

Zijing Wu

Monograph

Research on Contemporary Book Binding Art in Europe



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Edited by Prof.
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This monograph is devoted to book design in Europe. This research proposes a study of the main trends in book design from a historical aspect, analysing their impact on book publishing at the present stage. The monograph reviews the concepts of designing printed publications and presents the author's point of view on their visual appearance. The study also provides suggestions for solving the problem of typical mistakes in the design of printed publications. The monograph specifically highlights the issues and design features of interactive electronic editions and touches upon the creation and design of books on self-publishing platforms.

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Foreword

The book has long stood as one of the most enduring and multifaceted artefacts of human civilisation. As both a repository of knowledge and an object of visual and tactile expression, the book is inseparable from the evolution of culture, education, and technology. In the European context, the art of book design has not only reflected shifting artistic ideals and technological capabilities but has also shaped how societies understand and engage with the written word. This monograph offers a rich and scholarly investigation into the visual, structural, and conceptual development of book design from its historical foundations to the present digital age. Design has always been central to the identity of the book. In its earliest forms manuscripts painstakingly inscribed and illuminated by hand the book was a luxurious, sacred object. The rise of the printing press in the fifteenth century marked a profound turning point, not only by increasing accessibility to texts but also by standardising visual and typographic conventions. European printers, artists, and typographers developed distinct traditions and schools of design that reflected regional aesthetics, philosophical movements, and the interplay between form and function. This monograph examines those traditions in depth, tracing the continuity and innovation that characterise the development of both external and internal book design.

At the core of this study is an appreciation of the book as a complete design object one in which every component, from typography and binding to cover illustration and page layout, contributes to its cultural and communicative role. By considering the book's materiality, structure, and aesthetic choices across various periods, the work sheds light on how design decisions serve both artistic and practical purposes. The monograph also delves into how reader preferences, market conditions, and production technologies have influenced and been influenced by design. From parchment codices and incunabula to paperback novels and interactive e-books, the trajectory of book design reflects broader historical transformations in society, literacy, and media.

The study pays particular attention to the distinct regional developments within Europe, comparing the typographic elegance of Italian Renaissance printers, the ornamentation trends of German workshops, and the experimental approaches of 20th-century modernist designers. While unified by the shared purpose of transmitting text, these national traditions represent unique cultural responses to the challenges and possibilities of book production. The monograph draws from a wide array of examples to illuminate this diversity, including religious texts, scientific treatises, artistic portfolios, and educational manuals. Special attention is given to the transformations brought by digital technology and the emergence of interactive electronic editions. These formats not only introduce new aesthetic challenges but also require a rethinking of how design can adapt to screens, multimedia environments, and user interactivity. While digital platforms have made publishing more accessible, particularly through self-publishing they have also introduced risks of inconsistency and visual neglect. Accordingly, the monograph reflects on common mistakes in contemporary book design and offers thoughtful suggestions for resolving them through a return to foundational design principles adapted for modern needs.

The purpose of this monograph is not only to document the aesthetic and historical trajectory of book design in Europe but to analyse its implications for the current stage of publishing development. It seeks to articulate how the legacy of print design continues to influence digital formats

and to show how design can serve both expressive and functional roles in an evolving publishing landscape. By bridging historical insight with a critical look at present-day practices, the monograph contributes to a deeper understanding of book design as both an art and a system of communication. In addressing these issues, the monograph reaffirms the enduring importance of the book not only as a text but as a designed object, a cultural artifact, and a product of human creativity. It invites a re-examination of how visual form supports intellectual content, how material design shapes reading experiences, and how the aesthetics of the book continue to evolve in response to both tradition and innovation.

Introduction

Initially, it is worth noting that the most important transformations for publishers today are in digital and communication design, web design, multimedia and book design, graphic design, branding and related areas (Martins, 2023). In the digital era, the ongoing intensive scientific and technological progress and the active development of information and communication technologies, many of the traditional heritage of mankind are losing their relevance and popularity. First and foremost, books are emphasised, as interactive electronic resources, mostly those present on the Internet, which are gaining leading positions at this stage of human development.

In addition, print media overcome issues in their operations both during the production of the product itself and at the stage of direct delivery of books to readers. For instance, following C. Geuther *et al.* (2021), academic libraries face a double problem: budget cuts are occurring while the demand for electronic information systems is growing. This is usually caused by complex systems of financial redistribution for the provision of social services to the population in many European countries, including those provided by libraries (Nelson *et al.*, 2022). These issues are also relevant for the post-Soviet countries, which, after gaining independence, are related to not only with the material side of printing activities but also with creative rethinking of the history of book publishing and librarianship.

Along with the above-mentioned budgeting problems, which directly affect the ability of people to access books, and despite the obvious advantages of electronic resources over paper media, books in the 21st century cannot disappear from the history and modernity of human civilisation. Printed books continue to be an important part of society and are popular, especially among older people. In addition, they cannot be completely replaced by digital media due to the special formation of books, the sheets when changing pages, the cover and certain interactions that are made with them (Kusumowardhani and Maharani, 2022). According to Ray Bradbury in his novel *Fahrenheit 451*, rapid but superficial assimilation of information can cause intellectual death, while gaining deep and fundamental knowledge is possible only through reading books (Kalkan, 2021).

As technologies in various areas of production improve, new types of information presentation are emerging. As a result of the emergence of the latter, other types of modern books, besides paper, are being formed that more accurately meet the requirements of potential readers and the competitive book market. These include multimedia, interactive books, audiobooks and e-books (innovative). The development of these formats reflects the ongoing transformation in how books are consumed and highlights the shift towards digital and multimedia-based resources, offering greater flexibility and engagement for readers. In addition, a notable advantage of the traditional paper book in comparison with other more modern sources of information can be highlighted (Jain *et al.*, 2021):

- there is no need to purchase additional reading devices (mobile phone, tablet, computer) to use it, unlike e-books. Thus, the cost of a printed book will be lower compared to the latter;
- the book has not only an entertaining function, such as social media but also an educational and developmental. For this reason, reading books is especially important for the younger generation. A book is not only a source of knowledge, it helps a person to improve, and is applicable in any life situation;
- the book has a material form, it is an object with certain parameters and standards of external design, which differs from the virtual form of e-books. When reading a paper book, minimal

harmful effects on human health and overall reading comfort are ensured by complying with the relevant technical standards in the design of the book;

- the book is more convenient to use while reading, and its text is characterised by immutability, whereas it can be transformed into e-books. In addition, the beautiful design of a book is a way to satisfy the aesthetic needs of the reader.

At the same time, in recent decades, the role and status of reading, as well as the attitude of society in almost all countries of the world, have changed significantly. For instance, A.P. Bissenbayeva *et al.* (2024) notes that while in previous millennia people relied on physical books to gain knowledge, the development of the Internet has expanded information sources. Consequently, in a relatively short period, its virtual network has become the main means of obtaining information for most people. There are many reasons for this trend, the main ones being the following. In most cases, obtaining information on the Internet is free, easier and more accessible. An example of the latter advantage of electronic resources is the ability to access highly specialised texts that may not be available in libraries or for sale.

The situation with the transition from the use of printed books to their electronic analogues is also observed in the field of education. As costs rise, students are looking for alternative ways to acquire the necessary educational materials. At the present stage, they have gradually moved from buying printed textbooks to renting the necessary learning materials. These changes caused significant revenue and royalty losses among publishers. For these reasons, publishers of educational materials rethink approaches to providing them as a means of gaining a foothold in this emerging book market. The constant advancement of technology created a market for publishers to offer digital textbooks as a potential cost-saving option for students (Robb, 2019).

Thus, it is possible to conclude that due to the complex social processes taking place at this historical stage in the world, associated with the emergence of technological innovations that affect the life of society, publishing houses are undergoing significant changes in their activities. Thus, the results of a survey aimed at determining the main orientation of the further development of the book industry in European countries show that the following trends are the main ones. Hence: (1) printing offices highlight a possible future in innovative printing, (2) apart from the potential for increased costs, the lack of market demand is the most important factor preventing publications from using this technology, and (3) the overall approach and vision of the printing industry is similar across Europe.

At the same time, S. Tiekstra *et al.* (2016) suggests that Western European printers are likely to be more active in the field of innovative printing, while in Eastern Europe the focus of publications is on special effects and personalised printing. This indicates a delay in the introduction of innovative printing technologies in general in the mentioned countries. This statement is partly correct, as the long existence of the Soviet Union meant that many industries in the Eastern European countries that were part of it lagged far behind in their development compared to those in Western Europe.

It should be acknowledged that at the present stage, reading books as a prestigious form of leisure is being replaced by the rapidly developing interactive entertainment industry and the

emergence of new communication media, and as a reliable source of information – by changing existing and emerging new information resources. This results in changes in the way people think, behave and socialise in terms of transforming the means of communication and information exchange between them. However, all the above seems to be a consequence of the rapid loss of interest in books and in reading in general. It is therefore necessary to identify the root cause of this phenomenon, especially among the younger generation. The latter is most susceptible to various influences: school, university, social and cultural space, the consequences of the innovative information revolution in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and is also due to the subjective nature of young people.

In addition to the primary reasons for the loss of interest in reading, among which is the widespread use of artificial intelligence, the Internet and modern technologies in all spheres of human activity, the decline in the culture of reading, in general, should be regarded as an important component of the information culture of the population. Compelling international research illustrates the potential for reading to be enjoyable for the reader and to improve student achievement through reading alongside other learning modalities (Cremin and Scholes, 2024). Despite this, the global trend of declining interest in reading remains. This is primarily due to the general processes of globalisation, especially in the media sector, as well as the reasons mentioned above.

In addition, since the book was originally intended to be an informational tool, there was no need to pay much attention to the interior and exterior design of the book. Thus, it is possible to state that book design was not a widely used tool to attract potential readers. But as the printing industry developed, the book was not only used in communicating data but also in artistic and entertainment spheres. All spheres of society are currently subject to digitalisation. As a result, some of the technologies used are disappearing, being replaced by new ones or improving existing ones, including in the communications sector and various industries. Based on the above, it is possible to argue that in line with the new social and cultural realities, publishers' approach to the role of book design has begun to change.

The foundation of human civilisation is primarily based on the culture of reading, so the enlightening and educational role of book publishing houses and libraries in society must be preserved for the future and accompanied by comprehensive measures to maintain a high level of interest in reading. Therefore, it is necessary to address these factors as a complex, as J.A. Esponda Pérez *et al.* (2023) correctly notes, parents and teachers working with the younger generation are themselves dependent on modern technology, so they must seek creative ways to awaken interest in reading. This can be achieved in the digital age by understanding the potential benefits of education and learning enhanced by innovation.

The opposite, negative process of declining interest in reading is observed in all countries of the world, both in Western and Eastern Europe. It is also happening in Kazakhstan, as evidenced by the results of a survey conducted on a nationally representative sample in November and December 2023. It was attended by 8,000 Kazakhstanis over the age of 18 (Fig. 1, 2).

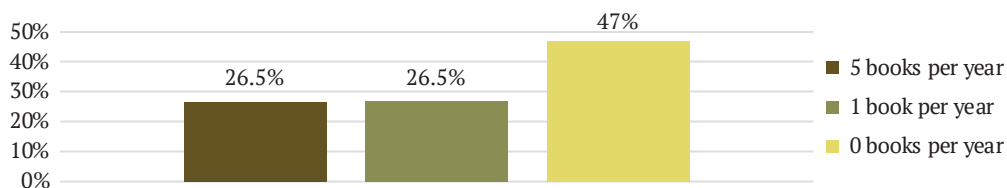


Figure 1. The average number of books read in Kazakhstan

Source: based on A. Akhmetbekov (2024).

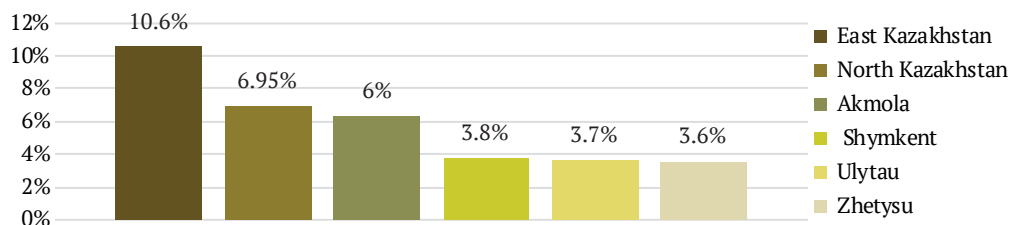


Figure 2. Average number of books read in Kazakhstan by region

Source: based on A. Akhmetbekov (2024).

Analysis of the characteristics of the printed book itself and determination of the universal nature of its creation, the process of coding all book elements, is crucial for the future development of the book industry, as well as, more generally, for understanding how modern society interacts with innovative technologies and cultural products, what interconnections exist between them, and how they influence each other. The heritage of human civilisation is represented by a wide range of diverse cultural products that are widely available and used everywhere, but unevenly across the world (Yucesoy *et al.*, 2018). For instance, in comparison to other countries (for instance, France, Canada, the USA and South Korea), Kazakhstan has lower rates of the average number of books read (Fig. 3).

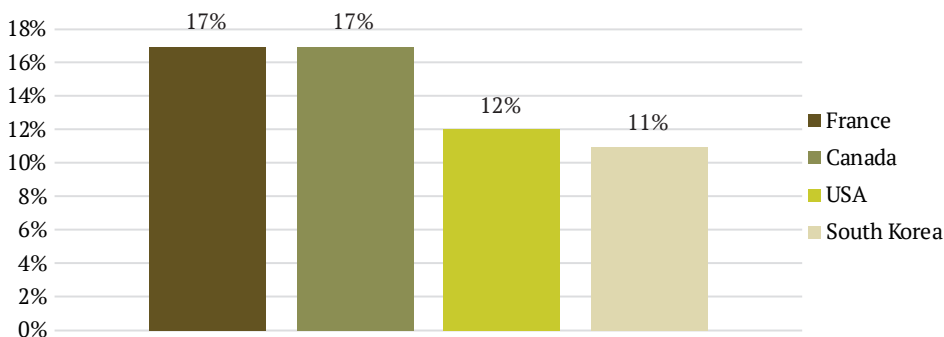


Figure 3. Average number of books read in France, Canada, the US and South Korea

Source: based on A. Akhmetbekov (2024).

The main reasons for the low level of reading activity in Kazakhstan are the following. Firstly, the accessibility of reading books for the public is notable. The decline in the circulation of books produced in Kazakhstan inevitably leads to an increase in imports from other countries. The latter creates a mark-up on the cost of books and reduces the number of potential readers because of their price. At the same time, most of the book products published in Kazakhstan are educational and methodological literature, while the share of fiction sold on the book market remains insignificant. This process directly affects the decline in the culture of the population, since it is fiction that shapes the character of an individual, develops will and consciousness, feelings and psyche, and creates a unique personality.

Secondly, difficulties are associated with the fact that Kazakhstan does not properly support publicity and activity in promoting and popularising the culture of book reading among the population at the state and municipal levels. Similarly to other creative industries, the book publishing industry is currently undergoing a transition from analogue to digital technologies and formats. This transition is challenging existing business models and prompting companies to rethink their product portfolios and core competencies (Øiestad and Bugge, 2014). In the age of digitalisation, productivity-oriented publishers are using digital tools to optimise their printing operations, which affects both editorial practices and printed products in terms of content and form.

Book products, which can nowadays be accessed through various media, are making significant changes in the field of printing, so the function of book design is undergoing a metamorphosis due to its digital impact (Djamfa, 2024). The important role of a book design concept is not only to create and implement a successful book project from the point of view of a commercial approach but also to attract the interest of a potential reader. Digital transformation has become a requirement for survival and long-term development in all areas of life. It can be defined as the process of reconstructing business models using a combination of new computer technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, blockchain and big data (Li *et al.*, 2023).

Notably, the use of paper books as a type of printed matter in terms of reviving the culture of reading, as compared to books in another, more modern format, as mentioned earlier, such as electronic and interactive, as well as multimedia publications, requires a different approach. The latter also includes the fact that the current stage in the organisation of the full cycle of paper book consciousness in Kazakhstan is characterised by significant changes (Schwab, 2011). These changes reflect a series of interconnected trends and transformations in the publishing industry. The process begins with the transformation of the economic model, which has initiated the development of IT technologies. These technological advances have contributed to the growth of the printing industry and the emergence of universal publishing houses with a broad profile. As a result, the automation of prepress processes and shifts in the roles and functions of publishing staff have become prominent features. These developments are leading to a broader trend towards the formation of universal specialists in the publishing sector. The interrelation of these factors highlights a cyclical and progressive evolution of the industry, where economic shifts, technological progress, and human capital transformation are tightly intertwined.

In summary, the transformations in the field of paper book publishing in Kazakhstan are due to the country's transition from a command economy to a market economy, which has led to the rapid development of scientific and technological progress and IT technologies, which have led to the

intensive development of the printing industry. After the crisis period of the 1990s in Kazakhstan, when some publishing houses were forced to cease operations, the circulation of printed products decreased, and the traditional wholesale purchasing network (for instance, the one that existed within the territory of the USSR) was destroyed, positive changes began to take place. Multidisciplinary publishing houses characterised by intensive work began to appear in the latter's field of activity and became widespread in the future.

Changes in the Kazakh economy meant that the printing industry needed to operate efficiently in an ever-increasing competitive environment. The latter is complicated by the presence of other popular leisure activities (computer games, TV and radio programmes, and widespread social media) given the steadily declining reading culture and loss of interest in it. Based on the above, it is possible to conclude that a book, when regarded as a commodity, should attract the reader with its appearance. The above is confirmed by the results of theoretical studies.

For instance, an experiment conducted by A. Gudiniavičius and A. Šuminas (2017) showed that women aged 18-35 preferred books with cold-coloured covers, and this preference faded with age; men aged 56+ preferred books with warm-coloured covers. This preference was not observed in younger age groups. Thus, the result of the experiment shows that at the present stage, it is necessary to create book covers that are more adapted to the needs of the reader.

The solution to the above tasks requires a comprehensive approach to commercial success while preserving the artistic value of the book design. First, the correct design of its elements should be accounted for, since the book will be perceived by the reader visually. The aesthetic pleasure from its design is also relevant. Impression from a visual appearance determines whether the reader will buy and read the book. In addition, it is a specific factor that influences further re-reading of the book and keeping it as part of the home library.

Given the above, it is equally relevant to maintain a high level of reading culture, to attract readers through book design, and to implement measures directly aimed at helping the printing industry overcome the crisis. This implies fundamental work on the design of the printed edition and thorough scientific research in this area. In the 21st century, books are seen as a complex fundamental system, which is the subject of study in various branches of science and is at the same time an object of creativity. A book, as a material object containing information and a material form representing writing, embodies the heritage of world culture, represents a treasure trove of human knowledge, and contains constructive and artistic concepts, as well as aesthetic trends inherent in a particular historical era.

The emergence of the printing industry and achievements in science improved the accessibility to art and literature for many people and increased universal spiritual culture spread and intercultural communication between peoples. The processes of enlightenment and self-education of mankind, its cultural growth and achievements in science and technology in many fields have been the result of the assimilation of the knowledge contained in books. The book is a unique cultural phenomenon that accumulates, preserves and multiplies spiritual values and information resources created by man.

The social, economic and cultural life of every nation in the world includes the history of book publishing and the development of printing products, which, in turn, renders them a relevant topic for scientific research. Predictions state that by 2040, libraries will move from printed books as the stand-

ard form of information storage to storage of digital editions as a copy of the record. They will nullify most of the print collections, thus retaining mostly small, unique collections (Askey, 2023). Source and historiographical analysis in this area is essential at the present stage for the specified reasons.

However, despite the relevance and importance of the problem under study, the design of the book was not an independent object of comprehensive work. In most cases, it was studied in terms of printing and technological innovation. In addition, the design of the book from the position of how the modern school of its design was formed has not been systematised and described properly, also considering the way the book business is developing at the present stage, as well as the difficulties faced by the book in the digital world. In addition, the historical experience of book design should be creatively reinterpreted from the perspective of the experience of the development of human civilisation and the national identity of people in a rapidly changing world influenced by digital technologies and globalisation.

Chapter 1.

The art of book design in Europe: Cultural and historical aspect. Continuity of traditions and technological innovations of the 21st century

1.1 The main traditions of book design in Europe and their influence on modern book publishing

Before analysing the traditions of external and internal book design in Europe that have developed over many centuries and their influence on book publishing today, it should be noted that book design is an integral part of its history (Fig. 4).

The story of the book's creation	History of the book's distribution	The history of book collections	The history of book's use
▪ general issues of bookkeeping and book management; ▪ handwritten and printed books; ▪ artistic design of the book.	▪ book market; ▪ librarianship; ▪ exchange of book stock.	▪ book stock of libraries; ▪ book collection of private individuals; ▪ book depository of legal entities.	▪ book as a source of information; ▪ book as an organisation of writing; ▪ needs and demands of the reader.

Figure 4. Elements of the book's history

A book is both a source of information contained in it and a text reflecting the writing of a particular people and a particular sign system. Books, as cultural heritage, are valuable public assets that preserve the experience of human civilisation. In addition, they reflect the present and future of its lifestyle and cultural values and strengthen the solidarity and social integration of communities in a modern globalised world (Mekonnen *et al.*, 2022). Based on the above, it is possible to argue that the book should be viewed from two main perspectives. On the one hand, it functions as a method used by humans to capture, store, and disseminate information across time and space. On the other hand, it serves as a form through which humans organise the products of writing. These two dimensions underscore the book's essential role in both the preservation and the structured presentation of knowledge, linking the abstract notion of content with its tangible, physical, and semantic form.

The first case refers to the information encoded through conventional signs in a book, and the second to writing and its products, texts in other sign systems, and the mechanism of their organisation in the text of a book. The modern digital society depends on fundamental information processes that take place in various ways: obtaining information, storing, processing, searching, disseminating or using it (Schuster, 2017). In turn, the quality and intensity of reading and the assimilation of information can be directly influenced by the book. As an organisational and functional form, it has two main features: a certain design, as well as spatial and semantic structures.

The above can be summarised as follows: the connection between the material form of the book and its text is defined, reflecting not only its dual nature, as discussed earlier, but also how

closely intertwined the visual and literary images, the construction of the book and the interpretation of its text. Today, the availability of e-books is constantly growing, and the technology of modern printing is improving. All of this determines the way books are sold and bought, the effectiveness of existing and new marketing strategies for attracting potential readers, the further development of the art of book design, and the emergence of various innovations in it that meet the requirements of the times and the reader's needs.

At the same time, it should be remembered that a book is not only a commodity. When the text of a book is published, and it is designed and printed, the book becomes a physical manifestation not only of the ideas of its author but also of the cultural ideals and aesthetics of a certain historical moment. The printed book not only played a prominent role in the information system and society but also played an important role in changing the religious and ideological situation in Europe at the beginning of the modern era. For this reason, following N. Drew and P. Sternberger (2006), the cover is the first message of a book to the reader, a graphic representation of not only its content but also an indicator of its place in the history of design, literature and culture.

For this reason, it is necessary to identify the main trends in the external and internal design of books in Europe from a historical perspective, and how they have influenced book publishing at the present stage. Libraries and research institutes around the world store countless manuscripts and old printed books in separate rooms. There are many factors to account for in classification, for example, rare books. These include materiality, date and method of manufacture, which are among the most common. Information about them is reflected not only in the names of the respective reading rooms of the libraries but also in the cyphers, which differ for manuscripts and printed books. They help to distinguish, for example, the language of the text, indicate whether the printed text is an incunabulum or was produced after 1500, and in some cases reveal the biographies of the previous owners of the books (Brockstieger and Schweitzer-Martin, 2023). Thus, it is possible to conclude that the first printed books had specific design features that significantly distinguished them from manuscripts. Among these distinguishing features were innovations in both decoration and graphic illustration. The earliest decorative techniques included xylography (woodblock printing), which was complemented by carving and engraving on metal plates, later advancing to etching and lithography by the 19th century. Linocut printing and duplicated ornamentation emerged during the same period, reflecting an increasing trend towards reproducible and stylised embellishments. Parallel to this, graphic illustration techniques such as wood and metal engravings were used extensively, followed by printing from lithographic stones or metal plates. Linoleum engraving and the implementation of reusable, standardised book decor also became characteristic of printed works. These elements not only facilitated mass reproduction but also visually marked the departure from unique manuscript traditions toward a new aesthetic and technological paradigm in book design.

The xylography was mostly devoted to the Apocalypse, the mortal nature of man, and the need to give up savings and bequeath property to the church. Printed propaganda, which originated in the era of early book publishing, is still actively used today. In addition, there is also a tendency for printing to focus on the potential reader of its publications and to take their interests into account as much as possible at the stage of preparing printed products for printing. For instance, in the Middle Ages, the volume of books for the middle class and aristocracy was large compared to the lower classes. In addition, even though in most cases manual labour was still used in the design, it was more diverse than engravings for the less affluent classes of the population.

These books were decorated with metal tinsel, wooden inserts, coloured quartz crystals and flocking (applying textile fibres to the outer elements of books). The language of design has become not only an organising principle supporting innovation initiatives, but also the language of innovation itself (Hernández *et al.*, 2018). Book design has changed in the history of printing. For instance, the invention of lithography and xylography expanded the possibilities for illustrating books. Along with this, lithography, photography and subsequent photomechanical processes were modified, improved and used later to create a variety of techniques that were used in fine art, art reproduction, book illustration and other visual product materials (Lopes and Machado, 2023).

Moreover, the reduction in the cost of book production technologies has subsequently become an additional reason for the decline in book prices. In particular, the nineteenth century witnessed important industrial changes in many areas of mass production, including paper making, metallurgy, ink and dye production, and the use of automated presses began to be widely used during this period. Achievements of technological progress, and social and historical conditions created book printing, and in its further development it related to people themselves and the scientific discoveries they made. At the same time, by increasing the accessibility of literature, the advent of printing provided wide opportunities for education and even created new methods of teaching with the help of visual models (Kojali, 2023).

The latter, in turn, led to the further development of science and technology, which resulted in the emergence of innovative advanced technologies in the industrial sector and the improvement of existing ones. For instance, the discovery of photography and the beginning of its use in conjunction with photomechanical methods of reproduction led to the appearance of books and magazines illustrated in colour in large numbers in the publishing industry. Therefore, following T. Otto (2015), design, including books, encompasses not only an orientation towards future changes but also imagery and narration of the past. This aspect of historicity establishes both the motivation for the transformations that have taken place and evokes agentic identities that can contribute to achieving the desired changes in the future. In the subsequent stages of book development, the paper book gradually evolved from a way of preserving and transmitting the knowledge contained in it to a way of spending leisure time, acquiring not only a scientific but also an artistic and entertaining character. In addition, the popularity of books was growing, which in turn contributed to increased competition in the book publishing industry and the search for an effective way to meet consumer demands. One of the solutions to the latter problem was an attractive and creative appearance of the books, which was able to attract and interest the potential reader.

Thus, the essence of the above is that the histories of society, books, fine arts, and graphics are closely intertwined. For this reason, the tradition of the emergence and development of book publishing is one of the most vibrant and intellectually stimulating areas of historiography (Tolonen *et al.*, 2018). The emergence of book printing was conditioned by the socio-economic, political and historical processes taking place in the world society, and at the same time directly influenced its life. Among the key factors that contributed to the rise of printing was the dynamic context of scientific and geographical discovery, which created a demand for reliable means of recording and disseminating new knowledge. This coincided with the scientific and technological revolution, which enabled the development of methods and tools necessary for mass printing. The growth of capitalist industrial development further stimulated the need for efficient and replicable forms

of communication, while the rapid rise in literacy rates and the demand for timely dissemination and retention of information necessitated scalable solutions. In addition, printing facilitated the accumulation and distribution of knowledge that contributed to the emergence of new crafts and the refinement of existing ones. It also supported the development and enrichment of national and world literature, strengthening cultural exchange and identity formation. Parallel to this, the education system was significantly shaped through the incorporation of printed material into teaching and learning processes, thereby standardising and democratising access to knowledge across geographical and social boundaries.

In addition, printed books, both at the time when the first printing press was invented and at the present stage are more accessible to potential readers. For instance, in most cases in the late Middle Ages, monasteries and universities had large collections of manuscripts. They were expensive and used by a narrow circle of people, while the advent of printing made books available to everyone. Thus, the main early production centres were in all European countries: Basel (now Switzerland); Amsterdam, Leiden and Rotterdam (now the Netherlands); Paris, Lyon and Strasbourg (now France); Cologne, Herber and Frankfurt (now Germany); and Florence and Venice (now Italy).

At the same time, the manuscript book continued to exist in parallel with the printed book. Decorations with metal elements, precious stones, as well as handwritten books made of materials such as strong and durable leather, which was used in production to protect the inner pages of the book from the external environment, were all characteristic features of books before the invention of printing. Initially, books were luxury items, but with the emergence of the need to distribute them, the creation of such bindings lost its relevance. Initially, the book was a luxury item, but with the question of the need for its circulation, the creation of such a binding lost its relevance. Notably, the appearance of the book, which can be defined as close to the modern one, appeared only in the nineteenth century.

For the first time, Johann Mentelin, a printer and entrepreneur, accelerated the publishing process and increased the range of books by printing the entire planned circulation of a particular book (Shaw, 2019). The further development of book publishing was reflected in the implementation of Anton Koberger's idea, who organised the emergence of a network of bookstores with a staff of salespeople and traders who sold books in crowded places. This resulted in the fierce competitive struggle of publishing and trading companies in the 16th century, the takeover of small and medium-sized enterprises by large monopolies, and the entry of book publishers into the markets of other countries, particularly the colonies of the Old World.

Thus, the handwritten book could no longer provide the necessary level of technology for the dissemination of information for the further rapid development of many branches of science and production, as well as social modernisation. The need for mass production of books was also driven by the emergence of a distinctive book market, and the simultaneous demand for copies of widespread and important books in large numbers (e.g., the Bible). In addition, the invention of printing technology is a replication technique, which allowed printing houses to solve two pressing tasks in their operations at the same time. Book printing, which enabled the production of one set of movable letters, made it possible to create several prints, which was more cost-effective. At the same time, the repeated rewriting of the book necessitated a thorough check of the text to avoid distortions and errors, as opposed to a one-time check of the text of the book during its printing.

The above can be summarised as follows. Several groups of preconditions for the emergence of printing in Europe can be identified: socio-economic, cultural and technological. All of them should be considered in the historical aspect of the era under study. In the former, in addition to the factors mentioned above, it is possible to distinguish such predetermining factors as the development of burghers, the emergence of the bourgeoisie during the craft-shop period of the spread of manuscripts in the late 14th and 15th centuries, and the increase in the number of city schools. These reasons also served as the main social prerequisite for European printing.

