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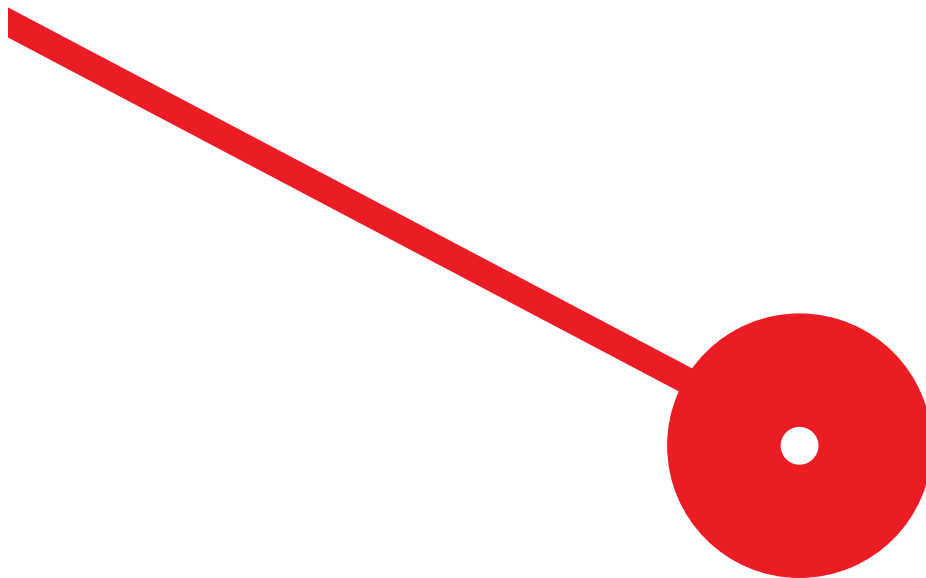
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MESTRADO
INTERCULTURAL STUDIES FOR BUSINESS

EXPLORING THE PUBLISHING
WORLD: CEI AS A CASE
STUDY

BRUNA SAADÉ DINIZ

07/2025



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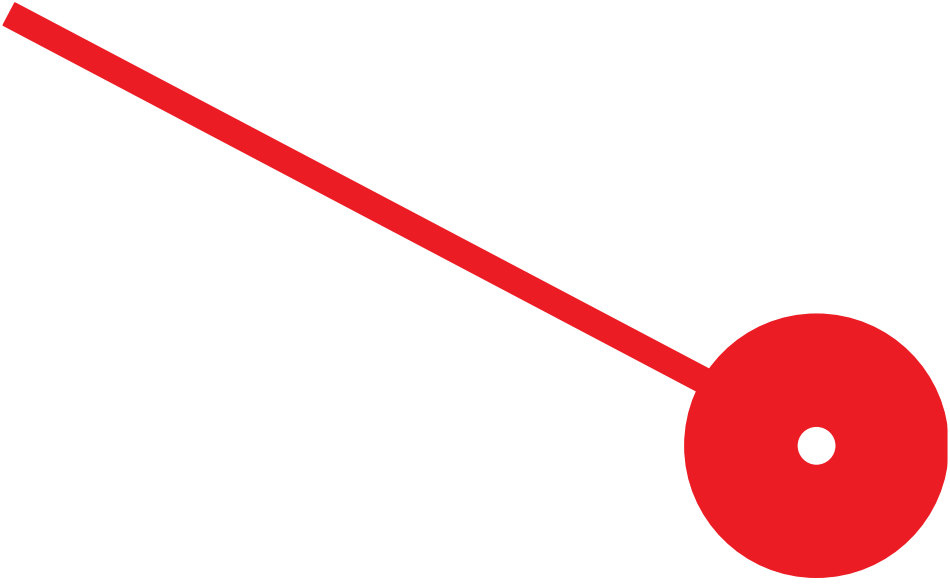
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BRUNA SAADÉ DINIZ

**Relatório de Estágio
apresentado ao Instituto Superior de
Contabilidade e Administração do Porto para a
obtenção do grau de Mestre em Intercultural
Studies for Business, sob orientação de Doutora
Carina Cerqueira.**



Dedication

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my family for their steadfast support and encouragement at every phase of this journey.

I am also deeply thankful to my professors and mentors, particularly Professor Clara Sarmiento, for her invaluable guidance, trust, and inspiration, which were instrumental in making this experience a reality.

Most importantly, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor and professor Carina Cerqueria, who has been with me throughout the process of composing my internship report, consistently demonstrating her understanding and exceptional commitment to my academic and personal development.

Last but not least, I am grateful to my colleagues and fellow interns at the Centre of Intercultural Studies (CEI) for fostering a collaborative and enriching atmosphere that significantly contributed to my experience and growth.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Professor Clara Sarmiento, whose mentorship, availability, and insightful feedback have guided me throughout every phase. Her confidence in my capabilities and her commitment to academic excellence were pivotal to my growth during the internship and the successful completion of this work.

I am particularly thankful to my supervisor and professor Carina Cerqueira for her unwavering guidance, support, and encouragement during the writing of my internship report, as well as for all her additional contributions. Her professionalism, empathy, and dedication were crucial in assisting me to navigate the challenges encountered on this journey.

I also express my gratitude to the entire team at the Centre of Intercultural Studies (CEI) for their warm welcome and for fostering a stimulating, collaborative, and inspiring work environment. The exchange of knowledge and ongoing mutual support made my experience genuinely enriching.

To my family, I am grateful for your steadfast support, understanding, and unconditional love, which have served as the foundation of my academic journey. Your encouragement provided me with strength during the most trying times.

To my friends and colleagues, thank you for your companionship, motivation, and the numerous meaningful discussions that expanded my perspective and enriched this journey.

Lastly, I would like to recognize all the authors, researchers, and professionals whose work has inspired and informed this dissertation. Their contributions continue to influence the future of publishing and intercultural studies.

To everyone, my sincere gratitude.

Resumo:

O setor editorial europeu tem passado por uma transformação significativa nas últimas décadas, motivada pela digitalização, alterações nos hábitos de consumo e a influência das redes sociais. Este relatório examina as principais tendências, desafios e oportunidades do setor, com um foco especial no contexto europeu e no papel das plataformas digitais. A ascensão de formatos digitais, como e-books e audiolivros, assim como o crescimento de comunidades literárias em redes sociais como BookTube, BookTok e Bookstagram, mudaram radicalmente a forma de como os livros são promovidos, vendidos e consumidos, democratizando o acesso e a participação de novos autores e leitores.

No campo da edição académica, destaca-se a evolução do movimento de acesso aberto, que visa tornar a pesquisa científica mais acessível e inclusiva, apesar dos desafios relacionados com a sustentabilidade financeira e a garantia de qualidade. Em Portugal, a implementação de políticas de ciência aberta e o desenvolvimento de infraestruturas digitais, como o RCAAP, têm favorecido a maior visibilidade da produção científica nacional, embora ainda existam obstáculos relacionados com a fragmentação do mercado, barreiras linguísticas e padrões editoriais.

Por meio da análise de caso do Centro de Estudos Interculturais (CEI), este relatório investiga práticas editoriais inovadoras, o efeito de eventos académicos e a relevância da colaboração internacional. A experiência de estágio no CEI possibilitou o desenvolvimento de habilidades práticas em edição, revisão e gestão de projetos editoriais, além de uma compreensão aprofundada dos desafios e dinâmicas do setor. Conclui-se que o futuro da edição europeia estará atrelado à capacidade de equilibrar inovação digital, diversidade cultural e sustentabilidade, promovendo um ecossistema editorial mais inclusivo, acessível e resiliente.

Palavras chave: edição, digitalização, acesso livre, redes sociais

Abstract:

The European publishing industry has experienced considerable changes in recent decades, influenced by digital advancements, shifting consumer behaviours, and the emergence of social media platforms. This report analyses the key trends, challenges, and opportunities that are shaping the sector, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between tradition and innovation within the European landscape. The rise of digital formats, including e-books and audiobooks, along with the impact of online communities such as BookTube, BookTok, and Bookstagram, has transformed book marketing, distribution, and readership, making access more democratic and allowing new voices to be heard.

In the realm of academic publishing, the open-access movement has promoted the accessibility and inclusivity of scientific research, although challenges related to financial sustainability and quality assurance persist. In Portugal, national policies and digital infrastructures – such as RCAAP – have enhanced the visibility of scholarly outputs, yet obstacles persist concerning market fragmentation, language barriers, and editorial standards.

Through the case study of the Centre of Intercultural Studies (CEI), this report underscores innovative editorial practices, the influence of academic events, and the significance of international collaboration. The internship experience at CEI equipped me with practical skills in editing, project management, and scholarly communication, providing a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics within the sector. The findings indicate that the future of European publishing will hinge on the ability to balance digital innovation, cultural diversity, and sustainability, thereby nurturing a more inclusive and resilient publishing ecosystem.

Key words: publishing, digital transformation, open access, social media

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List of Abbreviations

AI: Artificial Intelligence

ARC: Advanced Reader Copy

b-on: Biblioteca do Conhecimento Online (Online Knowledge Library, Portugal)

CEI: Centro de Estudos Interculturais (Centre of Intercultural Studies)

CD-ROM: Compact Disc Read-Only Memory

DIAMAS: Developing Institutional Open Access Publishing Models to Advance Scholarly Communication

EAA: European Accesibility Act

E-REI: E-Journal of Intercultural Studies (journal published by CEI)

EU: European Union

FCT: Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (Foundation for Science and Technology, Portugal)

ISCAP: Instituto de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto

ISI: Institute for Scientific Information

MDPI: Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute

OA: Open Access

RCAAP: Repositório Científico de Acesso Aberto de Portugal (Open Access Scientific Repositories of Portugal)

RESMI: Higher Education Network of Intercultural Mediation

RIESDM: Network of Higher Education Institutions for the Protection of the Mediterranean Diet

SCOPUS: A bibliographic database containing abstracts and citations for academic journal articles

UC Digitalis: Digital publishing platform of the University of Coimbra

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

INTRODUCTION

Editors are the unseen architects of the written word.
- Unknown

This poignant assertion acts as the foundation for comprehending the significant, yet frequently overlooked, impact that editors have within the expansive realm of publishing. Rather than simply functioning as technicians who rectify grammar or uphold house style, editors engage as intellectual partners, cultural intermediaries, and ethical guardians. Their contribution is crucial in determining how narratives, research, and concepts are developed, communicated, and ultimately safeguarded for a varied and continuously changing audience. The analogy of the “unseen architect” is particularly meaningful when reflecting on the entire range of modern publishing.

In every sector of the publishing industry, editors operate behind the scenes across literary fiction, commercial non-fiction, academic monographs, and digital media. They serve as the subtle forces that construct the frameworks through which knowledge and creativity are disseminated to the public, impacting not only the clarity and coherence of texts but also their accessibility, interpretation, and cultural significance. Their choices mould the very structure of communication, guaranteeing that each piece – be it an academic article, a bestselling novel, or a viral online essay – achieves its form, its audience, and its position within the larger discourse.

In contemporary times, the role of the editor has become increasingly vital, as the publishing industry experiences swift changes propelled by technological advancements, evolving cultural norms, and the democratisation of content creation and dissemination. The early 2000s represented a pivotal turning point: the emergence of digital technologies, the widespread availability of the internet, and the introduction of e-books and audiobooks have fundamentally transformed the methods of content production and consumption. Within Europe, these developments have unfolded amidst a rich tapestry of linguistic diversity, profound literary traditions, and the simultaneous existence of established publishing firms alongside a rapidly growing independent and self-publishing landscape. Editors are now tasked with navigating a multifaceted ecosystem where the distinctions between print and digital, local and global, as well as professional and amateur, are becoming increasingly blurred. Social media has significantly transformed

the publishing landscape, altering not only the methods by which books and ideas are marketed and discovered but also how communities of readers and writers are formed and interact. Platforms such as TikTok (BookTok), Instagram (Bookstagram), and YouTube (BookTube) have democratised the promotion of literature and the establishment of taste, empowering emerging voices while simultaneously introducing new pressures regarding visibility and marketability.

Editors, who were once considered gatekeepers, have now taken on the role of facilitators – navigating the challenges posed by viral trends, the necessity for diversity, and the maintenance of literary quality. The retail and distribution sectors have also transformed, as independent bookstores began to showcase their resilience by reimagining themselves as cultural centres and implementing hybrid sales strategies that integrate both physical and digital experiences. Concurrently, the emergence of open access, especially in the realm of academic publishing, has altered the foundational tenets of scholarly communication, highlighting the importance of accessibility, equity, and the public interest. Editors operating within these paradigms are required to maintain high standards while also adopting new technologies, innovative business models, and ethical responsibilities.

In this dynamic environment, my editorial internship at the Centre of Intercultural Studies (CEI), in Portugal, granted me a distinctive perspective to examine the evolving role of the editor. The editorial projects at CEI – including multilingual collective volumes, the open-access journal, E-REI, and various intercultural research initiatives – provided a microcosm reflecting the challenges and opportunities present in the wider publishing landscape. My time there highlighted the fact that editors, functioning as “unseen architects”, are tasked not only with refining and harmonizing texts but also with mediating across languages, cultures, and disciplines, thereby promoting inclusivity and innovation.

It is crucial to emphasize that, owing to the confidential nature of the editorial tasks performed during my internship, I cannot disclose the actual texts - the book that is due to be published this year, reports, or editorial communications - generated during this time. These documents contain sensitive information related to authors and the editorial process, and their dissemination is strictly forbidden. However, the articles I edited for E-REI are publicly available on their website for reference. Nevertheless, to offer further

context and improve clarity for the reader, a glossary of essential terms and concepts pertinent to the publishing industry will be provided in the annex.

This report was created to illustrate the complexity and interconnections within the publishing industry. The introductory chapter reviews the significant trends that have transformed European publishing since the early 2000s: digital evolution, the emergence of social media, the expansion of open access, and the changing dynamics of book retail and distribution. These changes are analysed not only for their technological and economic consequences but also for their impact on the relationships between authors, editors, publishers, and readers. The second chapter focuses specifically on Portugal, exploring both the overall publishing landscape, the unique challenges and innovations present in academic publishing, using CEI as a case study. The third chapter provides a personal narrative of my internship, contemplating the practical, ethical, and intellectual aspects of editorial work – work involving not only the correction of errors but also the construction of meaning and the promotion of dialogue.

By viewing my journey through the perspective of the editor as an “unseen architect”, this report highlights the essential, albeit frequently overlooked, roles that editors play in every facet of publishing. In a time characterised by swift technological advancements, evolving market conditions, and the worldwide exchange of ideas, the editor’s function as a guardian of thoughtful, inclusive, and rigorous communication has become increasingly crucial. During this internship, I realized that editing is not only a skill but also a vocation – one that transcends geographical boundaries, academic disciplines, and literary genres, and is vital for the future health and diversity of publishing in all its manifestations.

Editing is not just a job or a set of skills; it's a calling that requires judgment, empathy, and a passion for helping ideas cross boundaries – whether of language, genre, or culture. (Ginna, 2017, p. 2)

CHAPTER I – TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN PUBLISHING

The European publishing industry is an intriguing and ever-changing field that has undergone major changes in recent decades. Examining the European context provides important insights into how tradition and innovation coexist, showcasing the cultural legacy and the economic significance of publishing. In 2015, the total annual sales revenue reached about 22.3 billion euros, with around 150,000 full-time employees contributing to a robust and lively publishing market in the European Union and the European Economic Area (Anderson, 2017).

This region's publishing scene is influenced not only by its rich history of literary and intellectual contributions but also by its capacity to respond to modern challenges, such as technological advancements, changing consumer habits, and global market trends. By limiting our concentration to Europe, we can better understand the interplay between cultural and economic factors. Additionally, this focus highlights how European publishers have embraced innovative strategies to stay relevant in the fast-evolving digital world while preserving the rich literary heritage that characterizes the region.

The temporal framework for this analysis commences with the rise of the internet in the early 2000s, a crucial juncture that signifies the onset of a transformative period for the publishing sector. This area is especially noteworthy as it includes the swift digitalization of content, the introduction of e-books, and significant changes in consumer reading behaviours. The selection of this temporal framework facilitates an examination of the publishing industry's evolution amid a backdrop of significant technological advancements and market upheaval. By concentrating on the timeframe from the early 2000s to the present, we can delineate the comprehensive progression of the digital revolution within the publishing sector.

This encompasses the initial obstacles encountered by conventional publishers, their subsequent adaptation to emerging digital formats and distribution methods, as well as their continuous endeavours to harmonize print and digital products. Furthermore, this period allows for an in-depth analysis of the enduring effects of digital technologies on business models, content development, and reader interaction, thereby offering a holistic perspective on the industry's transformation and its prospective direction.

1.1 Digital Transformation

The publishing industry in Europe has undergone a gradual transformation that has profoundly altered the landscape of the sector over the last several decades. This evolution commenced in the late 20th century with the emergence of digital technologies and has gained momentum with the extensive integration of the internet.

In the early phases of digital transformation within the publishing industry, the emphasis was predominantly on converting existing content into digital formats and enhancing internal workflows. Publishers started to implement digital technologies for typesetting, layout design, and editorial tasks, leading to increased efficiency in the production process (Kalmykov & Magic Dome Books s.r.o. Publishing House, 2024). The emergence of CD-ROMs (Compact Disc Read-Only Memory) during this period marked a significant advancement in the distribution of reference materials and educational content.

The extensive integration of the internet during the late 1990s and early 2000s represented a transformative moment for the publishing sector. This development ushered in the second phase of the internet's influence on book publishing, characterized by the rise of e-books (Oliver & Ohlbaum Associates Ltd & Analysys Mason, 2017). The advent of e-books has significantly increased accessibility to literature for a broader audience by providing a more convenient format. This development has disrupted conventional distribution methods (characterized by physical bookstores, wholesalers, and intricate logistics systems) and has created new opportunities for self-publishing.

The expansion of internet access throughout the European Union has granted consumers unparalleled opportunities to engage with creative content (Oliver & Ohlbaum Associates Ltd & Analysys Mason, 2017b). This shift not only interrupted conventional publishing methods and value chains but also necessitated that publishers adapt their business strategies (Ciarcellut et al., 2020). The expansion of the internet has enabled direct communication between authors and their audiences, bypassing conventional intermediaries and creating new opportunities for self-publishing. This transformation has democratized the publishing landscape, empowering writers to connect with readers independently of traditional publishing companies.

Whilst these digital advancements have expanded access and democratized publishing, they have also introduced considerable hurdles confronting the distribution and retail

sectors of the book industry. A prominent challenge is the emergence of “showrooming,” which has turned into a major issue for independent bookstores. This trend involves customers checking out books in local shops but then buying them online for cheaper prices. As a result, smaller bookstores are finding it tough to keep up with the big online retailers that offer these discounts. The outlook for independent bookstores in Europe, although still facing challenges from the prevalence of major online retailers, is characterized by resilience, adaptability, and a revitalized commitment to their communities.

