

## ***Publishing Today (Philippines)***

Presented by:

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### **I. STATISTICAL DATA ON THE LOCAL BOOK PUBLISHING INDUSTRY**

The statistics on the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) can be a way of monitoring how many books were published as every book that comes out in the world is being assigned an ISBN.

Below is the growth of the titles in the Philippines from the time RA 8047 or the Book Publishing Industry Development Act was passed into law in June 1995 as gathered from the National Library.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Issued ISBN</b>
1996	3,770
1997	5,093
1998	4,326
1999	4,803
2000	5,083
2001	5,663
2002	5,193
2003	5,570
2004	5,139

Hereunder is other pertinent information related to the publishing industry in the country as gathered from the National Book Development Board (NBDB):

<b>Classification</b>	<b>As of 12/31/2003</b>	<b>As of 12/31/2004</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease)</b>
Book Publishers	86	104	18
Book Printer	36	42	6

Book Importer	20	16	(4)
Retail Bookseller/ Supplier	39	36	(3)
Wholesale Bookseller/ Supplier	48	51	3
Importer of Non-Print Information Materials	1	4	3

#### **A. General Profile**

Book publishers in the Philippines today number the above-cited figures of varying capabilities, with textbook publishing as the mainstay of the industry. About seventy percent (70%) of this output are school textbooks and general references; about twenty-three percent (23%) are monographs, tracts and miscellaneous publications such as indices, atlases, almanacs; about four percent (4%) are literary works; and the rest, about three percent (3%) are scholarly books published by the universities and research institutions.

Book sales of both local and foreign titles account for only fifteen (15) to twenty (20) percent of total store sales of National Book Store, the country's largest book retailer which has about eighty (80) stores. REX Book Store, Inc., another bookstore chain has about twenty (20) branches nationwide.

#### **B. Public School Textbooks**

With the advent of the government textbook project, funded from a World Bank education development loan, private publishers have developed all basic textbooks for the public elementary and secondary schools and have printed and distributed close to 45 million copies of pupils' texts and teachers' manuals during the last six years.

#### **C. Private School Textbooks**

Print runs for the private schools range from 50,000 to 80,000 per title.

#### **D. Lifespan of a Textbook**

In both public and private schools, the lifespan of a textbook program is five years--the same edition may be used for five successive years.

#### **E. College Textbooks**

Publication of college textbooks, which has been adversely affected by rampant photocopying among students because of prohibitive prices of foreign (imported) titles, may be revived with the enforcement of the new copyright law. Leading publishers are now commissioning experts in various fields of study to develop locally written college textbooks.

#### **F. Romance Paperbacks and Pocketbooks**

Next to textbooks, romance paperbacks or pocketbooks are bestsellers in the country. About 20,000 copies per title are sold every month. Each month an average of 20 titles are released. Romance novelettes have won over a large portion of the comics readership.

### **G. Coffeetable Books**

They have made their appearance in recent years, mainly catering to rich collectors and tourists. They deal mainly with specific facets of cultural interests such as old streets, indigenous architecture, art, historical vignettes.

### **H. Philippine Literature**

Philippine literature has been one of the main staples of the local publishing industry. Local novels and poetry, written in English, have received critical acclaim abroad.

### **I. Children's Books**

There is now a growing market for children's books in our country where about 22 million are children aged 12 years down.

## **II. PUBLISHING INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT TRENDS**

The country's printing and publishing industry faces a multitude of opportunities and threats brought about by social, technological, economic, and politico-legal developments both here and abroad.

The steady growth in the population of the Philippines enlarges the base of potential customers for the industry, as this results in higher school populations and more buyers of consumer goods that utilize printed matter in their packaging.

The increasing number of students from the primary to tertiary levels assures constant demand for textbooks, which constitutes the biggest share of the book market in the Philippines. This is an opportunity for private publishers now that the Department of Education has opened up its textbook program to them.