Among the cultural prerequisites, it is necessary to identify the spread of humanistic ideas in society the cult of the book, and the large-scale development of librarianship. If earlier books were seen primarily as objects of art, collectors, in the period under review, belonging to the aristocracy, emphasised the content of their book collections. For the participants of the cultural process in the Renaissance, the book was both one of the main subjects of study (works of ancient authors) and a means of creative expression (numerous humanitarian treatises and works of art).

In addition to the technological prerequisites described in detail above, it is also worth mentioning the spread of paper as the main writing and book material in Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries. Such a cheap medium made it financially feasible to print multiple editions. The widespread use of xylography in Europe was also substantial, as this method was used to produce large-scale publications (e.g. prayer books, alphabets, donations) that could recoup the costs of creating the printing plate.

In the early 20th century, many of the canons of book layout and printing, and the traditions associated with them, which had developed over a long period of book printing, were questioned due to changes in the borders and internal structures of the world's states. But the echoes of the history of the book industry are also present in the modern printing industry. As in other historical eras, the design of book covers is focused on attracting the attention of potential readers, and many technological processes remain unchanged. For instance, the grid used to ensure the optimal proportions of the typesetting strip was invented thanks to developments that existed in the Middle Ages to solve this technological problem in the book printing process.

Thus, it can be concluded that the book is not only a receptacle of information, but also a multifaceted cultural object. It serves as both a source of information and a way of transmitting writing and symbolic systems. Books are also repositories of cultural heritage, preserving the experience of past eras and shaping perceptions of the present and future. In the context of globalisation, they contribute to the consolidation of community and social integration. It is vital to recognise the duality of the book: as a carrier of encrypted data, it is at the same time a product of writing and a means of structuring text. The quality of comprehension depends directly on the way information is presented, on its spatial and semantic construction.

The interdependence between the material cover of a book (e.g., the cover, the paper used, the typeface) and the text it contains shows the close relationship between visual and literary perception. This phenomenon can be examined from the perspective of cognitive neuroscience, which studies the brain's processing of visual and textual stimuli, their influence on the development of mental models and the interpretation of meaning. Interaction with a book, especially an old or historical book, offers the reader the prospect of a multi-sensory experience. Physical contact with a book (e.g., turning pages), causes activation of different areas of the brain, which contributes to a more effective learning experience than electronic versions.

The relationship between the physical appearance of a book and the text it contains exposes the close connection between visual and literary aspects. As mentioned, a book is not only a data repository, but also a multilayered cultural object of diverse nature. From the standpoint of informatics and semiotics, it serves as a source of knowledge and a way of displaying writing, sign structures. Each letter, word, sentence are coded elements, and their arrangement and design create a spatial and semantic organisation, which directly affects the efficiency of perception and interpretation of information. This proves that a book is not just an ordered series of signs, but a hierarchically structured system in which form and meaning are closely intertwined.

Moreover, books are true repositories of cultural wealth, preserving the wisdom of ancestors and influencing the shape of today and tomorrow. In the era of globalisation, they serve as a bridge to strengthen the unity and integration of societies, acting as transmitters of cultural signs and principles between multiple communities and generations. The current dynamics of global economic development can be observed in the context of accelerated digitalisation and the development of networked information infrastructures. These phenomena may well be viewed through the lens of social communication theory, which holds the book to be a mass medium for the dissemination of information, influencing the development of collective minds and identities.

Digital gadgets, while offering an alternative to the usual paper books in the form of electronic versions and audiobooks, at the same time, thanks to the ubiquitous access to the Internet, question the depth and awareness of reading. E-books and audiobooks modify the very process of experiencing literature, as digital tools influence how and when people immerse themselves in the world of words. Technological advances, especially the proliferation of e-books and improvements in typography, are markedly transforming approaches to the sales realisation of book products, marketing principles, and the visual presentation of publications. This gives rise to a constant search for new ways to interest the potential reader.

Furthermore, the emergence of woodblock printing marked a significant breakthrough in the dissemination of knowledge by giving the general public access to visual materials. This process was, in fact, the forerunner of modern modes of visual communication. At the same time, the development of illustration techniques, together with the photomechanical processes that followed, greatly expanded the prospects for book design. The decline in the cost of production in the 19th century, due to industrial breakthroughs (in the production of paper, metals, inks, and the advent of automatic printing presses), provoked a reduction in the price of books, making them more accessible to the public.

A study of the development of the book industry reveals its significant influence on modern publications. The first printed books were characterised by design features that contrasted sharply with manuscripts. The emergence of woodcuts, driven by the need for replication, gave rise to mass production. Religious prints, the precursors of comics, were early examples of printed propaganda and educational content for a broad, mostly illiterate population. It is possible to analyse this process through the lens of media evolution theory, where each new print technology not only changes modes of production, but also transforms social practices as well as cognitive strategies related to information consumption (Tiihonen *et al.*, 2024). The emergence of book printing was the result of a complex interplay of a range of factors. These include:

- socioeconomic factors. The rise of the burghers and the formation of the bourgeoisie, as well as the increase in the number of urban educational institutions, prompted the need to disseminate knowledge widely and inexpensively;

- cultural factors. The spread of humanistic attitudes and the fascination with books, in parallel with the development of bibliophilia (being the case when an edition was evaluated not only from an aesthetic standpoint but also for its content) fuelled a growing demand for printed editions;
- technological factors. The emergence of paper as an accessible material and woodblock printing as a method of duplication (prayer books, primers) became the foundation for the economic feasibility of mass printing.

From the perspective of historical sociology and economic theory of education, the emergence of print is a textbook case of economies of scale, where lower production costs lead to increased supply, and hence increased access to educational resources. This process contributed to the emergence of a “reading society”, which served as the foundation for the development of current mass education systems. It clearly demonstrates the close relationship between technological advancement, economic incentives, and socio-cultural transformation. Book printing revolutionised the creation of printed materials: the production of plates became much simpler, parts could be reused, and the accumulation and dissemination of information was accelerated.

Unlike handwritten books, which were intended for a narrow circle of wealthy readers and were characterised by prohibitive cost, the advent of printing was a real breakthrough in the availability of information, opening it up to the masses. This dramatic change did not just make knowledge more accessible but also contributed to the development of a full-fledged book market, where publishers entered the battle for the reader. Nor was it without significant visual changes in the design of books. The elaborate, often ornate style of manuscript books was eventually replaced by the standardised and uniform design of printed editions. In an era of intensified competition, cover, typography, and layout became essential tools for attracting attention and promoting products.

Unification enabled mass production and made books more functional, giving rise to generic, easily recognisable solutions and serial design. Printing laid the foundation for visual brand identification in the publishing industry. Visual patterns were formed that helped readers navigate the ever-growing world of books. The cover was no longer just a protective element; it became a powerful marketing tool. Its job was to draw the reader’s attention to a particular book among many other titles. For this, replicable aesthetic techniques were employed to instantly convey information about the genre, subject matter, and value of the book in the new market reality.

Scientific research in the field of perceptual psychology and cognitive aesthetics shows that the visual characteristics of the cover can influence the initial impression of a book, shape the reader’s expectations, and activate certain cognitive structures prior to familiarisation with the text. This illustrates not only the aesthetic but also the cognitive role of the cover as an element actively involved in shaping of the reader’s perception. The book cover appears as a primary address to the reader, transmitting information not only about the content, but also about its position in the historical context of design, literature, and social life. The digital book cover is a deconstructed version of its physical predecessor.

It consists of the cover image in conjunction with various metadata elements, given freedom from the constraints and limits of the physical edition (Darling, 2019). The digital cover thus exists in the virtual space of the online shop, actualised as a web page. In turn, from a semiotic standpoint, the cover acts as a multi-layered sign system where each component – colour palette, font type, illustration, composition – is endowed with a certain meaning and encodes information about the genre, target audience, emotional mood, and socio-political connotations of the work.

The print edition has undoubtedly played a crucial role in the structure of information exchange and in the life of society.

This phenomenon accentuates the macrosociological function of the book, considering it as a means of constructing public consciousness and as a catalyst for social transformation. The introduction of printing was, in fact, one of the central elements of the “information revolution” of the early modern period, which entailed the growth of literacy, the unification of languages, and the development of national identities. From the perspective of historical sociology, this process can be viewed as an illustration of how technological breakthroughs can trigger radical cultural and political transformations. This gives rise to a permanent search for new tools to attract the attention of the readership.

A book is not merely an object of consumption, but a tangible embodiment of the author’s creative intent, a reflection of cultural values and aesthetic trends of the era. The printed word had a tremendous impact on the information environment and social life, transformed religious and ideological views in Europe at the dawn of the New Age. The book cover is perceived as the first address to the reader, conveying information not only about the content, but also about the place of the book in the history of design, literature, and culture. The innovative processes taking place in modern printing significantly influence the methods of sale and purchase of books, stimulate the development of marketing approaches, and innovative solutions in design.

From the standpoint of cultural economic theory, this metamorphosis illustrates the shift from a product-centred to a reader-centred model, where publishing houses are forced to adapt to changing consumer demands and technological advances. As part of this trend, big data analytics and machine learning algorithms are becoming increasingly significant in establishing readership, personalising recommendation systems, and optimising advertising strategies. At the same time, a book is not simply an object for sale, but a material embodiment of the author’s ideas, a reflection of cultural values and aesthetic ideas of the era when it was created.

Many established rules of layout and printing, created over the centuries, retain their significance in the modern-day printing industry, despite the transformation of national borders and technical devices. An example is the use of grids to achieve optimal proportions of the typesetting strip, a method that dates back to the developments of the Middle Ages. The design of the book cover still aims to capture the attention of the potential reader, demonstrating the inextricable relationship between the history of society, the book as a cultural artefact, the visual arts and graphic design. This relationship is supported by perceptual psychology, which studies the effects of visual components on cognitive processes and emotional responses.

1.2 Design of external and internal elements of the book

Print has played an unprecedented role in the transmission of culture and the development of civilisation (Zhang, 2023). For instance, due to political and military strife in Germany during the Middle Ages, particularly the pillaging of Mainz, one of the most important centres of book publishing in Europe by Adolf II of Nassau, many German book printers continued their activities in other cities and countries. One of the latter was Italy, whose masters are noted in the history of book design for their great contribution to both art in general and graphics in particular. First and

foremost, it is worth noting Nicholas Jenson, an engraver, printer and typographer who designed the font variations: Roman, Greek and Gothic. In addition, they were organic in the text, as the kerning, i.e. the interval between letters, was chosen when creating them.

Print revolution is more of an evolution, and the distinction between manuscript and print is not clear (Hufnagel, 2023). For instance, the first printed colour book, the *Calendarium*, appeared in 1476, published by Erhard Rathebold independently, without the involvement of scribes or illustrators, and contained, among other elements, a title page. In addition, this book, which describes solar and lunar eclipses in the form of diagrams, was designed using black and yellow, with the most important points in the text highlighted in red. The following books printed by Erhard Rathebold were also original in their design, they had a clear decorative effect, primarily ornaments and geometric figures.

The development of the book industry contributed to interethnic cultural communication and increased literacy. As such, by the mid-17th century, images of natural elements that originated in Dutch Brazil spread throughout Europe. They were often included in art collections (*Libri Picturati*) and natural history treatises, and the images of woodcuts with plants in these books represented type specimens and played a significant role in the dissemination of scientific botanical knowledge (Alcantara-Rodriguez *et al.*, 2024).

Regarding the contribution to the spread of book illustration, it is worth mentioning Alde Manucius, whose publications were distinguished by an elegant harmony and combination of typographic graphics with illustration, as well as the latter with text. This printer is also responsible for the invention of italics, semicolons and the modern comma, and for the development of the Bembo and Poliphilus typefaces, which are still in use today. In addition, Alde Manucius's son also became a printer, and his grandson contributed to the development of the book industry by standardising punctuation systems. It is worth noting that uniqueness has also become inherent in many other printing houses, which are beginning to develop their technologies in book design and use their trademark. Initially, textual signs or geometric symbols were used as this element, which were later replaced by heraldry. The most common decoration for decorating pages was a floral ornament with flowers and vines. However, over time, the spread of printing in Europe and the publication of a large number of books on religious topics, as well as the works of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, caused the demand for books to gradually decline.

This, in turn, has led to several innovations in book publishing by printing houses to attract readers and remain competitive. Among the most important of these were advances in both external and internal design features. On the exterior level, publishers began producing new types of printing products such as pocket-sized books, posters, leaflets, and brochures, which were more portable, versatile, and better suited to the changing habits of readers. Internally, significant developments included the introduction of page numbering systems, the use of italic fonts, and the application of patterned capital letters based on strict mathematical proportions. Additional interior enhancements involved cast metal decorations and layout innovations in both illustrations and typographic composition. These changes were aimed at improving navigability, enhancing visual appeal, and aligning printed works with emerging aesthetic and functional standards of the time.

In terms of design, printed books were more restrained, laconic and minimal in their external and internal design than manuscripts. It is also worth mentioning that from the end of the 16th

century, the technology of xylography prints changed, and they were made of copper rather than wood. As a result, book illustrations became more accurate, and they also contributed to the active development of the design of both ornaments and fonts. No radical changes in the design of books in the seventeenth century were noted, which is primarily caused by the circulation and the widespread use of printing in countries where it had not existed before, such as America, becoming central.

Additional innovations in the field of book publishing, such as the development of new fonts, illustrations, ornaments, and laws on the design of printed matter, were not needed by the printers of this era. The available technologies in the field of book printing fully satisfied both publishers and readers. Books are gradually becoming an integral part of society, a massive and widespread phenomenon. As books became widespread, the clergy lost their monopoly position in both education and book publishing. Notably, monastic libraries of the late Middle Ages are often considered as collections of manuscript codices, their collections were gradually replenished with both manuscript and printed books, in particular, incunabula (Dlabačová and Stoop, 2021).

These European first editions had several specific features that distinguish them from the general body of printed editions and bring them closer to the manuscript. First, it is the external design of the book – numerous abbreviations, ligatures, in most cases handmade miniatures, headings, and initials (space for them was provided in advance during printing). Secondly, there are several features of the book's institutional architectonics.

Among these features are the following:

- no pagination (page numbering) in the book;
- absence of origin data in the book (place, date of publication, name of the publisher, and in some cases - absence of the author's name);
- the absence of a title page at the beginning of the book and the placement of the title on the colophon.

These shortcomings in the design of books were eliminated with the further development of book publishing, and the gradual emergence of established traditions and rules of book design. In addition, as publishing technology improves, book designs are created that have been formed historically. For instance, the typeface used by Johann Gutenberg was beautiful, fully reproducing the handwritten one, with several letters matching in every letter, and the type itself was flawless. All these technological aspects had a practical purpose: to ensure that the perfect sign-to-sign ratio is maintained when composing words from them. Undoubtedly, the way the author's text is expressed through artistic and printing means in a book is its external and internal design. This can be done through the reproduction of the text, its placement in the book, the choice of a particular format, the type of paper itself, the composition of the book, its illustrations and decorative embellishments. Thus, a modern book has both internal and external elements that are relevant for the reader. Despite their equal importance, the external form is of primary significance: the appearance of the book directly affects the impression the reader will receive. The internal structure of a modern book includes three main components: the primary text, which constitutes the core content of the book; additional textual material, such as tables, illustrations and diagrams, which provide visual or supplementary support to the main content; and auxiliary text material, including introductions, explanations, notes and comments, which offer context or interpretation. While some of these components are required for all editions, others are applicable to a limited number and serve optional, albeit valuable, functions.

On the external side, the most essential components are the cover and binding, whose primary purpose is to hold the book's pages together and shield them from environmental damage. These elements also perform significant informational and advertising functions. For instance, they usually include key details about the book, such as its title and author, similar to what is found on the title page. Additionally, modern book design also includes adjacent components such as the flyleaf, slipcase, or dust jacket. These features not only add to the protective and aesthetic qualities of a book but also play an important role in how the book is presented and perceived by the reader.

It should be noted that while the primary text and flyleaf for bound editions are essential elements of modern books, other components such as illustrations, diagrams, introductions, and explanatory notes are included only in select editions and serve optional, supplementary purposes. The main practical functions of the cover and binding are to secure the book's pages and to protect the volume from environmental damage. Beyond their protective role, these elements also fulfil important informational and promotional functions. The cover and binding typically present core bibliographic information, mirroring the data found on the title page. Furthermore, they shape the reader's first impression, as the visual and tactile qualities of a book's exterior strongly influence its appeal and perceived value.

When publishing a book, the question arises of its design and release in a cover or binding. The choice depends on the period for which the publications are intended: a cover is used for short or medium-term use, and a binding or cover made of a material stronger than paper is used for long-term use. The processes for producing the cover and binding are also different: the former is much faster to produce, as it is mostly made using a paper coating to cover the paper block.

The method of attaching the cover to the latter also determines the durability of the book. In most cases, small books, as well as those not intended for repeated use by the reader, are published in paperback. The strength of the binding is often greater than that of the cover, but it directly depends on the material used to make the cover and the design of the book itself. The latter is more complex than the one on the cover. In most cases, a bound cover consists of several parts, namely: the spine, the outer material used to bind the sides of a book (or the entire cover), and the inlay. The latter is a strip of thick paper or thin cardboard glued to the spine on the back side, its purpose being to increase the density and elasticity of the spine.

As mentioned above, the cover and binding carry an advertising function and an information load about the book, so it is important to determine the information that should be placed in it. Their design is also necessary to acquire the reader's interest, whether to read it or buy it. For the above reasons, the cover and binding of a book are inconceivable without the title of the book and information about its author, but other information may be useful. Since the text on the binding or cover is printed in a larger font than the main text, the most important title information should be placed on the binding or cover.

Paper bindings contain more information than cloth or paper or similar material bindings. The reason for this is the technological features of the process: paper can be used to print smaller fonts and more title data than other materials. The design of the font itself will also differ significantly depending on the type of publication being produced. Political, scientific, industrial, technical, reference and subscription publications are characterised using clean fonts.

Since the main function of a font inscription on a book cover or binding is informational, a clear and beautiful font is necessary, as well as the logical and reasonable composition of the

represented text. First, all the elements of the inscription, the intervals between them, and the breakdown into lines should be addressed. In most cases, the font pattern is not directly related to the book and its content, but sometimes it can be associated with it through certain associations that arise in the reader. The font is not a single element of the composition of a book cover or binding; its visual structural components are important.

They can be thematic, emblematic, narrative or traditional, applied since the Middle Ages, ornamental elements, as well as images that are placed on the binding or cover of the book. Their main task is to provide additional information, to inform about the content of a book. If a picture is used in the design of a cover or binding, it should be both expressive and interesting. It can be a picture that is associated with the content of the book, for instance, a tourist guide can be designed with a hot air balloon on the cover or binding of the book.

It should be emphasised that not only the front but also the back of the cover or binding can contain such graphic elements that logically continue the design on the front. This may include information about the author, an abstract of the book, and the volume number in case of a multi-volume publication. Depending on the thickness of the book and its volume, the inscriptions on the spine can be arranged vertically or horizontally. In the first case, the inscription is arranged in such a way that it is easy to read from the bottom up if the book is placed, for example, on a shelf. In some cases, the inscription is placed in reverse to emphasise the desktop nature of the publication itself, and the spine may be decorated with an ornament or a small drawing. All these graphic elements, often used in the serial design of fiction and non-fiction books, help identify the book and distinguish it from similar books.

In terms of book construction, rigid and flexible codices, scrolls, stacks of tables, and leporellos were widely used at different historical stages. The choice of a particular book design directly depended on the level of production in a particular country and the materials available for book production. The most common material construction of a book at the present stage is the soft (flexible) codex, which appeared because people began to use a new material, namely parchment made of finely crafted animal skin for making books. In addition to the innovation in the material used for the latter, the codex was also more durable than a scroll, and to preserve its integrity, it was framed with leather and wood bindings.

Codices became the prototypes of modern books, as they contained traditional elements of a book. Both constructive and decorative aspects are notable: binding design, title page, illustrations, and the nature of the design. Such a construction as a leporello (screen) was a kind of transitional form from scrolls to codices and is nowadays used in the production of advertising products or printed publications for young children. It is also worth noting that a stack of tables enclosed in a folder differs in its characteristics from other structures (Table 1).

Table 1. Types of book structures

Name book designs	Book production material	Specific characteristics
Scroll	Papyrus, silk, paper	Primarily Ancient Egypt, Ancient China and Ancient Japan. Simple and compact form. Integrity was ensured by an additional device, a capsule in which the scroll was stored. Easy to read in sequence

Table 1, Continued

Name book designs	Book production material	Specific characteristics
Rigid codex	Clay, wood	Used in ancient Rome. Consisted of waxed wooden tables held together by a cord threaded through holes drilled in the inner margin.
Flexible codex	Parchment, leather, wood	It was a block of folded (bent and stapled at the spine) sheets of paper or any other flexible material. More durable than a scroll. To preserve the integrity of the book, a design element such as a bookbinding made of leather or wood was used. It also included other structural and decorative elements that are typical of modern books.
Stack of tables	Clay, wood	Easy in sample reading. Used when creating albums, the further use of which involves mainly selective perception of the elements (similar to the exhibits of an exhibition) that make up the publication.
Leporello	Paper	A transitional form from a scroll to a codex, the prototypes of which are found in medieval Japanese and Chinese books. The book space is decorated with textual and pictorial elements, similar to a panorama. The design of the book contains the effects of the game and advertising moments of the exhibition. Can be used to read cover-to-cover and selectively

At each historical stage, different materials prevailed for making books, some of which were widely used, such as clay, wood, parchment, metal (copper sheets), and eventually paper. Other materials, such as papyrus, silk, palm leaves or birch bark, were not as popular due to non-availability in a particular area. The third material, parchment, had the best characteristics for writing in book production, and despite being an expensive material, it predetermined the further design of the book.

The advantages of parchment made from the skins of young animals were that it was a more familiar material, compared to papyrus, which was commonly used in ancient Egypt and ancient Europe. In addition, unlike the latter, parchment did not break at the folds, making it suitable for use in the code's design, which stipulates that the material can be used on both sides. This made the use of parchment economically advantageous, as it reduced the cost of book production, which in turn was used to replace the scroll book in the late antiquity and early medieval periods. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, when the monasteries lost their monopoly on book printing and simultaneously switched to the wider use of paper rather than parchment in book publishing, a gradual process of democratisation of book publishing began, as books became publicly available.

Paper, which became widespread in Europe a millennium after its invention, eventually replaced the employment of parchment in the production of books, differing in the raw materials from which it was made. Scholars' opinions on what paper was originally made of in China are based on two primary assumptions: either the raw material was bamboo pulp, i.e., paper was made from bamboo, or paper was made from the bast of the paper mulberry. Rag paper used in Europe, on the other hand, was produced using a different technology, according to which the final stage of its production involved casting the paper pulp onto a metal mesh. Figurative and alphabetic symbols were also laid out on the latter, which were transferred to the paper sheet in the same way as with watermarks (filigrees), which was used as a stamp for the goods by the master.

The history of paper size is also noteworthy. Since it was made by hand, its parameters were determined primarily by the distance at which the craftsman held the wooden frame with both hands. A metal mesh was stretched over it, as described above. It should also be noted that the size

of the sheet was not the only criterion that determined the format of the book; the number of times a sheet could be folded in a particular edition also played an important role (Fig. 5).

Medieval books (folios)	Manufactured in a quarter-sheet format	Manufactured in a half-sheet format	Manufactured in a sixteenths of a sheet format	Manufactured in a half-sheet format
1/2 part of the sheet (1 fold)	1/4 of a sheet (2 folds)	1/8 of a sheet (3 folds)	1/16 of a sheet (4 folds)	1/12 or 1/24 of a sheet

Figure 5. Paper sheet size depending on its flexibility

As technology in the industry develops, improving those already in widespread use, such as innovative folding machines, as well as the emergence of new ones, such as the invention of paper rolls, print formats are becoming more diverse. Addressing the size of the book block from a historical perspective, it is worth noting the absence of fixed book formats at the initial stage of book printing as an important characteristic of the printed edition. The format of the book depended on the customer’s wishes, the availability of materials for book production, and the parameters of the grid used for casting paper sheets).

The modifications implemented by printers as additional services of book publishing, namely, trimming books or making new covers or bindings, also meant that the original format of the book was lost. At the same time, there were already established traditions in the format used for certain books dating back to medieval Europe. Thus, books of a religious nature, and over time, books of a scientific nature, were in most cases large, while books used daily were small in format and had a simple book design. After paper began to be used in book printing as a material for making books, the format was determined by the size of the paper sheet and its parts (1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/12, 1/32). In addition to producing books in regular formats, the production of miniature printed editions to order was popular, for example, souvenir books, which could not be read without a magnifying glass. The invention of photography also contributed to the reduction of the book format, which was also often used in richly illustrated books that had a large format.

The book’s circulation, the higher technological sophistication of the printing process, and the need to reduce its cost led to a simplification of the text font and a minimum number of engraved characters. This resulted in a decline in the overall aesthetic level of print media. This led to a decline in the aesthetic level of publications, and only in a few countries, such as Italy, did type designers continue to improve the pattern intended for the characters of a typographic font to make it clean and beautiful.

In addition, in Italy, the idea of moving from a pictorial handwritten book to a printed edition that acquires a new quality, a union of black and white inherent in the art of graphics, was realised. Among the masters of scripts, it is worth noting the Italian Francesco da Bologna (Griffo) and the Venetian Nicolaus Jenson, who designed the drawing in such a way that the letters could be perfectly joined in any combination. And the greatest contribution in terms of graphic design was made by Italian printers, who most often used Renaissance decor in the design of book pages. Over time, the progressive ideas of bookmaking in Italy, together with the printers who migrated from the country after the sack of Rome, spread to France, marking the beginning of a new era in the external

and internal design of books. Thus, evolutionarily, due to various social, economic, and political circumstances, new traditions of aesthetic book design were gradually formed, combined with the simultaneous development of innovative techniques and printing technology.

Proceeding from the above, the following conclusions can be drawn. Printing was the crucial factor in the dissemination of cultural values and the progressive progress of humankind. This process was not a lightning change, but a gradual development, since at the beginning there was uncertainty between manuscripts and printed books. The cases of German printers who moved to Italy after the sacking of Mainz demonstrate how political upheaval stimulated the transfer of knowledge and innovation in printing. Italian masters made significant contributions to the creation of typefaces (Roman, Greek, Gothic) and the refinement of their visual appearance through careful kerning techniques.

From the perspective of the history of printing and graphic design, the work of Italian printers formed the basic foundations of aesthetics and ease of text perception, which have not lost their relevance today. Their research on proportionality, contrast, and interlineage can be interpreted as the first empirical studies on the cognitive ergonomics of reading. They intuitively, or experientially, found ideal solutions for the visual processing of text by the human eye and brain, which increased the productivity and comfort of reading many times over. This fact emphasises that the development of book printing represented not only a technological advancement, but also a scientific and aesthetic process focused on improving human interaction with the printed word.

Early discoveries, such as Erhard Ratdolt's colour *Calendarium* (1476), decorated with title pages, charts, and colour accents, confirm the interest in the visual expressiveness and usefulness of books from the very beginning of printing. Ratdolt's editions were also renowned for their clarity of ornamentation and geometric forms. The progress of book publishing stimulated cross-cultural interaction and increased literacy. The spread of Dutch images of natural phenomena across Europe, and their integration into art collections and scientific writings, shows how printed matter facilitated the exchange of scientific data, particularly in the field of botany. It signifies that from the earliest stages of its formation; the book was more than just a way of transmitting textual information.

It was a multifunctional platform that facilitated both the visualisation and dissemination of scientific data and the aesthetic education of a wide audience. Thus, Aldus Manucius and his successors made a valuable contribution to book publishing by combining the elegance of typography and illustration, introducing italics, semicolons, and the familiar appearance of the comma, and formalising punctuation. His typefaces "Bembo" and "Poliphilus" have not lost their relevance to the present day. Aldus Manucius' work laid the foundation for the evolution of modern typography by showing how progress in one area of bookmaking, such as font design, can set in motion a series of improvements in other areas, such as unifying punctuation and improving readability.

As printing gained momentum and the market filled with religious and philosophical works, a decline in demand for books was observed. This prompted printers to seek innovative approaches to interest readers and stay competitive. It is possible to view this process from the standpoint of market competition theory, where the oversupply created a need for product differentiation as well as intensified marketing strategies. The key innovations that influenced the external and internal decoration of books were the transition from wooden woodcuts to copper engravings from the late 16th century onwards. This improved the clarity of illustrations and fostered the development of

ornament and font design. In terms of art history and technological development, this moment represented a massive leap forward. Copper engraving opened unprecedented horizons of detail and filigree in the rendering of lines, which expanded the boundaries of visual storytelling and scientific and illustrative possibilities. The new method also influenced the aesthetic demands of readers, leading to an increased demand for more refined and precise images. Thus, one can debate the evolution of visual literacy of society due to this technical breakthrough.

In the 17th century, the significance of book circulation increased, leading to the spread of printing to new territories such as America and the fulfilment of mass demand without dramatic changes in design (Albertin *et al.*, 2018). This reflects the underlying principles of logistics and mass production inherent in developing capitalism. The geographical spread of book printing not only expanded available markets but also contributed to the development of a unified cultural space through the standardisation of formats and visual elements of publications. Viewed from a sociological perspective, this process appears as a form of cultural expansion where the book served as a key tool for colonising minds and spreading European ideas. Another significant transformation occurred with the loss of the clergy's exclusive right to education and printing, which served to democratise the book trade and increase the availability of books for all. This process is an essential element in the secularisation of society and the emergence of civil society. From the standpoint of the history of education, it contributed to the increase of literacy across a wider population. This, in turn, increased demand for secular literature and played a role in creating a public space for the exchange of ideas. The expansion of the range of authors and publishers not affiliated with the church led to a pluralisation of content and the emergence of new genres that reflected changing social and intellectual demands.

Early printed books, called incunabula, retained a series of features shared with manuscript works. These included an abundance of abbreviations, letter links (ligatures), artistic miniatures, highlighted sections (headings), and large initial letters made by hand. Furthermore, page numbers, publishing data, and title pages were often missing, with the title of the book placed in the colophon, i.e., at the end of the text. With the development of printing and the formation of standards for book design, these "imperfections" were gradually eliminated. For example, the inventor of printing, Gutenberg, sought to mimic handwritten script as closely as possible, creating exquisite and flawless examples of typeset text.

