

2008

U.S. Book Consumer Demographics & Buying Behaviors Annual Report

The publishing industry's first complete consumer-based report
integrating channel, motivation, and category analysis of U.S. book buyers.
Prepared by Bowker's PubTrack Consumer and Publishers Weekly.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Demographics: Who Buys Books?.....	9
Genre: What Books Do People Buy?.....	21
Channel: Where Are Books Purchased?.....	37
Format: What Type of Books Are Bought?.....	57
Motivation: Why Do People Buy Books?.....	65
Trends: First Quarter 2009.....	73
Book Production: Statistics 2002–2008.....	79
Methodology.....	82

Romance

In romance, Baby Boomers finished second to Matures in their love of the segment, with Boomers accounting for 37% of purchases, compared to 46% for matures (table 2.7). Romance buyers prefer to buy their books at mass merchandisers—especially Wal Mart (table 2.8). Ten percent of romance books were purchased at Wal Mart, the highest percentage of all book categories at the country's largest retailer. This seems to be a case where the demographics of the category align well with the demographics of the outlet; romance appeals to a largely older, less affluent female buyer, an important customer for Wal Mart. Not surprisingly, only 7% of romance books were purchased by men. The author was the main factor in buying a specific romance title (table 2.9), helping to create loyal followings for such authors as Nora Roberts, Debbie Macomber and Danielle Steel.

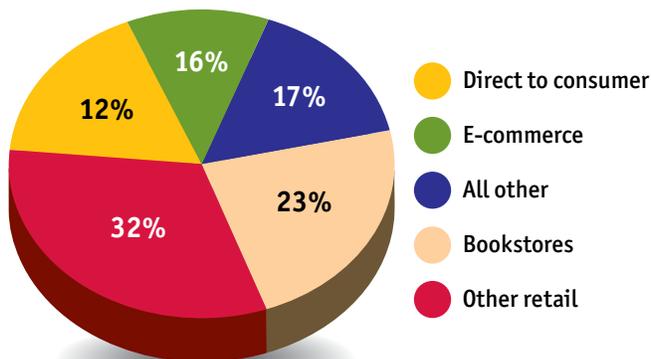


Table 2.8

Table 2.9

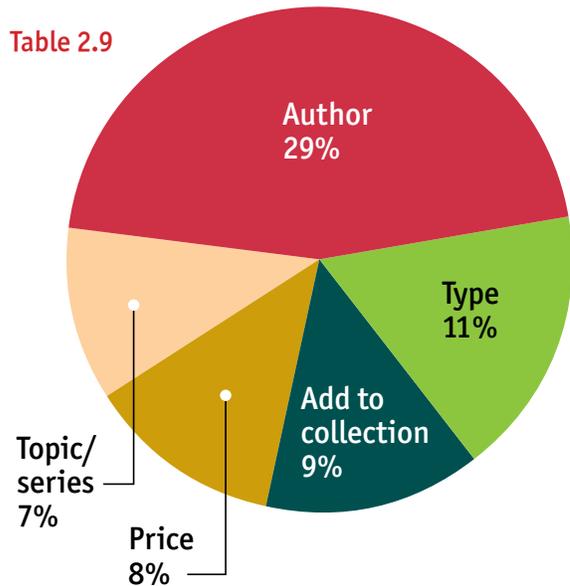
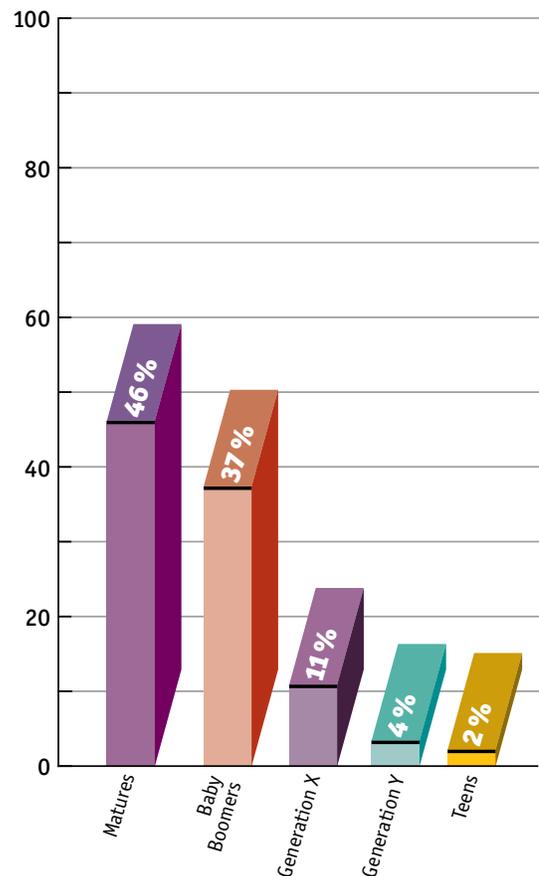


