

The Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science La Revue canadienne des sciences de l'information et de bibliothéconomie



Book influencers in the library?

Dóra Szabó  et Erzsébet Dani 

Volume 47, numéro 2, 2024

Bobcatss 2024 Special Issue
Numéro spécial Bobcatss 2024

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1115990ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5206/cjils-rcsib.v47i2.17685>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Canadian Association for Information Science - Association canadienne des sciences de l'information

ISSN

1195-096X (imprimé)

1920-7239 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Szabó, D. & Dani, E. (2024). Book influencers in the library? *The Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science / La Revue canadienne des sciences de l'information et de bibliothéconomie*, 47(2), 18–29.
<https://doi.org/10.5206/cjils-rcsib.v47i2.17685>

Résumé de l'article

The digital revolution has transformed reading promotion in a world where technology competes with traditional entertainment, posing challenges for libraries, especially in engaging audiences. Adapting actively is crucial to making reading appealing. The rise of book influencers and reading promoters on social media is pivotal for reading education, offering libraries opportunities to diversify programs. Using the "walkthrough" method on four platforms, our research identified 60 Hungarian book influencers and reading promoters. Structured interviews with 23 influencers aimed to unveil their activities, motivations, and the aspirations and reading experiences behind their content. The study contributes to literary and cultural mediation, exploring the intersection between libraries and literacy promoters. It addresses how literacy promoters can enhance reading promotion in the community, emphasizing their role in generating interest in books and literature. Findings suggest that social media and influencers complement libraries' literacy strategies, benefiting both libraries and readers. Collaborating with influencers can foster a reading culture aligned with the digital era's demands. Encouraging influencers to collaborate could also educate their followers, transforming them into library users.

© Dóra Szabó et Erzsébet Dani, 2024



Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

Book influencers in the library?

Dóra Szabó ¹ and Erzsébet Dani ²

¹University of Debrecen. Faculty of Humanities. Institute of Media and Library Science. Department of Library and Information Science

²Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Humanities, University of Debrecen, Hungary

The digital revolution has reshaped approaches to promoting reading and literature, posing challenges in a world where technological advancements compete with traditional forms of entertainment. Libraries, especially tasked with engaging younger generations, must actively adapt to make reading attractive. In this context, the emergence of book influencers and reading promoters on social media and online platforms plays a crucial role in reading education. These influencers, spanning diverse age groups and interests, offer libraries opportunities to diversify their reading programs. Our research focused on Hungarian book influencers and reading promoters using the “walkthrough” method on four platforms, identifying 60 individuals. Structured interviews with 23 influencers aimed to uncover their activities, motivations, and the underlying aspirations and reading experiences behind their content. The study contributes to literary and cultural mediation, exploring the intersection between libraries and literacy promoters. It addresses how literacy promoters can collaborate with libraries to enhance the promotion of reading and literature in the community. Emphasizing how reading promoters can help libraries generate interest in books and literature, the findings suggest that social media and influencers complement libraries’ literacy strategies. Collaboration with these influencers has the potential to benefit both libraries and readers, fostering a reading culture aligned with the digital era’s demands. Encouraging influencers to collaborate with libraries could also lead to the education of their followers, transforming them into library users.

Keywords: library, social media, reading promotion, influencer, book influencer

Introduction

Cultivating and promoting an interest in reading and literature is critical to culture and education. Libraries have traditionally been, and remain, centres of reading and learning because, in the information age, a desire to read and write is essential for media and information literacy and creative thinking. However, in the digital age, where many other forms of entertainment compete with reading, libraries need to develop new strategies for promoting reading to meet the needs of users across generations. Library staff have the skills and expertise to support readers’ lifelong learning. They perform their work to a high standard (Istók, 2018). In our research, we try to provide an adequate answer to our basic research question: how can we promote reading and literacy education in the information society through library collaborations, including the involvement of social media and its popular actors and influencers? We are also looking for answers to how we can adapt the methods of professional

opinion leaders and their book-promoting effects to library practice and how their cooperation can help to maintain and increase interest in reading in the digital age. Cooperation between reading promoters and libraries should be mutually beneficial for both parties. Influencers have the opportunity to support and promote library services and events, while libraries can gain the support of influencers in promoting reading.

In our study, after reviewing the theoretical background, we turn to the reading promotion initiatives implemented in the Katona József Library of Bács-Kiskun County, the institutional base of our research. In addition, we will also write about the latest social media influencers, specifically Hungarian professional opinion leaders dealing with reading and books, based on the “walkthrough” method (Light et al. 2018). What are the chances that readers will encounter books on the online social networking sites YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok? How could the library use this concept and the work of influencers? In the following sections, we will explore this issue from the perspective of the literature.

The “Bookternet”

Reading in a social context has long been a feature of book culture. In many cases, readers identify themselves as book

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dóra Szabó: szabo.dora@arts.unideb.hu

lovers and use what is known as 'book talk' in social situations (Reddan, 2022). In recent years, we can perceive that book and reading culture has adapted to the Internet in a number of ways. Some popular digital platforms and practices, such as book blogs or book-related groups on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, focus on books and reading. These behaviours go beyond the simplistic distinction between 'old' and 'new' media (two media cultures) that is often made in analyses of the modern media environment, where reading books is often considered a worthwhile media activity and using new media is a more problematic activity.

Traditional media culture refers to long-established media such as television, radio, print and film. These media have dominated the media landscape for a long time and have had a huge impact on social thought and culture. However, new media culture has emerged with the digital revolution and the spread of the internet. This media is available through online platforms and is fundamentally different from traditional media. Both media cultures play an important role in society, and each has its own advantages and challenges. Traditional media have dominated the media space for a long time, while new media give people the opportunity to create personalized and social experiences. The new media culture has fundamentally changed the way people access information, communicate and create culture, and this change is still ongoing (Szabó and Dani, 2023).