The modern book is organised around well-defined components that form its internal content and external presentation, which are integral to the reader's perception. Internal elements, which include tables, illustrations, diagrams, introductions, explanatory material, notes, and commentaries, are crucial (Jabborova *et al.*, 2024). Certain elements, such as the frontispiece for hardcover books, form an integral part of the publication. External elements like the cover or binding serve practical purposes, such as connecting the pages and protecting them from external factors, and they also carry informational and promotional loads. The choice between cover and binding depends on the expected life of the book and its intended use. Cover and binding design plays a crucial role in attracting the attention of potential readers. It includes the main title of the book and information about the author, presented in a large and readable font, along with visual elements such as thematic illustrations, logos, and images that directly reflect the essence of the content or evoke certain associations. Additional information on the back cover includes brief biographical information about the author, a book abstract, and volume number (if

part of a series). Spine design provides vertical or horizontal arrangement of the inscription with the title and the author's surname, with decorative details for quick identification of the book in the book series.

Historically, various book forms have evolved. The scroll, used in ancient Egypt, China, and Japan, was perfect for continuous reading, while the hard codex, used in ancient Rome, offered the convenience of selective access to information. The flexible codex, associated with the use of parchment, was the precursor to the modern book. Parchment, despite its prohibitive cost, became a substitute for papyrus because it was more durable and allowed writing on both sides, which eventually made it the preferred material for codices. With the development of paper production first from bamboo and silkworm in China, and later from cloth in Europe, bookmaking became cheaper and more accessible. Book formats evolved from pieces made to order and limited by available materials to standardised ones tied to the size of the paper sheet. The advent of folding machines and roll paper expanded type diversity by optimising work steps, allowing for multiple replications of products and meeting increasing consumer demand.

These developments also reduced the cost of production, which required simplifying fonts and reducing the number of engravings, affecting the overall aesthetic level of publications. However, countries like Italy continued to maintain the clarity and elegance of typography, striving for clarity and beauty in printed works, marking a significant evolution in book design. Over time, these progressive ideas of bookmaking spread from Italy to France and beyond, marking the beginning of a new era in the external and internal design of books. Thus, the evolution of book printing is not just a technological progression but also a cultural one, deeply intertwined with social, economic, and political transformations.

Reducing the cost of the production process required simplifying fonts and reducing the number of engravings, which in some cases affected the visual component of the publication. Still, countries such as Italy continued to work on typography, maintaining the desire for clarity and elegance of design, harmonising black and white as in the graphic arts. Italian typographers substantially influenced the development of graphic design, spreading the tradition of Renaissance design to France and other countries. Proceeding from this, the history of book printing is a continuous process of development, depending on social, economic, political, and technological factors. Modern book publishing continues to develop the principles of aesthetic design, combining them with advanced technical developments to meet the needs of readers and society as a whole.

1.3 The role of the artist in the selection and processing of illustrative material

At the present stage, typographic graphics are characterised by the principles that were laid down at the beginning of the 20th century: clarity, ease of reading the text, and grid modularity, while rejecting rigid symmetry. The main function of the text is to create the layout composition based on it. Book design in Western and Eastern Europe has developed in different ways: while the former, for instance, widely used the Swiss layout, the Soviet Union emphasised theoretical research. In particular, they focused on the printing technologies available at the time and the use of artistic means of expression in publishing (lettering, synthesis of illustrations and text).

In addition, the innovative technologies that emerged with the invention and spread of computers caused changes in book design, as a significant number of book designs became widely available. This has led to many successful experiments and wrong decisions in the interior and exterior design of books (Griffey, 2020). Among the innovative ideas that have been successfully implemented in Photoshop, which can be used for new techniques in book publishing: are collages, unusual typography, various graphic effects, and many font types. Contemporary book design also reflects the globalised world and the intertwining of different cultures: for instance, the features of book culture typical of Asian countries, combined with the book traditions of European minimalism, are quite common.

Civilisation is in constant progress, creating new and improving existing means and systems of information and communication technologies. At the same time, interest in reading and the book, in its place in the system of human values and its role in the spiritual heritage, is not lost amidst the proliferation of information processes and new media. The time and space of human life are inexorably filled with digital culture, the main element of the mass culture of the consumer society: in the virtual world, the Internet, a fast, convenient and affordable way to communicate; along with computer games, newspapers and magazines in electronic form, as well as audiobooks, have become popular (Rebelo *et al.*, 2023).

Modern typographic design, despite revolutions in technology, is still based on the fundamental concepts formulated at the beginning of the last century. These include the clarity and comprehensibility of text material, the mandatory use of a modular grid, and the pursuit of asymmetry. The functionality of the text continues to be the key factor determining the entire compositional structure of the layout. The evolution of book design in Europe developed in different ways: in the West, for example, "Swiss layout" was widespread, while in the Soviet Union more emphasis was placed on an in-depth study of available printing technologies, as well as on the active use of artistic techniques such as lettering and the integration of illustration and text.

The invention and widespread adoption of computer technology has been a revolution for book design, providing unprecedented access and mass production of book design. This process has produced both outstanding creative experiences and controversial solutions to both the interior and exterior visual components of books. Notable achievements include the progress of programmes such as Photoshop, which pushed the boundaries of creativity, allowing the creation of complex collages, original typography, and striking graphic effects. The palette of typefaces open to designers has also been enriched, stimulating the birth of fresh visual languages and aesthetic approaches.

At the same time, the horizons for experimentation in book design have increased and, in parallel, the challenges of ensuring comfortable reading and preserving established canons have come to the fore. Contemporary book design is no less sensitive to the processes of globalisation and the mixing of cultural codes. Designers are increasingly turning to the heritage of Asian book art, skillfully integrating it into the laconic forms of European minimalism. These trends point to a desire for visual communication to unite diverse groups of readers and be understood by all, reflecting the evolution of book design towards cross-cultural interaction and global reading accessibility.

Despite the steady introduction of the digital environment into all aspects of human existence, the interest in reading and books has not lost its relevance. In an era dominated by virtual reality, where the Internet, computer games, electronic editions, and audiobooks have proved to be fast, comfortable, and accessible ways of obtaining information and communication, the book

continues to occupy a special place in the system of human values and spiritual heritage. It continues to be a significant element of modern mass culture, demonstrating its stability and relevance in the ever-changing information space. This indicates that reading is firmly woven into human understanding of the world, and it adapts perfectly to ever-changing technologies.

Thus, modern book design is based on the fundamental principles formulated in the early 20th century: brevity, modular layout, and also actively introduces innovative tools: computer graphics, Photoshop, to enrich the palette of expressive means. The tendency to merge distinct cultural trends, such as Asian and European stylistics, in book design demonstrates globalisation trends and the desire to create products that appeal to all audiences. Despite the growing popularity of digital media, the book stays a vital cultural phenomenon and a custodian of information. Its role in shaping the spiritual heritage and value system of humankind continues to be key, confirming its continued relevance in the era of digital transformation of society.

Chapter 2.

The concept of publication design in Europe

2.1 Key parameters of developing the concept of publication design

The concept of a publication refers to a specific model and composition designed for the processing and preparation of a work for printing. It encompasses the content, structure, and design of the work, which together form the foundation for its subsequent realisation as a published piece. A publication should be understood as a document the printing of which is intended for the dissemination of the information it contains. A publication, produced through printing or embossing, includes publication details and is distributed only after undergoing editorial, design, and publishing processing. Based on this, the way in which a particular publication is designed is determined by a combination of various factors.

The primary task of the concept of a publication is to specify its typological reliable parameters, fully aligned with one another, to clearly convey the intent of the publication in its entirety, including its objectives and general principles for selecting and organising material. Furthermore, the concept of a publication must be specific, as it must correspond to the needs and interests of readers and the situation in the book market relevant at the time of the release. The concept of a publication must also be implemented with consideration of the economic and other capacities of the respective publishing house.

The development and implementation of a publication concept are determined by the intrinsic characteristics of the publication itself, as outlined in GOST 7.60-2003 (2004). These characteristics include periodicity, the composition of the main text, the sign-based nature of information, intended readership categories, purpose and nature of information, methods of organizing works, content originality, volume, edition type, design and printing execution, authorship and publisher affiliation, intended use, and material structure. Together, they constitute the foundational typology for the classification and production of printed publications.

Periodicity serves as a core differentiating feature, dividing publications into periodical, non-periodical, serial, and continuing types. Periodicals are issued at regular intervals, such as daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually, and though they maintain a consistent design and structure, their content changes with each issue. Non-periodicals, in contrast, are published without a predetermined schedule yet share a common title and identifiable numbering or dating system. Serial publications share similarities with non-periodicals but typically emphasize continuity through numbered volumes. Continuing publications are released irregularly, guided by the accumulation of necessary material, and mirror the features of non-periodicals in their structural logic.

The composition of the main text may take the form of monographs, collections, or digests. A monograph represents a self-contained scholarly work, while a collection compiles several pieces, potentially as a periodical or non-periodical issue. A digest features curated excerpts from diverse sources and is structured around selected, often thematically coherent, materials. These categories serve both scholarly and public purposes and reflect distinct approaches to content organization.

Information in printed publications is transmitted through various sign systems including textual, visual, musical, cartographic, Braille, or mixed formats. Textual publications contain verbal, numerical, or symbolic text. Visual publications incorporate reproductions of artworks, graphic or sculptural forms, or artistic photography. Musical score editions present compositions in notation. Album formats, whether technical, artistic, or photographic, offer collections of images, illustrations, or schematics. Artistic reproductions and postcards add an aesthetic or communicative layer. Cartographic and Braille publications represent specialized modes of information delivery, and sheet-image publications, such as engravings or ex-libris, serve both decorative and archival purposes.

The readership of non-periodical publications encompasses a wide range of groups: mass audiences, children and youth, library users, people with disabilities, and niche communities such as elite readers or bibliophiles. Mass-market and popular publications aim to provide accessible information to general readers, while children's editions are crafted with age-appropriate design and typographic elements. Library editions prioritize durability and institutional utility, whereas publications for people with disabilities include formats such as large print, audiobooks, and Braille. Specialized editions, including elite or bibliophile publications, are valued for their content and aesthetic presentation and are often produced in limited quantities.

The intended purpose of publications further shapes their classification. Categories include official, scientific, popular-scientific, educational, literary-artistic, mass-political, reference, spiritual-educational, informational, advertising, leisure-oriented, and normative production-practical works. Official publications encompass government and institutional directives. Scientific and popular-scientific editions communicate research findings to academic and general audiences respectively. Educational materials support structured learning at various levels. Literary-artistic works foreground creative expression, whereas mass-political publications aim at ideological dissemination. Reference materials offer concise information for practical use. Spiritual-educational works reflect religious traditions. Advertising publications serve commercial functions, and leisure publications support hobbies and amateur activities. Normative-practical works codify standards and technical procedures in industrial and professional contexts.

Information types and content formats largely mirror the categories of purpose and use. These range from scientific monographs and collections to instructional manuals and textbooks, dictionaries, biobibliographic guides, or anthologies. Official documents include statutes, standards, or price lists. Production-practical editions contain guidelines and recommendations for field application. Educational publications include textbooks, curricula, workbooks, and teaching aids. Reference materials cover encyclopaedias, catalogues, and posters.

Organizational methods in non-periodical publications include single-volume or multi-volume editions, collected or selected works, series, academic and serial editions, appendices, or separately published materials. Academic editions typically include scholarly apparatus such as commentaries, bibliographies, and variant readings. Series are united by conceptual or thematic continuity and target readership. Appendices and supplements may be independently useful and published in tandem with a core work. Re-publication of previously issued materials, whether individually or as part of anthologies, is also common. The originality of content allows for distinctions among original, translated, bilingual (parallel-text), and multilingual publications. Original editions present content in the author's language, while translated editions bring foreign-language works to new audiences. Parallel-text and multilingual publications serve pedagogical, comparative, or multicultural functions.

Volume distinguishes books (over 48 pages), brochures (4 to 48 pages), and leaflets (1 to 4 pages). These classifications affect printing strategy, distribution, and reader expectations. Edition types include first editions, reprints, expanded or revised versions, corrected or supplemented texts, and stereotyping or repeated printings. Each of these has implications for scholarly citation, market positioning, and historical relevance. Design and print execution includes formats such as paperback, facsimile, lithographic, finely bound, or xylographic editions. Paperback editions emphasize accessibility and mass distribution. Finely bound and facsimile editions cater to collectors and academic institutions. Lithographic and xylographic methods reflect artistic traditions and are used for reproductions or high-fidelity print runs. Authorship and publisher affiliation categories include anonymous, self-published, posthumous, institutional, joint, and corporate publications. These classifications affect intellectual property, editorial oversight, and publication ethics. Self-publishing allows authors to retain control, while institutional publications reflect the identity and mission of a sponsoring organization.

The use of printed materials can be oriented toward free distribution, market success (best-sellers), specialized circulation (subscription or numbered editions), or rarity. Bestsellers aim for wide public appeal. Subscription editions target a loyal audience. Numbered and manuscript editions suggest exclusivity or artistic value. Commemorative and memorial publications are issued in recognition of significant individuals or events. Such editions often feature elaborate design, enhanced print quality, and symbolic content, reinforcing their commemorative function. Periodical and continuing publications, such as newspapers, magazines, bulletins, and calendars, differ in format, frequency, and target audience. Newspapers provide current affairs, advertisements, and official announcements. Magazines include serialized commentary and artistic content. Bulletins deliver focused official updates. Calendars function as annual reference tools. Material structure defines physical format and functionality. These include books, magazines, sheets, newspapers, postcards, bookmarks, leporellos, toy books, and publication sets. They differ in binding, size, and use. Leporellos and toy books serve didactic or interactive functions, while folders and sets enhance thematic cohesion. The convergence of form and function in printed publications underscores the evolving nature of design and reader interaction in both traditional and digital environments.

Although the concept of publishing is undoubtedly developed with consideration of the aforementioned factors, it is important to consider broader reasons that directly influence the book industry, as previously discussed. In the early 1980s, with the advent of the personal computer, the industry experienced a wave of changes that brought turmoil and uncertainty about its future. This shift also led to changes in consumer demand, mergers and acquisitions within the printing sector, and the development of the information superhighway (Tat Keh, 1998). Thus, it can be argued that the primary factors directly affecting the activities of modern printing remain convergence and multimedia integration.

Therefore, the concept of a publication depends on a range of internal and external factors that directly influence the achievement of its objectives, as it constitutes an integral part of both individual publishing houses and the printing industry as a whole. Furthermore, the concept of a publication consists of several key components that ensure its realisation, including the processes of printing and economic, editorial, design, and publishing aspects (Fig. 6).

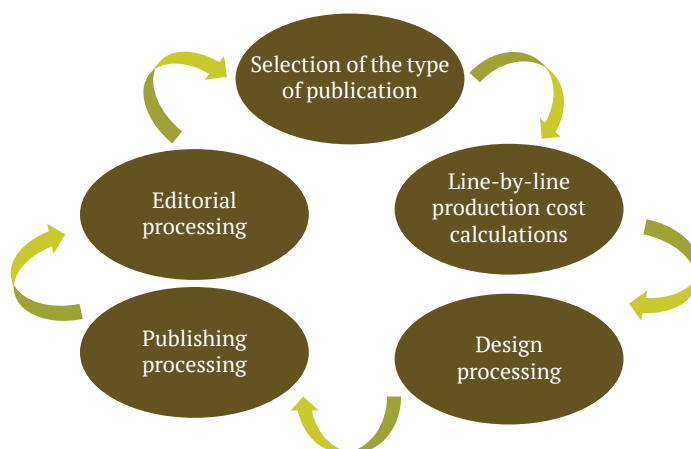


Figure 6. Key components of publication design

As shown above, the concept of a publication relies not only on artistic and literary aspects but also on economic considerations – accurate calculations must be made for both its production and cost. The concept serves as the methodological foundation for preparing and successfully completing the full editorial process of a publication and, therefore, forms the basis of the project for its creation and design. Since the model of a publication is developed based on its concept, it is important to understand the relationship between the two: they can be conditionally correlated as a plan of content (the latter) and a plan of expression (the former). Thus, the specific features of a particular type of publication, their evaluation, and the decision regarding its feasibility are most clearly reflected in the concept of the publication. The key structural and technical characteristics that allow for understanding the specifics of preparing a publication from the perspective of editorial, publishing, and printing processes constitute the model of the publication. These features must be considered at all stages of the publication, including the work of the editorial team, the planning and development of the publication’s concept and model, the acquisition of manuscripts and the signing of contracts, and the production and distribution of the publication.

The concept of a publication is developed before a title is included in the publication portfolio, while the layout is created later, as the editor defines the framework for the internal formatting of the publication. In turn, the set of the most significant characteristics of the publication, properly documented on a specific medium implies that, in its implementation, the following essential characteristics will be considered: provisional title and subtitle (if applicable) of the publication, annotation of the publication (including its target readership), genre and stylistic features of the publication, information about the author, the volume of the publication, the time frame for its preparation for submission to the publisher, estimated cost of the publication on the book market, series affiliation of the publication, originality (assessing the distinguishing features of the specific publication compared to similar ones on the book market), structure of the publication (synopsis or table of contents, content), and position of the publication among analogous works available on the book market (results of marketing research enabling such comparison) (Scholz, 2022).

The title is a crucial attribute of any publication, functioning analogously to its visual design in prompting the reader's interest and engagement. Positioned before the main text, the title conveys preliminary insights into the publication's content while simultaneously reflecting the author's evaluative perspective. It performs several interrelated functions. Firstly, it fulfils a promotional and expressive role by appealing to the potential reader and sparking interest. Secondly, the title serves graphic and divisive purposes, effectively distinguishing and demarcating the text from its surrounding visual and contextual environment through non-verbal means such as typographic emphasis, graphic elements (e.g., lines or illustrations), specific layout techniques, and colour schemes. Thirdly, the title also assumes a nominative and communicative role, acting as a condensed communicative unit that delivers essential information about the publication to the reader in a concise format. Thus, the multifaceted functions of the title underline its significance not only as a formal element but also as a strategic communicative device in book design.

The structural and technical characteristics that represent the concept of a publication should include the following (Table 2).

Table 2. Structural and technical characteristics of a publication, representing its concept

Technical parameters	The volume and format of the publication, the presence or absence of serial nature, the presence or absence of illustrations, their quantity and properties, the avant-title, counter-title, half-titles, and headers, the need for additional materials (e.g., prefaces, various appendices), and the definition of their placement relative to the main text.
Colour scheme or colouring of the cover	The cover may be printed in one, two, or four colours (full colour) depending on the colour scheme or design of the cover. In modern practice, most publications are printed in four colours, allowing for the full range of colour shades. To reduce costs, one or two colours may be used for the cover. This approach also allows specific design tasks to be addressed and is applicable when using coloured materials.
Type of cover	The choice of cover type depends on the nature of the publication. Hard covers are used for encyclopaedias, art albums, official documents, commemorative editions, and collectors' books. Soft covers are used for educational materials, poetry collections, brochures, and guidebooks. Integral bindings are used for guidebooks, literary works, and other practical yet presentable publications. Spiral bindings are used for educational materials, presentations, workbooks, cookbooks, or brochures (advertising leaflets, event programmes, and instructions are printed as brochures).
Type of paper for publication	The type of paper used is determined by the publication format: offset for books, magazines, booklets, brochures, and flyers; coated for magazines and catalogues; matte for postcards; newsprint for newspapers and disposable advertising magazines; and designer paper for booklets, catalogues, and postcards

Thus, the most important characteristics of the publication are reflected in its model, which is influenced by many factors. First, these are the goals and objectives of the publication, its typological specificity, the characteristics of its intended audience, the composition of the editorial team, and the capabilities of the printing house itself. Practical experience of editorial teams shows that modelling is an effective management method, helping to achieve the planned results of a publication only if the capabilities of the editorial team are correctly assessed and the created model

is appropriately aligned with the concept of the publication and the goal of its implementation. Moreover, the model of periodicals, designed for a long-term period, is optimised annually without changing its fundamental provisions.

This complex model of a publication is multi-component; it consists of three components: substantive, compositional, and design (graphic). The main role among the listed elements is played by the first one, as it is the foundation of the modelling. The starting point for determining how the substantive model is formed is to assess the value of the information needs of both current and potential readers, and the various resources of the editorial team (economic, administrative, time-related, and others).

The importance of the substantive model of a publication lies in that it demonstrates the features of the information addressed to the audience. The substantive model of the publication allows answering the question of what materials need to be issued and which points in various areas of social life are relevant to the audience and should be reflected in the issued materials. The substantive model of the publication defines its goals and corresponding tasks, as well as the main thematic focus of the publication. In some instances, the latter may be specified in permanent topics, and the model will then be referred to as a content-thematic model.

The publication model reveals its structural and technical characteristics, it reflects the relationship of the most important thematic areas of the publication, and the structure of its content. Based on this, the compositional model of the publication is created, which defines several important characteristics. This concerns the organisation of its content, the main thematic sections, and the columns of the publication, which ensures the achievement of two main objectives. Thus, the compositional model enables the scheduling of the publication (i.e., the frequency with which the publication will appear) and the placement of its materials in space – on the page or in a specific section of it.

In turn, the graphic model of the publication is built upon the compositional model, highlighting its most significant characteristics, namely its appearance and design. The main elements of the graphic form of the publication are the features of its layout (open, closed, blind type, columnar, with margin spaces, layout on margins, or trimmed layout) and illustration (frontispiece, title-page illustration, columnar illustration, spread illustration, tailpiece, and initial letters), as well as the primary text fonts (for example, serif fonts: Times New Roman, Garamond, Courier) and title fonts. All of these components of the graphic form determine the concept of the publication and define the mechanism for its implementation. Therefore, the graphic model helps achieve stability in the artistic and technical design of the publication, ensuring a familiar design for the reader and thus preventing subjective evaluation of the publication.

The essence of the above can be summarised as follows: the thematic focus (such as the hierarchy of main sections and headings), examined as an element of the substantive model of the publication, should be viewed not only as a characteristic of the information contained in the publication, which directly depends on the audience or the intended purpose, but also as an organised list of permanent and temporary headings. It is also an organised list of permanent and non-permanent categories. Based on the audience to which the publication is addressed, for example, mass-market or youth-oriented, and according to its purpose, it can be popular science or artistic.

In turn, permanent headings, which are published in each issue, and non-permanent headings, which appear intermittently, divide all the materials presented in the publication. The main purpose of heading classification is to help the reader navigate the contents of the publication. This

specific task of classification also characterises it as a distinct element of the publication. In addition to the elements of the substantive model of the publication mentioned above, it also includes such components as the modality of the materials. This represents the editorial stance towards the information contained in the published materials: it can be neutral (informational), positive, negative (critical), or multifaceted (problematic).

The genre palette of the material, as a component of the substantive model of the publication, includes analytical (essays, articles), commentary (reports, correspondences, sketches), and factual (chronicles, notes) genres, which imply a particular style of writing and arrangement of the material. Thus, they must be in different journalistic genres and also follow one another. While the goal of the genre palette of materials is to ensure convenience for the reader, so that they do not have to read lengthy articles consecutively, the locality of the materials serves to determine the geographical boundaries for future publications.

The principles of artistic and technical design, along with their evolution, form the foundation of the design (graphic) model and should be understood as components of the broader compositional-graphic model of the publication. This model is characterised by several specific publication features. These include the arrangement of materials on the website, the placement of material on the pages of publications available in PDF format, the selection of appropriate font styles, the development of a unified design approach for header complexes within the publication, the use of graphic techniques to highlight information, the application of typographical methods for emphasis, and the incorporation of elements of informational illustration such as animated images, audio tracks, and video sequences.

The significance of these features lies in their ability to enhance the visual impact and communicative efficiency of the publication. A carefully chosen combination of stylistic elements, such as font size, typographic layout, and multimedia components, not only leaves an enduring mark on the reader but also contributes to more efficient information transmission. At the core of the development of the design (graphic) model is the understanding of the publication as a systemic entity in which content and form are inextricably linked. Consequently, the design model of the publication includes the creation of a digital layout for the main sections and headings, the formulation of the content itself, and the elaboration of the artistic and technical design principles, encompassing structural organisation, compositional choices, and graphic presentation.

Additionally, the organisational (graphic) model is shaped by a set of contextual factors. These include the goals and corresponding tasks defined in the publication program, the geographical scope of its distribution, the social and demographic characteristics of its target readership, the economic conditions under which the publishing house operates, and the availability of material and technical resources at the editorial and printing stages.

The key components of the organisational model, sometimes referred to as the business model, are therefore derived from a synthesis of strategic objectives, target audience specifications, technological capacity, and economic constraints. This integrative approach underscores the multifaceted nature of book design as both a technical process and a cultural artefact (Fig. 7).

Structure	Financial and economic activities	Technological activities and promotion
▪ external – a set of key parameters (number of pages, periodicity, format, circulation, price); ▪ internal – a network of organisational and creative connections within the editorial team (in this regard, the editorial team functions as: a social group, a functional group, a group of professionals, and the organisational structure).	▪ profitability; ▪ production-related expenses for publication; ▪ revenue (this refers to income from advertisements, commercials, and sales); ▪ expenditures (this refers to costs associated with: paper, payments to information agencies, authors' royalties, payments to correspondents, distribution, delivery, printing expenses, and other general publishing and editorial costs); ▪ financial resources covering the gap between expenses and income.	▪ implementation of the publication preparation process, from planning to release; ▪ development of a publication promotion programme and its execution.

Figure 7. Main elements of the organisational model (business model) of the publication

Thus, the organisational model of the publication implies the presence of components such as the publication structure, represented by a variety of organisational and creative connections within the editorial team or printing house; the financial and economic activity of the company publishing the publication, revealing the sources of income for the printing house, and indicating the expenditure items related to the publication, which help calculate the cost of production and the profitability of the publishing company over a specific period. Furthermore, the organisational model includes the technological activities of the printing house related to the publication process and its subsequent promotion. Such activity involves the creation of a network layout for the main sections and headings of the publication. This refers to the preparation of a tentative plan containing fixed time intervals necessary for writing materials to complete the content of the publication. The schedule serves two main functions: firstly, it allows the editor to monitor the work performed by the author(s) within established timeframes; secondly, it tracks the process of populating the publication with various types of content.

In any case, it is crucial that the publication's concept be prepared by the editor. This is because the authors are not specialists in this area and may not consider all the parameters necessary for the most complete and accurate representation of the conceptual elements. Undoubtedly, the authorial, editorial, editorial-technical, and design (graphic) work involved in creating the publication is a complex process, with all its elements interrelated and influencing one another. For the publication to be cohesive, meet its functional purpose both externally and internally, and address the needs of the target audience, a unified idea for the formation of the structure and design of the publication is essential across all elements of the concept and its implementation process, considering the context and intended use of the information it contains.

Thus, considering the specifics of the information market, the development of a publication concept that meets the long-term needs and interests of target readers, along with its implementation, is directly linked to content management. The development of the publication concept involves the implementation of specific tasks at certain stages of this process. These stages include a comprehensive analysis of the information market to ensure the publication's competitiveness and

relevance, identification of key typological characteristics that define the publication's format, and the creation of a content model that aligns with both editorial goals and reader expectations. The compositional and graphic models are then developed, focusing on structuring the content and visually engaging the target audience. Once the concept is implemented, the publication undergoes a thorough analysis to identify potential errors, with necessary adjustments made to refine the publication's overall concept (Koob, 2021). Regular monitoring of the audience's evolving needs is essential for ensuring the publication remains dynamic, allowing for continuous adjustments to its content, composition, and design, ultimately maintaining its alignment with the interests of its readership.

The publisher should be understood as the organisation that produces information products in material and technical terms. At the present stage, the most popular publishers are editorial teams operating on internet platforms and publishing houses that issue series of newspapers and magazines. Thus, the information market is largely represented by large publications covering a wide potential target audience, generating significant profits. The editorial team chooses one of several types of publication, depending on the goals and tasks of the printing house and the subject matter of the publication. It is divided into five sections based on functional and thematic orientation, directly related to the characteristics of the target audience: social and political, business and finance, education, entertainment, and advertising. In determining the topics and formats for publication, editorial teams begin by analysing their target audience, most often through surveys and interviews with potential readers, and subsequently develop a coherent communication policy (Darvidou, 2024). The target audience profile is shaped by several key factors:

- demographic characteristics, including age and gender, guide whether a publication adopts a general or specialised approach. In general formats, gender differentiation is neutralised in favour of shared interests and needs;
- social status and educational background influence content strategy. The intellectual level, interests, and informational needs of readers determine the variety of genres and thematic complexity;
- financial situation reflects the audience's purchasing power and affects both pricing and content production. The cost of a single issue, via subscription or retail, directly shapes material aspects such as pagination, colour schemes, and the use of illustrations;
- psychological traits, particularly how information is perceived and processed, are considered to ensure effective communication and engagement;
- preferred communication style is selected based on audience expectations, encompassing appropriate stylistic registers, rhetorical strategies, and language tools suitable for different thematic domains.

The development of a publication's title represents a critical stage in conceptualising any periodical, such as a newspaper or magazine. This title must encapsulate the defining features of its target audience, the thematic scope, and the publication's functional orientation. Importantly, the method employed to generate the title, whether through editorial brainstorming, expert consultations in focus groups, engagement of a specialised agency, or public competitions involving the intended readership, is less significant than ensuring that the resulting title aligns with key criteria. These criteria include, first, euphony, or phonetic appeal, which relates to the ease of pronunciation and writing. Titles should avoid harsh sibilant combinations or clusters of three or more consonants in succession, which may hinder their clarity or appeal. Second, the title should address

and reflect the content model of the publication by considering the preferences and expectations of the target audience. This includes aligning with the overarching theme, main communicative goals, and preferred genres of the readership. Third, compactness is vital. Ideally, the title should consist of no more than three words and combine brevity with semantic openness and originality. Ingenious wordplay often achieves this quality, enabling both recognition and interpretive flexibility. In sum, a successful title serves not only as a linguistic marker but also as a conceptual and communicative entry point into the publication's identity.

The importance lies not only in the name of a publication, the choice of fonts and colours used in its design, creating a distinctive style from other publications, but also in its slogan, which establishes a connection with readers. The latter conveys either an informational message or a specific emotional tone. A slogan may consist of a phrase or a sentence, being an optional element, and in most cases is not used for business publications.

From the perspective of such a formal characteristic of publications as their locality, they can be international (i.e., those published in the territory of two or more countries), national (those distributed within one country or its regions, provinces, cities, or districts, e.g., in the territory of a district (or districts) within a particular city or a region of a province). In addition, there are corporate publications, which are distributed within specific social institutions (factories, banks, universities, or schools). A characteristic feature of corporate publications, the number of which has been growing steadily in recent times, is that they serve to fill an information gap arising from the lack of published editions at the city and regional levels. In terms of periodicity, publications may include almanacs published annually and those released biannually, quarterly, monthly, weekly, or every two weeks. Moreover, specialised scientific, literary, and literary-historical publications may be issued biannually or quarterly. The periodicity of publications is also associated with their format, the size of the finished trimmed and bound printed materials, as well as their colour palette, i.e., the number of colours used in the design of a particular publication. Black and white may be used (black-and-white publication), black and one additional colour (two-colour publication), or three colours (full-colour publication).

