

Diversity in Publishing

Who are the readers interested in diverse books?

Cultural Context

Petition

Prevent Donald Trump from making a State Visit to the United Kingdom.

Donald Trump should be allowed to enter the UK in his capacity as head of the US Government, but he should not be invited to make an official State Visit because it would cause embarrassment to Her Majesty the Queen.

► [More details](#)

[Sign this petition](#)

1,858,818 signatures

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100,000

BREAKING BARRIERS

To protest Trump, Mexicans locked arms to form a friendly human wall along the US border

Do the Grammys Have a Race Problem?

No black artists are nominated for Best New Artist or Record of the Year, but Iggy Azalea gets props in both



In case you hadn't noticed, the question of diversity **is** the defining cultural debate of our times. And this debate manifests itself most keenly in popular culture.

Diversity in Publishing: What Diversity?

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CILIP fends off criticism over lack of BAME authors on Carnegie longlist

Published February 16, 2017 by Natasha Oruwamazi

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CILIP has responded to criticism about the diversity of its Carnegie Medal longlist - which features no BAME authors - saying that while it "acknowledges and respects the concerns expressed", the longlisted books were "judged on merit and on an equal playing field".

The 20-strong longlist, which was [announced this morning](#) (16th February), included big name authors such as Mal Peet, Meg Rosoff and Horatio Clare, but has been criticised for not including a single black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) writer.

The Good Immigrant tops readers' book poll

25 November 2016 Entertainment & Arts

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Race issues Opinion

Could there really be only one new black male novelist in Britain?

Arifa Akbar

There's plenty of talent among minority ethnic writers in the UK, but their books rarely make it to the shelves - and that's shameful

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CODE SWITCH

RACE AND IDENTITY, BENDED

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Diversity In Book Publishing Isn't Just About Writers — Marketing Matters, Too

August 9, 2016 8:58 AM ET

JEAN HO

Trade publishing is in the midst of its own debate about diversity. According to statistics compiled by [The Bookseller](#) fewer than 100 books by British authors of a non-white background were published in 2015.

Some publishers recognise the importance of changing this situation. But the most commonly-used defence against publishing more diverse books is commercial. Even if they did publish more diverse books, we are told, they wouldn't find readers.

Building a business case for publishing diverse books

I'm a planner at a Top 15 PR agency in the UK. My job is to look at the defining trends in culture, communications and consumption for opportunities for my clients.

A key part of this job is identifying an audience who are likely to be receptive for a client's product or service, and size the opportunity. For example, if an ice cream company wants to launch a new type of ice cream, it's my job to work out how many people are likely to buy it, and what are the best ways of reaching this audience through the media.

I'm interested in the issue of diversity in publishing because I used to work in the industry. Fundamentally I believe there shouldn't need to be an argument for publishing more diverse books – come on, it's 2017!

Very clearly, however, some publishers and organisations still need to get the message. Since I couldn't rely on the moral case hitting home, I decided to interrogate the oft-used commercial case against publishing more diverse books. Was it really true? Or was it based (in the finest publishing traditions) on anecdotal data.

After starting with some research into [publishing audiences](#) (using the same principles I'd use to build an audience for a new brand of lager or ice cream) I came across some stats that I thought deserved to be presented to a wider publishing audience. These are my initial findings.

Defining Readers

The first thing to do when identifying an audience is to define it. I've used the following definitions for the audiences I'll discuss throughout this presentation.

All data is sourced from Global Web Index, a commonly used planning tool: -

- UK adults – Age 18-64, resident in the UK: **41m people**
- Readers – Age 18-64, resident in the UK, lists 'books' as a lifestyle interest: **21m people**
- Readers of Diverse Books (RoDB)– Age 18-64, resident in the UK, lists 'books' as a lifestyle interest and agrees to the following lifestyle statements: **11.8m people**
 - I am interested in other cultures and countries
 - I like to be surrounded by different people, cultures, ideas and lifestyles

N.B. It's important to remember that 'Readers' and 'RoDB' do not represent the whole market for book-buying and consumption in the UK. This audience does not include children, the over 65s and is self-selecting. You can, after all, have read a book in the past year without identifying books as a lifestyle interest.