Given the debate between these two media cultures, it is crucial to note that the emergence of a new reading culture on the Internet indirectly reveals to us ideas about the purposes and effects of reading. In this sense, the Guardian Reading Group serves as an illustration. This traditional newspaper has attempted to use Web 2.0 tools to make traditional book review formats accessible to a vibrant reading community. Another excellent example is the aforementioned social media, where digital natives are embracing reading and using book culture as a means of self-expression and social interaction. According to Collins (2010), the booktether is a platform that some book enthusiasts and those in the publishing industry refer to as the "book" site and group of the internet's many "bookish" people. In his book, he also argues that despite this digital movement, the printed book will have a unique cultural significance and that in a hypermediated world in which all forms of reading are prevalent, it is only in books that it can be realized as a culturally transformative activity.

Thus, the term booktether is an informal term that refers to the online presence of a passionate community and activity for books and literature. This community is made up of book and literature enthusiasts, book bloggers, bookstagrammers, booktubers, and all those who actively share their reading experiences, write book reviews, post book recommendations, or otherwise participate in the book and literature-loving community via the Internet. The booktether is a kind of

virtual literary community where readers and readers follow and communicate with each other based on their passion and interest in books. Such communities often appear on social media platforms such as Instagram (hence "bookstagram"), YouTube (hence "booktube") and various blogs and literary websites. People use the booktether to share their experiences of books and literature, get reading tips and recommendations, and socialize with people with similar interests. This community contributes to the promotion of literature and the development of a reading culture in the online space. The booktether is a dynamic and inspiring community that contributes to the promotion of books and literature in different ways. People can share their passion and opinions about books with readers from all over the world, contributing to the sharing of literary experiences and the cultivation of a passion for reading.

Most importantly, the online communities already mentioned are connected to relevant (social) sites where they become sub-communities, such as Youtube, Facebook, Instagram or TikTok, and not part of the closed network of the booktether. This is significant because initiatives often follow the guidelines and media opportunities of these platforms. So, for example, BookTube should be studied as a unique group within YouTube on the one hand, as a component of a larger community of video makers on the other, and as a separate small community of millennials who are building an online book culture (rejecting some ideas of book culture while embracing others), but more on this will be discussed in a later subsection (Birke & Fehrle, 2018).

Social media offer all users the opportunity to communicate quickly, even if they are thought to replace more traditional forms of communication. All individuals who use social media are considered content creators in these online spaces. The socio-cultural context of internet users influences the creation and consumption of material on virtual platforms. These online settings, such as reader groups and book reviews, facilitate the development of an online community of readers. Clearly, the online reading networks enabled by the virtual world provide users with access to real people and stimulate interest in reading in a virtual environment (Thomas & Round, 2016).

Perkins's article in *The Serials Librarian* is the first known example of the library community recognizing BookTube, a part of the booktether, as a tool. The author analyses precisely how the Internet and YouTube can build and sustain communities through their sociotechnical capabilities. His research question establishes a link between the extraordinary popularity of BookTube content producers and the content of their channels. He is one of the first researchers to draw attention to the beginnings of BookTube and succinctly define the community; in the 2010s, the online BookTube community emerged, growing out of the YouTube vlogging craze. Users share everything about books in this commu-

nity. His research looked at three booktubers, each with over 100,000 subscribers, who actively upload videos to their channels. Perkins also notes that booktubers have formed friendships based on mutual interest and community participation (Perkins, 2017). Her findings create both booktubers and the viewers they attract. He also points out that becoming a popular book opinion leader comes at an immense cost in terms of the book purchase that readers are encouraged to make. Perkins' study points to the enormous influence of BookTube, its content creators and viewers in the online reading community. Her research notes that booktubers bridge the gap between the private act of reading and the public reviews and analyses that take place on BookTube channels (Perkins, 2017; Dubroc, 2021).

Literacy education through influencers

This section discusses the people behind the concept of the bookternet. Opinion leaders are those who influence their fellow human beings with their opinions and behaviour: they can be celebrities, stars, bloggers, vloggers, and well-known people on various social platforms who have built up a large follower base. We also include individuals who work in a clearly defined market segment and influence the purchasing decisions of consumers in that market. All are able to use their individual perspectives and distinctive voices to influence the opinions and thinking of the masses. They speak directly to their highly receptive audience (Szilágyi, 2018). This role is not new, but with the rise of the internet and social media, almost anyone can become an influencer.

A new class of cultural mediators, the so-called book opinion leaders/influencers, has emerged as a result of the growing trend of social media users who are passionate about reading and books. They are individuals or content creators who reach a wide audience on social media platforms and other online spaces and are actively engaged in creating and sharing content related to books, literature and reading. These influencers talk about books and literary topics, share book recommendations and reviews, and promote libraries, authors, publishers and reading programmes. The role of book opinion leaders in promoting reading and supporting the book market has become more prominent with the rise of the online world.

On the other hand, they can be seen as active readers who engage with other readers on social media and share their love of books (Marwick, 2017). A key element of the book influencer brand is the distribution of trusted book reviews. In order to become 'real' and 'relatable' book fans, they establish trust with their followers by revealing their reading habits and tastes (Albrecht, 2017). Albrecht's research focuses primarily on BookTube but also applies to book influencers on other social media platforms because he discusses how authenticity and relatability play a role in building trust between social media creators and their followers. Para-social relationships

with their fans aim to build an emotional bond with the follower base (Baym, 2018). The following subsections will discuss the reader communities on different social platforms.

BookTube

Because they allow young readers to interact online, share their thoughts about books and make book suggestions, Booktube channels are a part of YouTube (Ünlü and Yaşar, 2022). BookTube, a literature-centred sub-community of YouTube, is a reading network where literary theory and pedagogical theory meet. The community is known for discovering and showcasing book reviews, but its content creators do much more than present colour hardback book covers. Within the BookTube community, there is a networked knowledge community where informal knowledge is seen as equal to formal knowledge acquired in school (Sorensen and Mara, 2014). As all readers now have a say in book reviews on sites such as Amazon and Goodreads, these online book reviews show that the power of professional book reviewers is weakening (Fay, 2012).