Numerous European independents, including Hoepli in Milan, Dussmann das KulturKaufhaus in Berlin, and Shakespeare and Company in Paris, have succeeded not merely in surviving but in flourishing by providing distinctive in-store experiences, curating specialized collections, and acting as cultural and social centres for their respective cities. These bookstores have taken on roles that extend beyond mere retail environments, organizing author events, book clubs, workshops, and even live performances, thereby cultivating loyalty and a feeling of community among local readers. In recent years, independent bookstores across Europe have experienced a stabilization—and in certain areas, a slight resurgence. For instance, the UK and Ireland reported having over 1,050 independent bookshops by the end of 2024, marking a notable recovery from the record low observed in 2016. This revival is largely attributed to a renewed enthusiasm for reading following the pandemic, a growing desire for physical spaces that foster connections among readers, and the innovative spirit of booksellers who consistently refresh their offerings. As Nic Bottomley of Mr B’s Emporium in Bath articulates, “It is essential to not merely function as a shop, but to create an environment that feels warm, inviting, and experiential.” Many retailers currently depend on events, tailored subscription services, and individualized recommendations to set themselves apart from large online competitors.

Hybrid sales models have notably contributed to this recovery. Numerous independent businesses in Europe have integrated their online and offline sales strategies, providing click-and-collect services, facilitating online ordering, and even hosting virtual author events to broaden their audience and offer alternatives to large e-commerce platforms. (eibf, 2024). Platforms such as Bookshop.org in the UK have enabled local retailers to engage in online competition while ensuring that profits remain within the community. In the aftermath of the pandemic, online sales continue to constitute a crucial segment of

the revenue for independent bookstores, indicating that hybrid models – integrating both physical and digital retail – have become essential to the business (Industry Insights, 2023). Furthermore, independent bookstores are innovating their business strategies by curating distinctive inventories that resonate with local preferences and interests, while also establishing subscription or membership programs that enhance customer loyalty and ensure consistent revenue streams. Certain governments have acknowledged the cultural significance of bookstores, implementing measures to shield them from inequitable competition, exemplified by France’s legislation prohibiting free shipping on low-value book purchases (Vizologi, 2025).

The rise of digital transformation has catalysed the emergence of novel business models and revenue opportunities. In order to maintain their competitive edge, publishers have been compelled to innovate, adopting digital platforms for both distribution and marketing purposes (Kalmykov & Magic Dome Books s.r.o. Publishing House, 2024b). The emergence of subscription-based models, print-on-demand services, and multimedia content offerings reflects the efforts of publishers to broaden their revenue streams and connect with readers through innovative approaches.

As of 2025, the European publishing sector is proactively engaging with the challenges and prospects presented by digital transformation. Although print media continues to be important, digital formats like e-books and audiobooks have become increasingly significant, driven by technological progress and evolving consumer habits. Notably, audiobooks have seen swift expansion, propelled by advancements in voice technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI), which enhance production efficiency and accommodate the demands of multitasking consumers. (Atmosphere Press, 2025)

Data analytics has become a pivotal instrument in the publishing industry, allowing publishers to make informed decisions based on data that enhance both operational efficiency and marketing approaches. By examining reader behaviour, including engagement rates and the duration of time spent on pages, publishers can customize their content to better align with audience preferences. (Highwire Press, 2024) (B, 2024) Predictive analytics improves publishing schedules by recognizing trends and optimizing production workflows (Highwire Press, 2024b). AI also contributes to the automation of workflows, tailoring recommendations for readers, and categorizing audiences for focused marketing initiatives (*My AI Forecast for 2025*, n.d.) (Arena, 2024). These

technologies enable human resources to concentrate on strategic activities, simultaneously enhancing efficiency throughout the industry (B, 2024b).

The European publishing sector is actively tackling regulatory obstacles while emphasizing inclusivity in its digital transformation initiatives. The implementation of the European Accessibility Act (EAA), which became fully operational in 2025, has encouraged publishers to create digital offerings that are accessible to individuals with disabilities. This transition not only fulfils legal obligations but also broadens the audience by addressing the needs of underrepresented markets (Jones, 2024) (Regan, 2024). In addition, publishers are implementing privacy-centric strategies due to the reduction of third-party cookies, fostering direct connections with their audiences by utilizing first-party data collection techniques such as subscriptions or memberships. (Regan, 2024b)

To effectively manage these complexities, publishers are implementing various strategies aimed at ensuring long-term growth within a competitive environment. Their emphasis is on creating high-quality content that engages readers, rather than concentrating on the volume of output (Atmosphere Press, 2025b) (*My AI Forecast for 2025*, n.d.-b). Sustainability has emerged as a key focus for publishers, who are adopting environmentally friendly practices. These include the development of energy-efficient websites, the use of recycled paper, and the implementation of more sustainable hosting solutions to tackle environmental issues (Gupta, 2024) (Regan, 2024c).

In spite of these advancements, obstacles persist. Profit margins are narrow, and the convenience and pricing advantages of online behemoths continue to attract certain customers. Nevertheless, the resilience and flexibility of independent bookstores provide a glimmer of hope. As Susan Novotny, proprietor of Book House and Market Block Books, notes, “There are far fewer of us across the country than ever before, which makes those of us that have survived all the more important to the community” (Spectrum News, 2025).

By embracing these approaches, the European publishing sector is successfully adapting to the digital era and preserving its significance in conventional print markets by adopting strategies such as data-driven decision-making, improved accessibility, privacy-centric policies, and a commitment to sustainability.

In conclusion, the digital transformation of the European publishing sector represents a multifaceted and continuous evolution. This shift has significantly changed the methods of book creation, distribution, and consumption, introducing a range of challenges and opportunities for publishers, authors, and readers. The European book publishing industry is anticipated to attain a market size of €36.4 billion by 2025, reflecting a consistent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.1% from 2019 to 2024. This expansion is bolstered by the existence of 39,648 enterprises within the sector in 2024, which collectively employ around 191,000 people – a workforce that has experienced a CAGR of 2.9% over the preceding five years (IBISWorld, Inc., n.d.).

Traditional publishing continues to thrive in conjunction with the expansion of formats. In 2019, European publishers released around 605,000 new titles and maintained a stock of more than 12.5 million titles. The countries at the forefront of title availability and production include Germany, the UK, France, Spain, and Italy (*Europe Books Market Size & Outlook, 2030*, 2024). Printed books remain prevalent in specific sectors, such as children’s picture books, which represented more than 30% of the global market share in 2024, despite the increasing popularity of digital formats (Research, 2024).

The data presented demonstrates the coexistence of digital innovation and traditional publishing within the dynamic landscape of Europe’s book market. Although digital platforms create novel avenues for self-publishing and enhancing audience interaction, print formats continue to play a crucial role in the cultural and economic framework of the industry.

1.1.1 Impact of Social Media

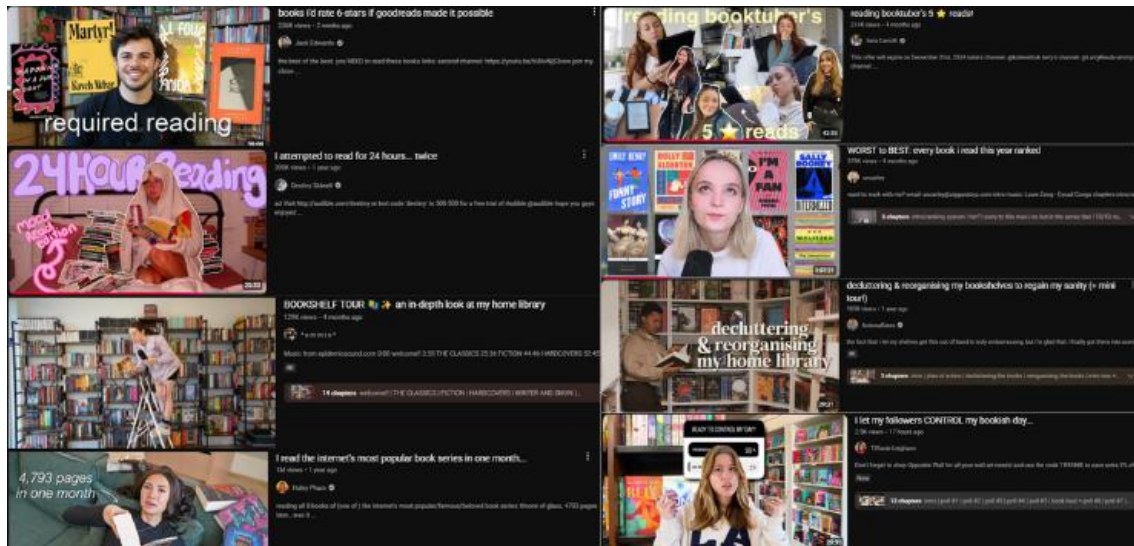
The influence of social media on the publishing sector has been significant and revolutionary. By 2025, platforms such as X (previously known as Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook, have emerged as essential resources for distribution, marketing, and engaging with readers. These platforms enable publishers to receive immediate feedback via comments, likes, and shares, thereby delivering real-time data regarding the effectiveness of their content (Puckett-Pope, 2025). In 2025, the engagement rates for both Facebook and X stand at 0,15%. In contrast, TikTok has experienced a year-over-year doubling of its shares, underscoring the platform’s

significance in the current digital landscape (*Instagram Benchmarks 2025: Key Insights, 2025*).

Social media's influence on the publishing landscape is demonstrated by its capacity to elevate previously unknown authors to prominence. A single viral post on platforms such as TikTok can swiftly elevate a book to bestseller status, significantly transforming an author's professional journey. This trend is illustrated by the emergence of book-centric communities like, BookTube, BookTok and Bookstagram, which have established themselves as powerful entities within the publishing sector (Schmidt, 2024).

BookTube, a niche community on YouTube focused on books and literature, emerged around 2010 and has played a pivotal role in shaping the social media-driven book culture that predated the rise of platforms such as BookTok and Bookstagram. In contrast to these newer platforms, BookTube is distinguished by its comprehensive, long-form video content, where creators engage in detailed reviews, recommendations, and discussions about literature. This platform has significantly influenced the marketing strategies of publishers. By adopting a conversational and analytical style, BookTube cultivates a sense of intimacy between creators and their audiences, resembling a personal dialogue with an informed friend who shares a passion for books (Mitchell, Amanda, "The Impact of BookTube on Book Publishing: A Study of John Green's *Looking for Alaska*" (2021). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. Paper 741) (Hughes, Melina, "BookTube and the Formation of the Young Adult Canon" (2017). *Book Publishing Final Research Paper*. 24)

Figure 1. Visual example of videos that are trendy on BookTube // Source: Youtube // curated by author



A notable impact of BookTube on the publishing sector is its capacity to foster authentic word-of-mouth promotion. Publishers frequently partner with BookTubers by supplying Advanced Reader Copies (ARCs) or orchestrating marketing initiatives for new publications. Such partnerships have demonstrated success in engaging specific demographics, especially younger audiences, and generating excitement for forthcoming releases. For instance, major publishing houses known as the “Big Five” – Hachette (France), HarperCollins (United States and United Kingdom – British-American, with origins in both countries), Macmillan (United Kingdom – originally British; now part of the German Holtzbrinck group, but historically UK), Penguin Random House (United Kingdom and United States (British-American multinational, formed by the merger of UK-based Penguin Books and US-based Random House), and Simon & Schuster (United States) – often distribute ARCs to influential BookTubers, accompanied by themed merchandise, to stimulate interest in new book launches (Tomasena, 2019). This approach enhances visibility while enabling publishers to leverage the trust that audiences have in the recommendations of their preferred creators.

The impact of BookTube transcends mere marketing; it has notably influenced the careers of emerging authors who have found exposure through this platform. Prominent instances include Sasha Alsberg, a well-known BookTuber (with around 318.000 subscribers) whose collaborative novel *Zenith* was released by Harlequin Teen, and Christine Riccio, who shifted from producing book-centric content to establishing herself as a published

author. These narratives exemplify how BookTube has transformed into a venue where creators can connect their identities as readers with their aspirations as writers, thereby enhancing the literary landscape (Mitchell, Amanda, "The Impact of BookTube on Book Publishing: A Study of John Green's Looking for Alaska" (2021). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. Paper 741b).

The interactive characteristics of the platform offer publishers essential insights into audience preferences. By examining viewer interactions with videos – such as comments on reviews or conversations regarding trends – publishers gain a clearer understanding of what readers desire in upcoming titles. This feedback mechanism has established BookTube as a strategic resource for recognizing emerging trends and adjusting marketing strategies accordingly (Tomasena, 2019b). Furthermore, its worldwide presence has enabled publishers to engage with a variety of audiences across different languages and cultures, thereby enhancing their market opportunities.

In comparison to emerging platforms such as BookTok and Bookstagram, BookTube provides a more measured and analytical framework for discussing literature. While TikTok's brief videos prioritize emotional responses and Instagram highlights visual presentation, YouTube's extended format facilitates comprehensive reviews and fosters a more profound interaction with literary works (Reddan, Bronwyn, "Social reading cultures on BookTube, Bookstagram, and BookTok" n.d.) (Arnone, 2021).

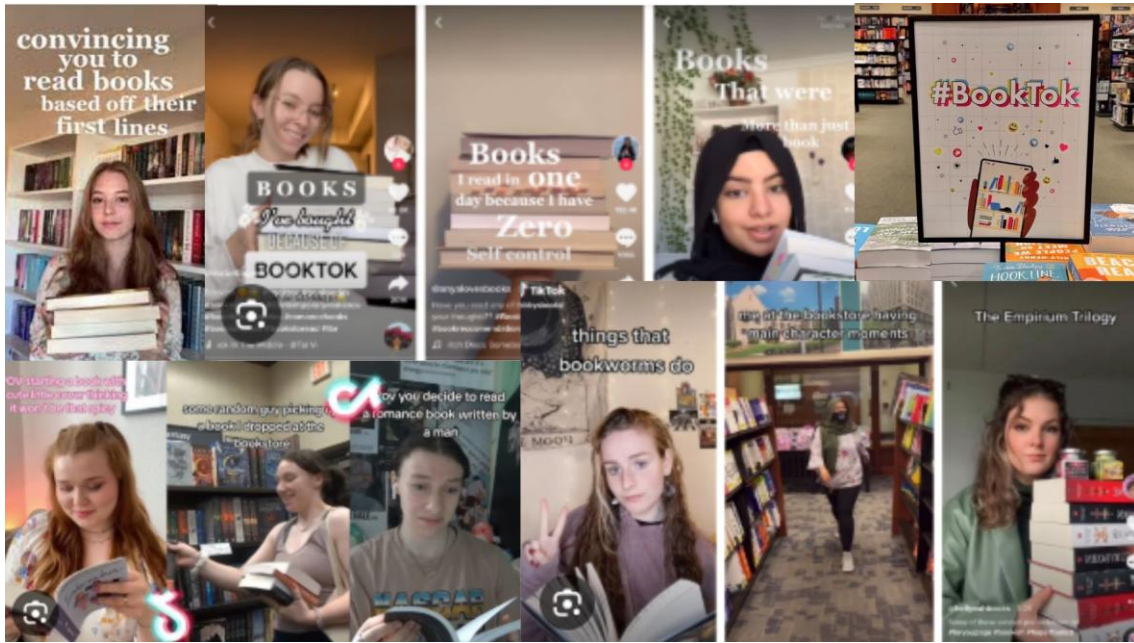
The significance of BookTube has solidified its position as a crucial platform within the digital literary community, serving as a lasting partner for publishers seeking to establish genuine relationships with their audience. In summary, BookTube has profoundly transformed the publishing landscape by altering marketing approaches, nurturing emerging authors, and building an active community of readers. Its influence persists, shaping contemporary discussions and promotions of books across various social media channels.

As the impact of BookTube began to stabilize, new platforms emerged that transformed the methods of book discovery, discussion, and marketing in the digital landscape. BookTok, a community on TikTok, and Bookstagram, a book-centric subculture on Instagram, have significantly influenced the literary scene with their distinctive strategies for engaging readers. While BookTube is characterized by its long-form content and comprehensive discussions, BookTok and Bookstagram appeal to different audience

preferences. BookTok features short, dynamic videos that utilize striking visuals, music, and voiceovers to evoke emotional responses and create viral moments surrounding books. Conversely, Bookstagram focuses on aesthetic presentation through elegantly styled images of books and reading environments, appealing to a wide range of readers who appreciate visual narratives. These platforms have not only enhanced the legacy of BookTube but have also introduced innovative avenues for publishers to engage with readers and boost book sales in an increasingly digital environment.

These platforms have built lively, worldwide communities where book lovers can connect, exchange suggestions, and produce eye-catching content that enriches the reading journey. The effect of these communities on the publishing world has been significant and noticeable. BookTok, especially, has shown an amazing power to sway book sales and reading habits. Its algorithm focuses on engagement rather than the popularity of the creators, which has led to quick and widespread sharing of book recommendations. This has caused a remarkable increase in sales for highlighted titles, often sparking renewed interest in older books and pushing new releases to the top of the bestseller lists. By July 2023, the #booktok hashtag had garnered more than 112 billion views, which played a substantial role in the sale of over 20 million books in the year of 2021 (Grain, 2024).

Figure 2. Visual example of trendy BookTok videos // Source: TikTok // curated by author



Conversely, Bookstagram flourishes through visually curated content that not only highlights the narratives contained within books but also emphasizes their visual allure. Elegantly arranged photographs frequently accompany insightful reviews or personal reflections regarding individual reading experiences (Siegal-Bergam, 2024). The heightened attention to aesthetics has resulted in a greater concentration on book design and the production of special editions by publishers and bookstores aiming to leverage social media trends.

Figure 3. Example of a Special Edition // curated by author



The capacity of these platforms to promote instantaneous engagement among creators, authors, and readers is one of their most intriguing features. Both BookTok and Bookstagram enable direct interactions via comment sections or live streaming sessions (Siegal-Bergman, 2024b). This feeling of community is further strengthened through initiatives such as reading challenges and giveaways, which promote engagement across various literary genres.

Figure 4. Visual example of Bookstagram // Source: Instagram // curated by author



The influence of these communities can be measured. As reported by Publishers Lunch, the leading 90 authors on BookTok experienced a remarkable increase in their total sales, rising from nine million units in 2020 to 20 million units in 2021 (Schmidt, 2024b). The influence of BookTok continued to be important beyond the year 2021, as evidenced by BookScan data indicating that sales of titles by authors featured on BookTok mounted to around 47 million copies in 2022 (*BookTok Helped Book Sales Soar. How long Will That Last?* n.d.). In 2022, despite a 5.8% decrease in total book sales, authors associated with BookTok experienced a noteworthy growth of 66% (Biino, 2023). The pronounced difference underscores the platform's capacity to stimulate sales, even amidst a difficult market landscape.

This increase in sales illustrates the noticeable impact of social media on the processes of book discovery and consumer purchasing behaviour. An industry expert observes that BookTok has emerged as a central hub for readers who possess clear preferences. These individuals are not looking for validation from traditional literary audiences, such as *New York Times* subscribers; rather, they share similar tastes and are unapologetic about their choices (Schmidt, 2024c).

