

E-Book Market In Vietnam: Great Potential, Many Barriers

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Abstract : Nowadays reading e-books on laptops, smartphones, and tablets have become a new leisure activity for Vietnamese youth. Since 2011 the copyrighted e-book market began to develop in Vietnam with the participation of five local enterprises. Over the last five years, thousands of e-books were published including the first online early education book series for children from 0 to 6 years old. Research shows that 61% Vietnamese find reading e-books is comfortable, and 45% feel convenient buying books online. More than half of the Vietnamese consider reading online far better than buying printed books, and surprisingly people over age 30 desire reading online while those under 18 prefer reading printed books. Hence with a market of more than 40 million regular internet users including 22 million smartphone users, Vietnam has ample opportunities to develop the e-book market and contribute a great deal to the diversity of the local reading culture which is essential for Building a Lifelong Learning Society, a state ambition of Vietnam by 2020. However, the e-book market in Vietnam is still in its infancy and is growing far too slowly than e-book producers had expected. All five e-book enterprises are facing numerous challenges. While the big profit that e-book technology can bring has been clearly recognised in other countries, e-books in Vietnam only make up less than 1% share of the book market. The objective of the study is to identify the difficulties and barriers to the development of the e-book market in Vietnam through an extensive literature review available in English. The study revealed that illegal e-books due to copyright infringement and an inconvenient payment system to purchase e-books are the major obstacles. The great potential of e-books in Vietnam is a reality but requires government enforcement of copyright protection laws, a new area of focus for the e-book market. Furthermore, Vietnamese readers should change their habits from using free and illegal e-books to develop the e-publishing industry in Vietnam.

Keywords : copyright, e-book, e-book reading, e-publishing, Vietnam

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