Over the past ten years, the BookTube phenomenon has been studied using various theoretical frameworks. New literacy studies emphasize the importance of understanding textual practices that are firmly rooted in social contexts such as digital environments and informal learning spaces. Because it is not constrained by the formalities that define cultural norms, BookTube fits within the paradigm of New Literacy Studies (Barton and Hamilton, 1998). Affinity theory has also been used to explain how the digital socialization environment of the BookTube community functions as an organizer of social dynamics (Gee and Hayes, 2012).

Verdú and colleagues' study points out that BookTube is a transmedia literate space where Booktube users and viewers engage in informal learning. The production of BookTube videos is part of applied learning. The transmedia competencies are similar to Bloom's widely used taxonomy. Trainers aim to assess learners' knowledge in mastering these competencies. BookTube can be positioned as a useful space for educators and literary researchers, as it is a space where in-depth literary analysis takes place despite informal learning (Vizcaíno-Verdú et al., 2019). Boot argues that the widespread adoption of video book reviews is largely due to people's enthusiasm to share their reading experiences. This underlines the importance of young readers experiencing a sense of belonging to a reading community. Thanks to their interaction, BookTube is evolving into what Sorensen and Mara call an "online knowledge community" (Sorensen and Mara, 2014), a community that self-regulates the norms of knowledge and conversation shared among its members (Boot, 2020, Paladines, 2022).

BookTubers work to demonstrate their 'authenticity' through engagement with their followers; this engagement is an ongoing dialogue with followers who affirm their au-

thentic BookTuber status by demonstrating 'affective' and 'relational' behaviours (Baym, 2018). BookTubers engage their viewers through relational and emotional work in order to foster a sense of community and connection between their viewers. Examples include commenting on other people's videos, asking for book recommendations, and even revealing private information about their lives (Reddan, 2022). BookTubers place more emphasis on identifying their personal preferences as readers rather than as critics or experts. This is a key element of BookTube's appeal, as viewers are attracted to the personalities of the creators and their enthusiasm for books (Horton, 2021; Birke and Fehrle, 2018).

Bookstagram

Instagram is a mobile social networking platform where users can share photos and videos. Every year, new features are added to the platform, which has already proven successful on other platforms. Bookstagram is Instagram's book community. More than 75 million posts have included the hashtag "#bookstagram", which is often used for content such as book photos (pages, book collections, book stacks, colour displays, and covers). The hashtag #Bookstagram is also used to describe posts that contain elements and scenes related to reading, the most common cases being bookshelves and people holding and reading books. These visuals are accompanied by text that encourages reader participation, such as book reviews and discussion topics (Reddan, 2022). The object cult of books has been a visible phenomenon on several internet platforms for years. This is confirmed by the so-called "inventive" posts, images and videos, which suggest that the death of the printed book is still a long way off. Many Instagram users specifically manage accounts where they capture their reading with creative photos. Among Hungarian Instagram users, there are also several people who fall into this category, as they only take photos of books, but sometimes in the most surprising and creative compositions. Sometimes it's not the content of the book itself that is important, but the aesthetic value, the mood that is captured. And we are seeing more and more users reviewing and recommending their reading on Instagram instead of blogs. There are Hungarian publishers who only give review copies to book reviewers after a certain number of Instagram followers. Publishers like to see photos of their books and usually share them on their own websites. For this reason alone, it's important to create nice, attractive covers for books because they capture the attention of users and readers not only in physical spaces but also on various online platforms.

BookTok

More than 50 billion videos with the hashtag #booktok have been viewed on TikTok worldwide, but the impact of BookTok goes far beyond the app. Many bookstores have

#booktok bookmarks, and online retailers have lists of BookTok's most popular books. The newly introduced BookTok effect has significantly impacted book sales.

Videos on BookTok reflect the carefree, spontaneous style of TikTok. Usually short, noisy and fast-paced, the creator appears up close, photographed and in a vertical perspective on a smartphone. In contrast to the carefully crafted, imaginative, glossy Instagram style, these features contribute to a raw, uncluttered look that is more 'responsive'. Abidin (2020) specifically argues that the rise of TikTok influencers has accelerated the transformation of social media attention.

With BookTube, Bookstagram and BookTok, readers can interact with books in a variety of ways and create communities of readers. For readers who want to be emotionally immersed, BookTok is the place to be. Bookstagram captures the reading experience with a selection of beautiful books and book-related items. The experience of using BookTube is like talking to a knowledgeable, literary-minded friend.

There are many ways influencers can help educate readers and foster a reading culture on the aforementioned platforms. Below, we summarise some of the ways in which professional opinion leaders can have a positive impact on the promotion of reading, with examples from Hungary to be mentioned later:

- Book recommendations. It is important to offer a mix of books of different genres to reach a wider audience (e.g. Anna Ott).
- Book reviews and ratings: Influencers can write or share detailed book reviews and ratings of books they have read, including both positive and negative experiences (e.g. Edmond's Book Cave).
- Book clubs: influencers can organise online/face-to-face book clubs where they read and discuss books with their followers. This encourages community and active reading (e.g. Anna Juhász Literary Salon).
- Reading challenges and targets.
- Book events and interviews.
- Book-themed content: influencers can create creative and interesting book-themed content, such as book reviews, challenges or videos on interesting literary topics (e.g. Words Vomited on Parchment).
- Reading tips and strategies: influencers can share their reading tips and strategies to help readers read more effectively and enjoy the reading experience more (e.g. Zolek).
- Promoting libraries and book events: influencers can help promote reading by promoting libraries and book events in their community (e.g. Anna Ott).
- Community building: influencers can build a community around their readers where people can share their opinions and experiences with books (e.g. Csaba Szendrői - Read freely).

Book influencers are important players in the book com-

munity as they help promote reading, discover new books and share the passion for reading. Libraries and book organizations that work with these influencers can effectively increase interest in reading in their communities and reach out to younger generations.

