

Summary



A nation of avid readers, the Czech Republic ranks among the world's top ten countries in terms of the number of published non-periodical titles per 10,000 inhabitants. Like many countries, the Czech Republic is facing a decline in the number of readers due to the availability of other media and activities. However, book reading remains a key part of the country's cultural life. In 2006 the Czech book publishing industry reached 17,000 publications – an all-time high. In comparison with 2005 totals, this is an increase of 11 percent. More importantly, this record year illustrates the profound changes that have occurred in the Czech publishing industry since the “Velvet Revolution” and the fall of communism in 1989. The total book market turnover is estimated at CZK 4.5 billion (\$0.2 bln). Estimations for non-periodicals market are not available, however, it is a very vivid sub-sector and there is a large (and ever growing) number and variety of newspaper and magazines available in the market.

Market Demand

In comparison to the U.S. market, book publishing in the Czech Republic is on a challenging scale. With only 10 million inhabitants and a language used only within its borders, the Czech publishing market is a small one. But Czech publishers can rely on a population of avid readers that frequently buy books to create home libraries.

The high absolute number of book titles published in 2006 testifies to the fact that Czech publishers compensate for dropping average print runs by publishing a large number of titles in order to sustain their financial turnovers. Out of over 17,019 titles in 2006, about one fourth represents reprints of books already published, which is quite an increase to 2005 numbers. Out of these numbers, it is estimated that about half represent off-market production, not distributed through the general bookshop network, that includes mainly purpose & regional interest titles, state & government institutions' production and some university publications. Unfortunately, limited information on the total turnover, print runs, profits and market shares in the publishing sector is available.

Table 1: Number of Books Published in the Czech Republic

2002	14,278
2003	16,451
2004	15,749
2005	15,350
2006	17,019

Source: *Grand Biblio magazine*



The offer of books and publications is rich and varied both in quantity and genre. Fiction literature accounted last year for over 20 percent of total book production. Increases were recorded for children's books as well as school and university textbooks.

Table 2: Comparison of Publication in Selected Genres

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Fiction	3,605	3,498	3,381	3,340	3,746
Children books	586	746	735	866	1,290
School & Univeristy Textbooks	1,578	1,884	1,732	1,776	1,924

Source: *National Library of the Czech Republic*



Rapid growth in the number of periodicals, including newspapers and journals, occurred in the 1990s after the fall of communism. The number of publishers of periodicals increased to about 1,600–1,700. The Union of Publishers of Periodicals offers on its web pages (address?) the results of their annual Media Project, which researches newspapers and magazines by readership and sales. Their research shows that *Blesk* followed by *Mlada Fronta Dnes* and *Pravo* are the most popular dailies. In other selected categories top three publications are as follows: women’s fashion magazines: *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *Marianne*; current affairs and society magazines: *Nedelni Blesk*, *Rytmus zivota*, *Tydenik Kvety*; business and economic magazines: *Econom*, *Euro*, *Osobni finance*; Music/Film/Photo magazines: *Cinema*, *Premiere*, *Rock & Pop*; Teen magazines: *Bravo*, *Divka*, *Bravo Girl!*.

Market Data

The structure of the Czech book production has remained largely unchanged over the past several years. Last year books in the Czech language were again predominant in the Czech Republic’s book production. As far as the foreign language book production of Czech publishers is concerned, English has clearly dominated the market once again followed by German and French.

Translations usually amount to about one third of the total Czech book production, making it rank among the world’s top consumers of translated texts, along with the Baltic states or Hungary. Number of languages of translated books has in recent years been around 45. The list of the three most often translated languages has remained unchanged since the year 1990. English has defended its dominant position, as almost a half of all published translations originate from English. Despite a long-term decline, translations from German have again been the second most numerous, with French ending third at some distance. Two other languages reaching over 100 translations include Slovak and Spanish.

Table 3: Numbers of Published Book Translations in the Czech Republic

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total/of which	4,342	4,602	4,604	4,423	5,240
From English	2,329	2,362	2,301	2,211	2,556
From German	982	1,029	1,033	980	1,186
From French	225	273	267	243	244
From Spanish	32	52	38	43	179
From Slovak	116	137	152	136	176
From Polish	67	76	73	74	70
From Russian	50	53	65	73	68

Source: National Library of the Czech Republic



One interesting aspect of the industry concerns the relationship between Czech publishers and public libraries. Czech law requires that publishers offer one copy of each publication to libraries specified by the Ministry of Culture to ensure that selected libraries have access to current production. This so-called ‘compulsory offer’ does, in some cases, cause problems between libraries and publishers. In addition, it promotes a disconnect between these two groups, which tend to see each other in opposition instead of as potential partners. Since 1989, publishers and libraries have viewed one another primarily through the narrow focus of ‘profit’ versus ‘public benefit.’

There are some exceptions. The Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers started cooperation with the Svet knihy company to launch campaign for support of books and reading aimed especially at children, entitled “Growing with the Book”. It draws inspiration from similar models employed in the USA and the EU. The project is enjoying growing interest and participation. There is also a growing number of book festivals and book awards as well as an emergence of new authors.

The operation of the ISBN and ISMN systems in the CR is based on generally accepted international rules and regulations. Participation in the system is voluntary, and national agencies usually contact publishers directly. Important materials are available on the National Library websites (addresses at end of report).

The publishing sector has not yet developed tools for a systematic monitoring of its own professional activities. A number of long-term statistical indices, general as well as specific analytical and marketing studies, and theoretical and prognostic studies for the monitoring of developmental trends in individual areas are missing. For example, statistical data on the annual production of non-periodicals and periodicals in the Czech Republic are prepared only on the basis of legal deposits in the National Library of the CR; data on the growth and development of prices of publishers' products are only estimated.

