witnessed the emergence of a number of Iraqi novelists, who qualified for a number of awards. The multiple Iraqi wars since 1990 left their imprint on Iraqi novels, and their implications were reflected in these works. It must also be mentioned that religious books maintained their position in Iraqi publishing. As for philosophy and psychology books, they may need a separate study comparing them with their counterparts in other Arab countries, as book production in these two fields in particular is exceptionally high. In fact, the state of controversy in Iraq today finds its echo even in publishing. It must also be noted that in the years between 2015 and 2019, Arabic publishing made up about 97 percent of total publications in Iraq, followed by two percent of English publications, and one percent of French. In Iraq, translation into Arabic is mainly from the following languages: English, French, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese. As for Iraqi publishing houses that contributed to translation, they include: Dār al-Maʿmūn, Ministry of Culture, Bayt al-Hikmah, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿilmīyah, and Dār Thaqaṭat al-Tifl. These publishers signify the diversity of translation entities in the country, which range between official bodies and civil-society organizations to private publishing houses, the latter assuming a bigger role in the field.

Periodicals and journals

Academic production in Iraq is supported by a network of Iraqi universities, which grew increasingly active between 2015 and 2019, especially in the humanities. For its part, the Iraqi Academic Scientific Journal (IASJ) introduced new ways to access contemporary Iraqi intellectual and academic knowledge. Until late 2020, this portal included 310 periodicals from 75 academic partners and comprised a total of 181,019 studies. Among the most remarkable Iraqi periodicals was the journal series published by Bayt al-Hikmah in Baghdad; this series includes historical, economic, and philosophical studies, as well as the study of religions, legal studies, and more. These journals managed to find a neutral academic arena away from university journals, which are usually characterized by the strong presence of the faculty members from the university or publisher of this journal. For their part, the journals of Bayt al-Hikmah are a reflection of academic mobility across all of Iraq. This is also a reminder of the solid issues published by the Iraqi Academy of Sciences journal.

It is important to mention Iraqi publishing did not lose the momentum that began with Iraq's renaissance in the 1920s, through the peak of Iraqi cultural visions in the 1950s, all the way to the emergence of a number of cultural journals like *al-Mawrid*, *al-Aqlām*, *Afāq Adabīyah*, and *al-Turāth al-Shaʿbī*. These magazines have all resumed publishing. Their return was facilitated by their digitization and by the fact that they were made available for free.

All of the above suggests a constant increase in the number of publishers in Iraq, including both public and private entities.

Publishers in Iraq

Year	Private publishers	Governmental publishers	Total
2015	130	25	155
2016	130	25	155
2017	135	25	160
2018	137	26	163
2019	140	27	167

Despite the above-mentioned efforts and advances, the situation of the Iraqi publishing industry is growing in complexity due to the prevalence of the counterfeit books, which now require deterrence.

Book counterfeiting in Iraq was a way to counteract the sword of censorship between the 1970s and 2003. This phenomenon burgeoned in the 1990s, with the counterfeiting of foreign academic scholarly books as a way to resist the Iraqi siege. Today, counterfeit books have become a phenomenon that threaten authors' and publishers' rights as well as the very presence of publishing houses in Iraq.

Reasons behind the prevalence of this phenomenon include:

- The increase in the price of books printed inside Iraq or imported from abroad.
- The decline in the incomes of intellectuals, university professors, and readers, who have thus resorted to cheaper books.

Weak distribution networks in Iraqi cities

At issue is the weak provisions of the Iraqi Copyright Law No. 3 of 1971. Moreover, Article 47 states that "The court of first instance may, upon a petition filed by the author, order the destruction of a work of art, copies or photocopies which have been illegally published, as well as the materials used in publishing the work provided that they are not useful for anything else." The law does not impose deterrent penalties, nor does it have any impact on perpetrators.

One of the most flagrant cases of counterfeit books in Iraq is the never-ending counterfeiting of the novels of Iraqi author Aḥmad Sa'daāwī, especially his *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, which topped best-seller lists and won the 2014 International Prize for Arabic Fiction.

For its part, the Union of Iraqi Publishers launched a campaign titled "Counterfeiting is an Ethical Offense," which saw the participation of authors, journalists, the media as well as university professors, to oppose this phenomenon. This campaign played a positive role in warning of the dangers of counterfeiting books in Iraq.

Books published in Iraq

Year	Number of books
2015	7650
2016	7900
2017	8050
2018	8200
2019	8400

Baghdad's Cultural Councils

One of the most promising signs of persistent cultural development in Iraq is the revival of cultural councils and forums, which were instilled across 'Okāz and al-Marbad. Since their inception, the

atmosphere of these councils has been charged with the voices of scholars and rhetoricians. Ever since their first appearance, these councils have revealed their authenticity and the importance of their role in serving human thought, making great strides in that direction. Their contributions were praised by scholars who honoured these councils by awarding them with the “Councils are Schools” accolade. This was a truly deserved award, especially as these councils provided information that would normally take users and attendees hours of research. This in addition to these councils’ offerings in terms of experience-sharing through discussions, feedback, and addendums.

Consequently, these councils are one of the tools that helped Baghdad maintain its critical capacity for the reading and acquisition of books. Discussions that happened in these councils led to an interest in specific books, which makes it a phenomenon that merits consideration.

Baghdad, the city of civilization, today witnesses a cloud of cultural clubs, flowing with its own communities and users. What gives these clubs such a delightful atmosphere is the diversity in knowledge and thought, as if you’re in a garden where flowers are racing to bloom and carry their scent to you. From a council specializing in the history and present of Baghdad, to another council where the atmosphere shines with scientific and literary lectures, to a third council celebrating a handful of scholars, novelists, doctors and artists, to yet another council highlighting artistic and technical aspects—whatever areas of knowledge that intellectuals turn to, there will be many fruits to pick, as well as glasses brimming with serenity and purity. Each of the evenings at these clubs shines with the presence of its scholars, novelists, poets, historians and artists. For his part, the visitor proceeds to sip from the nectar of these blossoming territories, which fuels him with a love of good words that speak of reality.

The situation further evolved, and clubs became productive spaces in which discussions and literary, scholarly, and intellectual debates are staged; sites where thoughts and ideas were put forth, resulting in a civilization of scholars and novelists who’ve reaped the benefits of these councils and were supplied with much food for thought. For their part, these events flourished and became more prevalent under the reign of Harūn al-Rashīd and al-Ma’mūn and beyond. By the beginning of the first century (AD), Baghdad began to dust off the past, thanks to the intellectual renaissance led by scholars and novelists. And now, today’s Baghdad abounds with many cultural clubs that have recently stalled due to security reasons. These include, but are not limited to, al-Shi’rba’ī cultural club in eastern Karrādah which was run by the late Hājī Alī Sā’ib al-Shi’rba’ī; the club of the late ‘Abd al-Razzāq Moḥīe al-Dīn, run by his sons ‘Awes and ‘Alī; al-Khaqān club, which was later renamed al-Kādhimīyyah cultural club and is managed by Muḥammad al-Khaqān; the late Hājī Jāssim al-Rabī’ī’s club, which is currently managed by his son Hājī Sādiq Jāssim al-Rabī’ī; Dr. ‘Adil al-Makhzūmī’s council; Sharqiyyat al-Rāwī council; Hājī Hamdī al-A’dhamī club, which is managed by Dr. Rashīd al-‘Ubaydī; Imām Abi Hanīfa Forum; the Mayoralty of Baghdad forum in Kādhimīyyah, which is managed by journalist ‘Adel al-‘Arḍāwī; the al-Ruwād forum; the Bayt al-Hikmah; the Society Against Tuberculosis forum, which was run by the late Adīb al-Fakīkī; al-Juwādīn Bookshop in Kādhimīyyah Holy Shrine, managed by Mr. Jawwād Hibat al-Din al-Hussaynī, which is now run by his son Iyād Jawwād Hibat al-Dīn; al-Juwādīn forum in Kādhimīyyah; the late Muhammad Jawwād al-Ghabān’s club, which is led by his son Māzin al-Ghabān; as well as the club of researcher Refat Marhun al-Safār. There are private clubs and forums, which also stopped for one reason or another. After 2007, new clubs were established, including al-Safār Cultural Club, Dr. Amāl Kāshif al-Ghaṭa’s Cultural Club, Saffīyah al-Suhayl Cultural Club; Dr. Wa’il Abd al-Latīf Cultural Club, al-A’arājī Cultural Club; al-Mitwalī Cultural Club, and al-Qurayshī Cultural Club.

By 2010, there were more than 15 cultural clubs in Baghdad operating regularly, until it was time to arrange and organize them. At this point, mayors of these councils, along with council-goers, met in the headquarters of al-Rabī’ī Cultural Club to form a melting pot for this melange of culture. This meeting generated an agreement for the establishment of an association of these clubs. It was agreed to name it the “Association of Baghdad’s Cultural Clubs,” and that was on 10 February 2010. In that same meeting, the association’s administrative body was elected to include nine members and two reserve members. The governing body then met to choose a president, vice-president, and a secretary of the association, electing Jāsim al-Rabī’ī as president, ‘Adil Hassūnī al-‘Ard Awī as vice president, and

Zaynab al-Mubarak as secretary. The association began its diligent cultural work as a faithful guardian of Baghdad's cultural clubs. It also strengthened its ties with similar associations across a number of governorates, in addition to visiting state institutions and civil-society organizations. It also obtained a certificate of approval from the division of non-government organizations at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. As such, more clubs were inaugurated until they rose to 25 cultural clubs in Baghdad alone, despite there being a strong relationship between some provincial councils and their Baghdad counterparts.

Since 2010, and until the release of this book, there have been 11 years of achievements. Together with their association, these cultural councils were one of the links of peaceful societal co-existence, especially with their visits to Iraqi governorates and their relationship with multiple elements of the Iraqi society, as well as holding events and activities inside and outside Baghdad. For example, the association visited and strengthened cultural ties with the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Lebanese Republic, the Syrian Republic, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and they delivered authentic Iraqi culture to those who didn't know it, thanks to the former authoritarian regime and its refusal of interactions of any sort. There are, however, strong ties between Iraq and the association of cultural clubs, and a number of consulates in Arab and foreign countries, and despite the associations' many art and photography exhibitions as well as its establishment of a number of pavilions in different book fairs. The association also held five festivals for cultural clubs, the most recent of which was in November 2020. It also has a website, and is present on Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram and YouTube, under the name of 'Baghdad's Cultural Councils'. The association also prints its own magazine and newspaper titled *al-Majāllis al-Baghdādīyyah*. The following is a list of clubs existing today in Baghdad, which operate under the auspices of the Association of 'Baghdad's Cultural Councils':

- Al-Shi'rba' Cultural Council
- Al-Rabī' Cultural Council
- 'Abd al-Razzāq Mohie al-Dīn Cultural Council
- Al-Makhzūmī Cultural Council
- Al-Ghabān Cultural Council
- Al-Jūwādīn Bookshop's Cultural Council
- Al-Khaqānī Cultural Council
- Dr. Amāl Kāshif al-Ghata's Cultural Council
- Baghdad Cultural Forum
- Al-Nuhūd al-Fikrī/Intellectual Development Association's Cultural Council
- Al-Mātar Cultural Council
- Al-Bayt Cultural Council
- Al-Sadr Cultural Council
- Dār al'Ma'rifah Aramaic Council
- Al-Qurayshī Cultural Council
- Al-Mitwalī Cultural Council
- Dr.Zaynab al-Khafāji Forum
- Al-Jum'aa Cultural Council
- Al-Juwahrīyyah Cultural Council
- Al-A'lwīyyah Club's Cultural Council
- Society Against Tuberculosis Council
- Al-Najjār Cultural Council
- Businessmen Cultural Council
- Al-Bushga'a Cultural Council
- Dr.Wā'il 'Abd al-Latīf Council
- Al-Saffar Cultural Council
- 'Awr Cultural Council
- Al-'Oqaylī Cultural Council

Baghdad International Book Fair

Every year, Iraq witnesses a number of book fairs held in different Iraqi cities, especially Baghdad, Irbil, Basrah, and Sulaymānīyah. A total of 15 international fairs were held in Iraq during the period from 2015 to 2019, while a total of 25 local fairs were held during the same period.