Most printing houses at the present stage give preference to a mixed approach in the colour design of publications: the cover and advertising pages are produced in colour to attract the attention of potential readers, while the remaining pages of the publication are in black and white. Regardless of the colour scheme of the publication, the number of pages will always be even, which is due to the specifics of the printing process. The number of pages, or the overall volume, is an important factor in the production of publications such as magazines and newspapers. Therefore, when developing concepts for these publications, the number of pages and the possible page volume for special issues are always specified. The circulation of a publication, in turn, determined by reader demand, the presence or absence of special issues, inserts, and supplements, is not a fixed quantity and can either be reduced or increased.

The content model of a specific publication is defined by its thematic and genre priorities, narrative tone, the nature of its publications, and the baseline level of information provided by the publication and its individual pages (in newspapers and magazines). The editorial team establishes parameters such as the composition of authors, the geographical scope of the materials, priority organisational activities, and the specific content of the publication. The editorial team pays particular attention to the development of a system of headlines, subheadings, and slogans. The

compositional model allows creating a categorisation system that determines the structure of the publication, particularly its thematic and, in some cases, genre orientation. Sections are highlighted either page by page or in accordance with the functional-thematic orientation of the newspaper (magazine), and their evaluation is presented in the form of a specific rating. The development and design of the composition of the first and last pages of publications (newspapers and magazines) is of great importance, as the reader's perception of these pages shapes their overall impression of the publication, for example, whether it has a mass-market nature.

The design (graphic) model of a publication is the starting point in shaping the style of the publication and its recognisability as a brand. The editorial team determines the basic set of fonts, the type of illustrative material, the characteristics of headline design elements, colour schemes, and layout options (classical, asymmetrical, artistic). In most cases, the pilot issue of a publication serves as a trial version, based on which the system for publication launch is fine-tuned, and contentious issues regarding the functioning of the concept are resolved.

Thus, for example, to save costs, the founder and head of the editorial board develop the details of the content, structure, and design (graphical) model based on the first few issues of the published publication (e.g., a newspaper or magazine). To evaluate the effectiveness of the concept created for a particular publication, it must first be released in a trial mode, with its implementation assessed using various methods. The finished informational product, the published edition, can be assessed both by potential readers (through questionnaires and interviews) and by experts (via focus group discussions). The most effective method for evaluating the implemented concept of the publication is the simultaneous use of both tools: interviewing representatives of the audience and relevant specialists.

Thus, the publication concept serves as a comprehensive blueprint and structure created to prepare a work for publication. It includes the content, structure, and visual design of the future information product, representing the basis for its creation and further publication. The term "publication" refers to a printed or embossed document created for the dissemination of information. This document undergoes editorial, design, and publishing processing and is provided with output data. Consequently, the formation of both the external and internal appearance of a publication depends on many interacting factors: the audience, the purpose of the publication, its volume, the type of information, and the intended channels of distribution.

The main purpose of a publication concept is to define and ensure internal consistency among the typological characteristics of a publication. A well-developed concept should be clearly articulated and tailored to meet the current needs and interests of the target audience, while also accounting for market conditions and the financial and operational capabilities of the publishing house. Functionally, the concept mitigates risks and facilitates the rational use of resources, supporting the successful implementation of the publishing plan from ideation to final product. It aids in establishing the publication's unique market position, differentiating it from competitors, and devising a long-term promotional strategy. This comprehensive vision guarantees both creative and commercial success.

The development and implementation of a publication's concept are directly linked to several defining characteristics. These include the publication's periodicity, which dictates how often it is issued (annually, quarterly, or monthly), thereby influencing the timeliness of information delivery and structural planning. The structure of the main material involves how textual

content is organised and presented. The sign specificity of information refers to the methods used to code content, such as textual, pictorial, diagrammatic, or tabular forms. The addressee is defined by the target readership, whether general or specialised, or by demographic criteria such as age. The publication's purpose can vary, such as informative, educational, entertaining, or promotional. Types of information include official, normative, scientific, popular scientific, industrial-practical, educational, artistic, reference, and advertising content. Materials may be arranged using diverse principles that structure articles within the publication. Uniqueness of content relates to the originality of published materials. In non-periodicals, the depth of analytical and synthetic information processing reflects the degree of detail and sophistication in data treatment. The volume of such publications, typically quantified by page count, influences both cost and usability. Seriality determines whether a publication is issued as a standalone or as part of a series. Publishing design encompasses materials selection, printing technologies, and post-print processing methods. Ownership addresses copyright and distribution rights. Delivery methods include purchases, subscriptions, or free distribution. Special print runs may be tied to events or notable figures. Finally, the design of the publication involves choices in binding, such as hard, soft, integral, spiral-bound, and broadsheet configurations.

While internal factors define much of a publication's character, global trends are equally consequential. The widespread adoption of personal computing in the 1980s initiated structural changes in consumer preferences, spurred consolidation in the publishing sector, and ushered in the era of the information highway. Today, publishing functions within a multimedia and convergent environment, necessitating a sophisticated conceptual approach to design. The concept comprises economic, editorial, graphic, and publishing aspects. The economic component pertains to production costs and pricing strategies. The editorial component governs content selection, thematic and stylistic direction, and tone. The graphic component includes typographic choices, layout, illustrations, colour schemes, and overall visual identity. The publishing component manages planning, production, and distribution.

Serving as a methodological framework, the concept underpins the entire editorial cycle and manifests externally as the publication model, which includes content, composition, and design. The content model identifies the informational needs of readers and the editorial team's capacities, defining content scope, topic selection, goals, and thematic orientation. This model may be concretised through fixed headings, contributing to a content-thematic structure. It further includes factors such as the characteristics of the target audience (age, gender, social and financial status, psychotype, and media preferences), the modality of materials (objective, positive, critical, problematic), genre diversity (analytical articles, commentaries, and reference texts), geographical localisation of materials, and the nature and provenance of the content (authored pieces, editorials, agency news, official documents, reprints, and digital sources). Stylistic and lexical features, along with systems of headings, subheadings, and slogans, are also part of this model.

The composition model, derived from the content model, establishes thematic frameworks and rubrication that structure the publication's regularity and layout. Rubrication acts as a navigational tool for readers. Complementing this, the design model determines the publication's visual format. It encompasses layout types such as open, closed, blind, columnar, modular, as well as elements like illustrations (frontispieces, headpieces, spreads, endpapers), typographic decisions (text and title fonts, line spacing, font size), headline hierarchy, graphic devices for emphasis, and

in digital formats, dynamic media such as animation, sound, and video. This design model ensures a consistent artistic and technical appearance, fosters recognisability, and standardises visual identity, thus mitigating subjective interpretation.

Integral to these models is the organisational model or business model. It addresses the internal structure of the publishing operation, delineating roles and responsibilities, creative co-ordination, and financial operations, including revenue streams, cost structures, and profitability projections. The technological component outlines workflow logistics, particularly the timing and coordination of section development using production schedules. Editors play a crucial role in conceptualisation, drawing on their expertise to integrate diverse factors. Conceptualisation is inherently collaborative, requiring contributions from authors, editors, designers, and technicians. Its primary aim is to produce a coherent publication that aligns with reader expectations, functional requirements, and contextual factors. Content management is central to this process, and a nuanced understanding of the target audience is critical. This involves profiling readers by age and gender (to distinguish generalist from specialist publications), social status (education level, intellectual engagement, interest range), financial capacity (which informs pricing), psychological characteristics (preferences and cognitive style), and communication style (which guides rhetoric and engagement tactics).

The title of a publication encapsulates the entire concept. It functions as a mirror of reader interests, thematic direction, and the publication's purpose. Ideally, the title should be concise, memorable, semantically rich, and original. The slogan, when included, reinforces the publication's core message or emotional resonance. Publications are categorised by geographic scope: international, national, regional, or municipal, and by affiliation, such as corporate or institutional. They serve to populate the information space of various public entities. Publication frequency, whether annual, monthly, or weekly, affects format, volume, and design elements such as colour usage. Hybrid printing strategies are often employed, featuring colour in covers and advertisements, with monochrome interiors to manage costs. Page counts must conform to even numbers due to technological constraints. Volume and print run are variable and influenced by audience demand and edition-specific attributes.

Creating a book is much more than just a set of characters on paper. It is a complex, multifaceted project that starts with a thorough elaboration of the idea. The idea is the key link that unites the author's ambitions, the editor's vision, the designer's creative solutions, and the publisher's commercial objectives. It requires in-depth market analysis, understanding of the target audience, assessment of financial prospects, and technical capabilities. The implementation of a successful project is unthinkable without the formation of a comprehensive model of the publication, factoring in the semantic load, structure (composition), and visual design. These models are interconnected and mutually influential, ensuring the integrity and harmony of the book throughout the entire process of creation – from the moment the idea originates to the final product presented in a bookstore or in digital form. Publishing is constantly influenced by external factors such as technological developments (digitalisation, multimedia) and the dynamics of consumer preferences. The concept of a publication and its model must be flexible enough to adapt quickly to these changes, while maintaining its relevance and ability to attract the attention of the target audience, regardless of the chosen format – whether it is a classic printed version or advanced digital technologies.

2.2 Features of the readers' perception of the visual appearance of contemporary publications

The rapid growth of interest in visual phenomena in the 20th and 21st centuries was driven by their practical significance and active application in everyday, professional, and scientific spheres. Notably, the sociocultural nature of the visual not only dominates modern culture but is also universally relevant. Diagrams, photographs, presentations, and demonstration materials make textual information more comprehensible to potential consumers, who prefer ready-made forms of imagery. Print and digital technologies, and the design of visual communication, play a substantial role in the perception of printed publications (Barness and Papaelias, 2021).

In response to these trends, books are being replaced by digital versions, advertising text by visual content, museum visits by interactive online tours, city exploration by photographs, and communication via messaging apps or email is replacing conventional face-to-face interactions. Undoubtedly, the innovative information and communication tools mentioned above have their advantages and disadvantages. When publishing theoretical and practical works, it is necessary to identify previously unestablished connections between the history and theory of art, cinema and photography, semiotics, historiography, semiotics and communication, media studies, and cultural theory (Evans and Hall, 1999).

The speed of the information flow in the contemporary era has become so high that people unconsciously opt for simpler and more efficient ways of processing information and communicating with each other. Cultural texts, in turn, are aimed at objects of perception, and the interpretation of visual images is a process that moves from focusing on the content of the text to understanding it on various levels. Visual perception is inherent to human nature, as determined by psychophysiology. Although the human visual recognition system is highly complex and consists of multiple subsystems, the process of recognising visual information can be broken down into two main stages: automatic processing and controlled processing.

The first stage is characterised by rapid parallel processing of information, perceiving specific types of information such as orientation, colour, texture, and movement, determining the edges of objects, and storing information over time. The second stage, in contrast, represents slow sequential processing of information and uses both short-term and long-term memory to direct attention (Griffin, 2020). Without the subjective element, visual phenomena would be of little interest, as they cannot be predicted or anticipated. The perceptual subject and vision merge into a single whole, differentiating and recognising space and the surrounding objects.

The distance between the surrounding world of objects and the individual thus disappears, so the visual image should be understood not only as the immediate observation of it in its raw or factual form, but also as its reflection in the human psyche. In other words, visual images are the result of the influence of normative and value systems on the development of one's perception, shaped under the direct influence of culture. Visual images possess their own dynamism, moving through time and space across different historical periods and countries. Symbols and signs from earlier periods acquire new meanings over time, while maintaining their aesthetic value.

Unlike visual images, visual texts are not only perceived by the subject but also read. This reading can be active (conveying meaning) or passive (contemplative). A visual text is a visible (visually perceived) structural-functional model in which the values and norms of culture are expressed in the form

of signs, symbols, and images that have a signifying nature and are connected by various contextual relationships. Visually perceived models of reality are constructed according to the subject-subject/subject-object principle using extralinguistic means. Visual texts do not allow people to ignore them.

The difference between “visual” and “visualised” lies in the fact that linguistic texts are transformed into a system of signs and symbols that are part of visual representation. The term “visualisation” refers to the non-verbal representation of events through graphical depictions of meaning. Visual content quickly penetrates the recipient’s consciousness, is remembered, evokes certain associations, and reinforces stereotypes. Data visualisation is closely related to information design. It does not convert data into text but uses its visual analogue to clarify the essence of the problem without text.

At present, written reality is increasingly being replaced by images and visual effects, with people in a technology-driven environment thinking in “pictures” and primarily perceiving information as visual images. The perception of traditional values transmitted through visual images (as seen, for example, in advertisements) takes place in a compressed form. Headlines are a powerful source of information, especially since people often do not read beyond them (Chuey *et al.*, 2024).

The orientation of mass consumer markets towards values that are primarily perceived visually and are easily understood is a common feature of culture in the digital age. Nevertheless, the nature of visual images creates contradictions in the dialogue between the author/creator and the reader/interpreter. Therefore, modern communication is undergoing radical changes. When dividing media content into verbal and visual, text has traditionally been the main means of conveying information. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult for information consumers to keep track of the vast number of events happening every second and the accompanying flow of information. Respondents do not read the text carefully but often turn to images to try to understand what is happening. The choice of material for reading is based on preliminary familiarity with the publication. Given the influence of digital technologies on all spheres of public life, the constant flow of information people receive from various sources is, on the one hand, necessary, but on the other hand, the mind is unable to perceive, classify, analyse, and formulate its own thoughts.

As a result of protection from information overload, a new type of thinking emerges, known as clip-based perception of messages. The recipient perceives a variety of fragments of messages, stores them in memory, and focuses on some of them. The chain “image-heading-text” corresponds to the principle of clip-based thinking. This is due to the fact that visualisations attract human interest due to their factuality, detail, emphasis, and other characteristics.

Visualisation uses recognisable images that help simplify complex topics and add emotion to the message conveyed in a specific publication. The types of images used in published texts also follow specific rules, genre conventions, and stylistic variations, each with its own distinctive execution. In this case, aesthetics serve a functional purpose rather than being an end in themselves. The language of visualisation is a graphic depiction combined with logical and compositional principles.

At the present stage, there is a variety of data presentation methods, and the reader tries to obtain information in a way that can be understood and evaluated with minimal effort. However, it is incorrect to perceive visual information as a simplification of content. Various types of data can be visualised, such as cartographic principles (cartography), data representation techniques (statistics), visual design elements (graphic design), content organization (journalism), software interfaces (informatics and programming), psychological principles of reader engagement (perception psychology), and technologies that make information more accessible through human perception.

The printed text of a publication is also visual communicative information, where the meaning of words conveys content, while the typography conveys mood, intensity of meaning, emphasis, loudness, and intonation. Typeface graphics become symbols with independent meaning (for example, using handwritten styles can create a sense of familiarity and intimacy with the reader, fostering trust). Since the main function of a font is to display information, its design and visual properties are aimed at optimal perception. To improve the meaning, organisation, and order of information, it is necessary to highlight separate blocks and elements of the published material, using both typographic and non-typographic methods.

For a socio-political publication covering a wide range of topics, the main focus is on the simplicity and clarity of the text layout. A unified design has its advantages. While it allows readers to easily recognise the publication, fonts can only be assigned to the entire publication rather than specific content. Aesthetic requirements focus less on the design of the font itself and more on its readability and design consistency, which contribute to shaping the publication's overall image. Although most readers of text blocks may not be aware of the differences between fonts and are primarily interested in the information printed by them, the comfort of reading and the ease of finding the necessary material subconsciously become the main demands of the reader. If the fonts are small or difficult to read, there is little desire to read even necessary information. The image is not only the external element of the publication but also its content.

By engaging the reader through visual images combined with text, images clarify and amplify the content, guide the reader in the right direction, provide visual commentary, or add a deeper subtext. The manner of representation influences perception, attracts attention, and the content satisfies informational needs. Visualisation is a tool for cross-cultural communication, the meaning and function of which are changing. The strategies in publishing are aimed at meeting the needs of readers, that is, at providing information in a convenient and understandable form. It is important not only to make the information contained in publications clear, but also to turn it into something that interests the reader. Modern book publishing combines the latest achievements in media, technology, social communications, art, psychology, statistics, and data presentation.

The explosive growth of interest in visuality from the 20th to the 21st century stems from its paramount practical significance and its all-encompassing penetration into all areas of life, from everyday life to work and research. Additionally, the sociocultural essence of the visual is not just prevalent in today's cultural context but also demonstrates universal properties. Graphs, photos, presentations, and demonstrations tangibly increase the cognitive accessibility of textual material for audiences who prefer ready-made visual formats. The current trend clearly shows how classical ways of receiving information are giving way to new ones.

Books are now more often read on screens, text ads are being replaced by colourful images, trips to museums are turning into virtual tours, and people prefer to look at photos instead of seeing city sights. Communication through messengers and e-mail is replacing direct interaction between people. Latest information and communication technologies, despite their clear advantages, are not without their shortcomings. The unprecedented speed of information dissemination in the current period pushes people to intuitively apply simplified and energy-saving methods of data analysis and communication. In the cultural sphere, works are created with the audience in mind, and understanding visual images is a multi-stage endeavour, starting with a superficial glance and leading to a penetration into the essence (Besoain *et al.*, 2022).

Vision, natural to humans, depends on psychophysiological factors. Despite the inordinate complexity of visual perception, covering numerous components, conditionally the entire process can be divided into two main steps: automatic and controlled analysis. The first stage is characterised by lightning-fast, simultaneous data processing, when specific features are recognised: direction, hue, roughness, and movement (Altamura, 2024). Also in this stage, object contours are extracted, and short-term retention of information occurs. The second stage, unlike the first, proceeds in a measured pace, with sequential processing of information. At this stage, both short-term and long-term memory are actively engaged for the sake of focused attention. The subjective factor is crucial for the perception of visual images, because it cannot be completely predicted and planned. Sensory perception and vision fuse together to distinguish and recognise the surrounding space and individual objects. In the process of visual perception, the boundary between the objects of the surrounding world and the observer is erased. Therefore, visual image should be understood not only as the direct observation of reality in pure or technical expression, but also as its refraction in human consciousness. In other words, visual images are the product of human value systems, which shape human vision under the direct influence of culture.

Visual images are characterised by internal mobility, traversing time and space, covering different historical periods and cultural environments. Symbols and signs of past eras are endowed with new meanings over time without losing their aesthetic significance. Unlike simple images, visual texts are not merely observed, but also “read” by the subject. This “reading” can be both conscious, carrying a certain meaning, and unconscious, associated with perception. Visual text is a visible (visually perceived) structural and functional model where cultural values and norms are manifested through signs, symbols, and images that have iconic status and interact with each other through various contextual relations.

Visual models of reality are “created” according to the principle of subject-subject/subject-object, applying extra-linguistic tools, and are characterised by their ability to attract the attention of the recipient without allowing themselves to be ignored. The difference between “visual” and “visualised” lies in the transition from verbal constructions to the world of visual signs. Visualisation is the process of turning information into graphic images that allow meaning to be conveyed without using words. Visual content has a unique ability to instantly capture attention, firmly imprinted in memory, awaken associative series, and form recognisable images.

Closely related to visualisation is information design, which does not paraphrase data into text, but operates with their visual equivalents, revealing the essence of the matter without added textual explanations. At the present stage, the written word is increasingly surrendering its position to screens and visual effects. In a technological environment, people are used to thinking in pictures, mainly perceiving information clothed in visual images. The perception of traditional values transmitted through visual channels (e.g., advertising) is becoming increasingly condensed. Headlines are a powerful source of information, as many people often do not read beyond them. The orientation of consumer markets towards values perceived primarily visually and available for quick comprehension is a characteristic feature of the culture of the digital age.

However, the very nature of visual images creates challenges in communication between the content creator and the consumer, causing substantial changes in modern communication. Despite the separation of media content into textual and visual content, text is still the primary way of communicating information. The challenge for data users is keeping track of the incredible

amount of things happening every minute, as well as the accompanying barrage of information. Interviewees often do not delve into reading text, preferring to focus on images in an attempt to get the gist of what is going on. The selection of content to study is based on initial familiarity with the source of information.

Considering the influence of digital technologies on all aspects of social activity, the continuous flow of information to people from a multitude of sources is a necessity on the one hand, but on the other hand human perception is not fully capable of comprehending, classifying, analysing, and forming its own understanding. As a result of protection from information pressure, a special type of thinking called clip perception of information is formed. The recipient assimilates separate parts of the message, memorises them, and focuses attention on concrete fragments. The structure “picture-headline-text” corresponds to the principles of clip thinking because visual elements arouse a person’s interest due to their clarity, detailing, accentuation, and other features.

Visualisation is implemented through visually recognisable images that simplify the comprehension of “hard-to-reach” issues and bring an emotional element to the message disseminated in concrete media. The forms of images found in publications are subject to their rules of use, have genre features, variability, and stylistic features of implementation. Aesthetics here acts as a means rather than an independent goal. The language of visualisation is a graphic representation together with logical and compositional patterns. At the present stage, the variety of presentation options is fixed, and the reader wants to assimilate information in such a way that it can be understood and evaluated with minimum effort.

However, it is erroneous to consider visual information as a primitivisation of content. Any kind of data can be visualised by applying the principles of cartography, the display of data in graphs (statistics), the rules of composition, layout, and colouring (graphic design), writing style (journalism), software (computer science, programming), reader orientation (psychology of perception), and technologies that enable human perception in an accessible form. The textual content of a printed publication is also a way of visual transmission of information, where words convey meaning, and the font solution determines the shades of mood, the strength of accents, expressiveness, and intonation.

A font in graphics turns into a symbol carrying its meaning (e.g., a handwritten font can create a feeling of intimacy and trust in the reader). The key task of a typeface is to convey information, and therefore its design and visual characteristics are aimed at maximising perception. To improve the understanding, organisation, and structuring of information, it is necessary to highlight individual parts and elements of the publication, using both typographic and non-font techniques. For socio-political publications covering a variety of content, simplicity and clarity of text layout is a key aspect. A uniform style has the benefit of helping readers to easily identify the publication, with fonts tending to apply to all material rather than individual components.

Aesthetics has less to do directly with the design of the typeface, but rather with its readability and consistency with the overall style that forms the image of the publication. Most readers, immersed in text blocks, do not understand the subtleties of fonts and are interested only in the content. Still, the comfort of reading and the ease of finding the necessary material involuntarily come to the forefront, determining the expectations of readers from the text. If the font is small or difficult to perceive, the desire to read even significant information is lost. Visual image is not only the external design of a publication, but also part of its content. Drawing the reader’s

attention through visual elements that organically complement the text, images serve to concretise and reinforce the main message.

Visual elements guide perception by offering visual commentary or forming hidden meanings. The way graphics are presented influences interpretation, emphasises the audience's attention, and the information content responds to the information request. The visual series acts as a means of international communication whose meanings and functions are constantly evolving. Publishing strategies aim to meet the needs of the readership by providing information in an accessible and user-friendly way. The challenge is not only to ensure clarity of presentation, but also to create content that piques the reader's interest. Modern book publishing actively utilises innovative media, technology, and knowledge from the fields of social communication, art, psychology, statistics, and data processing.

2.3 Common mistakes in the design of publications

The means of interpreting information include graphic symbols, infographics, photographs, typography, drawings, and other visual forms with varying semantic loads, which explicitly or metaphorically convey the content of the publication. Among the main mistakes in publication design, misunderstanding of the target audience remains a critical concern. To create effective graphic design, it is imperative to thoroughly understand the demographic characteristics, needs, and preferences of the intended readership (Traboco *et al.*, 2022). Awareness of such variables as age, gender, and location allows designers to create content that resonates on a personal level. For instance, designs targeting children and adolescents differ markedly from those for older audiences.

Equally important is understanding the interests and informational needs of the audience (Goh, 2020). Accurately identifying these factors enables the creation of tailored visual solutions that evoke appropriate emotional responses. For example, the design of health-related content should inspire trust and clearly convey critical information. Reader preferences for design features such as colour schemes, font styles, and overall aesthetic must also be considered. If, for example, a minimalist style is favoured, employing simple geometric elements and generous spacing can help maintain audience attention. To mitigate the risk of misalignment, designers should compile data-driven profiles of potential readers, monitor design trends, assess behavioural analytics, and collect feedback via surveys and user testing to guide design updates.

Another frequent error in publication design concerns the disregard for proper typography. Typography not only contributes to the visual appeal but also plays a central role in the readability and communicative function of the text. Selecting appropriate fonts, sizes, line spacing, and establishing a typographic hierarchy are essential. Fonts that are overly decorative may hinder legibility, while font sizes too small for the medium reduce accessibility and engagement. Similarly, excessive or insufficient line spacing can disrupt reading flow. Clear, readable fonts and well-calibrated typographic structures are critical, particularly in ensuring that headings are easily distinguishable from body text through size, weight, and positioning.

Typography also enhances the aesthetic coherence of a publication. Consistent typefaces contribute to brand identity, while contrast in font choices can draw attention to key information. A balanced approach that considers both functional and visual aspects is necessary to capture and sustain reader interest. Designers should experiment with font configurations that reflect audience

preferences, ultimately aiming to craft a typographic system that supports clarity, aesthetic quality, and effective communication.

Lack of sufficient margins is another prevalent issue. Crowded layouts can negatively impact readability and overall aesthetic value. White space, also known as negative space, not only provides visual rest but also enhances the hierarchical structuring of information and guides the reader's focus. Without adequate margins, a publication risks appearing cluttered, causing cognitive overload and diminishing message clarity. Therefore, maintaining balanced spacing around text and graphical elements is crucial for ensuring visual harmony and navigability. Thoughtful spatial composition supports the prioritisation of content and ensures that key messages are both accessible and prominent.

Brand consistency is also vital in effective graphic design. A cohesive brand identity articulated through a uniform application of colour schemes, typography, and visual motifs helps establish recognition and trust among readers. Inconsistent use of visual elements across publications may confuse audiences and dilute the publication's intended message. Creating a comprehensive style guide specifying fonts, colours, image styles, and layout principles is a recommended practice. This guide ensures that future design efforts adhere to established branding principles and can evolve with the publication's changing goals and audience. Colour choice presents another significant design challenge. Improper use of colour can miscommunicate the intended message, provoke unintended emotional responses, and hinder accessibility for readers with visual impairments. A well-chosen colour palette can support genre identification, evoke emotions, and maintain coherence with the publication's overall tone. Following established colour theory, such as using complementary or analogous colour schemes, and understanding colour psychology can inform decisions that enhance readability, emotional resonance, and visual impact.

Additionally, the strategic placement of text and images is fundamental to effective publication design. A well-composed layout that aligns visual and textual elements fosters clarity and aesthetic appeal. Correct alignment facilitates scanning and comprehension, while poorly placed components may result in visual dissonance and hinder message delivery. Image-text relationships should be designed to reinforce meaning and emotional connection. For instance, pairing a discussion on environmental conservation with imagery of nature enhances both emotional and intellectual engagement. Adaptability across devices is increasingly essential. A design should remain coherent and accessible whether viewed on a printed page, tablet, or smartphone. Responsive design considerations, such as adjusting spacing, font sizes, and image scaling, ensure a consistent user experience across platforms. Moreover, maintaining high-resolution visuals is crucial, as low-quality images can undermine credibility and impair the publication's overall effectiveness. Graphic elements, including typography, layout, image quality, and colour use are integral tools for meaning-making in contemporary publication design. Avoiding the typical mistakes outlined above requires a comprehensive understanding of the target audience, adherence to typographic and branding principles, strategic spatial planning, and informed colour choices. These practices collectively contribute to the creation of visually appealing, communicatively effective, and cognitively accessible publications.

It is crucial to keep a pulse on the current trends in the industry, as well as the behavioural characteristics of readers, to maintain the relevance of the project. By systematically analysing the effectiveness of publications and actively collecting feedback through surveys, focus groups, and usability testing, weaknesses can be identified, and the visual component optimised to achieve

the best possible response and improve the effectiveness of information transfer. The reason for this is that the foundation of successful graphic design is a detailed knowledge of the audience the publication is targeting.

This extends beyond simply listing demographics (such as age, gender, location) to create a design that resonates on an individual level (e.g., substantial differences in design for children and adults). It is equally significant to understand the needs and preferences of readers. Identifying these nuances allows creating graphics that offer relevant solutions or stimulate the right emotional responses (e.g., a design for the medical field should be trustworthy). Considering the tastes of the audience (whether it is the choice of colour scheme, font style, or overall design) is critical to visual appeal; for instance, if the target audience is drawn to minimalism, concise lines and plenty of space will be required.

To reduce typos, one should beware of overly elaborate or hard-to-read fonts. Font size and spacing (line spacing) require special attention considering the way information is displayed (print, large screen, mobile device). Small fonts combined with inadequate spacing complicate the perception and interaction with the material. Proper typographic hierarchy, achieved by varying font sizes, using bold and capital letters for headings and supporting text, makes content easier to navigate and accentuates content, increasing readability and drawing attention to the key messages.

A consistent font style creates a cohesive visual identity, while contrasting fonts can add variety and emphasise individual elements. Finding the ideal balance between readability and aesthetic appeal is crucial to attracting and retaining the attention of the target audience. Experimenting with different fonts, sizes, and styles to suit the tastes of an audience of readers helps to create a memorable design that prompts the desired action. Typography is the foundation of visually pleasing and easily digestible publications. Poor choice of font, font size, line spacing, and lack of hierarchy in typography drastically reduce the effectiveness of a visual solution. Clarity of design perception is essential for effective communication: choosing a clear, easy-to-read typeface ensures that the message is easily understood, even if the reader has no specialised design knowledge.

A widespread misstep in the layout of publications is insufficient margins, which creates a sense of clutter and impairs the perception of text. “Air space”, or negative space, is free areas around and between design elements. It gives the reader’s eye a break and helps create visual harmony. The purpose of “air space” is not just to fill in empty areas, but to enhance the overall composition and emphasise key aspects. Without adequate margins, a layout gives the impression of being cluttered, which can lead to confusion and an overabundance of information, and significant messages risk being overlooked.

One can substantially ensure that open space is used correctly and in a balanced way by placing it around text, images, and other elements, as well as separating sections. This gives the design a concise and organised appearance, enabling the focus on the key content and making it easier to navigate. Additionally, readability is improved, making it easier to understand and digest the material. Improved hierarchy of information is achieved by strategically utilising the surrounding space to highlight key elements and direct the reader’s gaze in a logical sequence. Excessive “airspace” can make a design look sparse and disjointed, and therefore it is critical to find a middle ground. In this case, the “air space” does not have to be white, it can be any colour or texture of the background, providing the necessary contrast and clarity. Proper work with margins in graphic layout is the key to creating visually pleasing, clear, and impressive designs.

