

COUNTRY REPORT

THAILAND

The Thai Publishing Industry 2007

The publishing business in Thailand has steadily grown since 2003, with a small decline in 2006, due to political instabilities. The estimated value of trade book sales in 2007 was around 18 billion baht, of which 88% was obtained from the sales of 110 large and medium sized publishing houses. The rest was from trade sales of 381 small size publishers, who were registered members of the Publishers and Booksellers Association of Thailand.

In 2007, approximately 955 new titles were launched per month to bookstores around 11,460 titles yearly. It is estimated that Thai people read only 2 books for pleasure per year and spend about 285 baht (9 US dollars) yearly on buying books. These figure show that Thailand is still far behind the so-called developed countries regarding new titles launched, and reading habits as shown by the number of books read and the amount of money spent on books.

However, Thailand still has opportunities for expanding the publishing market, it is expected that in the year 2008, the market value will reach 19.2 billion baht or around 600 million US dollars. A possible downside in 2008 stem from economic issues such as the fluctuation of oil prices or the rising inflation.

Some interesting figures regarding the publishing business:

Table 1 Numbers of publishers and bookstores in Thailand

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Publishers*	374	433	475	492	491
Bookstores**	678	759	848	955	1,913
Total	1,052	1,192	1,323	1,447	2,404

Note: * registered members of PUBAT

** From Se-ed Bookstore's report

These figures show a steady increase in the numbers of publishers and bookstores in Thailand, during the years 2003 to 2006. However, the number of publishers dropped slightly in 2007. The overall increase over the 5 years was 31.2%. The number of bookstores increased from 678 in 2003 to 955 in 2006, and to 1,913 in 2007. The overall increase over the 5 years being 182%. The introduction of "Book Smile" in the 7-11 chain stores in 2007 has contributed mainly to the dramatic increase in 2007.

Table 2 Trend of numbers of publishers categorized by size (revenue)

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Large Publishing House*	20	25	30	36	40
Medium Publishing House**	44	54	65	61	70
Small Publishing House***	310	354	380	395	381
Total	374	433	475	492	491

Note: *Revenue=more than 100 million baht

**Revenue=more than 30 million baht

***Revenue=less than 30 million baht

While the number of small publishing houses has dropped, the number of medium and large publishing houses has increased 13.4% between 2006 to 2007, due to their expansion.

Table 3 Revenue of publishing houses in Thailand

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Large Publishing House	6 bil. baht	7.5 bil. baht	8.7 bil. baht	10.6 bil. baht	11.3 bil baht
Medium Publishing House	2.5 bil. baht	3.5 bil. baht	4.2 bil. baht	4.2 bil. baht	4.5 bil baht
Small Publishing House	2 bil. baht	2.1 bil. baht	2.1 bil. baht	2.1 bil. baht	2.2 bil baht
Total	10.5 bil. baht	13.1 bil. baht	15 bil. baht	16.9 bil. baht	18. bil bath

In 2007, all categories of publishing houses in Thailand gained higher incomes, in comparison to the figures of the previous years. The revenues of the medium and large publishing houses witnessed a dramatic increase of 87.8% over the 5 year period.

Table 4 Numbers of new titles launched from 2003 to 2007

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
New titles/year	10,108	11,103	11,651	11,236	11,455
New titles/day	27.7	30.4	31.9	30.8	31.4

The number of new titles increased steadily from 2003 to 2005, dropped in 2006, but recovered ground in 2007.

Table 5 Numbers of titles launched per publisher from 2003 to 2007

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
New titles/year	10,108	11,103	11,651	11,201	11,455
No. of Publishers	374	433	475	492	491
New titles/publisher/year	27.02	25.64	24.53	22.83	23.33

These figures show that publishers now have a tendency to publish fewer titles, being more selective to publish only titles that they feel will be popular with the reading public.

Table 6 Book Revenue VS Gross Domestic Product (in baht)

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Book Revenue/year	10,500	13,100	15,000	16,900	18,000
GDP	5,928,975	6,503,488	7,102,962	7,716,225	8,485,200
Book revenue VS GDP	0.17	0.20	0.21	0.22	0.21

According to these figures, in comparison with the GDP of the Thai economy, the book business in Thailand is insignificant. Therefore, the ups and downs of the economy do not have much impact on book sales. Books in particular, are not considered a luxury item. The most important factors influencing the book business in Thailand seems to be the government's education policy, the human development policy, the publishers' own creative abilities, the efficient book management, and the strength of the networking in the book business.

