



The Nielsen Company
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Press Release

HOW DO CONSUMER BOOK SALES COMPARE WITH LIBRARY BORROWINGS: IS A BESTSELLING AUTHOR GUARANTEED THE SAME SUCCESS WITH LIBRARY USERS?

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The answer to these questions and many more lies with Nielsen Book. Twelve months ago Nielsen Book launched a new service called LibScan, which followed on the success achieved by BookScan and BookScan for Libraries (which allows librarians to see what's selling in the retail sector and use that information to inform their acquisition decisions).

LibScan collects borrowing data from public libraries and aggregates and analyses that data, which is then freely available to participating libraries to compare their data at local and national level. This assists stock decisions, helping libraries reflect public demand both locally and nationally.

Consumers buy non fiction and borrow fiction

The year to date LibScan figures show that almost 50% of all library loans are for Adult Fiction compared to only 35% of BookScan's Total Consumer Market (TCM) volume sales.

Twenty percent of borrowings are for Non Fiction compared to 35% in the TCM (by volume sales). This would suggest that consumers prefer to purchase Non Fiction, which they can refer to time after time, and borrow Fiction for one-off reads.

Children's percentage comparisons are aligned at about 30% both in the TCM and LibScan.

Less than 50% of top selling authors appear in borrowing chart

On analysis of sales and borrowings by author, less than 50% of the Top 100 selling authors appear in the Top 100 LibScan author chart. Of those 17 are within 10 position points in both charts, including James Patterson, Jodi Picoult, Alexander McCall Smith, Andy McNab and Roald Dahl. Of the top 50 authors appearing in the TCM, only 19 appear in the LibScan Top 50 chart.

Libraries lead on range

Unsurprisingly the range and title availability in libraries is considerably greater than in retail. Even in the Top 100 LibScan chart, over twice the number of any author's titles are borrowed than sold in any week. Top authors, by number of titles available, in the LibScan chart compared to the TCM are Jack Higgins and Patricia Cornwell - both of whom have over 4 times the number of titles borrowed than are sold. Such information may help inform publishing decisions and Nielsen Book is starting to work with publishers to develop insights which will assist promotions with libraries on new authors, those breaking through as well as those that have a higher profile.

The importance of LibScan and BookScan for Libraries as a tool for acquisition librarians is illustrated by this comment from Sue Wills, Stock Development Manager at Kensington and Chelsea Libraries: *"We consider both LibScan and BookScan for Libraries to be invaluable in helping us in a number of ways. We use it to monitor and update our supplier selection arrangements so for example we do not miss new authors or authors who are performing better than we anticipated. This has also been a major factor in helping us to improve our reservation service because we are more accurately predicting demand."*

We run author and subject lists and use Nielsen Book's information to review and update our supplier selection specifications on an annual basis. We regularly run bestseller/issue lists in 25 Dewey areas to ensure we have the most popular books in stock and if we don't, we can then place an order. We have annual stock action plans and their effective implementation means we are not just buying new books or relying on the lists and prices provided by our book suppliers. Nielsen Book's services allows us to reality check what we're being told."

There are now 42 public library authorities contributing their data to the service, which means 1 in 4 library branches are participating and this number continues to grow. LibScan is monitoring one million issues per week (40% of total issues) and this number is growing rapidly as we bring more authorities onto the LibScan panel. Participating authorities are gaining real benefits, comparing their borrowing at authority level and matching this against national trends enabling them to adjust their stock decisions accordingly. As more library authorities come on board the more useful the data becomes not only to the libraries involved but also to publishers, to authors and to agents.

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Nielsen Book has four key brands: Registration Agencies (ISBN and SAN Agencies for UK & Ireland, ISTC), BookData, BookNet and BookScan. The Nielsen BookData service provides comprehensive, enriched and timely bibliographic data worldwide. There is a range of information services for booksellers, libraries and publishers in 100 countries around the world. The Nielsen BookNet service provides value-added transaction services to the industry. The Nielsen BookScan service provides the world's only continuous retail monitoring service for English-language books in the UK, Ireland, US, Australia, South Africa, Italy, New Zealand, Denmark and Spain. The company launched LibScan last year, allowing the collection and analysis of library borrowing data. To-date, 42 UK public library authorities have joined the panel and the aim is to continue building this number in 2010. The group employs 120 staff in the UK. The company is wholly owned by The Nielsen Company. For more information, please visit: www.nielsenbook.co.uk

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