The high literacy rate in the country could contribute to increased demand for reading matter such as newspapers, magazines, books, comics, and other printed matter.

Printed matters like religious books, pocketbooks, magazines, etc. produced in the Philippines have markets in countries with a large number of overseas Filipinos such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, etc. There is also a potential market in North America which has a large Filipino-American population eager to reestablish their links with the Philippines.

While the National Book Development Board (NBDB), the governing body created under Republic Act 8047 to implement the rules and regulations for the privatization of book publishing for public schools, may have been successful in transferring the development, publishing and distribution of textbooks from the Department of Education (DepEd) to the private publishers, it however encountered difficulties in market development.

The publishers, especially the smaller ones, have hardly recovered their investments in the development of textbooks they submitted to the DepEd for evaluation and approval. DepEd

claims that the privatization brought about the adoption of multiple titles (various titles for a given subject for each level, both in elementary and secondary).

This is because all publishers are given the chance to develop and publish all titles that are at stake and are evaluated and approved by the DepEd if they pass the agency's criteria. Hence, a classroom ends up with a supply of many titles for a given subject, but not necessarily attaining the 1:1 ratio of one book per student.

Faced with the dilemma of failing to solve the problem of lack of textbooks, DepEd decided to purchase the textbooks which schools still lacked through a bidding process in the Central Office. The subjects are determined by the different regional field offices, based on inventories submitted by their respective Supply Offices.

Bidding for Textbook Procurement started in the year 2000, funded by a loan from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, and has continued up to the present. This resulted in lesser demand for textbooks out of regular purchases from either the DepEd field offices funded by the national budget and Local School Board funded by the Special Education Fund of a province, city or municipality.

As a further result, of the volume purchases made by the DepEd Central and the adoption of multiple titles, DepEd issued a policy that those regions, divisions, districts and schools with extra copies of books will have to give them to those who lack books or exchange them for what they need.

Presently, DepEd has come up with a new textbook policy, in consultation with NBDB:

1. To provide a 1:1 ratio of textbook per pupil or student, by adopting a single title for a series of grades 1 to 6 or 1st year to 4th year. This is to avoid multiplicity of titles per subject per level, resulting in maximized expenditure for the government and savings from the yearly-allocated budget for textbook procurement.
2. Quality of Textbook Ensured. DepEd shall purchase/provide only those textbooks that have passed the content evaluation and quality production standards of the agency. Through this system, DepEd believes that the "cut and paste up" style used by other publishers will be discouraged. Only those research-based and seriously and professionally-done materials that are aligned to the set Philippine Elementary Learning Competencies (PELC) and Philippine Secondary Schools Learning Competencies (PSSLC) may pass the test. Furthermore, to ensure their effectiveness and adaptability, the textbooks to be purchased and which are expected to win the bid should have been tested and actually used and adapted in a classroom as an instructional material either by a private or public school.
3. Conduct of Open Competitive Bidding. Textbooks by subject shall be purchased for the entire pupil/student population every five years. In subsequent years, DepEd shall only bid out reprinting of the same titles. Publishers of the winning titles shall retain copyright of the said title/s. DepEd, however, shall be given rights of the said title/s in the succeeding bidding, a royalty paid in exchange for the reprint right. To generate the necessary economies of scale of further bringing down prices, the bidding shall be conducted by zone.

Only 15% of the total elementary student population and 45% of the total high school population comprise the private school market. These are the areas where private publishers compete with one another.

It was acknowledged during the congressional debate that books used in the private schools are better off than those in the public schools based on the free market situation devoid of any governmental intervention, similar to what is happening in the more progressive countries.

### **III. POSSIBLE WAYS AND MEANS OF COOPERATION AMONG ASEAN COUNTRIES WITH RESPECT TO PUBLISHING INDUSTRY**

Considering their geographical closeness to one another, virtual similarity of ancestry, environmental surroundings, likes, dislikes, idiosyncrasy, etc., it is high time that the representative book publishing associations of the Asean countries bonded together to achieve at least two fundamental goals:

- a) Unity - in order that the collective voices of the countries concerned shall be heard and given recognition;
- b) Meaningful Exchanges – in order to get the best from one another.

