

# The rise of #BookTok – why are printed books trending on TikTok and how can marketers get involved?

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The late 1990s saw the rise of the e-reader and sudden access to new book content quicker than ever before. There was talk of the death of the printed book and predictions of plummeting print sales. However, over the past 20 years, we have seen the publishing industry demonstrate impressive adaptability and embrace change, resulting in print and digital sales growth. In 2020, **over 750.9 million books** were sold (up from 693.7 million in 2019). And that is even with the physical bookstore closures due to COVID-19.



## TikTok – celebrating printed books with short-form video

There is a captive audience out there for the printed word – and recently, this has been highlighted with the rise of #BookTok – a trending hashtag on TikTok. Our previous post on TikTok for marketers is a great place to familiarize yourself with the platform and how it works. TikTok is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms, with over 689 million monthly active users.

Being such a visual user experience, it may seem surprising that printed books are trending on TikTok. Let's explore why #BookTok is on the rise and the marketing opportunities it presents.

## #BookTok - using TikTok to promote favourite reads

The written word is being brought to life through the medium of short-form video, as the hashtag #BookTok trends within the TikTok community. #BookTok is a bustling corner of TikTok, notching up **over 9.5 billion views by July 2021**.

Users create short-form videos of themselves reading sections of their favourite books, tagged with #BookTok. They share quotes. Discuss plot twists. They even publish montages of themselves recorded before and after completing the book. Often set to music, it's fascinating to see how their demeanour, mood or spirit has changed on finishing the book.

## Is #BookTok a marketing megaphone?

Globally, authors are noticing increases in sales when their books are featured on #BookTok. Publishers and book stores have recognized this potential revenue stream and are actively promoting major TikTok influencers. The more followers an influencer has, the more likes and shares they get, the more likely the end-user is to buy.

Seeing #BookTok result in a rise in print sales reminds me of Seth Godin talking about the marketing funnel. We loved his take on seeing the concept of the marketing funnel as a megaphone instead - a megaphone you give to your customers/users so they can shout about your product/service. A genuine customer talking about their positive experience will always have a greater reach than a campaign constructed without customer insight.

Trending on #BookTok can drive thousands of new sales, meaning marketers and publishers are keen to explore this potential revenue model. When you give influencers a reason to shout about your products (be it payment, promotion or product), their #BookTok followers will like, share (market) – and buy.

## Top Influencers getting involved in #BookTok

**caitsbooks** (<https://www.tiktok.com/@caitsbooks>)

Cait has over 213,000 followers and regularly posts about her love of vampire books and her 'must reads'. Like many other top posters, she regularly gets thousands of other BookTok lovers engaging with her content, many of whom have joined Bookington, her online book club (The Bookington Book Club – Cait's Books ([caitsbooks.com](https://caitsbooks.com)))

**abbysbooks** (<https://www.tiktok.com/@abbysbooks>)

Racking up over 20 million likes, Abby's 370,000+ followers are regularly exposed to new reads, all chosen by Abby herself. With TikTok only allowing users to string up to four 15-second posts together, her 30-minute BookShelf Tour lives on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/VkFbEFrk-m8>). In it, you get to learn more about Abby, her book collection and the personal reasons behind her buying them.

**Kevin T Norman** (KTN (@kevintnorman) TikTok | Watch KTN's Newest TikTok Videos)

Kevin promotes LGBTQ 'must-read' books to his followers. He is also a rep for the Rainbow Crate Book Box, a US-based queer book subscription service (Home | Rainbow Crate ([rainbowcratebookbox.com](https://rainbowcratebookbox.com)))

## #BookTok – what does the future hold?

As marketers, we know that trends come and go, and our social media marketing practices need to be adaptable and resilient in the face of an ever-changing marketplace.

Twitter and Instagram have recently insisted on celebrities and influencers being more transparent with their posts. They have to use the hashtag #ad or #advert to let their followers know they are being paid for the post.

Will the same happen within the #BookTok community? Transparency and authenticity are key when making genuine connections with a community, which is something to bear in mind when looking at launching new campaigns within a savvy community such as TikTok.

**Have you engaged with #BookTok as part of your marketing? We would love to hear from organizations and marketers who are happy to share their experiences. Drop a comment below or on social.**