A regional library (KJK) on social media

As already mentioned, libraries need to recognize the need to innovate in a society that is increasingly reliant on technology and look for initiatives that attract people to their facilities. Our aim is to explore how libraries can engage with readers through book review leaders and innovate through collaboration to promote reading. The casual language of online reading groups and the interactivity of the platforms are shown to increase reading behaviour in libraries' current practical experience. In a library that seeks creative action through new media, these factors can all guide tactics for action. The goals of library communities can and should extend beyond the dissemination of reviews and the promotion of new titles, providing a basis for developing promotional opportunities that benefit libraries.

The Bács-Kiskun County Katona József Library (KJK) has borne its name since 1955 and is now 122 years old. One of the primary goals of the Katona József Library is to educate readers. They strive for personal presence and interaction, but 21st-century technological advances and the pandemic have also taught them that a constant digital presence is essential. They try to reach their users through several different channels. In recent years, the library has implemented a number of innovations that have enabled it to fulfil its role as a true community space, in addition to its traditional library role. By presenting good practices, we aim to make it clear that the library is now much more than a cultural institution since, as indicated at the beginning of this study, it is approached as an institution for promoting reading. And the innovations that are being applied are more effective in reaching users and attracting them to the library. First, the library's participation on social media platforms is presented:

- Facebook¹;
- Instagram²;
- YouTube³;
- Spotify⁴;
- Moly⁵.

They also have two websites, as they have recently renewed and modernised their online presence. The KJK library is also accessible from its own mobile app⁶.

The library regularly organizes reading education programmes for all ages to promote reading. One of the most popular services is the "Baby Story Morning" programme for 0-3-year-olds. During the outbreak, the stories were also made available on the library's YouTube channel, allowing the initiative to continue in the online space. Active content is still

available today, and librarians have also collected useful links and texts related to the activity and made them available on the website, thus supporting the activity at home. The traditional "Fairy Tale", "Reading for Children" or "Tale Test" options are also constantly available on the website. These are all tests and exercises for children where book reading, knowledge acquisition and literary research are essential. Kindergarten and school groups are regular visitors to the Children's and Teenage World section of the library. Invitations and programme opportunities for them are constantly available on the website and social networking sites. Games related to the seasons, holidays, feast days and folklore are constantly available on the website and are used by colleagues in the libraries of the CSCR to promote them to their readers.

The library is also reaching out to the next age group, teenagers, with a variety of online games and puzzles on all platforms. Thematic book reviews and new book blocks provide permanent content. The "Digital World" sub-page offers access to a wealth of databases, knowledge bases and virtual exhibitions. Europe Direct, which can be found in the library, selects a book every month, this time the "Book of the Month in the Katona József Library", with two questions linked to the book, to which answers are invited electronically, often with prizes. Here again, knowledge of the content is essential to answer the questions. Special attention will also be paid to the knowledge resources on József Katona, the eponymous composer, and Zoltán Kodály. The library organizes a variety of lectures for mixed age groups, which can also be viewed on the library's YouTube channel, which also hosts a library radio station called BookFm. Conversations with invited speakers are recorded under the title "Prologue", reflecting on the now popular podcast genre. A popular service is the virtual tour, which allows you to roam the library's public spaces and find out about services online. Particular attention is paid to the introduction of information and communication technology. To this end, the library has launched Internet user training courses, the materials for which are available on the website.

Hungarian book influencers

As can be deduced from the examples of previous book influencer activities, the number of Hungarian content producers has grown strongly in recent years, and those who share their book experiences through their videos have not been left out. Book videos have a long tradition and popularity in

¹<https://www.facebook.com/konyvtar.kecskemet>

²<https://www.instagram.com/katonajozsefkonyvtar/>

³<https://www.youtube.com/user/bacstudastar>

⁴<https://open.spotify.com/show/1zBC4kOWht8YLhpBjh39ln>

⁵https://moly.hu/tagok/bacs_kiskun_megyei_katona_jozsef_konyvtar

⁶<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.gmail.bacstudastar.kjkapp&pli=1>

Anglo-Saxon countries. Fewer people deal with book content in Hungary today, but there are a few channels that have been operating with reliable regularity for years. On their platforms, they report on the books they have just purchased, their reading, and their reading plans, but there are also videos in which they talk more abstractly about books, authors, and genres. Hungarian books on influenza generally cover the adolescent and young adult age group. At the beginning of our research, we used the "walkthrough" method Light et al. (2018) in order to gain insight into the Hungarian-language book contents of social media platforms through an iterative process. This is a research method that is widespread in the field of IT. For this, we chose the following four platforms: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube. The cyclical process consisted of the following activities:

- registration and login;
- daily use;
- suspension, closure and abandonment.

For this purpose, we have created independent user accounts, which, during the analysis, allow us to navigate independently of the prior recommendations of the interaction algorithm system of the platforms and create a new digital footprint. After that, using the search words "reading" and "book", we searched for posts and users who meet the requirements of the book opinion leader/influencer role we defined. The results were narrowed down according to various criteria; they had to have a minimum of 200 followers on a platform, and we also paid attention to age (but due to generational differences, we also interviewed a young book influencer). A total of 50 hits met these criteria, of which we conducted structured interviews with 23 people between August and October 2023, the analysis of which can be read in a later chapter.

Among the hits was the well-known No Time to Read Challenge (NIOK), a literary movement that aims to inspire people to read, especially those who feel they don't have time to read due to their busy lifestyles. The challenge emphasizes the importance of finding reading and developing reading habits in modern lifestyles where time is often a limited resource. The challenge launched on Facebook in 2017 relatively quickly grew into a movement, which included not only the online group, but also two published reader diaries, several events and a podcast channel. Since then, we have been able to meet several reading popularization movements. This movement encourages people to creatively integrate reading into their daily lives, even for short periods of time. Participants in the challenge divide the time allocated for reading into their daily activities, such as during breaks between work, during public transport or before bed. Reading is treated as an activity that can be done anywhere and at any time for stress relief and intellectual relaxation. This challenge draws attention to the importance and joy of reading and inspires you to create

opportunities for everyone to read, regardless of their busy schedule or time constraints. The "I don't have time to read" challenge is a positive and motivating way to build reading habits and maintain a passion for literature and it can help people rediscover the joy of reading in their lives.

