

# Review of book publishing in the Czech Republic in 2014

Dr **JAROSLAV ČÍSAŘ**

BIBLIO Literární noviny / jcisar@literarky.cz

This is a summary of the official statistics available on book production in the Czech Republic in 2014, as presented to UNESCO. It testifies that in the area of book production, as elsewhere, the economy of the country has overcome its period of crisis; for the second year running it has continued its recovery, in the segment of traditional, printed books as in that of the production and sale of e-books and audiobooks. Translations into Czech, too, are shown to be dynamic. Last year's reduction of VAT on books from 15% to 10% has not greatly affected their price. The tendency towards greater concentration of entities producing and selling books continued, although the continuing absence of exact figures for the turnover and profits of the major players on the Czech book market means that it is not possible to support this finding with precise economic indicators.

## THE PRODUCTION OF PRINTED BOOKS

According to the number of copies submitted obligatorily to the National Library of the Czech Republic, which monitors book production in the Czech Republic, 18,379 book titles were published in the Czech Republic in 2014 (see TABLE I, which also shows the number of published translations and their share of total production). This represents an increase in book production of almost 3% over the previous year (in absolute terms an increase of over 500 titles). Viewed over the past three years it represents an increase of almost 7% (in absolute terms, 1,132 titles). After the record-breaking year of 2011, it is the second-best result in the history of the Czech Republic, which in terms of book production by population retains its position among world leaders, with a very high level of book production. In 2014 book production in the Czech Republic involved a total of 2197 publishing entities (in 2013 this figure was 2037).

The actual number of active book publishers is in fact again several hundred higher, as 1880 titles (10.2% of the total volume of book production) were published without the ISBN (International Standard Book Number). To these the National Library of the Czech Republic assigned substitute identification.

**TABLE I** Survey of number of book titles and translations published in Czech Rep., 2010–2014

	total	of which translated works	
		absolute no.	%
2010	17,054	6044	35
2011	18,985	6514	34
2012	17,247	5871	34
2013	17,876	6565	37
2014	18,379	6355	35

source: National Library of the Czech Republic

In real terms only about half of what is produced makes it to ordinary bookshops: the remainder is made up of so-called "grey" literature, university textbooks, printed matter produced for specific purposes and other non-market publications. The share of fiction in last year's total book production was almost 30% (5129 published titles), which represents a slight decrease against the previous year, although this indicator remains above

average when compared to the composition of book production in most countries of the EU. Last year works of literary criticism and literary history accounted for 196 titles. Of course, the volume of book production alone tells us nothing about quality, sophistication, earnings and true share of the Czech book market.

In comparison with certain other EU states, book publishing in the Czech Republic continues to be spread among a relatively large number of publishing entities. Concentration among an elite of publishing houses, a process that began several years ago, has continued: particularly notable is the expansion of the Albatros Media group, which since 1 January 2015 has comprised 13 imprints, many of which operated independently as significant Czech publishing entities in their own right. The 2014 survey shows that a total of 20 private publishing entities published more than one hundred new titles (see TABLE III).

Last year there was a clear increase in the activities of departments at institutes of higher education, with over 100 titles produced by 16 publishing entities. Institutes of higher education are special in that they produce a great many titles in small editions. In 2014 nearly forty large private publishers and institutes of higher education, universities and state institutions produced more than forty per cent (42.3%) of Czech book titles, a total of 7776 titles, of which 4573 are from private publishers and 3203 are from presses of institutes of higher education, universities and state institutions. This represents a significant shift from 2013, when such titles comprised only 36%.

A further 160 presses (of private schools, institutes of higher education and state institutes) pursue a systematic publishing programme and can also be considered large. Twenty-seven of these produced between 50 and 99 titles; 129 produced between 20 and 49. Thus it can again be stated that almost 200 publishing entities had a significant involvement in the main volume of book production in the Czech Republic. The remaining majority are medium-sized, small or occasional publishers. In comparison with previous years this indicator showed no significant change.

