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Lithuanian publisher's needs for training

Arūnas Gudina vičius

Abstract

The survey on the training and professional development needs of Lithuanian publishers was designed and conducted. The pilot research showed that publishers in Lithuania have an interest in professional training. According to the results, the need for training among the employees of Lithuanian publishing houses depends on the previous training experience: the more training courses the employee had before, the greater need for training he/she expresses. 82% of publishing house employees from four different fields agreed and strongly agreed on the need for training. Very few employees would like to pay for training by themselves. The identified need for training appears to reflect the nature of the problems encountered in the publishing field in Lithuania: Copyright, Law & Rights is the most wanted training topic among managing directors. The list of preferred topics for training can be used as the grounds for creating a supply of publishing training courses.

Keywords: needs for training, publishers, Lithuania

1. Introduction

The economic decline observed in the world around the end of the first decade of the 21st century along with the digital transformation of reading affected the publishing business all over the world. After the crisis the publishing market in Lithuania was recovering from € 24.9 million book retail sales in 2010 to € 29.4 million in 2013 but dropped again in 2014 to € 28.9 million (Statistics Lithuania 2015). A lot of publishing houses in Lithuania do not want any changes in their business; they are trying to avoid any new emerging technologies: e-books, apps, tablet computers, smartphones, etc. They refuse to change and are trying to hold on to the old publishing models and ideas. From one point of view, it is understandable. It is not easy to be interested in new skills, technologies, methods while you must survive in this ever-changing time.

Strong professional training traditions can be found in big countries with large book markets. For example, *The Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies* (<http://publishing.brookes.ac.uk>) is one of the leading centers (based in Oxford Brookes University) for publishing training in the world and is running courses in a number of countries including the UK, India, UAE, China and South Africa. Another provider, *The Publishing Training Centre* (<http://www.train4publishing.co.uk>), based in London, specialises in editorial skills training for book and journal publishers but also offers a range of topics covering broad publishing skills for all kinds of publishers. Canada's premier training ground for publishing professionals is *Simon Fraser University* (<http://publishing.sfu.ca>) based in Vancouver. It offers education and professional development at all levels. In Lithuania, where the publishing market is small, there are few training companies which offer a single publishing course for publishers. The Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University offers *Publishing study programs* (bachelor and master). However, there are no solid training courses for publishing professionals offered on the market.

Lithuanian publishers show interest in professional training but it is not clear what kind of training and topics publishers want and would prefer first. Training courses have to be adjusted to the specificities and needs in order to be effective for small country publishers. No information about similar investigations on the publishers' need for training could be found. Therefore, in collaboration with the Lithuanian Publishers Association, the following research task was formulated: to find out the training and professional development needs among Lithuanian publishers mostly focusing on managing directors, project managers, copy-editors and designers positions in publishing houses. In order to achieve the aim, a questionnaire was designed and a survey was conducted. The analysis of publishers' needs for training and professional development was performed which came to conclusions and recommendations for a list of preferred topics for training courses. The level of the training demand was evaluated as well and it can be used as the grounds for creating a supply of such training courses.

2. Previous research

Only several research studies on the topic of publishers' needs for training were conducted. In their article Johnson and Royle (2000) consider the British experience of developing education for publishers at the end of the 1990s; they summarise some of the developments that are taking place in education and training and raise issues that will become more relevant in the future, including that of keeping the existing staff up to date.

Sobol (1997) argues that classroom-based training programs can help



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prospective job seekers decide whether publishing is for them. Also, training programs can release publishers from the expenses of training professionals new to publishing. Davies (1997) analyses internships as a publishing training tool and concludes that internships provide aspirants to the publishing profession with the opportunity to learn about the industry through hands-on work, without the financial investment or geographical dislocation required to attend many publishing courses. Publishers also benefit from applicants with a valuable practical training.

