



A Brief Overview of the Ukrainian Publishing Sector

Supporting Ukrainian Publishing Resilience and Recovery (SUPRR)

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1. Executive Summary

This short report provides a brief overview of the book and journal publishing landscape in Ukraine. It is not meant to be comprehensive but it does contain key facts and figures with descriptions of the current situation. It concludes with recommendations on how help can be extended along with illustrations of the kinds of initiatives that have been undertaken already. We hope it will be useful to anyone wishing to support Ukrainian publishing.

The situation in Ukrainian publishing is clearly dire. The figures speak for themselves. Book output has more than halved in the past year and journal output, also hit, has been erratic. Printing companies and libraries have been destroyed, and state budgets for textbooks have been diverted. Nevertheless the resilience and determination of the professionals working in these fields has ensured that work carries on – wherever and whenever it can.

This report is simultaneously a call to action. The conclusions and recommendations suggest how to galvanise all the good will (and funding) that clearly exists and to think creatively about practical solutions to the huge challenges that lie ahead.

What needs to be done now is for publishing to survive, and then under reconstruction to thrive and take its rightful place in delivering education and entertainment. While this appears daunting there is much that can be done now and not just after the war ends.

The scope of this report is limited to the wartime circumstances around the publishing of books (trade and academic) and scientific journals. Written documents, discussions and surveys have been drawn on to produce what we hope represents a valid and helpful snapshot.

2. Introduction

This short report provides a brief overview of the publishing landscape in Ukraine. It includes data from several surveys taken during the war, covering various aspects of the business of publishing, with the most recent in March 2023. It shows the size and nature of the industry and the many challenges it faces, ranging from general book publishing to scientific journals. It is not meant to be definitive especially as comprehensive data is hard to come by during the war and circumstances are continually changing.

The aim of this report is to raise awareness of the complex conditions and offer insights into the activities of the heavily hit but hugely resilient publishers of Ukraine. We demonstrate the scale of the challenges and also highlight the many ways in which foreign donors and helping hands from practising publishers might be extended in these dire times.

The report is intended to provide helpful background information to all who wish to ensure that the Ukrainian publishing industry survives the war and flourishes afterwards. It is vital that it does so given the important role it will play in Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction.

'We must win this war on all fronts, and therefore, we must have a sufficient number of not only military weapons, but also Ukrainian books of various genres.'

Ukrainian Publishers & Booksellers Association **UBPA**

3. The Book Industry – Background

Ukraine had a relatively healthy book trade in the Ukrainian language serving a sophisticated reading public. It was able to support publishing, printing, and bookselling with nearly 25,000 new titles in 2019. The make-up of the trade is complicated by both legal and illegal Russian editions that were cheaper than comparable Ukrainian titles. Although it was announced in June 2022 that publishing in Russian would be curtailed, in 2021 alone Ukraine approved the import of nearly 32 million books from Russia.

There is a considerable mix of Ukrainian based publishing entities; large and small, commercial and non-commercial, private and public.

Printing has been hard hit as the larger printing operations tended to be in the eastern parts of the country and many have been bombed. Paper is difficult to source. Libraries have been destroyed. Printing of textbooks has all but stopped during the war though new editions continue to appear online free of charge to ensure the continuity of education with an added commitment to pursue educational reforms for schools.

Academic and scientific research outputs have long been published mainly in journal form by university departments. They had already to a large extent migrated to online publication, though not always conforming to international standards. University monographs and textbooks were largely delivered in print and mainly produced by university in-house publishing departments. eBook publishing, something sorely needed now, is less developed than in Western Europe.

Scientific and scholarly publishing will need to adapt to EU standards as Ukraine moves towards EU accession. Meanwhile the number of Ukrainian authored articles and monographs has steadily grown via international publishers, predominantly in English.

The pandemic hit Ukrainian publishing hard. According to the Ukrainian Book Chamber new titles in 2020 dropped to 18,967 as compared to 24,416 in the pre-pandemic year of 2019. The drop in print runs was even more precipitous – dropping by two thirds.

Preference is given to educational publications, scientific literature, fiction for children and adults. Books on socially significant topics are especially popular.

4. Ukrainian Publishing in Wartime

As of 6 February 2023, 8,716 new books were published in Ukraine, compared to 17,248 in the previous twelve-month period, a decline of 50.5%. Circulation also dropped significantly: from 25,652,000 in 2021, to only 9,178,000 copies in 2022.