## REGISTRATION OF PUBLISHERS

Data on the registration of book publishers in accordance with the ISBN international system of methodology (see TABLE II), which the former Czechoslovakia did not join until 1989 (the Czech Republic did so in 1993), provide a reliable indication of the activities of publishers in the Czech lands since the denationalization of the publishing industry after November 1989. As no registered publishing entity is ever removed from the system, it includes defunct as well as active publishing houses and also entities which are active but not currently practising the activities of publisher or have suspended these. These statistical data provide a complete picture of the dynamics of development and movement in the book industry in this country. The National ISBN Agency estimates that only about a half of the publishing entities registered today are active.

In 2014 around 100 publishers of non-periodical publications wound up their activities (in a total of c. 2600 since November 1989); 299 publishing entities were re-registered.

**TABLE II** **Number of publishers registered in Czech Rep. 2010–2014 (with ISBN)**  
(Note: as at 31 Dec. of each given year)

2010	4875
2011	5167
2012	5474
2013	5796
2014	6095

source: National ISBN Agency

## PRIVATE PUBLISHERS

TABLE III below shows the largest private publishers in the Czech Republic by number of non-periodical publications issued in 2014. This somewhat mechanically set criterion gives us at least a rough idea of the size and turnover of the companies in question, though naturally it tells us nothing of the quality and editorial demands made of the books produced, their earnings and – in particular – their true position on and share of the Czech book market.

It can be broadly stated that last year book production continued its recovery, with the largest publishing entities basically maintaining their positions in terms of the volume of titles produced. This time the biggest growth in production over the previous year was recorded by the publishing houses Václav Svojtka & Co., Mladá fronta, Tribun EU, Českého svazu vědeckotechnických společností and Slovart ČR. Also Pavel Dobrovský's Beta company took a number of ambitious steps; for years it has been building up its system of book distribution and chain of bookshops, which has come to include large stores on commercially attractive sites such as Prague's Wenceslas Square and the Anděl business complex.

**TABLE III** **Largest private book publishers in Czech Rep. by number of titles published in 2014**

1.	Albatros Media, Prague*	735	(760)
2.	Euromedia Group, Prague**	525	(509)
3.	Egmont ČR, Prague	340	(369)
4.	Grada Publishing, Prague	330	(371)
5.	Moravská Bastei – MOBA, Brno	311	(337)
6.	Václav Svojtka & Co, Prague	265	(187)
7.	Fragment, Havlíčkův Brod/Prague	227	(229)
8.	Mladá fronta, Prague	210	(132)
9.	Tribun EU, Brno	196	(88)
10.	Portál, Prague	172	(173)
11.	Nová forma, České Budějovice	160	(128)
12.	Argo, Prague	158	(146)
13.	Nová škola, Brno	138	(190)
14.	Beta, Prague	131	(40)
15.–16.	BB art, Prague	122	(237)
15.–16.	Slovart ČR, Prague	122	(84)
17.	Český svaz vědeckotechnických společností, Prague	119	(61)
18.	Wolters Kluwer ČR, Prague	107	(88)
19.	Triton, Prague	103	(82)
20.	Sun, Prague	102	(168)

source: National Library of the Czech Republic and National ISBN Agency

Note: The table includes private publishing entities that in 2014 published more than 100 new non-periodical titles – i.e. excluding re-editions and new editions of previously published titles. Figures in brackets show the number of titles issued by each publisher in 2013.

\* Figures for Albatros Media a.s. are given in total. Last year its imprints recorded the following results:

Albatros	172	(167)
B4U Publishing	3	(11)
Biz Books	46	(37)
CooBoo	99	(92)
Computer Press	72	(67)

CPress	116	(95)
Edice ČT	8	(6)
Edika	85	(101)
Fragment		(since 1 Jan. 2015)
Management Press	14	(13)
Motto	42	(82)
Plus	38	(31)
XYZ	40	(58)

\*\* Figures for Euromedia Group, k.s. are given in total. Last year its imprints recorded the following results:

Knižní klub	269	(270)
Ikar	182	(177)
Odeon	38	(31)
Universum	21	(32)
Yoli	15	(did not exist)

## PRESSES OF INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION, UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTIONS OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

For presses of institutes of higher education, universities and institutions of central government the same criteria applied in 2014 as in previous years. The extent of their costs is in most cases incomparable with the costs incurred by private publishers. Their lists are governed above all by prioritization of the needs of given schools, faculties, departments and government bodies. Many of their titles are “grey” literature, e.g. guidelines for law implementation, various publications for state institutions, statistics and systems guides and publications produced for specific purposes. Their activities remain constant in spite of significant fluctuation in the cases of the Czech Statistical Office and the Institute of Health Information, for instance, whose publishing activities are largely determined by the need to evaluate surveys of public opinion, censuses of population, etc.

In 2014 a total of 16 publishing entities of institutes of higher education, universities and institutions of central government produced over 100 titles (see TABLE IV); a further three recorded production for the year of over 90 published titles (Faculty of Education of Charles University, Prague (95), Technical University of Liberec (93), University of Economics, Prague (92). The state institutions producing the greatest number of publications were again the Czech Statistical Office (94 published titles) and the Department of Rationalization in Construction (60); the K.E. Macan Library and Press for the Blind, one of few state publishing entities that produces publications for special purposes, produced 50 titles.

**TABLE IV** **Largest presses of institutes of higher education, universities and institutions of central government in Czech Rep. by number of titles published in 2014**

1.	Vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého, Olomouc	442	(418)
2.	Masarykova univerzita, Brno	389	(265)
3.	Vydavatelství ČVUT, Prague	293	(212)
4.	Mendelova zemědělská a lesnická univerzita, Brno	228	(141)
5.	Česká zemědělská univerzita, Prague	221	(168)
6.	Karolinum, Prague	209	(200)
7.	VŠ báňská – Technická univerzita, Ostrava	208	(334)
8.	Vysoké učení technické, Brno	165	(165)
9.	Ostravská univerzita – PedF, Ostrava	163	(151)
10.	Česká zemědělská univerzita, Prague	146	(168)
11.	Gaudeamus – Univerzita Hradec Králové	137	(56)
12.	Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, Ústí nad Labem	136	(109)
13.	Univerzita Tomáše Bati, Zlín	126	(84)
14.	Univerzita Pardubice	119	(170)
15.	Západočeská univerzita, Plzeň	115	(50)
16.	Slezská univerzita, Opava	106	(129)

source: National Library of the Czech Republic and National ISBN Agency

Note: The table includes all entities that in 2014 produced more than 100 new non-periodical titles – i.e. excluding re-editions and new editions of previously published titles. Figures in brackets show the number of titles issued by each publisher in 2013.

## THE COMPOSITION OF BOOK PRODUCTION

In 2014 new titles – i.e. newly published titles (first editions) that are original Czech works or translations – accounted for almost 89% of the total book production; in absolute terms this is 16,332 titles out of a grand total of 18,379. This indicator does not deviate significantly from the trend set in previous years. If we limit our analysis to works of Czech provenance, we see that these account for approximately 65% of last year's total book production – in absolute terms, this is 12,024 titles. This represents an increase of two percentage points over 2013. The book production of Czech publishing entities in 2014 was again dominated by books in Czech, which accounted for almost 85% (in absolute terms, 15,536 titles). A further 1074 titles were published in Czech with parts in another language. This quantitative indicator, too, is practically identical to that of the previous year. Last year 212 multilingual publications were issued by Czech publishers.

As to books from Czech publishing houses in foreign languages, in 2014 English was again dominant (839 titles); the share of non-periodical publications in English accounted for a share of total book production of 4.6%. In the period under review, 718 titles (687 in 2013) in another 20 languages were published in the Czech Republic; in sum this is 1557 titles (1431 in 2013). The number of titles published in Slovak remained at the same level, following the great increase that occurred in 2013. TABLE V shows numbers of books issued by Czech publishing entities in certain foreign languages in the years 2010–2014.