In his article Gill Davies (2005), senior lecturer on the MA in Publishing (City University, London), discusses the need of training for publishing: "is it worth it or is just another burgeoning but parasitic side of the publishing industry?". He argues that not all trainers are good and no publisher should be employing a trainer who has not had a lengthy and proven record of success working in a publishing house. Davies concludes that the training provides employees with valuable insights and it is a genuine benefit for both sides (the publisher and the employee) and reflects the spirit and attitude of young people joining the industry.

No research attempts on investigating publishers' needs for training in Lithuania were found.

3. Methodology

Questionnaires designed to evaluate the needs for training in various fields are used quite often. One study (Bai and Martin 2015) assesses the needs of urban school leaders for special education preparation in the USA. The needs survey measures 10 aspects regarding special education knowledge and skills as indicated by 10 factors in the exploratory factor analysis. The results revealed that there were significant differences in the needs of training in special education knowledge based on the school administrators' backgrounds.

A questionnaire together with an innovative theoretical assessment model was used to identify teacher candidates' needs for training in inclusive classroom assessment in Canada (Lin and Lin 2015). Training needs of Portuguese school psychologists working in public and private schools were analysed on the basis of the survey of professionals (Mendes et al. 2015).

Another study (Turturean and Turturean 2012) in Romania based on the data obtained from the application of a sample survey analyses the perception of undergraduate university students regarding the effects of the Internet on their scientific activities and their training needs. A structured questionnaire together with discussions in small and large groups was used in the research of the training needs (Garcia et al. 2010) of health care professionals working in Peruvian governmental institutions. Survey data from Egyptian novice researchers in the form of an online questionnaire were collected in order to help framing the research students' training programs (Mohamed and Koehler 2010).

A closed-ended questionnaire was prepared for research on Lithuanian publishers' needs for training. In order to maximise return rates, the questionnaire was designed to be as simple and clear as possible with the use of targeted sections and questions (Boynton and Greenhalgh 2004). The first part of the questionnaire included statistical respondent information (age, sex, work area, position in a publishing house, experience, participation in training); the second part was about the training needs (the kind of training needed; whether training is needed at all; training conditions; ability to train others) and the third part consisted of specific training topics to choose from.

At the first stage the questionnaire was sent to all members of the Lithuanian Publishers Association. Association combines all main Lithuanian publishers: it was 42 members at the time of research[1]. At the second stage the questionnaire was passed to all other active publishers: 143 publishing houses from the 2014 Digital Publishing Situation in Lithuania research (Gudinavičius, Šuminas and Macevičiūtė 2015) which was carried out under a research grant from the Lithuanian Council for Culture. Publishing houses were asked to spread the link to the survey between the employees of the company. The survey took place in four weeks of March, 2015. The reminders to spread and fill the survey were sent three times every week.

The questionnaire was filled in by 146 respondents from approximately 50 publishing houses (the survey was anonymous but the respondents had an option to leave an e-mail and/or a publishing house name; besides, different IPs were also taken into account in counting the approximate number of publishing houses which participated in the survey). There was at least one participant from each of the major publishing houses.

4. Findings

4. 1. Portrait of the survey respondents

Age group. 40% of the respondents were from the age group 35-50; the second age group comprised 27% of the respondents aged 50-64 years and the third age group consisted of 23% of the respondents aged 25-34. The smallest age groups were 18-24 represented by 10% of the respondents and over 65 years old with 3% of the respondents (Figure 1).

