

Behind BookTok's popularity

Article

The [#BookTok](#) tag, which at the time of writing had **65.8 billion** views on **TikTok**, has helped drive an increase in printed book sales.

Let's dig into the phenomenon:

- [Annual print volume of books](#) reached **825.7 million** in 2021, a **9%** increase year over year and **19%** ahead of 2019, per NPD Group. This is the highest annual print volume since NPD began tracking book sales in 2004. BookTok helped sell **20 million** books in 2021, the company said.

- [TikTok is supporting book discovery](#). “The whole idea of dominating supermarket shelves, dominating airport stores, dominating the front tables at bookstores, it’s just not really where it’s at in the same way,” Kristen McLean, executive director of business development at NPD Books, told The New York Times.
- [TikTok is partnering with Barnes and Noble](#) on the #BookTokChallenge, which encourages readers to find new books and authors and share their reactions online. The platform is also launching the [TikTok Book Club](#), where five BookTok creators (dubbed “BookTok Laureates”) choose a book and guide discussions.
- Before BookTok, there was BookTube, a community of readers on YouTube. But [BookTok has taken off in a way that BookTube never did](#), Shannon DeVito, director of books for Barnes & Noble, told Mashable. “BookTube tended to foster flash-in-the-pan successes... BookTok on the other hand has had a broad effect on hundreds of titles, and these sales sustain for a very long period of time.”
- The success of TikTok boils down to one thing: [The power of word-of-mouth advertising](#). “I think one person can put it on the radar, but it takes the rest of BookTok chiming in and going big with it to really make a book succeed,” an assistant store manager at a Washington, D.C., bookstore told The New York Times.

Why we care: NPD Group told The New York Times that [sales of print books are already up](#) another **50%** over last year. Though BookTok tends to focus on adult and young adult lit, it will be interesting to see if other genres pick up steam on the platform.

This was originally featured in in the Retail By the Numbers newsletter. For more retail insights, statistics, and trends, [subscribe here](#).