The "Free to Read" movement was started in 2020 by a Hungarian musician, singer and psychologist. It is an initiative that encourages people to read without being dependent on anything or anyone and to leave behind the stress and stereotypes associated with reading. This movement promotes the freedom of reading and the enjoyment of books, regardless of the chosen reading material or the environment in which the reading takes place. Its purpose is to promote reading, self-development, and the impact of reading on an individual's personality, consciousness, and thinking. They don't want to provide real therapy, they just try to put tools in the hands of readers, with the help of which everyone can make the most of themselves in their own way. At the events, in the first hour, everyone "only" reads a book they brought, and then the participants discuss the most memorable sentences and paragraphs from what they read that day. After that, the psychologist and the guest of the month will give a presentation, where the participants will be invited to a joint conversation.

In 2022, the Scruton Book Lounge initiative was launched in Budapest. It was created with the community-building intention of popularizing the reading of books dealing with the social sciences and providing a space full of lively discussions to explain questions and topics that arise in them.

We also feel it is necessary to touch on a movement in which, in addition to bookstores, libraries can also play a greater role; this is the Margó Literary Festival, a celebration of literature and books, where writers, poets, literary critics, book lovers and the general public can meet, talk and participate in literary events. "The program must be read!" started with a main message in 2011; since then, it has become an important part of literary culture and is now held three times a year in different parts of the country. During this time, many different projects were started: Margó Reading Circle, Margó Podcast, and Margófakt (literature popularization program for high school students). The purpose of the Margó Literature Festival is to bring together the literary community, promote reading and literature, and develop literary culture.

One of the most famous Hungarian book opinion leaders is Anna Ott, whose two most important missions are the promotion of culture and reading, which she does on social media and on her own website. He leads the literary event "Egy Budapest coffee house Brunch", the monthly book club of the Societ . In addition, he is a regular participant and organizer of the above-mentioned Margó Literary Festival, book events and festivals. He not only deals with the authors of Hungarian literature, he also analyzes international readings, talks about the works, possibly about the authors,

with authors. He does this in a lively and friendly style that engages all listeners. Through it, many books reach those who want to read, thereby showing readers a direction that provides eternal truths and spiritual nourishment.

One of the latest reading promotion platforms is "Not Bad Books". With this title, a book podcast series was launched, which was also connected to a social interface on Facebook. The main topics are new releases, rediscovered classics, and fresh reading experiences.

Qualitative research

After the highlighted movements and initiatives, we will present the 23 structured interviews already mentioned, our qualitative data were systematically and thematically analyzed. Verbatim transcripts of the interviews provided the textual basis for our analysis. Research questions:

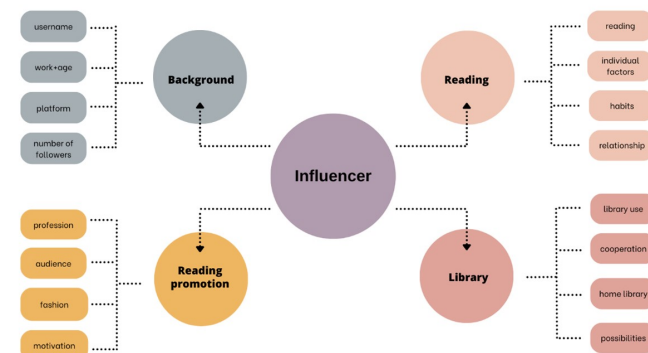
- How can we promote reading and education to become a reader in the information society through library cooperation by involving the activities of social media and its popular players, influencers?
- How can we adapt the methods of professional opinion leaders and their book popularization effect to library practice, how can their cooperation help maintain and increase interest in reading in the digital age?

Between August and October 2023, personal or online interviews were 30-50 minutes long on average. The table below contains the general data of reading promoters. Out of the 23 people, 2 opinion leaders requested anonymity.

We organized the interview questions into thematic groups and analyzed the responses of the interviewees according to these. The first block included questions that focused on the activity of reading, the origin of the love of reading, motivation, relation to literature, and compulsory reading. The second category contained questions concerning reading promotion activities: profession, motivation, purpose, reading as fashion, and addressing generations. And finally, the last class formed a group of issues related to libraries. During the processing of the interviews, we used thematic coding, where we used a hybrid approach during manual coding. In the beginning, we coded the three main themes in a deductive way, and then we discovered additional information by inductive coding.

Figure 1

Interviews with book influencers



Reading

If someone in their twenties and thirties spends most of their free time reading, we can be curious as to where this love comes from. Most of the interviewees have always enjoyed this activity. Several people linked this to people, e.g. the most popular were parents, but the roles of school teachers and compulsory reading were also mentioned (both positively and negatively). In this regard, a large proportion of the influencers mentioned that the compulsory readings have an inappropriate age classification (although they liked the novel *The Boys from Pál Street*) and that contemporary literature and youth novels should be recommended to the students (e.g. *Harry Potter*, *Szent Johanna Gimi*), or students should choose the book to read themselves. Many people remember the first book that really enchanted them and introduced them to the world of reading. A common example was the *Harry Potter* series, as well as other children's book series.

The concept of reading is made up of many aspects in the eyes of people, in this case especially among people who promote reading. For many people, reading means active recreation and waiting for help. Most of them highlighted that reading is an activity that allows them to devote some time from their lives to themselves. In addition, reading is often an interest in particular chosen topics, and influencers only choose books that suit their interests. As a result, bookish opinion leaders rarely get tired of reading since they almost only mention its positive features and devote their personal time to this activity.