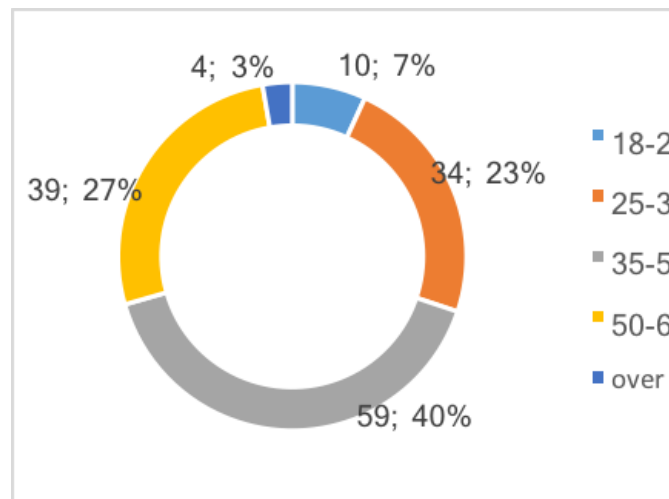


Figure 1. Age groups of the respondents [click to enlarge]

Table 1. The number of employees in the respondent's publishing house

Answer options	Response percent	Response count
1-3	18.5%	27
4-6	17.1%	25
7-10	19.2%	28
11-15	13.7%	20
more than 15	31.5%	46

Private vs. public. 66 respondents (45%) stated that they work in a publishing house funded by the government (mostly universities and other academic institutions), i.e. the public sector, and 80 respondents (55%) were from the private sector.

Number of employees. The questionnaire included a question about the number of employees in the respondent's publishing house. Most respondents (46) were from publishing houses with 15 or more employees (31.5%). Other answers were more or less equally distributed between the publishing houses with a smaller number of employees (Table 1).

Table 2. The number of titles published in the past year in the respondent's publishing house

Answer options	Response percent	Response count
1-3	18.5%	27
4-6	17.1%	25
7-10	19.2%	28
11-15	13.7%	20
more than 15	31.5%	46

Number of book titles. A question on the number of titles published in the past year was asked as well. Most (35) respondents (24%) answered that they worked in a publishing house with 11-20 titles published per year. Other answers can be seen in Table 2.

Table 3. Professional experience of the respondents

Answer options	Response percent	Response count
1-4	10.3%	15
5-10	18.5%	27
11-20	24.0%	35
21-50	18.5%	27
51-100	17.1%	25
more than 100	11.6%	17

Professional experience. A question was asked about the professional experience in publishing. 36 respondents indicated 11-20 years of experience (25%). 34 respondents specified their experience as 6-10 years. All results are stated in Table 3.

Answer options	Response percent	Response count
Up to 1 year	4.8%	7
1–2 years	10.3%	15
3–5 years	16.4%	24
6–10 years	23.3%	34
11–20 years	24.7%	36
More than 20 years	20.5%	30

Respondents work area. All respondents were asked to identify their work area. 35 respondents (24%) were managing directors, 25 – project managers (17%), 21 – copy-editors and proofreaders (14%), 20 – designers, art directors, layout artists (12%), 17 – marketing and sales managers (11%). Other work area groups were smaller (see Figure 2).

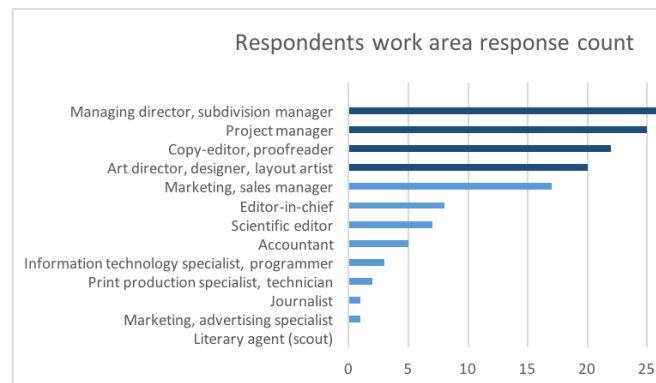


Figure 2. Respondents work area [click to enlarge]

Four biggest work area groups were selected for further analysis:

- Managing directors.** 35 managing directors or subdivision managers filled in the questionnaire. 54% of them were from the private sector and 46% represent the public sector. 11 (32%) of them specified their experience in the field as more than 20 years; 14 (40%) indicated the experience of 11-20 years; 5 (14%) stated that they had the experience of 3–5 years and 5 (14%) had 6–10 years of experience.
- Project managers.** 25 project managers completed the questionnaire. 80% of them were from the private sector and 20% from the public sector. 9 (36%) of them described their experience in the field as 6–10 years; 8 (32%) showed 3–5 year experience; 4 (16%) specified 1–2 year experience; 2 (8%) had more than 20 years of experience, one (4%) project manager indicated the experience of up to 1 year and one specified the experience of 11–20 years.
- Copy-editors and proofreaders.** 22 copy-editors and proofreaders completed the questionnaire. Most of them – 77% – were from the public sector and the rest – 23% – from the private sector. 7 (32%) of them described their experience in the field as more than 20 years; 7 (32%) showed a 11–20 year experience.
- Designers, art directors, layout artists.** 20 designers, art directors and illustrators answered the questionnaire. 50% of them work in the private sector and 50% are employed in the public sector. 7 of them (35%) specified 11–20 years of experience in the field; 5 (25%) of them had more than 20 years of experience; 7 (25%) indicated the experience of 6–10 years; 1 (5%) showed the experience of 3–5 years and 1 specified 1–2 years of experience.

4.2. Previous participation in training

Most respondents (86, 59%) answered that they had not participated in any professional training courses in the past 5 years. 34 respondents said that they had the participation experience of 1–2 times (23%). 13 respondents (9%) attended the training course 3–5 times and 13 respondents participated in training courses more than 5 times (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Participation in training [click to enlarge]

Let's see into the participation results according to each work area. The survey showed that 49% of managing directors specified that they had never participated in any training. 17% of them participated 1–2 times; 17% attended a training course 3–5 times and 17% participated in the training more than 5 times. There was no significant difference between private and public sector.

A similar situation was found in the case of copy-editors. 45% of them specified that they had never participated in any training. What is more, none of the copy-editors participated in training courses more than 5 times. 45% of them attended a training course 1–2 times; 10% of them participated in a training course 3–5 times.

Project managers and designers participated in even fewer training courses: 72% of project managers and 75% of designers indicated that they had never participated in any training. 8% of project managers

attended a training course 1–2 times; 16% of them completed a training course 3-5 times and 4% participated in a training course over 5 times. The rest of designers (25%) were enrolled in a training course 1-2 times.

4.3. Training needs

The respondents were asked to express their opinion on whether they needed professional training courses. Most of them are in need of such courses: a total of 40 respondents (27%) 'strongly agreed' and 76 respondents 'agreed' (52%) to it. 23 respondents were neutral (16%); 6 of them indicated that they did not need training (4%) and only one stated that he strongly did not need any training (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Training needs [click to enlarge]

The respondents were also asked about the condition on which they would like to join training courses. The majority of them (126 respondents – 86%) said that they would join courses if somebody (publishing house) paid for their training; 14 respondents (10%) would be willing to pay by themselves and 6 respondents (4%) would refuse to participate in the training under any conditions.

The answers of the respondents from different work areas slightly diverged.

The answers of **managing directors** about the need for training showed interesting results: all managers who had already participated in training courses more than 5 times answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree'; such answers were in the questionnaires of 75% of the managers who had already participated in a training course 1-5 times and only 35% of the managers who had never participated in any training (Figure 5).

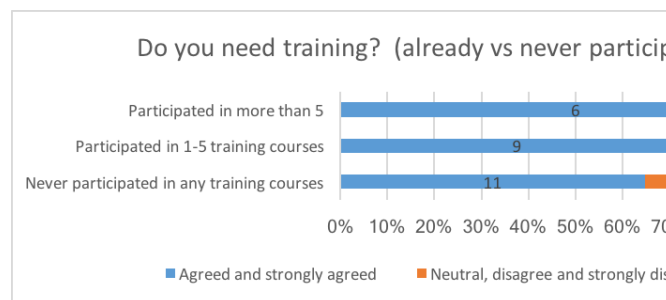


Figure 5. Training need in comparison to previous participation [click to enlarge]

It should be noted that more managers from the public sector agreed to training needs (88%) compared to the private sector (63%).