What this presentation is intended to do is size the opportunity for 'diverse' books among the audience that already self-selects as readers.

The Size of Opportunity

More than half (11.8m) of people in the UK with an interest in books take an active interest in other cultures, and like to be immersed in those cultures



- 21 million UK adults identify as 'readers'
- 11.8 million UK adults fit our working definition of Readers of Diverse Books (RoDB)

Readers of Diverse Books: Who Are They?

Education

54% RoDB have a degree or post-graduate qualification

46% diverse readers don't.

(That's not a huge skew, So we can't afford to be snobby. Diverse books shouldn't feel exclusive.)

Gender

64% RoDB are female

(That's a big enough skew to inform our communications strategy and focus on female readers.)

Income

RoDB are more likely to come from top 25% and 10% income brackets.

(People who like diversity have money to spend. They are a desirable group to market to.)

N.B. Global Web Index doesn't currently offer ethnic background breakdowns of audience data, so I can't offer any insights into this aspect of the RoDB audience

RoDB: diverse cultural interests



Their interest in books lies alongside a lot of other interests in other cultural activities. This is an expansive audience. There are also lots of other calls on their time.

Reading Platforms - Formats

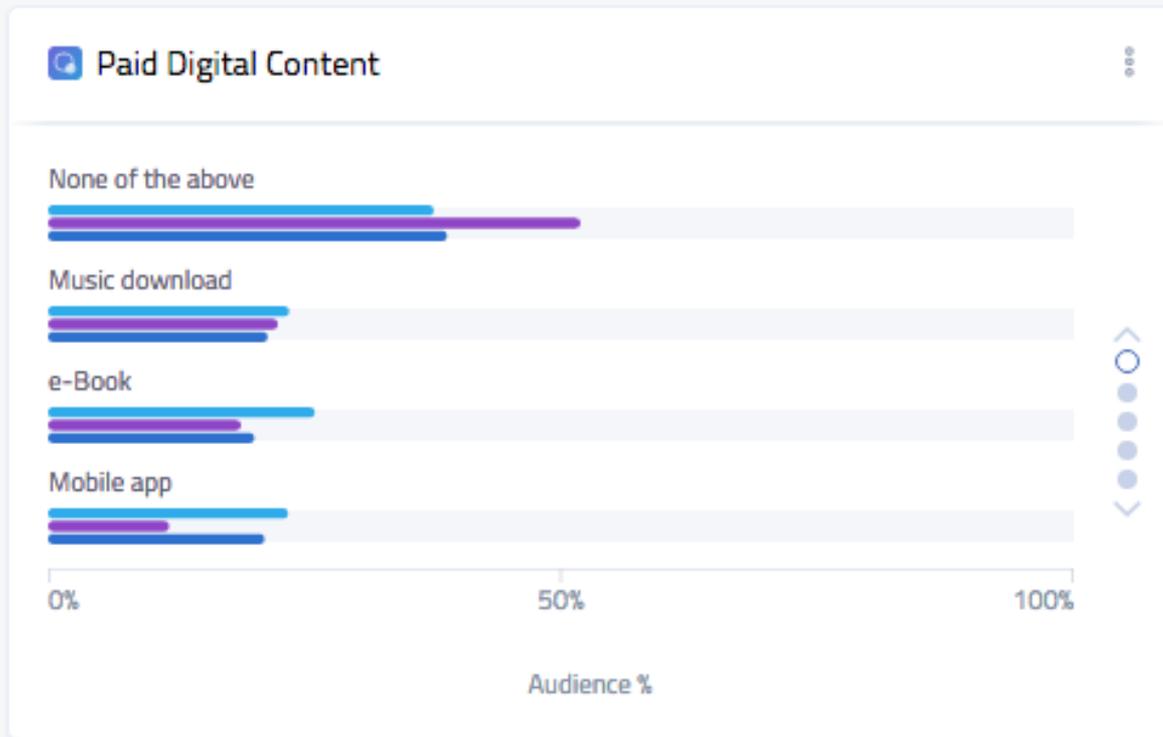
Ok, let's talk about a really uncomfortable subject: ebooks.