The surfacing of BookTok has fundamentally transformed the literary landscape, enabling readers to discover affirmation and a sense of belonging beyond conventional literary frameworks. This evolution signifies a wider movement in the ways individuals interact with literature and pursue genuine experiences in their reading journeys. Historically, literary endorsement was predominantly derived from authoritative entities such as prestigious literary magazines, academic bodies, or celebrated critics. Readers aspiring to be regarded as intellectually astute often sought validation from these traditional gatekeepers, aligning their literary selections with those recognized as notable by the literary establishment. In contrast, BookTok has disrupted this established order by fostering an environment where readers can freely celebrate their tastes without the need for external approval (Noahglenney, 2025).

The democratization of literary preferences has enabled numerous readers to freely appreciate genres and titles that were once overlooked by conventional literary communities. Romance novels, young adult literature, and various other popular genres have discovered a supportive platform on BookTok, and conventional literary validation is more intricate than it may seem at first glance. Although certain readers experience a sense of freedom from the necessity of external endorsement, others may merely be substituting one type of validation for another. The yearning for acceptance and acknowledgement does not vanish; it merely transitions to a different social group. Some users of BookTok may continue to seek validation, granted now from their contemporaries on the platforms instead of from established literary figures.

Moreover, the veracity of these preferences and the genuine nature of users' interactions on BookTok are becoming increasingly challenging to evaluate. Similar to various elements of social media, the distinction between authentic enthusiasm and performative actions has become progressively indistinct (Schieren, 2024c). Individuals may shape their BookTok identities to conform to popular trends or to attract a larger audience, which could undermine the genuineness of their literary preferences. The ambiguity

surrounding authenticity is a noteworthy concern within the context of social media platforms. As users gain a heightened awareness of the curated nature of online identities, it becomes progressively difficult to discern whether individuals are genuinely articulating their preferences or merely adhering to prevailing trends on these platforms.

In the realm of BookTok, this ambiguity fosters a multifaceted interaction among authentic literary passion, performative reading behaviours, and the quest for communal affirmation. Although the platform has certainly opened fresh avenues for readers to engage and express their interests, it has simultaneously given rise to novel types of social pressure and conformity.

Furthermore, while some users may curate their content to align with popular trends or specific genre communities – potentially creating a blend of genuine enthusiasm and performative behaviour – many others maintain their authenticity in their love for books, irrespective of what is deemed “trendy”. This amalgamation of motivations contributes to the vibrancy of platforms like BookTok: it encompasses both those who seek recognition through shared literary tastes and those who simply enjoy the fellowship and community that arises from discussing beloved books with others who understand their passion.

1.1.2 The Pressure on Authors in the Age of Social Media

The impact of social media on consumer behaviour within the publishing sector is crucial. According to a 2023 report by Statista, 72% of authors utilizing social media regard it as their main marketing instrument (Chowdhury et al., 2024). Social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram enable authors to engage directly with their audience, thereby cultivating a sense of community and fostering reader loyalty. This transformation has noticeably influenced the publishing industry, leading publishers to consider an author’s online presence as an essential element in the negotiation of new contracts (Puckett-Pope, 2025c).

Michael LaBorn, a key figure at Left Unread Books, a division of Bindery Books, notes that publishers are increasingly allocating larger budgets to influencers. This trend is largely attributed to the recognition that influencers are transforming how readers interact with literature (Puckett-Pope, 2025d). This assertion highlights the increasing

acknowledgement of the influence that social media exerts on the development of reading habits and preferences. The incorporation of social media into publishing strategies has significantly contributed to the emergence of influencer marketing within the sector. As previously mentioned, publishers now routinely distribute advanced reader copies (ARCs) to book influencers who possess considerable followings, thereby transforming these social media personalities into essential partners in marketing efforts (Puckett-Pope, 2025e). This strategy not only generates anticipation prior to the launch but also contributes to sustained visibility in a crowded marketplace.

The widespread use of social media in the publishing industry presents several challenges. The vast availability of free content on the internet has created significant obstacles in convincing readers to invest in digital books or subscription services (Hayes, 2024). In response, publishers and authors have implemented a range of strategies, such as paywalls, advertising revenue models, and collaborations with brands for sponsored content (Hua & Hua, 2025).

The overwhelming dominance of certain titles on social media platforms can hinder the visibility of talented authors who struggle to achieve recognition without a strong online presence (Schmidt, 2024d). Here are some examples:

Author and blogger:

You can write the best book in the world, but if nobody knows it exists, it's like shouting into the void. (Bransford, N. (n.d.). *Nathan Bransford, author*. <https://nathanbransford.com>)

Irish Thriller Writer:

It's hard not to feel invisible when your book is buried under a mountain of bestsellers and celebrity memoir. (Howard, C. R. (n.d.). *Catherine Ryan Howard, Irish thriller writer*. <https://www.catherineryanhoward.com>)

Author and former literary agent:

The hardest part isn't writing the book. It's getting people to notice it. (Wendig, C. (n.d.). *Terribleminds* [Blog]. <https://terribleminds.com>)

An Anonymous Self-Published Author:

It feels like unless you're already famous or have thousands of followers, your book is just another drop in the ocean. (Reddit. (n.d.). *r/selfpublish*. Reddit. <https://www.reddit.com/r/selfpublish/>)

This prevailing trend has sparked concerns about the potential uniformity of literary expressions and the growing pressure on writers to prioritize financial success over their artistic integrity. Such concerns are warranted, considering the significant transformations the publishing industry has undergone in recent decades, which have profound implications for both the creation and reception of literature. At the heart of these issues is the consolidation within the publishing sector, where a limited number of multinational corporations – like Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, and Hachette – dominate the global market. As Thompson (2012) points out, “the publishing industry today is characterized by a high degree of concentration, with a small number of large firms accounting for a substantial share of the market” (p.13). These corporations, driven by profit motives and shareholder expectations, often prioritize works perceived as commercially viable. As a result, there is a discernible trend towards publishing titles that adhere to established formulas or genres known for strong sales, such as popular thrillers, romance novels, or celebrity memoirs.

This commercial approach tends to foster predictability and mass appeal, inadvertently resulting in a homogenization of literary output. Striplhas (2009) notes that “the logic of the blockbuster has come to dominate publishing, with publishers seeking the next big hit at the expense of diversity and risk-taking” (p.24). The previously rich diversity of voices, styles, and themes within the literary landscape is in jeopardy, as unconventional or avant-garde works are increasingly sidelined in favour of those that align with current market trends (Murray, 2023). The growing inclination towards uniformity is exacerbated by reliance on data analytics and algorithms that predict consumer preferences. Publishers now have access to vast amounts of data concerning readers’ purchasing habits, online engagements, and even their reading velocities. While this information can be beneficial for marketing and distribution strategies, it also promotes a more cautious stance towards acquisitions. As Schmidt (2024d) notes, “algorithmic recommendations and sales data have become central to editorial decision-making, often at the expense of literary innovation” (p.87). Manuscripts that do not conform to popular genres or that challenge established norms may be deemed excessively risky, regardless of their artistic merit. Consequently, authors often find themselves pressured – either explicitly by agents and

editors or implicitly by market dynamics – to conform to prevailing tastes and expectations. The creative process transitions from an exploration of innovative ideas and artistic limits to a concentration on producing content that is likely to achieve commercial success. As Murray (2023) articulates, “the pursuit of marketability can undermine the very qualities that make literature original and meaningful” (p.211)

There’s always pressure. A great deal of pressure, when writing, since my first books were so successful. (Sparks, N., & Archer, J. in Subramanian, R. (2023). *The pressure of being an author.*)

Art is about risk and imagination, but the marketplace rewards formula and predictability. When the market drives what gets published, originality takes a backseat. (Atwood, 2019)

When literature becomes a product designed for mass appeal, it risks losing the very complexity and nuance that make it meaningful. (Smith, 2015)

If I don’t get the book turned in on time, they’ll be freaking out. ... Sometimes there’s an overwhelming feeling of panic. It’s like a rock ‘n’ roll concert, and what if I don’t show up? (Cornwell, 2008)

There’s pressure to treat authors like Coca-Cola... ‘How many books can you put out?’ ... It’s not worth it to me. (Meltzer, 2008)

They’re wondering if they’re going to earn out their advance. They’re wondering if their marketing pushes are worth it, if their newsletter is worth it. And, like... Everybody is just so – Everybody’s so anxious and tight. (Parker, n.d.)

You don’t deliver on time, and that entire chain collapses like dominoes... If we missed a deadline, you can be confident that a catastrophe of some sort has occurred... Don’t miss deadlines. It’s bad. And the guilt will gnaw on you for months. (Andrews, n.d.)

This situation presents a significant dilemma for writers. On one side, the aspiration to connect with a broad audience and attain financial security is undeniably appealing.

Oppositely, the pressure to emphasize marketability can undermine authenticity and innovation. As noted by Schmidt (2024e), “authors express feeling obligated to modify their stories, simplify intricate themes, or embrace popular clichés to enhance their publication prospects”. For example, bestselling fantasy writer Sarah J. Maas was compelled to revise her novel *House of Flame and Shadow* within a remarkably brief period after her publisher voiced dissatisfaction with the manuscript’s trajectory, a process that Maas herself characterized as “the most difficult book I’ve ever written” (Maas, 2024, Instagram Q&A). The hurried revisions resulted in mixed responses from fans, with some observing that the narrative felt “less nuanced” and “more formulaic” compared to earlier instalments (Goodreads reviews, 2024). In a similar vein, Rebecca Yarros, the author of the acclaimed romantasy (a genre that mixes romance and fantasy) *Fourth Wing* series, disclosed in interviews that her publisher requested an expansion of the series from three books to five, a decision widely interpreted as a tactic to leverage the series’ commercial success (Yarros, 2024, Publishers Weekly interview). As Yarros articulated, “There’s a lot of pressure to keep the momentum going and meet readers’ expectations, even if it means changing the original plan.” Such examples highlight the intricate balance authors must maintain between artistic integrity and market demands in the current publishing environment. This often results in a sense of artistic compromise, where the writer’s initial vision is either diminished or entirely lost. For novice and emerging authors, the stakes are even more pronounced, as the necessity to penetrate a fiercely competitive industry frequently necessitates yielding to editorial demands that favour commercial viability over creative authenticity.

Furthermore, the growing demand for authors to prioritize financial success extends beyond the mere content of their writings. Contemporary authors are increasingly expected to participate in the marketing and promotion of their works, cultivate personal brands on social media, engage with their readership, and even organize their own book tours (Thompson, 2012; Murray, 2023). While these activities may boost sales, they shift focus from the craft of writing to the business of self-promotion. As Murray (2023) points out, “the lines between author, marketer, and entrepreneur have become increasingly indistinct in the digital era” (p.198). This merging of roles may overshadow the intrinsic worth of literature as a means of personal expression, social critique, or cultural enhancement in favour of its commercial potential (Cordell, 2015). Thompson (2012) additionally notes that publishers now “regularly anticipate authors to maintain an active

social media presence and engage in book promotion” (p.377), further emphasizing the transition from artist to entrepreneur and raising concerns regarding the long-term effects on literary culture.

This shift in expectations is apparent in the journeys of numerous modern authors, who now deem it crucial to develop a personal brand and engage with their audience through online platforms. This situation is further supported by publishers, who frequently mandate that authors engage in promotional efforts and sustain active social media accounts as a condition of their publishing agreements (Thompson, 2012). Many authors now coordinate their own virtual or physical book tours, take part in library events, and participate in community festivals to enhance their visibility and sales. While these endeavours are advantageous for connecting with readers, they require considerable time and effort, often hindering the creative process. The difficulty of reconciling writing with self-promotion is a prevalent issue for authors. As noted by Elite Authors, achieving the right balance between creating high-quality work and marketing it necessitates continuous experimentation and can lead to significant stress. This broadening of responsibilities blurs the conventional line between writer and entrepreneur, compelling authors to navigate both creative and commercial domains.

Moreover, the pressure to meet market demands can affect the very content of literary works. Writers, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds or with non-traditional narratives, frequently encounter editorial recommendations to modify their stories to align with more commercially viable trends. A tangible illustration of how authors from marginalized backgrounds or those with unconventional narratives are often urged to alter their stories for commercial viability can be observed in the experiences of writers of colour within the publishing sector. For example, as highlighted by NBC News, authors of colour often face editorial demands that their narratives should revolve around themes of trauma or adversity, as these stories are viewed as more appealing to mainstream audiences.

Cathy Park Hong, poet and essayist:

As someone who writes in American culture, my talent is measured by how much I hurt on the page. ... I was conscious of the fact that there would be an expectation that I would write about my own racial trauma as an Asian American woman. ... Was it to satiate the appetite of a broader American audience, or a

white audience – to allow them to take a ride in my reality before arriving at some kind of self-affirmation?

Narratives that end in some kind of individual triumph or reclamation don't leave room for all of these other, more nuanced, not quite legible feelings – feelings like shame, suspicion, melancholia. But those feelings are huge for people of color, for anyone in marginalized positions, living in a country where their realities are constantly gaslit by a dominant culture who tells their stories for them. Or doesn't allow them to tell their own stories. (Hsu, H. (2020, March 4). Cathy Park Hong's Minor feelings. *The New Yorker*.)

Laura Warrell:

... the pressure to make mentions of race digestible to white readers, the lack of inclusion in community writing circles, and my decades-long search for representation... Will this book, like so many cultural products made by creatives of color, be expected to somehow prove the viability of Black novels in the marketplace. (Warrell, L. (2022, September 28). Laura Warrell on publishing while Black. *Literary Hub*.)

An analysis of the film “American Fiction”, reflecting real experiences of Black authors in publishing:

Black authors constantly grapple with the pressure to conform to the expectations of the publishing market. ... Monk critiques Golden's novel as 'trauma porn' - a needlessly traumatic story created to shock and entertain – arguing that narratives like hers oversimplify the black experience, 'flattening' black lives. (The Conversation. (2024, February 13). American Fiction: Scathing and accurate portrayal of the obstacles Black writers face in publishing. *The Conversation*.)

When writers endeavour to craft narratives that showcase the everyday joys, intricacies, or achievements of their communities – rather than concentrating exclusively on hardship – they are occasionally informed that such viewpoints are not 'valuable enough to share', resulting in pressure to modify their work to conform to dominant stereotypes or trends (NBC News, 2022). This editorial gatekeeping not only limits the diversity of stories available to readers but also reinforces the misconception that marginalized communities are monolithic, ultimately narrowing the literary landscape and discouraging authentic representation. For instance, some authors have been encouraged to amplify conflict or adopt popular tropes to improve their chances of publication, illustrating the industry's inclination towards works that satisfy established commercial patterns. Such pressures threaten to marginalize distinctive voices and experiences, raising concerns that the

intrinsic value of literature as a vehicle for personal expression and cultural enrichment may be eclipsed by its commercial potential.

The implications of this transformation reach beyond individual authors, impacting the wider literary landscape. When financial success becomes the dominant measure of achievement, significant yet less commercially viable voices – particularly those from underrepresented communities or those addressing contentious or intricate topics – may find it challenging to secure a platform. Consequently, the literary canon risks becoming increasingly restricted, moulded by the preferences of a global market rather than reflecting the diverse range of human experiences. As a result, readers are presented with a limited array of literary works, perpetuating existing trends and deepening the cycle of homogeneity.

In conclusion, the pressure faced by authors in the contemporary digitally oriented publishing environment is intricate and extensive. The demand for commercially successful narratives, influenced by market dynamics and editorial standards, frequently compromises narrative diversity and genuine representation. As social media heightens the need for content that adheres to established norms or achieves immediate engagement, authors – particularly those from underrepresented communities – risk having their creative expressions diluted or ignored. This resultant constriction of the literary canon not only diminishes the variety of stories accessible to readers but also weakens literature's ability to mirror the complete range of human experiences. As the industry progresses, it is essential to recognize these factors and promote platforms and practices that uphold artistic integrity, inclusivity, and the celebration of a genuinely diverse literary landscape.

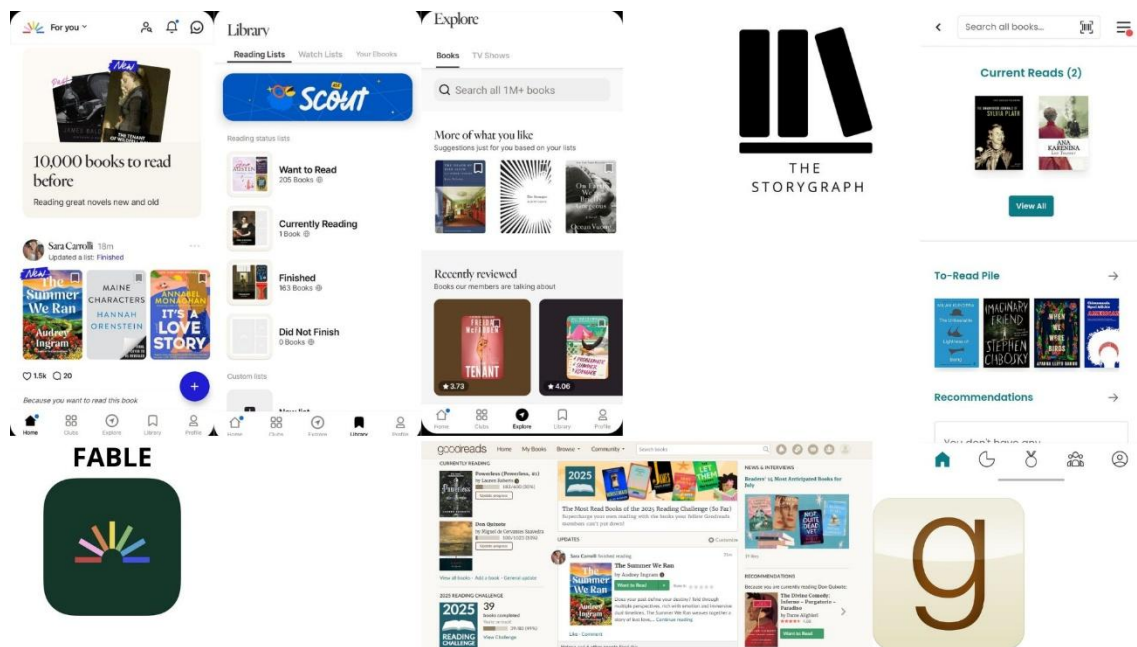
1.1.3 Reflections on Social Media and Publishing

As a viewer of book content on every platform (TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and X), I have personally experienced the transformative impact these platforms have had on the discovery, discussion, and sharing of literature. Both platforms, TikTok and Instagram, have fostered dynamic communities where bibliophiles can connect and engage in substantive conversations about books. BookTok, particularly, has excelled in propelling books to bestseller status almost instantaneously through its short-form videos format. The platform's algorithm emphasizes user engagement rather than the popularity of the

content creator, allowing even obscure titles to achieve considerable visibility if they resonate with the audience. A notable example is the resurgence in sales of Colleen Hoover’s earlier works, which benefited significantly from enthusiastic endorsements by BookTok creators.

The democratization of book promotion has notably empowered both readers and authors alike. What I find most appealing about social media is its ability to facilitate immediate interaction between writers and their audiences. Observing authors as they engage with comments, conduct live sessions, or provide glimpses into their writing processes fosters a sense of community that is both inclusive and dynamic. Platforms such as Goodreads, Fable, and Storygraph further amplify this interaction by enabling readers to post reviews, engage in discussions, and connect with fellow literature enthusiasts. It is remarkable how these exchanges can cultivate a greater appreciation for literature and inspire readers to delve into new genres and discover different authors.

