

Diverging paths: the influence of ereaders on book clubs

Presentation

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Creative writing is moving in new directions with changes to its format and delivery as ereaders become more popular due to increased options and ease of use. By May 2012, sales of ebooks on Amazon overtook those of print books, and in the UK digital book sales increased by 366% in 2011.

Readers often enjoy sharing their thoughts and feelings about books and authors, and a popular way of doing this is to get together in book clubs. These meetings take a variety of forms with each group often creating their own 'rules'.

This presentation reflects on research into the potential effects of ereaders on book clubs. The research method involved 14 focus groups held in and around Hamilton in 2012. In these groups people were asked about their reasons for joining a book club as well as their attitudes to ereaders and books.

The research found that people do not join book clubs just for the books, the social aspect is perceived as just as important. Ereaders were seen as a solitary pursuit; although those who did have ereaders continued to share authors and titles in their meetings. Fewer than one third of the people surveyed owned an ereader; however, at least another third would like to own one or find out more about them. The successful inclusion of ereaders into the book club would depend on the type of club, with book discussion groups being more likely to use them than book libraries in which everyone reads different books 'from the box'.