5 (14%) managers (from public and private sectors) assured that they would like to attend a good quality training course at their expense while 3 of them remained neutral about whether they needed any training. 2 managers from the private sector with more than 20 years of experience answered that they would not participate in any training under any circumstances. The remaining 28 managers (80%) preferred that the training costs were covered by somebody else (the company or a sponsor).

Project managers with the previous 1-5 time experience in training courses agreed with those project managers who had never participated in a training course in the answer to the question "Do you need any training to acquire new skills and knowledge?"; 83% of both groups 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to it (Figure 6).

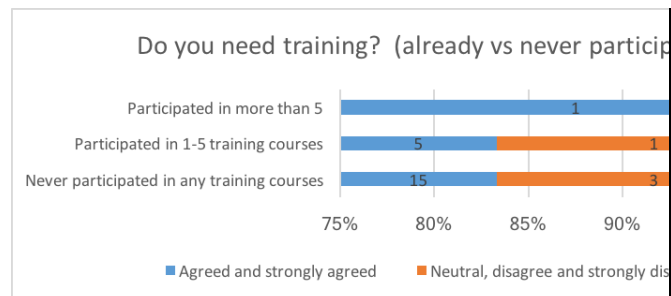


Figure 6. Training need in comparison to previous participation [click to enlarge]

More project managers from the private sector agreed to the need for training (90%) compared to the public sector (60%).

One (4%) project manager from the private sector assured that he would like to pay for a good quality training course at his expense, whereas one project manager answered that he would not participate in any training under any circumstances. The remaining 23 project managers (92%) would prefer that somebody else paid for a training course (the company or a sponsor).

Copy-editors and proofreaders are in some way similar to managing directors: all copy-editors who had already participated in at least one training course and only 60% of copy-editors who had never participated in any training 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to it (Figure 7).

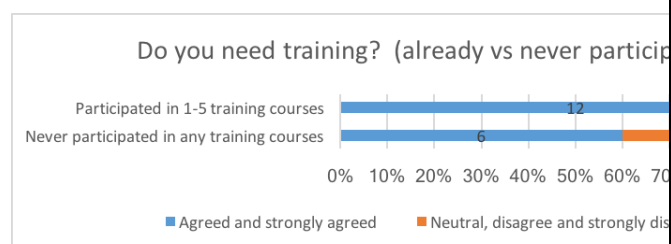


Figure 7. Training needs in comparison to previous participation [click to enlarge]

More copy-editors from the public sector agreed to the need for training (88%) in comparison to the private sector (60%).

4 (18%) copy-editors (from public and private sectors) assured that they would pay for good quality training at their expense. The remaining 18 copy-editors (82%) would prefer that somebody else paid for a training course (the company or a sponsor).

80% **designers** who had already participated in training courses 1-5 times and 87% designers who had never participated in any training 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to the need for training (Figure 8).

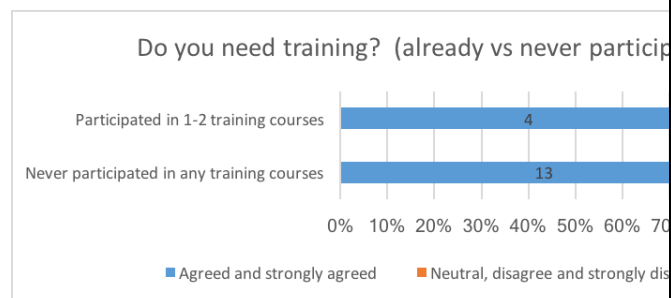


Figure 8. Training need in comparison previous participation [click to enlarge]

Slightly more designers from the public sector agreed to the training need (90%) compared to the private sector (80%).