Figure 5. Homepages of Storygraph, Goodreads, and Fable // curated by author



Additionally, social media has offered me a distinctive insight into how authors cultivate their personal brands. By sharing updates on their writing experiences or offering glimpses into their creative processes and daily lives as authors, they can forge a more

personal connection with their readers. This engagement transcends mere book promotion; it allows readers to connect with the individuals behind the narratives. I have followed numerous authors on TikTok and YouTube, and witnessing their daily lives or learning about the inspirations for their characters has deepened my investment in their literary works.

The remarkable viral capacity of social media is an aspect that I find particularly intriguing. Short-form content on platforms such as TikTok has the ability to thrust books into the limelight almost instantaneously, exposing them to new audiences and significantly boosting sales. It is exhilarating to witness how a single video or post can ignite widespread enthusiasm for a book. In addition, social media fosters creative marketing approaches that maintain reader engagement and excitement. From virtual book clubs and cover unveilings to collaborations with influencers and interactive polls, authors and publishers have a myriad of opportunities to connect with their audience.

While there are valid concerns regarding the impact of social media on our literary engagements – such as the inclination to favour visual attractiveness over substantive content – I believe that these online communities primarily enhance the reading experience by creating a more collaborative and vibrant atmosphere. The insights from accomplished authors and industry experts underscore the real pressures and obstacles that writers encounter in this evolving environment. Nevertheless, I also acknowledge the distinct opportunities that social media presents for both established and emerging voices to connect with their audience and foster a nurturing community.

Social media has significantly transformed the way readers find and engage with new literary voices, creating opportunities that extend well beyond traditional marketing methods. I have been particularly impressed by how social media can highlight niche genres and emerging authors, enabling them to connect with audiences who may never have discovered their work through conventional means. The capacity to share concise reviews, excerpts from books, or even innovative adaptations – like fan art or dramatic performances – ensures that literature evolves into a more interactive and visually captivating experience. Another intriguing element is the manner in which social media fosters a culture of recommendation and discovery among individuals. Readers are no longer exclusively dependent on professional critics or traditional bestseller lists; rather, they can find inspiration from a worldwide community of fellow enthusiasts. This peer-driven dynamic frequently results in more authentic and fervent discussions regarding

books, as individuals express their sincere reactions and personal preferences. For example, witnessing a heartfelt video review or a debate in the comments section can ignite curiosity and encourage me to explore a title I might have otherwise missed.

Nonetheless, I am profoundly sensible of the challenges that authors encounter in this landscape. The demand for constant visibility, the necessity to cultivate a personal brand, and the obligation to engage in marketing efforts can be daunting, particularly for those still in the process of discovering their unique voice or lacking the means to fulfil these expectations. The threat of uniformity and the sidelining of diverse perspectives is palpable, raising concerns about authors being compelled to align with market trends or to prioritize financial gain over artistic authenticity. The narratives of authors who have had to alter their creations to satisfy publishers demands, or who have been urged to concentrate on specific themes for the sake of market appeal, underscore the difficulties of preserving creative autonomy in a fiercely competitive and commercialized sector. In light of these challenges, various independent publishers and literary organizations have endeavoured to establish platforms for alternative and experimental writing. For instance, publishers like Ugly Duckling Presse, Unbridled Books, and Tin House are recognized for their commitment to producing innovative, unconventional, and thought-provoking literature, frequently placing greater importance on literary quality and cultural relevance than on commercial success (*50 Indie Publishers Who Are Accepting Unsolicited Manuscripts*, n.d.). Nevertheless, they frequently operate under constrained resources and encounter considerable difficulties in reaching a wider audience. The predominance of large publishing firms in areas such as distribution, marketing, and retail often results in even the most groundbreaking works struggling to achieve visibility. Concurrently, I find motivation in the tenacity and inventiveness of authors who have successfully navigated these challenges, leveraging social media to forge genuine connections with their audience and to disseminate narratives that might otherwise remain unheard.

In spite of the ongoing pressures that can influence and occasionally limit the creative decisions of authors, the literary landscape persists in evolving, presenting both obstacles and prospects for both readers and writers. As the publishing sector contends with the requirements of digital presence and content driven by market forces, the physical locations where literature is found and appreciated – bookstores – continue to serve as essential focal points for the community. The lasting charm of these establishments, along with the traditions they cultivate, prompts us to reflect on how the dynamics between

authors, readers, and the marketplace will influence the future of storytelling and the culture surrounding books. I firmly maintain that we will not reach a point where physical bookstores cease to exist. The idea of a future absent of these cherished spaces strikes me as both unlikely and profoundly sorrowful. There exists an irreplaceable enchantment in entering a bookstore – a soft silence that welcomes you at the entrance, the familiar aroma of paper and ink blending in the atmosphere, and the reassuring sight of shelves filled with untold stories waiting to be explored. For numerous readers, myself included, the experience of browsing in person transcends mere utility; it is a cherished ritual. It serves as an invitation to meander, to pause, and to allow curiosity to lead you toward unforeseen literary gems.

Bookstores represent more than mere commercial establishments; they function as havens for creativity and meeting places for like-minded individuals. There is a subtle excitement in selecting a book you are unfamiliar with, perusing the initial lines, and experiencing that exhilarating spark of connection. Dialogues with insightful booksellers frequently introduce new favourites, and the serendipitous encounters with fellow readers – sharing knowing glances or recommendations – foster a sense of community that is both uncommon and invaluable in our increasingly digital age. I have lost track of the instances where I exited a bookstore with a book I had no intention of purchasing, simply because someone's passion or a handwritten staff recommendation persuaded me to explore it further.

Physical bookstores provide a tactile experience that cannot be matched by online shopping. The sensation of a beautifully crafted cover, the heft of a hardcover book in one's hands, and the sound of pages turning – these sensory delights are fundamental to the reading experience. Numerous bookstores extend their role beyond merely selling books; they host author events, poetry reading, book clubs, and have cafés inside where you can read while drinking a good cup of coffee, transforming into lively cultural centres. These events cultivate authentic connections and remind us of that literature fundamentally represents a shared experience. While I acknowledge that the ease of online shopping and e-books will continue to influence and transform the industry, I firmly believe that physical bookstores will persist, evolving and reinventing themselves as they have historically done. Their strength resides in their capacity to provide something intangible yet priceless: a sense of place, belonging, and discovery. As long as there are readers who value the experience of browsing through shelves, who take

pleasure in the chance discovery of a new favourite, and who seek the companionship of fellow book enthusiasts, bookstores will continue to be a vital and enchanting component of our cultural landscape. In a world that frequently feels fast-paced and impersonal, bookstores encourages us to pause, to dream, and to connect – with narratives, with others, and with ourselves.

Simultaneously, the progression of the literary landscape extends beyond mere physical locations. Despite these challenges, social media continues to offer remarkable opportunities for development and innovation within the publishing industry. The quotations presented below illustrate the significant impact of social media on professional paths.

I can trace almost my whole career back to when I joined Bookstagram at 14 or 15... I was part of the scene in 2016 when Bookstagram really helped books gain popularity and generate revenue for publishers. – Giselle Gonzalez's (Puckett-Pope, 2025f)

I started my career as a radio DJ, but when I discovered Twitter in 2009, it completely changed my trajectory. I used it to connect with listeners and artists, which led to opportunities I never imagined possible in traditional media. Now, I run a successful social media consultancy, helping businesses harness the power of these platforms. – Jessica Northey (Shaikh, 2024)

My entire professional life changed when I started blogging in the early 2000s. it allowed me to share my thoughts on emerging technologies and connect with like-minded individuals globally. This led to speaking engagements, book deals, and consulting opportunities that I never would have had otherwise. – Brian Solls (Shaikh, 2024b)

Notwithstanding these success narratives and looking ahead, the publishing world faces a tough challenge: it needs to find a way to use the influence of social media while still keeping a variety of literary voices strong and respected. This change requires us to be careful about how we use social media. We need to make the most of its benefits while still keeping the important values of different types of literature and creative expression intact.

The publishing industry must strike a delicate balance – leveraging social media’s vast influence while preserving literary diversity and creative integrity. The challenge lies in amplifying voices without overshadowing them. (J. Smith, 2023. “The Digital Pen: Social Media and the Future of Publishing”)

To conclude, although the influence of social media on the publishing industry is intricate and accompanied by various challenges, I contend that its net effect has been predominantly beneficial rather than detrimental. The sense of community fostered, the avenues for discovery created, and the direct connections established between authors and their audiences are of immense value. Nevertheless, it is essential for all parties involved – including publishers, authors, and readers – to stay alert to the dangers of homogenization and to proactively champion diversity and creative risk-taking. By doing so, we can guarantee that literature continues to be a dynamic, significant, and inclusive element within our society.

1.2 The Open Access Movement

The open access (OA) movement is a major change in how academic publishing works, focusing on making research available for free online. It started because of the “serial crisis” in the 1970s, when the rapid increase in academic journals put a strain on university library budgets. The OA model tackles this problem by allowing free access to research papers and data, which boosts visibility, encourages teamwork, and speeds up scientific advancements. The OA movement started in the early 2000s when the internet and the World Wide Web opened new ways to share research.

As the movement progressed, various OA models were developed to tackle the issues associated with traditional publishing. One of the main models that gained popularity is Gold OA, where authors or their institutions cover article processing charges (APCs) to publish their work in open access journals (*Open Access to Scholarly Publications Is Essential, Experts Agree*, n.d.). Concerns about the financial strain on researchers prompted the creation of different methods, like Diamond Open Access, which removes costs for both writers and readers.

The OA movement does more than just make information easier to get. It’s really important for creating fairness in academia, especially for researchers from low-income

countries who usually struggle to access resources that require subscriptions (*Open Access to Scholarly Publications Is Essential, Experts Agree*, n.d.-b).

OA promotes a more inclusive and varied academic conversation by ensuring that everyone has equal access to important information. Recent statistics highlight the increasing impact of OA publishing. By 2024, almost half of all academic articles will be accessible in some type of open access format (Dudley, 2021). This change has greatly helped researchers from various institutions and has been especially beneficial for independent scholars. However, there have been some challenges: one major issue is the sustainability of open access models, especially those that depend on article processing charges (APCs) (R. Anderson, 2024).

Concerns about how to keep quality standards and make sure that author-pays models can last over time continue to be a topic of discussion in the academic world. Even with these obstacles, the OA movement is still making progress. Programs such as cOAlition S's "Towards Responsible Publishing" policy, which was launched in December 2024, are designed to acknowledge and reward all types of scholarly work, including preprints, review reports, and editorial choices (R. Anderson, 2024b).

This shows an increasing awareness of the various ways people can contribute to academia beyond just writing traditional journal articles. As scholarly publishing changes, the OA movement is leading the way in making knowledge more accessible to everyone. Even though there are still some challenges, the main ideas of accessibility, fairness, and creativity are helping to define how academic communication, and teamwork will develop in the future.

The OA movement has consistently impressed me as an immensely beneficial force within the academic and scientific realms, one that not only democratizes knowledge but also cultivates a culture of collaboration and innovation, which is crucial for tackling the intricate challenges of our era. At its essence, I contend that open access is fundamentally about dismantling the financial barriers that have historically restricted participation in scholarly discourse. For an individual who values both education and equity, the notion that research – often financed by public funds – should be confined behind costly paywalls appears inherently unjust. Open access guarantees that anyone, anywhere, can access the most recent findings, whether they are a student at a well-funded university,

an inquisitive amateur, or a researcher in a nation where library budgets are severely constrained.

One of the most persuasive arguments in favour of open access is its capacity to equalize opportunities for aspiring scholars from diverse backgrounds. Conventional publishing models have historically favoured researchers affiliated with prestigious institutions, who typically enjoy access to comprehensive library subscriptions and institutional backing. Conversely, independent researchers, early-career academics, and those from underfunded institutions are often sidelined from the latest advancements in their fields simply due to their inability to afford journal subscriptions. Open access eliminates this barrier, enabling talented individuals everywhere to engage in and benefit from the global discourse.

In addition to promoting equity, OA significantly enhances the speed of scientific and academic advancement. When research is accessible without cost, it can be disseminated, debated, and developed upon at a faster rate. This level of transparency not only aids in avoiding redundant efforts but also fosters collaboration across disciplines, as researchers from various fields can more readily access and incorporate one another's findings. It is truly motivating to consider the myriad innovations and discoveries that have emerged due to the ability of scientists and scholars to utilise and expand upon open research. In a time when global issues – such as climate change, public health emergencies, and technological upheaval – demand swift, collective action, the capacity to share knowledge openly is increasingly vital.

I am profoundly impressed by the innovation and flexibility exhibited by the open access movement in creating new models for its sustainability. Although the concerns regarding the financial viability of open access are legitimate, I contend that the community's readiness to explore various funding mechanisms—such as institutional backing, consortia partnerships, and alternative frameworks like Diamond OA—illustrates a dedication to discovering solutions that benefit all stakeholders. The rise of initiatives such as cOAlition S and the increasing acknowledgment of diverse scholarly outputs (including preprints, peer reviews, and data sets) signify a developing movement that is attuned to the requirements of the academic community. Furthermore, I value the way open access promotes a more inclusive and diverse academic environment. By providing broader access to research, it invites participation from demographics that have traditionally been marginalized within academia. This inclusivity enhances the academic

discourse, introducing fresh perspectives and concepts that may otherwise be ignored. As an individual who appreciates intellectual diversity, I regard open access as an essential mechanism for guaranteeing that every voice—irrespective of institutional ties or geographical position—can be acknowledged.

Undoubtedly, the open access movement faces several challenges. A significant issue is the rise of non-peer-reviewed articles or, in certain instances, content that may not consistently be accurate or thoroughly examined. The simplicity of online publishing can occasionally result in the dissemination of misinformation or subpar work, which presents risks for both researchers and the general populace. Additionally, there is ambiguity regarding how to guarantee the dependability of open access materials, particularly as the amount of available content continues to expand. Nevertheless, I contend that these challenges do not diminish the overall significance of open access. Rather, they underscore the necessity of upholding rigorous peer review processes, cultivating critical thinking abilities among users, and endorsing platforms that emphasize quality and transparency. Despite these hurdles, the advantages of open access—such as enhanced accessibility, inclusivity, and the acceleration of discovery—significantly surpass the disadvantages, and the movement persists in evolving in ways that confront and alleviate these issues.

In summary, my endorsement of the open access movement stems from the conviction that knowledge ought to be regarded as a public asset rather than a commodity exclusive to a select few. Although the shift to open access presents various challenges—especially concerning funding, quality control, and the viability of emerging models—the fundamental tenets of accessibility, equity, and innovation are positively reshaping academic publishing. I remain hopeful that as open access progresses, it will foster a more inclusive, collaborative, and vibrant scholarly environment that serves everyone, from seasoned researchers to inquisitive learners globally. In the end, I perceive open access as a crucial advancement toward a future where the quest for knowledge is genuinely accessible to all.

1.3 Challenges and Opportunities

The global publishing sector is experiencing a profound transformation, with the European market leading numerous changes. This section will provide a comparative

framework to assess the challenges and opportunities encountered by the publishing industry in Europe, as well as in the United States and Asian markets. By exploring these varied markets, we can acquire important insights into the dynamic landscape of publishing on a global scale.

In Europe, a notable challenge lies in the multitude of languages and diverse markets, which complicates cross-border publishing efforts. Historically, European publishers encountered considerable obstacles concerning translation costs and the intricacies of cross-border publishing. Given the multitude of languages spoken throughout the continent, the financial burden of translating books posed a significant hindrance to accessing broader audiences. For instance, in the early 2000s, EU institutions allocated hundreds of millions of euros each year for translation services, with the average expense per page for literary translation soaring to €276 at the Council by 2025 (*C_2006284EN.01000101.xml*, n.d.). The elevated expenses were exacerbated by the necessity to cover translation rights, royalties, and the supplementary marketing efforts needed to promote non-native authors in international markets (Rüegg, 2023). Moreover, translation posed not only a financial challenge but also a cultural one, as publishers needed to identify proficient translators capable of accurately conveying literary subtleties and context into the target language. In spite of these challenges, governmental assistance – such as grants and subsidies – was instrumental in enhancing the feasibility of translated literature, particularly for smaller publishing firms and for works translated from languages with fewer speakers (Literature Across Frontiers et al., 2012) (CEATL, 2008).

Currently, although translation costs are still a factor, the main obstacle has transitioned to the incorporation and consequences of artificial intelligence (AI) within the translation workflow. AI-driven machine translation, which is characterized by the application of algorithms and neural networks to autonomously convert text from one language to another, has transformed the efficiency and affordability of multilingual publishing.

Platforms such as DeepL and Google Translate are capable of handling extensive volumes of text in mere minutes and at a significantly lower expense compared to human translation, accommodating over 99 languages and allowing publishers to swiftly connect with larger audiences (Team, 2025) (Cordis, 2022). Nonetheless, the emergence of artificial intelligence has brought about new challenges. Numerous publishers across Europe are now requesting that translators utilize drafts produced by AI, thereby reducing

their role to that of post-editors instead of original creators. This transition has resulted in diminished pay, reduced transparency, and a deterioration in the working conditions for literary translators, as indicated by reports from professional associations and industry surveys (Vulser, 2024) (“The Future Relationship of Literary Translation and AI,” 2020).

Although AI translation proves to be quite efficient for simple or genre-specific literature, it frequently encounters difficulties when dealing with intricate literary works, idiomatic phrases, and cultural subtleties. This often leads to translations that, although technically precise, may fall short in terms of depth, creativity, and emotional impact. Consequently, the hybrid method – employing AI for preliminary drafts and human translators for enhancement – has gained popularity, although it does not entirely address issues related to quality and authenticity (Team, 2025b). A notably urgent concern in today’s environment is the occurrence of “machine dehumanization”. This concept describes how machine translation can diminish the uniqueness, creativity, and cultural nuances that human translators contribute to literary texts. Although machine translation is efficient, it generally results in outputs that are more straightforward, less subtle, and frequently devoid of the stylistic depth found in literature translated by humans (*TITLE: The Comparison of Translationese in Machine Translation and Human Translation in Terms of Translation Relations*, n.d.).

The process of dehumanization is further intensified by the economic motivations for publishers to favour speed and cost efficiency over quality, resulting in a literary environment where the “voice” of the original author – and consequently, the translator – is either diminished or entirely lost.