Readers care marginally less about ebooks than the general UK adult population

BUT RoDB over-index on ebook consumption by 151%.

That means they are 50% MORE likely than average to buy and read ebooks.

GET YOUR EBOOK STRATEGY AND PRICING RIGHT

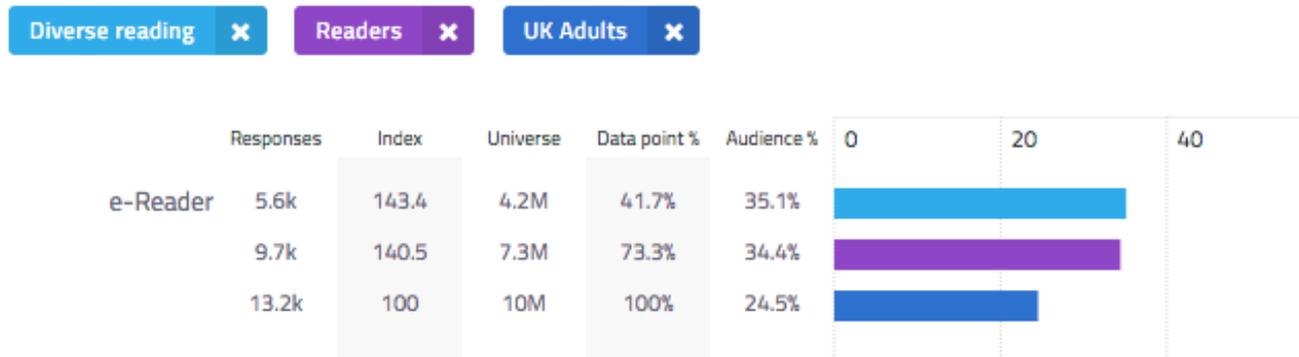


Diverse reading x

Readers x

UK Adults x

Reading Formats - Devices



People who classify themselves as readers are also highly likely to own an e-reading device. 34% of readers claim to have an e-reader at home, compared to the general population, where e-reader ownership is 24%.

Let's not kid ourselves here, either. When we say e-reader, it's almost certainly a Kindle. RoDB are even more likely to own an e-reader, with an over-index of 143%.

So diverse books can probably thrive as ebooks and find readers, if their publishers know how to navigate the world of Kindle.

Online Purchase Drivers



While we're on the subject of Amazon...

1. RoDB are **really** keen on a super-quick checkout process. Forget trying to drive them to your website unless your ecommerce is really slick. Amazon has you beat
2. Reviews are really, **really**, **REALLY** important. Probably more important than anything else in your promotion plan. Build your publicity around getting those reviews
3. RoDB are also keen on earning loyalty points. This is interesting if you're trying to build direct to consumer ecommerce – but ask yourself if it's worth doing if you're never really going to be as good at ecommerce as Amazon