The efforts put into the organization of these fairs bore fruit during the period from 2015 to 2019, and this shows clearly in the figures and data from the Baghdad International Book Fair, the latest edition of which was held at the end of 2020 with the participation of 300 publishing houses from 21 countries over an 11-day period. Remarkably, the fair was publicized by dynamic and successful social media activity. For example, the fair's own Facebook page had 31,885 active followers, as well as the strong support of the fair's sponsors. The fair also hosted extensive activities, including book-signing events for poetry collections by Iraqi poets. Examples include signing events for Iraqi poets Mijahid Abū al-Hayl and 'Umar al-Sarrāy, which were accessible to the public. This also demonstrates that poetry collections still enjoy an audience in a number of Arab countries. For its part, the fair's management succeeded in incorporating cultural activities into the fair's different pavilions, which attracted more visitors. One example is its hosting of Iraqi singer Falah al-Baghdadi, whose heritage songs were well received by the fair's audience. Particularly striking was how Iraqi society recognized the fair's significance, which showed vividly in the participation of the Iraqi Bar Association, which had their own pavilion in the fair. The fair's slogan, 'Halā Bil Kitāb' (Welcome to the Book), managed to invite the audience through a campaign that drew on all possible means of attracting an audience, including videos.

Baghdad International Book Fair

Year	Number of participating states	Number of publishers	Associations, organization, committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the book fair	Rights Deals	Remarks
2015	14	120		1,000,000	10 days	95	Incoming packages: 5000 Roughly 2500 discards
2016	The edition was postponed due to ISIS events						
2017	18	153		1,200,000	10 days	105	Incoming packages: 6000. Discards: 2400
2018	22	255		1,400,000	11 days	164	Incoming packages: 6000. Discards: 2400
2019	26	344		1,400,000	12 days	176	Incoming packages: 7000. Discards: 2500

Figures in the table are from the fair's management.

The success of Irbil's annual book fair is also documented. For example, 300 publishers participated in the fair's last edition. More importantly, the strong purchasing power of universities in north Iraq, as well as the huge turnout by an audience who loves reading, both contributed to the fair's success. The Baṣrah International Book Fair, which witnessed the participation of 120 publishing houses, portends the emergence of a new publishing and reading centre in Iraq in the coming years.

The Republic of Yemen

The modern publishing industry in Yemen began in 1890 in Aden, when 'Abādi Hasan Muḥammad 'Olwī established Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīyyah as a centre for book distribution and publishing. The publishing house moved to Sana'a in 1994 and has since operated under difficult circumstances. It was

nationalized under South Yemen rule, but its owners continued to work in the field of publishing. To date, its bibliography comprises some 1660 titles, yet a survey of its publications reveals that the real number is 1965 titles, the majority of which were authored by Yemeni intellectuals, writers, and thinkers. Its publications are a comprehensive register of the Yemeni cultural movement. In 2017, it became a foundation and was renamed the “‘Abādī Cultural Foundation.” Throughout its history, the foundation has always introduced all that is new.

This type of foundation operating in the fields of publishing and culture is also present in Sana’a, in the form of the al-‘Afīf Cultural Foundation, which was established by Yemeni intellectual and politician Ahmad Jabir ‘Afīf, who was born in Al Hudaydah in 1928 and died in 2010. Al-‘Afīf is one of the most active foundations in Yemen.

Contemporary publishing began in North Yemen in 1962. There were multiple state publishing centres in the country, headed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which prints several publications, including magazines and books. Among its most prominent publications is *al-Iklīl* magazine, the most popular Yemeni magazine in the region. It is a quarterly magazine with an interest in Yemen’s intellectual history as well as the history of its civilization. The magazine was first published in 1980. Another significant publication by the Ministry of Culture is *al-Thaqāfah* magazine, which appeared in 1991.

Yemeni state publishing evolved with the establishment of the Yemeni General Book Association in 1995. With its establishment, the association played an important role in Yemeni publishing, releasing 69 titles during its first two years. Today, Yemeni publishing is at a standstill, due to the civil war and the country’s economic situation.

The Centre for Studies and Research in Sana’a stands out in the landscape of Yemeni publishing. The Centre was established in 1972, but its actual beginning was in 1978. It publishes *Dirasāt Yamaniyah*, one of the most important Yemeni periodicals. The centre also prints publications in various fields relevant to Yemen.

Since the 1970s, Yemen has showed the possibility of a dynamic publishing movement. However, this has not happened for several reasons:

- Weak awareness among readers in Yemen: The educated and intellectual Yemeni class is highly cultured. For its part, this weak awareness is a relative one, especially as there exists a strong inherited oral culture in Yemen. As such, illiteracy in Yemen may involve reading and writing, but is not a cultural illiteracy. The deficit in readers’ awareness can be attributed to the limited number of public libraries in Yemen, which are only 50. Ten of these public libraries are in Sana’a alone. But on the other hand, there is an unspecified number of community libraries in Yemen. Also, Yemen lacks comprehensive state programmes to encourage reading and to build generations who read, as many other Arab countries have done. The war in Yemen has negatively impacted readerships: The National Library, situated in the heart of Sana’a, used to receive some 500 readers a day, but now that number is down to 70-100 readers a day. Moreover, book-purchasing budgets for public libraries have remained limited for years.
- The increase in book prices, since most are imported from abroad.

There is also a scarcity in distribution outlets for Yemeni books. Because distribution outlets are mainly centred in cities like Sana’a, Aden and Ta’iz, Yemeni youth have circumvented this problem by relying on the digital sphere. As such, they’ve set up *Madīnat al-Kitāb al-Yamaniyah* (City of Yemeni Books) on social media platforms, including Facebook, where they now have 16,973 followers. *Madīnat al-Kitāb* delivers books to customers’ homes. It also runs brief overviews of books via its pages to attract readers. In Aden, Book Time, a youth initiative to advertise print books and encourage reading, has come to the fore. It was established by a young Yemeni named Tawfīq al-‘Ulwī, and held three book fairs in Aden, Seiyūn and al-Mukalla.

- Scarcity of high calibre employees working in the preparation of books for publication.

Despite that, several Yemeni publishing houses publish books annually in all areas of literature, as well as researched heritage books. These include Dār al-Jīl al-Jadīd, Khalid Bookshop for Publishing, Dār al-Hikmah al-Yamanīyah, university presses, as well as other publishing houses. Yemen is one of the countries that was home to promising printing presses back in the 1970s, including al-Miṣbah, Sayf bin Dhi Yazan, Nibras, Dār al-Yaman al-Sa'id, Ma'īn, al-Jazīrah; however, the turn on the part of Yemen's Ministry of Culture and Tourism to printing outside Yemen was not an incentive for the development and revival of the publishing industry in Yemen.

Even so, several Yemeni publishing houses have succeeded in holding out, and these participate in Yemeni fairs. For its part, the proliferation of universities throughout Yemen over the past five decades was a contributing factor in the growth of publishing, as it provided a nurturing environment for the development of the publishing sector in the country. Hundreds of faculty members as well as thousands of students were able to satisfy their reading needs, as well as having the ability to survey, read, and author books.

As it ventured into publishing, the Yemeni Bookshop for Publishing and Distribution, which was established in 1980 and would go on to import English books and distribute them in Yemen, was able to achieve tremendous success. It received the 2008 Trailblazer Award from the London Book Fair. Moreover, its manager—Nashwān 'Alī al-Maqhaff—was picked as one of the Frankfurt Book Fair's ambassadors in 2017. The publishing house brings out personal, administrative, and human development books, as well as children's books.

A survey of Yemeni publishing reveals multiple problems. Many state and private publishing houses do not receive ISBNs, which suggests that the Yemeni books landscape is beset with numerous problems. For example, in 1995, 130 books were reportedly published (received ISBNs) when the actual number of published books was 231; in 2000, 280 books received ISBNs, but 415 books were actually published; in 2015, 130 books received ISBNs out of a total of 187 books; and finally, in 2019, 495 books received ISBNs, when a total of 548 books were actually published.

Moreover, several Yemeni authors print their books privately, which then appear digitally, without collaborating with publishing houses or receiving ISBNs.

Books published in Yemen

Year	Number of books
2015	130
2016	334
2017	253
2018	355
2019	495

Arab Republic of Egypt

The history of publishing in Egypt began with the establishment of the Bulāq Press by Muḥammad Alī in 1822. The press published *al-Waqa'i' al-Miṣrīyyah*, the official Egyptian newspaper at the time, as well as educational and translated books, by order of Muḥammad Alī, as well as heritage books. It then turned to publishing original works published at the expense of their authors. Between 1822 and 1842, Bulāq Press published at least 243 titles. Egypt's first private press was established in 1837, and it printed a limited number of books at the expense of the wealthy, which were either distributed for free, or at the expense of the authors, who in turn distributed them for free. In the era of Sa'id Pasha, the first bookshop, an affiliate of Bulāq, was inaugurated close to al-Husayn Mosque, which was only the beginning for the concentration of many bookshops in this area, and also around al-Azhar, where manuscript copyists, a craft which remained alive in Egypt until the late 19th century, once thrived. The oldest continually operating publishing house in Egypt remains the one established by Aḥmad al-

Bābī al-Halabī in 1859. It operates currently as a publishing house with a sales outlet close to al-Azhar Mosque, as well as a press near al-Husayn Mosque. During the era of Khedive Isma'īl, Egypt witnessed a publishing renaissance, traceable in books, magazines, and newspapers.

Dr. Aida Naṣīr noted that, by the end of the 19th century, Egypt had published 9782 books distributed among 107 topics, including 2762 religion books, 2015 literary books, 1372 social sciences books, 1092 history books, 705 philosophy books, 242 books in the natural sciences, and 372 textbooks. However, this record did not include medical books published in Arabic or other books printed in presses at the expense of rich individuals or by their authors, which were still shelved by big bookshops. In my estimation, a total of 16,321 books were published in Egypt in the period between 1822 and 1900.

Egypt experienced a publishing boom at the hands of private publishing houses until 1952, when the Egyptian state became a publisher with its own cultural project and publishing houses. This is when several publishing houses relocated to Beirut. In the 1970s, however, the private publishing sector returned to play a vital role, arm-in-arm with government publishing in Egypt. As such, there are two main publishing bodies in Egypt: government publishing and publishing by the private sector, this in addition to several scientific societies.

Egyptian publishing makes up about 30-40 percent of the size of publishing in the Arab world, with the content of its publications spanning a wide range of topics, including the productions of universities, research centres, and the Egyptian intelligentsia. Egypt's population census, estimated at 103 million people, makes Egypt the biggest book market in the Arab region.

The return of Bulāq Press to print publishing since 2018, publishing 60 books in a diverse number of topics, in addition to re-publishing some of its heritage titles, signalled a new movement in Egyptian publishing. It also launched a digital book platform.

This takes us to another prominent publisher in Egypt, which is Dār al-Kutub and al-Wathā'iq al-Miṣriyyah (the Egyptian National Library), which began publishing in 1870, publishing book catalogues and manuscript collections. It quickly expanded, publishing verified manuscripts, which later inspired the founding of its Heritage Verification Centre. More research centres were established, printing a number of publications, including the *Nahḍat Miṣr* series, as well as magazines like *Turāthiyyāt*, *Miṣr al-Hadithah*, among others.