Through the endorsement of PEPA in cooperation with the local book associations, Asian Pacific Publishers Association (APPA), International Publishers Association (IPA) coupled with other considerations, we were able to effectuate the passage of RA 8047 or the Book Publishing Industry Development Act in 1995. It is the bible of all those involved in book publishing and related activities.

Aside from the provisions of the law itself which are geared to enhance local book publishing, other beneficial developments took place:

- a) June was declared to be the Book Publishing Development Month;
- b) The National Book Policy was formulated;
- c) Twenty percent (20%) royalty tax on authors was reduced to ten percent (10%);
- d) Compliance with the Florence Agreement, Nairobi Protocol and international commitments was enhanced, etc.

Lately, a proposed legislation was made which will set aside 100 hectares of land in Subic, Zambales for the establishment of a 'book city' in an attempt of the Philippines to become the hub of publishing in this part of the region.

In view of the rampant book piracy and illegal xeroxing in the country, the erstwhile dormant Philippine Reprographic Rights Organization (PRRO) is being reinvigorated with the assistance of the International Federation of Reprographic Rights Organization (IFRRO).

Lately, through the combined efforts of PEPA, the Book Development Association of the Philippines, National Book Suppliers and Publishers Association, Association of Philippine Booksellers, they were able to persuade Congress not to reimpose VAT and similar exactions on book publishing and related activities.

At the moment, at the IPA, which is the biggest aggregation of book publishers in the world, the Asean countries are not collectively represented. We have to rely on the APPA to represent us which may be too big in scope in formulating global policies affecting the book industry.

As cited earlier, another important goal of bonding together is the development of meaningful exchanges in order for us to emulate the best of what our neighbors have, not only in business practices but also in legal infrastructures.

In the Philippines, we have the following domestic laws, executive directives and international commitments where the country is a signatory :

- a) Republic Act No. 8047 – An Act Providing for the Development of the Book Publishing Industry Through the Formulation and Implementation of a National Book Policy and a National Book Development Plan;
- b) Republic Act No. 8293 – An Act Prescribing the Intellectual Property Code and Establishing the Intellectual Property Office, Providing for its Power and Functions and for other Purposes;
- c) Republic Act No. 7165 – An Act Creating the Literacy Coordinating Council, Defining its Powers and Functions Appropriating Funds Therefor and For Other Purposes;
- d) Republic Act No. 7743 – An Act Providing for the Establishment of Congressional City and Municipal Libraries and Barangay Reading Centers Throughout the Philippines Appropriating the Necessary Funds Therefore and for Other Purposes;
- e) Republic Act No. 7716 – An Act Restructuring the Value-Added Tax (VAT) System, Widening its Tax Base and Enhancing Its Administration and For Other Purposes Amending and Repealing the Relevant Provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code, As Amended and for Other Purposes;
- f) Republic Act No. 9155 – An Act Instituting a Framework of Governance for Basic Education (Basic Education Act);
- g) Executive Order 119 or the Adoption of the National Book Policy;
- h) Florence Agreement;
- i) Nairobi Protocol.

If we could only harmonize the respective laws of the Asean countries, interpretation and decision-making processes would be facilitated as we could depend on their respective jurisprudence to guide us.

Another incidental benefit of bonding together is that it would create a greater market for our publications through co-publishing, translation, etc., not to mention the important need to enrich our respective local dialects and languages which are the vehicles through which our cultural heritage is preserved and expressed.

As our publications are sources of knowledge, the Asean book publishing sector can be a potent force to contend with.

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*Sources:*

1. *Bookwatch (a publication of the National Book Development Board), December 2004 issue*
2. *Annual Report 2004 by the National Book Development Board*
3. *Annual Report 2004, Department of Education*
4. *National Library*

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