


The communication potential of the book as a mass medium in the age of new communication technologies



<p style="text-align: center;">Jitka Rožňová <i>Philosophiae Doctor, Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and New Media, Faculty of Arts, E-mail: jroznova@ukf.sk, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2308-1873, WOS ID AAM-1333-2020, SCOPUS ID 57189296717 Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, B. Slančíkovej 1, 949 01, Nitra, Slovak Republic;</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Zuzana Kozárová <i>Philosophiae Doctor, Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and New Media, Faculty of Arts, E-mail: zkozarova@ukf.sk, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1693-2342, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, B. Slančíkovej 1, 949 01, Nitra, Slovak Republic.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Citation:</i></p> <p>Rožňová, J., & Kozárová, Z. (2024). The Communication Potential of the Book as a Mass Medium in the Age of New Communication Technologies. <i>Social Communications: Theory and Practice</i>, 16(1), 80–95. DOI: 10.51423/2524-0471-2024-16-1-8</p> <p>© Rožňová, J., & Kozárová, Z. (2024).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)</p>
--	--

Annotation

The specificity of the book results from its dual, diametrically different gist because it is considered an art artifact and a mass medium. On the one hand, it is distinguished by the characteristics defined by media studies, and at the same time - in a different context - it takes an oppositional attitude towards them and tends to the characteristics of an artistic artifact. We also find the mentioned opposites in the relationship between the book and the audience: due to the wide spectrum of genres, authorial approaches, and production procedures, the book could be perceived by the audience as a unique work of art and simultaneously as a product of mass culture. The communication potential of the book also corresponds to the aspects mentioned above, which essentially remain unchanged. It continues to be/can be a source of new information, knowledge, artistic experiences, entertainment, or relaxation. Still, the advent of new technologies has brought/is bringing a whole spectrum of changes. The biggest change - by the advent of the Internet and smartphones - is the acceleration and simplification of communication in the production, distribution, and sale of books process. These technological changes also significantly affect the mutual relationship between the book and the reading public. The reader is not just a passive recipient of its content and visual component but also an active participant in perception. In the article, we analyzed the specificities of the book as a mass medium in the cultural space, as well as its communication prerequisites for the reader in the era of new communication technologies. The main aim of the survey was to find out how

book readers perceive new technologies or how new technologies affect the reading habits associated with book usage. The article has a summarizing character in the theoretical part and an overview in the practical part. It represents an introduction to more detailed research, the results of which will be presented in articles published in other issues of the journal Social Communications – Theory and Practice. We will focus on the book's impact on increasing media literacy and critical thinking among children and youth, as well as on various technologies facilitating the use of the book's potential in the mass media and artistic spheres.

Keywords: *book, communication technologies, culture, mass media, audience.*

Introduction

The development of the book from its handwritten form to its current electronic form was conditioned by social, political, cultural, and economic changes, which over the centuries significantly influenced and changed humanity in its most elementary components, as well as in individual segments of its life – including the perception of the book and its role and importance in a person's life. Technological development, which was and continues to be one of the initiators of these changes, shaped and reshaped the communication potential of the book – preserving certain common features that do not change even under time influence, but simultaneously bringing new impulses that determined and are determining several key changes at all levels of book culture as copyright, publishing, distribution, and readership. The invention of the letterpress brought changes not only to the book production by replacing manual copying with the printing press but also affected its visual and content components and the relationship between the book and the reader. Victor Hugo called the invention of the printing press one of the greatest events in history – the mother of all revolutions. It was a media breach of fundamental importance, and as with any other extension of man, it led to psychological and social consequences that suddenly shifted previous boundaries and models of culture, and with new extension came new knowledge and perception (Kasarda, 2013). The possibility of producing a large amount of more or less identical prints was a completely fundamental transformation of communication possibilities compared to manuscript rewriting. The invention of the printing press reduces the time to produce a copy of a manuscript. A larger space opened up for reformist ideas and currents, and the traditional division of power, based primarily on the principle of inheritance, rigorous control of education, and the ideological and economic supremacy of the church, gradually began to weaken (Jiráková, 2015). The letterpress, as a technology of revolutionary importance, was also associated with the expansion of the spectrum of functions that the book – as a mass medium – fulfilled and continues to fulfill to the recipient and society as such. Even though several centuries have passed since Gutenberg's invention, it has survived in its primary form to the present. Thanks to modern innovations, it has moved the book as a work of art and a mass medium into new dimensions, while in some aspects it has strengthened and expanded it in others, on the contrary, it has weakened its power and the quality of its communication potential. Combining antiquity and the Middle Ages, the printed book created the third, modern world, which today meets new electronic technology, a new extension of man (McLuhan, 1991). Digital technologies have become another dimension, which – similar to the invention of the printing press in its time – has significantly changed and continues to change the form of (mass) media culture and its interaction with the surrounding world.

Even though the book is defined as a mass medium within the framework of medialology, unlike television, radio, or new media, it remains for a long time at the interface of artistic

(aesthetic) and mass media communication and possesses the characteristics of a work of art and a mass medium, which makes it exceptional in a certain sense, and therefore in the process of mass media research it is necessary to emphasize and accept this specific position.

The communicative potential of the book is broad not only in the context of its changes over time and under the influence of old, innovative, and new technologies but also in terms of further research at the level of establishing/erasing the boundaries between unique and commercialized, artistic and mass media, individual and mass. In fact, in today's globalizing world, the aforementioned opposites do not represent immutable autonomous worlds but create – thanks to new communication possibilities – a space for connecting, bringing together, and regrouping segments and phenomena, the integration of which was impossible even a few decades (or even just years) ago.