The General Egyptian Book Organization is the biggest government publisher in Egypt. It is also in charge of organizing the Cairo International Book Fair. Between 2015 and 2019, the organization witnessed a decent publishing momentum, which gave its publications a degree of variety as well as allowing them to print multiple editions of some of the titles. The organization makes its publications available via a series of outlets in different areas across the country. This, in addition to its participation as Egypt's delegate in Arab and international book fairs. Moreover, GEBO has increased its involvements over the past five years, which included its participation in the Jakarta Book Fair in Indonesia in 2017. The organization's publications are mainly concentrated in a number of publication series: *al-Jawā'iz*, *Kitābāt Jadīdah*, *Tarīq al-Miṣriyyīn*, *al-Turāth*, *Ishrāqāt Jadīdah*, and *'Udabā' al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn*. Its new publication series, 'Mā,' aims to identify key entry points to knowledge.

The organization also releases a number of magazines, most notably *Fuṣūl* magazine, which is specialized in literary studies and criticism. It also publishes *al-Funūn al-Sha'bīyyah* magazine, and has digitized its issues published between 1965 and 2015—and made them available on its website. In so doing, it launched an ambitious project for multilingual digital book publishing which is still in its beginning stages. It must be noted that the organization also publishes other specialized magazines, including *'Alam al-Kitāb*, *'ilm al-Nafs*, and *al-Maṣrah*.

Publications of the General Egyptian Book Organization

Year	General publications			Family		
	Original language books	Translated books	Total	Original language books	Translated books	Total
2015	304	37	341	99	54	153
2016	299	49	348	55	21	76
2017	384	22	406	79	28	107
2018	407	33	440	17	1	18
2019	307	15	322	31	18	49
2020	351	37	388	8	15	23

Bibliotheca Alexandrina represents another aspect of the Egyptian publishing scene. The library has a quality publishing program which focuses on untapped topics in Arab publishing. For a while, the program focused on futures studies, or discussed topics such as linguistic geography, or focused on architecture books; this in addition to publishing about Alexandria and its heritage. The library publishes in Arabic, English, French, and Russian, which distinguishes it from other programmes. It also digitizes all its publications and allows downloads, which has contributed significantly to the spread of its publications. The library publishes two scholarly periodicals: *Abjadiyyāt* and *ʿUlūm al-Makhtūṭ*. It is set to launch a third periodical in Coptic studies. It also publishes a quarterly journal by the name of *Dhakirrat Miṣr*.

Publications of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Year	Number of publications
2015	43
2016	54
2017	44
2018	58
2019	46

We also see a decline in the role of the Academy of the Arabic Language and its publishing of lexicons and researched heritage books, as well as in the regular publications of *al-Maʿājim* periodical, previously one of the most distinguished periodicals specialized in the Arabic language. Between 2015 and 2019, the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts came to the fore with its special publishing program. The institute was established in 1946 as one of the arms of the Arab League. It publishes manuscript catalogues, researched heritage books, and a scholarly journal. But what contributed to the wide dissemination of the institute's publications was its launch of a digital book series comprising 39 books. The institute also developed a number of databases that serve the Arab publishing scene, including:

- Printed Arab heritage database
- Heritage practitioners database
- Manuscripts database

The American University in Cairo Press (AUC Press) has emerged as the most distinguished Egyptian university press, with a publications list comprising 8,000 English books published since it was founded 60 years ago. The press has delivered high quality, diverse, and multidisciplinary publishing. It was a pioneer in the fields it ventured into, and it opened new horizons for Egyptian books internationally, with its repeated successes. The AUC Press publications stand out for their precision and quality content, as well as the quality of the art direction. The press has translated many Egyptian books, especially novels, from Arabic to English, extending to include translations of novels by Arab authors and adding a lot to Arab publishing. AUC Press focused mainly on publishing about Egyptian antiquities (Pharaonic) and Islamic heritage and art, in order to meet the increased demand on these topics in Egypt and the world. It also gifts its publications to Egyptian schools as well as to the libraries of the Ministry of Antiquities.

In 2017, AUC Press distributed some 25 book collections to schools for free, in addition to the free distribution of 17 collections among the libraries of the Ministry of Antiquities. AUC Press also organizes the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature, valued at USD 5000. The winning novel is also translated into English.

Many scholarly periodicals are published in Egypt. For example, Cairo University publishes 44 digitized periodicals in both Arabic and English, which are made available on its website. The earliest among these periodicals is the journal published by the Faculty of Dār al-‘Ulūm. The same is true of universities in Asyūt, Alexandria, and al-Manṣūrah.

Several Egyptian scientific societies also release their own periodicals and books, the oldest among them being the Egyptian Geographic Society, which has been publishing its periodical since the 19th century. This also applies to the Egyptian Scientific Institute and the *Egyptian Medical Journal*, which has been published by the Egyptian Medical Society for almost a century.

For its part, the Egyptian Publishers Association is an active publishing body. By 2019, the association comprised 965 members, 830 of whom are active. Several other research centres, universities, and associations publish books without being members in the association. Contributing to their publishing activity are their inherited expertise, and a well-structured publishing industry, comprising presses, editors, designers, and more, all in addition to a distinct website that allows the selling and shipping of books. The rising prices of the industry’s inputs, including of ink and paper, as well as rising wages of industry workers due to higher inflation, all led to the doubling or tripling of the price of books compared to pre-2016 rates. The price of Egyptian books had always been a competitive advantage, which allowed them to reach a big market in the Arab region. Therefore, and due to the above, a decline in the number of copies printed of all books in Egypt has followed. In the past, the average number of copies printed of any such book were between 1000 and 2000. Now, the average has gone down to 500 to 1000 copies per book. On the other hand, high tariffs on paper, which is an essential input to the book-making industry, has increased the cost of books, therefore pushing some Egyptian publishing houses to print abroad.

A presentation of active and non-active members in the Egyptian Publishers Association

Year	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
Active Inactive	Active	Inactive	Active	Inactive	Active	Inactive	Active	Inactive	Active	Inactive
Number	385	111	451	80	532	87	695	127	830	135
Total	496		531		619		822		965	

Number of publishers in Egypt

Year	Number of publishers
2015	496
2016	531
2017	619
2018	822
2019	965
2020	1016

It is difficult to identify which Egyptian publishing houses are reflective of the status of Egyptian publishing in the period between 2015 and 2019. However, we may be able to review the work of some of them through an analysis of bookshops that have their own research centres, structured provision and acquisition policies, and digital reading platforms. That said, several Egyptian publishing houses experienced booms during these years (2015-2019), including Dār al Ma’ārif, while some of them still live on their publishing legacy from past decades, like al-Khanjīr Bookshop. Other publishing

houses, however, have experienced a period of inactivity, with their publications falling under or at five titles a year. Meanwhile, several new publishing houses have quickly emerged to constitute a crucial feature of the publishing scene: like Bataña, Dār Ghurāb, Dawin and finally al-Karma, which rose to prominence especially in the novel genre with its good-quality publishing programme which gained it a young audience that actively seeks its publications. Yet, since we're trying to propose aspects of Egyptian publishing and not carry a detailed study of it, the following Egyptian publishing houses can help us assess the publishing situation in Egypt:

Al-Dār al-Miṣrīyyah al-Lubnānīyyah: It was established in 1985. In the fifteen years between its establishment and the year 2000, al-Dār al-Miṣrīyyah printed 1000 titles. It relied on academic and cultural publishing through a number of book series, including: al- Saḥāfah, al-I'l ām, al-Aṭfāl, al-Falsafah, al-Maktabāt wa al-Ma'lūmāt, and most recently, al-Kutub al-Falsafīyyah. In the past five years, al-Dār al-Miṣrīyyah also turned its focus to novels, publishing novels by prominent writers of the likes of 'Ammār 'Alī Hasan, Ashraf Ashmawi, 'Isām Yūsif, Ibrāhīm Abdelmeguid, Mekkawi Said, among others. Al-Dār al-Miṣrīyyah now prints several editions of its novels, which have come to constitute an essential part of the Arabic novel scene. Its publishing of Iḥsān 'Abd al-Qudūs' complete works has complemented its role in this Arabic novel field:

Al-Dār al-Miṣrīyyah al-Lubnānīyyah's publications

Year	Number of published books	Translations	Number of Arabic books translated into other languages
2015	89	8	2
2016	77	6	6
2017	57	1	3
2018	66	10	2
2019	51	1	4
Total	340	26	17

Dar El Shorouk: Dar El Shorouk's parent company—Dār al-Qalam—was established in 1948 and quickly climbed up the Egyptian publishing scene. When Dār al-Qalam was nationalized, its founder, Mr. Muḥammad al-Mo'allim went ahead and established Dar El Shorouk in Beirut, which later relocated to Cairo. Considered one of the most established Arab publishing houses, Dar El Shorouk rose to prominence for publishing works by several Arab thinkers and historians across many fields, including: Zakī Najīb Maḥmūd, Aḥmad 'Abd al-Raḥīm Muṣṭafa and Tharwat Okasha. It is also the publisher of Naguib Mahfouz, Bahaa Taher, Raḍwa Ashour, Khairy Shalaby, Ahmed Mourad, and others. Dar El Shorouk published many works by Arab novelists, including the works of Mauritanian novelist Aḥmad Wild Salim. It also publishes history books, and so released a unique series of history books to mark the centennial of the 1919 Egyptian Revolution, the most prominent of which was the book titled *Muṣṭafa al-Naḥās: Mudhakirāt al-Manfā* by Dr. Emad Abu Ghazi. Some of its books are also published in English, and it has a unique publishing record of children's literature.

Nahdet Misr Publishing Group: Nahdet Miṣr has come to represent a comprehensive publishing institution, in terms of its book publishing cycle. It mainly focuses on educational textbooks and children's books, playing a prominent role in each, this in addition to its preoccupation with publishing techniques and international partnerships, especially in the field of children's books. Nahdet Miṣr has a generally versatile publishing records, even if it mainly focuses on novels and biographies, having created a tangible success in both. Nahdet Miṣr's transformation into a comprehensive institution and the generational turnover in it, both give it prominence in the Arab and Egyptian publishing scenes.

Nahdet Miṣr's Publications (2015-2019)

Year	Number of publications
2015	52
2016	28
2017	29
2018	13
2019	39

Nahdet Miṣr's Translated Publications (2015-2019)

Year	Number of publications/releases
2015	54
2016	64
2017	51
2018	44
2019	75

Nahdet Miṣr published several translations of children's books and stood out in this field. It also publishes children's books predominantly in English by acquiring the publishing rights from international publishing houses.

The Anglo Bookshop: The Anglo Bookshop in Downtown Cairo is considered one of the landmarks of the city. It was established in 1928 and is one of the oldest Egyptian publishing houses that are still active in the publishing field. It stands out chiefly for its publications in a number of fields, including history. Many of its history publications are reprinted on a semi-regular basis, as well as its Egyptology books, especially those authored by Dr. 'Abd al-'Azīz Salīḥ. The Anglo Bookshop is distinguished by its psychology works as well as translations in this field from early on. It publishes many Arab writers, and it lately reclaimed this role with its publishing of *'Awdat al-Malikah Balqīs*, a novel by the Omani writer Amal al-Shanfārī. There is also an interest in the Anglo's published architecture books. It also adopted a digital publishing campaign at an early stage and introduced on-demand printing among its services.

The Anglo Bookshop's Publications (2015-2019)

Year	Translated books	Reprinted books	Published books	Total number of books
2015	9	9	21	85
2016	2	3	56	61
2017	5	5	18	28
2018	11	8	20	37
2019	5	4	21	28
Total				239

Dār al-Salām: Dār al-Salām is currently one of the most established Egyptian publishing houses in religious books, publishing in various sub-categories of this field. Its ḥadīth studies list comprises 112 titles; its Islamic faith and the fundamentals of religion list includes 72 titles; its Islamic studies list includes 369 titles; its jurisprudence list 62 titles; and its prophetic biography and genealogy list includes 75 titles. Dār al-Salām also publishes outside the religious sphere, having published 104 economy titles. It is meticulous in determining the accuracy of its publications and therefore has a good distribution network as well as its own bookshop chain.