The role of branding in publication graphic design cannot be underestimated, nor can the significance of keeping it consistent. A coherent and recognisable brand identity is a key factor contributing to recognition and trust from the target audience. Failure to maintain consistency in the use of colours, fonts, and visuals across brand materials is fraught with negative consequences: visual clutter can mislead, alienate audiences, and dilute the key brand message. Without a clear and consistent visual concept, it is difficult to impress readers and distinguish the brand from competitors. To avoid such mistakes, it is essential to develop a detailed style guide that summarises key brand elements such as colour palettes, fonts, and image styling.

Such a document will guide all design projects and ensure consistency across all platforms. It is critical to stick to the chosen colour palette and use it consistently, as the uniformity of colours directly affects brand recognition and evokes the right associations. The chaotic addition of new colours must be avoided. One should also select several fonts that match the character of the brand and apply them consistently. A clear typographic hierarchy (headings, subheadings, body text) further strengthens the visual integrity of the brand. Regularly reviewing and updating the style guide ensures that the design is in line with current brand values and objectives. Adherence to these guidelines, careful choice of typography and colour palettes, and thoughtful use of visual elements reinforce brand personality and increase brand recognition.

An incorrect colour palette is one of the most frequent problems in graphic design. The consequences can range from impaired perception of information to provoking unwanted feelings and reducing accessibility for people with colour vision impairments. However, by drawing on a basic knowledge of colour psychology and the principles of combination, it is possible to create designs that are both aesthetically pleasing, functional and inclusive. Each colour has its meaning and evokes certain associations; the choice of particular shades should be coordinated with the emotions and values of the target audience (e.g., warm tones are usually associated with activity, cold tones – with calmness).

For successful colour combinatorics, it is recommended to use proven colour schemes: complementary, analogous, and triadic. Complementary colours provide a pronounced contrast, analogous – a harmonious combination, and triadic – a bright and balanced palette. Understanding the psychology of colour expands the understanding of its influence on emotions and perception (e.g., blue is often associated with trust, red – with excitement). A careful approach to colour selection greatly enhances the effectiveness of graphic design, making it possible to clearly communicate the message, achieve the necessary emotions, and ensure inclusivity for all users.

The correct placement of text and images in a publication's design is a key factor in determining its success. It is responsible for visual coherence, makes content easier to understand, and substantially affects the delivery of the main message. Carefully planned placement and alignment creates a sense of order and demonstrates a professional approach, which simplifies the interaction with the material for the audience. Effectively aligned text makes reading easy and information more understandable and accessible to all. Moreover, the thoughtful arrangement of images and text creates visual connections that reinforce the meaning of the information being communicated.

For example, an image of a forest in an article on environmental issues would be fitting. In addition, to achieve optimal placement, attention must be paid to alignment, space between elements, and symmetry. Using a grid for alignment helps to achieve uniformity and balance. It is also essential to consider the size ratio of images and text so that they complement each other rather

than compete for the reader's attention. In the age of mobile devices, it is crucial to adapt design to different screen formats and sizes, adjusting placement and spacing to maintain visual consistency. Neglecting the placement of text and graphics results in an unattractive and difficult to read design that ineffectively communicates the essence of the content. The use of low-resolution images also ruins the experience, leading to pixelation, quality degradation, and consequently undermining the credibility of the publication.

Chapter 3.

Visual appearance of modern electronic publications in Europe

3.1 Promotion of books in social media using elements of external design

The era of rapid progress in data (information) storage and distribution technologies is giving rise to products that, in certain contexts, compete with traditional printed books. However, a book is not merely a tool for the transmission of knowledge; it is a repository of wisdom that enables individuals to explore the world around them, to comprehend and engage with the fundamental aspects of human existence. A book contributes to personal growth and self-improvement. Under its influence, an individual's worldview is shaped and developed.

At the same time, despite the unchanging significance of books for humanity, recent years have witnessed significant transformations in the approaches and means of their promotion. Considering the status of the traditional book in the context of modern realities, particularly in comparison with innovative information products, and examining its potential and distinctiveness are undoubtedly tasks of paramount importance. In today's information society, the role of the book is evolving; the pace of socio-economic processes is accelerating, and the speed at which information is absorbed is increasing. Alongside the printed word, humanity is increasingly turning to new information, telecommunications, and electronic media. New technologies are reshaping the image of the book, bringing about substantial changes. Its life cycle is undergoing continuous transformation, beginning with manuscripts, progressing through the printing press, and today, manifesting in digital format.

Nowadays, book publishers are actively seeking unconventional ways to popularise books and reading, introducing fresh concepts into traditional processes. The development of information and communication technologies has also influenced public perceptions of readers. Consequently, in order to reinforce and redefine their role in society, publishing houses must adopt fundamentally new approaches in their operations. The task of a book is to satisfy clearly defined reader demands while also ensuring financial returns for the publishing house. However, professionals in leadership positions within book publishing and bookselling currently lack the necessary economic, managerial, and commercial competencies that are critically important in today's market environment.

The primary reason for this lies in the defining characteristic of contemporary society: the accelerated pace of events and transformations. The uncertainty of the future further complicates adaptation to these evolutionary trends. Since the Internet has become an integral part of human life – serving as a daily tool for data retrieval, communication, and knowledge dissemination – it is logical to regard it as a powerful instrument for promoting books and the culture of reading. To effectively realise this objective in the digital environment, it is essential to begin by creating engaging content. Such content must fulfil a dual function: to provide relevant information and, simultaneously, to capture attention – stimulating interest in books and fostering a desire to engage with them.

Sales promotion is a key element of the marketing strategy employed by both manufacturers and retailers. Manufacturers utilise it to increase purchases from retailers (distribution promotion) and to attract the attention of end consumers to their products (consumer sales promotion)

(Gedenk *et al.*, 2006). Traditional book promotion includes the following methods: prioritising product display and promotional materials within the sales area; author participation in thematic shows and programmes on television and radio; publications in the media; participation in professional and thematic exhibition events; author meetings with readers in bookstores and other retail outlets (autograph sessions); and advertisements in public transport.

Promotion comprises a set of activities undertaken by a company with the aim of informing, persuading, and reminding consumers about its products, services, brands, ideas, social initiatives, or societal impact. It should be noted that, in the present day, the following areas of advancement are considered more promising than those previously mentioned (Fig. 8).

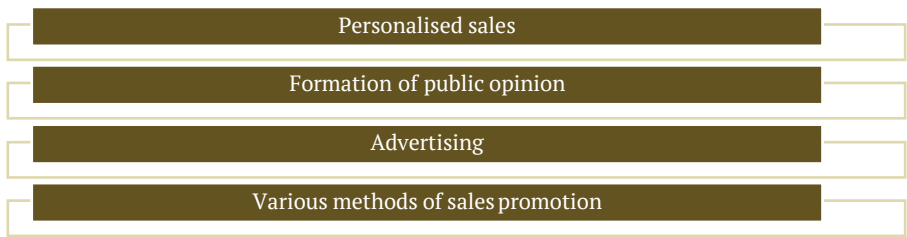


Figure 8. Promising directions for advancement at the present stage

The most important tasks of promotion, within the framework of the marketing mix, encompass a wide array of strategic objectives. These include the communication of information regarding current promotions and discounts, as well as the cultivation of a favourable image of the company, its products, and services, with an emphasis on their prestige and uniqueness. Promotion also involves positioning the company advantageously in relation to its competitors by highlighting its strengths. Moreover, it is essential to ensure that the company and its offerings are perceived as modern and relevant in the eyes of consumers. Providing clear and accessible information about the locations where products and services can be obtained is another critical aspect. In addition, a thorough description of product features must be offered to facilitate informed decision-making. Promotional efforts should aim to embed the unique and distinguishing features of products into the consumer’s memory while also delivering a well-reasoned explanation of the pricing policy adopted. It is equally important to address potential customer queries and maintain a high level of public interest in existing goods and services. Strategies should be employed to encourage customers to consider more premium product options and to shift their perceptions regarding potential uses of the products. Finally, it is necessary to motivate and sustain enthusiasm among members of the distribution network, ensuring their continued engagement and alignment with promotional goals.

While traditional methods of promoting book products remain relevant, their effectiveness is significantly lower compared to modern methods of online promotion and engagement through social media. For instance, by 2025, online advertising offers more tools, greater flexibility in configuration and targeting, making it the optimal solution for authors and publishers seeking to achieve the best results and attract the largest possible readership. The most effective strategies for promoting a book involve leveraging online resources, email newsletters, and traditional book marketing tools. Together, these can significantly enhance the popularity of a work and expand its readership.

Incorporating these book promotion strategies into an overall marketing plan can significantly enhance the likelihood of success – particularly with regard to book sales, which represent the final stage of the entire publishing process. At each stage of a product's or service's life cycle, promotional strategies and methods must adapt accordingly. At the launch stage, the primary objective is to inform potential consumers about the new product. If the product is complex, this stage may also involve educating the consumer. During the growth phase, the focus shifts to establishing a positive image of the company and its brand, as well as differentiating the product from those of competitors. In the maturity phase, the key task is to remind consumers of the product's continued existence. Finally, during the decline phase, promotional efforts are typically scaled back and concentrated on maintaining contact with loyal customers.

To identify effective methods for promoting a book in the current market, it is essential to first define the key characteristics of a book as a product and to consider certain distinctive features of the book market. A book, in most cases, does not belong to the category of essential goods. It is not a product of daily demand and is often classified as an impulse purchase. Compared to other consumer goods, a book typically exhibits a more specific target orientation. Unlike most personal goods, which are destroyed or physically worn out through use and subsequently reproduced in identical quality, the creative work contained within a book is not destroyed during consumption. Even after multiple readings, a book retains its consumer value and can withstand long-term use. The physical deterioration of a book does not necessarily result in a loss or a significant reduction in its consumer value; such a decline only occurs if the book loses its social relevance. Furthermore, the quality of a book's content cannot be precisely measured, as it is not concretely defined and remains highly conditional. Reading a book stimulates not only the desire to engage with that specific title but also fosters an interest in related works that contribute to the expansion and deepening of the reader's knowledge. Thus, an interest in one book can easily lead to an interest in others.

Following the Republic of Kazakhstan's attainment of independence in the early 1990s, the book industry underwent dynamic changes that mirrored the broader economic and socio-political transformations of that period. Among the first industries to transition towards a market economy, the book business adopted fundamental principles characteristic of market relations. These principles include the freedom of enterprise, competition, the determination of prices in accordance with market conditions, and remuneration based on the performance of individual enterprises.

The current era of transformation in publishing and bookselling is strongly shaped by new technologies. The widespread penetration of the Internet into all spheres of society, the decline in readers' interest in printed books, the accessibility of e-books, and the emergence of newer, more advanced and affordable reading devices have already impacted the market, and their influence will only increase in the future (Schwabe *et al.*, 2022). Each publisher brings unique products to the market, while the book market retains a characteristically vast range of offerings – exceeding that of other industries in terms of the number of printed publications. This is due to the continuous need for publishers to update and diversify their product range.

This situation arises from one of the most inherent characteristics of the book as a cultural and economic artefact: its capacity to reflect the dynamic realities of social life and to continually adapt to evolving economic, political, and cultural conditions. Consequently, governments often intervene in the book market to stimulate diversity within the available book assortments, preserve a high density of bookstores, and promote a culture of reading. Such state interventions may include

fixed-price regulations, direct subsidies for authors and publishers, reduced tax rates for printed materials, and support for public infrastructure such as libraries and the educational system (Spjeldnæs and Karlsen, 2022).

Despite these regulatory mechanisms, the overall volume of supply within the book market remains relatively stable and is constituted by several key categories. These include new editions and reprints (including revised editions), as well as unsold stock from previous print runs, which continue to circulate in the market or remain in storage. These reserves are typically located in two main areas: (1) finished goods warehouses of publishing houses and (2) storage facilities operated by wholesale and retail distributors.

In the specific context of Kazakhstan, the book market exhibits a number of notable structural features. Chief among these is a high degree of centralisation. The majority of book production is concentrated in the urban centres of Almaty, Astana, and Shymkent, as well as a few other large cities. This centralisation is accompanied by marked regional disparities in both logistical costs, especially transport tariffs, and in the purchasing power of the population, which varies considerably across regions. Another key feature is the relatively modest presence of the public sector in the field of book publishing. Instead, the state's influence is exerted predominantly through indirect instruments such as the taxation system, differentiated discount rates, customs duties, and regulated energy prices. Furthermore, Kazakhstan's book market is shaped by a regulatory environment that mandates the registration of individual entrepreneurs, thereby introducing additional institutional complexities into the publishing ecosystem.

Taking into account the specific nature of the book as a product and the features of the book market, the following innovative methods of promoting book products can be identified: information promotion, organisational promotion, and Internet marketing. These methods are more effective than traditional ones and offer more convenient and flexible tools for achieving promotional objectives. Let us examine each of these methods in more detail. Information promotion refers to support through the sponsorship of professional events such as conferences, festivals, forums, and other similar activities. This method is widely used by publishers as it effectively addresses the challenge of promoting books within professional communities.

The organisers of such events receive advertising and informational services from the publisher, and in return, the publisher gains the opportunity to participate in these events and present its printed products. Another equally common practice in promoting publications is the independent organisation of training programmes, professional events, and thematic meetings that bring together specialists. Using this approach, a publisher may host a small event on its own premises or take advantage of partnerships with other organisations. The forms of interaction employed in this context range from seminars and lectures to round tables, masterclasses, and conferences. The publisher may also offer informational services by posting details about forthcoming events on its own digital platforms, advertising them within its publications, and informing its readership about events organised by the publishing house itself (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021).

As a result, the publishing house acquires the status of an official information partner, gains a valid reason to issue press releases, and, within the framework of the event, has the opportunity to conduct presentations and to include promotional materials in "participant packages". For example, the publishing house may participate in a children's project competition with the aim of supporting the initiative while simultaneously promoting books to the younger generation.

Another common method of promoting a publication and its products involves independently organising educational and professional events, as well as thematic meetings with subject-matter experts. In this approach, the publisher arranges a small-scale event either within its own premises or in collaboration with partners. A variety of interaction formats may be employed, including seminars, lectures, round tables, masterclasses, and conferences. Such initiatives might consist of a series of lectures on diverse topics, organised by the publisher and delivered either by relevant specialists and experts in specific fields or by the publication's own bestselling authors. In this way, organising presentations and events provides an excellent opportunity to introduce the book to the public and engage directly with readers. Among the most effective promotional methods listed above, the following should be highlighted:

- presentations in bookstores;
- autograph sessions;
- participation in literary festivals and book fairs;
- online events.

The use of the World Wide Web and social media has radically transformed consumer behaviour and the way companies conduct business. Digital and social marketing provide organisations with significant opportunities to reduce costs, build brand awareness, and increase sales. However, these channels also present considerable risks, including the potential for negative word-of-mouth and consumer backlash from excessive or intrusive brand activity online. At the same time, the modern market imposes new demands on publishers. Today, even the most significant publications require promotion. This is one of the key reasons why stealth marketing has greatly expanded its sphere of influence in recent years, particularly in light of the rapid proliferation of the Internet.

This method is being actively adopted by publishers seeking to promote their products. In particular, at the current stage, the promotion of book products through electronic libraries plays a significant role. The high demand for electronic publications has encouraged publishers to release both print and digital versions of books. This advertising approach has also contributed to the emergence of paid electronic libraries. Research and development in the field of digital libraries, which began approximately two decades ago, has progressed through several key phases: from simple collections of digital resources available online to fully developed information services tailored to specific tasks and serving a global user base (Chowdhury *et al.*, 2010).

Mobile applications that incorporate a built-in library are also in demand. These platforms enable users to read or listen to books online or download them directly onto their devices. Thus, the current market environment imposes specific demands on publishers. Even the most engaging and valuable publications require promotion. Advertising is necessary not only for individual books but also for entire series and, in some cases, for the publishing houses themselves. Editorial teams must cultivate a strong, recognisable image in order to be acknowledged, remain in demand, or at the very least, be understood by their audience. This, in turn, necessitates a consistent and well-structured interaction with both readers and experts, ensuring they receive regular updates.

A fundamental factor for the successful promotion of reading in the digital space is the creation of relevant and compelling content. This content should not only serve as a source of information but also possess the capacity to capture the reader's attention, stimulate their interest, and awaken a desire to engage with literary works. Broadly speaking, content can be categorised into two main types. The first includes informational materials, such as reviews of new books, reading

recommendations, information about electronic libraries, and announcements of in-person events. The second comprises materials that stimulate activity, including participation in competitions, promotions, challenges, calls to comment or repost on social media, and involvement in discussions.

Combining both types of content, ideally interconnected and presented in a logical sequence, can achieve the highest level of effectiveness. For instance, a raffle for the book or a quiz based on its content could follow a video review of a new book. It is essential to emphasise the importance of high-quality and well-crafted design in any materials issued by a publishing house, especially those aimed at fostering interest in reading and literature. Several key parameters determine the quality of such content. Uniqueness is paramount, as duplicate content negatively affects the publisher’s reputation and may result in the resource being blocked. Informational value is equally important: the content must provide relevant and meaningful information. Clarity is also crucial; the text must be tailored to the target audience. For event announcements, the purpose, objectives, location, and timing must be clearly stated. For selections or competitions, users must be able to easily navigate the material and follow links. Visualisation plays a significant role, as the inclusion of illustrations or video significantly increases engagement, improves memorability, and elicits a stronger response from readers. Aesthetic design contributes further to effectiveness. Images should be high-resolution and clear. A modern minimalist design is recommended. Videos should be steady, free from interference, and have clear audio. The text should be well-structured, divided into paragraphs with appropriate spacing, and include clearly marked lists where necessary.

The genre-specific characteristics of book advertising are also important, and analysing these can help enhance its effectiveness in influencing potential readers. Books that are actively advertised tend to be more recognisable to readers than those that are not. This, along with other proven advertising strategies – such as fostering or reinforcing a positive attitude toward books and creating meaningful personal experiences – combined with the emergence of new media technologies, is shaping a new kind of relationship between books and readers. A positive perception of reading encourages a favourable view of book advertising. While advertising may not be the sole or decisive factor influencing book purchases, there is a clear correlation between a publisher’s advertising expenditure and the degree of reader awareness.

Advertising of specific publications, authors, and projects serves the purpose of promoting literary works and popularising reading. Among the key types of advertising, the following categories are typically identified: wholesale (trade) advertising campaigns, consumer-oriented advertising, and cooperative advertising initiatives (Table 3).

Table 3. Main types of advertising and their characteristics

Type	Characteristic
Wholesale (trade) advertising	Focuses on book chains and libraries.
Advertising for trade	Focuses on the author, title, release date, and price. The main goal of this type of advertising is to establish an informational connection with the reader.
Consumer advertising	It is built around the concept of the target audience.
Cooperative advertising	In this situation, the efforts of the publishing house and the retail chain are combined to achieve a common goal – boosting sales of a specific book and, accordingly, generating profit.

Table 3, Continued

Type	Characteristic
Informational advertising	Serves to notify about the release of a new product, announce a change in price, and provide information about additional or related services. The subjects of advertising may include a specific book, a multi-volume publication, or the publishing house itself, representing its interests.

Consumers begin to consider and evaluate a book not only during the act of reading it – it becomes integrated into personal experience even if it is not read in full. Fragmentary or irregular reading can be seen as a response to advertising and as a starting point for developing new reading habits: a book is read similarly to other forms of media and is interpreted only in conjunction with other information, advertising, and general media content (Vaišvilienė, 2010). Therefore, the key to trade advertising lies in the high-quality presentation of information that characterises the publication, in planning events that promote book products on the market, and in developing promotional strategies that stimulate sales (e.g. preferential terms, additional services for libraries and booksellers, etc.).

An example of trade advertising would be cooperation between publishers and various research institutes or libraries, particularly in purchasing educational literature at discounted prices. Consumer advertising requires that the publication be clearly positioned in the market, with its segment clearly defined. Understanding the specific nature of the publication allows for the effective selection of advertising channels to promote the book. For instance, a presentation of a book about the intricacies of watch production would be suitably held during an exhibition dedicated to these products. Cooperative advertising, by its nature, begins with the pooling of resources. Both parties – publishers and booksellers – have a vested interest in the success of such advertising.

The difference between a book and other goods lies in the specific motivations behind its creation, which are directly tied to its promotion. Joint efforts make it easier and more effective to convince potential buyers of the value of the product, highlight the exclusivity and relevance of the publication, and reduce costs. In this case, it is not only the book that is promoted, but also the author and the seller. This approach helps expand the presence of key players in the information space, which is one of the pressing challenges of modern commerce. An example of such an advertising campaign is as follows: on the eve of the release of a new film adaptation of a book, publishers release the book with a redesigned cover, and bookstores display these editions alongside current bestsellers.

In addition, there is a significant positive correlation between social media marketing and the formation of intent to purchase a product or service (Islam and Sheikh, 2024). Under current conditions in the book market, advertising tools are diverse and represent a combination of traditional and innovative methods of book promotion. Presentations, press publications, the organisation of conferences – including meetings with readers – careful design of exhibits at book fairs and exhibitions, as well as the placement of advertisements directly within book texts, remain in demand. Exhibitions and fairs are pre-planned events, strictly tied to a specific time and location. Festival fairs are oriented towards promoting specific publications.

Retail and small-scale wholesale events are typically timed to coincide with significant occasions, forming a thematic focus. These platforms present an assortment of already released publications, while also announcing forthcoming titles. With regard to charity fairs, it should be noted

that they are most often considered part of broader PR campaigns. The main functions of such fairs include: providing an overview of the existing market; showcasing and comparing products; establishing connections with intermediaries; and facilitating interaction with the media. A book is a unique product, the demand for which frequently arises through personal contact – seeing a publication can prompt the desire to purchase it. This is why the aforementioned promotional methods remain relevant.

Book fairs play a vital role in fostering interest in reading among the population. They are an essential element in shaping an educated society in the modern world. Book fairs influence personality development by encouraging critical thinking and the generation of new ideas. Today, under the influence of mass media, interest in reading books, magazines, and other printed materials is often in decline. In this context, there is an urgent need to stimulate public interest in reading (Malipatil, 2021). At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the ongoing development of information and communication technologies.

The Internet has become a platform through which companies can directly interact with their customers. Consequently, a new field has emerged – Internet marketing – which encompasses a wide range of tools. When selecting promotional tools, the characteristics of the target audience and its activity across various Internet platforms are taken into consideration. Over recent decades, the field of digital advertising has undergone significant transformation, marked by substantial progress. At the current stage, companies are able to gain a much deeper understanding of the preferences and tastes of specific consumers (Baslandze *et al.*, 2023). Unlike traditional approaches, online advertising and promotion through social networks offer more effective and adaptive methods.

The Internet provides access to a wide variety of advertising formats. These include advertising on corporate websites, banner advertising, email marketing, contextual advertising, advertisements on forums, and promotions on social media platforms. The evolution of media technologies in the modern world, which has the potential to constrain traditional distribution methods, has led to the emergence of three distinct advertising formats: static, sequential, and interactive. Over time, media technologies have reshaped the entire advertising landscape (Lin, 2024). Furthermore, the term “Internet advertising” refers not only to formats and platforms, but also to the methodologies and strategic approaches employed by modern companies in managing integrated marketing communications within the digital environment.

The purchase of a book is often a deliberate act, influenced by a certain level of intellectual engagement on the part of the buyer. This distinguishes it from other goods, for which the need typically arises naturally in the course of everyday life. Naturally, in the context of growing demand, online advertising is not static. New promotional tools are being actively employed, with social networks emerging as the key channel for promotion. These networks are currently experiencing rapid growth, largely due to the continual expansion of their user base. Online advertising is not only effective but also constitutes one of the most important components in achieving marketing objectives in today’s book markets (Bebnadze, 2024).

On social networks, one can find personal pages of individual users, blogs, organisational accounts, and specialised platforms that facilitate direct sales via social media. Given this, it is essential to understand precisely how these tools influence the promotion of goods and services. Social networks have become an indispensable marketing tool for publishers and booksellers, actively used by both businesses and readers alike. Most customers turn to social networks for

user-generated content, including customer reviews, comments, and information about special offers. When considering this tool in the context of the book market, its primary function is to increase the visibility and online presence of both the book and its author.

Primarily, this refers to various platforms such as blogs, forums, major social networks, and specialised book communities. In addition, research shows that social networks offer consumers an emotional dimension, including positive feelings and a sense of belonging to a consumer community. Furthermore, according to customers, social networks play a significant post-purchase role by providing opportunities to share opinions and experiences with other users (Nguyen *et al.*, 2019).

A set of online interaction activities can help create a favourable image for a book project. This, in turn, contributes to an increase in both the quantity and quality of positive feedback and reviews. Online engagement also stimulates discussion and debate within the reading community, which may ultimately lead to a significant increase in book sales. The advertising aspect of book design is an integral component of the publishing process. Specific elements of book design can help boost sales by capturing the attention of the target audience. Advertising-oriented book design is thus one of the key marketing strategies used to promote book products. Particular emphasis is placed on elements such as the cover, cover illustrations, annotations, the author's name, and the book title. The advertising potential of book design in this context is substantial, and it often requires no additional financial investment – particularly in cases where promotion is carried out via social networks.

If a book is already familiar to potential readers, the marketing strategy is typically centred around promoting the title and cover, as well as enhancing the author's public profile through media and online platforms. To effectively capture attention at points of sale, it is essential to concentrate resources on the physical presentation of the publication – its design and packaging (for example, by using original wrapping paper). For well-known publications, the author's name and the book title become key advertising elements, as they serve as the primary communicative anchors in the subsequent advertising campaign. The external design of any book is intended to address two core objectives: to provide a clear impression of the book's content and to attract the target audience.

Frequently, misinterpretation of the work's essence and a lack of analysis of the book's target audience result in ineffective advertising design. Today, one of the most common reasons for the misapplication of the representational potential of book design is the general lack of professionalism among participants in the book publishing process. Each literary genre has distinct requirements regarding both content and design, as well as appropriate methods of promotion. It is customary to differentiate publishing products into categories such as scientific and technical publications – where, for instance, a serious scientific study may be published without the need for an eye-catching cover – and artistic or literary works. In the latter case, it is generally preferable for the cover to be visually attractive and memorable.

The use of images in cover design is essential when promoting a book on social networks. This approach helps to give the book an aesthetic appearance, attract the interest of potential readers, reflect the essence of the narrative, and convey artistic value. Illustrative material should be selected in such a way that it acts as a preliminary visual representation of the text, facilitating easier reader engagement and a more accurate interpretation of the work's meaning.

It is acceptable to use masterpieces of world art in cover design. Paintings or their fragments featured on book covers should be thematically linked to the content of the book or the historical

period in which it was created, while avoiding overly simplistic or clichéd solutions. It is recommended to use lesser-known artworks and works by various artists to minimise the likelihood of repetition. When designing literature within the same genre, it is important to seek out new, fresh, and original design solutions. When selecting illustrations for the cover, it is essential to carefully oversee the work of the artist-designer to ensure that they have a correct understanding of the work's content and that the visual presentation aligns with reader expectations. It is not sufficient to choose an image that merely relates to the subject, author, or title, as this may result in inaccuracies and provoke negative reactions from the audience. In the case of translated editions, the original foreign design style should be fully preserved.

Thus, the cover design of the Harry Potter books fully replicates the layout developed by the publishers: the illustration and the image of the main character remain unchanged. When creating film adaptations of books, it often becomes necessary to reflect the on-screen image of the protagonist on the cover of the corresponding publication. In most cases, any work of art that has gained widespread popularity is eventually adapted into a film, and frequently, computer games are also developed. New images from the film are quickly incorporated into the design of the associated books. These editions are typically published in softcover formats and feature stills from the film – visuals that can also be utilised in the promotion of books on social networks. As a result, expressive visual solutions are playing an increasingly important role in the marketing of fiction.

Particular emphasis is also placed on the annotation featured on the book's cover. The annotation is arguably the most familiar and classic form of textual advertising, commonly used in the preparation of a publication. In books published in Kazakhstan, annotations are traditionally placed either after the title page or on the final page. Occasionally, the annotation appears on the back cover, which serves a direct advertising function, as the cover is typically the reader's first point of contact with the book. When creating annotations, it is important to consider their structure, content, and stylistic features. These texts are designed to spark the reader's interest in the book and to motivate purchase and reading. It is acceptable to include a short quotation from the work that clearly conveys its central idea.

A well-crafted advertising annotation must not mislead the reader. The author's name and the title of the book are the most essential and obligatory elements of the cover design. They provide key information about the work and facilitate the reader's understanding. These elements serve as the foundation of the book's identity and can carry strong advertising potential. For example, the font size used may depend on the fame of the author, while emerging writers may choose original and appealing pseudonyms to attract attention. There are two primary types of "author's name": the real name and the pseudonym. A proper name is typically used by writers who are more focused on creative expression than on gaining social recognition or critical acclaim.

A book title can convey information about its literary genre, succinctly reflect its essence, serve as an identifier of the work, indicate its thematic orientation, and attract the attention of the target audience. In the modern context, titles in fiction often fulfil an advertising function, acting as a kind of slogan. The title of a literary work is intended to serve a communicative purpose and is aimed at a broader audience than the text itself. At the same time, the advertising function of the title is often deliberately intensified – titles may be crafted in analogy with already well-known works. Reading remains a leading leisure activity, contributing to a highly dynamic and competitive book publishing market (Wang *et al.*, 2019).

While other goods are typically developed in response to consumer demand, a book is often the embodiment of the author's desire for self-expression. Many authors do not focus on the tastes or views of a specific readership, believing instead that their work is meant for a universal audience. Proper book design is a highly effective promotional tool. Publishers have access to a variety of potentially powerful advertising tools – symbolic, visual, and textual. The book cover serves as a platform for the implementation of both the publisher's and the author's artistic advertising ideas. In book marketing, these ideas are communicated through design, which must align with the content of the work. It is essential to maintain the correct balance between form and content in order to ensure an effective and coherent presentation.

As for advertising text, its distinguishing feature lies in the obligatory inclusion of a significant informational component. Whereas the primary function of product advertising is suggestion – encouraging the consumer to remember the product or brand name – in book advertising, the informational function takes precedence. That is, the advertiser must ensure that potential buyers are aware of the availability of a specific book on the market. In practice, traditional advertising methods in book distribution do not always demonstrate high levels of effectiveness. On the one hand, many consumers are sceptical of product advertising; on the other, it is often unnecessary to rely on conventional product advertising formats to successfully fulfil the informational function.

Social networks represent a powerful and indispensable tool for promoting books and are widely employed in modern marketing. They enable authors to effectively reach large target audiences with considerable speed. However, it is important to recognise that merely maintaining a social media presence does not guarantee direct sales. The primary function of social platforms in this context is to generate product awareness (John Mabeba, 2020). Within online communities, information about new releases or promotional offers reaches the target audience much more quickly than through other communication channels intended for end users. While the reader's motivation to purchase a book is often already established, this motivation alone is not always sufficient to result in a purchase.

