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A bulletin from the world of global media distribution

Edited by *Distripress, Zürich*



Welcome to the first issue of Distripress News!

This newsletter is designed to keep you up to date with everything happening in the world of press: new launches, the trends you need to know about, and how you, our members, are reaching new and existing audiences in every corner of the globe.

Please let us know what is happening in your territories so we can showcase and share your innovative ideas, launches and events in future issues.

I'm looking forward to a busy year ahead, with our next Virtual Forum coming up soon, and the Distripress October 2021 conference in beautiful Zurich this autumn.

Until then, I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter; we'd love to know what you think.

I look forward to seeing you at our Virtual Forum event on 9 June.

Lizanne Barber, Managing Director

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INSIGHT / Looking up / France

French market update

The French publishing market faced severe disruption in 2020, with the Covid-19 pandemic altering business from March, followed by the bankruptcy of former press distribution giant Presstalis in May.

However, Patricia S. from distributor MLP and Olivier B. from fellow distributor France Messagerie believe the market is looking up.

"By mid-June 2020, all the players – the new Presstalis company France Messagerie, MLP and other players in the trade found solutions, so there was no stop in the distribution of press," says Patricia.

"In France the trade is 21,000 retailers and roughly 61 wholesalers, so this is not easy to organise when there is a failure, but it was very successful."

But 2020 was not all bad, thanks to the Government recognising that newsagents were among the essential stores that could remain open during the Covid-19 pandemic. The exception was stores in stations and airports, which closed due to the lack of travel.

"Some publishers decided to suspend some issues or delay some, and travel retailers closed. But if we take the 2020 sales figures in turnover, for many segments we have had a lot of very successful results," says Patricia.

So, where is the market heading now?

There is a reopening plan in place for retailers across the country. Railway stations are planning to open by the end of June, and airports by September.

"For the global press business, travel stores represent 7% of the total turnover. For the foreign press, travel stores represent 16% of the turnover, so it's really good news for the business to reopen this specific category of outlets in the coming months," says Olivier.

But 2021 has brought a wider restart for the market, according to Patricia, with 405 new titles launching between January and mid-May.

"Generally, at the beginning of the year, there are not so many launches – most of the time they do that between April and summer. But it means there is trust in this system and that the publishers were very attentive to what was happening in the market," Patricia adds.

Despite the closure of travel stores, sales patterns have not shifted much over the past year.

"The usual sales patterns are currently the same," says Olivier. "The Covid-19 period has shown a very strong interest in France for printed magazines and niche products."

However, there are particular areas that have thrived, such as the crossword segment and magazines for young people – both of which have seen new launches over the past few months.

But there are still challenges ahead – one of which is the structure of the market.

"The network is clearly stabilised, but discussions continue with the French authorities to improve the press distribution system," says Olivier.

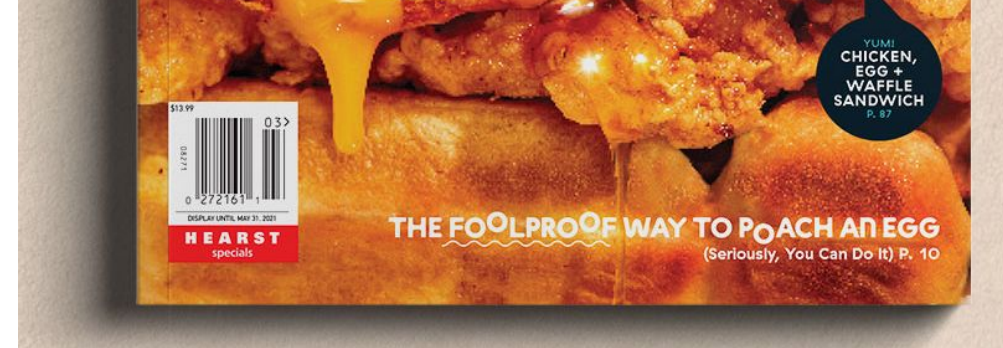
Patricia adds: "One very important point is that, in 2023, there is a possible opening of the markets to new players. But at the moment MLP and France Messagerie have to really work together to reassure clients and build a confident system."

Ultimately, both Patricia and Olivier think the past year has shown the strength of the French market and what it can withstand.

"This restart and restructure is an opportunity for the business and for all the actors of our industry in France," says Olivier.

"It's a bit like a vaccine for the industry," says Patricia.

Distripress members receive access to our international member database. To contact France Messagerie or MLP, or any other Distripress member, login to your account and head over to the database.