Dār al-Salām's Publications (2015-2019)

Year	Arabic books	English books	French books	Spanish books	Italian books	Indonesian books
2015	30	9	2	1	1	-
2016	25	1	1	1	-	2
2017	35	5	-	-	-	-
2018	28	-	-	-	-	-
2019	38	1	-	-	-	-
Total	156	16	3	2	1	2

Al-Azhar became active in the publishing field in the years between 2015 and 2019, precisely through its Islamic Research Academy. This was evident in its increased exhibiting space at the Cairo International Book Fair, where it sold more than 58,500 books during the fair's 2018 edition. The academy also released 27 titles in 2019, and more than 100 titles between 2015 and 2019. There are also publications by the rest of the entities affiliated with al-Azhar. For example, al-Azhar Centre for Translation translates into 13 different languages. For its part, the Islamic Research Academy digitizes several of its publications. In parallel, publications by the Muslim Council of Elders, which operates between Cairo and Abu Dhabi, have stood out, with the council releasing more than 150 English and Arabic titles in the years between 2015 and 2019.

For its part, StoryTel introduced a paradigm shift in Egypt and the Arab region, drawing attention to the increased popularity of audio books. Demand for audio books in Egypt has grown by an estimated 18-20 percent annually. Also, audio books published so far, either by StoryTel or other platforms in Egypt, stand out for their quality. Demand for these books has in turn encouraged the emergence of other similar platforms in a number of Arab countries, especially in Jordan.

Number of books published in Egypt from 2015 to 2019

Year	Number of books
2015	22,500
2016	23,900
2017	24,000
2018	22,000
2019	23,000

Cairo International Book Fair

Three international books fair are organized in Cairo, Alexandria and Shaykh Zayid City; however, the General Egyptian Organization (GEBO) played a more active role during the years covered by this study (2015-2019) in holding book fairs in most Egyptian governorates, a phenomenon that has filled a lot of gaps relating to the dearth in the number of book distribution outlets in Egypt, compared to its population. For its part, the Cairo International Book Fair celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2019 with a transformative shift by relocating to the new exhibition grounds, which enjoy a higher capacity. The fair's management took into account all previous criticism with regards to the organization of the fair, which has in turn increased its turnout as well as book sales. The fair also hosted the Arab League as guest of honour, a reflection of the fair's status as the most important, as well as biggest, fair in the Arab region, with more than three million visitors.

The fair's organizing committee succeeded at curbing the counterfeit books phenomenon in the pavilions of Azbakīyyah Market, which was evident in its 2019 edition. It also introduced the 'Am Amin application, a mobile app that helps visitors easily navigate the fair's different pavilions and find needed books.

Year	Number of participating countries	Number of publishers	Associations, organizations and bodies	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Notes
2015	26	850	28	3,000,000	14 days	350	100 Azbakīyyah booths participated in this edition.
2016	35	850	30	3,500,000	14 days	300	118 Azbakīyyah booths participated in this edition.
2017	35	700	38	3,500,000	14 days	300	119 Azbakīyyah booths participated in this edition.
2018	27	867	38	3,500,000	14 days	350	117 Azbakīyyah booths participated in this edition.
2019	35	741	38	3,800,000	14 days	525	6 Azbakīyyah booths participated in this edition. Received parcels: 60,310

Figures in the table are from the fair's management.

Kuwait

Publishing occupies a prominent place in Kuwaiti cultural life. There is a huge publishing momentum in the country, which has grown thanks to the increase in the number of private publishing houses. In Kuwait, there were 90 publishers in 2018, which retreated to 68 publishing houses in the following year. The biggest indicator of the publishing vigour in Kuwait appears through two main entities: First, the launch of Platinum Book for Publishing and Distribution, which is a youth publishing platform accommodating and publishing young people active on the internet in Kuwait and the Arab Gulf. Platinum also started to hold writing workshops to help new creative writers develop their writing, and also extended its focus and published writers in Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan. Among these writers is Wā'il al-Radād. There are also other Kuwaiti publishing houses that focus on creative production as their main aim while also interacting with readers and creators via its website, to attract greater attention.

This is true of Dār Takwīn, which has translated articles by prominent writers and published works by Arab writers. The above suggests that there is an influx of literary content in Kuwait, which was well accommodated by Kuwaiti publishing houses, which also introduced new generations of writers, in a manner similar to Dār al-Farāshah for Publishing, by introducing novelist Bashāyir al-Shaybānī's *Aktub Li'ana al-Kalimah Hawā'a*.

Yet traditional publishers are still active in the Kuwait publishing industry. These include Dār al-Raḍwān for Publishing and Distribution, which is specialized in educational and university textbooks, but is also a pioneer in publishing interactive digital books. This suggests that traditional publishers are becoming more aware of developments in the publishing industry and are ready to interact with these changes. Dār al-Raḍwān must also be credited for its capacity to publish high quality scientific books in a way that has generated demand for these books outside Kuwait. These medical books include: *Mabādi' al-Aksadah wa Mu Dādatiha*, *al-Wajiz fi Tib al-Sumūm*, and *al-Aghziyah al-Muhandasah Wirāthiyan*.

Dhāt al-Salāsīl, however, remains the most prominent Kuwaiti publishing house. It was established in 1972 and has 16 book distribution outlets inside and outside Kuwait. Out of 330 books published in Kuwait in 2019, 109 were published by Dhāt al-Salāsīl alone. Its book production gradually developed in 2015 when it published 66 books, with the number of published books increasing rapidly every year until it reached 105 books in 2018, followed by 109 books in 2019. On another hand, Platinum's inauguration of a bookstore chain for the distribution and commercialization of books was an incentive for boosting book-selling campaigns in Kuwait, which has relatively revived book distribution in the country.

Table showing two types of private publishing

Year	Publishing house	
	Dhāt al-Salāsīl	Platinum
2015	66	45
2016	67	35
2017	99	28
2018	105	25
2019	109	25

Government publishing

The National Councils for Culture, Arts and Letters in Kuwait occupies a prominent role in contemporary Arab publishing. It has a solid publishing program launched many years ago, which is still operating at the same level, especially its distinctive book series, such as *'Ālam al-Ma'rīfah*, which is published monthly and covers a variety of topics in constantly changing fields of knowledge. Moreover, its translated issues constantly explore vital fields. 40,000 copies are printed of each publication, a record for the distribution of any Arabic cultural book. The series is supported by the Kuwaiti government, and is well distributed across the Arab region. The council's other publications include a literary writings series, in addition to magazines like *'Ālam al-Fikr*, *al-Thaqāfah al-'Ālamīyyah* and *Dhakhā'ir al-Turāth*, as well as cultural publications.

Kuwait University's publishing programme is one of the most distinguished and consistent university publishing programmes. We can attribute this to the high publishing standards applied to the university's publication series, whether books, periodicals, or annals. Accordingly, the university established the Scientific Publication Council, which assesses these standards and ensures they are met. Moreover, Kuwait University publishes in both Arabic and English, which gave its publications a competitive advantage. One good example in this context are the annals published by Kuwait University's Faculty of Arts, as well as several distinct academic periodicals of the likes of the Kuwaiti *Journal of Science*, *Journal of Law*, *Arab Journal for the Humanities*, and *Journal of Engineering Research*.

Other examples include the Kuwait Ministry of Awqāf and Islamic Affairs, which publishes Islamic awareness-raising *nahḍāwī* (enlightenment) books, itself a promising project that was well-received in Arab and international circles. Previously published by the Department of Cultural Affairs, these books have been disrupted since 2018. On the other hand, the ministry still prints several publications by other departments, and digitizes many of them for free on its website. Between 2015 and 2019, it ran a unique Kuwaiti project, which was the Kuwait Islamic Arts Centre's publication of a series of English and Arabic publications in Islamic arts and architecture as well as Arabic calligraphy. It also ventured into translation into Arabic, making an important contribution with the release of a series of Islamic arts and Arabic calligraphy children's workbooks in attractive prints that were distributed for free. The centre's role went beyond Kuwaiti borders, reaching the whole Arab region, as well as Asia, Europe, and North America, which gave the ministry a special international reputation.

Arab organizations:

Kuwait hosts a number of Arab organizations, including the Arab Planning Institute (API), which was co-established by the Kuwaiti government in 1966 along with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In 1972, API became an independent Arab institution. API publishes a

development studies series, having released a total of 69 issues by 2021. It also publishes the Jisr al-Tanmiyyah series, of which 152 issues were released by 2021. Its other publications include Journal of Development and Economic Policies, the Arab Competitiveness Report, and the Arab Development Report; however, most of these publications do not receive ISBN numbers, and therefore do not make it to publication estimates in Kuwait. This is a recurring phenomenon in Kuwait.

Kuwait hosts the Arab Towns Organization (ATO), except that its publishing activity is now limited to publishing the *Arab City Journal*. In the past, ATO published books including *al-Quds* by Ahmad Rā'if Najm as well as the agendas of its scholarly conferences.

Civil society

Several organizations have been established by Kuwaiti civil society, the most prominent of which is the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, which since its establishment has enjoyed the support of the Emir of Kuwait, along with the support of private Kuwaiti companies. This foundation played an active role in translation into Arabic, as well as Arabic publishing, except that this role has diminished in recent years. In 2015, the foundation published no more than six books, three of which were translations. The freezing of the Kuwait International Book Fair awards, for best Arabic and Kuwaiti books, has had a negative impact on the Arab cultural sphere. The resumption of these awards is therefore necessary, especially as they gave vigour to the fair, in addition to promoting Arab cultural and knowledge production.

Kuwait's Abdulaziz Saud al-Babtain Cultural Foundation is an example of an Arab civil society cultural organization that is both efficient and active. The foundation runs a public library that generally focuses on poetry and literature. It also has a versatile publishing programme, which comprises the publications of Babtain's annual festival, including the publications of the festival's 15th edition, which took place in Oxford, United Kingdom in 2015, under the slogan "Challenges of a Shared World," in addition to the publications of poetry festivals. Yet one of the most important aspects of this program is the "al-Babtain Lexicon of Contemporary Arab Poets," an original lexicon, as well as the publications of al-Babtain Centre for the Verification of Poetry Manuscripts, a field that is unique to the foundation regionally. The foundation also launched a translation program for scholarly books, but it was paused four years ago. This takes us to the new publishing institutions that emerged in Kuwait, such as Bayt al-Khayl al-'Arabī, which is specialized in publishing about Arabian horses in both Arabic and English.

Books published in Kuwait

Year	Number of books
2015	615
2016	162
2017	318
2018	343
2019	330

Publishing trends in Kuwait from 2015 to 2019

Geography and history	Literature	Arts	Applied sciences	Pure sciences	Languages	Social sciences	Religions	Philosophy and psychology	General knowledge
125	605	32	108	13	18	267	161	117	32

The social sciences enjoy a substantive share of Kuwaiti publishing, but literature, especially stories, novels, and poetry, remains the most dominant in terms of the number of published titles, something that signals the presence of a creative momentum in the country. The same is not true, however, of publications in applied and pure sciences, which are exceeded by the number of titles in the humanities and social sciences. There is also a steep decline in the number of books covering fields of general knowledge.