Rapid extraction of information regarding consumer or reader preferences on the Internet, as well as responses to current events, provides valuable material for analysis and the development of future strategies. Direct interaction with users enables the dissemination of information about upcoming promotions, announcements of new releases, and, crucially, the conduct of marketing research without incurring additional financial costs. In the modern publishing industry, marketers' expertise functions as a forecasting tool, categorising projected sales (or print runs) into four key segments. However, this classification often overlooks data obtained from social networks, online search queries, and digital mentions (Martín Sujo *et al.*, 2021).

An effective and dynamic online user community affiliated with a brand, company, or media outlet can significantly reduce the expenditure required for other advertising tools. Since many followers tend to trust the recommendations of those they follow, collaboration between brands and influencers has become a common practice. This applies to any user of a media platform or social network who commands a large audience and can influence its members. Such influencers may be media personalities, subject-matter experts, or ordinary users who publish content on specific topics and have earned the trust of their audience.

In this context, the influencer is invited to showcase a product, such as a book, by tagging or mentioning the brand in a post on their social media profile, either in exchange for a fixed payment

or on a barter basis. When an organisation compensates an opinion leader for posting such content, this constitutes sponsored advertising. In such cases, the influencer's interaction with their audience on behalf of the sponsor must clearly indicate that they have received compensation in exchange for the promotion. This form of advertising often delivers rapid and significant results, particularly when the influencer enjoys a strong reputation and a loyal following.

Thus, direct interaction with readers on social networks can take several forms. One such form involves creating a personal page for the author, for example, registering on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and regularly posting information about the book, including announcements, visual content, and short videos. Another approach is posting content that includes regular posts featuring excerpts from the book, inspirational quotes, or images thematically related to the content, which can effectively draw the attention of potential readers. Engaging with the audience also plays a crucial role; this may involve responding to reviews and questions from followers, conducting polls, and organising competitions. Additionally, promotion through social networks can be achieved through targeted advertising, which is an efficient means of broadening the audience and attracting individuals interested in a particular author's work.

At present, the promotion of books and reading via the Internet has become increasingly important. It can be argued that, for book publishers, maintaining an active presence on social networks offers a number of significant advantages. Social networks have become one of the primary channels for promoting books in the current environment. This is due to several key factors. First, they provide daily access to a large audience. Second, the growing number of users who utilise digital technologies to search for and purchase goods and services reflects increasing trust in online shopping. Third, social media platforms allow for the presentation of a brand to the target audience, the generation of interest in its activities, and the advertisement of products and services. Moreover, they facilitate active consumer engagement through features such as comments and likes. Social networks also enable the attraction of new potential customers from thematic online communities to the supplier's website. Finally, they offer a cost-effective advertising and promotional alternative to traditional methods, as creating and maintaining a community, channel, or page is entirely free of charge.

Product promotion is an integral part of any advertising campaign, and the ultimate success of such a campaign directly depends on the choice of an appropriate promotion strategy. A book, as a unique product, requires particularly effective promotion when entering the market. Among the most widely used and impactful channels is, of course, the Internet. The global expansion of Internet access and the rise of e-government have made e-marketing highly relevant in today's world. Its effectiveness, however, relies heavily on the implementation of well-designed, evidence-based strategies (Jaas, 2022). Social networks have proven to be an effective promotional tool online, with their broad audience reach being the primary factor driving their success.

Publishers, bookstores, and writers are increasingly active on social networks, where entire book communities are emerging and book blogs are gaining popularity. Introducing readers to various social platforms and educating them on how to engage with these platforms appropriately can be beneficial, helping them discover books of interest and inspiring them to read more. At the same time, research indicates that such reader networks may serve multiple functions and, if misused or overused, can lead to negative consequences (Demirel, 2023). Online promotion, with its broad range of marketing tools and channels, plays a vital role for stakeholders in the book industry. The global

network has radically reshaped the book market, with the main advantage of social media being its capacity to finely target advertising campaigns towards specific segments of the intended audience.

Several new phenomena have emerged as a result of this transformation, including e-books and digital libraries. These platforms offer convenient access to information, facilitate network-based interaction, and provide broad access to collections, often including open-access materials (Sorgel, 2009). Books are now sold in both specialised and general online stores. Book-focused social networks have emerged and typically operate based on the enthusiasm of readers, and occasionally, the support of bookstores. However, the active engagement of bookstores and publishers with these networks can significantly enhance and scale the functionality and effectiveness of these platforms.

Book social networks can be viewed as a type of digital library – applications that allow users to create personal collections of films, books, and audio materials, which are accessible to other participants and supplemented with recommendations and ratings. Social networks offer numerous advantages, both in comparison to other forms of Internet-based promotion (such as SEO, contextual, and banner advertising) and to traditional advertising methods. Visitors to book social networks are typically avid readers – individuals who purchase books or download electronic versions, share their impressions, and write reviews. This high concentration of active, interested users makes book social networks highly attractive platforms for the application of marketing tools within the book industry.

Two prominent examples of such platforms that can be used to promote publishers online are LiveLib and Bookmate. These platforms were selected due to their large number of registered users, extensive book databases, and established partnerships with major publishing houses in Kazakhstan. One of the most well-known book social networks today is LiveLib. Launched in 2007, the platform now boasts over 700,000 registered users. Its core features include maintaining a reader's diary and facilitating communication among readers. A key function of LiveLib is its recommendation system, which is implemented through the ability to write reviews and rate books. LiveLib also possesses several distinctive features that differentiate it from other book social networks.

This includes the presence of a variety of ratings generated through user voting. Such a rating system, based on reader input, is a key factor in the appeal of social book platforms. It enables users not only to express their own preferences but also to navigate the extensive range of available literature more effectively, discovering new titles through community recommendations. A distinctive feature of the LiveLib network is its close collaboration with stakeholders in the book industry, establishing a direct link between the platform and the publishing sector. This includes partnerships with publishers, bookstores, online portals, and specialised periodicals.

One of the largest and most rapidly growing platforms is Bookmate – a social network for book enthusiasts. This platform combines the functions of both an electronic library and a social network. It operates as a subscription-based service that provides legal access to e-books and allows users to store them. Bookmate's recommendation system is enhanced through integration with other social networks. A key distinguishing feature of Bookmate, setting it apart from other e-book reading services, is its strong focus on mobile device users. The platform offers dedicated applications for iOS, Android, and Windows Phone. Furthermore, Bookmate supports synchronisation between applications on different mobile platforms and devices, enhancing usability and accessibility for readers. Thus, the main advantages of book social networks can be summarised as follows (Thomas and Jeba, 2024):

- discovery of new books and authors. Users discover new titles through recommendations from reading friends, curated book lists suggested by other participants, engaging in discussions, and reading reviews. This is an excellent way to broaden one's literary horizons;
- communication and exchange of opinions with like-minded individuals. Book social networks bring together readers who share common interests. These platforms offer opportunities to exchange impressions, discuss reading experiences, and share the thoughts and emotions evoked by books;
- receiving personalised recommendations. Platform algorithms often analyse user preferences and reading history, offering tailored book suggestions that may align with individual interests;
- following authors. Many writers maintain personal profiles within these communities, where they share information about upcoming works, engage in discussions, and interact with fans;
- systematisation of personal libraries and reading lists. Users can track books they have read, create "to-read" lists, rate literature, and write reviews;
- participation in book clubs and reading marathons. Most book social networks allow users to create or join virtual interest-based clubs and participate in various reading marathons, enhancing the enjoyment of the reading process;
- mutual exchange of books and recommendations. These platforms may support book exchanges between users or provide information about libraries and bookstores offering specific titles;
- inspiration for reading. Observing what others are reading, reading their reviews, and sharing in their enthusiasm for books can serve as a strong motivation to explore new works.

The popular online platforms that provide opportunities for self-publishing and selling books include Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, Apple Books, Google Play Books, and Smashwords. Direct marketing tools, such as banner advertising and the organisation of various promotions and competitions, are aimed at attracting maximum attention from readers to individual publishing projects. One of the simplest and most effective means of promotion is banner advertising. This effectiveness can be attributed to the fact that users of book social networks are already predisposed to receiving up-to-date information about new books, author events, and other literary activities. Despite the advantages of this advertising tool, publishers rarely employ it directly for promoting their products within book social networks. Banner advertising is predominantly utilised by large bookselling companies.

With the rapid expansion of Internet usage and the steady rise in the popularity of digital platforms, the Internet currently serves as the primary channel for the distribution of advertising (Peker *et al.*, 2021). Organising sweepstakes and competitions is an effective tool for building a positive company image, and social networks offer businesses extensive opportunities to carry out such initiatives. The benefits of using social networks for this purpose include: prompt feedback and simplified communication with participants; effective dissemination of information about the competition; a neutral and accessible environment for attracting attention and increasing engagement; and the ability to collect user-generated content.

These events not only contribute to fostering a positive attitude towards the brand but also help address a range of marketing objectives, including those relevant to the book industry. In an environment oversaturated with online advertising, this marketing format represents a non-trivial and less intrusive method for capturing the attention of a broad audience, especially when compared

with traditional banner advertising. In contrast to the organisation of sweepstakes and competitions, monitoring reader reviews on book social networks serves as a valuable tool for publishers aiming to assess audience sentiment. Reviews published by users of these platforms can serve as a foundation for developing marketing materials for promotion across other social media channels.

Monitoring reader reviews enables publishers to identify which books, genres, and authors generate the greatest interest, thereby offering critical insight into the preferences and sentiments of the target audience. Forums – an integral component of book social networks – provide a valuable space for analysing user attitudes and preferences. They act as a repository of information, both positive and negative, which spreads organically through a “viral” effect, i.e. it is voluntarily shared by members of the community. A key feature of forums is the capacity to initiate topic-specific discussions, guide the direction of dialogue, and stimulate debate. Rating systems, in turn, transform social networks into a source of statistical data, offering further opportunities for informed marketing decisions.

All of these activities are carried out with the aim of obtaining valuable insights into readers’ expectations and needs, as well as their views on the future development of the industry and the composition of the publishing portfolio. This information can be transformed into an effective mechanism for evaluating the commercial success of a publishing house’s book products. Platforms such as LiveLib and Bookmate, as previously discussed, offer open access to ratings and are distinguished by their emphasis on quality – specifically, they reflect the readership value of books. These ratings are compiled based on the popularity of works among a broad audience. In conjunction with other information resources, rating data serve as a vital tool for understanding trends in the book market and for identifying the most sought-after publications.

Ratings provide publishers and authors with timely feedback from the reading public, thereby supporting the adoption of informed organisational and managerial decisions. In addition, like reviews, ratings enable the analysis of reader preferences, the evaluation of the effectiveness of advertising campaigns, and the stimulation of interest in the works featured. Beyond quality ratings, book-themed websites can also provide statistical data necessary for assessing the performance of a publishing house. In particular, the Bookmate platform offers such services through its Publisher tool. The scores and reviews published on the platform help generate quasi-ratings that benefit not only other readers in their book selection process, but also publishers seeking to optimise their product strategies.

The service is also of particular value to publishers seeking to evaluate how their products are perceived by the audience. It provides data on the total number of readers for a given book, the proportion of each book in a user’s total monthly reading volume (expressed as a percentage or per month for a specified fee), as well as details on when users read the book, with whom they share it, and which collections they include it in. Book social networks frequently offer publishers the opportunity to maintain their own page, structured similarly to a personal user profile. On this page, publishers can share a range of content. The primary objective of such a presence is to shape visitors’ perceptions of the publisher, generate interest in its latest publications, and promote ongoing projects.

These platforms offer a wide array of tools – both explicit and subtle – that can be effectively used to stimulate book sales, enhance publisher visibility, monitor reader feedback, assess the performance of publishing initiatives, and disseminate information about books within society. At present, book social networks serve as a vital communication channel between publishers and

readers. It is highly probable that, in the future, interaction with such platforms will become an integral component of the marketing strategies of many publishers in Kazakhstan. At the same time, the strategic management of the book publishing industry requires the development of a new, coherent concept – one based on the systematic coordination of all stages of the publishing process.

This, in turn, paves the way for a synergy between state regulation, network-based management, and marketing – while preserving the hierarchical structure of the book publishing complex and supporting the dynamic development of publishing and bookselling networks grounded in the principles of self-organisation. The formation of the publishing and book assortment should be informed by comprehensive marketing research, encompassing a wide spectrum – from identifying the spiritual and cultural needs of the population to addressing the highly specialised interests of various age and social groups. It is essential to consider the financial and commercial performance of enterprises, the potential for attracting new clients and market segments, and the effectiveness of diversification strategies within publishing and bookselling organisations.

The assortment of publications should be shaped through a retrospective review and analysis of current publishing and bookselling activity, combined with a forward-looking vision for the sector's future. Only such an approach can ensure the development of an optimal thematic and typological structure that meets the following criteria: maximum variety to satisfy the diverse needs of readers; elimination of outdated publications; sustainable operation at minimal cost; efficient book circulation. Optimising the range of offerings in the book trade involves not only the application of specialised operations, tools, and research methodologies, and the establishment of optimal print runs, but also the reconfiguration of existing networks of interaction.

When considering the state of the book publishing industry on a global scale at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it can be asserted that the advertising potential embedded in book design is of growing importance. The prioritisation of reader needs and preferences is becoming increasingly significant, prompting publishers to carefully analyse consumer behaviour and impressions within the digital environments of bookstores (Afolabi and Adeyemo, 2024). Advertising plays a crucial role in this process. In the book industry, three main types of advertising are commonly identified. Wholesale advertising is primarily directed at book distributors and focuses on promoting large-scale purchases and distribution agreements. Consumer advertising, on the other hand, is designed to deliver information directly to the reader and is disseminated through various channels such as print media, radio, and television. Finally, joint advertising is implemented through the collaborative efforts of publishers and bookselling networks, aiming to coordinate marketing strategies and expand audience reach through shared resources and initiatives.

The use of book design for advertising purposes is effective both in promoting titles at points of sale and in maintaining interest in established publications. The semiotic content of any book design must fulfil two essential functions: to convey information about the book's content and to capture the attention of the target audience. A frequent cause of ineffective advertising design is a lack of understanding of the work's essence and insufficient analysis of the intended readership. One of the most common issues that undermines the representative potential of book design – and hinders or even conflicts with the book's full integration into the communication flow – is the unprofessionalism of those involved in the book creation process.

For example, a designer's lack of professionalism – manifested in an unclear understanding of the target audience or ignorance of the preferences and tastes of potential readers – can result in a cover

design that alienates the reader. If the structure and organisation of the book's design, both overall and in terms of its individual elements, do not align with the intended objectives or fail to produce the desired effect, the book may appear unclear, disjointed, or simply unappealing. Such design decisions may lead to a poor arrangement of visual elements, imbalance, or excessive visual noise, all of which make the cover difficult to interpret and aesthetically unattractive. Furthermore, the use of low-quality illustrations or photographs reflects a lack of professional skill. This includes the use of low-resolution images, images that violate copyright, or those that are unrelated to the book's content.

If the designer selects inappropriate fonts – whether they are difficult to read, outdated, or stylistically inconsistent with the book's theme – the overall impression of the design may be severely compromised. In some instances, a designer's lack of professionalism is also evident in the failure to meet basic technical requirements. Inadequate preparation of the layout for printing can result in production defects and negatively affect the visual quality of the publication. A designer's lack of awareness regarding the fundamental marketing objectives of book design also has adverse consequences. As a result of such unprofessional execution, the book may fail to capture interest, ultimately leading to low sales.

The result of this may be the creation of a visually attractive cover that fails to stand out from the competition, lacks distinction, and does not communicate the book's core message. To counteract this negative trend, cover designers and publishers must consider not only the visual aspects of the design but also the associated marketing objectives and the specific characteristics of the target audience. The key lies in striking an optimal balance between aesthetic appeal, originality, and content in order to ensure that the cover effectively contributes to the promotion of the book. Accordingly, when designing a book, several common design mistakes can be identified:

- weak compositional solutions;
- lack of understanding of the target audience and taking into account the preferences and tastes of potential readers;
- low-quality illustrations or photographs;
- fonts that are illegible, obsolete, or stylistically inappropriate;
- ignoring technical requirements;
- lack of knowledge of the basic principles of marketing objectives.

Another negative factor in book design is the unprofessionalism of the editor, which may manifest in insufficient attention to the textual elements on the cover and back cover. This can include typographical errors, stylistic inconsistencies, and inaccuracies in the annotation or author information – all of which can create an impression of carelessness and undermine the reader's confidence in the publication. Additionally, an editor who fails to appreciate the importance of the visual component may neglect to communicate key aspects of the book's content and intended audience to the designer, thereby hindering the creation of an effective design. The unprofessionalism of the publisher or project manager, particularly in the form of insufficient funding allocated to design, can also have negative consequences – both for the appearance of the book and for its subsequent sales performance.

Attempts to cut costs by underinvesting in professional design and illustration services often result in a product with a cheap appearance, one that fails to appeal to the reader or stimulate the desire to purchase. Moreover, the absence of a clear brief for the designer can give rise to several problems. First, it leads to ambiguity in the task at hand. In such cases, the designer may interpret

the publisher's or project manager's intentions in a way that does not align with expectations, resulting in a final product that misses the mark. Furthermore, the lack of a brief makes it difficult to assess and manage the design process. Without clearly defined evaluation criteria, the publisher or project manager cannot accurately gauge the quality or progress of the work, while the designer may lack direction and confidence in their approach. This can ultimately result in the need for extensive revisions and delays in meeting production deadlines.

In addition, an unclear brief increases the likelihood of conflicts between the designer and the publisher or project manager. A designer's misunderstanding of the book's marketing objectives and target audience may lead to mutual dissatisfaction, which can hinder collaboration and prevent the creation of an effective design. At the same time, the professional opinion of the designer may be disregarded, and interference from the publisher or project manager in the creative process – without adequate expertise – can result in a decline in design quality. Ultimately, a clear and detailed brief is the foundation of a successful book design project. It serves as the basis for mutual understanding, facilitates efficient collaboration, and helps ensure that the final product meets its intended goals.

In some cases, errors in book design also stem from poor choices in printing materials. It is crucial to take into account the specifications of the printing equipment, the types of ink used, and the overall objectives of the project when selecting materials. The use of inappropriate materials can compromise image quality and lead to inefficiencies in the printing process. Moreover, the selected material influences both the durability and the visual appeal of the finished product. If the book is expected to resist moisture or fading, suitable specialised materials should be employed. Failure to consider these factors may lead to rapid deterioration of the printed product. Economic feasibility must also be taken into account. While high-quality materials can enhance the appearance and longevity of the book, they must be balanced with the financial constraints and commercial goals of the publishing project.

Choosing overly expensive materials for simple tasks can lead to unjustified cost increases, while opting for cheaper alternatives in cases that require high image quality would be equally inappropriate. The correct selection of printing materials is a crucial aspect of successful book design, as it directly influences the quality, durability, and cost-effectiveness of the final product. High-quality printing is essential for achieving an excellent design outcome. The implementation of, and strict adherence to, a quality control system is a prerequisite for an efficient and cost-effective publishing process. The absence of such control at each stage of book design can result in substantial problems, including the need for rework, increased production costs, defective output, or the release of substandard products.

The incompetence of the publisher or project manager can undermine the creativity and efforts of even the most talented designers, ultimately leading to the publication of a book with an unsuccessful, poor-quality, or visually unappealing design. This, in turn, directly affects reader perception, sales figures, and the overall market success of the book. It is therefore essential that this key role be occupied by professionals who understand the significance of design, can communicate effectively, and are capable of ensuring quality control throughout all stages of the book's cover and interior design process. From the above, it becomes evident that it is important to avoid the following common mistakes made by publishers or project managers during the book design process:

- insufficient funding for design work;
- lack of a specific brief for the designer;

- ignoring the professional opinion of the designer;
- incorrect selection of printing materials, use of cheap paper;
- lack of quality control at all stages.

In some cases, the author of a book may demonstrate unprofessionalism – particularly through a lack of understanding regarding the importance of design. This may result in the author underestimating the role of external design in promoting the book and failing to give it adequate attention. Conversely, the opposite situation may occur, in which the author, rather than neglecting the design process, becomes overly involved and interferes excessively in the designer's work. Such imposition of unprofessional ideas by the author can lead to a decline in the overall quality of the design. An unprofessional approach to book design on the part of the author creates additional challenges for both the publisher and the designer, increasing the likelihood of errors and, consequently, compromising the quality of the final printed product.

To prevent such negative outcomes, it is critically important to establish effective communication between the author, publisher, and designer. The importance of a professional approach to book design must be clearly explained to the author, and they should be encouraged to respect and consider the opinions of qualified specialists. Achieving a compromise between the author's creative vision and the designer's professional expertise is a key factor in producing a book with both an aesthetically pleasing and functionally effective appearance. Mistakes made by the author during the design process may lead to a range of negative consequences (Fig. 9).

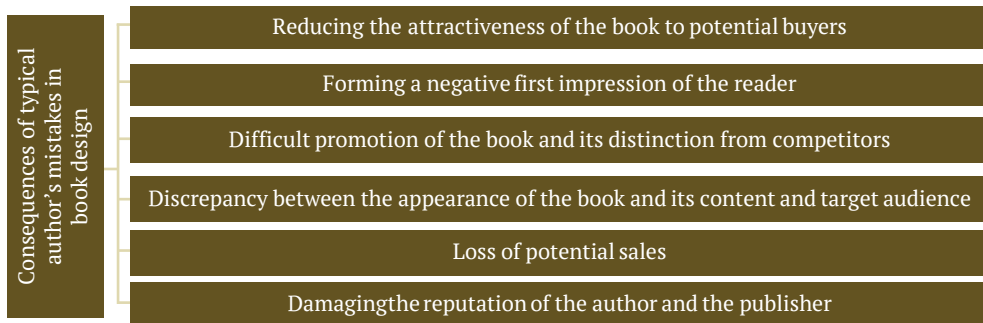


Figure 9. Typical mistakes made by the author when designing a book

Thus, the professionalism of every participant involved in the book creation process, from the author to the publisher, plays a critical role in realising the representative potential of book design and ensuring the successful presentation of the book within the broader communication flow. Investment in skilled professionals and rigorous quality control at every stage are essential prerequisites for producing a book that is not only informative but also visually appealing to readers. At the same time, promoting books on social networks with a strong emphasis on visual design can be an effective strategy for generating interest among potential readers. This task may be addressed in several ways.

One effective approach is to create an attractive cover and its variations. The cover can be showcased from multiple perspectives, such as front, back, or with an emphasis on particular design elements, including illustrations or typography. In addition, three-dimensional mockups

may be developed using specialised tools or graphic editors, presenting the book as a tangible object positioned on a desk, held in someone's hands, or placed on a bookshelf, thus enhancing its realism. Animated covers represent another possibility, involving the production of short videos that highlight specific design features or introduce dynamic effects such as gradual zooms or subtle colour transitions. Moreover, adapting cover dimensions and layouts to meet the technical specifications of various social media platforms, for instance, square formats for Instagram, horizontal for Facebook and X (formerly Twitter), and vertical for Stories or Reels, ensures optimal visibility and engagement.

Interior design elements also serve as a means of providing a glimpse inside the book. Notable excerpts may be featured through visual quote cards, designed against engaging backgrounds or photographs that reflect the thematic focus of the publication. Individual illustrations or maps may be posted separately, ideally accompanied by brief contextual commentary. Aesthetic photographs of book spreads, capturing open pages with particularly compelling layouts or text, can further entice potential readers. Short videos simulating the act of turning pages, whether performed by the author or another individual, create a sense of immersion by inviting viewers into the book's interior. Equally significant is the establishment of a unified visual style. This includes the use of consistent corporate colours and fonts across all promotional materials, aligning with the book's cover and general tone. Furthermore, the development of customised post templates for social media announcements, quotations, and reviews helps to maintain visual coherence. It is critical that all shared visuals meet high standards of quality. Well-composed, sharp, and aesthetically polished images contribute to a credible and attractive digital presence.

To enhance interactivity and deepen audience engagement, additional strategies may be employed. For example, users may be invited to find a particular detail on the cover from a fragment posted online, prompting them to examine the design more closely. Polls may be conducted to gather opinions about preferred cover or interior design elements, while contests can be held encouraging users to generate creative descriptions of the cover using predetermined keywords. Animated GIFs or short videos featuring specific design components can further enrich the visual appeal of promotional content. Another promising tactic is to narrate a story through visual elements. Publishers can share the evolution of the cover, showcasing earlier versions to illustrate its developmental process. Behind-the-scenes insights, such as the initial sketches, the designer's inspirations, or the rationale behind font choices, offer added depth. Visual elements may also be linked to the book's narrative, with explanations of how particular colours, images, or typographic decisions reflect key themes or plot elements.

The use of Stories and Reels on social platforms provides additional opportunities. Short video reviews of the book's design may highlight key visual features, while stickers derived from cover components can be repurposed for greater visibility. Thematic filters or masks inspired by the book's aesthetic may also be developed for interactive use in social media environments.

Each social media platform has its unique characteristics and user demographics, which must be considered when crafting a tailored promotional strategy. Facebook, for instance, although not specifically designed for literary communities, remains widely used for author-reader interaction due to its functional affordances, such as the ability to create author pages, publish updates, moderate discussions, and foster audience engagement. TikTok, in contrast, thrives on short-form video content and appeals predominantly to younger audiences. While not a conventional platform for

book promotion, it has increasingly become a space for authors to market their work creatively by participating in trends, sharing behind-the-scenes content, or reading excerpts. Interaction through comments, direct messages, and livestreams supports deeper reader engagement.

Instagram remains an especially effective visual platform, ideal for sharing book covers, event photographs, quotations, and creative process insights. Its features, including Stories and direct messaging, enable sustained communication and personal brand development. YouTube also plays a substantial role, particularly for long-form video content. Authors can create dedicated channels to share video blogs, interviews, reviews, readings, and educational material, while also benefiting from user feedback through comments and subscriptions.

Goodreads, designed specifically for readers and authors, facilitates community-building through book reviews, ratings, and discussions. Authors can create and manage profiles, interact with readers, and access targeted promotional tools, including campaigns and contests. Pinterest, though less conventional for book promotion, provides a platform for visual storytelling. Writers may curate boards that include cover designs, illustrations, aesthetic inspirations, and even writing resources or literary quotes, thereby showcasing both their work and personality.

X (formerly Twitter), though grounded in brief real-time communication, is widely used by writers for sharing updates, engaging in literary discussions, and networking. It facilitates both content promotion and personal branding. The decision of which platforms to prioritise depends on factors such as the author's creative style, target readership, and preferred communication modes. For instance, visually orientated authors may prefer Instagram or Pinterest, while those producing video content will benefit most from YouTube. Authors targeting teenagers or young adults should consider TikTok and Instagram, whereas those writing for professionals might find greater resonance on platforms like LinkedIn.

Authors should approach social media with an integrated strategy that includes regular updates featuring high-quality content, active interaction with followers, and the use of analytics to guide future campaigns. Consistency and relevance are key, as is openness to experimentation with new content formats. Successful promotional efforts also require continuous self-development, drawing on best practices and insights from the broader literary and publishing communities. For those seeking to establish their own digital platforms, several tools are available. A professional website serves as a central hub, showcasing biographical information, publications, event announcements, and potentially a blog. An email newsletter enables the systematic delivery of exclusive updates and offers to subscribers, fostering a loyal reader base. Writers can also use podcasts and vlogs to share reflections, writing tips, and news, offering a more intimate mode of engagement. Online courses and webinars provide further opportunities for sharing expertise and connecting with aspiring authors.

Ultimately, successful digital promotion relies on flexibility and the ability to select and combine platforms that align with the author's goals and audience. A blog or personal website can serve as a foundational resource, supplemented by strategic use of social networks and distribution platforms such as Amazon KDP or IngramSpark. Design tools like Vellum or Canva support professional formatting, while analytics services (for example, Google Analytics) and scheduling tools (such as Buffer or Hootsuite) help streamline content delivery and audience tracking. These combined efforts allow authors to promote upcoming releases, foster engagement, and build lasting relationships with their readership in an increasingly competitive and digitalised publishing environment.

3.2 SelfPub: Book creation and design on author self-publishing platforms

The book market in the Republic of Kazakhstan is currently undergoing a transformation, driven by growing reader interest in new book formats – particularly e-books and audiobooks. A significant surge in the popularity of digital book formats was observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this trend has continued in the post-pandemic period. Among the key factors contributing to the increasing popularity of digital formats are their lower cost and greater accessibility. These formats offer enhanced mobility, allowing readers to access books on smartphones, eliminating the need for physical storage space, and avoiding logistical difficulties associated with transportation. As a result of the proliferation of digital devices, traditional printed publications now increasingly coexist with e-books and audiobooks (Spjeldnæs and Karlsen, 2022).

The advantages of digital products for readers are evident, which has, in turn, stimulated the expansion of the market and the entry of new participants – including publishing houses, independent authors, bookstores, and digital book service providers. However, in order to operate effectively within this segment, it is essential to understand the unique characteristics of digital books compared to traditional print literature, particularly from a marketing perspective. Readers' choice of reading platform is influenced by a range of factors, including the cost of the device, its portability, durability, reading comfort, and battery life (Buringh and Van Zanden, 2009). To fully explore the features of e-books and audiobooks, it is first necessary to examine the broader concept of a digital product.

The latter can take two primary forms: a digital product and a digital service. A digital product is an item with consumer value, created for sale or exchange, digitised and encoded as a bit stream, which is transmitted from the seller's medium to the buyer's device. This definition implies the product's digital nature – represented as program code that can be interpreted by devices such as computers, smartphones, and other gadgets, and subsequently transformed into content such as video, images, software, or text. In contrast, digital services are a specific type of digital product that are simultaneously produced, transmitted, and consumed. In other words, digital services are interactive in nature and can only be accessed in real time via the internet. These include digital files that are consumed online, such as streaming services or online translation tools.

This distinction has important implications for the e-book market, which differs markedly from the traditional print book market. Digital books may be offered to consumers both as standalone products (e.g., downloadable files) and as services – through dedicated platforms that enable users to read or listen to literature online. This dual nature broadens the scope for deploying diverse distribution channels and marketing models when promoting digital literature. In this context, all that is required from the user is a standard web browser or the installation of a dedicated mobile application, which significantly enhances accessibility and convenience.

At the same time, due to the inconvenience experienced by many users when installing specialised software or selecting appropriate file formats, publishers are increasingly offering e-books as services for online reading or listening. The subscription-based distribution model for e-books – functioning more as an online service than a downloadable product – not only enhances accessibility but also helps to mitigate, if not entirely eliminate, the risk of unauthorised distribution of pirated content. This is a critical factor that marketers must consider when determining a distribution strategy for digital publications. Another key aspect of this product type is the requirement

for a compatible device capable of processing information, along with the appropriate specialised software to access the content.

