



## BOOK-BUYING AND READING HABITS 2009

by Julie H. Ferguson

*Author and professional speaker, Julie H. Ferguson delivers keynotes and breakouts that provide aspiring authors with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to approach publishers and succeed. Her paperbacks and e-books, as well as Coaching Towards Publication are available through Beacon Literary Services at [www.beaconlit.com](http://www.beaconlit.com).*

The way we buy books in N. America has changed, is changing, and will continue to change.

All authors whether commercial or self-published need to pay attention to Bowker's latest information and not only at the writing stage, but also at the contract signing and at the promotion planning phase. Librarians and booksellers will learn much from this survey too.

Here are some highlights:

- 67% read book reviews online before buying
- 23% buy books online as opposed to 21% in retail outlets
- 21% of fiction was bought online
- 50% of all fiction bought is in the mystery and romance sub-categories
- 58% of readers are female
- 32% of readers are 55+
- 57% of book buyers are female and buy 65% of all books
- 67% of book buyers are over 42; 17% are Gen X; only 10% are GenY

Electronic books are surging and so are purchases of e-readers, like Kindle. But the age group driving this is surprising - the over-50s:

- Seniors buy the most e-readers, followed by the 18-34 year olds
- E-book sales grew by 183% in the over 65 cohort and by 174% in the 55-65 age group
- The 35-49 year olds prefer reading on their iPhones and iTouches



Bowker's stats are gathered monthly from a sample of 36,000 book buyers. Kelly Gallagher's (Bowker) slideshow can be viewed at: <http://www.slideshare.net/bisg/4-making-information-pay-2009-gallagher-kelly-bowker-1406744>. You'll need to register at [Slideshare.net](http://www.slideshare.net) if not already a member - it's free.

To learn more about our book buying habits and read comments about them, visit <http://followthereader.wordpress.com>