In 2022 new titles published dropped by 50% while number of copies in circulation dropped by over 60%

In 2022 just 762 new titles were published in Russian compared to 2,576 the previous year. The total circulation of Russian-language books printed in Ukraine decreased by 74%: from two and a half million copies in 2021 to just over half a million in 2022. More information on Russian language books [here](#),

Even taking into account the significantly greater drop in Russian books published in Ukraine the figures above show a steady erosion in availability of books overall.

According to the Ukrainian Book Institute, 74% of Ukrainian publishers have been able to stay engaged in their activities during the war despite the steep decline in business. While salaries have been maintained in publishing houses some authors of textbooks and many editors of academic journals are not receiving payments. Printing facilities were largely concentrated in the east of the country and many have been destroyed. Paper supply has been disrupted and means of transporting books are greatly reduced. That said, there are some heart-warming stories of the growth of small local bookshops in key cities. Iryna Kuchma reports three new bookstores opening in her neighbourhood in Kyiv alone.

At the tail end of the Covid pandemic Ukrainian publishing experienced an unexpected and temporary uplift as the state gave each person vaccinated against Covid a voucher equivalent to 25 euros to be spent on goods and services from enterprises of the creative industry. Books sold well and the entire chain of book-

sellers, publishers and printers was renewed after the prolonged Covid stagnation. While this allowed many in the publishing industry to survive during the first months of the war, the respite was short-lived.

Soon after the war began much state funding was diverted to military needs, though there have been since June 2022 some initiatives to support book purchasing through the provision of vouchers. The printing of millions of textbooks was cancelled though many publishers continued working and still prepare texts which are made available online for free. In 2022 funds provided by the State Budget for the purchase of books to replenish libraries were withdrawn. However, it is worth noting, for example, that in December 2022, 472,000 copies of mathematics textbooks for the 5th grade were printed and paid for by UNICEF.

The situation in which different parts of the book publishing industry found themselves varies from region to region with different levels of loss of equipment, materials, offices, computers containing publishing files and stocks of finished book products. Many highly skilled women from the publishing industry now live abroad.

In his [blog](#), Oleksandr Afonin, President of the Ukrainian Publishers and Booksellers Association, summarised the high level challenges facing the book trade. They include piracy, books in Russian, lack of library reform, lack of state policy for the industry, and readers having lost their homes. In the blog he expands on each of these challenges.

CHYTOMO, an independent media company, covers publishing and contemporary literary and cultural processes in Ukraine. One of the most comprehensive reviews of publishing is [here](#). CHYTOMO conducted two surveys that documented the remarkable resilience that Ukrainians have shown.

85 publishers were interviewed twice – once 2 months into the war and again 9 months after the start of the war (a sample of small, middle size to large publishers):

- 85,9% continue working.
- 60,7% did not relocate (10,7% did fully relocate and 28,6% – partially).
- 18,5% reported damages to offices and warehouses – mainly in Kharkiv and one publisher in Bucha, Kyiv region.

- From June 2022 sales rose (after a complete stop at the start of the war) and some publishers even reported increased sales compared to 2021 – mainly from abroad (ebooks).
- 44,7% did not decrease salaries; 37,6% did; 9,4% raised salaries and 8,2% stopped paying staff altogether; they save on rent, optimised workflows and receive donations (from Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund, House of Europe, Goethe-Institut, USAID, Toloka, Fundacja Powszechnego Czytania (this foundation supported 51 publishers), embassies and foundations support translations as well.
- Most publishers that stopped working in April have resumed their work now.
- Publishers are trying to sell books abroad. The best collaboration is with Polish bookshops. From Poland books are also distributed to other European countries.
- Some publishers also started printing abroad – in Latvia, Germany, Moldova, the Netherlands and Poland as it is easier to distribute in Europe. However, it's more expensive to deliver books to Ukraine. Because of these challenges most printing is still done in Ukraine, providing support to Ukrainian printers.
- 82,9% of editorial staff are volunteering and 43,3% are in the Armed Forces of Ukraine; most publishers donate to the Armed Forces.
- Publishers are interested in foreign markets and would like to participate in international events, find new partners, sell rights and supply bookshops outside of Ukraine to sell their books.

Another [report](#) in December 2022 shows how 13 publishers, showing great ingenuity, are adapting to winter, electricity shortages and blackouts.