Many individual factors influence how much time our interviewees can devote to reading and even how many books they can read in parallel. Lack of time and commuting lifestyles force many reading promoters to read only one book at a time. However, others prefer to read in several genres at the same time, such as non-fiction and fiction, due

Table 1*Characteristics of the interviewed book influencers*

Influencer	Profession	Age	Platforms	Number of followers
Olvass kortárst	drama teacher, doctoral student	27	Instagram	63 3
Borító alatt	bookstore salesman	35	YouTube, Instagram, Facebook	275, 719
csak_olvass	researcher-analyst	33	Instagram, blog, moly.hu	4,202
bookswithszandra	project manager and sales assistant	27	TikTok	8,523
anonim_1	administrator	32	YouTube	6,170
Juhász Anna Irodalmi Szalon	literary person	42	Facebook, Instagram	44,000, 12,100
Kincső_könyvei	student	15	Instagram, TikTok, moly.hu	2,452, 13,300
Dórii könyvei	HR assistant	33	YouTube, Instagram, own website	752, 1,325
Olvas.lak	entrepreneur	25	Instagram, TikTok, moly.hu, Facebook, Blogspot	2,440, 590
Könyvszalon	educational organizer	24	Facebook	281
Betű_és_tinta	notary	35	Facebook, Instagram	327
anonim_2	marketing expert, copywriter	32	Instagram	1,127
olvassasorokközött	university student, social media manager	24	Instagram	1,806
Pergamenre hányt szavak	actor	27	YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, moly.hu	10,300, 6,046, 2,400, 3,667
_artemis_books	secretary	20	Instagram	229
te_mire_books	printer	30	Instagram	2,100
kinga.olas	professional translator	33	Instagram	3,825
Mert olvasni mindig jó	office administrator	27	Instagram	4,139
Edmond_könyvkuckója	bookstore salesman	22	Instagram, TikTok, YouTube	6,808, 8,475, 4,500
Különös Könyvtár Blog	coach	38	Instagram	1,686
Ott Anna	artistic director	34	Instagram	34,900
Zolek	marketing expert	35	Instagram, Facebook	1,800, 2,300
könyvbenjobbvolt	neurológus	35	Instagram	248

to the variety of reading. Electronic books (e-books) and pocketbooks (pockets) have also grown in popularity, as their compact size allows them to be carried everywhere so that the reading experience is constantly present in their lives, regardless of where they are. Due to their small space requirement and easy portability, e-books and pocketbooks offer a practical solution for those who want to satisfy their varied reading needs amidst the challenges of everyday life. And this diverse need is also present in the selection of the next books to read, mostly influencers choose a genre or an author, but the mood and current emotions can also influence this. Recommendations also play an important role for influencers, as they can contribute to expanding their reading repertoire and discovering new books and authors.

In almost all cases, we were able to divide the interviewees into groups for questions related to the reading habits of influenza drugs. Of course, one of the questions was whether they read anywhere and anytime. A significant group of them is willing to read at any place and time. For them, reading is not tied to a strict place or time, and they can immerse themselves in a book at any time. While some people only read at home in a comfortable environment, for them the home provides the most ideal reading conditions. For another subgroup, the place of reading can also be influenced by what kind of book they read and at what time. When it comes to taking notes in books, there is a large proportion of readers who do not write in them at all and even condemn this, but there are also those who use notebooks or markers and those who take notes in the books. If they don't like a book, they usually put it down, but not necessarily permanently. The role of parents and teachers also appeared to a large extent in relation to literature. In the case of reading promoters, we can generally speak of a positive relationship since teachers and parents often play a supporting role in encouraging reading and developing an interest in literature. Reading promoters tend to become positive role models for reading and inspire people to explore literary works. At the same time, it is important to note that the role of school literature teachers was not always positive in the lives of reading promoters. But many other factors can also influence this relationship, such as friends, writers or series in which reading is strongly featured (eg *Gilmore Girls*) or other influences. The relationship to literature in the lives of reading promoters is, therefore, the result of many influences and can reflect a wide range of individual experiences and relationships.

Reading promotion

Reading promotion can often be a career, and many individuals take this route to encourage and inspire others to read. About half of the interviewees see the promotion of books and reading as a profession and a conscious activity, while others see it as a simple hobby and leisure activity. Their goal is to share their reading habits and experiences with others and

create a community of like-minded people. The promotion of reading and books is usually experienced more passionately and consciously by those who see it as a profession. For them, reading and sharing reading experiences are of prime importance, and they see a kind of mission in involving others in this world. They also strive to create a community based on the love of reading and similar areas of interest. The other group, who act as book influencers as a simple hobby and leisure activity, focus more on aspects of personal enjoyment and informal networking. Their goal is to create community and share the joy of reading with others without feeling like an obligation. The different attitudes of the interviewees towards reading promotion reflect the diversity of the reading culture and the variety of individual motivations for reading and the distribution of books.

As we indicated in the previous table and highlighted that we focused on book influencers over the age of 18 (with one exception), they all said that they could best appeal to young people, their own age group. They tend to encourage their followers to read books they are interested in or show strategies for choosing what to read.

The fashionable resurgence of reading was influenced by many factors, and influencers - who will play an increasingly important role in this thanks to the online expansion - highlighted the influence of the media, social media and the advertising industry in particular. Some of the interviewees were not sure if reading had become fashionable again. However, others cited different reasons that contributed to the revival of reading fashion. These include the confinement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has freed up more time for reading, and the many available books that have created opportunities to expand one's reading repertoire. In addition, the flow experience caused by reading, that is, deep concentration and enjoyment, was also an important factor in increasing the popularity of reading.

Before moving on to the relationship between libraries and reading promoters, we also collected the motivations for reading. Typically, the love of reading is one of the main motivating forces that encourage people to develop extensive reading habits. Reading is a source of personal pleasure for many, and the enjoyment of good books is a powerful motivator. The motivation to read is also strengthened by recommending quality books to as many people as possible. Readers are often inspired by the recommendations of others and are driven by a curiosity to discover new books. Recommendations are extremely important in reading, as they help readers make more informed reading decisions and find books that really interest them. Increasing the number of books read also emerged as a motivating factor for some influencers. Readers often set themselves the goal of reading a certain number of books in a certain period of time (for example, a year). This challenge and recognition of the achievements has a stimulating effect on reading. The motivation to read

and the reading experience are strongly influenced by the quality of the books read and the enjoyment of the reading experience. The love of reading and the enjoyment of the reading experience are powerful motivations for people to continue reading and to share their reading experiences with others. The motivation to read is, therefore, fueled by many factors and leads to the enrichment of reading culture and the strengthening of reading communities.