Publishing houses in Kuwait

Year	Private publishing houses	State publishing houses	Total
2015	61	55	116
2016	68	54	122
2017	40	53	93
2018	90	35	125
2019	68	46	114

The table above reflects the increase in the number of private publishing houses in Kuwait, which came as a result of a rise in reading activity among Kuwaiti youth, as well as the presence of a solid government program that provides high-quality books. This is at a time when programmes by private publishing houses to encourage the reading and acquisition of books have become more active. Yet the fluctuation in the number of publishing houses, due to the limited book market in Kuwait, remains a problem. One phenomenon must be taken into consideration, however, and that is the existence of a promising book-export movement that operates from Kuwait and exports to a number of countries. Another interesting phenomenon is the presence of high-quality English publications.

Kuwait has solid publishing programmes that have been in place since the 1960s, especially the program of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL), which runs the following publication series: 'Alam al-Ma'rifah, Ibdā'āt, 'Alam al-Fikr, al-Thaqāfah al-'Alamiyah and Silsilat al-Turāth. Another example is the presence of a number of active publishing institutions, such as al-Babtain Foundation, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, and Kuwait University. Yet the number of private and public publishing houses continues to fluctuate. Here, established publishing houses like Dhat al-Salāsil continue to play an important role in the industry, at a time when several new publishing houses are emerging, and then quickly disappearing.

Kuwait is one of a few Arab countries where counterfeit books rarely exist in bookshops. This can be attributed to the commitment on the part of main bookshops, namely Dhat al-Salāsil and Platinum, as well as others, to the professional standards of book displays.

For its part, the Kuwait International Book Fair does not allow the exhibition of counterfeit or pirated books, due to the robust standards set by the fair's management with regard to book displays, which is also reflected in the competent organization and management of the fair.

Libraries in Kuwait

Kuwait is one of a few Arab countries whose libraries are proportional to the size of the population. When it comes to categorizing these libraries in terms of efficacy and the extent to which academic standards are implemented, Kuwait University emerges as a shining example. Kuwait's first community library was established in 1922, and public libraries were affiliated with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education until 1974, when they were transferred to the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, before returning to the Ministry of Education once again in 1988. There are 28 public libraries in Kuwait:

- Mubārak al-Kabīr Public Library
- Al-Qārin Public Library
- Sabāḥ al-Salīm Women's Public Library
- Jabir al-'Alī Public Library
- Al-Firdaws al-'Amah Public Library
- Al-'Aradiyyah Public Library
- Khītan Public Library
- Jalīb al-Shuyūkh Public Library
- Al-Yarmūk Public Library
- Student Services Library at Cordoba
- Al-Qādissīyah Public Library

- Fayḥāa' Public Library
- Al-'Adilīyyah Public Library
- Al-Sulaybikhāt Public Library
- Al-Shāmīyah Public Library
- Al-Dā'iyyah Public Library
- Al-Khālidiyyah Public Library
- Salwa Public Library
- Al-Ramithiyyah Public Library
- Al-Jabirīyyah Public Library
- Al-'Oyūn Public Library
- Al-Jahrāa' Public Library
- Hadiyah Public Library
- Al-Fiḥayḥil Public Library
- Dāhiyyat 'Abdullah Salīm Public Library
- 'Abdullah al-Mubārak al-Subāḥ Public Library
- 'Abdulazzīz 'Abdullah al-Sanad Public Library
- Muḥammad Sālīḥ al-Tarkīt Public Library

These public libraries require new programmes for interacting with their readers and to create an environment of contemporary knowledge. However, many specialists in Kuwaiti libraries prefer transferring the libraries to exist within Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Art and Literature. This is due to problems regarding school libraries in Kuwait, which were traced by the Library and Information Association of Kuwait. The association aims to make library reading a main school subject. The latter was cancelled with the introduction of the curricula system in 1978, which also marked the merger of the library and research methods curricula into one curriculum, before it was merged once again with the IT curriculum in 2006, and was named the Information and Scientific Research curriculum.

Kuwait International Book Fair:

The Kuwait International Book Fair is an excellent example of a well-organized and well-attended Arab fair, which in turn reflected on the purchasing power of the fair's attendees. The fair is an important cultural event that happens annually in Kuwait, and it has become distinguished by its versatile cultural activities, which are carefully planned to raise issues and introduce various views. That said, the decision to ban a number of books during the 2018 edition of the fair raised problems. Yet the intervention of the Arab Publishers Association and the responsiveness of Information Minister Shaykh Muḥammad al-Jabrī relatively resolved this issue. This in turn inspired a youth campaign in Kuwait which raised the slogan "We will say 'no' to the banning of books, stand with us!" Additionally, the fair's figures give excellent impressions, especially in terms of the turnout of children and youth.

Year	Number of participating countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organizations and Bodies	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Notes
2015	28	508		310,000	11 days		Number of private publishing houses: 446, school visits: 640, Sales: KD 2.1 million
2016	30	556		300,000	11 days		Number of private publishing houses: 503, School visits:

Year	Number of participating countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organizations and Bodies	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Notes
							695, Sales: KD 2 million
2017	30	482	59	330,000	11 days	125	Number of private publishing houses: 423, with the participation of over 160000 titles, including 11000 titles published in 2017
2018	26	369	35	330,000	11 days	136	Number of published titles: 87246, including 12200 titles published in 2018
2019	30	490		350,000	11 days		With the participation of 500000 titles, including 3000 titles published in 2019. Exhibition space: 18,500 meters. 720 school visits. Total sales: KD 3.6 million.

Figures in the table are from the fair's management

The State of Palestine

The state of publishing in the State of Palestine mirrors the country's reality. Despite the tough conditions under which people in the West Bank and the territories occupied in 1948 live, the publishing sector in Palestine continues to thrive, as resilient as the Palestinian people. There are 113 publishing houses in Palestine, 23 of which are very active. There are also 257 printing houses and 214 shops specialised in book distribution. Ninety percent of published books in Palestine are in Arabic and 10 percent in English. In content, those books are mainly focused on a literature of remembering, prison literature, poetry, humanities, heritage, religion, and children's literature.

Universities are one of the means by which book publishing is sustained in Palestine, through twenty Palestinian universities and an increased level of education. On the other hand, books in Palestine are besieged. As the occupying state controls all entries and border crossings, Arabic books cannot easily enter Palestine. Pirated or reprinted books are therefore a widespread phenomenon in Palestine, as many books are banned from entry. This phenomenon, which has grown worse, has harmed the Palestinian publishing industry. The biggest of many issues faced by the industry was the postponed establishment of a Palestinian national library – which has deprived this industry of one of its basic components. The recent establishment of a national library, however, has rekindled the hope of attaining the remaining key components needed for a Palestinian publishing industry. Furthermore, inaccurate Palestinian book deposit numbers and the absence of a national Palestinian bibliography has complicated the process of building an inventory of Palestinian intellectual, scientific, and literary works, especially those published prior to 1948.

To observe the publishing world in Palestine, one must start with private Palestinian publishing houses, as they play a critically important role in this domain. One must distinguish, however, between publications published by Palestinian publishing houses that work between Palestine and Jordan, where works are also published in Palestine, and works published in Palestinian publishing houses *within* Palestine:

Dār al-Jundi for Publishing is headquartered in Jerusalem. It was established in 2011, and it has brought out 395 titles. Its book list comprises authors from Tunisia, Iraq, Algeria, UAE, and Egypt, and it publishes content in various domains: religious books, education, science, Arabic language, literary works, and children's literature. Dār al-Jundi cooperates with a number of different Palestinian institutions and schools, where it holds mobile book fairs. In 2015, it won the Best Publisher Prize at the Sharjah International Book Fair.

Maktabat Kull Shay is based in Haifa. Founded in 1970, it focuses on children's literature and specialises in this genre. One of its most prominent children's authors is Mājed Abu Ghosh, whose books include *Ahlām Mājed* (2016), *Farāsha* (2016), *Farah wal-'Osfūr Aṣaghīr* (2016), *An-Nahr al-Ladhi Dallā At-Tariq* (2017), and *Thamrat Shajarat al-Ballūt* (2019). This publishing house has also dabbled in theatre literature; it published Ma'sāt Waḍāḥ, by Sāmi Muhanna. Ever since 1973, the publishing house has held a local book fair in Haifa.

Dār ash-Shāmel li-Nashr is based in Nablus and was established in 2015. It began participating in book fairs in 2015 and has expanded its reach since 2017. Until now, the publishing house's publications have focused on academic books, particularly those specialised in law, novels, literature, and children's literature.

Maktabat Al-Yāziji was founded in Gaza in 1986. It has essentially focused on the history of Palestine and Gaza and stood out for its children's literature. It has produced a number of children's book series, including *Hayawānāt Warada Dhikruha fil Qura'ān el-Karīm*, *Adāb wa Sulūkiyāt*, *Al-Mua'allif as-Saghīr*, *Al-Qiṣas al-'Alamiya*, and *Al-Qiṣas at-Tarbawiya*.

Many Palestinian publishing houses stand out in the publishing domain for their eye-catching and distinguished publications. Tibāq Publishing House in Ramallah has published *Nuṣūṣ wa Qaṣā'e'd Nathriya* by Saudi writer Anghām al-Ghamdi and the collection of poems *'Ala Katifayn min Ta'ab* by Palestinian poet Muhammad Duqqa. Mua'ssarat an-Nāsher in Ramallah has also introduced Sāfi Sāfi's novels, including *Tāyeh* in 2019 and *Al-Bāṭel* in 2017. Notably, in recent years, the number of publishing houses has been on the rise, with diverse publishing interests. One such example is Dārat al-Maha in Nazareth, founded by Maha Suleiman in 2017.

The Palestinian Ministry of Culture also collaborates with Palestinian publishing houses in book production. Examples include the collaboration with Dār Nūn for Media and Publishing in 2019 in publishing *Maqālāt*, a book of correspondence between Ghassan Kanafani and Mahmoud Darwish, put together by Intiyaz Diab.

Recently, the Palestinian Ministry of Culture has been shaping its role in the publishing domain. It has produced 13 carefully selected books by Palestinian authors:

- *Al-matāḥif wa-sirā'a al-falastini al-isrā'īli 'ala huwīyat al-Quds al-mu'aāsira* (*Museums and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict over the Identity of Contemporary Jerusalem*) by Nassab Adib Hussein.
- *Lasstu wahīdan mithla hajar* (*I'm Not Lonely Like a Stone*) by Sami Kilani, prison literature.
- *Hatta ya'ama al-qalb* (*Until the Heart Goes Blind*), by Widad Barghouti.
- *Fī dawi' dafāi'riha tastahimmu al-yanābi'i* (*The Springs Bathe in the Light of her Locks*), by Mazen Dweikat.
- *Saqiya*, by Samih Faraj.
- *Walaw ba'ada ḥīn, aw mawton mua'ajjal* (*Even if After a While, or a Postponed Death*), by Bassam Abu Shawish.

- *Al-aghāni a-sha'abiya al-falastīniya fī qitā'ai ghazza wa aghāni a-sayyadīn*, (*Palestinian Popular Songs in the Gaza Strip and Sea Shanties*), by Khaled Jum'aa and Jamil al-'Abadsa.
- *Fai'd bil-mawt* (*Overflow of Death*) (Poetic prose), by Samih Mohsin.
- *Mukawwināt al-huwiya al-falastīniya fī-sīra a-dhātiya* (*Components of the Palestinian Identity in Autobiographies*), by Nahed Zakout.
- *Malik al-Ghāi'bīn* (*King of the Absentees*), a short-story collection by Elias Sanbar.
- *Yawmiyāt fī sujūn al-ḥtilāl – zinzāna raqam 7* (*Diaries in the Prisons of the Occupation – Cell no. 7*), by Fadel Younis.
- *Portrait li-imraa'a ghāi'ba* (*Portrait of an Absent Woman*), by Israa Arafat.
- *Dhākiratu al-mukhaiyam* (*Memory of a Camp*), by Nabil al-Arini.