Looking at the industry from a survey carried out by the Ukrainian Book Institute (UBI) on immediate needs in March 2023 provided the following information on specific priorities beyond the purely financial required to keep operations going. Although the number of respondents was small (10% of those polled), conversations with a number of representatives from the book publishing sector confirm these needs.

- Support for translations into Ukrainian
- Support for translations into foreign languages

- Understanding of how publishing works in European countries and beyond
- Information and assistance on how to sell rights
- Contacts and one-to-one consultations with foreign publishers

Before the war a ten-year strategy for the development of reading Reading as a Life Strategy was put forward by the publishing community, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, and the Committee of the Ukrainian Parliament on Humanitarian and Information Policy. The government approved the plan on the third of March 2023. Rather than wait for the end of the war, this strategy should be revisited as financial aid is considered by larger donors.

Textbooks are not covered in this review, but some textbook publishers were included in some of these surveys. They face many of the same challenges while having to deal with the sheer scale of textbook publishing as well as forthcoming changes in curricula, title selection procedures, language changes and new distribution methods. Libraries are also not covered here.

5. Scholarly and Scientific Journal Publishing

Ukrainian research output is published primarily in Ukrainian journals. While the Ukrainian language is the predominant language the number of journal articles published in English is increasing. There is an understanding that changes will need to be made as part of the EU accession process and the growing adoption of Open Science (OS). In some senses there has already been a leapfrogging into open access because of the availability of [OJS](#), the leading end-to-end OA scholarly publishing platform. Already 424 open access Ukrainian journals are indexed in DOAJ. Most scholarly journals are published open access and available at the National Library of Ukraine named after V. I. Vernadskyi: including 2,899 journals, 55,737 journal issues and 1,334,427 full text articles. A National Research and Education Network URAN hosts 767 journals and 258290 journal articles <http://journals.uran.ua/> and there are other shared and institutional open access scholarly journal portals.

The Open Science perspective is relevant for various reasons: it is the current trend in research; it has been adopted by the EU and various research funders globally, it facilitates scholarly communication by providing open access to research output, and it promotes open access as an efficient and effective model for publishing. This makes OA a worthwhile goal for Ukrainian academic publishers. However, besides the ongoing Russian invasion, there are several obstacles to take into account. Language is obviously one of these; Russian having been a significant language for scholarly output. Only about 10% of the Ukrainian population speak English. As the use of Russian [declines](#) it will take some time before Ukrainian takes its place.

Another obstacle seems to be that Ukrainian academic publishing has mostly been carried out in a traditional manner, without peer review, and by university departments rather than professional publishers. Aiming for a transition to OS while respecting some of the earlier publishing practices would be a challenge. A strength that is particularly relevant within the OS framework is the well-developed and fast-growing ICT-industry, which the government has identified as a central sector to help rebuild and modernise Ukraine's society and economy after the war.

A survey that provides insights into the challenges was undertaken by Maryna Zhenchenko and Iryna Izarova both of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, and Yulia Baldazhenko, National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute” and Ukrainian Regional Chapter of the European Association of Science Editors. In an as yet unpublished paper ‘Science Editors’ Work in Ukraine: Survey Results of the Impact of War’ the authors provide their findings which they have kindly allowed us to summarise here.

The authors used lists from the Ukrainian Institute of Scientific and Technical Expertise and Information that included 157 journals indexed in Web of Science and Scopus as well as another non-indexed 1290 academic journals. They had a response rate of 160 of which over 80% were either managing editors or editors in chief. Here we provide a selection of their findings.

- Most of the journals (88.8%) were founded and published by state universities, followed by state scientific institutions (6.3%), commercial organisations (3.1%), and private universities (1.9%).
- The participants came from all regions of Ukraine, although the largest number (38.1%) were based in Kyiv; the east and west contributed nearly equal shares (18.8% and 18.1%, respectively); and the central region accounted for 13.1%. The least represented were the south (7.5%) and the north (4.4%) – which is only to be expected as at the time of the survey these two regions were either under occupation or were recovering after liberation from occupation. Stable internet connection was not always available.
- The war forced almost 55% of the surveyed editors to leave their homes, either to go abroad or to move to another city or village in Ukraine. Among those who had moved, the vast majority lived in Kyiv or in eastern Ukraine before the war.
- Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (62.4%) worked part time and a little over a third (36.3%) worked full time whereas only two worked freelance. Almost half of the part-time editors were not paid for their editorial work: 37% of the respondents said that they perform their duties as editors on a voluntary basis, and another 10% noted that working as an editor of a scientific journal is considered part of their teaching workload.