**TABLE V** Numbers of books issued by Czech publishing entities in certain foreign languages, 2010–2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
English	627	779	753	744	839
German	66	93	72	87	102
French	13	18	8	22	22
Spanish	13	18	14	18	26
Slovak	194	272	252	370	370
Russian	35	43	31	98	120
Polish	21	28	16	24	28

source: National Library of the Czech Republic

The share of fiction in last year's total book production amounted to 5129 titles, i.e. a share of c. 29%. As to the number of children's book titles published in the record year of 2013 (2031, i.e. about 11% of the Czech Republic's total book production for the year), publishers basically succeeded in maintaining this in 2014, with 1962 titles, representing a share of 10.7%.

The segment for textbooks (university and other) last year set a new record for the Czech Republic (see TABLE VI). This is connected with a growth in interest in tertiary/university education on the part of the Czech population in general, which is reflected in the above-mentioned increased activity of presses of institutes of higher education and universities. In 2014 the number of published textbooks (university and other) totalled 1698, which represents a share of 9.2% of overall annual book production. This indicator, too, shows an increase over 2013, when this share stood at 8.6%.

**TABLE VI** Published book titles in certain categories, 2010–14

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
fiction	4477	5174	4684	5190	5129
children's books	1336	1569	1698	2031	1962
textbooks (university and other)	1536	1596	1522	1538	1698

source: National Library of the Czech Republic

## TRANSLATIONS

The share of book production claimed in 2014 by works in translation was comparable with recent years, both quantitatively and in terms of its share of the total volume of production (over a third – 35%). In quantitative terms this represents the third highest return in the history of the Czech Republic. The favourable standing of the Czech Republic as one of the countries which produces most books in translation – given by the fact that Czech is not a world language and the resulting need to open doors to other language cultures – has been given further confirmation. Apparently Czech citizens' knowledge of foreign languages has not risen to such a degree that they read more fiction in the original.

It should be emphasized that artistic translation in the Czech lands has a long tradition and is of a relatively high standard. The quality of translation is encouraged by a number of competitions and prizes (e.g. the Josef Jungmann Prize and the Jiří Levý Competition) and there is also a State Prize for work in translation. The Czech Literary Translators' Guild confers the annual "Torturer's Rack" award for poor translations, i.e. which demonstrate an inability to translate text in a manner that is factually and semantically correct and a disregard for the artistic intent of the original, and which violate the code of ethics for the publishing of works in translation (e.g. non-compliance with copyright, "updating" of an earlier translation). The announcement of the "winners" at the Book World Prague fair always attracts the culturally-aware public and media.

Last year Czech publishers gave their readers translated works in c. 45 languages. Again these languages include some with very few users in the Czech Republic, such as Icelandic, Lithuanian, Swahili, Sanskrit, Sorbian and modern Latin. It is necessary to emphasize here that in the Czech Republic works of literature are generally translated straight from the original, a state of affairs that is far from common in certain other countries.

The identities of the three most-translated languages have remained more or less unchanged since 1990. These are English, which in 2014 again accounted for more than half (almost 53%) of all published translations, German (over 15%) and French (some way behind at 4%); somewhat surprisingly, Slovak was in fourth place, with 3%. For our eastern neighbour, the reading of Czech books in the original is more or less taken for granted, which cannot be said of works in Slovak in the Czech Republic. After the dynamic increase in translations from Spanish recorded in 2013, the number of such works fell by about a third last year. Italian maintained its position. The well-established growth in popularity of literature from the countries of Scandinavia is confirmed by the steady volume of production and an increase in translations from Scandinavian languages. Again Swedish is in the lead; in the years 2012–2014 the number of works in Czech translation from the Swedish practically doubled (80 titles last year compared to 48 in 2012). The only fall in comparison with 2013 (from 36 to 24) was recorded by works from the Norwegian. Increases recorded by other Scandinavian languages were as follows: Finnish from 12 to 15, Danish from 11 to 13, Icelandic from 2 to 4.