Streaming platforms have a transformative effect on the entire chain of book creation and publication, reshaping the format and presentation of books in the contemporary digital landscape. Audiobooks, which consistently rank among the most popular digital formats, necessitate adaptations in the production process to accommodate their unique requirements. In many cases, streaming services have assumed the role traditionally held by publishers, thereby exerting considerable influence across the industry. Within the context of streaming, distribution becomes significantly more complex and strategically important than in conventional print book sales. As content consumption increasingly shifts to digital platforms, the distribution structure becomes inseparable from the final product itself, and user data emerges as a critical asset – a primary source of insights for content development, marketing, and audience engagement (Berglund and Tanderup Linkis, 2022).

Unlike printed books, which can be used immediately after purchase, digital files require a compatible device with the appropriate software installed in order to function. This may include an e-reader, tablet, smartphone, or standard computer. The required software ranges from widely known office applications to specialised reading or multimedia platforms. This characteristic of digital literature leads to two important consequences. First, it necessitates the adaptation of digital file formats to the technical specifications and capabilities of various devices – taking into account the preferences of commonly used platforms and software among the target audience. Second, it transforms gadget and software manufacturers into active market players who form strategic partnerships with major online retailers and publishers of digital content.

Based on these characteristics, four core types can be identified, each representing a key form of digital literature as a finished product – defined by its method of creation, distribution, and user experience. It is important to note that this classification may vary depending on the chosen criteria, as the types differ in terms of material presentation (e.g., text, audio, or interactive elements), the mode of consumption (reading, listening, or interacting), and their delivery environment (downloadable files versus online platforms).

Each format entails distinct production, distribution, and monetisation models, which justifies their treatment as separate forms of digital literature. Furthermore, with the continued advancement of technology, the emergence of new hybrid forms is anticipated – formats that combine the characteristics of various existing types. Downloadable digital products can exist in a variety of file formats. For text-based e-books, the most commonly used formats compatible with a wide range of devices, including personal computers, are: .txt, .rtf, .pdf, and .docx. For Amazon Kindle devices, the preferred format is .mobi, while for devices running the iOS operating system, the .epub format is widely supported. Each of these formats has its own strengths and limitations: some are more suitable for pure text content, while others are optimised for transmitting graphics and illustrations. A key factor in selecting the appropriate format is the preference profile of the publisher's target audience – specifically, the types of devices and platforms they use and the software they have installed.

In the case of audiobooks intended for download, the most widely used formats are .mp3, the standard audio file format, and .m4b, which is specifically designed for audiobooks and supports bookmarks. The latter feature allows listeners to easily navigate between parts or chapters within an audio file. However, it should be noted that not all audio players or devices support the .m4b format, which may affect user accessibility. The selection of an e-book distribution model should

therefore be informed by a careful analysis of the target audience's preferences, the types of devices and software they use, and their patterns of engagement with book content. At present, the number of websites and applications offering e-book and audiobook reading and listening services is estimated in the hundreds, reflecting the dynamic growth and diversification of this sector.

A significant number of digital platforms provide access to user-generated content (UGC), including self-published works that are often not officially registered as books (i.e., lacking an ISBN or bibliographic metadata). These platforms enable aspiring authors to share their writing, and in some cases, such works attract a considerable readership. However, alongside legitimate UGC platforms, there also exists a vast number of websites offering pirated versions of books. The resources available to copyright holders are often insufficient to track the timely appearance of unauthorised copies, even for newly published titles. As a result, it becomes extremely challenging to monitor the spread of illegal copies online – especially given the sheer volume of content uploaded to the Internet each day.

In the current digital environment, where both UGC platforms and piracy websites operate simultaneously, a highly complex and paradoxical situation has emerged in the book market. This presents a significant challenge for publishers, authors, and rights holders, requiring the development of more effective strategies for protecting their intellectual property in the online sphere. On one hand, these digital platforms democratise literature by offering opportunities for emerging authors to gain visibility and for readers to access a broader range of content that may never reach them through traditional publishing channels. On the other hand, the absence of official registration – such as ISBNs – for self-published works complicates their discoverability, cataloguing, and recognition within the professional literary community.

Piracy has a profoundly negative impact on the economic position of authors and publishers, depriving them of legitimate remuneration and diminishing their motivation for creative endeavour. It represents a pressing issue that undermines the very foundations of creative activity. Inadequate compensation for the efforts of authors and publishers can result in decreased investment in new works, a reduced variety of published content, and, ultimately, the impoverishment of the cultural landscape. The creation of a book is often a labour-intensive and resource-demanding process involving not only the author, but also editors, proofreaders, designers, marketers, and other professionals. Piracy devalues this collective effort, posing a threat to the sustainability of the entire publishing ecosystem.

When comparing the book publishing sector – both traditional and digital – to other media industries, significant challenges arise. These include: ambiguity in terminology, particularly due to the conflation of content creation and distribution processes; blurring boundaries between content formats and distribution channels; the rise of new, dominant market players (such as Amazon, Apple, and Google), which are fundamentally reshaping entire industries; and the development of new platforms for accessing increasingly diverse and mobile content. Despite these challenges, the steady growth of the e-book sector is expected to continue in the coming years, creating a favourable environment for the further expansion of self-publishing. This trend offers authors greater opportunities for distributing and promoting their work, increasing their independence and market reach.

The e-book sector is projected to reach a value of \$32.01 billion by 2028, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.1%. The anticipated growth during this forecast

period is attributed to several key factors: the increasing use of mobile devices, the expansion of subscription-based reading models, the globalisation of book markets, and rising public awareness of digital reading opportunities. Together, these trends create a fertile environment for the continued development of the e-book market, presenting new opportunities for both traditional publishers and independent self-publishing authors. This is particularly significant for the latter, as the digital format provides a more accessible means of engaging with readers and removes several barriers associated with the printing and distribution of physical books.

Historically, the United States and the United Kingdom have held leading positions in the self-publishing industry, and most existing research and statistical data are focused primarily on the book markets of these countries. Comparative analysis across markets can involve a range of criteria, including the number of published titles, circulation figures, financial performance, and other key metrics. For instance, in Germany, according to Die Self-Publisher-Bibel, self-published works are estimated to account for up to 15% of total e-book sales revenue. However, the sector is also marked by ambiguous assessments and inconsistently defined criteria, making comprehensive analysis challenging. Moreover, a number of self-publishing (SP) services operate not only as platforms for independent authors but also as distributors of their own digital publications, further complicating classification and market evaluation.

It is not uncommon for the same e-books to be sold simultaneously across multiple digital platforms such as Amazon, Kobo, and Apple Books. However, information regarding sales is typically fragmented across these platforms and is not automatically consolidated into a unified data set. Consequently, sales data remain dispersed rather than centrally aggregated, hindering efforts to gain a comprehensive overview of market dynamics. This lack of standardised, organised data across countries poses significant challenges to conducting meaningful comparative analyses and forming a coherent understanding of global trends in the self-publishing sector. It also complicates the development and forecasting of this market segment under differing cultural and economic conditions. The result is a fragmented and often ambiguous picture of the global state of self-publishing – particularly outside the United States and the United Kingdom, where data collection and industry analysis are more robust.

Currently, the key players shaping the e-book market include: Walmart Inc., Amazon.com Inc., Apple Inc., Google LLC, Reliance Industries Limited, Tencent Holdings Limited, Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA, ViacomCBS Inc., Penguin Random House LLC, Pearson plc, Hachette Book Group (Lagardère SCA), Follett Corporation, HarperCollins Publishers LLC, John Wiley & Sons Inc., News Corporation, Barnes & Noble Inc., and Simon & Schuster Inc. These companies are actively investing in innovative digital solutions – such as e-bookshelves – to expand their customer bases, drive sales, and increase revenue. An e-bookshelf is a digital platform that allows users to store, organise, and access their e-book libraries conveniently in one place (Kim and Leung, 2021).

It can be concluded that over the past decade, fundamental changes have occurred in the methods of content creation and distribution. Even prior to the digital era, poststructuralist theory had already begun to critically re-evaluate traditional literary concepts such as authorship, the notion of the “work”, and reader perception. In the current context, the rise of self-publishing (SelfPub) represents a significant force reshaping the traditional publishing landscape. It not only intensifies competition posed by digital formats but also presents an existential challenge to the conventional publishing model. Self-publishing has enabled the rapid emergence of author-driven

and independent publishing platforms, many of which offer user-friendly interfaces that simplify the creation of finished content. These platforms lower the threshold for entry into the publishing world and significantly increase the volume of new publications.

Traditionally, the publication of books involves rigorous quality control at every stage of production, including professional editing, proofreading, and formatting. However, as the number of authors opting for self-publication continues to grow, and as technological tools become increasingly sophisticated, notable transformations are taking place across the entire publishing ecosystem. These changes affect not only fictional genres but also the academic publishing sector (Bavestock and Steinitz, 2013). The development of platforms that offer intuitive tools for self-publishing has been a key driver of this growth. Such tools have made the process of book creation accessible to virtually anyone with written content and the desire to share it, thereby greatly simplifying and democratising the publishing process.

The optimisation of technical aspects – including layout, design, and even distribution – has enabled authors to dedicate more time to the creative process, thereby avoiding the often lengthy and complex interactions traditionally required with publishing houses. The availability of pre-designed templates and user-friendly design tools has significantly accelerated and simplified the book creation process, making it more predictable and manageable. This development marks a new stage in the evolution of digital technologies, which now allow users – without programming expertise or professional publishing knowledge – to independently design publishing products such as books, magazines, and promotional materials. Using specialised platforms, authors can upload content (text, images) and modify it within the limitations defined by the system's functionalities.

Books can now be produced in a wide range of digital formats (e.g., ePub, PDF, Mobi, FB2) and distributed either through online retailers or via print-on-demand (POD) services, with physical copies produced in print shops and distribution centres as needed. The widespread adoption of e-book readers marked a turning point and served as a powerful catalyst for digital transformation, imbuing the publishing industry with the features of a true revolution. This shift has opened the door for self-publishing to emerge as a viable and increasingly popular alternative for authors (Hviid *et al.*, 2019). Prior to the advent of e-books and the widespread availability of the internet, publishing a book was a labour-intensive and highly regulated process, largely governed by publishing houses. Authors were required to navigate a lengthy series of steps, including securing a publishing deal, undergoing editorial revisions, preparing the manuscript for typesetting, overseeing the printing process, and coordinating the distribution of the print run.

At the same time, authors did not always retain full control over the publication process and often received only a relatively small share of the profits. The rise of e-books and independent publishing platforms has triggered a radical transformation in the publishing industry. This revolution has brought about several key changes. Firstly, entry barriers have been significantly lowered. Authors no longer require a traditional publishing contract for their work to reach readers. Instead, they can publish and distribute their books independently through platforms such as Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, Google Play Books, and Apple Books. Secondly, this development has led to increased creative and managerial control. Authors now maintain full autonomy over the entire publishing process, including decisions related to cover design, writing blurbs, setting prices, and developing promotional strategies.

Moreover, self-publishing platforms typically offer more favourable royalty structures, granting authors a significantly higher share of sales revenue compared to conventional publishing models. Another advantage lies in the capacity for direct interaction with readers. Through reviews, comments, and social media engagement, authors can establish a more personal and responsive relationship with their audience. In terms of logistics, the time-to-market for e-books is considerably shorter than the often protracted timeline associated with traditional publishing. E-books also offer a global reach, granting authors access to international readerships unrestricted by physical distribution networks. In addition, authors are afforded the freedom to experiment with a wide array of genres and formats, unencumbered by the commercial expectations typically imposed by traditional publishers.

In the late 1990s, the publishing landscape was reshaped by the consolidation of established publishing houses into large corporate conglomerates. As a result, these entities became increasingly risk-averse, often reluctant to support emerging or unknown authors whose works lacked immediate commercial promise. This environment prompted the rise of independent publishing initiatives, including self-publishers, author services, and print-on-demand (POD) publishing houses. While self-publishing represents one of the few remaining avenues for truly independent publishing, particularly amid ongoing industry consolidation, it presents new challenges. Chief among them is the inconsistent quality of editorial and production standards. The lack of a centralised system of quality control has led to significant variation in editorial, design, and production quality across self-published works.

Furthermore, authors engaged in mass-market publishing frequently find themselves at a disadvantage relative to commercial intermediaries such as publishers and distributors. The perceived inefficiency of self-publishing is largely structural, reflecting the entrenched relationships and operational practices of the broader publishing industry (Schroff, 2023). Independent authors typically have limited access to information and diminished bargaining power, and their publications often encounter structural commercial constraints. These constraints are rooted not only in deficits of industry knowledge and professional expertise but also in the distinctive characteristics of the self-publishing ecosystem.

For example, self-publishing authors often lack comprehensive knowledge of the book industry's intricacies. This includes unfamiliarity with distribution logistics, promotional strategy formulation, pricing mechanisms, and legal matters such as copyright compliance and licensing. In contrast to traditional publishing houses, which benefit from in-house professional teams and well-established industry networks, independent authors must independently acquire this expertise, often through trial and error, resulting in predictable missteps. Their negotiating power is similarly limited. When working with service providers such as editors, designers, printing companies, and distribution platforms, self-publishing authors are disadvantaged by an information asymmetry. Lacking the market influence and economies of scale enjoyed by traditional publishers, they often agree to less favourable terms, incur higher costs, or enter into inefficient agreements due to an incomplete understanding of service scopes or contractual obligations.

Additionally, access to expertise and resources remains limited for self-published authors. While traditional publishers typically employ experienced editors, proofreaders, designers, and marketing specialists, independent authors must either procure and finance these services on their own or assume these roles themselves, often to the detriment of the final product's overall

professionalism and quality. The commercial limitations of self-publishing manifest in multiple ways. Effective marketing and promotion of a self-published book demand substantial investments of time, effort, and capital. Independent authors are typically unable to match the marketing capabilities of established publishers, which benefit from large promotional budgets and relationships with media outlets, literary critics, and influential online commentators. Moreover, self-published books are frequently subject to bias and scepticism. Readers and critics may perceive them as inferior in quality or lacking professional standards, making it more difficult for such works to gain traction, earn reviews, or secure visibility in reputable literary circles.

Pricing is another complex issue for self-published authors. Determining an appropriate price point is fraught with risk: if the price is too high, it may deter readers; if too low, it may result in financial loss or a diminished perception of value. Furthermore, self-published authors often face restricted access to conventional distribution channels, particularly brick-and-mortar bookstores. Online platforms may be the primary venue for dissemination, which, despite their accessibility, do not offer the same market exposure as traditional networks. According to the English-language Wikipedia, self-publishing refers to the process whereby authors publish books or other media independently, without the involvement of traditional publishing houses. In the English-speaking context, such works, particularly in printed form, are often referred to as “privately printed”. Within this model, the author assumes complete responsibility for every aspect of the publication process. This includes the design of the cover, interior formatting, file preparation, pricing, distribution, marketing, and promotional strategies. Authors may either undertake these tasks themselves or outsource some or all of them to third-party service providers that specialise in supporting self-publishing efforts.

Contemporary self-publishing has transcended the traditional print format and now encompasses e-books, audiobooks, and multimedia-enriched editions. Authors also frequently self-publish brochures, advertising booklets, websites, and other types of digital content. In today’s digital economy, modern-day samizdat occupies a substantial share of the online content market, providing creators with direct access to their audiences and tools for autonomous content production. Several key factors have driven the proliferation of self-publishing across various media formats. Foremost among these is the technological accessibility offered by modern publishing tools. These platforms simplify and reduce the cost of creating, designing, and distributing digital content. A further motivating factor is the desire among authors and companies to retain control over the content creation and dissemination process, including decisions related to distribution channels and revenue models. Another significant feature is the opportunity for direct audience engagement, enabling real-time interaction between creators and consumers. This disintermediation facilitates immediate feedback, thereby strengthening community-building around the content. Lastly, the economic advantages of self-publishing are considerable. In many instances, the independent route proves more profitable, allowing authors and content creators to retain a greater share of the revenue generated from their work (Yessenbekova *et al.*, 2025).

In the historical context of post-Soviet countries, the term samizdat originally referred to the unofficial production and underground distribution of literary, religious, and journalistic texts in the USSR, intended to bypass state censorship. Rendered into Latin script, samizdat entered the European lexicon to denote unauthorised or dissident literature in states governed by authoritarian regimes. With the advent of the Internet, which significantly accelerated literary activity in

online spaces, the term samizdat evolved to encompass a wider range of independently published works, appearing on literary portals, personal websites, fan fiction platforms, blogs, and social media channels. As a result, the meaning of samizdat has expanded to include self-published texts of various genres, distributed online without institutional oversight or editorial gatekeeping. In Kazakhstan, as in many countries of the former Soviet Union, self-published literature has a long-standing tradition, reflecting both cultural heritage and modern digital innovation.

During the Soviet era, copies of texts were produced by authors or readers through a variety of means, ranging from handwriting and typewriting to photographic reproduction and photocopying, after which the materials were often bound manually. This spontaneous and decentralised practice of circumventing censorship (particularly in the later Soviet period as an expression of dissidence) carried significant personal risk, as possession of prohibited materials could result in severe punishment, including imprisonment. In addition to banned works, samizdat also included publications that were not formally prohibited or whose bans had already been lifted but which remained inaccessible to the general public due to extremely limited official print runs. This lack of availability made samizdat an essential means of circulation for important literary, religious, and political texts. It is worth noting that the manual reproduction of censored or marginalised works is a phenomenon observed across various cultures and historical periods.

Although modern technologies have dramatically simplified and reduced the costs of self-publishing, a review of the historical context reveals that the core concept of self-publication is not entirely new. A clear historical parallel exists in the practice, entirely legal, whereby an author would publish a book at their expense, effectively bypassing traditional publishers. In the English-speaking world, this is often referred to as vanity publishing, a term that reflects some of the social perceptions attached to the practice. In such cases, the author provides financial backing to a publishing house to see their work in print. However, the author's influence over key aspects, such as print run size, distribution channels, and marketing, tends to be limited. While the publisher may offer related services (such as proofreading, layout design, and printing), its primary source of income frequently derives from the fees paid by the author, rather than the sale of the published copies.

The author will typically receive a portion of the print run, while the remaining tasks, particularly sales and promotion, are largely the responsibility of the publishing house. However, the publisher may not be highly motivated to pursue dynamic sales, as payment has already been received from the author. In contrast to publishing intermediaries, self-publishing grants the author full control over the entire book production process. The author personally oversees all stages, including editing, design, layout, printing, distribution, and marketing. They either cover all related expenses or hire professionals to assist, while retaining exclusive rights to their work and the potential for maximum profit from sales. The author independently determines the print run, selects sales channels, and devises the marketing strategy.

Thus, vanity publishing may be understood as a hybrid format, situated between traditional publishing, in which the publisher assumes full financial risk and editorial control, and the author receives royalties, and self-publishing, where the author bears all costs and manages the entire process independently. It is important to note that the term vanity publishing often carries negative connotations. This is largely due to the practices of some such publishers, who may offer low-quality services, impose inflated fees, and fail to provide meaningful marketing or distribution support.

For this reason, authors considering this route should carefully evaluate the terms of cooperation and thoroughly research the reputation of the publishing house before proceeding with publication.

Another aspect of amateur book publishing concerns the production of textbooks by students. This practice may arise from a variety of motives and exhibits several distinctive features. Firstly, it may serve as a response to the unavailability or inadequacy of existing textbooks. Available teaching materials may be outdated, prohibitively expensive, or misaligned with the specific content or pedagogical approach of a given course. In such cases, proactive students may collaborate to develop more relevant, accessible, and cost-effective resources for themselves and their peers. Secondly, this form of publishing may be driven by a desire to share a personal perspective or to present an unconventional method of engaging with the subject matter.

Students who have developed a deep understanding of a topic may create their own methodologies, study guides, or compilations of exercises, believing these resources will benefit their classmates. Thirdly, the production of student-authored textbooks may be integrated into the educational process itself, particularly as part of project-based learning. Faculty members may encourage students to compile their own teaching materials as a means of deepening subject comprehension, enhancing critical thinking, and improving their ability to organise and structure information. However, it is important to note that student-authored textbooks are typically produced in small print runs, often circulating only within the confines of a specific course or institution. Moreover, the quality of these materials can vary significantly, depending on the qualifications, academic maturity, and pedagogical experience of the student authors.

Nevertheless, the very emergence of student-authored textbooks reflects the proactivity and initiative of the student community, as well as the broader potential of amateur book publishing to address niche educational needs. In certain cases, such textbooks may even gain recognition and dissemination beyond their original academic environment. From this perspective, attention should be drawn to the rise of global self-publishing platforms associated with academic book publishing, such as LAP (Lambert Academic Publishing). The monetisation model of these platforms is typically based not only on the commercial sale of digital and printed books but, more significantly, on print-on-demand services, which are frequently initiated and financed by the authors themselves. It is important to understand the distinctive nature of academic publishing, where peer review serves as a crucial quality control mechanism.

Peer review is a cornerstone of the contemporary scientific communication system, underpinning citation indices, journal rankings, and impact factors. Of particular interest is the fact that LAP and similar platforms offer the opportunity to publish a wide range of academic works, including monographs, dissertations, research projects, and even undergraduate theses. The early 2000s saw the emergence of numerous global and regional platforms offering independent publishing opportunities for authors and small publishers. These include: Lulu (established in 2002), Blurb Inc. (2005), Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing (2007), Amazon CreateSpace (2007), Smashwords (2008), and XinXii, a European platform (2008), among others. It is important to emphasise that these platforms vary significantly in their terms of service, user interfaces, offered features, and revenue models. Some prioritise ease of access and low barriers to entry, while others focus on supporting professional-grade publishing with expanded distribution options.

Some, like KDP and Lulu, are comprehensive tools, offering formatting, uploading, pricing, and sales monitoring. Others, like Smashwords, focus primarily on distribution. Having your own

store, like KDP's Kindle Store, gives authors a direct path to millions of potential readers. At the same time, this approach can impose certain restrictions on the ability to distribute through other sales channels. With interactive (multimedia) books, things are much more complicated: it is worth referring to the Apple iBooks Author application, used to create similar publications in the iBooks format, or to Lulu Press, Inc., a company based in the USA.

Its line of business is print-on-demand and digital book publishing. Initially, Lulu Press, Inc. printed hardback and jacketed books, and since 2009, it has switched to e-books. Lulu has published approximately two million titles from authors around the world. With its own Lulu Bookstore, books can also be distributed through Amazon and Apple's iBookstore. Authors receive 80% royalties from sales of printed books and 90% from e-books. The copyright for works uploaded and distributed through Lulu.com remains with the author. The following services are available free of charge on Lulu (after registration):

- downloading a manual (guide for eBook authors) on creating e-books;
- bringing a manuscript or text document into compliance with grammar rules;
- converting to electronic format.

However, to achieve a professional level – such as creating a cover, developing a design (layout), and receiving individual consultation – a fee is required. Additionally, a guide to distributing e-books is offered, outlining the nuances of obtaining an ISBN and the file requirements, taking into account various forms of metadata. In general, the example of Lulu demonstrates that the emergence of such platforms in the early 2000s served as a catalyst for the explosive growth of samizdat. This contributed to the democratisation of book publishing, granting authors unprecedented freedom. Platforms do not remain static; they continuously evolve, adapting to changing needs – whether of writers or readers – while maintaining their role as a significant part of the contemporary publishing landscape.

Making the most of the Internet as the primary channel for access to information is not merely a matter of technological adaptability; it is also a key strategic imperative for all stakeholders involved in the publishing process. In addressing the major challenges currently faced by online publishers, it is essential to establish a constructive platform that responds not only to immediate tactical demands but also to long-term strategies aimed at product development and market relevance.

To this end, it is important to assess the areas influenced by Internet accessibility in comparison to those that remain unaffected. The success of digital publishing depends on the ability of publishers to monitor and analyse user behaviour online, to remain open to emerging opportunities, and to adapt their publications accordingly – delivering value to both the research community and libraries by making use of the Internet's potential as effectively as possible, particularly in its role as the primary conduit for access to scholarly information (Waltham, 2003). In general, it may be concluded that the phenomenon of self-publishing, which stimulates the creative potential of the broader public, has – despite its contradictions – become a firmly embedded element within the structure of digital book publishing. Nonetheless, several issues remain unresolved, particularly concerning the quality of content, the promotional challenges faced by individual authors in an increasingly competitive self-publishing environment, and the potential implications for traditional publishing models.

However, overall, samizdat has demonstrated a significant democratising effect in the book industry, providing authors with greater control over their work and its distribution. This trend is

likely to continue to develop and evolve in the future. In this context, self-publishing platforms – which enable authors and publishers to post their works independently – raise two important questions. On the one hand, they present effective methods of cultural navigation amid the growing flow of information and widespread information overload. On the other hand, they prompt a rethinking of the role and nature of publishing, as well as the cultural significance of book publishing as an institution.

Traditional publishing houses have historically served as crucial intermediaries between authors and readers. However, with the advent of the digital era and the rise of electronic samizdat, traditional publishers are undergoing a period of transformation. Authors now enjoy greater freedom to self-publish and to form direct relationships with their readership. Nevertheless, traditional publishers continue to play an important role, bringing experience, resources, and expertise across all stages of the publishing process. Their key functions include (Fig. 10).

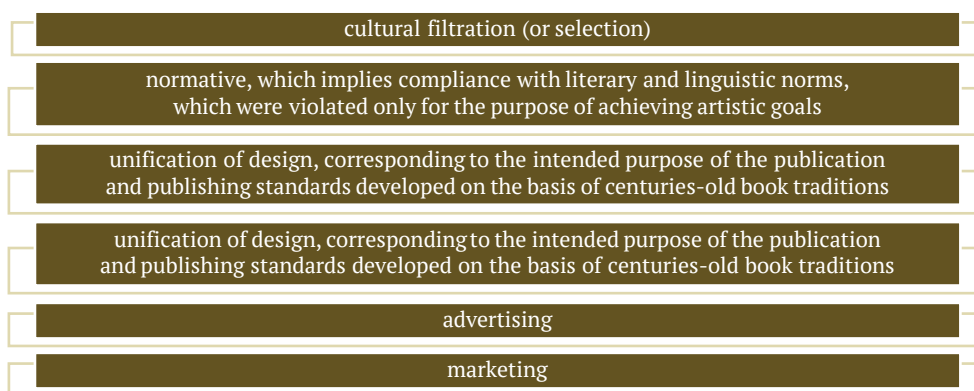


Figure 10. Main functions of traditional publishing houses

It is safe to say that contemporary book design is a mosaic, where a diverse array of design approaches converge – an outcome of the fusion of aesthetic and technical innovation created by designers across the globe. The most striking design solutions have often emerged from intense debates between traditionalists and reformers, in moments where diametrically opposed styles have collided. This underscores the critical importance of how artists, printers, and publishers approach the question of continuity in classical design traditions. Books are characterised by a specific set of identifying features, most commonly expressed through their design. These include: textual elements such as the author's name, title, and annotation; symbolic elements such as the typographic mark or series symbol; and figurative elements such as the cover illustration.

Together, these features constitute a system of social representation for the work. Their function is to ensure that the publication has favourable conditions for effective participation in the broader communication process. However, certain participants in this process – such as publishers or designers – may misinterpret or overemphasise the advertising component of the book, which can result in a breakdown of communication between the text and its intended audience. Moreover, in Kazakhstan, there is an observable trend towards a decline in the growth dynamics of the advertising services market, particularly in relation to outdoor advertising and radio. This situation

highlights the pressing need for traditional media to embrace the digital environment, which offers broader opportunities for advertisers and enables the establishment of direct engagement with target audiences (Sadykova and Sagimbekova, 2019).

Currently, the leading trend in book advertising in the Republic of Kazakhstan is the active development of advertising design. The cover, cover illustrations, annotation, author's name, and book title are particularly intensively utilised. It can be assumed that this trend reflects global developments in marketing, where visual content plays a central role in attracting the attention of potential buyers. In the context of a high volume of available literature, it is often the colourful and informative design that becomes the decisive factor influencing a buyer's decision. A successful design is not merely an attractive visual element; it also serves as an effective promotional tool.

It should be noted that the development of book presentation formats is currently being undertaken by both small publishing houses, which lack significant financial resources for large-scale advertising campaigns, and by large publishing firms seeking to monopolise the market. The latter often have catalogues too extensive to allow for individual promotional strategies for each title. Book advertising serves two primary purposes. The first is to stimulate sales and promote associated goods and services, a practice often referred to as product placement, which generates additional revenue for the publisher. The second aim is to promote the book itself, typically realised through copywriting, which can significantly expand the readership of a particular title (Vernyhora, 2019).

The advertising opportunities of book design in this context are considerable, and at the same time do not require significant financial investment. Whether in a situation of increased book supply, as is the case for large publishing houses, or under constraints on the operational freedom of smaller publishers, there is a growing demand for concise, "generalising" forms of presenting literary works to the public – forms capable of functioning as marketing reference points. Today, with minimal financial input, publishing houses must strive to achieve maximum effect and audience reach. In this regard, particular emphasis is placed on the promotional potential of book design. A publisher's public image must be cultivated, as consumers require marketing reference points – a faceless publishing house cannot fulfil this need. A strong and recognisable publisher image can serve as an umbrella advertisement for all the titles it releases.

The same principle applies to the image of the author. If this image is effectively shaped and highlighted, the author's persona itself becomes a powerful promotional tool for all of their works – even when such works have been released in a samizdat format. Today, the book publishing industry actively engages with all of these forms of presentation. Considering the current state of the book market, both in Kazakhstan and internationally, one potential development path in this sector can be identified. It is predicted that continued monopolisation of the book market, alongside an ever-expanding range of publications, may result in a decline in the relevance of the modern form of the book.

In the context of intense competition, which is characteristic of the contemporary European book publishing industry, there is a growing demand for the active personalisation of books. It may be assumed that European readers are increasingly guided by personal preferences when selecting books, giving attention to works that align with their specific interests and tastes. As a result, publishers are required to invest greater effort in the positioning of each title, ensuring a distinctive design, preparing a detailed annotation, and developing effective marketing strategies to communicate the value of the publication to its intended audience. In contrast, in the United

States, where book consumption is at a high level, the issue of individualisation is less pronounced, and there appears to be no strong, conscious motivation to read among a significant portion of the reading public.

This has led to the rise of the bestseller phenomenon, whereby the consumer is in a sense compelled to read, and the need for personal selection is diminished. A similar role is played by the increasingly popular book clubs, in which democratically elected leadership selects titles based on shared interests, thereby bypassing the reader's individual choice. It should be emphasised that, despite the significant demand and popularity of printed books in the United States, there remains a substantial group of readers who are committed to personal preferences and independent literary choices. The diversity of publishing houses, creative trends, and authors represented in the American book market reflects the continued existence of varied and nuanced reading interests.

