



Amazonian: Brazilian Booksellers, Publishers Begin Big Digital Push

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SAO PAULO: For the past several years Brazilian booksellers and publishers have watched and waited, content to let their colleagues abroad debate the positives and negatives of digital publishing.



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But two events in 2009 changed things. First was the [Jornada de Nacional de Literatura de Passo Fundo](#) (National Literature Journey of Passo Fundo) where some 20,000 students, teachers, researchers and authors gathered together at for a one-week discussion about technologies related to the experience of reading. The second was [the opening in December](#) of [Gato Sabido](#), the first Brazilian eBookstore, which started with just 130 titles in Portuguese. Three months later, the e-bookstore has 850 titles in Portuguese as well as 100,000 titles in English.

New E-bookstores

Suddenly, the Brazilian e-book market, at least on the retail side, is starting to boom.

On March, 31, [Livraria Cultura](#), a prominent Sao Paulo-based chain, also started selling e-books. The title selection is quite similar, with Livraria Cultura offering 500 e-books in Portuguese and another 120,000 international titles.

Next month, [Saraiva](#), the highest grossing bookseller in the country, will also begin selling e-books. They are expected, like Barnes & Noble in the United States, to release their own e-book reader soon thereafter, something that would likely make them the leader in the e-book market as well. In addition, chain booksellers [FNAC](#) and [Submarino](#) are also studying how to get into the market.

The move made by the booksellers into the e-book world is forcing the publishers' hand, pushing them to think harder about and come up with solutions on how to deal with e-books.

First E-book Conference

To help ease this transition into digital publishing, the Brazilian Book Chamber (CBL), the Frankfurt Book Fair and The Official Press of Sao Paulo State organized the 1st International Digital Book Congress, which ran last week, from March 29th to 31st, in Sao Paulo. More than 550 curious professionals took part in the discussions.

Topics of discussion included DRM, formats, social media, devices, publishing, selling, public perception, pricing, piracy, literacy, and contracts. All the basics were covered. Speaking at the opening on Monday evening, Juergen Boos, director of the Frankfurt Book Fair, directed Brazilian publishers to try new things. "You have to experiment, talk to your peers and be flexible," he said. "If you try and do not succeed, you just try again."

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