The most-translated Slavonic languages in 2014 were, as usual, Slovak, Polish and Russian. The dynamic growth in terms of the number of published translations from these languages is, however, striking – in the cases of Polish and Russian the increase is of about a third. In recent years titles translated from other Slavonic languages have been significantly less frequent: the total published per year tends to be between 20 and 30, a trend that was essentially maintained in 2014, albeit with very different rises and falls. The quantitative bases of the individual languages are very low; in the case of Croatian, for instance, last year we saw a 3.5-fold increase over 2013 (from 4 titles in translation to 14), while Bulgarian recorded a 9-fold fall (from 9 titles in 2013 to 1 title last year). TABLE VII (immediately below) shows the languages from which most translations were produced in the Czech Republic in the period 2010–2014.

TABLE VII

**Books in translation published  
in the Czech Republic, 2010–2014**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>total</b>	<b>6044</b>	<b>6514</b>	<b>5871</b>	<b>6565</b>	<b>6355</b>
of which from					
English	3071	3276	3238	3633	3344
German	1058	1129	970	924	971
French	562	307	239	287	249
Slovak	229	148	127	181	194
Russian	73	87	78	124	165
Spanish	77	96	60	203	140
Polish	108	93	86	58	96
Italian	111	116	66	82	89

*source: National Library of the Czech Republic*

## RECORDS OF E-BOOKS

In July 2010 the Czech National ISBN Agency began to assign ISBNs to online publications (e-books) and established a database of registered e-books. All registered e-books are stored here, the vast majority in pdf, ePub or Mobipocket, although in theory it is possible to use a far greater number of forms. The total figure for ISBNs assigned to e-books is given by format rather than by individual title; it is not unusual for one title to be assigned three numbers. Each e-book publisher has access to the database so that it may check on the registration of its titles.

So far (as at 15 April 2015) 28,708 e-books have been assigned an ISBN since this programme was introduced in July 2010. In 2014 10,752 records of e-book titles were registered, a high figure which does not, however, represent total individual registered titles; staff at the National ISBN Agency suppose the number of individual titles registered to be approximately 4000. Evidence of dynamic growth in this area is given by the fact that in 2012, 3,997 e-books were assigned an ISBN. It is estimated that the total number of titles registered in the database is over 10,000.

This year the National Library of the Czech Republic commenced testing of operations for the acquisition of online publications (the “e-deposit” project), providing for a continuing acquisition process for these publications in line with that of other books. Hitherto the system applies only for publications issued by publishers with whom the library has a licensing agreement. This matter is embraced by an amendment to the law on non-periodical publications (No. 37/1995 Coll.), which provides for mandatory copies of online publications. Certain publishers object to this, fearing that their publications in electronic form will be insufficiently protected. The National Library must also resolve how these publications will be archived in an appropriate format, protected and lent; these are serious challenges that will mean fundamental changes to current practice.

## READERS AND PRODUCERS OF E-BOOKS

According to the Czech National Panel ([www.ceskynarodnipanel.cz](http://www.ceskynarodnipanel.cz)), a joint research project on the Internet population of the Czech Republic conducted by the agencies ATEM/MARK, NMS Market Research and MEDIARESEARCH, 34% of this population has experience of reading e-books. The typical Czech e-book reader is a man under thirty years of age with a university education.

Users, who were asked to choose from a range of technologies, were shown to read e-books most often on computers (55%), mobile telephones (45%) and tablets (36%). It is interesting to note that dedicated e-book reading devices are used by a relatively small minority (24%). Readers prefer to read magazines and full-colour pictorial publications (e.g. tourists’ guides) on a tablet or computer. When reading non-fiction furnished with accompanying pictorial material, users often opt for a mix of

technologies, reading the text first on an e-reader, then studying the pictures on a computer.

The most common way to access an e-book is free-of-charge download; this is used by a massive 70% of readers. Only 27% of e-book readers pay for e-books. Every month the average reader downloads two books for free and buys one. Readers spend an average of CZK 231 (a little under EUR 10) per month on e-books.