Historical aspects of the development of the book as a mass medium

The main starting point for the study of the development of mass media is the social changes that took place when Johannes Gutenberg came up with a way to build a printing press and thus print multiple copies of the same original. Therefore, the emergence of mass media is often heralded precisely by the invention of the letterpress, a technological innovation of such fundamental importance that it is sometimes referred to as the «print revolution» (Briggs, & Burke, 2010). This change affected not only the way of book production but also its content (genre) and visual appearance (graphic design, materials used).

In the early 16th century, two important intellectual and artistic movements intervened in the development of printing in Europe: the Renaissance, which manifests itself in literature as humanism, and Luther's Reformation. In addition to the religious books of the Reformation and scientific and artistic books, popular publications (adventure novels) and calendars were published in large quantities already in the 16th century. The bookbinding of the first edition was mostly still Gothic, while the wooden boards of these bindings were often replaced by boards made of glued papers (waste). In addition to the «ordinary», cheap binding for fewer solvent customers were published books in luxurious gilded binding intended for monarchs, high church dignitaries, and the nobility (Kneidl, 1989).

The successful use of letterpress technology in text reproduction was also the first step in the creation of media institutions. Various forms of monopolies began to emerge that served the purposes of censorship, but also provided some protection for authors and allowed a certain standard to be maintained (Johns, 1998). Printing gradually became a new craft and an important branch of commerce (Febvre, & Martin, 2010). Printers ceased to be merchants and became publishers, the two functions gradually becoming distinct. Equally important was the discovery of the notion and role of the «author» since older manuscript texts usually did not have living authors. At the beginning of the 16th century, the role of the professional author often supported by a wealthy patron, appeared. Each of the successive development steps reflected the emergence of the market and the transformation of the book into a commodity. Book publishing in the late 16th century contained many essential features of modern media – including the early form of the reading public. Later, the history of the book took place not only in the sign of a gradual increase in circulation and expansion of the range of content but also in the fight for freedom of the press and the rights of authors. One of the first and at the same time the most famous and telling demands for the freedom and independence of the press was published by the English poet John Milton in 1644 in his treatise *Areopagitica*. Freedom of the press went hand in

hand with democratic political freedoms and was achieved after the victory of democracy in individual countries (McQuail, 2009).

Several discoveries in the 19th and 20th centuries (the steam engine, mechanical paper production, the invention of the high-speed press, and the typesetting machine), which caused the Industrial Revolution, also contributed to the letterpress improvement. The complexity of these discoveries caused the printing craft to change into an industry during the 19th century. Inventions speeded up, cheapened, and comprehensively rationalized the book production, but did not particularly contribute to its aestheticization. On the other hand, the discovery of new graphic techniques had a favorable effect on the illustration possibilities. It lent them – as well as the decoration of the book – new aesthetic features. In the 19th century, binding also became mechanized and the use of bookshelves became the most common method of industrial binding. Technical development in this period caused the book to become cheaper and further democratized, at the same time it distanced the author from the printer as the immediate speaker of the book. In the new conditions, extensive multi-volume works of professional literature, as well as titles of beautiful literature, began to be published. In parallel with the large-scale production of books on cheap paper, the effort of certain private printers to prioritize quality, regardless of profit or loss, also grew (Kneidl, 1989).

The period after World War II was characterized by an enormous increase in production, the advent of phototypesetting, and the advent of offset. The creation of new fonts and methods of graphic editing of books have seen great progress and have become an integral part of book architecture (Kneidl, 1989).

Currently, the book represents a specific sphere with identifiable characteristics of mass media. These often do not appear in the same form and intensity as in other types of media. This is due to the already mentioned connection of the book with the diametrically different levels of mass media and art.

The specifics of the book as a mass medium in the cultural space

The readership can be considered the historically first media audience. The publication of books and other printed matter gradually led to the distribution system establishment of secular texts that interested people could procure and use for instruction, entertainment, and pleasure. Readers were mainly concentrated in cities and belonged primarily to the newly established social class, the bourgeoisie. The printed text could be read anywhere and at any time, so there was no need for the people exposed to a certain message to be present at the same time in the same place. It was with the creation of the reading community that the first truly dispersed media audience emerged as part of the social change that was connected with the advent and development of letterpress. The development of letterpress led to new reading practices and habits, primarily to the transition from intensive to extensive reading (reading an ever-growing number of titles). This opened up space for the late onset of certain reading habits (flipping pages, skipping parts of texts, skimming the text, ignoring details and aesthetic qualities, transition from loud to silent reading, from pre-reading to intimate contact with the text) (Jiráková, 2015).

Mass media assume a mass audience characterized by large numbers, significant anonymity, socio-cultural diversity, and temporal and spatial dispersion. It is unrooted from the point of view of the context of the communicated message and receives the communicated messages in a large number of identical copies. Its existence is based on the use of media production technology and, in the eyes of publishers and broadcasters, it has the potential to

ensure return on investment and profit. This is also why the mass media - to gain the attention of the largest possible audience, and thereby obtain the highest profit – bring content aimed at the lowest common denominator and create a new, specific type of cultural production, characteristic of mass culture (Jiráček-Köpplová, 2015).