MAGAZINES / Out now / Global

In Coming

Delish, and an explosion of food titles

Hearst's digital-first brand *Delish* has launched a quarterly print magazine to supplement its popular website. The title will be available in newsstands but will also feature as part of the brand's all-access subscription model. The launch is part of a flurry of food titles, including *Joy the Baker*, *Meal*, *506*, *Sandwich*, *Fifty Grande* and *Nourish: Plant Based Living*. www.delish.com/food-news/a35634218/delish-new-quarterly-magazine/

Men's Adventure Quarterly's retro revival

New print-on-demand magazine *Men's Adventure Quarterly* has a vintage feel and features reprints of stories and illustrations from men's adventure magazines published in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. One for the retro loving reader, each issue will focus on stories and artwork related to a particular topic, such as its first edition: 'The Most Wanted Wild West Issue'. www.mensoulpmags.com

Justsmile's inclusive self-expression

Heralded as a magazine with inclusivity as its starting point, *Justsmile* says it has been "created for everyone". The magazine's pages will be filled with fine art, fashion, ideas, self-expression and, of course, inclusivity. It hopes to provide a collaborative platform for Black voices and People of Colour. www.justsmilemagazine.com

French TV tie-ins

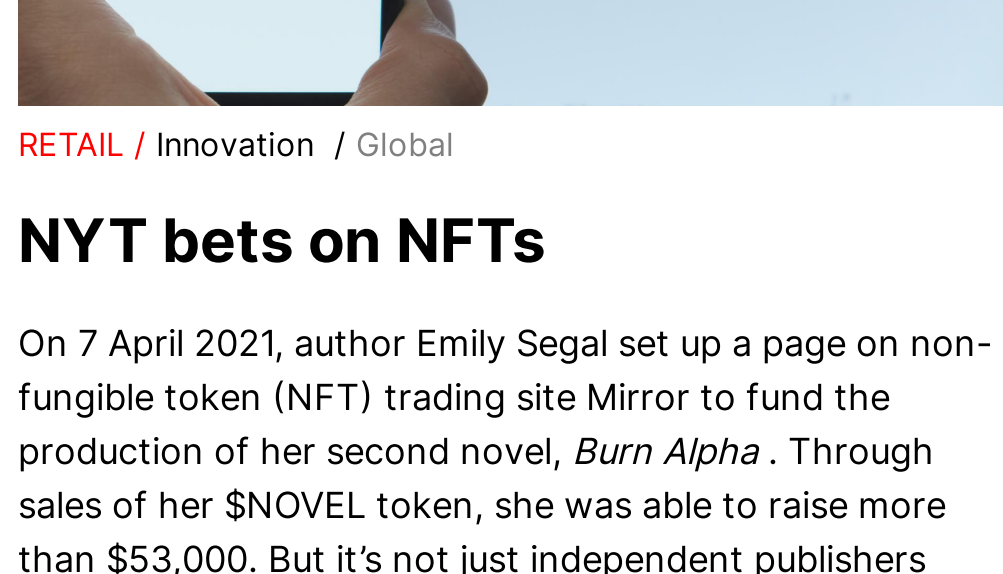
In France, we've seen a micro-trend for magazines tied into TV shows. The first is *Bienvenue Chez Vous*, a new real estate and interior magazine from Prisma Media, M6 and TV presenter Stéphane Plaza, combining property management and enhancement advice with an in-depth look at interior design. The second is gardening title *Silence ça Pousse*, fronted by another Stéphane, TV gardener Stéphane Marie. www.prismamedia.com/ www.burdableu.fr

A Royals focus

Meredith's longstanding popular culture magazine *People* has launched a new premium 100-page quarterly publication devoted solely to the Royals. Each cover story will focus on a different member of the royal family, with the first on the Duchess of Cambridge. The publication will showcase glamorous photos and inside stories, including a first-person essay in its first issue from the Duchess of York on what lifetime means to her. www.people.com/royals/people-launches-new-quarterly-magazine-focused-exclusively-on-the-royals/

Konfekt

From the creators of *Monocle* comes a sharp and elegant new magazine, *Konfekt*. Edited between Zurich and London, and printed in Germany, it covers topics including fashion, travel, design and dining, in both English and German. In other travel title news, *Audley* has also launched digital magazine *Adventures & Escapes* as two editions; one for consumers, and another for travel agents. www.konfektmagazine.com/ www.audleytravel.com/inspiration/adventures-and-escapes



RETAIL / Innovation / Global

NYT bets on NFTs

On 7 April 2021, author Emily Segal set up a page on non-fungible token (NFT) trading site Mirror to fund the production of her second novel, *Burn Alpha*. Through sales of her \$NOVEL token, she was able to raise more than \$53,000. But it's not just independent publishers getting in on the NFT action.