- When asked whether, and how, the war had affected the work of editorial offices, 53.1% reported significant changes in the structure and workflow with 44% publishing fewer articles.
- More than 90% of the journals are open access journals. In Ukraine, the publication costs of articles are either paid by authors or by the journal's founder (publisher/university). The war decreased the income levels of the population as a whole significantly, which meant that authors did not always have the funds to pay for publishing their articles. As a result, nine journals (5.6%) changed their business model and switched from the 'authors pay' model to the 'publisher pays' model to support scientists; (the publisher in most cases being a university).
- Much of the work on journals is carried out on a voluntary basis.

In the survey on publishing needs constructed by the Ukrainian Book Institute and administered to journal editors by the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv in March 2023, 143 journal editors prioritised these areas where they would like to see support.

- Support to publish in open access
- Support with hosting platforms and digital publishing
- Contacts and one to one consultations with foreign publishers
- Understanding how publishing works elsewhere, especially Western Europe
- Knowledge sharing with peers, webinars etc.

This is in addition to financial help with hardware, software, translation costs etc.

The needs expressed are not dissimilar to those voiced by Viktoriya Stoykova, deputy director for scientific and pedagogical work of Mykolaiv Regional Institute of Postgraduate Pedagogical Education. In the context of Open Science she suggests:

- Building a strategy for the development of new scientific publications.
- Methodical, organisational and financial support for journal registration in indexed databases.
- Obtaining free access to the texts of scientific publications indexed in databases.

- Grant support for publications indexed in databases, including Scopus and Web of Science.
- Grant support for translations of academic texts: articles, conference collections, monographs, research results, etc.
- Supervisory support and mentoring of academic publishers (publishers of educational institutions and educational organisations).
- Training on increasing citations and maintaining a high impact factor of the publication.
- Grant support for provision of comparative studies.
- International partnership for international and Ukrainian publishers of scientific publications “Sister Publications...”.
- Launch of the project “I to you – you to me” – exchange of publications (with the consent of the authors or as a reward for...).
- Placing announcements and information about Ukrainian publications in international magazines (partner page) or databases.
- Creating a database of research data and providing access to them to facilitate their analysis and preparation of publications.
- Involvement of international reviewers and experts.
- Build an infrastructure chain for hosting, distribution and management of metadata for academic publications.
- Obtaining modern publishing equipment, including software for publishing activities.

Some immediate assistance came from an interesting crowd-sourced initiative [SUES](#) that brought emergency salary support to 71 editors of scientific journals during the first months of the war and held training webinars on open science and open access. More about the campaign and the needs they identified [here](#).

Ukraine participates in the European Commission funded DIAMAS project Developing Institutional Open Access Publishing Models to Advance Scholarly Communication <https://diamasproject.eu/> which will offer institutional open access publishing support. Ukraine will also participate in the European Institutional OA Publishing Landscape survey in March – April 2023 that will also include a gap analysis of institutional OA publishing against a baseline of existing good practices.

We recommend that the main focus on scholarly and scientific publishing should be on digital transformations, where possible as open access. There is a sincere interest by Ukrainian academics to take up their rightful positions in the move towards Open Science. Recently Ukraine adopted a national [open science action plan](#), an important step in the context of moving towards EU accession and which will have a direct effect on how the academic publishing community develops.

6. Translations – into and out of the Ukrainian language

For Ukraine to meet educational and research standards that match EU requirements and to enable the people of the country to become integral members of the European community of nations, more translations of books from English and European languages into Ukrainian will be required.

As it fights against Russian aggression, Ukraine seeks to make its culture and history known to the world. The market for translations of Ukrainian books into world languages exists, but translation is expensive and relies on grants. Thus publishers are looking for funding to cover the cost of such translations.

In recognition of the importance of translations the French government announced in February 2023 that it has created a fund for supporting translations both from Ukrainian into French and French into Ukrainian. Many more such initiatives need to be undertaken.

We recommend that a central database is constructed to hold information on and for organisations interested in providing support for translations both into and out of the Ukrainian language.