“translation becomes merely another step in this process, incorporating updates and enhancements to the already-translated text, modifying at the margins in ways akin to what we have observed in our monolingual example. This approach is remarkably economical and progressive. So what could possibly be the issue? ... the mediation implies that the receiver has little understanding of who the sender is ... and that, I propose, is central to the dehumanization experienced at both the sending and receiving ends.” (TINET, 2003)

The translator’s voice is always present, and when publishers rush for speed or use machine translation, that voice – and the author’s intent – can be lost. Literary translation is an art, not a commodity. – Jennifer Croft (Interview with The Guardian, 2023)

There's a real risk that, in the race for efficiency and profit, publishers will turn to AI and automated tools, which can never replicate the nuance and artistry of human translation. The result is a flattening of voices, both the author's and the translator's. – Sophie Hughes (Interview with Words Without Borders, 2022)

AI can produce a readable text, but it cannot capture the subtlety, the humor, or the heartbreak that a human translator brings to the page. When publishers prioritize cost over quality, literature suffers. – Anton Hur (Panel discussion at the London Book Fair, 2023)

There is a danger that translation becomes seen as a technical process, especially with the rise of AI. But translation is interpretation, it's creative. If we treat it as mere data processing, we erase the human element that makes literature meaningful. – Daniel Hahn (article in The Bookseller, 2022)

Publishers' increasing reliance on AI and tight deadlines is eroding the space for careful, thoughtful translation. The unique voice of both author and translator risks being drowned out by the demand for speed. – Charlotte Collins (keynote at the International Translation Day, 2023)

In conclusion, while the past was defined by the high costs and logistical hurdles of human translation, the present is characterized by the rapid adoption of AI and machine translation, which brings both opportunities and risks. The efficiency and affordability of AI are undeniable, but they come at the potential cost of literary quality, cultural authenticity, and the professional livelihoods of translators. As the European publishing sector continues to evolve, the challenge will be to harness the benefits of AI without sacrificing the human elements that make literature vibrant and meaningful.

Other challenges include varying copyright regulations, and distinct consumer preferences across different nations. Diverse consumer preferences among various European countries pose a considerable challenge for publishers, as each market is influenced by distinct cultural, economic, and social elements. Unlike the more uniform markets such as the United States, the literary landscape in Europe is significantly fragmented. Readers across different nations display distinct preferences regarding genres, book formats, and purchasing behaviours. This fragmentation stems from the linguistic, cultural, and regulatory diversity present in Europe, which sharply contrasts with the relative uniformity of the U.S. market. In the U.S., a single language and more centralized publishing frameworks facilitate wider, standardized marketing and

distribution approaches. For example, the European book market is described as a “mosaic of national markets, limited not only by economic or legal, but also by language or cultural barriers,” resulting in significant differences in consumer habits and market structures across countries (Maciejewski, Jędrzej (2019): *Book Markets in Europe: Facing the Challenges of the Digital Single Market*, Comparative Economic Research).

For instance, a recent RISE Bookselling study revealed that although fiction is the predominant genre throughout Europe, significant differences exist: Italian readers demonstrate a strong affinity for biographies and classical literature, whereas non-fiction is particularly esteemed in Portugal. Furthermore, the probability of purchasing books as gifts is notably greater in Italy and Portugal in comparison to other nations, which illustrates the influence of regional customs and values (EIBF et al., 2024).

These distinctions also apply to book formats; although physical books continue to be preferred choice globally, e-books and audiobooks have become increasingly popular in nations such as Germany and Spain, especially among the younger demographic. The reasons for buying from independent bookstores differ as well – atmosphere and variety are crucial in Germany and Spain, whereas cost and convenience hold greater significance in Portugal (EIBF et al., 2024a). Consumer behaviour is additionally shaped by overarching cultural values, including individualism, perspectives on technology, and the significance of community ties. As emphasized in cross-cultural consumer studies, elements such as uncertainty avoidance, indulgence, and regional traditions influence what readers look for, how they assess books, and the locations they prefer for purchasing them. For example, consumers in Europe are placing greater importance on experiences that promote connections with others, whether through physical events at bookstores or through online virtual communities (Innova Market Insights, 2025). In Spain, one of the primary motivations for purchasing from physical bookstores is the personalized experience of receiving recommendations from booksellers, a tendency that is not as strongly observed in other regions (EIBF et al., 2024b).

Furthermore, the increase in digital formats is not uniform throughout the continent: although Scandinavian nations such as Sweden and Norway exhibit elevated rates of digital adoption, recent years have witnessed a decline in e-book and audiobook sales in those regions, whereas other markets like Germany and the Netherlands are experiencing an upsurge in digital consumption (eibf, 2024, *International bookselling markets report 2023: The European and International Booksellers Federation*). The variety of consumer

preferences necessitates that publishers customize their strategies for each market, encompassing the genres of books they choose to publish and promote, the formats they provide, and the retail channels they emphasize. This complexity is further exacerbated by economic variables such as inflation, which affects book pricing and purchasing power in diverse ways across different countries, as well as by the disparate levels of technological adoption seen among various age demographics and regions. Ultimately, grasping and addressing these unique consumer preferences is crucial for publishers aiming to thrive in the intricate book market of Europe; however, it also requires adaptability, localized knowledge, and a readiness to appreciate the continent's rich cultural diversity.

The complexities of consumer behaviour and the adoption of technology highlight the intricate nature of the European publishing environment, where a universal strategy is seldom successful. Publishers are required to consistently adjust to the distinct needs of each market; however, their endeavours are further complicated by enduring structural and regulatory obstacles that exist throughout the continent. Despite the European Union's promotion of cross-border cooperation and cultural interchange, the actual distribution of books continues to be fragmented, impeded by national legislation, diverse copyright laws, and logistical challenges. In this context, strong governmental support – such as funding for translations and initiatives aimed at strengthening independent bookstores – plays a crucial role in maintaining the vibrancy and diversity of European literature.

Robust governmental backing for literature across Europe transcends just principle; it is reinforced by notable, actionable initiatives and financial support that demonstrably influence the richness and variety of the continent's literary scene. For instance, the Creative Europe programme of the European Union allocates specific funding for the translation, publication, and promotion of literary works, facilitating over 500 book translations annually in more than 40 source languages and 30 target languages, while engaging 300 translators and 400 contemporary authors each year (Culture and Creativity – European Union) (*Books and Publishing*, 2024b). Grants can hold considerable value: projects of a smaller scale that translate a minimum of five books may obtain funding of up to €100,000, whereas larger projects that translate at least 21 books can secure up to €300,000, with the funding potentially covering as much as 60% of the overall project

expenses (Eufunding, 2025) (*A Continent of Stories - EU Schemes for Publishers, Writers and Translators*, n.d.).

National initiatives are similarly strong: for example, Poland's Book Institute reimburses up to 100% of translation and copyright expenses for Polish literary works, whereas the Romanian Cultural Institute and Austria's Ministry of Culture have established enduring translation assistance programs (Europa Criativa) (Büchler, 2012). A survey indicates that since 2007, 40% of publishers in Europe have benefited from EU translations grants. Notably, certain publishing firms, such as Colibri Publishers based in Sofia, have produced as many as 60 titles with the support of EU funding (Lit Across Frontiers) (Büchler, 2012b). Support for independent bookstores is also substantial and targeted. In Germany, the "Neustart Kultur" federal program allocated €10 million specifically to bookshops for digital upgrades, web shop development, and staff training, with eligible stores receiving between €1,500 and €7,500 each. France has enacted various initiatives, such as covering shipping expenses for independent booksellers during periods of lockdown and introducing a €5 million emergency plan via the Centre National du Livre, along with grants of up to €150,000 for modernization efforts related to renovations and IT enhancements (EIBF, 2020). Ireland and various other EU nations have implemented comparable initiatives to assist the industry during times of crisis. In addition to direct financial support, policy measures like France's legislation that restricts book discounts aim to safeguard independent bookstores from aggressive pricing strategies employed by major online retailers (Publishers Weekly, 2024).

Concurrently, the emergence of digital publishing and audiobooks introduces both opportunities and challenges: while these formats have the capacity to engage broader audiences, their uptake is slower compared to regions like the United States, thereby adding another layer of difficulty for publishers attempting to navigate the complex European book market (Throsby, D. (2010). *The economics of cultural policy*. Cambridge University Press). The rise of digital publishing and audiobooks has greatly enhanced the availability of literature throughout Europe, with the goal of providing cultural resources to a wider and more varied audience. Digital formats, including e-books and audiobooks, eliminate numerous physical barriers that previously restricted access to literature, particularly for individuals with visual impairments, dyslexia, or mobility issues. Initiatives such as Libro Parlato illustrate this objective by creating and distributing high-quality audiobooks for free, focusing on short texts and popular works, via platforms like

Liberliber.it and QR code-enabled posters in educational institutions and libraries. These efforts specifically aim at demographics that have historically encountered challenges in reading, such as commuters, foreign language learners, and individuals with disabilities, thus promoting increased cultural engagement and literacy (*Libro Parlato*, n.d.).

The widespread adoption of smartphones and smart speakers has enhanced accessibility, enabling users to enjoy literature while commuting, performing household tasks, or during their leisure time, thereby converting previously unproductive moments into chances for interaction with books (Ltd, n.d.). Despite these advancements, the shift towards accessible digital publishing in Europe faces several obstacles. The European Accessibility Act, which is scheduled to be fully implemented by June 2025, requires that all digital publications – including e-books and their distribution platforms – adhere to stringent accessibility standards. Although more than 70% of European publishers recognize these obligations, fewer than 40% of those creating e-books are actively working on accessible versions, underscoring a notable disparity between awareness and actual implementation (*European Publishers Increasingly Aware of Accessibility, but Resources and Training Needed: APACE Reveals - Aldus*, n.d.-b) (P. Anderson, 2024). The absence of effective, user-friendly software for the development of accessible e-books, along with the necessity for continuous training and collaboration throughout the supply chain, continues to be a significant concern. As highlighted by Ricardo Franco Levi, the president of the Federation of European Publishers, advancements in accessibility have predominantly depended on the social responsibility of publishers, while public policy support has been inadequate to align with the aspirations of the sector (*European Publishers Increasingly Aware of Accessibility, but Resources and Training Needed: APACE Reveals - Aldus*, n.d.-c). Nonetheless, the directive is anticipated to create a domino effect, prompting publishers to embrace “born-accessible” standards that will advantage not only European readers but also audiences worldwide (Narekuli, 2022).

Audiobooks, especially, are undergoing serious expansion and are progressively acknowledged as a conventional reading medium for a diverse audience. The European audiobook industry was assessed at \$2.51 billion in 2024 and is anticipated to attain \$20.87 billion by 2033, exhibiting a compound annual growth rate exceeding 26%. Countries such as the UK, Germany, and France are at the forefront in terms of both volume and revenue, propelled by advancements in technology, increased internet access, and the growing trend of consuming content on the go. The appeal and accessibility of

audiobooks have been further enhanced through localized narration, curated content, and integration with smart devices, particularly among younger demographics and individuals with adaptable study or work schedules. Moreover, national initiatives, exemplified by Italy's collaboration between cultural institutions and publishers, have led to an 18% rise in audiobook revenues in 2023, alongside a doubling of usage among university students over the last three years (AIE, ISTAT, 2023) (Ltd, n.d.-b).

These advancements emphasize the transformative capacity of digital formats in enhancing the accessibility of literature for everyone, while simultaneously underscoring the necessity for ongoing investment, innovation, and policy backing to guarantee that no reader is excluded. Furthermore, these collective initiatives – translation grants, modernization funds, emergency assistance, and protective legislation – illustrate the tangible and continuous dedication of European governments to preserve a vibrant, diverse, and accessible literary culture.

On the other hand, the publishing landscape in Asia grapples with issues of censorship and governmental oversight, particularly in nations such as China, where publishers must adhere to stringent content regulations. Unlike Europe, where linguistic diversity is the predominant concern, Asia's expansive market is often influenced by political constraints and varying levels of market access. Additionally, the issue of piracy remains a significant threat in numerous Asian countries, adversely affecting the revenues of authors and publishers. Despite these challenges, Asia holds considerable growth potential, especially in emerging markets like India and Indonesia, where rising literacy rates and increased smartphone usage are fuelling demand for digital literature. Furthermore, countries such as South Korea and Japan are enhancing their global presence through cultural exports, including manga, webtoons, and literature related to K-pop, showcasing the impact of cultural products in the publishing industry (*Readership for digital literature in China exceeds 460 million subscribers, 2021*).

The United States, in contrast, is confronted with the issue of consolidation among major publishing firms, raising alarms regarding potential market monopolization. Unlike the situation in Asia, where governmental oversight can restrict content, the American publishing landscape is characterized by the dominance of a few large corporations, as previously mentioned, which poses challenges for independent publishers and the representation of diverse perspectives. Although the emergence of self-publishing and digital platforms has broadened market access, it has also resulted in an oversaturated

environment, complicating the discoverability of new authors. Moreover, the intensifying discussions surrounding censorship and book banning in various regions have affected the availability of literature addressing contentious subjects. Nonetheless, the United States continues to be a formidable force in global publishing, benefiting from a large English-speaking demographic and a rich literary heritage. Advances in AI-driven content recommendations and hybrid publishing strategies present new avenues for growth, ensuring the ongoing evolution of the market.

To conclude, each of these regions encounters specific challenges – Europe deals with the intricacies of multilingualism, Asia faces governmental constraints and issues of piracy, while the United States addresses corporate consolidation and accessibility concerns. Nonetheless, they also possess distinct opportunities that, if effectively harnessed, could propel the global publishing industry forward.

CHAPTER II – THE ACADEMIC PUBLISHING SECTOR & THE ROLE OF CEI: A CASE STUDY

The academic publishing industry in Europe has experienced significant change since its inception in the 17th century, transitioning from exclusive scholarly circles to a multifaceted ecosystem influenced by commercialization, digital advancements, and the open access movement. While its fundamental aim continues to be distribution of validated knowledge, the frameworks and obstacles it faces mirror wider societal and technological developments.

The origins of contemporary academic publishing can be traced back to 1665, a year that marked the inception of two groundbreaking journals: the *Journal de sçavans* in France and the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society in England. These initial publications set foundational standards, such as peer review and empirical validation, and served as central platforms for the intellectual community known as the “Republic of Letters” in Europe (Taster & Taster, 2022). The Royal Society’s emphasis on the open sharing of experimental data established the foundation for contemporary peer review systems, even though structured evaluation methods did not materialize until the mid-19th century. In the 20th century, the field of academic publishing experienced significant expansion, characterized by a doubling of journal publications approximately every 15 years to meet the needs of the growing research communities (Fyfe, A., et al. (2017), *Untangling Academic Publishing: a history of the relationship between commercial interests, academic prestige and the circulation of research*).

The aftermath of World War II signified a profound transformation in the publishing landscape, as commercial entities such as Elsevier and Pergamon Press leveraged the increasing volume of research output. Their approaches, which included the establishment of specialized journals, a focus on institutional subscriptions rather than individual sales, and an emphasis on global English-language markets, fundamentally altered the industry. The “serial crisis” of the 1980s revealed underlying systemic tensions, as library budgets became increasingly pressured by rising journal expenses,

while funding for monographs continued to decline (Fyfe, A., et al. (2017), *Untangling Academic Publishing: a history of the relationship between commercial interests, academic prestige and the circulation of research-b*).

The process of digitalization has amplified these trends: it has facilitated unparalleled access while simultaneously hastening the consolidation of markets. By the year 2023, a small number of leading publishers, such as Elsevier (Netherlands), Springer Nature (Germany/UK), Taylor & Francis (UK), Wiley – John Wiley & Sons (USA), Oxford University Press (UK), Cambridge University Press (UK), SAGE Publishing (USA/UK), held significant shares of high-impact journals, in spite of the European Union’s efforts to promote a “publicly owned, not-for-profit scholarly communication ecosystem” (*Publishers - Eua, 2024*) (Aarhus University et al., 2022).

Europe has established itself as a frontrunner in the realm of open access (OA) reforms. Initiatives such as Plan S, which was adopted in Portugal by 2022, and has resonated throughout EU member states, require that research funded by public resources be made publicly accessible. The 2023 EU Council Conclusions directly questioned the viability of paywall models, promoting Diamond Open Access (which eliminates fees for both authors and readers) and endorsing initiatives such as DIAMAS (Developing Institutional Open Access Publishing Models to Advance Scholarly Communication) to enhance the publishing capabilities of institutions (*Publishers – Eua, 2024b*) (Aarhus University et al., 2022b).

Nonetheless, the implementation of open access remains inconsistent. A 2024 analysis indicated a division between nations that are focusing on emerging open access platforms, such as MDPI (Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute) journals, and those that continue to rely on established “Big Five” publishers (Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, Hachette, Simon & Schuster, and Macmillan). This disparity is linked to the national capacity for innovation and institutional rankings, indicating that publication decisions are influenced by wider socio-economic environments (*Two Scholarly Publishing Cultures? Open Access Drives a Divergence in European Academic Publishing Practices, n.d.*).

The main role of the sector – ensuring the dissemination of knowledge with quality control – now intersects with pressing discussions surrounding equity and sustainability. Although OA enhances accessibility, there remain ongoing concerns regarding:

- Financial sustainability: the implementation of commercial article processing charges (APCs) may pose a risk of marginalizing researchers with limited funding. (*Academic publishing in Europe must be sustainable, equitable, and driven toward research excellence and integrity*, 2023)
- Geographic inequities: the legacy of Eurocentrism continues to endure, as evidenced by the fact that merely 5% of prominent academic journals are situated in Southern or Eastern Europe. (*Two Scholarly Publishing Cultures? Open Access Drives a Divergence in European Academic Publishing Practices*, n.d.-b)
- Research Integrity: the demand for publication in prestigious journals contributes to the rise of predatory publishing practices and the manipulation of metrics. (Science Europe, n.d.)

Innovative approaches highlight the importance of collaborative frameworks and the sharing of infrastructures. The DIAMAS initiative serves as a prime example of this movement, establishing common standards for 136 institutional publishers spanning 23 nations (*Publishers - Eua*, 2024b). Concurrently, reforms in the evaluation of research are shifting away from metrics based solely on journals to acknowledge a variety of outputs, to align incentives more closely with the principles of open science (Science Europe, n.d.-b).

These initiatives aim to harmonize traditional practices with innovative approaches, ensuring the integrity of peer review while broadening access. This endeavour reflects the Royal Society's foundational goal of establishing science as "a public good". (Taster & Taster, 2022b) (Fyfe, A., et al. (2017), *Untangling Academic Publishing: a history of the relationship between commercial interests, academic prestige and the circulation of research-c*)

The sector is currently at a pivotal juncture, where its capacity to harmonize commercial interests with the principles of public welfare will dictate its future as a crucial driver of European research. Alternatively, it risks devolving into disjointed and inequitable subsystems. With the European Union increasing its backing for community-oriented publishing, the next ten years may witness a revival of institutional frameworks that echo the pre-commercial foundations of academia, albeit adapted for the digital era.

2.1. Academic Publishing Sector in Portugal

Having explored the wider European context, focusing now on Portugal, where the academic publishing industry has experienced a distinct evolution. This evolution showcases Portugal's distinct cultural, economic, and linguistic attributes, alongside its commitment to digital advancements and the open science movement prevalent throughout Europe.

The academic publishing landscape in Portugal has undergone significant changes, influenced by collaborative efforts among institutions and advancements in digital technology. For centuries, scholarly publications were largely decentralized, primarily produced by university presses and scientific societies. However, the 21st century witnessed structural reforms aimed at enhancing this sector. A key development took place in 2007 with the establishment of the Portuguese Association of Higher Education Publishers (APEES), which brought together 11 academic publishers to tackle systemic issues such as low publication rates (with most publishers releasing fewer than 100 titles each year) and disjointed distribution systems (Leão, 2015b).