The concept of a mass audience suggests that the media addresses really «everyone» with its content, no one is excluded, and the media message is potentially intended for everyone. This statement is false (Jiráček, & Köpplová, 2015) Media rarely try to sell a product, service, or message to everyone. Instead, they attempt to determine how the entire population can be divided into meaningful segments (Potter, 1998). The existence of segmented audiences is connected primarily with the growing commercialization of the audience, which leads to the fact that the media tries to attract the attention of certain consumer groups defined, usually by sociodemographic characteristics, income, and consumption habits.

Even in this case, the book as a mass medium deviates from the usual formulas and definitions – it is parallel anchoring in the frameworks of artistic and mass media communication presupposes opposite poles not only at the level of cultural inclusion but also at the level of identification of the readership, which absorbs the communicated contents and also at the level of aesthetic perception, not only at the level of mass culture.

If we perceive a book in the position of a work of art, we find the most identifying features in the definition of an elite audience, which cannot be associated with the idea of an "average", "ordinary" person, but rather with the idea of an intelligent, educated, naturally curious individual with a sense of beauty, searching value even in the contemporary world, critically approaching to texts and topics (at the same time, an active reader). In connection with the book, we can also talk about a specialized audience, defined by certain professional interests, professional focus, etc. The emergence of a specialized audience falls roughly at the same time as an early elite audience. It is a consequence of the interest and professional specialization of the audience, caused by the development of the arts and sciences (Jiráček, & Köpplová, 2015).

The third specification of the audience regarding the book is connected with the advent of new technologies (mainly the Internet and social networks), which allow the recipients of communicated messages a greater degree of active participation in the creation and final modification of the message. This also leads to the homogenization and fragmentation of the audience, supported by a richer media offer, later by the decentralization of network media and a greater possibility of interactivity (Jiráček, & Köpplová, 2015). A member of an interactive audience has quite a bit of choice in what he reads and what form he ultimately chooses to take. Last but not least – whether it will rather take the position of a member of the elite readership, inclined towards high-quality content in terms of content and visuals, or whether it will be aimed at a mass audience with a more commercial orientation. Naturally, it is not possible to define the exact boundaries between the elite and the mass audience by their definition presented above, since these characteristics are general, they do not take into account possible changes in the perception of members of individual audiences, or factors involved in changing interests under the influence of various events in the personal and professional life of individuals.

Research methods and techniques

The article's main goal was to approach the main aspects of the book as a mass medium in the era of new communication technologies, namely at the level of elementary theoretical starting points and research (probe) aimed at obtaining «field data». They will serve us for

specific research carried out in connection with the main topic, the results of which will be presented in the following issues of the journal «*Social Communications: Theory and Practice*». As part of the above-mentioned survey (probe), we specified – without claim to completeness – selected communication technologies influencing the habits associated with the use of books, reading behavior, and the way of perception and reception of the textual and visual essence of the book as a mass medium and a work of art, using the method of qualitative content analysis. In the contribution, we analyzed the book specifics as a mass medium in the cultural space and its communication prerequisites for the reader in the era of new communication technologies.

The short questionnaire survey was focused on determining reading habits in the era of new communication technologies. Questionnaires were distributed in electronic form (on the bookstores' Facebook page) but also in printed form (in bookstores and libraries in Nitra, Nové Zámky, Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, and Košice), from February 14th to 27th in 2024. Questionnaires were filled out by 92 respondents aged 19–73 (40 respondents aged 19–40 and 52 respondents aged 41–73). Respondents answered 5 questions:

1. Which form of book do you prefer and why?
 - a) printed (explain);
 - b) electronic (explain);
 - c) audio (explain).

2. Do you use mobile applications designed for book readers?
 - a) yes (specify);
 - b) no.

3. Which method of access to books do you prefer?
 - a) purchase (specify whether in a brick-and-mortar bookstore or via the internet);
 - b) borrowing from the library;
 - c) different way (specify).

4. Which statement regarding the function of the book is most accurate for you?
 - a) i need it for studying and/or performing my profession;
 - b) i learn new knowledge about the world;
 - c) it is a source of entertainment and relaxation for me;
 - d) it is a source of artistic/aesthetic experience for me;
 - e) different way (specify).

5. Do you think the book in printed form should survive even in the era of new technologies?
 - a) yes;
 - b) no.

Regarding the questionnaire survey, we established the following hypotheses:

H1: We assume that most respondents prefer a printed book.

Reasoning: The printed book is connected with tradition and stereotypes rooted in Slovakia for centuries. Direct contact with the book, the possibility to leaf through it, and the smell of the book, are the most common reasons why it continues to enjoy great popularity.

H2: We assume that more than half of the respondents do not use any of the mobile applications intended for book readers.

Reasoning: These applications resonate mainly in the consciousness of young users, and their use among middle and older generations is not yet significantly widespread.

H3: We assume that most respondents prefer to buy books (more than half of them in brick-and-mortar bookstores).

Reasoning: Prioritizing the purchase of a book is also related to the need to own it and return to it at any time. Buying in brick-and-mortar bookstores is connected – as in the case of the first question – with a certain tradition, rituals, and stereotypes. Customers still prefer direct contact with the book before buying, the possibility of flipping through it and visually perceiving it. However, due to time constraints, the number of those who buy books electronically from the comfort of their homes is also increasing.

H4: We assume that most of the interviewed respondents perceive the book as a source of entertainment and relaxation.

Reasoning: The fast lifestyle and demands that modern people have to fulfill in their personal and professional lives increase their need for relaxation, which they associate with a book.

H5: We assume that more than half of the respondents think that the book in printed form should survive even in the era of new technologies.