If such trends become more widespread and intensify, the highly individual features of books may lose their relevance, giving way to a total standardisation of both book design and content. This could result in serial design and identical bestsellers, as monopolistic publishing houses, operating on a vast scale, may be unable to sustain the trend towards individualisation. Indeed, standardisation in both book design and information presentation is already becoming evident. On the one hand, the implementation of standards can be beneficial – for instance, by reducing production costs, simplifying the publishing process, and improving readability for the audience, particularly in the context of book series.

On the other hand, an excessive reliance on standardisation presents certain risks. Books may lose their distinctiveness, become less appealing to buyers, and restrict the creative scope of artists and designers. The publishing industry thus finds itself in a complex position, having to navigate between the efficiency-driven unification of processes and the need to remain competitive. As a result, it becomes increasingly important to produce publications that stand out for their uniqueness and visual appeal. It can be assumed that a gradual standardisation of the basic structural elements of books is currently underway. Simultaneously, space is being created for the creative execution of key features that shape the identity of a publication – whether in the form of cover illustrations, overall visual concept, or the design philosophy underpinning the final product.

With the worsening of disruptions in the “author-publisher-reader” system, a new publishing paradigm is likely to gain increasing popularity – namely, literature published directly on the Internet. A general shift in orientation among a new generation of authors towards this form of presenting their work to the public appears increasingly probable. From a technical perspective, the evolution of the book has reached a point where its form must align with, or at least adapt to, the latest advancements in technological and computing fields. Leading companies in the United States, Japan, and Europe are actively engaged in the development and refinement of a new type of publication – the electronic book (e-book). Numerous websites now offer services through which, for a modest fee, users can order virtually any book in digital format and download it for use on a wide range of devices.

Such an electronic book is capable of storing up to ten different titles in its memory, enabling fast searches, handling quotations, connecting directly to the Internet, and allowing for edits. These innovations are not limited to consumer benefits – they also simplify publishing processes from an economic perspective. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the role of electronic samizdat in the contemporary literary environment is both significant and multifaceted, demonstrating

steady growth. This phenomenon has made substantial contributions to the transformation of the publishing landscape (Moonkum *et al.*, 2025). First, it has facilitated the democratisation of the book publishing business. Electronic samizdat enables authors to publish their works independently, bypassing traditional publishing houses. This process opens access to the literary sphere for new authors, supports genres with limited commercial appeal, and encourages experimental narrative styles that may otherwise remain unpublished due to market constraints. Furthermore, authors retain full control over their creations, from content and visual presentation to pricing and marketing strategies, thereby preserving the integrity of their creative vision. Another key advantage lies in the speed of publication, as works can be uploaded to digital platforms and made available to readers within days or weeks, a significant acceleration compared to traditional publishing timelines.

Secondly, electronic samizdat contributes to the expansion of readership. E-books are globally accessible wherever Internet connectivity exists, eliminating geographical barriers and thereby significantly enlarging potential audiences. Moreover, due to the absence of printing, storage, and distribution costs, e-books are typically more affordable than printed editions, appealing to price-sensitive readers. The convenience of instantaneous purchase and storage on digital devices further enhances their popularity, allowing users to build extensive libraries without physical space limitations. In addition, self-publishing platforms tend to offer a wider array of literary works, including niche genres and texts by independent authors, which may be absent from conventional bookstores. Importantly, digital formats often include features that accommodate readers with visual impairments or learning disabilities, such as adjustable fonts and text-to-speech functions, thereby promoting inclusivity. Online platforms also nurture virtual communities centred around specific authors or genres, fostering reader engagement and facilitating organic, peer-driven promotion.

A third contribution is the stimulation of innovation and diversity within literature. Authors can freely explore unconventional and highly specialised genres through electronic publishing, which traditional publishing often overlooks. Additionally, digital formats support experimentation with form and interactivity, allowing the incorporation of multimedia, hyperlinks, and reader-responsive elements that expand narrative possibilities. The agility of samizdat authors to respond quickly to current events and social developments ensures the timely dissemination of culturally relevant content.

Finally, electronic samizdat has had a discernible impact on traditional publishing. Established publishing houses have begun to scout for successful self-published authors, recognising the market value of those with pre-existing readerships. This trend highlights the integration of samizdat as a form of talent incubation within the broader industry. Simultaneously, the growing popularity of self-publishing exerts competitive pressure on traditional publishers, compelling them to adopt more flexible business models and offer more attractive terms to authors. In response, hybrid publishing arrangements have emerged, blending the advantages of both traditional and self-publishing frameworks, and presenting diverse options for content production and dissemination.

These fundamental factors underscore the significant and ever-growing importance of electronic self-publishing in today's literary landscape, influencing not only authors and readers but also the entire publishing system. SelfPub offers authors extensive opportunities to realise their creative potential and directly engage with readers. However, success in this domain largely depends on the author's readiness to assume responsibility for every stage of the book's development and promotion, as well as their willingness to invest both time and financial resources to ensure

high quality. A careful assessment of the advantages and disadvantages will assist the author in making an informed decision regarding the most appropriate publishing route (Table 4).

Table 4. Main advantages and disadvantages of SelfPub

Advantages	Disadvantages
Complete control: The author retains full authority over all aspects of the book's creation, including content, title, cover design, formatting, and pricing. This ensures that the author's vision is realised without being constrained by traditional publishing standards.	Lack of professional support: The author is entirely responsible for all aspects of book creation, from editing and proofreading to cover design and layout. The absence of an experienced editorial team may result in a reduction in the quality of the final product.
Efficiency and flexibility: The publishing process is significantly quicker than with a traditional publisher. Authors can revise their work at any time and immediately release updated versions or make corrections to those already published.	Financial considerations: While publishing is often free of charge, producing a high-quality book typically requires financial investment. The author may need to pay for the services of editors, proofreaders, designers, and potentially marketing professionals.
Higher royalties: Self-published authors typically receive a larger share of the revenue compared to those working with traditional publishers. Self-publishing platforms often offer more favourable terms.	Challenges in promotion and marketing: The author bears sole responsibility for promoting the book. In a highly competitive market, this can be a demanding task requiring time, knowledge, and marketing expertise.
Direct communication with readers: Authors have the opportunity to interact directly with their audience through platforms, social media, and newsletters, allowing for feedback and the development of long-term reader relationships.	Reader perceptions: Some readers may be sceptical of self-published books, assuming they have not undergone the same rigorous vetting and professional editing processes as traditionally published works.
Accessibility for all: Self-publishing platforms are open to all authors, regardless of their popularity or the presence of a literary agent. This offers an alternative route to publication for those rejected by traditional publishers.	Technical skills required: Self-publishing necessitates a degree of technical competence. Authors must either learn to use publishing tools and design software or engage professional assistance.
Variety of formats: Most platforms support publication in multiple formats, including eBooks, print-on-demand, and, in some cases, audiobooks.	Limited distribution channels: Although online platforms provide wide access, gaining placement in traditional bookshops is more challenging. Distribution opportunities are generally more restricted compared to traditional publishing routes.

3.3 Design features of interactive publications

The challenge of visualising, storing, and transmitting information arose long before the invention of writing. It is possible to trace how methods of communication evolved throughout history – from cave paintings and object-based writing systems to modern phonetic writing and the use of paper. Over time, information carriers, modes of transmission, and data perception have undergone significant changes, particularly during periods marked by radical technological shifts. These shifts were often accompanied by transformations in writing practices. The transition to clay tablets, for instance, facilitated the development of cuneiform; subsequent pivotal moments included the shift from scrolls to codices (enabled by the invention of paper) and the emergence and spread of printing technologies (Meletis, 2020).

As a product of human culture, writing changed and developed – initially shaped largely by natural conditions – until the Renaissance period. Writing techniques evolved in parallel with

advancements in materials and tools. It is impossible to isolate a single determining factor in the development of writing; rather, a combination of influences operated in mutual interaction. This process unfolded organically over thousands of years, and it was only with the invention of printing that technical progress began to intervene more directly. In the evolution of writing, two parallel processes can be consistently observed. The first is the simplification and schematisation of written characters, making them easier to memorise and reproduce. The second is the evolution of techniques and media, shaped by the available tools, materials, and contextual writing conditions.

Many of the signs and media we take for granted today – such as the modern alphabet and paper – are the products of centuries of refinement and selection, developed by countless individuals across different eras using a wide array of writing instruments. Consequently, we must acknowledge the gradual separation of originally unified forms of information into distinct textual and graphic components. Today, text remains the primary medium for conveying and preserving data in a stable format. The relationship between text and graphic information, as we now understand it, was largely codified through printed books produced in codex format (Kornicki, 2025). These early printed works also established the foundational principles and conventions governing the interaction between text and images.

The spatial organization and typography of the codex laid the foundation for the vast majority of printed publications based on the book model until the mid-nineteenth century. Subsequent developments in print media were driven more by economic considerations than technological ones: the more cost-effective and therefore more profitable model of serial publications led to the emergence of periodicals, which fully met society's growing demand for timely information. The term publishing models encompasses a wide range of strategies used in scholarly publishing. These models continue to evolve in response to technological advancements, shifts in research funding mechanisms, and the rise of the open access movement.

Current models include traditional subscription-based approaches, contemporary open access systems – where authors cover publication costs – and self-archiving practices, whereby researchers deposit their work in open access repositories (Harmelink *et al.*, 2024). Today, a similarly transformative moment – comparable in significance to the invention of printing – is marked by the development of computer technologies and global networks. As a result, the total volume of information now doubles approximately every 18 to 24 months. This “digital boom” offers unprecedented opportunities for humanity, yet it also introduces complex societal challenges, including issues of data reliability, the digital divide, and cybersecurity.

There is a rapid virtualisation of the information environment – that is, a transition of all means of communication and information carriers to a digital format. Almost any text or graphic information is now initially produced, transmitted, and stored electronically. This ensures high mobility and flexibility in data handling, but at the same time raises concerns about information ecology – that is, a responsible and reasonable approach to information production (Moulaison and Million, 2015). In examining modern printed publications, it becomes evident that they are gradually losing their audience, which is shifting into the realm of the global Internet. This trend presents significant challenges for publishers of print media, as their relevance and influence in the information space undergo major transformations.

To remain appealing to readers, print publications must restructure, enhance their digital resources, explore new methods of engaging with their audience, and perhaps even reconsider the

role of the printed word in today's information-driven world. As information continues to migrate into the virtual environment, a new type of publication is emerging – one that is, on the one hand, a full-fledged successor to traditional print media, and on the other hand, designed and operated according to principles unique to the digital space. Understanding and managing these principles, as well as mastering the new environment, is a key task for most publishing houses, many of which are actively experimenting with electronic formats in various ways (Verhoef *et al.*, 2021). The successful implementation of a publishing project requires a structured sequence of interrelated stages, spanning from the conceptualisation of the publication to post-publication dissemination and analysis. These stages include:

1. Strategic planning and conceptual development: the process begins with the identification of a societal, academic or market need for publication. This is followed by the formulation of a coherent concept that defines the aims, scope and thematic orientation of the future edition. At this stage, the appropriate format (print, electronic or hybrid) is also determined, along with the composition of the editorial board and analysis of the intended target audience.

2. Project structuring and resource allocation: after conceptual clarity is achieved, a detailed publication plan is developed. This includes defining the content structure, establishing a production timeline and identifying the necessary human, technical and financial resources. Authors are either commissioned or manuscripts are solicited through open calls or targeted invitations. Contracts are formalised with contributors at this stage.

3. Editorial and technical preparation: submitted manuscripts undergo peer review and editorial evaluation, followed by copy editing and language revision. Typesetters and layout designers structure the visual appearance of the publication. Graphic designers contribute to the visual identity, including cover design, typography and illustrative materials. Proofreading and quality control checks ensure textual and typographic accuracy before final approval.

4. Production and publication: once approved, materials are sent to print, published electronically or both, depending on the chosen format. Simultaneously, a marketing strategy is activated, including advertising, promotional outreach and digital presence enhancement. The physical and digital distribution of the publication to libraries, bookstores and online platforms completes this stage.

5. Post-publication engagement and feedback integration: following dissemination, publishers engage with readership communities, collect evaluative feedback and monitor the reception and impact of the publication. Insights from this stage inform future publishing cycles and contribute to iterative improvement of both editorial policy and production workflow.

When discussing the publication of e-books, it is important to mention a key feature of the virtual space – interactivity, which enables interaction between the reader and the content. In certain contexts (such as through online platforms or digital applications), the virtual space is inherently interactive, justifying the term “interactive environment”. However, the potential of interactivity is underutilized in modern electronic publications. Most continue to mimic their physical counterparts, even in digital form, which can create a disconnect rather than enhance the reading experience. The creation of truly interactive electronic publications requires a fundamentally different approach to design, content, and technical implementation.

The main focus should be on leveraging the advantages of the digital space to create a completely new user experience – one that could not be realised in traditional printed form. This implies an evolution from basic digitisation of text and graphic materials to the development of a

dynamic, adaptive, and engaging environment for reader interaction. As technological progress continues and user expectations increase, it is likely that we will see a growing number of genuinely interactive electronic publications that fully harness the potential of the virtual environment.

The most significant changes at the current stage are occurring within the realm of periodicals. These are of particular interest as design objects because they combine visual and textual information with structural flexibility – unlike books, where narrative linearity is typically maintained. Digital transformation unfolds across three key stages: digitisation, digitalisation, and, ultimately, digital transformation (Dong and Verhoef, 2024). In light of this, it is especially important at present to analyse the possibilities of transferring printed publications into digital formats within the broader context of information environment virtualisation. Equally crucial is the development of design approaches for formatting publications – particularly periodicals – within an interactive environment, taking into account both its unique characteristics and the design expertise accumulated over more than 500 years of printing and publishing history.

Issues surrounding data visualisation and interaction within virtual space have been under discussion in academic circles since the mid-1980s. These early studies laid the groundwork for understanding the unique characteristics of virtual environments and computer screens as tools for information visualisation. Today, the exploration of virtual space and advanced technologies – particularly in relation to the evolving landscape of printed publications – continues to attract growing interest from both researchers and practising designers. For instance, Scott Dadich, former art director of the leading design and technology magazine *Wired*, was one of the pioneers to engage seriously with the challenges of electronic publishing. The work of Bret Victor is also noteworthy; a former interface designer at Apple, he has played a key role in developing the concept of “natural interfaces”, as evidenced by a series of influential articles and essays.

Interest in the future of virtual reality as a medium for the development of printed content is well founded. In a context where traditional formats are experiencing a decline in readership, the search for new approaches to content presentation is of critical importance. Collaboration between virtual environment researchers and technology experts, on the one hand, and practising designers skilled in creating intuitive and appealing interfaces, on the other, is becoming increasingly vital. The synthesis of these domains holds the potential to generate innovative solutions for adapting printed publications to the digital age.

Conclusion

The decoration of books in Europe has an incredibly rich and multifaceted history, reflecting the evolution of artistic movements, technical breakthroughs, and prevailing cultural trends. When examined in historical retrospect, several fundamental stages and characteristics can be identified.

The Middle Ages, spanning approximately from the 5th to the 15th centuries, were marked by the creation of manuscripts, where each book was painstakingly copied by hand. Artistic decoration was an essential part of this process and often included illuminated manuscripts adorned with miniatures, ornamental initials, borders, and intricate decorative motifs. The use of precious materials such as gold and silver leaf was frequent to create shimmering decorative elements. The majority of illuminated manuscripts were of a religious nature, including Bibles and liturgical books, although secular works such as chivalric romances also appeared. Distinctive illumination styles developed in different parts of Europe, including Irish, Carolingian, Ottonian, Romanesque, and Gothic traditions.

The Renaissance, from approximately the 14th to the 16th centuries, saw the invention of printing, a revolutionary development that transformed the production and accessibility of books, significantly influencing their visual design. The rise of woodcut and copper engraving techniques enabled the reproduction of illustrations, and humanistic influences brought secular themes, classical motifs, and more realistic images into book design. Italian artists, printers, and typographers set the tone in book design, emphasising harmony, proportion, and the elegance of fonts and illustrations.

During the Baroque and Enlightenment eras, from the 17th to the 18th centuries, copper engraving reached its peak, enabling the creation of richly detailed and elaborate illustrations. This period saw the emergence of professional book illustrators who specialised in producing imagery for books and periodicals. The range of illustrated genres expanded to include not only religious texts and scientific treatises but also literary works, almanacks, and encyclopaedias. The Baroque period favoured dynamic compositions and lavish decoration, while the Enlightenment leaned towards a more restrained and orderly visual language.

The Age of Romanticism and Realism in the 19th century brought technical advances in printing, making illustrated books more affordable and quicker to produce. This period saw a growing demand for illustrated works, with numerous novels, children's books, and periodicals featuring illustrations by well-known artists. Diverse artistic trends, including Romantic and fantastical imagery alongside realistic depictions of everyday life, emerged. The Arts and Crafts movement, which championed the revival of craftsmanship and high-quality book design, drew inspiration from mediaeval traditions.

The 20th century and modern times have seen the evolution of printing and photography, with photography becoming a standard element of book design and the range of printing and binding techniques expanding. Book design reflected changing artistic trends, from Art Nouveau and the avant-garde to postmodernism. The rise of the book cover as a marketing tool made covers crucial in attracting potential readers, and typographic experimentation gained importance in defining a book's aesthetic. The impact of digitalisation introduced interactivity and new challenges for visual presentation on screens.

Today's European book design is an eclectic fusion of tradition and innovation. Publishers and graphic designers boldly experiment with materials, printing techniques, imagery, and typography. The aim is not only to create a visually appealing cover but also to enhance the emotional and aesthetic experience of reading. It is equally important to consider the cultural nuances and preferences of readers across different European countries.

The European heritage in book design has become the foundation of modern book aesthetics. This influence is evident in several key areas. The paramount importance of typography, where the selection of font, its size, style, and layout continues to be regarded as one of the most critical factors in ensuring ease of reading and shaping the overall impression of the text, is a primary example. Functionality in design is another crucial aspect, where contemporary book design prioritises the balance between aesthetic appeal and practicality, ensuring the book is not only beautiful but also comfortable to read and easy to handle. The role of the cover as a powerful marketing tool designed to attract potential readers and communicate the essence of the work is also significant. The use of images and graphics, where illustrations and visual elements are widely employed to complement the text and evoke a specific atmosphere or mood, is another key area. Additionally, a variety of formats and bindings are offered in modern book publishing, from traditional hardback covers to paperbacks and digital editions. Contemporary designers often draw inspiration from historical styles and classical traditions, reinterpreting them in a manner that resonates with today's audience. Thus, although the European roots of book design have evolved significantly from illuminated manuscripts to interactive digital publications, they still hold an influential place in how books are created and perceived today. These traditions established fundamental principles of book design that remain highly relevant in the contemporary publishing landscape.

The external design of a book plays a pivotal role in attracting the attention of a prospective reader and forming their initial perception of the work. Its key elements include the cover, binding, dust cover, endpapers, headband, and bookmark. The cover is the central element, containing the title of the book, the author's name, the publisher's logo, and often an illustration or graphic element that corresponds to the genre and theme of the work. The design should be eye-catching, memorable, and convey the atmosphere of the book. The back of the cover traditionally includes an annotation, reviews, information about the author, a barcode, and the retail price of the publication. Flaps may contain additional information about the author, the work itself, and the book series, as well as quotes or graphic illustrations. The spine features key information such as the title, author's name, and publisher's logo, and its visual design is important for easy identification when the book is shelved.

The binding ensures long-term durability and can be made from various materials such as board, fabric, or leather, and can include embossing, foil stamping, or blind debossing. It is often accompanied by a dust jacket, which is a removable outer layer with a more visually striking design than the main binding, intended to protect the book from damage and often includes additional information on the inner flaps. Endpapers are thick sheets that connect the book block to the cover, made of heavier paper, and may be plain, coloured, or decorated. Their purpose is both functional and aesthetic. The headband is a small ribbon fixed to the top and bottom of the spine, offering additional reinforcement beyond decorative appeal. The bookmark is a thin ribbon sewn into the spine for convenient page marking. The principles of exterior design include attractiveness, where

the visual design should generate interest and align with the preferences of the target readership. Informativeness is crucial, as the cover and other exterior elements should communicate essential information about the book, including its genre, author, and content. Content relevance ensures that the design accurately reflects the book's theme and tone. Brand recognition is essential for publishing houses and book series, where a consistent and recognisable visual style is important. Usability ensures that the cover and binding provide both durability and ease of use. The internal design of a book plays a crucial role in ensuring comfortable reading and easy comprehension of the text. Its elements include typeface, type area, margins, page numbers, running headers and footers, illustrations, tables and lists, footnotes and comments, and layout. The typeface must be highly legible and appropriate for the genre and length of the work, with key considerations including font size, style, line spacing, and optimal line length for reading ease. Heading and subheading styles may differ from the main text font, using alternative typefaces, larger sizes, or other distinguishing methods to structure content and improve clarity. Auxiliary fonts may be used for quotations, footnotes, marginal notes, running headers and footers, and other supplementary content, helping to visually distinguish different levels of information.

The type area refers to the width and height of the text field on a page, determining how much text fits onto each page and having a direct impact on readability. Margins are the blank areas surrounding the text block, contributing to visual balance and ease of reading, and can be used by the reader for annotations. Page numbers are essential for navigation within the book and may be placed at the top or bottom of the page, centred or aligned to the left or right margins. Running headers and footers are consistent textual elements that usually appear at the top of each page, including the book title, chapter title, or author's name, aiding orientation and location within the text. Illustrations may be embedded within the body of the text, positioned on dedicated pages, or used across two-page spreads and must be high-resolution, clearly rendered, and thematically consistent with the content and tone of the book. Captions, when necessary, should provide relevant explanations or contextualisation of the illustrations. Tables and lists should be presented in a clear, structured, and easily readable format, using proper typefaces, spacing, indentation, and alignment to aid comprehension and visual clarity. Footnotes and comments are placed either at the bottom of the page or at the end of a chapter or the entire work, set in a smaller font to distinguish them from the main text, providing clarifications, references, or supplementary information without disrupting the flow of reading.

The layout refers to the overall composition of textual and graphic elements on a page, ensuring visual harmony, logical organisation, and ease of information perception. The positioning of titles, text blocks, images, and other elements should contribute to a coherent and aesthetically pleasing reading experience. The principles of internal design include readability, which is the primary objective where every design element must support clear and easy comprehension of the text. Practicality ensures that the internal design facilitates the reader's navigation through the book, making it easier to locate chapters, sections, footnotes, and illustrations. Uniformity maintains consistency in the visual style throughout the book, with fonts, headings, margins, and spacing remaining coherent from beginning to end. Aesthetics ensure that the interior design is pleasing to the eye and harmonises with the overall mood and tone of the book. Genre and target audience alignment ensure that the design corresponds with the genre and the expectations of the intended readership, reflecting the nature and purpose of the content.

Modern book publishing places growing emphasis on the overall appearance of a book, recognising the critical importance of both external and internal design in appealing to readers and ensuring a publication's success. Well-considered, aesthetically pleasing design can greatly enhance the appeal of a book, making the reading process more comfortable and enjoyable. The role of the illustrator is central and multifaceted in this process. The illustrator is not merely responsible for "drawing pictures" but acts as a visual interpreter of the text, a co-author who mediates between the author's concept and the reader's perception. Their task involves capturing the narrative's spirit and transforming it into visual form that enriches the reader's experience without overshadowing the written word. The key elements defining the artist's role include the interpretation of the text and the author's intent, where the artist carefully reads and analyses the text to gain a deep understanding of its content, tone, characters, key moments, and emotional atmosphere. Visualisation of characters involves transforming the narrative into visual form, creating representations of characters, settings, events, and symbols based on textual descriptions. Collaboration with the creative team ensures that the illustrations are stylistically and conceptually consistent with the book, avoiding contradictions with the text and supporting overall narrative cohesion.

The selection of illustrations involves assessing the relevance of imagery in collaboration with the author and editor, aiming to enhance the reader's perception and evoke emotional engagement. Defining style and technique selects the illustrative approach to match the subject matter, target audience, and overall concept of the publication. Determining format and scale works within the technical constraints of the book's layout, directly affecting illustration size and placement. Research and sketch development draw initial inspiration from photographs, historical materials, or other references, developing draft sketches for approval before final production.

Processing the illustrative material involves creating original visuals using chosen tools and mediums, with thoughtful attention to composition, colour, detail, and emotional resonance. Adapting existing visuals ensures stylistic harmony by editing, cropping, stylising, and integrating them with the overall design. Technical preparation for print adapts final illustrations to meet the technical requirements of the printing process, including correct resolution, colour model, and file formats. Cooperation with the designer defines the most effective placement of illustrations, ensuring they interact harmoniously with the text and contribute to the visual rhythm of the layout. Thus, the artist-illustrator acts as a true co-author of the book, bringing artistic insight, the ability to translate meaning into visuals, and a strong sense of the narrative's emotional depth. Their contribution makes the book more engaging, accessible, and memorable, enriching the reader's experience and often enhancing the publication's artistic and commercial value. The content-thematic parameters of a publication include the subject, which encompasses the genre, target audience, main theme, and overall message of the text. The style and tone of presentation, whether formal, conversational, humorous, directly influence the visual presentation of the text and determine the appropriate design language. The volume and structure of the publication, including the total page count, division into chapters and subchapters, and inclusion of illustrations or diagrams, affect the layout, typographic choices, and overall compositional structure. The functional purpose shapes how the reader interacts with the material and must be reflected in the design to support usability and reader engagement.

The artistic and aesthetic characteristics include the visual concept, which is the central visual image, atmosphere, and emotional tone that the design should convey to the reader. The colour

scheme involves selecting colours appropriate to the theme, style, and intended audience, with consideration given to colour psychology and its emotional impact. Font design requires careful choice of typefaces for different content elements, focusing on readability and visual harmony within the overall design concept. The illustrative series determines the type of visual content, their stylistic coherence, placement on the page, and integration with the textual material. Composition and layout aim to create a clear visual hierarchy and a dynamic reading experience through the strategic arrangement of text blocks, images, and decorative elements. Cover specifics ensure that the cover is designed to attract attention, communicate the central idea of the work, and reflect the internal content in both tone and style. Decorative elements use lines, ornamental motifs, and graphical frames to reinforce stylistic consistency and contribute to the overall structural organisation of the publication.

The technical and technological characteristics include the publication format, which influences the physical dimensions of the page, affecting both the ergonomics of use and the ease with which the material can be read and handled. Paper quality, including the weight, shade, and surface texture, affects the tactile experience and the visual quality of the printed content. The printing method, such as offset, digital, or flexographic printing, determines the precision of colour reproduction and the clarity of printed details. Post-press processing techniques, including lamination, embossing, die-cutting, and binding, enhance both the aesthetic appeal and the durability of the printed product. The publication budget directly influences the choice of materials, production technologies, and the overall complexity and refinement of the design. The marketing and ergonomic characteristics include the target audience, where the age, social background, and cultural characteristics must be taken into account when developing the design. Series or publisher recognition involves the development and maintenance of a unified corporate style that visually links books within a series or those issued by the same publisher. Reader convenience ensures the comfortable perception of text, ease of page-turning, and an intuitive publication structure to facilitate reader navigation. Competition requires a thorough analysis of the visual presentation of similar products available on the market to ensure competitiveness. All these characteristics form an integrated whole and require a holistic approach when developing the overall concept of publication design. This is essential for achieving the publisher's objectives and optimally addressing the expectations of the target audience.

The visual appearance of contemporary publications is of key importance in attracting readers and forming a strong first impression. Reading preferences in this context are shaped by a range of factors, including socio-cultural trends, technological advancements, and evolving habits of information consumption. Key features of the reader's perception of the appearance of modern publications include visual appeal as the basis for the initial choice, where the cover is the first encounter and often determines the reader's decision to purchase a book or magazine. An eye-catching, original, and expressive cover can immediately attract attention and spark interest in the content. The role of illustrations and photographs is significant, as high-quality visuals that are thematically relevant not only complement the text but also enhance the overall appeal of the publication, making it easier for the reader to engage with. The influence of current visual trends is also notable. Minimalism, with its clear lines, generous use of white space, simple styles, and restrained colour palettes, evokes a sense of modernity and elegance. Bold colours and unconventional choices, including vibrant tones, unique typography, and non-traditional layouts, can catch the eye and

convey energy and creativity. Typography as a visual element is increasingly serving not only a functional but also an aesthetic purpose, helping to communicate the tone and personality of the publication. Digital design elements, such as gradients, textures, and digital art styles, enhance the perception of technological relevance and innovation.

Ergonomics and reading comfort are crucial aspects. Font legibility is important, as creative expression should never come at the expense of readability, with font size, style, and line spacing being crucial for comfortable reading. Layout and navigation contribute to ease of use through clear structure and logical placement of text and visuals, with helpful navigational cues such as headers, footers, and page numbers. Print and material quality leave a lasting impression and enhance sensory engagement through tactilely pleasing paper and high-quality printing techniques. Visual style compliance ensures that the visual appearance aligns with the content and purpose of the publication. For instance, a scientific journal would not benefit from bright neon hues or comic-style imagery. Target audience relevance is important, as perceptions of design vary greatly between age groups, social demographics, and cultural contexts, and effective design reflects the preferences and expectations of its intended readership.

The impact of the digital environment is significant, with adaptive design being essential for electronic publications, where layouts must adapt smoothly to various screen sizes and devices. Interactive elements in digital formats allow for animation, embedded video, and other interactive features that enrich the reader's engagement with the content. The emotional impact of a publication is also important, as colour schemes, imagery, and page composition can evoke specific emotions and create associative impressions, significantly shaping how the publication is perceived overall. It is equally important to avoid typical errors in the design of publications. At the text level, spelling and punctuation mistakes, stylistic flaws, inconsistent terminology, incorrect formatting of citations and bibliographies, and faulty list formatting can significantly impair the reader's perception of the text. At the layout and typesetting stage, illegible fonts, poor page organisation, incorrect text alignment, problems with line spacing, inconsistent visual presentation of headings and subheadings, incorrect placement of images and tabular data, poor image processing, lack of uniformity in the design of headers, footers, and pagination, neglect of orphan and widow lines, and failure to follow page imposition rules can reduce the overall legibility and aesthetic appeal of the publication. At the level of cover design, an uninformative or unattractive cover, incorrect placement of elements, illegible font, and low image quality can fail to attract the reader's attention and reflect a lack of professionalism. To avoid such mistakes, vigilance is required at every stage of the publishing process, from writing and editing the text to layout and cover design. A professional approach and thorough checking ensure the release of a product that is both high in quality and enjoyable for the reader.

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