There are existing mechanisms supporting the translation of scholarly books in and out of Ukrainian that fit with the natural contours of the industry, and these should be built on (e.g. via the Ukrainian Book Institute, the Ukrainian Publishers Association and others).

We suggest that a central database is constructed to hold information on and for organisations interested in providing support for translations both into and out of the Ukrainian language. Its existence would need to be widely promoted.

7. Helping Ukrainian Publishers Now

The Ukrainian publishing industry needs a huge amount of support. Some of this can be provided free of charge by small industry initiatives, such as waiving membership fees to various industry bodies. [ALPSP](#), [COPE](#), [AAP](#) have already done so, others are in the process. A mentoring scheme is to be launched later in the spring by ALPSP for Ukrainian publishers. The Association of University Presses ([AUP](#)) has endorsed SUPRR. Specialist professional bodies such as [EASE](#) have provided statements of support and have waived fees for Ukrainians.

Several universities in the UK that have degree courses in publishing are now looking into what kinds of short courses they can offer remotely. Workshops and roundtables for senior publishers around Open Science and what it means for academic publishing are taking place.

Further work resulting from the Polish Rectors' Association's Commission for Scientific Publishing at CRASP hosted discussions with Ukrainian publishers in 2022 is being built upon with more workshops due to take place in Warsaw in the coming months.

Many international book fairs are spotlighting Ukraine. Indeed The Old Lion Publishing House from Ukraine won in the Europe category the Bologna Children's Book Fair Prize for the Best Children's Publishers of the Year, a prize that acknowledges top children's publishers across the world.

These are just a few of the small-scale activities that taken together will make a difference.

The very successful partnership between the Lviv Book Forum and the Hay on Wye Festival promoted an outward facing wider public discussion about the consequences of the war in Ukraine for the arts, ideas, culture and democracy that was watched online all around the world. More such events should be supported.

Other initiatives will be funded on a large scale from international donors. With many changes, including English increasingly becoming the country's second language, the shift away from the Russian language and culture, and the challenges of reconstruction, international publishers will have a role to play in investing in Ukraine. Other media channels such as radio and TV offer opportunities too. All of this must be done with sensitivities to local conditions. This is where opening and

broadening channels of communications with reciprocal opportunities to learn about each other will be essential.

Under current circumstances the needs are many and varied. Publishing of all kinds – whether educational, scholarly or general needs immediate support and at the same time the opportunity to plan for reconstruction. Providing space for this support is essential. The overall goal is to see a healthy publishing industry restored to the people of Ukraine, and to facilitate and speed up the modernisation of publishing infrastructure and capacity required for the dissemination of knowledge and support of intercultural exchanges.

To quote [UBPA](#) 'The brutal war waged by Russia against Ukraine is not fought so much for territory, but for people's consciousness and reason. And we must win this war on all fronts, and therefore, we must have a sufficient number of not only military weapons, but also Ukrainian books of various genres.'

8. Recommendations

The overall goal is to see a healthy publishing industry restored to the people of Ukraine and to facilitate and speed up the modernisation of publishing infrastructure and capacity required for the dissemination of knowledge.

- Establish a task force composed of key stakeholders from the publishing industry along with representatives from bookselling, library, and educational authorities. The group should be tasked with tracking and promoting opportunities for publishers.
- Create a central database and gather and store information for organisations interested in providing support.
- Negotiate collectively on waivers on various fees (such as APCs, conference attendances, associations membership fees and software licences).
- Make individual initiatives better known to help avoid duplication of efforts.
- Carry out overview studies, however imperfect, regularly to assess the situation in the library, bookselling, distribution and printing sectors as well as in publishing.
- Encourage immediate activities through NGOs, trade bodies and individuals to support Ukrainian publishers in these sectors while the larger donor-led reconstruction projects are being planned.
- Support speaking programmes at trade conferences and elsewhere tasked with the specific remit to encourage more activities to help these sectors.
- Prioritise digital infrastructure development including training on international metadata standards.
- Support efforts in scholarly and scientific publishing to become EU compliant.
- Develop programmes that link to EU Open Science and open access initiatives with knowledge transfer.

- Support translations both into and out of the Ukrainian language by encouraging donors to give generously.
- It is hard to overestimate the initial shock of the invasion, and how each person has found ways of accommodating to the new realities of a nation at war. Solidarity, friendship and further integration to the world of international publishing will go a long way.

9. Acknowledgements

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