Reasoning: The printed book has a centuries-old tradition in our society, and reading a book is associated with certain customary scenarios (in an armchair, with coffee and tea, etc.). Despite the high proportion of households equipped with the Internet, many readers (especially members of the older generation) do not have the Internet and/or are not interested in using it.

The communication potential of the book in the era of new communication technologies

The most fundamental aspect of information and communication technology is digitization, the process during which all texts (symbolic meanings in all encoded and recorded forms) are converted into binary code and can be produced, distributed, and stored by the same process. Authors have much more options and opportunities when they publish their texts on the Internet and create their typesetting. New media have opened up alternative forms of publishing, which means new possibilities and challenges for the traditional publishing business. In some types of Internet publishing, we find traditional publishing functions (editorial interventions, authorship verification), but in others, we do not encounter them. The role of the audience hides great possibilities for change, especially toward greater autonomy and equality concerning resources and suppliers. An audience member is no longer part of a crowd but is either a member of a chosen network, a member of a special audience group, or an individual. In addition, the audience activity is moving from simple reception to search, consultation, and more personal interaction. New technologies have freed us from many constraints, although there are still many social and cultural reasons why many communication activities have a fixed place (McQuail, 2009).

In this context, it is important to point out that new technologies do not offer us new stories but expand the possibilities of active and passive content consumption. Whether we will choose from them or just let them affect us is rather a question of media education, critical thinking, and

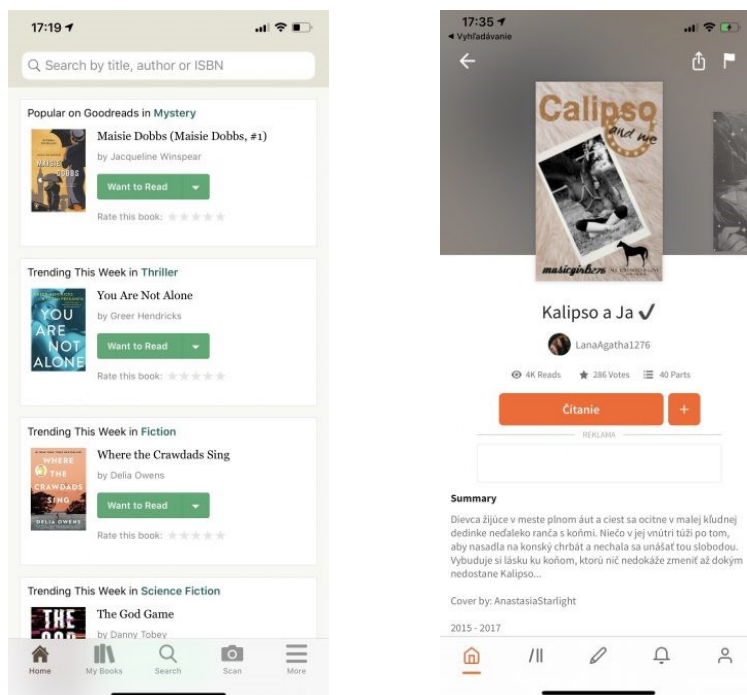
learning, how to approach the world of media and popular culture, and how to look for moments and situations, that can be liberating, enriching and emotionally appealing for each of us (Kasarda, 2013).

The relationship towards information, its hierarchization, production, and thus also to creation, has also changed in a revolutionary way. Popular culture quickly converged with digital technologies and subsequently, the Internet, because the appeal of the virtual world lies precisely in an interesting change. In contrast to the passive perception of media content, there is also the appearance of a certain participation in the content, the feeling of necessary presence, and participation in the entertainment. At the same time, the Internet offers an extreme degree of individualization in the selection of popular culture products, which is also related to the current problem of copyright infringement. Currently, the problem is not diversity, or subculture, but rather the leveling of values. On the Internet, any information becomes equal to any other information, often there is no editorial principle, and there is no hierarchization of information. At the same time, there is a new way of communicating with celebrity culture on social networks or specialized servers. Fan pages and professional websites oriented towards popular culture are becoming community places, but also a space for brand commodification. At the same time, the huge amount of choice also leads to the individualization of interests. Subcultural spaces are created where there is an exchange of information and news from an area that is interesting to the consumer for some reason. Sharing the same interests with other people can have not only negative, but also positive aspects – it can return the recipient to an interactive, active approach, and thus contribute to increasing the level of his creativity (Kasarda, 2013).

The advent of new technologies has also had a significant impact on book culture – starting with the creation of a book, through its production, distribution, sale, and audience perception. At the level of the creation of a book by the author, as well as its production and distribution by the publishing house, the computer, and the Internet have become an integral part of «event» at all levels – from the actual writing (creation) of the text to the use of electronic dictionaries, geographically and time-limited, fast communication between authors, editors, publishers, illustrators, printers, booksellers to shape the image, strengthen the good name and build active contact with the audience (e. g. through social networks). New technologies have lent new characteristics to the book as a work of art and mass medium, and have also influenced its more modern appearance.

In particular, new technologies affected the reading public. They influenced not only their approach to the book but also their reading habits and reception methods, respectively level of activity and interaction. The most fundamental change brought about by new technologies was the arrival of electronic books (e-books) and auditory (audio) books, which expanded the offer in terms of form. In addition, new applications appeared for real and potential readers, which highly influenced their behavior and reading habits. We present some of them for illustration.