Users of e-books value them for their compactness, wide availability and price. Further they appreciate that they are able to work actively with the text, for instance when searching for a word or passage in the book as a whole, to insert as many bookmarks as they wish, and to save their own notes within the text. Readers of books in foreign languages appreciate the integrated dictionary and the simplicity of searching for equivalents in translation. They also appreciate not having to worry about damage to a book’s binding, the fact that there is no need for bookmarks and no danger that an e-book will sell out, and that they can carry more than one title at a time.

The negative comments of respondents on their attitude to e-books also make interesting reading: most of these are highly subjective in nature and strongly attached to habit. Many people miss the atmosphere of book-reading and the smell of paper. Reading e-books means that people spend more time at their computers, with consequent eye strain. Last but not least, respondents complained that e-books could not be displayed in bookcases. The most popular genres are fantasy, science fiction and specialist literature. Readers of fiction in this form are predominantly women: 42%, as against every fifth man.

The circle of Czech e-book publishers continues to expand. Many leading producers of printed books are investing in this segment of the book market even though on the small Czech market returns on this investment, to say nothing of profits, are mostly small.

Also growing is the number of Internet portals where e-books can be bought, although as a rule the range of titles on offer and prices differ little. Some portals are able to send e-books as presents or to lend them for a limited period. Virtually all retailers allow the downloading of an extract from a book, which replaces somewhat the browsing of a printed book in a brick-and-mortar store. A reasonable compromise known as “social DRM” has largely secured sold e-books against unauthorized distribution.

The best-known literature portals in the Czech Republic carrying the largest range of titles include Kosmas ([www.kosmas.cz](http://www.kosmas.cz)), Palmknihy ([www.palmknihy.cz](http://www.palmknihy.cz)), eReading ([www.ereading.cz](http://www.ereading.cz)), Ráj knih ([www.Rajknih.cz](http://www.Rajknih.cz)), martinus.cz ([www.martinus.cz](http://www.martinus.cz)), eKNIHOVNA.cz ([www.eknihovna.cz](http://www.eknihovna.cz)), Knihaulka ([www.eknihulka.cz](http://www.eknihulka.cz)) and VirtBook ([www.virtbook.cz](http://www.virtbook.cz)). In the Czech Republic there are now specialist portals for e-books, including some with contributions on the theory and practice of e-books and others for fans of e-books that contain evaluations of books and authors along with rankings.

TABLES VIII are a concentration of data (author, title, publisher) from the two major retailers of e-books in the Czech Republic, showing the top-selling e-book titles of 2014. The tables are dominated overwhelmingly by titles in translation.

## TABLES VIII Top-selling e-book titles in 2014

**Palmknihy company**, retailer of e-books in Czech Rep. for over 15 years

1. Jo Nesbo: *Přízrak*, Kniha Zlín
2. Jo Nesbo: *Červenka*, Kniha Zlín
3. Jonas Jonasson: *Analfabetka, která uměla počítat*, Panteon
4. Jonas Jonasson: *Stoletý stařík, který vylezl z okna, a zmizel*, Panteon
5. *Nový občanský zákoník 2014*, Proboston-probooks.cz
6. Jo Nesbo: *Levhart*, Kniha Zlín
7. Evžen Boček: *Poslední aristokratka*, Druhé město
8. Jo Nesbo: *Netopýr*, Kniha Zlín
9. Jo Nesbo: *Spasitel*, Kniha Zlín
10. Andrzej Sapkowski: *Zaklínač – Bouřková sezona*, Leonardo
11. Evžen Boček: *Aristokratka ve varu*, Druhé město

12. Jo Nesbø: *Pentagram*, Kniha Zlín
13. Jo Nesbø: *Nemesis*, Kniha Zlín
14. Lars Kepler: *Hypnotizér*, Host
15. Lars Kepler: *Paganiniho smlouva*, Host
16. William R. Davis: *Život bez pšenice*, JOTA
17. František Kotleta: *Příliš dlouhá swingersparty*, Epoque/Freetim(e) publishing
18. Jo Nesbø: *Sněhulák*, Kniha Zlín
19. Lars Kepler: *Písečný muž*, Host
20. Alice Claytonová: *Nabíječ*, Mladá fronta

source: [Palmknihy.cz](http://Palmknihy.cz)