Libraries

Since one of our research goals focuses on the cooperation between libraries and book influencers, we could not go beyond asking the interviewees about library visits. In this case, too, we were able to divide the opinion leaders into three groups: regular library users, avoid libraries, and book buyers. Some people visit libraries for the sole purpose of studying, as this is where they can access necessary literature or information. They are motivated by a huge selection of libraries and an excellent environment for learning. Others visit libraries specifically for professional books that they do not intend to purchase. University students, or looking back on their university studies, often visit libraries during their studies, as this is where they find the resources they need for research and learning. Also, some influencers go to libraries because the prices of the books are high and they can't or don't want to buy them. At the same time, there were reading promoters who do not go to libraries because they feel they have little time or simply do not enjoy the condition of old books. Others used to like libraries, but they no longer go there and prefer to create their own library in their home by buying books. Home libraries come in a wide range and vary depending on people's individual preferences and capabilities. In general, the sizes of home libraries of influenza drugs vary widely, but some common characteristics can be observed. The largest on the scale contains about 3,000 books, but most people own more than 300-500 books. Based on these, we can see that visits to libraries and the development of reading habits depend on many factors and are formed based on people's individual preferences, availability and life situations.

The question of library cooperation brought a variety of answers among the people interviewed. 17 of the interviewees answered yes to the question, expressing their willingness to participate in library cooperation. These individuals are open to opportunities to work together with others, other institutions or communities to achieve the goals of libraries. However, one of the interviewees answered no to the question, which indicates that he does not feel the need or interest in library collaboration. He probably has other priorities or preferences at play. In the case of the two interviewees who answered "possibly", there may be doubts about their commitment to library cooperation or their qualifications. These persons can decide whether to participate in the li-

brary cooperation based on additional information or specific opportunities. Library collaboration is an important factor for libraries and reading communities, as it can help to use resources more efficiently and achieve community goals of promoting reading. People's different opinions and attitudes towards library collaboration reflect individual preferences and the local context of what libraries do.

Possibilities

The relationship between libraries and book influencers is increasingly important in the field of popularizing reading and developing literary communities. Both parties contribute to increasing interest in books and reading, but in different ways and with different means. Involving influencers in library work is a strategy that can help promote reading and libraries, especially among younger generations. Influencers are individuals who have a significant following base on social media platforms and are able to influence the opinions and behaviour of their followers. Here are some ways that influencers can help libraries:

- **Book Recommendations and Book Reviews:** Influencers can use their platforms to share recommendations and reviews of books recommended by libraries. This allows libraries to reach a wider audience.
- **Promotion of library events:** Influencers can participate in the promotion of events organized by libraries, such as author meetings, book launches or reading programs.
- **Promote library services:** Influencers can help libraries in the online space by promoting library services such as online book lending or digital library databases.
- **Library challenges and contests:** Influencers can be people who promote reading challenges or contests organized by libraries by encouraging their own followers to participate.
- **Building a library community:** Influencers can also help libraries build an online community, for example by creating social media groups or forums where readers and library users can share their experiences and tips.
- **Support library programs:** Influencers can be supporters and advocates for libraries by participating in and promoting library programs, such as reading events or literary workshops.

However, it is important to note that when selecting influencers, it is important to consider the values and messages they represent so that they are consistent with the mission and values of the libraries. Cooperation with influencers should provide long-term and mutual benefits for both libraries, influencers and the public. The collaboration has two-way benefits: libraries can support the work of book influencers and help reading communities, while book influencers can share their reading passion and experiences with a wider audience.

These relationships strengthen the promotion of reading and the spread of literary culture, which can be beneficial for everyone.

Conclusion

Our goal was to map and analyze how social media platforms and influencers can contribute to libraries' strategies for educating readers. The research showed that in the digital age, libraries must increasingly expand their online presence and respond appropriately to changes in reading habits and preferences.

In conclusion, we can say that book influencers emphasize the experience of reading, thus making book reading fashionable for the younger age group as well. The community nature is emphasized on social media platforms, and the experience reports testify that the book opinion leader activity, with its lack of expertise or simply by making the reading habits and speech of the passionate lay reader visible, is a typical product of the radically changing opinion culture. Reading appears as a kind of learning and experience-gaining process, which is opposite to what is compulsory at school. By adopting this approach and reinforcing it on our own websites, librarians can also benefit from this and gain new readers. Influencers who have a large following based on social media have become prominent players in the field of popularizing reading. They are able to influence readers' decisions and bring new books to the center of attention with their recommendations. The paper demonstrated that libraries should collaborate with these influencers to target online audiences and promote reading.

Younger readers benefit from making reading a joint and shared activity, as demonstrated by the book influencer activity, an emerging literacy strategy. Theoretically, this social aspect of reading is firmly supported as one method of revitalizing literature education. BookTube/Bookstagram/BookTok or any social media platform related to book culture, as developed by these participants, is a world of readers – their reading experiences, perspectives, relationships, etc. – they emphasize, in contrast to the literary culture prevalent in formal education, which is more text-centred. – the formulation of a literary text with a collective commitment that adapts to the specific worldview, peculiarities and experiences of the readers (Paladines, 2022).

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that social media and influencers can contribute to the strategies of libraries to educate readers and help develop the reading culture since libraries produce the same digital reader training content for online platforms as opinion leaders dealing with books and reading. Collaboration with these online players can be beneficial for both libraries and readers, helping to promote reading and build reading communities in line with the demands of the digital age. Why shouldn't these people cooperate with our institutions and even educate their

followers to become library users?

About the authors

Dóra Szabó is a PhD student in the Doctoral Program on Educational and Cultural Sciences at the University of Debrecen (Hungary). She graduated in 2020 as a Teacher of German language and culture and a Teacher of Library and Information Science. During her university years, she began discovering the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), digital competence, and digital literacy of future teachers based on online information, as well as fake news. Her research field focuses on future teachers and their digital attitudes and digital education skills. The main question is what kind of impact fake news and influencers have on education.