Notably, literature prevails over all other Palestinian productions. Prison literature has also been rising, reflecting the situation in Palestine. An initiative called Asrā Yaktubūn (Prisoners Write), sponsored by the Jordanian Writers Association, has also published *Rassā'e'l ila al-Qamar* (*Letters to the Moon*) by prisoner Hussam Zahdi Shahin, in collaboration with Dār a-Shurūq in Ramallah.

In collaboration with the Palestinian Ministry of Culture, the General Federation of Palestinian Writers and Authors has published a book titled *Lissijni Madhāqon Akhar* by prisoner Ussama al-Ashqar.

The University of Palestine publications, books, and periodicals have also been growing, while the Khalidiya Library in Jerusalem has published numerous books, some of which it has brought out in collaboration with the Institute for Palestine Studies.

The Institute for Palestine Studies is considered one of the most important Palestinian research institutes, which publishes many journals and quarterlies. Those include the *Journal of Palestine Studies* and the *Jerusalem Quarterly*, both of which are published in Arabic and English, with some articles available for download on their website.

The encyclopaedia *Bilāduna Falastīn* (*Palestine Our Land*), published in 2018 in 11 volumes, is considered its most prominent publication. Authored by Mustafa a-Dabbagh and introduced by Walid al-Khalidi, its author refers to Muslim messengers and geographers, a number of history books in Arabic or translated into Arabic, and Arabic dictionaries, journals, and newspapers. The encyclopaedia discusses Palestine's location, area, population, natural features, administrative divisions, and its history, from prehistory to the modern age.

The institute has diversified its publications and topics, but its books have remained focused on documentary and intellectual studies as well as political analyses. These include a collection of Mahmoud Darwish's articles, assembled in a book titled *Maqālāt al-Yawm a-Sābe'e* (*Articles from al-Yawm a-Sābe'e*).

Number of Publications by the Institute for Palestine Studies

Year	Number of publications
2015	13
2016	12
2017	12
2018	18
2019	19

Palestinian reading-promotion initiatives, which also encourage book purchases, are quite varied. The most prominent is the Palestinian Ministry of Culture initiative, launched as part of Al-Kitābu lil-Jamī'e project (Books for All), during which it distributed 350,000 books to 1700 universities, institutes, libraries, refugee camps, and cultural institutions, including in 1948 Palestine.

The Books for All initiative follows three courses of action:

- Printing 50 books by Palestinian authors.
- Increasing the number of local publishers to strengthen publishing in Palestine.
- Distributing books to libraries across different sectors in Palestine.

What amazed the cultural milieu in Palestine, however, was the success of Kitābon A'ala a-Raff (A Book on a Shelf) initiative. In September 2019, the initiative held its fourth book fair, where the question of unread books, stored on bookshelves for a long while, was interrogated. As such, people with unread books in their houses offered them to the initiative coordinators. Once the book was sold, its owner received the revenues generated from the book. In 2019, the initiative's success peaked as it collected 3000 books sold for cheap, with a huge turnout.

Books published in Palestine from 2015 to 2019

Year	Number of publications
2015	356
2016	207
2017	720
2018	1104
2019	829

The Palestine International Book Fair

The Palestine International Book Fair has faced all manner of challenges as it sought to continue and sustain itself. During its eleventh edition in 2018, the fair received half a million visitors, which is a record number, considering the conditions under which it was held. A good collaboration between the Palestinian Ministry of Culture and publishers, however, has helped the fair succeed. The Palestinian Ministry of Culture exempted publishers from participation fees, while publishers gifted some of their books to the Palestinian National Library. Furthermore, giving First Book awards to writers, towards the end of the fair's third edition, added a cultural aspect to the fair, inspiring and introducing a new generation:

- Muhanad al-Akhras, based in Baq'aa Camp in Jordan, won the Jabra Ibrahim Jabra Award for Novels for his novel, *Al-Jarmaq*.
- Poet Muhammad a-Zaqzuq, based in Gaza, won the Ola Khalili Award for Poetry for his poetry collection titled *Khānani al-'Arrāfūn*. Denied a permit by the Israeli Occupation Authorities, Zaqzuq could not attend the awards ceremony in person, and poet Khaled Jum'aa received the award on his behalf.

Both the Samira Azzam Award for Short Stories and Abdul Latif Aqel Prize for playwrights were withheld, thus giving credibility to the awards.

Many local book fairs are held in Palestine. One of them, held September 2019 in Beit Sira village, west of Ramallah, was a collaboration between village institutes and the Young Creators Club, called Reading is Life (Al-Qirā'a Hayā) at Diwan Al-Haj Hall in the village centre. The Young Creators Club was established in 2016 and managed to establish a public library that holds 6000 books.

Year	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights Deals	Notes
2016		400		400,000	10 days		Number of participants includes rights deals too; set up on an area of 3000 m2; 500 thousand book titles
2018		500		500,000	10 days		Number of publishing houses includes the number of rights deals; set up on an area of 5,000 m2; 60 thousand book titles; 1,200,000 USD in overall sales

The figures are from the fair's management.

Note: the Palestine International Book Fair is held once every two years, depending on the political situation and the Israeli Occupation authorities. It was held in 2016. However, in 2018, the Israeli Occupation authorities prevented Arab publishers from directly participating in the fair.

The State of Qatar

The number of book titles printed in Qatar more than doubled from 2015 to 2019. Four hundred and seventeen titles were published in 2015 in Qatar, which rose to 1020 in 2019. This is mainly thanks to the introduction of new publishers into the publishing field in Qatar. Most prominent of those are the Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) Press, which has offered books in many different domains, including novels, short stories, academic and cultural books, all in handsome and high-quality publications. Likewise, the Qatar University Press began to enhance its domain by launching a digital publishing platform. In parallel, the Katara Cultural Village launched its own publishing house in 2018 with a focus on publishing Qatari authors and heritage in both Arabic and English, as well as in other languages.

Many up-and-coming publishers in Qatar have adopted a straightforward approach to meet Qatar's visitors' needs, which follows in the footsteps of the internationally successful approach already practised in Dar al Athār al Islamiya in Kuwait. Some of the institutes that take this approach are the Qatar Institute Museum, whose most prominent models are the publications of the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha.

Many established publishers in Qatar are still noticeably active, such as the Qatari Ministry of Culture. In recent years, they have actively focused on publishing poetry collections by Sudanese poets and literary works by Qatari authors, covering many aspects of Qatari history and heritage. In parallel, the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs is equally active, and they produce one of the most prevalent series in that domain, *Kitāb al-Ummah* book series, along with a number of different Islamic books on an annual basis, most of which are distributed for free, locally, regionally, and internationally.

Al Jasra Cultural Club, founded in Doha in 1960, is still remarkable, though its presence has waned as against previous years. The Qatari Writers and Authors Association, on the other hand, has yet to develop its own unique role in publishing.

Qatar's speedy efforts to mark its presence in the Arab publishing scene has driven it to push to build publishing houses that belonged to either public or private institutions. One promising new publishing venture has since appeared, following the 2019 launch of the Qatar National Library. It is currently preparing to launch its own publishing house. The importance of the new Qatar National Library lies in overseeing many digital publishing projects, in multiple formats, in both Arabic and English. It particularly focuses on the Arab Gulf region as well as on Islamic Arab heritage. Furthermore, it provides audiobook services in multiple formats for free, and has enabled access to children's e-sources online, which has increased visits to the library. Interaction with its public grew as the library focused on purchasing multimedia tools for knowledge.

The Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies in Doha has also been a distinguished publisher in the Arab publishing scene and present in Arab book fairs. The centre publishes a number of rigorous academic journals, book series, and reports, some of which are written by its own research units.

The Qatari Ministry of Culture and Sports translation initiative, Years of Culture, has created a strong base for cultural exchange and enriched the library of translations: Qatar/India (2019), Qatar/Russia (2018), Qatar/Germany (2017), Qatar/China (2016), Qatar/Turkey (2015), Qatar/Brazil (2014), Qatar/UK (2013), and Qatar/Japan (2012).

Al-Doha Magazine is considered a pioneering magazine in the Arab world. Its motto, 'A Meeting of Arab Creation and Human Culture' has embodied openness, interaction with different intellectual, cultural, and artistic streams in the Arab world, and an observation of the intellectual, social, and cultural transformations throughout different modern periods. A monthly magazine published by the Ministry of Culture and Sports, it addresses an Arab cultural readership. It was founded in 1969, and its first issue, published on 5 February 1969, was themed "Media-Radio Management". It remained a platform for Arab authors and readership from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf, and throughout the diasporas around the world.

In 2011, the magazine underwent an important development when it began publishing the monthly *Doha Book*, offered for free with the magazine. The book presented excerpts of constituent writings from the modern Arab Nahda (or Renaissance) in the first half of the twentieth century, alongside other writings that enriched a contemporary readership's knowledge.

Of the pioneering journals specialised in Islamic affairs is the Qatari *Majallat al-Ummah*, which was published in the years 1980-1986, alongside *Kitāb al-Ummah*, a platform for Islamic thought. In the same field, *Al-Maa'thūrāt a-Sha'abiya* magazine was published, specialised in Arab heritage and Arab Gulf heritage, just as A-Saqr magazine was, the latter a pioneering cultural and intellectual platform in the Arab world ever since its foundation in 1977.

Books published in Qatar from 2015 to 2019

Year	Number of publications
2015	417
2016	488
2017	677
2018	811
2019	1020

After recently introducing two important awards, Qatar began to garner attention in the publishing field. These were:

- The Katara Prize for the Arabic Novel, which has innovated in an unprecedented field: its prizes are given to unpublished novels and critical studies, whose publication Katara later handles.

Its prize categories are the following:

- Published Arab novel: 5 prizes, 50 thousand USD each.
- Unpublished critical studies and research: 5 prizes, 15 thousand USD each.
- Unpublished Young Adult novel: 5 prizes, 10 thousand USD each.
- Published Qatari Novel: one prize, 60 thousand USD.
- Importantly, the Katara Prize began to create a database of Arab authors and a library of novels. It also publishes *Sardiyyat* magazine.
- The Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding. This award was founded in Doha in 2015. It differs from other awards as it focuses on areas like English to Arabic translations and Arabic to English translations. The total value of the award in each category is 200,000 USD. The award also focuses on Arabic to Chinese translations and Chinese to Arabic translations, each award worth 200,000 USD. The award's founders also choose three languages from and into which the translation award will be given, at a value of 100,000 USD for the book that wins the translation into Arabic award that year. The languages have included Urdu, Amharic, and Dutch. This is the only Arab prize in the field of translations that awards translations both from and into Arabic.

The Doha International Book Fair

The first edition of the Doha International Book Fair started in 1972. It used to be held once every two years until 2002, when it turned into an annual event. In 2018, Russia was the fair's guest of honour. The fair management is careful to invite countries with a hefty cultural legacy and intellectual production. The fair provides key services to its visitors, especially through its paper and digital guides. It also provides carts to transfer books from the exhibition wings to visitors' cars and controls book quality throughout the fair, especially agented books – to avoid repetition and to prevent pirated books in Qatar and its fair. The State of Kuwait has also followed a similar path.

Year	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights	Notes
January 2015	29	432	5	350,000	11 days	28	25,000 received packages; 5500 returned packages; nearly 15 million Qatari riyals in sales
December 2015	26	455	5	350,000	11 days	19	27,000 received packages; 6,000 returned packages; nearly 16 million Qatari riyals in sales
2016	33	480	8	500,000	11 days	31	30 thousand received packages; 5 thousand returned packages;

Year	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights	Notes
							nearly 18 million Qatari riyals in sales
2017	29	355	8	500,000	7 days	24	26 thousand received packages; 3500 returned packages; 18 million Qatari riyals; set up on an area of 23,500 m ² – 150 publishing houses specialised in children's literature
2018	30	427	10	500,000	10 days	30	30 thousand received packages; 5 thousand returned packages; nearly 19 million riyals in sales

The figures are from the fair's management.