The consolidation of institutions occurred simultaneously with the emergence of OA policies, particularly highlighted by the 2014 directive from the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), which mandated the archiving of publicly funded research in repositories such as RCAAP (Open Access Scientific Repositories of Portugal). This sector's shift towards digitalization was further propelled by the introduction of platforms like UC Digitalis, which was established by Coimbra University Press (CUP) in 2012. As the foremost academic digital platform in the lusophone world, UC Digitalis facilitated the integration of its publications into prominent international databases, including ISI Web of Science and Scopus, as well as European research infrastructures such as DARIAH-EU (Leão, 2015c).

Portugal's commitment to OA was solidified with the endorsement of the National Open Science Policy in 2016, culminating in its alignment with Plan S in 2022. This evolution prompted a revision of OA policies in 2025, which eliminated embargo periods and prioritized the retention of author rights, underscoring a dedication to ensuring that publicly funded research is accessible to all. The RCAAP initiative has played a pivotal role in this transformation by collecting and indexing materials from institutional

repositories, achieving the consolidation of 70 OA journals by 2013, since its beginning in 2008, ranking Portugal 28th worldwide in terms of the number of open access journals (POTTS, C. (2013) *Up and Away: Open Access in Portugal.*), and surpassing 1 million documents by 2024. Additionally, institutions such as the University of Minho have utilized metrics like download statistics, through RepositóriUM, to assess their impact and visibility, indicating a growing dependence on quantitative measures. However, some critics have raised concerns about the potential risk of emphasizing quantity at the expense of quality.

It is the quality, not the quantity, of research that make the biggest difference... Unfortunately, there are many pressures that cause researchers to focus on producing a large quantity of research rather than high quality research. For example, researchers' publication rates inform decisions about grants, promotions, professional standing and funding. Hence, the perceived need to 'publish or perish'. (Harvey, 2020)

The proliferation of publications often comes at the expense of quality. This editorial explores the factors driving this phenomenon, its negative impact on the research community, and the need for systemic reforms to uphold the integrity of scientific research. (Faiza, 2025)

It values quantity over quality and creates perverse incentives that easily lead to questionable research practices. Relying too much on metrics has led to researchers engaging in practices that reduce the trust in, and quality of, research. These include 'salami slicing'... and selective reporting. (Article by Professor Ginny Barbour and Dr. Adrian Barnett) (Bouter & Horn, n.d.)

Scientists must publish less, or good research will be swamped by the ever-increasing volume of poor work. (Michalska-Smith & Allesina, 2017)

The development of academic publishing in Portugal has been influenced by a multifaceted interaction between advancements and enduring structural constraints. As the nation increasingly integrates with global trends in scholarly communication, various patterns and obstacles have surfaced, highlighting both the drive for innovation and the vulnerability of systemic change. A notable trend observed is the increasing implementation of OA practices. This transition was initiated with the introduction of the Open Access Policy by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) in 2014, which required that all research funded by public resources be archived in institutional

repositories. This initiative gained momentum with the establishment of the National Open Science Policy in 2016, which provided a foundation for a more transparent and accessible research environment. Portugal's adoption of Plan S, in 2022, also reinforced its dedication to OA. Concurrently, transformative agreements made between 2022 and 2024 with leading publishers via the Biblioteca do Conhecimento Online (b-on) network have allowed researchers from participating institutions to publish in open access journals without facing additional processing fees. This approach has been particularly effective in reducing financial obstacles to publication and promoting equitable engagement in academic discussions.

At the institutional level, digital repositories like Estudo Geral at the University of Coimbra and the repository of Instituto Superior Técnico have made notable progress in enhancing the visibility and accessibility of research produced in Portugal (Universidade de Coimbra, *Estudo Geral: the Open Access digital repositior of the University of Coimbra*, 2025). These platforms function not only as archiving resources but also as tools for assessing impact and performance. The strengthening of these digital infrastructures has supported national initiatives aimed at integrating Portuguese research into the global academic discourse.

Furthermore, commercial book sales have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of economic difficulties, with a reported 7% increase in sales for the year 2023. This growth can be primarily attributed to the engagement of younger audiences and the influence of social media, underscoring the changing dynamics of digital platforms in influencing reading behaviours and academic discourse (Lavan, 2024) (“Book Sales Rise in Portugal”, 2024).

Notwithstanding these developments, numerous challenges continue to affect the academic publishing landscape in Portugal. A noteworthy concern is financial sustainability, especially for smaller publishers and institutions shifting from traditional subscription models to OA frameworks. Although transformative agreements can reduce certain expenses for authors, they frequently impose financial pressures on institutions that are tasked with negotiating advantageous terms with larger publishers. This dependence on external funding underscores the necessity for stronger support systems to guarantee long-term sustainability (Universidade de Coimbra, *Estudo Geral: the Open Access digital repositior of the University of Coimbra*, 2025b) (Carreira, 2025b).

A further challenge lies in upholding editorial quality within digital repositories. The task of ensuring editorial quality in Portuguese digital repositories, such as RCAAP, arises from the conflict between the objectives of OA and the standards of academic rigor. Although, as mentioned previously, RCAAP has greatly enhanced the accessibility of Portuguese research – collecting 1 million documents by 2024 (Alfredo, 2025) – the platform’s inclusive strategy for content deposition results in a range of quality levels. It features peer-reviewed articles alongside unreviewed theses, dissertations, and institutional reports, frequently without adequate labelling to indicate their editorial status. This amalgamation of different types of outputs poses a risk of merging thoroughly vetted research with materials that have not undergone formal peer review, thereby compromising credibility for global audiences and indexing organizations such as ISI Web of Science or SciELO. (Saraiva & Rodrigues, n.d.) (Leão, 2015e)

Factors Influencing Quality Challenges:

- Automated deposits and institutional motivations: numerous universities in Portugal emphasize repository metrics, such as download statistics, in their institutional assessments. This focus results in the automated mass submission of student theses and technical reports. Although these contributions enhance the visibility of the institutions, they frequently lack proper editorial review. For instance, the SARI (Serviço de Alojamento de Repositórios Institucionais) service provided by RCAAP features repositories where approximately two-thirds of the content consists of unpublished theses and internal reports (Alfredo, 2025b) diminishing the perceived academic worth of the platform.
- Variability in Peer Review Standards: journals listed in RCAAP exhibit significant differences in their review practices. For instance, *Acta Radiológica Portuguesa* implements a structured approach to peer review, while others may not adhere to such rigorous standards. (BILHIM, T., May-August 2022, *Editorial – Peer-reviewing: the Backbone of Scientific Journals*. Vol 34-nº2. p 3-4) Some entities do not have established formal protocols. The lack of centralized guidelines governing repository content results in the presence of unreviewed materials alongside peer-reviewed articles, leading to confusion for users and indexing databases. (Alfredo, 2025c)
- Metadata and Standardization Deficiencies: the validator tool of RCAAP ensures adherence to metadata standards as outlined by DRIVER guidelines (Alfredo,

2025d). However, discrepancies continue to exist. For example, numerous Portuguese journals do not have well-defined self-archiving policies, and repository managers frequently need to manually rectify metadata inaccuracies after deposits are made. This labour-intensive procedure may lead to the incorrect categorization of content types, such as misidentifying a thesis as a “research article” (Alfedro, 2025e).

Consequences for Global Recognition

The presence of non-peer-reviewed materials hinders the indexing of Portuguese research within international databases. SciELO, an essential platform for scholarship in the Portuguese-speaking world, mandates that journals adhere to rigorous editorial standards, which encompass transparency in the peer-review process and consistent publication timelines. Nevertheless, merely 5% of Portuguese social science journals fulfil these criteria. This issue can be attributed, in part, to the lack of uniformity in repository practices. Likewise, repositories such as UC Digitalis, which are at the forefront of providing multilingual access, encounter difficulties in obtaining comprehensive indexing in Scopus or Web of Science. This is primarily because the automated submission of theses does not meet the curation standards set by these databases. (Leão, 2015d)

The expansion of RCAAP signifies Portugal’s dedication to open science; however, it is essential to balance accessibility with quality assurance to maintain global competitiveness. In the absence of more defined editorial standards, the repository’s inclusivity may unintentionally reinforce the notion that Portuguese research lacks rigor, creating a paradox for a system that aims for international acknowledgement.

Linguist challenges represent considerable hindrances to academic publishing in Portuguese. While platforms such as UC Digitalis have enhanced accessibility to research conducted in Portuguese-speaking regions, a mere fraction of indexed articles are available in the Portuguese language. This situation restricts their influence within international academic circles, which are largely characterized by English-language publications. Initiatives aimed at fostering multilingual publishing formats may serve to mitigate this disparity, thereby safeguarding the cultural and linguistic richness of

Portuguese academic contributions. (Universidade de Coimbra, *Estudo Geral: the Open Access digital repositior of the University of Coimbra*, 2025-d)

The fragmentation of the market presents additional challenges to the advancement of the sector. Although entities such as APEES have promoted cooperation among higher education publishers, numerous institutions persist in functioning autonomously instead of establishing a strategic partnership that could bolster their competitiveness on a global scale. This lack of collaboration restricts their capacity to expand operations or to invest in innovative dissemination techniques, including multimedia formats and AI-enhanced translation tools. (Núcleo de Multimédia e e-Learning · Instituto Superior Técnico · <http://nme.ist.utl.pt>, n.d.-c)

In summary, the academic publishing landscape in Portugal exemplifies a vibrant interaction between advancement and ongoing obstacles. The nation's dedication to open access and digital transformation has established it as a prominent figure in Europe's scholarly communication arena. Nevertheless, it is essential to tackle challenges concerning financial viability, editorial standards, language barriers, and market fragmentation to guarantee the continued success of Portuguese academic publishing within the ever-evolving global research environment.

Having analysed the academic publishing landscape in Portugal reveals the importance of investigating a particular case study that highlights the sector's challenges and innovations. The Centre of Intercultural Studies (CEI) at ISCAP, affiliated with the Polytechnic of Porto, serves as a pertinent example of how a research centre engages with and adapts to the academic publishing environment. Founded in 2007, CEI has emerged as a key contributor to research and publishing in intercultural studies, reflecting the dynamics of the wider academic publishing field while also presenting distinctive methods of scholarly communication.

2.2. Editorial Practices & Contributions to the Sector

The Centre for Intercultural Studies has markedly impacted the academic publishing landscape through its editorial methodologies and dedication to scholarly discourse. Central to CEI's publishing activities is the E-REI – E-Journal of Intercultural Studies (*Call for Papers E-REI*, n.d.). This journal, which is listed in various esteemed databases

such as SCOPUS, demonstrates CEI's commitment to upholding rigorous standards in the field of academic publishing (*CEI – P.PORTO | Ensino Superior Público*, n.d.).

CEI's methodology regarding editorial practices is firmly grounded in a vigorous ethical framework, as demonstrated by their detailed Ethics Statement for E-REI (Centre for Intercultural Studies of the Polytechnic of Porto, 2021). This document delineates key principles including research integrity, confidentiality, and the prevention of plagiarism, reflecting CEI's dedication to maintaining the highest standards in academic publishing. The centre prioritizes peer review, requiring that all manuscripts undergo evaluation by a minimum of two expert reviewers, thereby ensuring the quality and credibility of the published research (*CEI – P.PORTO | Ensino Superior Público*, n.d.-b).

Additionally, CEI's commitment to maintaining editorial independence and transparency throughout the publication process enhances the overall integrity of the academic publishing industry. Alongside its journal, CEI has released almost twenty books for global distribution (Tulekian, Ribeiro & Álvares (Eds.). (n.d.). *Cultural and Linguistic Education in the Context of Migration*. <https://www.iscap.pt/cei/en/books/>; Pascoal, Tallone & Furtado (Eds.). (n.d.). *Dark Heritage Tourism in the Iberian Peninsula: Memories of Tragedy and Death*. <https://www.iscap.pt/cei/en/books/>; Sarmiento, Clara (n.d.) *Concepts and Dialogues Across Shifting Spaces in Intercultural Business*. <https://www.iscap.pt/cei/en/books/>), focusing on the area of intercultural studies. This varied publishing portfolio highlights the centre's dedication to sharing knowledge through multiple avenues, thereby enhancing the richness and diversity of academic literature within the discipline.

2.2.1. Practical Examples from CEI's Work

CEI's initiative showcases numerous practical instances of creative strategies in academic publishing and the dissemination of research. The centre's role in organizing and overseeing masterclasses, conferences, and seminars highlights its dedication to promoting academic dialogue outside conventional publishing methods (*CEI – P.PORTO | Ensino Superior Público*, n.d.-c).

Masterclasses

- Masterclass on Literary & Battlefield Tourism: on March 14, 2025, this masterclass delved into the depictions of Waterloo found in the travel diaries of Dorothy, Mary, and Dora Wordsworth. It analysed themes including literary war tourism, mass tourism, and the appropriation of relics, highlighting the significant role that female authors played in shaping British literary traditions in the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat. (*Masterclass Do Mestrado Em Intercultural Studies for Business | 14 De Março De 2025*, n.d.)
- II Masterclass – Graduates of the MA in Intercultural Studies for Business: held on January 4, 2022, this event showcased presentations by alumni covering a range of subjects, including refugee integration policies in Germany, the influence of museums on local communities, and innovative methods for thesis writing. The session highlighted effective strategies for conducting academic research and fostering cultural entrepreneurship. (CEI - Centro de Estudos Interculturais do ISCAP-P.PORTO, 2022)

Conferences

- E&M 2022 – International Conference on Education and Migration: the conference addressed the convergence of education, migration, and sustainable development. Prominent topics encompassed the cultural effects of migration, the globalization of education, and language-related challenges associated with migration. Certain papers were chosen for potential publication in a peer-reviewed international journal.
- Innovation Through Heritage – Resilience Amid Climate Change: CEI participated in the international conference held in Vienna by showcasing its research focused on leveraging heritage for innovation. The conference explored essential issues, including resilience to climate change and the sustainability of cultural practices. (CEI - Centro de Estudos Interculturais do ISCAP-P.PORTO, 2025)

Seminars

- ISCAP International Week (IW2024): took place from April 15 to April 19, 2024. This series of seminars included international guest speakers conducting

workshops and seminars in diverse fields. The initiative is designed to encourage intercultural dialogue and strengthen academic collaborations by providing networking opportunities. (*International Week 2024 — ISCAP | P.PORTO*, n.d.)

- COST SHIFT Action Writing Retreat: took place on March 13-15, 2025. This seminar emphasized sustainability and research methodologies. It served as a collaborative platform for researchers from different countries to engage in projects concerning intercultural studies and sustainable development. (CEI - Centro de Estudos Interculturais do ISCAP-P.PORTO, 2025a)

Such events provide opportunities for researchers to present their findings, participate in dialogues, and establish partnerships, thereby enhancing the overall academic publishing landscape.

A notable illustration of this is CEI's assistance to emerging scholars, which is demonstrated through its yearly awards for MA dissertations and scholarships designated for junior researchers (CEI – Centro de Estudos Interculturais do ISCAP-P.PORTO, 2025).

Awards for MA Dissertations

- CEI Prize “Professora Dalila Lopes”: this esteemed accolade is awarded each year to the most outstanding dissertation or project in Intercultural Studies of any Master's program at ISCAP-P.PORTO. Awardees typically exhibit remarkable research skills and are often invited to become junior researchers or faculty members at CEI. (*CEI — P.PORTO | Ensino Superior Público*, n.d.)
- Best Student Award in MA in Intercultural Studies for Business: Ana Margarida Silva was honoured with this award due to her exceptional achievements in the 2020/2021 academic year. Her dissertation examined societal changes in mountainous regions and marginalized communities, highlighting her creative perspective on intercultural studies. Subsequently, she joined the CEI as a researcher and embarked on a doctoral program at the University of Santiago de Compostela (*Ana Margarida Cruz Da Silva (ID1B-EF93-FF6C) | CIÊNCIAVITAE*, n.d.)

By acknowledging and assisting early-career scholars, CEI plays a vital role in fostering new voices and perspectives within the discipline, thereby improving both the diversity

and quality of academic publishing. CEI's interdisciplinary methodology, which includes areas such as intercultural theories and practices, intercultural communication, and intercultural business, demonstrates the potential of academic publishing to connect various fields.

The centre's emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration is evident in its publications and research initiatives, highlighting the capacity of academic publishing to promote dialogue and foster innovation across various disciplines.

2.2.2. Impact of CEI on the Academic Publishing Sector

The influence of CEI on the academic publishing industry reaches far beyond its direct research results. By operating an open access E-Journal (E-REI) that is indexed in prominent databases, CEI plays a significant role in advancing the open access movement within the realm of academic publishing. This strategy is consistent with worldwide developments in academic communication, facilitating broader distribution of research findings and enhancing accessibility for readers around the globe.

The international partnerships established by CEI, which include collaborations with universities worldwide, play a crucial role in the globalization of academic publishing.

Formal Collaborations with Universities

- CEI fosters collaborations with various universities throughout Europe, establishing particular PhD protocols with the University of Vigo, Santiago de Compostela, and Salamanca. These partnerships enable the development of joint research initiatives and promoted academic exchanges. (CEI - Centro de Estudos Interculturais do ISCAP-P.PORTO, 2025a)
- The partnership with Brazilian universities fosters intercultural dialogue and research projects, demonstrating CEI's dedication to international academic collaboration. (CEI — P.PORTO | *Ensino Superior Público*, n.d.-b)
- Collaborations with institutions in Macao, such as University of Saint Joseph (USJ), and Mozambique underscore CEI's commitment to promoting intercultural dialogue across various cultural contexts. (CEI — P.PORTO | *Ensino Superior Público*, n.d.-c)

- Collaborations of the CEI encompass Russia, the USA, Algeria, Sri Lanka, and India, facilitating cross-cultural academic initiatives and the exchange of knowledge. (*CEI — P.PORTO | Ensino Superior Público*, n.d.-d)

Institutional Networks and Alliances

- The ATHENA European University Alliance includes CEI as a member, with the objective of advancing European higher education by fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation.
- RESMI (Higher Education Network for Intercultural Meditation) is dedicated to promoting education and research in intercultural mediation among its member institutions.
- RIESDM (Network of Higher Education Institutions for the Protection of the Mediterranean Diet): CEI plays a role in advancing research focused on the preservation of cultural heritage within this network.
- World Network of Magellan Universities: CEI engages in collaborative projects focused on global cultural studies within this network.

Other Partnerships

- CEI partners with Université d'Artois and ISIT-Paris to offer dual-degree programs in Intercultural Studies for Business, focusing on academic collaboration and integrated curricula.
- Unyleya and CIJE (the Law School of University of Porto) collaborate to foster interdisciplinary research and facilitate practical applications in the field of intercultural studies.

Collaborations of this nature promote sharing of concepts and research techniques, thereby enhancing the international academic dialogue and broadening the dissemination of published research. The centre's engagement in specialised translation and interpretation, particularly through its master's program, significantly influences the academic publishing landscape by tackling the vital challenge of language barriers in scholarly communication. Through the training of experts in this field, CEI facilitates the

broader sharing of research across different languages, thereby amplifying the global influence of academic publishing.