Goodreads is a mobile application that serves as a database of books and at the same time as a social network where books that the user owns, reads or wants are stored for free. At the same time, it allows you to evaluate books, write reviews about them, create virtual shelves from them, and communicate about them with other readers. The more books the user rates in the application, the more accurate recommendations will be offered. After entering your favorite genres, it will recommend reading tips. At the same time, Goodreads also serves as a shopping advisor – after pressing the appropriate button, it will scan the book's barcode, which displays the ratings of other readers (Vinc, 2020).

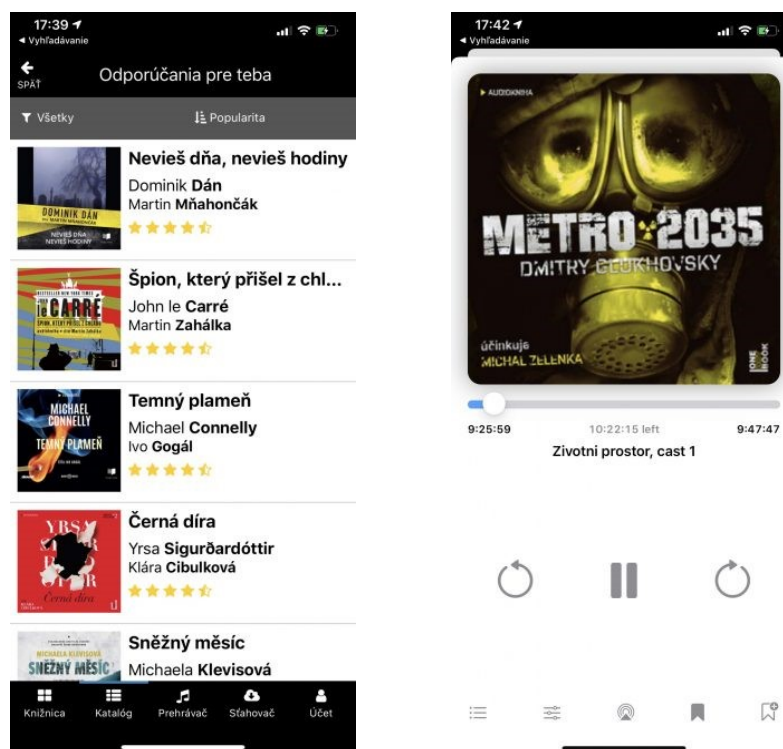


Picture n. 1–2 Goodreads a Wattpad (Source: Vinc, 2020).

Wattpad offers a database of over twenty million e-books and stories by amateur authors and young, emerging writers from around the world, as well as those who give these authors a chance at publication. Everyone can publish their book here, which results in lower quality, but sometimes also interesting and elaborate author texts that users of this application can read for free. You can choose according to individual genres and categories. Books in Slovak are also represented in the database (Vinc, 2020).

Martinus.sk Audiobooks allows you to listen to a rich library of audiobooks in the Slovak and Czech languages through the browser after purchase. The advantage of the application is that users can listen to a preview before buying a title, thanks to what they can find out whether they like not only the plot but also the voice and delivery of the artist. After purchase, the audiobook can be directly downloaded to the device via Wi-Fi, thereby saving mobile data.

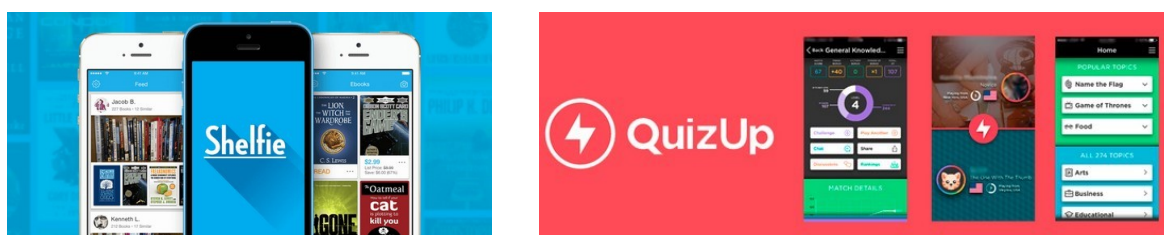
Bound-Cloud Audiobooks is intended for fans of audiobooks purchased outside the store with their player or still on a CD carrier, which they can comfortably listen to using this application. It is compatible with several cloud storage, but it is possible to download a book directly from your computer. Subsequently, the application behaves like a classic audiobook player, that is, it recognizes their chapters, remembers the last playback stop, and also supports saving time bookmarks.



Picture. n. 3–4 Martinus.sk Audiobooks and Bound – Cloud Audiobooks (Source: Vinc, 2020).

Shelfie connects books and readers. After the user downloads the application and a photo of his library, it takes him to the online world: it tags his books, recommends them as e-books, and can also follow the bookshelves of others (e.g. his friends). Books of all genres are represented on Shelfie, from classics to bestsellers (7 Najlepších aplikácií pre milovníkov kníh 2015, 2015).

QuizUp is an application with tests and quizzes, including tests and quizzes about books. The user logs in with an email or Facebook account and chooses from a menu of quizzes: he/she fills in book titles, literary figures, and authors. It also allows you to choose a teammate from any corner of the world with similar interests and similar results/experience (7 Najlepších aplikácií pre milovníkov kníh 2015, 2015).



Picture n. 5–6 Shelfie a QuizUp (Source: 7 Najlepších aplikácií pre milovníkov kníh 2015, 2015).