More than 100,000 children visited the thirtieth edition of the Doha International Book Fair. The fair management dedicated an important section of its intellectual and cultural programming to interactive workshops, panels, and platforms that targeted the promotion of children's books and discussions centered around their requirements, in terms of printing, publishing, and distribution.

The Sultanate of Oman

The Sultanate of Oman is considered one of the most promising Arab countries in the publishing field. Despite the limited capacity of Omani publishing houses and publishing movement, the Sultanate has, at this stage, sufficient components to enable it to embark on the realm of publishing.

To this effect, efforts have been made—and still are being made—by the Omani Ministry of Heritage and Culture. The ministry has also managed to enter the virtual sphere by making its publications accessible, as soon as they are available, on its website, Bawwābat Massāder al-Ma'arifa. It is also currently working on building an e-library on its website.

Notably, the Sultanate of Oman publishes a collection of encyclopaedias that could be a foundation for a publishing movement. Those include *Al-Mawsū'aa al-'Omāniya*: This is one of the cultural projects that contribute to a Omani reference library. It comprises everything related to humans, nature, the economy, society, heritage, history, and literature. Previously, Oman published the *Sultan Qaboos Encyclopaedia of Arab Names*.

Furthermore, what ensures a publishing future in the Sultanate of Oman is the Omani database of authors and writers that the Ministry of Heritage and Culture has set out to build. Their efforts complement the project launched by the Omani Studies Centre, which assembles and preserves

Omani intellectual production and enables access to it. The centre holds 8400 titles and 2500 dissertations, most of which were authored by Omanis.

The Omani Ministry of Culture publishes a number of publications: peer-reviewed heritage books and studies, which come out on an annual basis; a quarterly titled *Tafāhum*; and the works presented during its annual symposium, *Tatawwur al-‘Olūm al-Fiqhiya*.

Ever since its establishment in 1983, the Omani Cultural Club has contributed to the Omani publishing movement. It has been a pioneer in publishing a number of Omani authors' works, and even held public readings to introduce their creations to the cultural world in Oman.

Other prominent efforts in Oman include the Literary Club's, founded in 1985. The Literary Club has many publications under its name, especially works presented in the symposia it has held. Its most notable project was a field survey of the literary infrastructure in Oman.

Here, the private sector plays an important role in publishing. One may trace its effect through three projects.

Dār al Warāq was founded in 2015 in Oman. It started off with 35 titles, but stood out in 2019 for adopting a project of publishing books on Omani history and heritage. It published *Al-Mahāliba al-‘Omāniyūn: Rijālu el-‘Ilmi wa-Siyāsa* by researcher Yusuf Rawadi and *Ālu a-Rahil: Khamsatu Qurūnin min Siyāghati al-Hayāti Siyāsiya wal-‘Ilmiya fī ‘Omān* by Dr Badriya al-Wehibi. It also launched a literary series to introduce Omani literary personas to the public, along with an educational book series for children.

Throughout its short-lived years, **Dār al-Ghishām** in Muscat was a promising venture. It published more than 330 titles, most of which are by a new generation of writers in the Sultanate. The closure of the house was a shock to the cultural milieu in Oman and the Arab world. Still, writer Muhammad al-Rahbi, who played a key role in **Dār al-Ghishām**, founded **Dār Lubān** and launched it with dozens of publications. The publishing house is set to publish between 60 and 70 publications a year.

Children's literature in Oman has begun to shine in recent years, with the establishment of **Dār al-Batrīq** by Omani translator and publisher Fahd bin ‘Amer a-Sa‘idi, who has translated more than 26 important children's literary works and stories into Arabic. In parallel, Omani writers specialised in children's literature, including Dr Wafaa' a-Shamesi, author of *‘Azzūz Yaftaqidu Mama* (Azzuz Misses Mama) and others, began writing their own works.

Cultural and general-interest Omani magazines have also helped the Omani publishing movement. These are regularly published; the most notable is the quarterly *Nazwa Thaqaifiya*.

Omani society has also periodically launched reading promotion initiatives. Those include *Iqara'* (Read), affiliated with the Social Committee at the Zubair Institute, whose objective is to disseminate books in public spaces, including hospitals. It gifted, for instance, a library to the Sultan Qaboos Hospital in Salalah.

Al-Moj neighbourhood has also launched the Free Little Library initiative, where little libraries are set up throughout open spaces, from which individuals can borrow books or share their own books for others to read.

Publishing houses in the Sultanate of Oman

Year	Number of publishing houses
2015	27
2016	30
2017	34
2018	34
2019	34

Libraries in the Sultanate of Oman

Year	Libraries	
	Public	Private
2015	26	63
2016	28	67
2017	68	29
2018	71	30
2019	64	32

The table above reveals a steady increase in the number of libraries in Oman. Additionally, many reading promotion projects, organised by the state and civil society, organise free public readings in a number of different libraries. These include the initiative led by the ‘Omān al-Ma‘arifa platform, Qirāa’t Kitāb, wherein ‘Oman al-Ma‘arifa members read a book to the public in public spaces, followed by a discussion of the book. This initiative was launched in 2017.

Books published in Oman

Year	Number of books
2015	502
2016	489
2017	588
2018	631
2019	767

Books translated in the Sultanate of Oman

Year	Number of Omani books translated into different languages	Number of foreign books translated into Arabic
2015	16	6
2016	15	8
2017	15	8
2018	12	20
2019	8	8

Muscat International Book Fair:

The Muscat International Book Fair is set apart by the fact that it has sponsors that support the fair, enabling excellent services for its visitors. Sponsors include the Oman Telecommunications Company and Oman Post, which, in an attempt to encourage reading, ships any books that weigh less than three kilograms anywhere in Oman. The fair management provides media services via a comprehensive media centre in the fair, Jalīs, and is paralleled by cultural and artistic conferences.

Year	Number of attending countries	Number of publishers	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights	Notes
January 2015	25	498		704,312	10 days	179	180,000 book titles
2016	27	650		682,187	10 days	115	Fair area is 8550 m ² ; 250,000 titles; Japan attends the fair for the first time
2017	28	757		826,006	10 days	173	450,000 titles
2018	28	783		1,000,060	10 days	180	500,000 titles
2019	30	828		1,000,212	10 days	253	523,000 titles

The figures are from the fair's management.

The Kingdom of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Bahrain has a notable cultural elite. Modern forms of creative production in Bahrain began at the beginning of the twentieth century. The most important event the Bahraini publishing sector experienced between 2015 and 2019 was the establishment of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities. It is headed by Dr Mai Al Khalifa, who is considered one of the most influential cultural personas in not just in Bahrain, but in the whole Arab Gulf cultural scene. With the foundation of the authority, culture became institutionalised in Bahrain, officially sponsored. The authority's role in publishing has thus grown quickly. The most important project proposed by the authority was the translation project called "Transfer of Knowledge," launched in 2016. The authority has also proceeded to provide interactive e-services through its website, such as:

- A chronological timeline of the history of Bahrain.
- An interactive map of Bahrain.

- Virtual book fairs and tours.

The authority has also adopted an artist directory in Bahrain. It also heads Masār a-Lo'lo' Project (The Pearly Path Project), which is expected to introduce many books on the heritage and economics of pearl diving. In terms of a digital contribution, the authority provides free access to many publications on its website through its cultural e-library, including *Majallat al-Bahrain a-Thaqāfiya*. The authority has also launched a book series, *Al-Bahrain a-Thaqāfiya*, and other publications that promote reading in Bahrain.

The Joint Publishing Project is one of the projects launched in Bahrain a few years ago, with good results. Through it, some Bahraini books, or Bahrain-related books, or others written by a non-Bahraini writer on Bahrain-related topics, are designated for translation. As long as a book contributes to the cultural scene in Bahrain, it is eligible for nomination. The project is jointly run with the Arab Institute for Research and Publishing in Beirut, and has focused on literature and the arts, publishing more than 100 books.

In Bahrain's publishing scene, the Isa Cultural Centre also stands out. The centre contains the national library, and has brought out a number of publications, such as collected and republished newspapers from early Bahrain. It also sponsors and publishes the Bahraini Authors Dictionary and has held a Bahraini Women's Book Fair. It currently promotes publishing and books in Bahrain through the Bahrain Book Club, which discusses one book every month, analysing and critiquing it.

As a scientific and academic institution, the University of Bahrain plays its own role in the publishing sector in Bahrain. In 2013, the university's Scientific Publishing Centre launched five e-journals, which are still being issued today. The University of Bahrain also provides pre-publishing services to individual authors looking for help with book indexing.

The publishing sector in Bahrain is also visible in a number of institutes. Those include Beit Al Quran Museum, which has numerous publications, and Sheikh Ebrahim bin Muhammad Al Khalifa Centre for Culture and Research.

While Bahrain is undoubtedly home to a cultural movement and creative production, the latter is not fully satisfied by the publishing sector in Bahrain. Many examples could be brought up here; several Bahraini authors and creators turn to the Gulf, while some go beyond the Gulf and into the overall Arab publishing scene. Writer Nabi al-'Akri's first edition of *Dhākirat al-Waṭan wal-Manfā* (Memories of the Homeland and Exile) sold more than one thousand copies in less than a year. Thus we can understand the various places and publications that have published Bahraini poet Qassim Haddad's poetry. Born in 1948 in the city of Muharraq, his works have been translated into a several languages. More than 49 Qassim Haddad creative works have been published in a number of editions in Bahrain, Kuwait, Beirut, Cairo, Casablanca, Baghdad, Tunis, London, Damascus, Dubai, and Sharjah.

One cannot discuss publishing in Bahrain without stopping at the Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International, and Energy Studies, which is one of the most important research centres in Bahrain. It publishes strategic studies and periodical reports and studies twice a year and focuses on report-publishing on its website.

The Arab Club is a key cultural institution in Bahrain. It was founded in 1939 and thus celebrated, in 2019, 80 years of publishing. It is a local community institution, and it publishes a quarterly every three months, *Al-'Orūba*.

Number of books published in Oman (2015-2019)

Year	Number of books
2015	301
2016	420
2017	370
2018	280
2019	265

Bahrain International Book Fair

Bahrain is a society of readers. Although the publishing sector in Bahrain is quite limited, on an individual level, Bahraini society is dynamic and culturally proficient. Most Bahrainis have their own home libraries, which encourages many Arab publishing houses to participate in the Bahrain International Book Fair, held once every two years. The Bahraini Authority for Culture and Antiquities also gives the Bahrain Book Award to Arab writers, at a value of 50,000 USD, presented during the Bahrain Book Fair.

Year	Number of attending countries	Number of publisher	Associations, Organisations, Committees	Number of visitors	Duration of the fair	Rights	Notes
2016	22	345	30	150,000	11 days	150	175,000 Bahraini dinars in sales, a 70% increase compared to 2014.
2018	26	400		200,000	11 days		18,000 fair visitors; visited by 9000 pupils.

The figures are from the fair's management.

The Bahrain Book Fair is held once every two years.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Although some Arab countries have been living through unrest and difficult circumstances, the cultural and publishing movement have not stopped. Libya, for example, saw 1008 books published in 2015, and also saw an increase in published books during the following years, reaching 760 books. It should also be noted that 15 local book fairs were held between 2015 and 2019, which affirms that the future of Arabic books in Libya is a promising one, despite all the circumstances which Libya has been undergoing.

In parallel, the situation in Somalia must also be revisited. Book production has faced a host of challenges, and yet the country saw 2000 titles published in 2018 – a record number for Somalia. Several publishing houses there are currently active; their number is estimated at 49.

Statistics have likewise shown that Saudi publishing has grown into a 4.5-billion-riyal industry, and that Saudi-translated books in 2018 made up 18.26 percent of published works in Saudi Arabia.