Erzsébet Dani is a Habilitated Associate Professor at the University of Debrecen (Hungary). She is the Head of the Department of Library and Information Science and the Director of the Bács-Kiskun County Library. Her research topics are reading research/digital reading narratives, dissemination of scientific results, cultural identity, and institutional history in the Carpathian Basin.

References

- Abidin, C. (2020). Mapping Internet Celebrity on TikTok: Exploring Attention Economies and Visibility Labours. *Cultural Science Journal*, 12(1), 77–103. <https://doi.org/10.5334/csci.140>
- Albrecht, K. (2017). *Positioning BookTube in the publishing world: An examination of online book reviewing through the field theory*. <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/52201>
- Babbie, E. R. (2017). *The basics of social research* (Seventh edition). Cengage Learning.
- Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. Routledge.
- Baym, N. K. (2018). *Playing to the crowd: Musicians, audiences, and the intimate work of connection*. New York University Press.
- Birke, D., & Fehrle, J. (2018). #booklove: How Reading Culture is Adapted on the Internet. *Komparatistik Online*, 60–86.
- Boot, P. (2020). The Voice of the Reader: The Landscape of Online Book Discussion in the Netherlands, 1997–2016. In J. Rose, *The Edinburgh History of Reading* (pp. 258–279). Edinburgh University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781474461894-016>
- Collins, J. (2010). *Bring on the books for everybody: How literary culture became popular culture*. Duke University Press.
- Dubroc, A. (2021). *To Be Read: The Educational Opportunities of BookTube*. LSU Doctoral Dissertations. https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/5629/

- Evans, C., & Lewis, J. (2018). *Analysing Semi-Structured Interviews Using Thematic Analysis: Exploring Voluntary Civic Participation Among Adults*. SAGE Publications, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526439284>
- Fay, S. (2012). Could the Internet save book reviews? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/05/could-the-internet-savebook-reviews/256802/>.
- Gee, J. P., & Hayes, E. (2012). Nurturing Affinity Spaces and Game-Based Learning. In C. Steinkuehler, K. Squire, & S. Barab (Eds.), *Games, Learning, and Society: Learning and Meaning in the Digital Age* (pp. 129–153). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139031127.015>
- Horton, K. (2021). *BookTube and the Publishing Industry: A Study of the Commercial Relationship between YouTube Content Creators and Publicists*. Curtin University.
- Istók A. (2018). Digitális mindennapok egy könyvtár életében – innovatív módszerek a fiatalok olvasóvá nevelése, valamint az élethosszig tartó tanulás területén. *Tudományos és Műszaki Tájékoztatás*, 65(3), Article 3.
- Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R. (2017). Self-branding, ‘micro-celebrity’ and the rise of Social Media Influencers. *Celebrity Studies*, 8(2), 191–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2016.1218292>
- Light, B., Burgess, J., & Duguay, S. (2018). The walkthrough method: An approach to the study of apps. *New Media & Society*, 20(3), 881–900. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816675438>
- Lo, E. Y. (2020). How Social Media, Movies, and TV Shows Interacts with Young Adult Literature from 2015 to 2019. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 36(4), 611–618. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12109-020-09756-8>
- Marwick, A. (2017). Microcelebrity, Self-Branding, and the Internet. In G. Ritzer (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (1st ed., pp. 1–3). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeos1000>
- Norrick-Rühl, C. (2019). *Book clubs and book commerce*. Cambridge University Press.
- Oliveira, H. C. C. D., Sundström, A. S., Santos, C. D., & Prado, M. (2021). Booktubers e bibliotecas: Uma proposta de atuação inovadora de mediação de leitura. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Ciência Da Informação*, 14(1), 8–25. <https://doi.org/10.26512/rici.v14.n1.2021.29078>
- Paladines, L., & Aliagas, C. (2023). Literacy and literary learning on BookTube through the lenses of Latina BookTubers. *Literacy*, 57(1), 17–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12310>
- Papacharissi, Z. (2015). *Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Perkins, K. (2017). The Boundaries of BookTube. *The Serials Librarian*, 73(3–4), 352–356. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0361526X.2017.1364317>
- Piorecký, K., & Malínek, V. (2020). Czech Literary Culture in the Post-Digital Era. *Porównania*, 27(2), 267–288. <https://doi.org/10.14746/por.2020.2.14>
- Reddan, B. (2022). Social reading cultures on BookTube, Bookstagram, and BookTok. *Synergy*, 20(1), Article 1. <https://slav.vic.edu.au/index.php/Synergy/article/view/597>
- Sorensen, K. & Mara, A. (2014). BookTubers as a Networked Knowledge Community. In M. Limbu and B. Gurung (eds.) *Emerging Pedagogies in the networked knowledge* (pp. 87–99). IGI Global.
- Szabó, D., & Dani, E. (2023). A könyvtárak médiatudatossága és az olvasóvá nevelés stratégiái a közösségi média segítségével. *Közösségi Kapcsolódások - Tanulmányok Kultúráról És Oktatásról*, 3(1), 91–100. <https://doi.org/10.14232/kapocs.2023.1.91-100>
- Szilágyi, K. (2018). Robban az influencerpiac. *Marketing & Média* 23(8), 48–49.
- Thomas, B., & Round, J. (2016). Moderating readers and reading online. *Language and Literature*, 25(3), 239–253. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963947016652785>
- Ünlü, S., & Yaşar, L. (2022). Literature Gathering as a Cultural Event: Booktube Participation. *Folklor/Edebiyat*, 28(111), Article 111. <https://doi.org/10.22559/folklor.2162>
- Vizcaíno-Verdú, A., Contreras-Pulido, P., & Guzmán-Franco, M.-D. (2019). Reading and Informal Learning Trends on YouTube: The Booktuber. *Comunicar: Media Education Research Journal*, 27(59), 93–101.
- Waldinger, D. (2020). Könyves influenszerek módszereinek adaptálása könyvtári környezetben. *Könyvtári Intézet*. 3.