Best Prospects



Best prospects for U.S. publishers on the Czech market is mostly in B2B sales of rights for bestselling novels, while specific niche markets may exist for other categories such as documentaries, arts and life style, travel and tourism, scientific, technical, medical, management, social and human sciences and children's books.

Major Czech publishing firms usually attend international book fairs, such as the Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany. There are also opportunities at the Czech International Book Fair, which takes place annually in Prague.

Key Suppliers

The publishing of books in the Czech Republic is clearly divided between more publishing entities than in countries which have enjoyed an uninterrupted and continuous development towards specialization and concentration of book producers. In 2006 there were 3,908 publishers registered in the Czech Republic. However, it is estimated that approximately half of these publishers are not active. And a decisive share of Czech book production is still attributed to only several dozen publishers. (As mentioned above, the industry could benefit from better systems of monitoring and tracking, such as the registration of publishers. The existing mechanism does not filter out defunct publishing entities.)

Last year, 170 companies published more than 20 titles, meeting the criteria for regular activity. Only 33 companies publish more than 100 books per year (half of these are university or government establishments). University and state institution presses are, as in other countries, usually characterised by a large number of highly specialised titles at relatively low print runs.

Table 4: Number of Registered Publishers in the Czech Republic

2002	3,267
2003	3,448
2004	3,619
2005	3,775
2006	3,908

Source: *Grand Biblio* magazine



The leading book distributors have begun pressing for higher rebates. As a result, the production of books has approached the limit of profitability for a number of publishers, since no marked increase in consumer prices has been registered.

The bookshops are facing competitive pressure both from market chains and bookshop chains, similar to the situation abroad. In some regions bookshops have disappeared, not only due to generation change, but also because new shops were opened by publishing houses and new literary cafés have come into existence.

Prospective Buyers

Like many countries, the Czech Republic is facing a decline in the number of readers due to the availability of other media and activities. However, book reading remains a key part of the country's cultural life. Despite all the challenges, statistics show that in terms of the number of book titles published, the Czech Republic ranks among the top countries in the world. In terms of published titles per 10,000 inhabitants, the country even makes it to the top ten.

Market Entry

A recommended strategy for a U.S. company interested in penetrating the Czech publishing market would be to find a local partner/representative or open an office in the country. Without a local representative who can support everyday contact with customers and government representatives, it is very difficult to succeed in the market. A U.S. company can stimulate further sales by working with Czech partners on effective marketing campaigns, as well as by utilizing trade shows, in-country promotions, and advertising. The U.S. Commercial Service offers a number of ways to help U.S. companies find business partners in the Czech market. These include setting up meetings with Czech companies interested in partnership, government officials and associations representatives (Gold Key Service), due diligence on prospective partners (International Company Profile) and events to introduce new product lines to potential customers (Single Company Promotion). More information and contacts can be found at <http://www.buyusa.gov/czechrepublic/en/>

Market Issues & Obstacles

The Czech Republic is a highly developed, open market with liberal policies and intense competition. While imports from the EU are exempt, products from non-EU countries are subject to import duties. Customs duty rates are updated annually and are harmonized within EU countries. In addition, all goods, imported or produced domestically, are subject to a value-added-tax (VAT). The value added tax rate for non-periodic publications (books, brochures) is 5 percent.



The Czech Republic is a member of various international copyright agreements. In accordance with European Union legislation, a protection period of 70 years from the author's death applies in the country. One of the principles of Czech copyright is the reciprocity principle, whereby foreign authors enjoy at least the same level of protection as Czech authors, provided reciprocity is ensured.

The key factors influencing book prices are the price of the material (paper, printing services) and author's fees. Author's fees can also be considered a factor bearing the greatest influence on the final price of any book, especially so with foreign authors whose publications are translated into the Czech language, and where the requested fees are relatively high. Book prices are considered contract prices and recommended sale prices are printed only on limited number of publications.

Czech is the official language in the Czech Republic. More than half of Czech company representatives are able to communicate in English or in German as well.

Trade Events

International Book Fair, Prague
May 3-6, 2007, www.svetknihy.cz

Resources & Key Contacts

Ministry of Culture, www.mkcr.cz
Almanach Labyrint, www.almanachlabyrint.cz
National Library, www.nkp.cz
The Union of Publishers of Periodicals, www.uvdt.cz
The Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers, www.sckn.cz
American Chamber of Commerce, www.amcham.cz
General Directorate of Customs, www.cs.mfcr.cz

For More Information

The U.S. Commercial Service in Prague/Czech Republic can be contacted via e-mail at:
Veronika.Novakova@mail.doc.gov; Phone: +420 257 531 162; Fax: +420 257 531 165 or visit our website:
www.buyusa.gov/czechrepublic.

The U.S. Commercial Service – Your Global Business Partner

With its network of offices across the United States and in more than 80 countries, the U.S. Commercial Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce utilizes its global presence and international marketing expertise to help U.S. companies sell their products and services worldwide. Locate the U.S. Commercial Service trade specialist in the U.S. nearest you by visiting <http://www.export.gov/>.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this report is intended to be of assistance to U.S. exporters. While we make every effort to ensure its accuracy, neither the United States government nor any of its employees make any representation as to the accuracy or completeness of information in this or any other United States government document. Readers are advised to independently verify any information prior to reliance thereon. The information provided in this report does not constitute legal advice.

International copyright, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2006. All rights reserved outside of the United States.