To conclude, the case study of CEI demonstrates the diverse functions a research centre can fulfil within the academic publishing arena. By implementing effective editorial practices, launching various publishing initiatives, supporting new scholars, and advocating for open access and international collaboration, CEI serves as a model for how academic institutions can foster innovation and uphold excellence in scholarly communication. As the landscape of academic publishing continues to transform, institutions like CEI are poised to play a crucial role in shaping its future trajectory.

CHAPTER III: INSIGHTS FROM MY INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

In this chapter, I will examine the essential aspects of my internship experience, providing a comprehensive narrative of my tenure at the Centre of Intercultural Studies (CEI) at ISCAP. This chapter will commence with an introduction to CEI as a scholarly and research-focused institution, from my perspective. Throughout this chapter, I intend to portray not only the institution but also the environment I experienced – characterized by collaboration, intellectual curiosity, and a collective dedication to academic excellence.

In the following sections, I will present a detailed account of the specific projects I engaged in during my internship, which include the editing and formatting of a multi-author academic book, as well as the assessment and preparation of articles for CEI's online journal, E-REI. I will elaborate on the diverse responsibilities I undertook from reviewing and peer evaluating academic articles to formatting manuscripts following publishing standards, drafting correspondence with authors, ensuring editorial consistency, and participating in regular meetings with the editorial team.

My experience at CEI was profoundly practical, with each task offering a chance for professional learning and development. Amid this journey, I faced various challenges – some technical, others interpersonal, or stemming from unfamiliar processes – and I will elaborate on how I navigated these situations and the strategies I employed to address them. Additionally, in this chapter I will examine the competencies acquired during the internship, encompassing both practical and interpersonal skills. These competencies include effective time management, precision in editorial tasks, professional communication, adaptability, and the capacity to collaborate within a structured yet flexible environment. The internship facilitated my transition from studying academic texts to actively engaging in their creation and refinement – a transformation that proved to be both empowering and enlightening.

In conclusion, I will explore the influence of my contributions to the Centre. Although a significant portion of my internship was dedicated to my personal and professional growth, I also acknowledge the positive impact I had on the team.

By the conclusion of this chapter, I aim to offer a thorough and candid account of the experience of developing within an intercultural academic environment and actively participating in the editorial processes that influence scholarly communication. This

chapter serves not only to record my actions but also to reflect on my learning, adaptability, and the professional growth I experienced throughout this journey.

3.1. CEI: Centre of Intercultural Studies

The Centre of Intercultural Studies (CEI) at ISCAP is notable for its distinctive blend of a well-defined mission and a truly supportive work environment. CEI fosters a relaxed and informal atmosphere that promotes curiosity and appreciates the contributions of every individual. Participation in discussions is encouraged for all, regardless of background or experience, and contributions are valued. The flexibility provided by CEI is particularly advantageous, enabling me to customize my schedule to fit my personal and academic obligations, thus promoting a more manageable balance of responsibilities. This autonomy has enhanced my motivation to produce high-quality work while ensuring that support is always accessible. Whenever I faced challenges or sought new perspectives, I could depend on my colleagues and supervisor for attentive listening and constructive feedback. Informal meetings for brainstorming or discussing ongoing projects were frequent, often resulting in the development of innovative ideas and collaborative initiatives.

Moreover, I was impressed by the multitude of simultaneous initiatives consistently underway – spanning interdisciplinary research in intercultural communication, the curation of scholarly publications, the cultivation of international collaborations, and the organization of conferences and various academic events. This array of narratives fostered a vibrant atmosphere within the Centre, where each day presented unique experiences, and the exchange of knowledge across disciplines and specializations felt both natural and omnipresent. Despite the distinct nature of our responsibilities, all members were aligned towards a common goal: the promotion of intercultural understanding. This collective mission provided a sense of unity to our efforts and cultivated a profound feeling of belonging and purpose. Even as an intern, I never perceived myself as an outsider or as someone relegated to minor roles. On the contrary, I was encouraged to engage actively, take initiative, and make significant contributions to high-level editorial endeavours. Being entrusted with responsibilities that had a direct influence on the Centre's academic outputs was immensely affirming and inspiring.

What profoundly resonated with me was how CEI exemplifies its core values in its daily operations. Interculturality at CEI transcends mere research efforts; it is an integral principle that informs the team's collaborative efforts, communication styles, and overall functioning. This was clearly reflected in the extensive scope of its initiatives and partnerships, the varied backgrounds of the authors, researchers we engaged with, and the everyday interactions among team members. This experience enriched my learning journey significantly, surpassing my initial expectations. It also highlighted the significance of adaptability, empathy, and open-mindedness within intercultural professional environments. CEI was involved in a platform where I not only honed my editorial skills but also cultivated cultural sensitivity and intellectual humility.

In my view, CEI struck an ideal equilibrium between scholarly rigor and a human-centred, inclusive atmosphere. The trust I experienced, the encouragement to undertake new challenges, and the team's openness to my contributions made me feel like an integral part of a larger mission. It was indeed a professional environment, yet it also fostered my personal growth, allowed me to take ownership of my duties, learn from my errors, and celebrate successes. This experience reinforced my aspiration to engage in intercultural and editorial settings in the future, equipping me with skills, knowledge, and lasting memories. Ultimately, CEI was not merely the venue for my internship; it was a place where I felt intellectually engaged, professionally valued, and personally motivated. My tenure here not only influenced my academic trajectory but also left a noticeably imprint on my vision for my future career.

3.2. My Experience

My internship at the Centre of Intercultural Studies (CEI) has been an exceptionally enriching and transformative experience, significantly influencing my academic, professional, and personal growth. It commenced when I, driven by the intention to proactively secure a meaningful internship for my final semester, contacted Professor Clara Sarmiento on June 26th to inquire about available opportunities. Among the various options she suggested, the CEI immediately piqued my interest, because of the strong resonance I felt with the nature of their work. After reviewing their website and some of their previously published articles, I recognized that this was an environment where I could truly flourish. Consequently, I pursued this opportunity further and was pleasantly

surprised and grateful when Professor Clara Sarmiento encouraged me to consider myself accepted. The exhilaration and gratitude I experienced at that moment were beyond words; I understood that I was about to embark on a professional journey intricately linked to my future ambitions in the editorial and publishing sectors – fields I had long aspired to enter.

As the semester began, discussions with Professor Clara Sarmiento further solidified the shape of the experience ahead. I was initially supposed to start in the second semester, but due to the team's urgent needs, I agreed, and was eager to begin earlier, during the first semester. Our first meeting, on October 2nd of 2024, marked the formal initiation of my responsibilities. From the outset, it was clear that this would be a hands-on and multi-faceted role. I was tasked with reading, revising, editing, and formatting chapters for a book that CEI was preparing for publication.

Under Professor Clara Sarmiento supervision, I was immediately immersed in the intricacies of academic editorial work, dealing with real manuscripts, real deadlines, and real scholarly expectations. The work was both challenging and exhilarating. I learned to work independently but also to coordinate with the team, when necessary, a balance that strengthened my self-discipline and ability to manage projects autonomously. At the same time, I felt constantly supported, which boosted my confidence in facing the many new challenges that arose along the way.

One of the initial assignments I undertook involved meticulously reviewing and providing feedback on several chapters (as Professor Clara Sarmiento needed another opinion on whether chapters would be accepted or not). Although I was somewhat familiar with the process of critical reading and evaluation from an academic standpoint, the requirement to do so for publication purposes added new dimensions of responsibility and rigor. I approached this task with a sense of seriousness, resulting in a comprehensive three-page feedback (it depended on the article, but usually it was three pages) document that contained candid yet constructive observations.

The positive feedback I received from Professor Clara regarding the quality of my work instilled in me a significant sense of achievement early in my internship and inspired me to uphold high standards throughout the duration. Simultaneously, I initiated the organization of materials in a more methodical and structured fashion, acknowledging the significance of maintaining compartmentalization and accessibility, particularly in light

of the extensive and varied content involved. To facilitate this process, I established multiple Word documents, each focused on a distinct facet of the editorial workflow. For example, rather than consolidating abstracts into a single file, I opted to create two separate documents – one dedicated to the Portuguese abstracts and another for the English versions – thereby ensuring clarity, organization, and ease of reference for both myself and the editorial team, not only that, but I also created a file for all of the keywords (in Portuguese and in English – separately). This division proved crucial later when I needed to verify consistency across languages, uphold bilingual coherence throughout the publication, and it was easier and practical when formatting and adjusting the final details of the book.

Additionally, I prepared a distinct document exclusively for the author’s biographical notes, arranging each biography in accordance with the sequence of authors in the book. This approach not only facilitated editorial consistency but also enabled quicker access to individual author information for updates or corrections as necessary. To further enhance this organizational framework, I compiled numerous lists, identified missing documents, marked completed tasks, and maintained comprehensive daily logs of my working hours and activities in my internship notebook, which significantly contributed to my efficiency and provided a continuous sense of progress over the months. Through this systematic and segmented methodology, I was able to manage my responsibilities more effectively. Meticulously track each stage of the process and establish a dependable system that supported both my tasks and the collaborative nature of the editorial endeavour.

Despite utilizing a systematic approach to organize and oversee my tasks, I faced numerous challenges during my internship – some anticipated, while others were entirely unfamiliar. A notable hurdle was managing multiple simultaneous responsibilities while adapting to the specific formatting and editorial standards and guidelines mandated by the publishers. I had to carefully consider and implement detailed requirements concerning font type and size, margin measurements, line spacing, bibliography and references formatting (following APA 7th rules), the correct placement of abstract and bio notes, the footnotes and its formatting, and the overall structure of the document – all while ensuring consistency and quality across numerous chapters authored by different individuals, each with their unique stylistic preferences. Although I believed I was following the publisher’s guidelines from the beginning, I realized during a meeting –

after having submitted the book to my supervisor – at the end of November, that I had inadvertently formatted the entire manuscript with the incorrect font and margin settings. This revelation was initially extremely disheartening. I had invested many hours in editing, and the thought of having to reverse and redo such a substantial amount of work was overwhelming and frustrating. Nevertheless, this challenge emerged as one of the most educational experiences of my internship. It underscored the necessity of meticulous attention to detail in the publishing industry and taught me that even minor oversights can lead to significant consequences if not addressed promptly. While the experience of making such a mistake was extremely discouraging, it motivated me to be much more diligent in reviewing and cross-referencing guidelines prior to their application. Most importantly, it instilled in me the perspective that such setbacks should not be viewed as failures, but rather as invaluable learning opportunities that would ultimately enhance my professional skills. The reformatting process, although time-consuming, greatly bolstered my perseverance and enriched my comprehension of the publishing process.

In addition to formatting, one of the most intricate and unfamiliar challenges I faced was the development of the book's index. Before this internship, I had never created an index, and I was initially at a loss regarding how to start. When I expressed this challenge, Professor Clara Sarmiento graciously provided me with a book that contained a completed index and clarified that this should serve as my model. Although this reference was beneficial, I still felt uncertain about how to implement the task using Word. To address this, I opted to conduct independent research and turned to YouTube, where I discovered several tutorial videos that elucidated the index-making process in a clear, step-by-step manner. These videos were invaluable, as they detailed the mechanics of inserting index entries, marking keywords, and generating the final index at the document's conclusion. Once I grasped the underlying logic of the process, the task became significantly more manageable – albeit still quite time-consuming. The book's length and the varying nature of the chapters contributed to the complexity, with all chapters containing approximately five keywords and differing greatly in length and density. Some chapters necessitated more extensive indexing than others due to the diversity of terms and topics they encompassed.

Nevertheless, after mastering the correct method through online tutorials, I was able to apply my knowledge with confidence and accuracy. Although the task was demanding, it became considerably less intimidating once I understood the tools at my disposal. This

experience exemplified how I navigated a notable challenge during my internship: by seeking assistance, utilizing available resources, and taking the initiative to self-educate, I transformed a previously daunting task into an achievable and even rewarding aspect of the project. Ultimately, the strategy of integrating institutional support with autonomous problem-solving emerged as a consistent theme in my approach to navigating the various challenges encountered during my internship. Whether it involved clarifying uncertainties in meetings, employing visual tools to monitor progress, or utilizing online tutorials to acquire new competencies, I discovered that my adaptability and eagerness to learn were crucial in surmounting nearly every obstacle.

Whilst these challenges were at times discouraging, they imparted crucial lessons regarding the editorial and publishing processes, as well as fostering resilience, ingenuity, and professional development. By the conclusion of this project, I had not only made substantial contributions to the creation of a sophisticated academic publication but had also armed myself with skills and strategies that will be indispensable in my future endeavours within the publishing sector.

Another domain in which I encountered both development and challenges was in the realm of professional communication. My responsibilities included composing emails to the contributing authors to inform them of the status of their chapters, whether they were accepted, rejected, or needed revisions. Crafting these emails required a careful approach: I needed to strike a balance between professionalism, respectfulness, and clarity while delivering potentially sensitive information. I created a general email template and tailored it for each author, a process that enhanced my understanding of adapting communication for diverse audiences. The majority of responses from the authors were positive and courteous. However, one author, whose submission was rejected, reacted defensively and critically to my correspondence. Initially, their response left me feeling unsettled, leading me to question whether my wording was inappropriate or if I had inadvertently offended them. After reflecting on the incident and discussing it with my supervisor, I realized that not everyone handles rejection gracefully, and as a professional, it was essential for me to remain composed, uphold my professionalism, and not take every negative reaction to heart. This experience bolstered my resilience and emotional intelligence, highlighting the significance of maintaining calmness and professionalism in the face of challenging feedback.

During my internship, I experience a supportive and enriching relationship with the CEI team. Regular meetings provided opportunities to address many uncertainties, suggest solutions, and obtain guidance. Despite periods of being overwhelmed by my master's coursework or feeling unwell, I remained dedicated to my internship responsibilities, often working remotely and managing my schedules. This level of flexibility required robust time management skills, as I needed to effectively balance competing deadlines and obligations. Maintaining comprehensive daily records of my tasks, including to-do lists and time logs, enabled me to stay organized and focused, even amidst increasing external pressures.

As this project approached its conclusion, I took on additional responsibilities by assembling the final elements of the book, including the table of contents, the table of images, and the section detailing the author's background. Furthermore, I was tasked with overseeing the incorporation of last-minute chapter submissions, confirming co-authorships, and pursuing outstanding contributions right up until the deadline.

Witnessing the book gradually take shape – after months filled with effort, challenges, revisions, formatting, and meticulous planning – was profoundly gratifying. In retrospect, despite the many errors and challenges I encountered throughout the process, I recognized significant personal development: my technical editing abilities had markedly enhanced; my capacity for professional and empathetic communication had evolved; my resilience in managing stress and obstacles had fortified; and my comprehension of the intricacies of the editorial and publishing sectors had considerably expanded.

In addition to the primary task of editing and formatting a multi-author academic book, I was also afforded the opportunity to engage in another crucial aspect of my internship at CEI: the editorial preparation of E-REI, the Centre's intercultural e-journal. This initiative, while separate from the book project, significantly enhanced my internship experience by providing a deeper insight into academic publishing and the intricacies of collaborative editorial processes. I collaborated on E-REI with my colleague, who took the lead in author communications, organized our workflow through Excel spreadsheets, and ensured a comprehensive overview of the submitted articles. Together, we established a robust and collaborative editorial team. My contributions primarily involved reviewing the submitted articles, generating peer reviews, aiding in editorial decisions, editing and formatting the accepted submissions under the journal's specific publishing guidelines.

The breadth of this project was notably remarkable, with a total of 72 articles submitted for our evaluation. These submissions originated from a diverse array of authors, including professors, researchers, students, and academics hailing from a wide spectrum of countries and institutions worldwide. Contributions were received from nations such as China, Indonesia, Macau, Brazil, among others, which significantly bolstered the journal's – and CEI's – commitment to intercultural engagement. The variety in the author's backgrounds, viewpoints, and topics not only rendered the reading experience intellectually enriching but also highlighted the necessity for meticulous, respectful, and culturally aware editorial practices.

In this undertaking, my role entailed a comprehensive evaluation of each submission, followed by the preparation of a peer review that examined its scholarly value, coherence, clarity, and alignment with the objectives of E-REI. This responsibility rapidly emerged as one of the most intellectually challenging and fulfilling components of my internship. Nevertheless, as this was my inaugural experience with the formal peer review process, I initially approached it with trepidation and self-doubt. I recognized the crucial importance of peer reviews in influencing the quality and credibility of academic publications, which added to the gravity of my task. My apprehension arose from a lack of clarity regarding the appropriate structure for a review, the tone to employ, and how to effectively balance constructive feedback with impartial assessment. I often found myself doubting my qualifications to evaluate the work of seasoned academics and researchers. The variety of submissions we received further complicated the process, as I needed to be attuned to various academic conventions, cultural viewpoints, and disciplinary methodologies.

To address this challenge, I adopted a proactive strategy. I expressed my concerns to my supervisor, who was exceptionally supportive and offered comprehensive, step-by-step guidance on how to effectively conduct and write peer reviews. Her recommendations encompassed aspects such as structure, originality, clarity of argument, and methodological rigor, as well as advice on how to deliver feedback in a professional, respectful, and constructive manner. Alongside her insights, I engaged in independent research on best practices for peer reviewing by consulting academic literature and viewing instructional videos that clarified the process in both straightforward and thorough terms. These resources explained the process and provided me with a better understanding of the expectations. Additionally, I made it a point to read peer reviews authored by others whenever feasible, which provided me with exemplary models to

follow. Gradually, my confidence increased. With each article I reviewed, I became more adept at identifying strengths and weaknesses, articulating my reasoning with clarity, and substantiating my evaluations with specific examples from the text. It's important to note that, frequently, I was the sole reviewer for many articles, although in some instances, another expert peer reviewer participated (many times our opinions were similar, although there were times the other peer reviewer and I would disagree), facilitating an even more comprehensive evaluation.

My review process for each article typically commenced with a brief evaluation of the title – if it corresponded with the article itself, with the scope and themes of E-REI and the centre's focus on intercultural studies, I would then proceed to a more comprehensive assessment of the article's content. I evaluated whether the article was well-articulated, logically organized, and thoroughly researched, ensuring it met the standards expected of an academic publication. Articles that were ambiguous, poorly organized, or lacking in critical engagement with pertinent sources were marked for rejection or needed some revision. Nevertheless, I remained cautious not to be excessively dismissive; if I identified potential in a submission, I suggested revisions instead of outright rejection. I occasionally received submissions that showed promise but necessitated considerable revisions to comply with the journal's criteria. In such cases, I made it a priority to provide comprehensive and constructive feedback, not to dishearten the authors but to assist them in enhancing their work.

To ensure that the feedback was constructive and positively received, I utilized the 'sandwich feedback' technique. This approach involves starting with positive comments regarding the strengths of the article, followed by addressing the necessary revisions with clear and respectful recommendations, and concluding with encouraging remarks that acknowledge the article's potential. I first encountered this method during my undergraduate studies, and it has consistently resonated with me. I firmly believe in its effectiveness for fostering respectful, encouraging, and productive communication. Implementing this technique in a professional editorial context has further solidified my conviction regarding its importance. It enabled me to provide critical assessments in a manner that was perceived as balanced and equitable, thereby enhancing the overall supportive nature of the peer review process. The approach demonstrated its efficacy in real-world applications: every author who received my peer reviews reacted with respect and gratitude, even with significant modifications suggested. This experience bolstered

my belief in the value of considerate communication and illustrated that constructive feedback, when provided with diligence and professionalism, can cultivate mutual respect and facilitate significant enhancement.