These and many other technological innovations have improved access to books in a form other than print, thus creating the conditions for young people to find their way to them and eliminating many obstacles (spatial, time). Currently, the share of households with Internet access is growing significantly, and the number of smartphones is just as high. However, we also

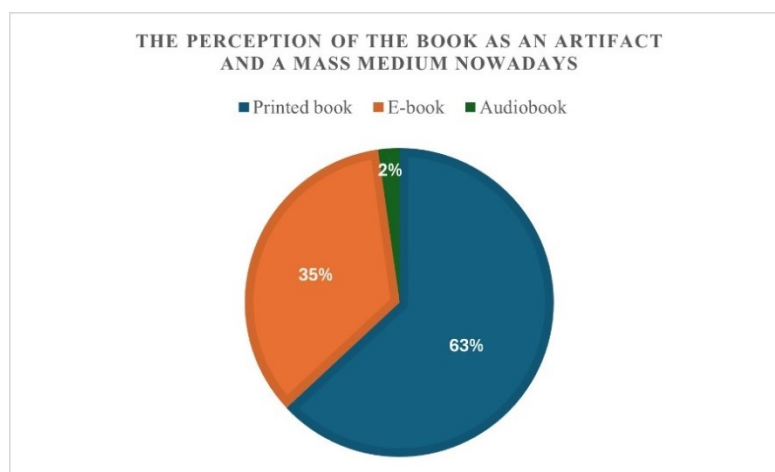
positively perceive that the traditional printed book continues to be popular, in bookstores, second-hand bookshops, and libraries.

Results and discussions

After evaluating the questionnaire survey, we came to the following conclusions:

H1: We assume that most respondents prefer a printed book.

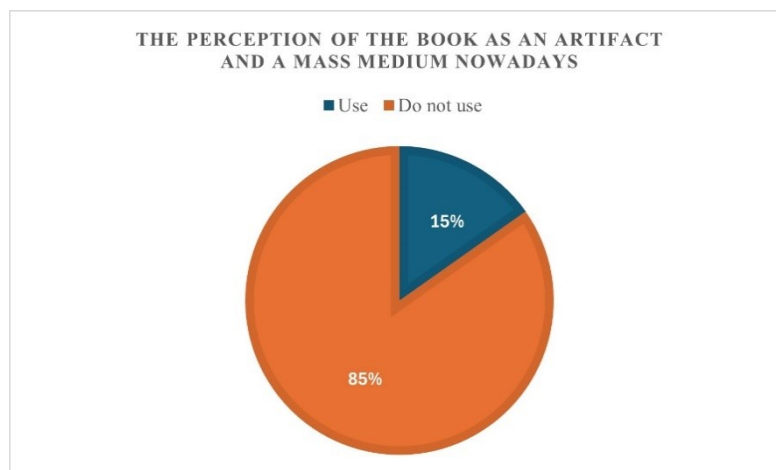
The hypothesis was confirmed: 58 respondents prefer a printed book. The most frequent arguments were tradition, habit, a better feeling when in personal contact with a book, the possibility of leafing through it, the smell of a book, and the ritual associated with reading. 32 respondents prefer an e-book and justify their choice mainly by saving space and practicality. Only 2 respondents mentioned they prefer an audiobook because it can be listened to, for example, while driving or other activities, while also appreciating the preservation of eyesight.



Graph Nr. 1 Questionnaire survey – hypothesis 1 (Source: own processing).

H2: We assume that more than half of the respondents do not use any of the mobile applications intended for book readers.

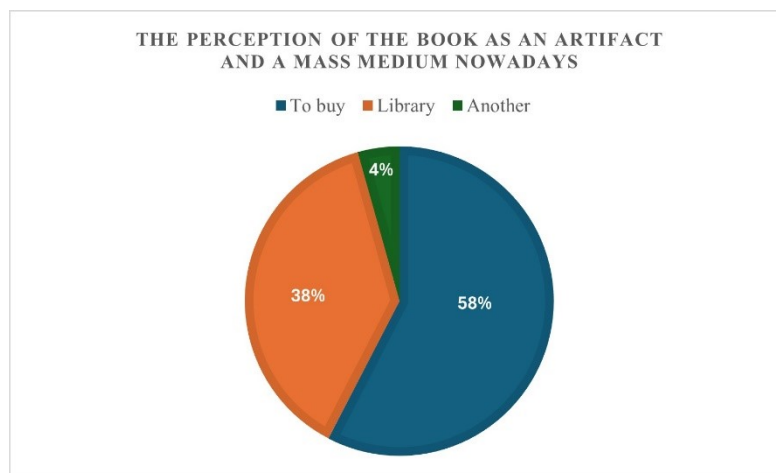
The hypothesis was confirmed: 78 respondents do not use any of the mobile applications intended for book readers, and 14 respondents (all in the age group of 19–40 years) use some of these mobile applications (Goodreads, Wattpad, Shelfie, Amazon Kindle were mentioned).



Graph Nr. 2 Questionnaire survey – hypothesis 2 (Source: own processing).

H3: We assume that most respondents prefer to buy books (more than half of them in brick-and-mortar bookstores).