Only one designer (5%) from the private sector assured that he would like to pay for a good quality training course at his expense, whereas 2 designers from the private sector indicated that they would not participate in any training under any circumstances. The remaining 17 designers (85%) would prefer that someone else paid for the training (the company or a sponsor).

More respondents from the public sector needed training in a total of three work areas (managing directors, copy-editors and designers) and only more project managers from the private sector agreed to the need for training compared to the public sector (60%). What is more, 'the more previous training, the more training wanted' tendency is observed: the respondents who have never participated in any training want less training and vice versa.

4.4. Most wanted training topics

According to the answers of **managing directors**, the most wanted training topic is *Copyright, Law & Rights* – 62% of the managers included this training topic in their wish list. Other three topics were popular as well: *Strategy and Leadership, Marketing, Advertisement and Promotion*. Each of them was chosen by 51% of managers (Table 4).

Table 4. Most wanted training topics among managers

Training topic	Private	Public	Total
Copyright, Law & Rights	12	10	22
Strategy and Leadership	10	8	18
Marketing	10	8	18
Advertisement and Promotion	8	10	18

It is interesting that 12 managers wanted either illustration, design or layout design training. The same number of managers wanted the training on project management. The results are similar to the survey on the training needs of Portuguese school psychologists (Mendes et al. 2015) and shows the intention of some professionals to expand their field of expertise beyond the so called traditional roles.

Advertisement and Promotion is the most wanted training topic among **project managers** – 60% of project managers included this training topic in their wish list. Other four topics were popular as well: *Project Management* (48%), *Strategy and Leadership* (44%), *Marketing* (44%), and *Copyright, Law & Rights* (44%). Each of them was chosen by 51% of project managers (Table 5).

Table 5. Most wanted training topics among project managers

Training topic	Private	Public	Total
Advertisement and Promotion	13	2	15
Project Management	12	0	12
Strategy and Leadership	10	1	11
Marketing	10	1	11
Copyright, Law & Rights	8	3	11

Six project managers also expressed a wish for the training on *Copy-editing*, six on *Financial Management* and six on *Print Process*.

Editing is the most wanted training topic among **copy-editors and proofreaders** – 95% of copy-editors included this training topic in their wish list. *Proofreading* was the second most popular topic (45%) (Table 6).

Table 6. Most wanted training topics among copy-editors

Training topic	Private	Public	Total
Editing (language)	5	16	21
Proofreading	3	7	10

In addition, nine copy-editors (41%) wanted either illustration, design or layout design training. Six copy-editors preferred the training on *Copyright, Law & Rights*.

The most wanted training topic among **designers** is *Design* – 80% of designers included this training topic in their wish list. Other two topics were popular as well: *Illustration* and *Page Layout*. Each of them was chosen by 60% of designers (Table 7).

Table 7. Most wanted training topics among managers

Training topic	Private	Public	Total
Design	7	9	16
Illustration	5	7	12
Page Layout	5	7	12

What is more, six designers (30%) wished to have the training on the *Print Process* topic.

4.5. Willingness to train others

The respondents were asked to express their opinion on whether they were willing and capable to train others. Among all the answers given in the survey 13 respondents (9%) believe that they are capable and would like to train others; 42 respondents (29%) expressed a desire to train but were not sure whether they would be able to do that. The answers according to four different work areas are presented in the charts below (Figure 9).

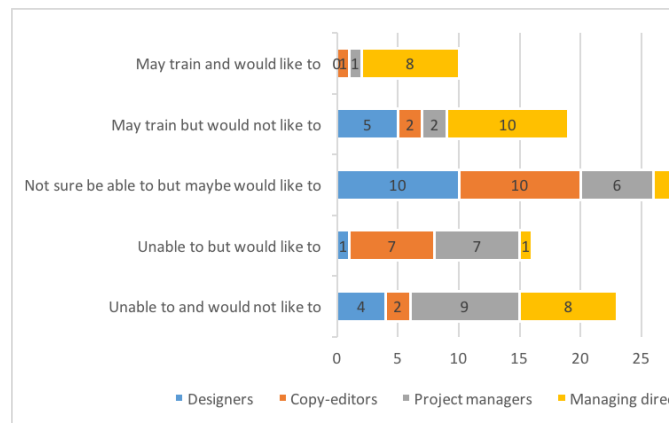


Figure 9. Willingness to train others [click to enlarge]

