

World's biggest book fair homes in on children's literature

FRANKFURT: The world's biggest book fair which opened with the spotlight on children's literature, traditionally an "under-recognised" sector but now seen as a driving force in publishing.



More than 7,000 exhibitors are expected at the five-day Frankfurt Book Fair from Wednesday, 10 October 2012.

"Children's books have been doing very well around the world," Richard Robinson, president and chief executive of the publisher and distributor of children's books, Scholastic told a news conference.

"In the last 12 months, children's publishing has been the top category in general trade publishing, leading families, readers into the bookstores," he told reporters ahead of the fair's inauguration.

Around 1,500 publishers who deal exclusively with the children's and youth market are expected at the showcase, according to fair director Juergen Boos, who has described the sector as "a prototype" for the industry.

He pointed not only to the availability of playful apps for smartphones and tablet computers as well as interactive games, but also to changes in style and content of children's books reflecting today's society.

"Children's publishing, always an important but somewhat under-recognised part of the book industry, may likely become the leader in pioneering new forms of reading because as we all know from watching babies with iPads, children are intuitively digital readers," Robinson said.

However he predicted that print books would "survive and prevail as core children's literature" adding that many schools or families would likely not be able to afford or have access to digital ebook readers.

While electronic books have been all the talk of the Frankfurt fair in recent years, ebook sales in Germany still only account for two percent of the market share, Gottfried Honnefelder, president of the German Booksellers' and Publishers' Association, told reporters.

That compared to about 20 percent in the United States, he said. German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle will be among dignitaries due to officially open the fair, whose guest of honour this year is New Zealand, later Tuesday.

Source: AFP

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