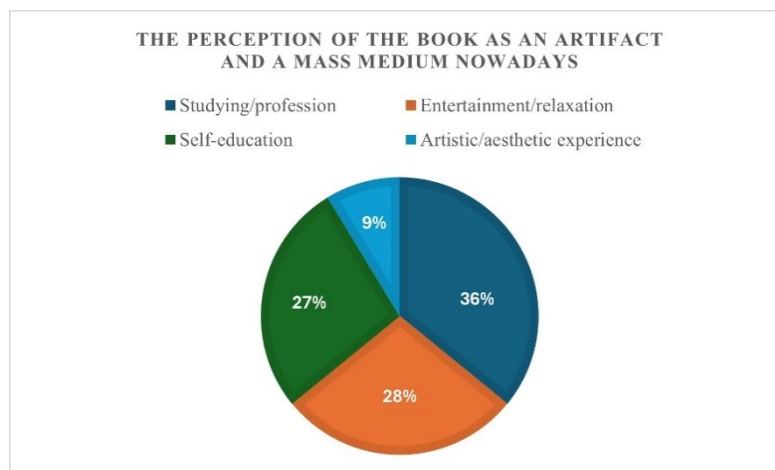
The hypothesis was confirmed: 53 respondents prefer to buy books. 33 of them prefer to buy in brick-and-mortar bookstores and 20 respondents prefer to buy via the Internet. 35 respondents use the services of the library (especially the age category of young students) and 4 indicated another way of accessing books (borrowing between friends and family members).



Graph Nr. 3: Questionnaire survey – hypothesis 3 (Source: own processing)

H4: We assume that most of the interviewed respondents perceive the book as a source of entertainment and relaxation.

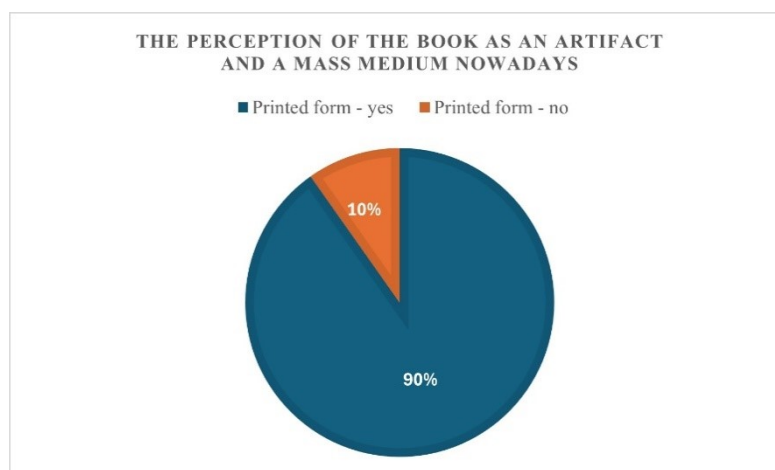
The hypothesis was not confirmed: 33 respondents need the book when studying and/or performing their profession, 26 perceive it as a source of entertainment and relaxation, 25 as a source of new knowledge in the process of self-education, and 8 consider it a source of artistic/aesthetic experience.



Graph Nr. 4 Questionnaire survey – hypothesis 4 (Source: own processing).

H5: We assume that more than half of the respondents think that the book in printed form should survive even in the era of new technologies.

The hypothesis was confirmed: 83 respondents think that books in printed form should survive even in the era of new technologies, and 9 respondents believe that publishing printed books currently has no justification.



Graph Nr. 5 Questionnaire survey – hypothesis 5 (Source: own processing).

Conclusion

The book went through a long and dynamic development that changed, reshaped, and modified not only its content and visual appearance, but also the way it was produced, distributed, sold, and perceived. In the 21st century, it fulfills the function of an art artifact and the role of a mass medium. At the same time, it forms a part of culture in its noble meaning and a mass (popular) form. The aforementioned «duality» elevates the book as a specific medium in which the aesthetic dimension is combined with the mass media (also marketing) dimension.

The qualitative and quantitative research we carried out confirmed that the development of new technologies in connection with the production of the book and its communication potential about the target audience brought many positives and facilitated access to the book even for those who argued about the lack of space in the home library (e-book) or busy time (e. g. the possibility to listen to an audiobook while driving). New applications have been added to support reading, but also the author's work, to which younger age groups in particular find their way.

In addition to positives, new technologies have also brought negatives: e-books mean a certain competition for brick-and-mortar bookstores, but also for libraries. Downloading a book to your computer, mobile phone, or e-reader is simple and feasible from the comfort of your home. Mass production of books and opportunities on the book market (practically anyone who has the necessary financial means can publish a book) often leads to a decline in the quality of communicated content. We perceive that there are currently so-called elite book publishers who place great emphasis on preserving the qualitative and aesthetic aspects of the book and perceive it primarily as a work of art and only secondarily as a consumer product.

At the same time, the survey results pointed to the power of tradition, manifested not only in the preference for printed books or purchases in brick-and-mortar bookstores but also in reading habits and stereotypes. We consider it important to create and maintain conditions on the book market that allow access to books to all who are interested in them, i.e. j. adherents of new technologies and more conservatively oriented users, regardless of age or social status.

As mentioned above, the article has a summarizing character in the theoretical part and an overview in the practical part. It represents an introduction to more detailed research, the results of which we will present in the following articles. In them, we will focus on the book's impact on increasing media literacy and critical thinking among children and youth, as well as on various technologies facilitating the use of the book's potential in the mass media and artistic spheres.

As Confucius said that the words of a book always excite us, but the important thing is that they change us. And it is precisely in this possibility of change that we see the future of the book. Following new technologies and traditions, but above all with the communication potential of the book and its mission to educate, socialize, develop an aesthetic sense, and bring fun and relaxation. We consider this mission to be timeless.

Statement

Financing

No organisation funded this study. The author carried out the research at his own expense.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Ethics

The material presented in this article meets all the points and requirements put forward by the Ethics Commission of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia.

Copyright

This is an open-access article distributed under Creative Commons Attribution. The license permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are properly acknowledged.