**Kosmas.cz**, winning online store in 2014 ShopRoku [Shop of the Year] survey

1. Dan Brown: *Inferno*, Argo
2. Jo Nesbø: *Přízrak*, Kniha Zlín
3. Jonas Jonasson: *Analfabetka, která uměla počítat*, Panteon
4. Jo Nesbø: *Červenka*, Kniha Zlín
5. Jonas Jonasson: *Stoletý stařík, který vylezl z okna, a zmizel*, Panteon
6. George R. R. Martin: *Rytíř Sedmi království*, Argo
7. Jeremy Clarkson: *Léta s Top Gear*, Argo
8. Evžen Boček: *Poslední aristokratka*, Druhé město
9. Peter May: *Muž z ostrova Lewis*, Host
10. Paulo Coelho: *Nevěra*, Argo
11. Peter May: *Skála*, Host
12. Evžen Boček: *Aristokratka ve varu*, Druhé město
13. Franz-Olivier Giesbert: *Himmlerova kuchařka*, MH
14. Marek Herman: *Najděte si svého manžana*, MH
15. Jo Nesbø: *Levhart*, Kniha Zlín
16. Jussi Adler-Olsen: *Složka 64*, Host
17. Jean-Michel Guenassia: *Klub nenapravitelných optimistů*, Argo
18. Timothy Snyder: *Krvavé země*, Paseka/Prostor
19. Peter May: *Šachové figurky*, Host
20. Jean-Michel Guenassia: *Vysněný život Ernesta G.*, Argo

source: [Kosmas.cz](http://Kosmas.cz)

## AUDIOBOOKS

In the past three or four years the Czech Republic has witnessed expansion in production of and interest in audiobooks, culminating in 2013 with a number of events and performances for the general public. During this time the profession has established the Association of Audiobook Publishers (AVA). Last year, for the first time, an Audiobook of the Year (for 2013) was announced in 8 categories; in 2014 the holding of this competition was taken over by the AVA, and it was reduced to 6 categories. Prizewinners are selected by a jury composed of journalists, publishers, authors and experts in the field of audiobooks.

The activities of the K.E. Macan Library and Press for the Blind, which is a specialized, strictly non-commercial state publisher for audiobooks for the blind and partially-sighted, dates back to 1918.

In 2014 around 290 audiobook titles were published in the Czech Republic. These days they can be purchased not only in traditional CD format but also in the form of digital download at, for instance, [Audiolibrix.com](http://Audiolibrix.com), a portal for the Czech and Slovak Republics that was set up in 2012 and now carries 2,200 titles.

At present around 30 publishing houses, some with long histories, some specialist houses, are involved systematically in this type of book production. These include Audioberg, AudioStory, Fragment, Mladá fronta, OneHotBook, Radioservis, Progres Guru, Radioservis, Supraphon, Tympanum, Walker & Volf and XYZ. Radioservis, the publishing arm of Czech Radio, a public broadcasting institution, can draw on a large archive.

Information on audiobooks and their history can be found in the online magazine [naposlech.cz](http://naposlech.cz) and at the sales portal [Audiokniha.cz](http://Audiokniha.cz). Some online bookshops and literary portals that offer e-books have added audiobooks to their range (e.g. [Palmknihy](http://Palmknihy), [Kosmas](http://Kosmas), [Ráj knih](http://Ráj knih)). New methods of distribution of audiobooks, including free applications for the mobile operating systems iOS and Android, focus on the younger generation in particular.

According to a survey conducted by the portal [Audiolibrix.com](http://Audiolibrix.com), 'spoken word' is acquired by 55% men, 45% women. Respondents reported as follows: 27% most commonly listen to audiobooks while relaxing, 18% while driving, 16% while cleaning, cooking and performing household tasks, 11.5% while performing a creative or skilled task, almost 7% as a spur while doing sport.