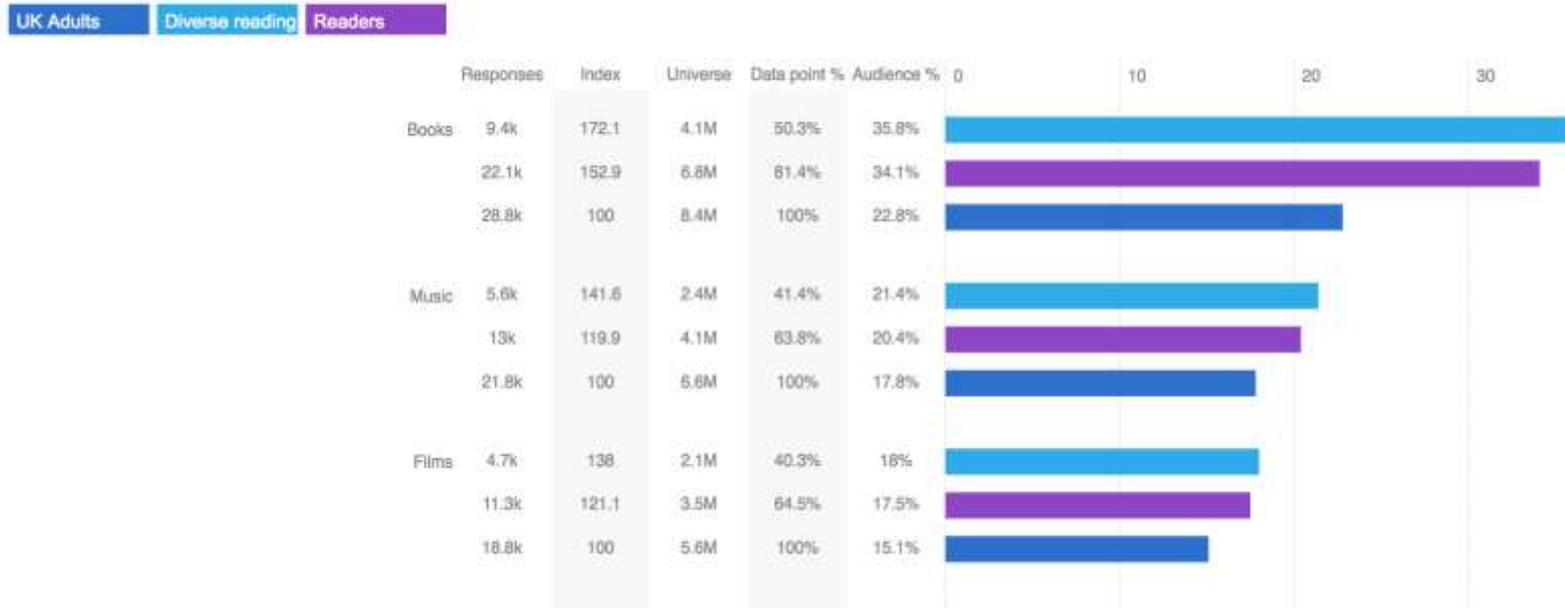
Online Purchase Research



Books may individually be low-value purchases, but consumers research them carefully. RoDB research them more than any other type of entertainment, which includes music and film.

This raises interesting questions about where and how they research books. Amazon reviews (obviously) but what other research do you have available? This is where focus groups and surveys could prove useful to publishers of diverse books.