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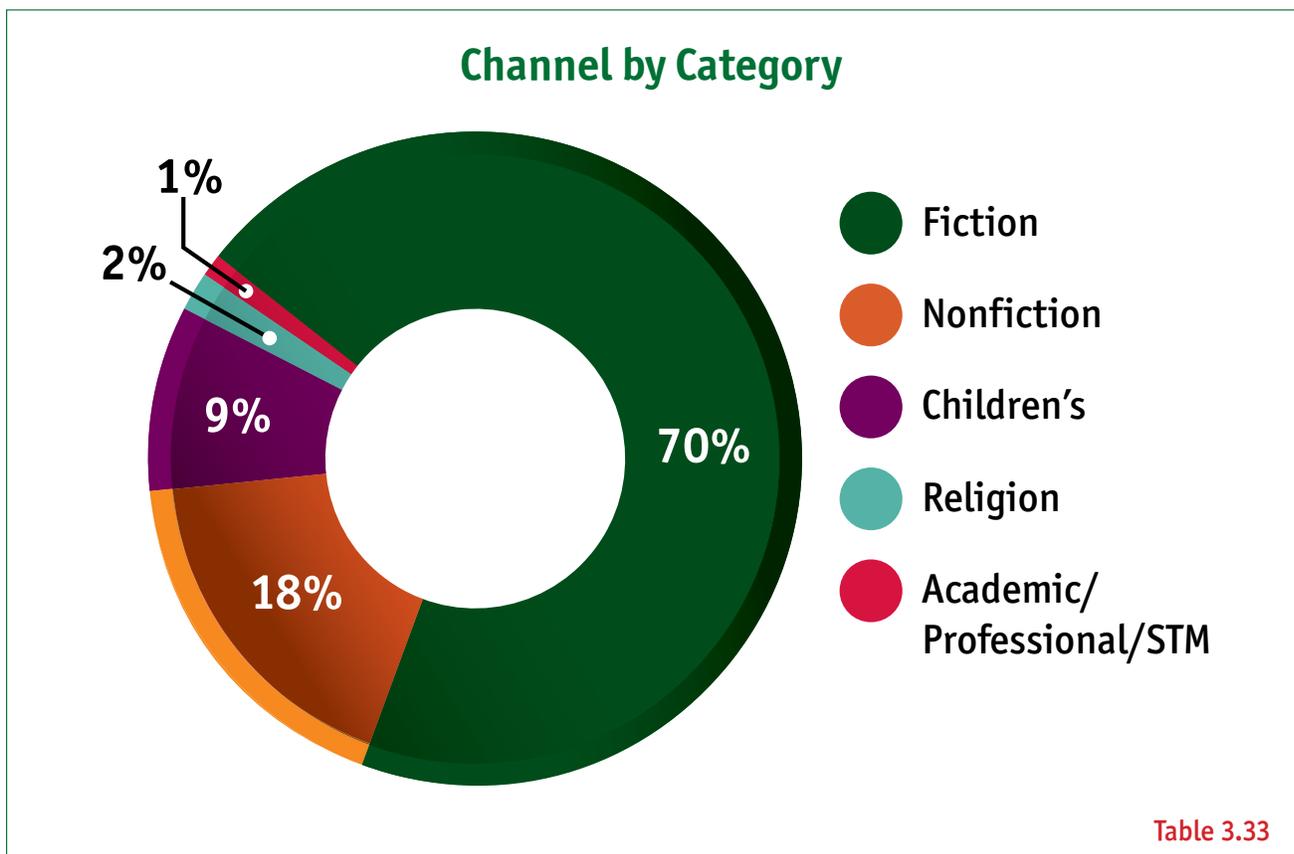
Warehouse Clubs (4% market share)

As at Wal Mart, fiction dominates book sales at warehouse clubs, accounting for 70% of units sold. Nonfiction is a distant second, at 18% (table 3.33). Consumers' reasons for buying a book at a warehouse club are similar to those at Wal Mart, topped by shopping for other items when buying a book (table 3.34). Since discounts are the attraction at warehouse clubs, price/special offer is the second highest factor in buying a book at such outlets, which are led by Costco and

BJ's Wholesale Club.

Matures account for more than half of the units bought at warehouse clubs, at 53%. With Baby Boomers accounting for another 32% of units, only 15% of warehouse customers are under 30. Women dominate buying at the clubs: 69% (table 3.36).

The mix sold at warehouse clubs is more varied than at Wal Mart, with paperbacks accounting for 69% of units sold in 2008 and hardcovers 30%, boosting the price paid per book to \$8.44 (table 3.37).



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