A significant yet nuanced challenge I faced during this process was the necessity to set aside my personal preferences and inclinations while evaluating submissions. At times, I encountered articles that, despite being exceptionally well-crafted, thoroughly researched, and entirely suitable for an academic journal, did not resonate with my interests. The subjects appeared, in my estimation, rather uninspiring or unengaging, yet they clearly fit within the journal's scope and would attract a different readership. In such instances, I had to deliberately remind myself that my role was to assess based on relevance, quality, and scholarly merit rather than personal taste. This experience proved to be a valuable exercise in maintaining objectivity – acknowledging that my duty as a reviewer was to prioritise the best interests of the e-journal over my academic inclinations. This process equipped me with the skills necessary to adopt the role of a professional editor, one who evaluates contributions to the field based on their broader significance rather than their immediate personal appeal. Following the completion of the peer reviews, we convened regularly with the rest of the editorial team and our supervisor to deliberate on the outcomes of each article and to make final determinations regarding their acceptance, rejection, or conditional acceptance pending specific revisions.

After a decision was reached, my colleague was in charge of communicating with the authors by sending personalized emails that either congratulated them on the acceptance of their articles, informed them of their rejection, or offered constructive criticism along with a list of recommended revisions. For those articles requiring modifications, authors were assigned a deadline to submit their revised versions, which I would subsequently review to verify that the changes were effectively made in accordance with my peer review feedback. If the article met the standards of E-REI, I would edit it according to the journal's publishing guidelines and upload the final version to a shared OneDrive folder. This centralized repository enabled all members of the editorial team to monitor the progress of each article and ensure that everything remained organized and current. One of my key responsibilities was to maintain consistent formatting and editing across all accepted articles.

While the process of editing and formatting the accepted articles for E-REI was not overly difficult – particularly due to the insights I had gained from my previous book editing

experience – it was nevertheless vital for ensuring the coherence and professionalism of the final product. My background in editing and formatting intricate academic documents enabled me to tackle this stage with assurance and accuracy. Utilizing the reference materials provided, including the style guide noted in my internship documentation, I effectively implemented the journal’s formatting guidelines. My duties encompassed standardizing various elements such as title fonts, spacing, citation formats, abstract placements, keywords, and bibliographic details across a wide range of submissions. This uniformity was crucial for preserving the journal’s presentation integrity, and thanks to the foundational knowledge I had previously acquired, I could concentrate primarily on quality control rather than struggling with technical formatting issues. Similar to the book project, I employed a methodical and organized strategy for managing my time and duties throughout the E-REI editorial cycle. I consistently utilized to-do lists, recorded my working hours, and monitored my daily achievements in my internship notebook. Additionally, collaborating with my colleague, we upheld a systematic and cooperative workflow, coordinating seamlessly through shared documents and a meticulously organized Excel spreadsheet that monitored the progress of each article from submission to final decision.

This framework enabled us to manage our editorial tasks with clarity and accountability, significantly enhancing communication during our regular meetings with the editorial team and our supervisor. These discussions were essential for aligning our progress with the centre’s standards, addressing borderline cases, refining our peer review approaches, and making equitable, consistent editorial choices. The atmosphere we cultivated was open and communicative, allowing us to voice concerns, exchange feedback, and collaboratively solve problems, thereby nurturing a strong sense of teamwork and mutual respect.

3.3. My Impact on CEI

Although internships are frequently perceived as mere avenues for students to acquire experience, my tenure at CEI was notably characterized by the substantial contributions I made to the institutions. During my internship, I exhibited unwavering commitment, proactive engagement, and exceptional organizational skills, which enabled me not only to complete the assigned tasks but also to facilitate the efficient operation of the Centre’s

editorial processes. My participation in two prominent editorial initiatives – the publication of a multi-author academic book and the development of CEI’s online e-journal, E-REI – placed me at the core of the Centre’s academic endeavours.

By engaging in the reading, reviewing, editing, formatting, and finalization of numerous scholarly texts, I was instrumental in upholding the high-quality standards synonymous with the institution. In the context of the book, I was assigned critical tasks – elements that are not merely ancillary but essential to the clarity and organization of an academic publication. I implemented systematic approaches, such as comprehensive to-do lists and visual progress tracking tools, which were pivotal in being on track.

Firstly, a notable and enduring contribution I made to the Centre was my active participation in the editing, formatting, and organizational development of a multi-author academic book, which served as a cornerstone of my internship experience. Under the guidance of my supervisor, I assumed considerable responsibility for shaping the publication’s structure and presentation, engaging with it throughout nearly every phase of its production. Although I had access to guidance, when necessary, a substantial portion of the practical execution was delegated to me, and I wholeheartedly embraced the autonomy afforded to me. I was deeply involved in reviewing and evaluating chapters, providing structured feedback to facilitate the editorial decision-making process, and subsequently formatting the accepted chapters following the publisher’s house style. I was responsible for creating and maintaining critical components of the book. These tasks demanded a high degree of attention to detail, accuracy, and a comprehensive understanding of the publication’s overall structure and flow. The effort invested in assembling these components directly enhanced the usability, coherence, and academic integrity of the final product.

The influence of my involvement in this book transcends the mere editorial tasks. It represents a tangible outcome of my efforts, set to be published and disseminated, showcasing my commitment, diligence, and meticulousness. Rather than just being a participant in the process, I played a pivotal role in shaping the final product of a scholarly work that will benefit the academic community and exemplify CEI’s intellectual contributions. By taking charge of organizing, formatting, and finalizing the book, I ensured that the publication adhered to both technical and editorial standards while also embodying the Centre’s dedication to excellence and intercultural academic dialogue. The book compiles the research from various scholars from different backgrounds, and

through my involvement, I served as a crucial link in integrating these diverse contributions into a unified, professional, and publishable work. The Centre placed its trust in me to prepare a complex manuscript for submission to an academic publisher – this reflects both my competence and the Centre’s faith in my abilities. Consequently, the publication itself represents a lasting contribution I have made to CEI, a work that will persist as part of the institution’s legacy even after my internship has concluded. This experience not only provided me with invaluable professional growth but also clearly illustrated the significant impact that a dedicated and responsible intern can have on an organization.

In addition, I contend that my influence transcended mere task execution, extending into the domains of collaborative engagement and institutional enhancement. By closely collaborating with my colleague and actively engaging in regular editorial meetings with our supervisor, I fostered a positive and effective team environment that promoted ongoing communication and advancement. My readiness to undertake intricate responsibilities – such as independently performing peer reviews for E-REI submissions, occasionally without the support of a second reviewer – demonstrated the confidence the team and my supervisor had in me, which I honoured by taking that responsibility seriously. I approached the peer review process with objectivity and scholarly integrity, providing constructive critiques that informed final editorial choices. Furthermore, I was useful in converting reviewed manuscripts into publishable articles by adhering to CEI’s formatting guidelines, ensuring that each accepted submission complied with the journal’s standards. This process enabled the institution to uphold its credibility and intercultural reach by effectively managing a vast and varied array of submissions. The shared OneDrive folder (although not created by me), I regularly updated with finalized and formatted articles, served as a centralized resource through which the team could visualize and track our collective progress – a system that I played a key role in developing and sustaining.

Perhaps equally important was the standard I established regarding independence, professionalism, and dedication to quality. When faced with challenges – such as the need to reformat an entire manuscript due to previous errors – I accepted full accountability and addressed the situation with composure and resolve. By maintaining responsibility and perceiving my mistakes as opportunities for growth rather than hindrances, I exhibited resilience, and a mindset focused on development, which I believe had a

positive impact on the work environment. Furthermore, my capacity to distinguish personal preferences from professional judgement reflected a level of maturity in decision-making that is consistent with CEI's editorial principles. I consistently aimed to prioritize the best interests of the publication and its audience, ensuring that subjective biases did not cloud objective assessments.

CONCLUSION

The editor's job is to help the author say what they're trying to say in the best way possible – not to say it for them. (Ginna, 2017, p. 2)

Peter Ginna's perspective effectively encapsulates the core of editorial practice. It highlights the delicate yet essential equilibrium that editors must sustain, preserving the integrity of the author's voice while simultaneously improving clarity, coherence, and accessibility. This equilibrium, as I have learned during my internship at CEI, transcends mere technicality – it embodies a relational, intercultural, and profoundly ethical pursuit. Editors do not impose their interpretations; instead, they enable meaning to emerge. They do not substitute the author's voice; they enhance it, allowing it to resonate more distinctly across the divides of language, discipline, and culture.

In this report, I have examined the dynamic evolution of the publishing industry, particularly in relation to its adaptation to the challenges and opportunities presented by digital transformation, social media, and the open access movement. These elements are not only altering the distribution of texts but also influencing their curation, framing, and consumption. Within this swiftly evolving landscape, the function of editors – who serve as the “unseen architects” of written content – has gained unprecedented importance. They have transitioned from being mere enforcers of stylistic guidelines or grammatical correctness to becoming interpreters of tone, mediators of meaning, and co-stewards of intellectual diversity. My tenure at CEI illustrated this complex role, as I engaged in multilingual and multicultural editorial initiatives that required a keen awareness of nuance, an understanding of authorial intent, and a sensitivity to intercultural communication.

In my exploration of the current publishing environment, I identified several significant themes that not only characterise the industry at present but also influenced my comprehension of its continuous evolution.

Through my research, I found that digital transformation extends beyond merely converting print books into e-books or introducing audiobooks – it represents a profound, structural change that has redefined the processes of content production, distribution, and

consumption. I discovered that the emergence of digital formats has democratised access to literature, enabling readers from various backgrounds and locations to engage with books more readily. Nevertheless, this transformation also presents challenges, such as the risk of ‘showrooming’ for independent bookstores and the necessity to balance innovation with the preservation of literary traditions. The adaptability of independent bookstores, which have embraced hybrid sales models and fostered community engagement, demonstrated to me that physical and digital experiences can coexist and even enhance one another. Additionally, I became increasingly aware of the significance of accessibility and sustainability, as publishers respond to regulations like the European Accessibility Act and implement environmentally conscious practices.

Investigating the impact of social media on the publishing industry has illuminated the extent to which platforms such as BookTok, BookTube, and Bookstagram have transformed book marketing, discovery, and the formation of communities. I discovered that social media has empowered both readers and authors, fostering dynamic online communities and allowing new voices to emerge beyond the confines of traditional gatekeeping mechanisms. Yet, I have also observed that this landscape introduces new challenges: authors are expected to maintain a continuous online presence, develop personal brands, and occasionally modify their work to align with viral trends or market demands. This situation can result in a tendency towards homogenization and a prioritization of marketability over originality. The peer-driven dynamics of social media, where recommendations and conversations originate from fellow readers, underscored for me the significance of authenticity and the necessity of supporting diverse, risk-taking literary voices.

Regarding the open access movement, it revealed its transformative capacity within the realm of academic publishing. I discovered that OA is fundamentally centred on equity – eliminating financial and institutional obstacles to ensure that anyone, anywhere, can access scholarly research. This democratization of knowledge holds particular significance for researchers affiliated with underfunded institutions or those situated in countries with limited resources. Furthermore, I found that OA accelerates scientific advancement. However, I also became cognizant of the challenges it encounters, especially concerning financial sustainability and quality assurance. I came to understand that the future of scholarly communication hinges on achieving a balance between accessibility, rigorous editorial standards, and sustainable funding models.

Throughout my exploration of translation and multilingualism, I discovered that the linguistic diversity of Europe presents both challenges and opportunities for publishers. The rise of AI-driven machine translation has facilitated and reduced the costs associated with publishing in multiple languages; however, I realised that authentic literary translation is a nuanced art form that necessitates human creativity, cultural awareness, and an appreciation for subtleties. I grew increasingly concerned about the phenomenon of 'machine dehumanization', wherein the unique voices of authors and translators are diminished by automated systems. This experience solidified my conviction regarding the significance of human translators and the necessity of maintaining the richness and authenticity inherent in literary works. Furthermore, I recognised the vital role that government support and grants play in promoting translation efforts and ensuring that a variety of voices can reach audiences worldwide.

Through an analysis of the European and Portuguese publishing industries, I discovered the intricate relationship between tradition and innovation. The multilingual nature of Europe, along with its fragmented markets and diverse regulations, necessitates that publishers remain flexible and possess local expertise. Support at both the national and EU levels for translation initiatives, independent bookstores, and digital infrastructure is crucial for preserving literary diversity. In Portugal, I observed that OA and digital transformation have enhanced the visibility of national research; however, challenges such as financial sustainability, language barriers, and the necessity for consistent editorial standards continue to exist. I realised that achieving significant progress demands collaboration, investment in training and infrastructure, and a dedication to both inclusivity and quality.

In summary, my exploration of these subjects has enhanced my understanding of the intricate nature of the publishing industry. I discovered that the future of this sector hinges on the capacity to harmonize innovation with tradition, accessibility with thoroughness, and the demands of the market with the integrity of creativity. The most significant insight I gained is that publishing transcends the mere act of producing and selling books – it encompasses the promotion of dialogue, the support of diversity, and the commitment to keeping literature and scholarship vibrant and accessible to everyone.

Ultimately, my investigation led me to realise that the publishing industry is much more than a profit-driven venture. It represents a multifaceted ecosystem where ideas, identities, and cultures converge. Its vitality relies on the active participation of all

stakeholders – editors, authors, publishers, and readers – in fostering dialogue, advocating for diversity, and maintaining the principles of openness and intellectual honesty. Thus, publishing is not solely about books; it is about constructing connections, cultivating curiosity, and ensuring that the narratives and knowledge we disseminate today can motivate, provoke thought, and unite future generations.

In addition to the theoretical insights I gained in the initial two chapters, my internship provided me with the opportunity to engage directly with the collaborative essence of editorial work. At CEI, I discovered that editing is not a solitary endeavour but rather a process interwoven with relationships: among authors and editors, between texts and their audiences, and among institutions and the cultural environments in which they function. Whether I was involved in preparing a scientific volume, refining articles for the open-access journal, E-REI, or ensuring coherence across various scholarly contributions, each task presented a chance to observe how editorial work supports and influences academic discourse.

Most significantly, this internship reinforced the notion that an editor's role transcends the mere handling of text. It encompasses the creation of opportunities for marginalized voices, the promotion of accessibility, and the maintenance of intellectual rigor. In a time increasingly influenced by market-driven demands and algorithmic trends, editorial practices must serve as a counterbalance – prioritizing care over expediency, accuracy over popularity, and substance over mere metrics. CEI's dedication to these principles, despite its limited resources, illustrated that it is feasible to uphold academic and cultural integrity even amidst industry pressures. This is a methodology that deserves to be preserved and emulated.

In concluding this report, I revisit Ginna's quote – not merely as a summary, but as a provocation. The finest editors do not merely refine words; they enhance ideas. They facilitate the movement of ideas across boundaries – of language, genre, and culture – without altering their essence. This is a challenging endeavour, necessitating humility, expertise, and foresight. However, it is also immensely fulfilling. Throughout my experience at CEI, I have come to regard editing not solely as a career but as a calling: one that is grounded in attentive listening, continuous learning, and the conviction that words, when crafted with intention, possess the ability to unite minds across divides.

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Annex – Glossary (Alphabetical Order)

- **Abstract** – a concise summary of a research article, thesis, review, or other scholarly document, typically highlighting the main objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.
- **Accessibility** – the practice of designing publications (especially digital) so that they can be used by people with disabilities, in compliance with standards such as the European Accessibility Act.
- **Advanced Reader Copy (ARC)** – a pre-publication version of a book sent to reviewers, influencers, or booksellers to generate early interest and feedback.
- **Algorithm** – a set of rules or calculations (often used in digital publishing and social media) that determines how content is recommended or displayed to users.
- **Author** – the creator or originator of a written work.
- **Audiobook** – a recording of a book or other work being read aloud, often distributed digitally.
- **Backlist** – books published prior to the current year that remain available from a publisher.
- **Bibliography** – a list of sources cited or consulted in preparing a work, usually appearing at the end of academic or research documents.
- **Bookstagram** – a community on Instagram dedicated to sharing and discussing books, often through visually appealing photographs and reviews.
- **bookTok** – a community on TikTok focused on book recommendations, reviews, and literary trends, known for its significant influence on book sales.
- **BookTube** – a community on YouTube where creators produce video content about books, including reviews, discussions, and recommendations.
- **Copyright** – legal protection granting the creator of original work exclusive rights to its use and distribution.
- **Copyediting** – the process of reviewing and correcting written material to improve accuracy, readability, and fitness for publication, including grammar, style, and consistency.

- **Data Analytics** – the use of data analysis tools and techniques to understand trends, reader behaviour, and optimize publishing strategies.
- **Digital transformation** – the integration of digital technology into all aspects of publishing, including production, distribution, and marketing.
- **Distribution** – the process of making a publication available to the public, either physically (bookstores, libraries) or digitally (e-books, online platforms).
- **Editor** – a professional responsible for preparing content for publication by reviewing, revising, and coordinating the work of authors and contributors.
- **Editorial Independence** – the principle that editors make decisions about content without undue influence from publishers, advertisers, or other external parties.
- **Editorial Standards** – guidelines and criteria established by publishers or journals to ensure quality, consistency, and integrity in published works.
- **Hybrid Model** – a business or publishing model that combines traditional and digital methods, such as offering both print and e-books or integrating online and in-person sales.
- **Indexing** – the inclusion of a publication in a database or directory, which increases its visibility and discoverability.
- **Influencer marketing** - a strategy in which publishers or authors collaborate with individuals who have notable social media followings to promote books.
- **Manuscript** – the original version of a work submitted for publication, prior to editing and formatting.
- **Metadata** – information about a publication (such as author, title, keywords, abstract) used to facilitate search, discovery, and organization.
- **Open Access (OA)** – a publishing model that allows free and unrestricted access to scholarly research, often funded by institutions or authors rather than readers.
- **Peer review** – a process in which experts in a field evaluate a manuscript for quality, validity, and originality before publication.
- **Plagiarism** – the act of using someone else’s work or ideas without proper attribution.
- **Predatory publishing** – unethical publishing practices that exploit authors by charging fees without providing legitimate editorial and publishing services.
- **Print-on-demand** – a printing technology and business process in which new copies of a book are printed only when an order is received.

- **Publisher** – an individual or company responsible for producing and disseminating books, journals, or other works.
- **Research integrity** – the adherence to ethical principles and professional standards essential for the responsible practice of research.
- **Revenue model** – the strategy a publisher uses to generate income, such as subscriptions, sales, advertising, or open access fees.
- **Self-publishing** – the act of publishing one’s work independently, without the involvement of an established publisher.
- **Subscription model** – a business model in which readers pay a recurring fee to access content, such as journals or digital libraries.
- **Thesis** – a substantial research paper written by a candidate for an academic degree.
- **Typesetting** – the arrangement of text and images for publication, whether in print or digital format.
- **Wholesalers** – business or intermediaries that purchase books in large quantities from publishers and resell them in smaller quantities to retailers, such as bookstores and online sellers, rather than directly to consumers.