More than half of **managing directors** were sure that they were able to teach others but only half of them answered that they would like to teach. Only 12% of **project managers** were sure that they were able to train others, whereas 64% considered themselves unable to train others. 41% of **copy-editors** considered themselves not able to teach others and 45% were not sure about their capabilities (but maybe they would like to). Only 14% of copy editors considered themselves capable to teach others and only 5% would like to teach. Half of **designers** were not sure if they were able to teach others but they maybe would like to. Only 25% believed that they were able to teach others but none of them would like to. 25% considered themselves unable to teach others.

In summary, managing directors mostly (23%) may and would like to train others (they chose this answer option most often). Managing directors (28%) and designers (25%) may but would not like to teach. Designers are most undecided: 50% are not sure if they are able to but maybe they would like to teach. Project managers (28%) and copy-editors (32%) are mostly unable to but would like to teach. Finally, project managers are mostly (36%) unable to and would not like to teach others.

5. Conclusion

According to the survey results, the need for training among the employees of Lithuanian publishing houses depends on their previous training experience. The more training courses the employee attended before, the greater need for training he/she expresses. It is important to notice that these results of the survey represents job positions such as managing directors, project managers, copy-editors or designers.

All four groups of publishing house employees from different work areas believe that they need training – 82% of the respondents on the average agreed and strongly agreed to it, with the exception of managing directors who stand below average with 74%. 85% of designers, 84% of project managers and 82% of copy-editors think that they need training. These results can in some way be compared to the research completed by Sotirova (2001) in Bulgaria. The results clearly express the need for training (53%) and the inclination to pay for it. Most Bulgarian publishers (61%) were not able to participate in training programs offered by the EU in 2001 and were not investing in training activities in general.

Only 4–5% of managing directors, project managers and designers would be willing to pay for training by themselves. Copy-editors make an exception – 18% of them would agree to pay for good training. All others prefer a publishing house or any sponsor to pay for their training. About 60% of the respondents from Lithuanian publishing houses have never participated in any training. It could be a promising opportunity for training providers, especially bearing in mind that 59% of the respondents had six or more years of experience in this field.

When considering the hiring of lecturers from the publishing business, it should be noted that according to the survey results, managing directors are most willing to teach others, whereas project managers are most unwilling to teach others.

More than 60 subtopics classified into 8 topics were offered to the employees of publishing houses in Lithuania. The identified need for training appears to reflect the nature of the problems encountered in the publishing field in Lithuania: the most wanted training topic for managing directors is *Copyright, Law & Rights*.

This topic is also important for project managers. *Advertisement and Promotion* is the top preference among project managers. The most wanted subtopics are the following:

- for managing directors – *Copyright and Legal Compliance in the Digital Age and Publishing Marketing*;
- for project managers – *Efficient Work with Social Networks and Copywriting for Publishers*;
- for copy-editors – *Advanced Proofreading and Getting into Grammar*,
- for designers – *Ebooks in EPUB Format with InDesign*.

The subtopics with the subjects on digital publishing were also popular: *Digital Strategy for Publishers, Publishing in the Digital Age, E-marketing, The Basics of E-books, Apps in Publishing, Editing Digital Products*.


This pilot research shows that there is a publisher's interest in targeted training in Lithuania. Some topics such as *Copyright and Legal Compliance in the Digital Age, Efficient Work with Social Networks, Ebooks in EPUB Format* are very much wanted, in particular if training was paid by the company or from any sponsor project grant.

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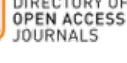
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