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BOOKTOK AS A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL

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Анотація: Розглянуто феномен BookTok, як потужний маркетинговий інструмент, в книжковій індустрії. Проаналізовано вплив користувацького контенту, вірусних трендів і культури інфлюенсерів на продажі книг.

Ключові слова: BookTok, TikTok, маркетинг, книги, вірусні тренди, соціальні мережі, цифрова реклама, жанри.

Abstracts.

The phenomenon of BookTok is explored as a powerful marketing tool in the publishing industry. The influence of user-generated content, viral trends, and influencer culture on book sales is analyzed.

Keywords: BookTok, TikTok, marketing, books, viral trends, social media, digital advertising, genres.

In recent years, social media has become a crucial tool for marketing in various industries, including publishing. One of the most influential phenomena in the book industry is BookTok, a thriving subcommunity on TikTok dedicated to discussing and promoting books that people find either fascinating or disappointing. Unlike traditional book marketing, which relies on critical reviews, advertisements, and book tours, BookTok harnesses the power of short-form videos and viral trends to engage readers in a dynamic, interactive way.

BookTok began gaining popularity around 2020 when readers started sharing emotional reactions, book recommendations, and aesthetically pleasing book hauls. Publishers quickly recognized the potential of this subcommunity and started collaborating with influencers to promote new and existing titles [1].

Today, BookTok is more than just a community — it's a powerful marketing tool that shapes bestseller lists, revives forgotten books, and even influences publishing decisions. One notable trend on the platform is the dominance of certain genres, particularly romance, fantasy, romantasy, and young adult fiction. These genres thrive due to their emotional depth, engaging plots, and strong fan communities.

Among the most commonly mentioned authors on BookTok is Sarah J. Maas, whose books, including *A Court of Thorns and Roses* and *Throne of Glass*, have gained massive popularity, sparking debates about quality, inclusivity, copycatting, and market saturation. However, Sarah J. Maas is not the only author who has captivated the platform [2].

Rebecca F. Kuang has also gained significant attention with her *The Poppy War* trilogy, a high fantasy inspired by Chinese history and mythology. BookTok readers are drawn to the series for its complex characters and unflinching portrayal of historical atrocities. Discussions around Kuang's work often center on themes of power, revenge, and the moral ambiguity of her characters, making her books a staple in many BookTok debates.

BookTok is not just about recommendations — it's also a space for heated literary discussions. Anyone who has spent time in the community has likely come across passionate debates about which characters deserve redemption and which do not. Fans argue endlessly over morally gray protagonists, redemption arcs, and whether certain characters' actions can truly be forgiven. This kind of engagement fuels the virality of books, as readers feel compelled to share their opinions and convince others to see their perspective.

Recently, *The Hunger Games* franchise has once again taken over BookTok with the release of *Sunrise on the Reaping*, a new prequel by Suzanne Collins, which hit shelves on March 18 [3].

The book explores the 50th Hunger Games — also known as the Second Quarter Quell, the year Haymitch Abernathy won. Early conversations of fans suggest that this book, much like its predecessors, will break readers' hearts and serve as a powerful reminder of who the real enemy is.

Impact on the Publishing Industry [4]:

- Boost in Book Sales: Books that gain popularity on BookTok often experience a noticeable increase in sales. Publishers and booksellers have noted that titles featured in viral BookTok videos frequently climb bestseller lists. This trend has also revived interest in older books, bringing back titles that had previously faded from widespread attention.
- Increased Visibility for New Authors: BookTok has become a game-changer for new and lesser-known authors, offering them a platform to reach a target audience. A single viral video can promote an unknown book to mainstream success, as seen with *The Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller.
- Evolving Marketing Strategies: Recognizing the power of BookTok, publishers have increasingly incorporated TikTok into their promotional efforts. Many now collaborate with popular BookTok influencers to market new releases, interactive events, and hashtag campaigns to engage with the platform's literary community.

Additionally, BookTok's influence is evident in bookstores worldwide, where dedicated BookTok sections feature trending titles. In Ukraine, publishers are also embracing this trend, actively collaborating with local BookTokers to promote books and engage new readers.

Transformation of reading habits [4]:

- Expanding Reading Preferences: BookTok has introduced readers to a wider range of genres and authors, often spotlighting books they might not have discovered otherwise. By fostering curiosity and literary exploration, the platform has significantly shaped the modern reading trend.
- Stronger Community Engagement: The interactive nature of BookTok has made reading a more social experience. Users actively discuss books, take part in reading challenges, and share personal insights, creating a vibrant and engaged literary community.
- Influence on TBR (To Be Read) Lists: These kinds of lists have become a major part of BookTok culture, with users exchanging recommendations and setting reading goals. This trend has encouraged more intentional and structured reading habits.

Beyond viral book recommendations, BookTok has also influenced how readers track their reading progress. Many users create accounts on Goodreads to organize their To Be Read lists and review books. In Ukraine, the Rork app has gained popularity, allowing readers to track their progress, discover new books, and see what others are reading.

How to Leverage BookTok for Marketing [4]:

- Engaging with the Community: Authors and publishers should immerse themselves in BookTok by interacting with readers, joining trending discussions, and creating content that resonates with the target audience.
- Collaborating with Influencers: Partnering with popular BookTokers can significantly boost a book's visibility, as their recommendations often drive sales.
- Emphasizing Authenticity: BookTok thrives on honest reviews. Successful marketing strategies prioritize genuine recommendations, behind-the-scenes content, and meaningful interactions with readers.

As BookTok continues to expand, it will undoubtedly remain an integral part of the book industry, up-grading a love for reading and bringing book enthusiasts together worldwide. TikTok's user base is predominantly female, with 60% of its audience belonging to Gen Z — a generation known for setting trends[1].

Summing up the factors above makes BookTok an incredibly influential marketing tool, capable of shaping literary trends and driving book sales.

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