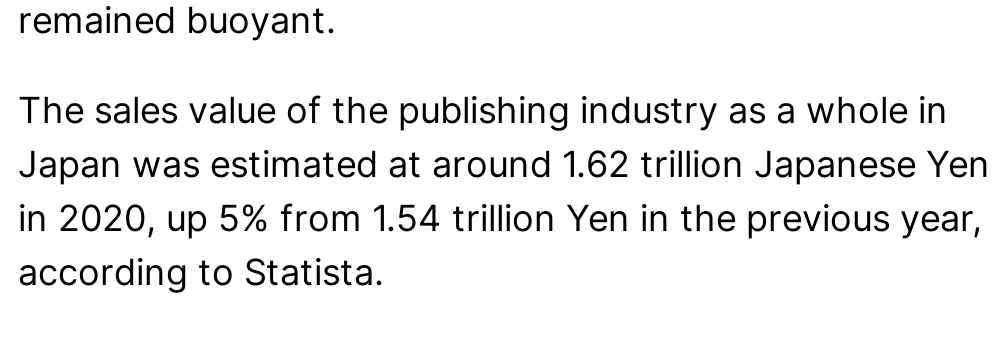
NFTs have recently become big news, due to an NFT artwork recently selling for \$69m. Larger publishers have also made considerable amounts from NFT sales. *Time* magazine recently sold an NFT of its famous 1959 'Space Exploration' cover art for more than \$249,000. The publisher has put together a 50-person strong NFT and crypto team to explore other opportunities in the sphere.

The New York Times was able to sell an article about NFTs as an NFT for around \$700,000. It is clear that the technology offers publishers new ways to distribute and sell content. *Playboy* (now *PLBY*) is also offering fractional digital ownership in its original photographs, such as its Marilyn Monroe cover and its Kim Kardashian centrefold.

But like a lot of blockchain-linked technologies, it comes with caveats. For one thing, it's difficult to explain NFTs to the average person on the street – the audience, for now, remains niche. It also takes a lot of processing power to exchange NFTs, which can have a detrimental impact on the product's carbon footprint.

Bill Rosenblatt, president of GiantSteps Media Technology Strategies, expressed some cynicism about NFTs in a recent *Publishers Weekly* column, although he admitted there was potential to offer exclusive, limited edition content as NFTs.

"Ultimately, NFTs are about artificially imposing scarcity on an internet world that strenuously resists it at every turn. The success of NFTs is predicated on consumers adopting a mindset that what they are buying is actually unique or nearly so."



INSIGHT / Demon Slayer / Tokyo

Digital sales up in Japan

Despite a difficult year for many businesses – including the publishing world – the magazine market in Japan has remained buoyant.

The sales value of the publishing industry as a whole in Japan was estimated at around 1.62 trillion Japanese Yen in 2020, up 5% from 1.54 trillion Yen in the previous year, according to Statista.

Sales of print publications – including books and magazines – fell by 1% year on year, according to the All Japan Magazine and Book Publishers and Editors Association's Research Institute for Publications. However, this was encouragingly less than the 4.3% year on year decrease in 2019, which could be a reflection of people spending more time at home over the year, due to Covid-19.

Sales of magazines were down 11% year on year to 557.6 billion Japanese Yen. However, digital magazine sales increased by 15.4% to 11 billion Japanese Yen.

Comic book sales also shot up by an impressive 24%. The popularity of manga series *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba* helped to lift overall publishing sales in 2020, according to the Research Institute for Publications. The final book volume was published on 4 December, by which point there were more than 120 million copies of the series in circulation.

Overall, the market remained steady, with most people sticking to their purchasing habits.

A survey compiled by Japan Trend Research found that 14.1% of people surveyed had purchased more printed magazines and books than before the pandemic, whereas 75.5% were unchanged. Only 10.4% had purchased fewer books or magazines, which shows strong resilience in the market.

REGISTRATIONS OPEN
DistriPress
Virtual Forum
June 9, 2021

Registrations for the Virtual Forum are open until 12pm (GMT) on 4 June.
CONTACT [Anna Sponqulado](mailto:Anna.Sponqulado) to register now.



COMMUNITY / Reading month / Dubai

Family focus

Dubai celebrated its annual reading month in March, with the aim of encouraging families to read across the United Arab Emirates to read.

Reading month was first marked in Dubai in 2016 to encourage the community to read daily.

After its success, HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, declared it would happen annually, with a new theme each year.

Throughout the month, various departments and organisations hold engaging activities, workshops and sustainable initiatives.

Each year, the Ministry of Culture and Youth chooses the theme for the month. This year, the theme was My Family Reads.

A spokesperson for Distripress member Tawzea Distribution & Logistics Services, Abdul Rahim Alparambil, said his company engaged with readers in many ways during the month, including offering special discounts to students, the general public, retail stores and online store customers, and praised the month as a success.

"We were able to renew subscribers who had temporarily stopped, and we were able to gain additional customers. There was some good engagement, which means the publication and publisher can reach readers. That's a good thing. We are still coming up with innovative ways to engage readers, and this is one of them."

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