Table 7 Amount of money spent on books (per head)

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Book expense /year	166.42	210.55	239.78	259.93	285.54
GDP/head	93,142	101,304	109,696	144,500	128,564
Book expense/ head/year	0.18	0.21	0.22	0.18	0.22

Even though the GDP fell between the years of 2006 to 2007, the amount of money spent on books actually increased.

Table 8 Numbers of population VS bookstores

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
population	63,079,769	61,973,621	62,418,054	64,631,595	63,038,247
Number of bookstores	676	759	848	955	1,913
Persons/bookstores	99,313	81,651	73,606	67,677	32,952

There is a very small number of bookstores compared to the total population of Thailand, as shown above. However, as mentioned earlier, the introduction of in the 7-11 outlets in 2007 has helped to redress the balance.

PUBAT's Activities in 2007

1.1. Domestic Activities

☆ Promoting “Reading” as a National Agenda

PUBAT in cooperation with government bodies and organizations in the private sector (totally 31 in all) has set up a National Agenda in order to “Promote Reading among the Thai population”.

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Public Health
- Ministry of Justice
- The Government Public Relations Department, Office of the Prime Minister
- The Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior
- Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
- The Publishers and Booksellers Association of Thailand
- Thai Health Promotion Foundation
- Thailand Knowledge Park
- Thailand Library Association
- P.E.N. International Thailand-Centre under the Royal Patronage of H.M. The King
- Writer's Association of Thailand
- The Translators and Interpreters Association of Thailand
- Preschool Education Association, Thailand
- Tai Wisdom Association
- Cultural Affairs Association
- The Stock Exchange of Thailand
- Book for Children Foundation-ThaiBBY
- Foundation for Children Development
- Sikkha Asia Foundation
- Siam Cement Foundation
- The Mirror Foundation
- Cartoon Thai Institute, Foundation for Children
- Sathira-Dhammasathan
- Rakluke Institute
- YIY (Why I, Why)
- KB-Reader
- Pineapple Media
- We Are Happy

☆ Organized three book fairs

- 35th National Book Fair & 5th Bangkok International Book Fair 2007 (March 30 – April 10, 2007)
- 5th Book Festival for Young People 2007 (July 25-29, 2007)
- 12th BookExpo Thailand 2007 (October 17-28, 2007)

- ☆ **Co-Organized to hold the Book & Magazine Fair** with the Magazine Association of Thailand (November 21-25, 2007)
- ☆ **Book for Gift Campaign**
- ☆ **Book Barter Project**
- ☆ **PUBAT Charity for Disadvantaged Children**
- ☆ **Bookstore Awards**

1.2. International Activities

☆ Participated in International Publishing Activities

- Taipei International Book Fair, Taipei, Taiwan
- Brunei Book Fair, Brunei
- London Book Fair, London, UK
- Bologna Children's Book Fair, Bologna, Italy
- Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair, KL, Malaysia
- APPA Annual General Meeting in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- World Book Fair, Singapore
- BookExpo America, New York, USA
- Seoul International Book Fair, Seoul, Korea
- Tokyo International Book Fair, Tokyo, Japan
- Hong Kong Book Fair, Hong Kong
- Manila International Book Fair, Manila, the Philippines
- ASEAN Book Publishers Association AGM Meeting in Manila, the Philippines
- Frankfurt Book Fair, Frankfurt, Germany

☆ Attended in the international forum/seminar

- January 30, 2007, The Publishing Market of Thailand, Taipei, Taiwan
- February 25, 2007, Business Networking Among ASEAN Publishers, Brunei
- March 31, 2007, Ten Books You Don't Want to Miss! (From Each ASEAN Country), Bangkok, Thailand
- April 28, 2007, Publishing: Applying the Blue Ocean Strategy, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- August 29, 2007, Enhancing Business Profitability in Book Publishing among ASEAN Countries: Ways and Means, Manila, the Philippines