Reference

7 Najlepších aplikácií pre milovníkov kníh 2015 (2015, December 9). *LepšíDeň.sk*, URL: <https://lepsiden.sk/7-najlepsich-aplikacii-pre-milovnikov-knih-sutaz/> (in Slovak).

- Baker, M. (2006). *Slovník kulturních studií [Dictionary of Cultural Studies]*. Praha: Portál, 206 (in Czech).
- Briggs, A., & Burke, P. (2010). *A Social History of the Media. From Gutenberg to the Internet*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 374.
- Febvre, L. & Martin, H. J. (2010). *The Coming of the Book*. London: Verso, 2010, 384.
- Habermas, J. 2000. *Strukturální přeměna společnosti [Structural transformation of society]*. Praha: Filosofia, 2000, 454 (in Czech).
- Jiráček, J., Köpplová, B. (2015). *Masová média [Mass media]*. Praha: Portál, 392 (in Czech).
- Johns, A. (1998). *The Nature of the Book*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 753.
- Kasarda, M. (2013). *Populárna kultúra a masové médiá: Od karnevalovej ulice po virtuálny svet [Popular culture and mass media: From the carnival street to the virtual world]*. Žilina: Eurokódex, 144 (in Czech).
- Kneidl, P. (1989). *Z historie evropské knihy. Po stopách knih, knihtisku a knihoven [From the history of European books. In the footsteps of books, letterpress and libraries]*. Praha: Nakladatelství Svoboda, 144 (in Czech).
- Liba, P. (2005). *Kultúra / literatúra [Culture / literature]*. Nitra: Kulturologická spoločnosť, 392 (in Czech).
- McLuhan, M. (1991). *Jak rozumět médiím: Extenze člověka [Understanding Media: An Extension of Man]*. Praha: Odeon, 348 (in Czech).
- McQuail, D. (2009). *Úvod do teorie masové komunikace [Introduction to mass communication theory]*. Praha: Portál, 640 (in Czech).
- Potter, W. J. (1998). *Media Literacy*. London – Thousand Oaks – New Delhi: Sage Publications, 438.
- Vinc, D. (2020). 8 najlepších aplikácií pre milovníkov kníh 2020, March 8). *Denník N – Techbox*, URL: <https://techbox.dennikn.sk/temy/8-najlepsich-aplikacii-pre-milovnikov-knih/> (in Slovak).
- Zahrádka, P. (ed.) (2010). *Estetika na přelomu milénia [Aesthetics at the turn of the millennium]*. Praha: Barrister & Principal, 486 (in Czech).

**Комунікаційний потенціал книги як засобу масової інформації
в добу нових комунікаційних технологій**

Їтка Рожнова,

доктор філософії, доцент,
кафедра журналістики та нових медіа, факультет мистецтв,
Університет Костянтина Філософа в Нітрі
(м. Нітра, Словаччина);

Зузана Козарова,

доктор філософії, доцент,
кафедра журналістики та нових медіа, факультет мистецтв,
Університет Костянтина Філософа в Нітрі
(м. Нітра, Словаччина).

Анотація

Специфіка книги зумовлена її подвійною, діаметрально різною сутністю, оскільки вона вважається артефактом мистецтва та засобом масової інформації. З одного боку,

вона вирізняється характеристиками, визначеними медіастудіями, і водночас – в іншому контексті – має опозиційне ставлення до них, тяжіє до характеристик художнього артефакту. Вищезгадані протилежності знаходимо й у взаєминах між книгою й аудиторією: завдяки широкому спектрові жанрів, авторських підходів і виробничих процедур книга може сприйматися аудиторією як унікальний витвір мистецтва і як продукт масової культури. Зазначеним вище аспектам відповідає й комунікаційний потенціал книги, який залишається незмінним. Він продовжує бути/може бути джерелом нової інформації, знань, мистецького досвіду, розваг чи відпочинку. Проте поява нових технологій принесла/приносить цілий спектр змін. Найбільша зміна з появою інтернету та смартфонів – це прискорення та спрощення комунікації в процесі виробництва, розповсюдження та продажу книг. Ці технологічні зміни також суттєво впливають на взаємини між книгою й читацькою аудиторією. Читач є не лише пасивним реципієнтом її змісту й візуальної складової, а й активним учасником сприйняття. У статті ми проаналізували специфіку книги як засобу масової інформації в культурному просторі, а також її комунікаційні передумови для читача в епоху нових комунікаційних технологій. Головною метою опитування було з'ясувати, як читачі книг сприймають нові технології або як нові технології впливають на читацькі звички, пов'язані з використанням книг. Стаття має узагальнювальний характер у теоретичній частині й оглядовий у практичній частині. Вона є вступом до більш детального дослідження, результати якого будуть представлені в статтях, опублікованих в інших номерах журналу «Соціальні комунікації: теорія і практика». Ми зосередимося на впливі книги на підвищенні медіаграмотності та критичного мислення дітей і молоді, а також на різноманітних технологіях, що сприяють використанню потенціалу книги в ЗМІ та мистецькій сфері.

Ключові слова: книга, комунікаційні технології, культура, ЗМІ, аудиторія.

Submitted to the editor – 26.04.2024

Review 1 – 25.05.2024

Review 2 – 30.05.2024

Accepted for printing – 08.06.2024

Подано до редакції – 26.04.2024

Рецензія 1 – 25.05.2024

Рецензія 2 – 30.05.2024

Прийнято до друку – 08.06.2024