TABLE VIII is a concentration of data (author, title, publisher) showing the top-selling audiobook titles of 2014 as established by the portal [Audiolibrix.com](http://Audiolibrix.com). The table is dominated overwhelmingly by titles in translation, and the presence of products from Slovak publishing houses is considerable.

**TABLE IX Top-selling audiobook titles in Czech Rep. in 2014**

1. Jonas Jonasson: *Analfabetka, která uměla počítat*, Panteon
2. Jonas Jonasson: *Stoletý stařík, který vylezl z okna a zmizel*, Panteon
3. Gillian Flynn: *Zmizelá / Gone Girl*, OneHotBook
4. Jo Nesbø: *Přízrak*, OneHotBook
5. Jo Nesbø: *Snehulák*, Ikar
6. Jay Elliot: *Cesta Steva Jobse*, OneHotBook
7. Milan Lasica: *Listy Emilovi I*, FORZA MUSIC
8. Jo Nesbø: *Netopýr*, OneHotBook
9. Winston Groom: *Forrest Gump*, Kristian
10. Eckhart Tolle: *Síla přítomného okamihu*, Settour.sk
11. George R. R. Martin: *Hra o trůny. Píseň ledu a ohně 1*, Tympanum
12. Peter May: *Skála*, OneHotBook
13. Jo Nesbø: *Červenka*, OneHotBook
14. Scott Jurek: *Jedz a behaj*, Publixing
15. Walter Isaacson: *Steve Jobs*, Práh
16. Jo Nesbø: *Nemesis*, Radioservis
17. kol. aut.: *Hrdinovia a géniovia*, Štúdio Nádej
18. Olivier Truc: *Poslední Laponec*, OneHotBook
19. Fredrik Backman: *Muž jménem Ove*, OneHotBook
20. Peter May: *Muž z ostrova Lewis*, OneHotBook

source: [www.audiolibrix.com](http://www.audiolibrix.com)

## CONCLUSION

It is gratifying to see that books still occupy one of the highest places in the rankings that demonstrate the cultural values of the people of the Czech Republic, irrespective of the means by which their content is disseminated (i.e. print, electronic data or audio). In 2014 the Czech Republic again demonstrated that it is a country with a highly developed book culture, although opportunities for development on its relatively small book market are necessarily limited.

The salient factors on the book market are, in my opinion, the following:

- The fight to reduce the rate of VAT on books from 15% to 10% has been successful, although this has not been much reflected in book prices.

- There is still a lack of precise economic data on individual entities on the book market (publishers, distributors, booksellers), most notably in terms of numbers of book copies published and sold, profits and losses etc., making it impossible to compare strengths and relative status.

- Concentration and the emergence of strong players in the books business are ongoing and likely to continue for some time. There is no doubt that this will have an impact on pricing policy, the composition of titles and how home-produced titles are represented.

- All basic links in the book-market chain reacted with flexibility to the emergence of new forms of communication for the production, distribution and sale of literary works.

- In the organization and holding of book exhibitions and various promotional events the widening economic gap between large, powerful entities focused on mass production on the one hand and small, relatively independent entities that prioritize production of artistic, more original works on the other, is ever more

apparent. Although there is no doubt that all contribute to diversity on the book market, their impact on volume of production, readers and sales rankings is very different.

The economy of the Czech Republic has rebounded sharply and is still on the rise. In this regard the books industry is no exception. Nevertheless, neither money alone nor the many literary

prizes, grants, subsidies and events will automatically raise the quality of works of literature.

*I wish to thank Olga Zeinertová, Antonín Jeřábek, Jan Marek, Anna Dufková, Jiří Michek and Martin Pilař for their assistance and cooperation.*

Svět knihy, Ltd. – Company of the Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers

Fügenerovo nám. 1808/3, CZ – 120 00 Praha 2, Czech Republic | phone: +420 224 498 234, 6 | fax: +420 224 498 754 | info@svetknihy.cz, www.bookworld.cz