One could also note an increase in e-book publishing; a lack of national deposit e-book numbers, however, has prevented access to an accurate count. Morocco is one of the few countries with a precise count of e-books, and they saw 457 Arabic titles, 168 French titles, and 56 English titles digitally published in Morocco in 2018.

Many factors have contributed to e-book self-publishing online:

- The Arab publishing world has been incapable of satisfying the needs of Arab knowledge production, particularly works produced by the younger generations.
- Author rights are unclear to many publishers, of which the younger generations are now critical. In their view, only a small number of publishing houses have clearly defined the obligations towards their authors. The number of self-published e-books is 674 titles in Iraq, 1832 in Egypt, and 2274 in Sudan. This is a preliminary count at best, and potentially higher.
- No national deposit numbers exist in Arab countries for e-books and audiobooks, an issue which must be addressed.
- Many Arab publishing houses have avoided supporting the works of younger authors. This is clearly prevalent in poetry, novels, and the humanities. In Egypt, the number of poetry collections whose publication was self-funded by the author ranges between 65 and 80 percent per year, throughout 2015 to 2019. In Morocco, 45.5 percent of poetry publications are self-funded.

Islamic book publishing maintained a slow growth between 2015 and 2019. There have been new actors in the field, however, such as *Al-Azhar a-Sharif*, affiliated with Al-Azhar Observer (although books published by the latter are not given any deposit numbers); the Muslim Council of Elders, which works between Abu Dhabi and Cairo; Arrabita al-Muhammadiya lil-'Ulamāa', whose publications have flourished in the past five years; and Believers without Borders (Mou'minūn bila hudūd). Saudi universities have maintained the prominent role they play in this domain, such as Umm al-Qura University and the Madinah Islamic University. Ministries of endowments (waqfs), such as the Egyptian Ministry of Endowments, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, and the Moroccan Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs have also played an important role. Still, the development of Islamic book publishing is thought to be in decline, in comparison with the leaps that Islamic books have seen during the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. Furthermore, new Islamic books are far less prevalent than novels and humanities studies.

State-sponsored clear and defined publishing programmes have positively impacted publishing in each state. The number of books produced in Morocco in 2014 was 1469, whereas in 2019, after the introduction of a clear and defined publishing programme supported by the Moroccan Ministry of Culture, the number of published books reached 4219.

Iraq has seen a notable rise in publishing, but mainly in self-publishing. As Iraqi publishers resumed their work, the Baghdad Book Fair relaunched, Iraqi university libraries returned to life, and a new generation of authors and writers emerged. Thus, publishing in Iraq developed. This began when 300 titles were printed in celebration of Baghdad being the Capital of Arab Culture in 2013. After a period of silence, it put many Iraqi authors in motion. Likewise, governmental publishing houses have resumed work. Iraq remains one of the countries expected to vigorously revive its Arabic publishing movement. The country's Writers Association has also played an active and helpful role in such a return. Still, Iraq needs the following:

- Resist and limit book piracy.
- More printing houses and skilled printing personnel.
- More skilled book designers and directors.

Iraq is distinguished for having a detailed record of its publishing movement, which renders its publishing reality a good and promising one.

One of the biggest issues that publishing has faced in occupied Palestine is the lack of a national library. Likewise, several Palestinian publishing houses cannot participate in Arab book fairs and have no book listings. The publishing sector in Palestine is mainly dependent on Jordan. The overall number of publications in Palestine between 2015 and 2019 has reached 3184 titles. Palestinian publishing houses rely on book distribution for 70 percent of their business, and on book publishing for 30 percent. The Palestinian Ministry of Culture has published a number of books, but far fewer than those that the Palestine Liberation Organization or the Centre for Palestine Studies used to publish (whose role has dwindled in this domain).

Syrian publishing houses suffered immensely between 2015 and 2019. The average number of titles that any Syrian publishing house published used to be between 40 and 100 a year. Now, however, publishing houses publish between 20 to 40 titles at best. Syrian state publications have also declined in number. Syria now publishes one thousand titles a year, a number that does not match Damascus' former status as one of the most important Arab publishing hubs.

Although the number of printed books has increased in the Arab world, one must consider that the number of printed books in every edition (besides novels) ranges between 500 and 1000 copies. Some editions barely make it to 200 copies. This is the result of the following:

- On-demand printing technology, which enables publishers to print a smaller number of copies to test a book's marketability, which is a positive factor.
- Smaller demand for books that are beyond a bookshop's distribution range, and a smaller demand for specific topics, which is a negative factor.

An economically viable edition of any given book should have no fewer than two thousand copies, while taking into consideration that two thousand books should enable publishers to properly distribute to marketing outlets.

Another notable phenomenon has been Arab publishing houses that work between more than one Arab country. Such collaborations first started between Cairo and Beirut, spread to Kuwait and Cairo (Dār Su'aād a-Sabbāh), then Beirut, Cairo, and Tunis (Dār a-Tanwīr), Saudi Arabia and Beirut (Ashabaka al-'Arabiya), and finally to Doha and Beirut (the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies). Such widespread collaborations have positively impacted publishers. One sees it in the presence of several Maghrebi authors throughout Beirut's publishing houses: Al-Markiz a-Thaqāfi lil-Kitāb, which works between Casablanca and Beirut, and Mou'minūn bila Hudūd, which works between Rabat and Beirut.

The publishing sector has also developed in the Arab Gulf. Intellectuals from the Gulf cultural movement have been establishing publishing houses, with a diversity of published books, addressing topics new to the Gulf publishing world.

Sharjah is a driving force in publishing in the Gulf region. It has founded the Sharjah Book Authority, a publishing “Free Zone” for books, book awards, and book-production support programmes. New actors in the publishing world have also emerged, such as the Sharjah Heritage Institute. Furthermore, Sharjah is considered the biggest Arabic book publisher in the UAE. Some international publishing houses have also started to work from Sharjah, such as the British Austin McCauley Publishers, which publishes in both Arabic and English.

The multiplicity of book fairs in one country is considered a positive factor, which influences the publishing world in that particular country. This has been clearly visible in the UAE (Abu Dhabi and Sharjah) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, Jeddah, and Al-Qassim). Al-Qassim Book Fair, which was held in Buraidah City, drew wide attention in 2018. More than 950,000 visitors attended, 200 publishing houses participated, and 1.3 million books were bought—remarkable numbers for a national book fair. Iraq is a country that has encouraged a variety of book fairs. The Baghdad Book Fair returned and saw the participation of 600 publishing houses; Basra International Book Fair hosted 150 participating publishing houses; Najaf International Book Fair hosted 150 publishing houses; Karbala Book Fair hosted 70 publishing houses. The Erbil International Book Fair, which has its own special status, hosted 300 publishing houses. Those fairs affirm the presence of a dynamic readership in Iraq. Meanwhile, book fairs in Egypt have multiplied in the past five years. Three international book fairs are currently held in Egypt: in Cairo, Alexandria, and Zayed. Furthermore, not one major Egyptian city does not hold a book fair, and there are fairs in Desouk, Damanhur, Asyut, Ismailia, Suez, and other cities.

Publishers from Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria have the highest levels of participation in regional Arab and international book fairs. After them, there are those somewhat less present both regionally and in the Arab world, such as Kuwait, UAE, Morocco, Jordan, Algeria, and Tunisia. In other Arab countries, participation is more limited, like Iraq, Oman, and Sudan; while countries like Yemen, Djibouti, Somalia, and Libya are virtually absent or participate in book fairs in a very minimal manner.

Lebanon is a phenomenon worth its own separate study. Compared with other Arab countries, publishing numbers in Lebanon rank in the middle. The publishing industry in Lebanon, however, is an established and stable one, with its own solid traditions. Publishing spaces in Lebanon enjoy a margin of freedom wider than that provided in other Arab countries, which has impacted the Lebanese publishing movement. The Lebanese publishing sphere is thus open to all Arab writers, with no restrictions or limitations, which one can see reflected in the quality of Lebanese book content and their quality production and printing. Books published in Lebanon thus seem to occupy a much larger space in the Arab world than the numbers listed in this study might imply.

The publishing crisis in the Arab world is mainly manifest in books’ home base: libraries. Few public libraries exist in neighbourhoods, cities, and villages. Publishers are subsequently not called upon to supply many books. The public library’s book supply and their policies are two questions that will impact the future of the Arab publishing world—indeed, they will make or break it. A conference between the Arab Publishers Association and the Arab Library and Information Association should therefore be held, to address and examine the relationship between the publishing industry and the small number of public libraries in the Arab world. This conference could potentially be sponsored and supported by the ALECSO.

An Arab enterprise that establishes and consolidates national libraries is needed in a number of Arab countries, such as Djibouti, Mauritania, Comoros, Sudan, and Yemen. It could be achieved through e-libraries, e-books, or e-building, as national libraries are one of the pillars of the publishing sector in any given country.

A project funded by one of the institutions that sponsor Arab culture is needed to hold book fairs in Djibouti, Somalia, Mauritania, and Comoros over three consecutive years. This would create new prospects for Arabic books and would strengthen the publishing sector in those countries.

Translation in the Arab world still needs more support. Although it is commonly held that official institutions publish the largest number of translations into Arabic, the truth is that the lion's share of translation work has been carried out by private publishing houses. In terms of content, humanities studies and literature are most prevalent in translation. Some Arab institutions translate from and into Arabic, such as the Tunisia Institute for Translation, which has thus far published 131 translated books. Translation from Arabic into other languages, however, desperately needs solid initiatives that organise the process of selling authors' rights and marketing the translation of Arabic books into other languages. As regards the translation of technical and applied sciences, a translation programme at King Saud University produced, between 2015 and 2019, a number of translations of reference books in several scientific fields, particularly in dermatology, dentistry, and other fields.

One of the crises of monitoring the publishing sector in the Arab world is that some Arab institutions are not meticulous about getting deposit numbers. Some universities, institutes, and research centres publish books without deposit numbers. Had they not been available on different websites, it would have been impossible to list accurate numbers for the Arab publishing world. Likewise, some publishing houses in some Arab countries publish books without any deposit numbers. Some publishing houses themselves are not registered in national registries, either as associations or organisations, especially those located outside the traditional publishing centres in Arab countries. Book numbers and data have been collected and listed, for the first time, in this study, which has made it twice as taxing as previous reports. The Arab publishing world is much larger than what it may seem, especially when considering all the e-books and audiobooks without deposit numbers. This further clarifies the issue of properly monitoring and tracing the Arab publishing movement.

One must then raise the question: Do Arabs read? Contrary to what is commonly believed, yes, they do read. Readership averages have increased, especially in the past nine years. The number of published books has subsequently increased, and so has the size of production. This is clearly the case with novels and many humanities studies, especially history and other relevant domains, such as autobiographies.

The repetition of names among Arab publishing houses confuses the checking and evaluation process of publishing in the region. Name repetition also hinders strong commercial ties with these houses. There is no real coordination in branding among Arab publishing houses, which would help build solid publishing domains.

One of the notable phenomena in recent years is the emergence of Arab publishing houses in the diaspora, particularly in France and Canada. Likewise, some foreign publishing houses have also managed to penetrate the Arabic publishing field, like Leiden in the Netherlands. Another notable example is Dār Manshūrāt al-Mutawassit in Milan, which has managed to meet the needs of the Arab diaspora in Europe, carving out a place for itself in the publishing sector in the Arab region.

Many publications in the Arab world lack national deposit numbers, which is a recurrent phenomenon in most Arab countries and is exacerbated in some countries, such as Libya, Somalia, and Sudan. One may thus deduce that publishing in the Arab world is much larger than what had been observed in previously published reports. Lack of deposit numbers equally hinders the creation of a bibliography of Arabic publications.