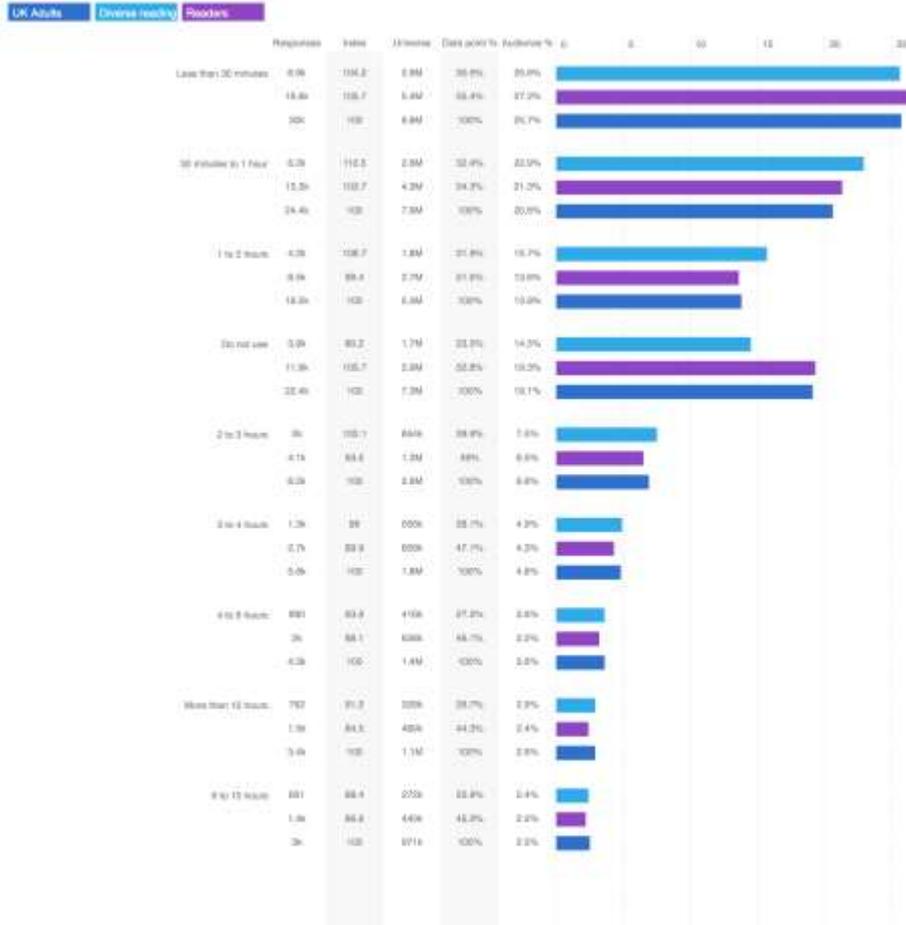
Online Purchase History



RoDB are frequent book buyers. 36% have bought a book in the last six months, compared to 34% of readers and 23% of the UK population.

Frequent book-buyers are not just potential repeat purchasers, they are a source of information. Do you have a strategy for gathering and acting on feedback from readers? Do you have a readers' panel, for example? Maybe you should...

RoDB – Social Media Use



Now this is interesting

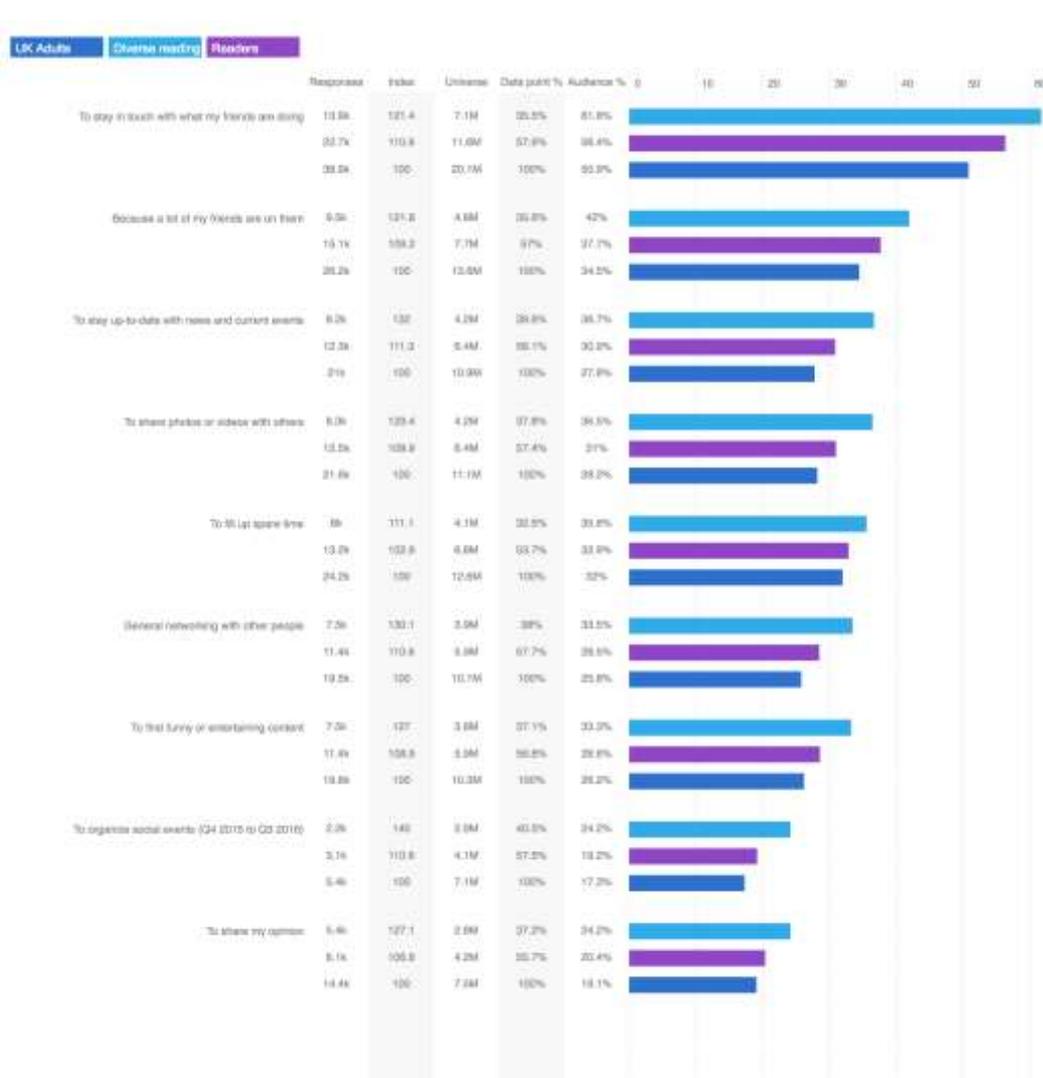
Nearly 20% of readers identify as non social media users, and a further 26% use social media for less than half an hour a day.

(This does suggest that a lot of pushing books via social media is destined to fall on deaf ears.)

Just over half of RoDB spend 30 mins to 3 hours a day on social media, and over-index in high usage segments.

So social media IS important for RoDB.

RoDB – What they do on Social Media



RoDB over-index on every single social media behaviour.

Readers also over-index on a significant number of social media activities (but do remember that 20% are non-users) and a further 26% spend very little time on social networks.

What are they doing on there?

Well, they're mostly hanging out with their friends.

So ask yourself as a publisher, what are you doing on social media. How do you fit into this world of socialising and entertainment?

What do they talk about when they talk about stuff online?



Books are a surprisingly high contributor to online conversations. 8% of the UK general population has posted an opinion about a book in the past month, and this rises to 14% among RoDB.

Remember, though, that the vast majority of online conversations have absolutely nothing to do with the products and services you would like people to buy. This is where people socialise now.

So what have we learned?

1. Readers who are also interested in diversity (RoDB) represent nearly 12 million people in the UK
2. RoDB are frequent book-buyers and are likelier than average to have high disposable incomes
3. They (like the rest of the UK) do most of their reading in print – but they are more likely than average to read ebooks
4. Peer recommendations are key to their online purchasing decisions, and they will likely research their next book purchase more keenly than they will their next mobile phone contract
5. Social media is really important to RoDB, but like the rest of the world they go there to be entertained and talk to friends, not to get marketed at
6. If an RoDB is going to go online to express an opinion about something – it will be a film or a book first. There is an opportunity for diverse books to be part of a conversation that isn't marketing-led

Next Steps

If the publishing industry was my client, I'd tell them to do the following things: -

1. **PUBLISH MORE DIVERSE BOOKS** – It's 2017! It would be the right thing to do, even without this data
2. **Take Research Seriously** – You owe it to yourself, your readers and your bottom line to get to know RoDB. Do this by commissioning further research and talking to readers. Remember that you as a publisher are not the target audience
3. **Use Insight to challenge your assumptions** – If your research tells you you're doing everything right, you haven't asked the right questions. Approach everything with an open mind, and prepare to ask difficult questions of what you do as a business
4. **Diversity is a Whole Business Strategy** – Becoming a publisher of more diverse books means more than launching a new imprint or hiring a new publisher. Every aspect of your business – from sales to acquisitions, rights and editorial needs to know why the issue matters
5. **Prove you take the issue seriously through action** – Buy more diverse books, appoint diversity panels, adopt affirmative action policies for new hires. And when you do screw up (looking at you, CILIP, World Book Day, World Book Night) admit you screwed up and are working on not doing this again
6. **Set targets** – Show you're serious about publishing diverse books by making it a business target – and then measure yourself against it

Thank You!
Chris McCrudden

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