

Italian Publishers Feast at the 2011 BookExpo America

Alice Bonvicini (May 26, 2011)



Italy is the guest of honor of the 2011 BookExpo America (May 24-26). The National Institute for Foreign Commerce, in collaboration with the Italian Publishers Association has brought the excellences of our publishing world to the Javits Center.

[BookExpo America](#) [2] is one of the most important international events of the publishing industry: the previous edition counted 29'923 visitors and 4'959 agents, scouts, film and television producers and authors from all around the world. This year Italy is the guest of honor at the [Javits Center](#) [3]. The Global Market Forum, a shared project of BookExpo America, [ITC \(Italian Trade Commission\)](#) [4] and the [Italian Publishers Association](#) [5]. The session of professional meetings that takes place alongside the fair has Italy as Focus Country.

This journey created to show the Americans the Italian publishing activity – with the help of eleven seminars – is a “profitable complete view of our publishing industry”, as defined by Marco Polillo, President of the Italian Publishers Association.



“The symposiums serve the purpose of showing the Italian market while simultaneously figuring out how to develop in relation to the American market.” These are still two different worlds and the Italian publishing industry underlines this: the numbers of non-readers is still very high, reaching beyond 50%.

A summary of Italy's activity in this field was presented without underestimating the problems, although they were faced constructively with the aim of a collaboration with American publishers. An important theme was the conflicting relationship in Italy between e-book and paper book. The public attention towards the electronic book in Italy is still very small, and was in fact launched only seven months ago. “The offer is still limited – says Polillo – so it is still too early to realize its potential”.

Also this year, ITC, in collaboration with the Italian Publishers Association, set up a national 300 square-foot stand, an Italian oasis, in which thirty-nine exhibitors meet people from the industry and consumers.

“For us this means offering a platform to the small- and medium-sized Italian publishers who otherwise would never be able to exhibit their products,” says Pasquale Bova, Director of the ITC in Chicago. “The Italian publishing industry, apart from a few giants, is made up of small businesses who have a great capacity, both creatively and in buying rights,” he explains. “And we are certain that these publishers will find a public here in America”.

ITC's commitment to the American publishing industry as a vehicle for the Made in Italy is concrete and effective, demonstrated by the [Italbooks website](#) [6]. With over a million visitors a year, the website presents Italian book available for purchase or the rights of which are on sale by the authors. Art books, educational book, Italian language books, and fiction, are the most sought after and bring Italy to the seventh place in USA publishing industry exports.

Raising Italian sales in the United States remains an important priority also for the diplomatic world. Consul General of Italy Francesco Maria Talò, who cut the ribbon together with BEA Director Steven Rosato, told us how the priority campaign for the promotion of the Italian language goes perfectly along with “the commitment to spreading and reinforcing our publishing industry abroad.” The Consul also underlines that Italy is guest of honor at the BookExpo on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of its Unification. “Today we celebrate an important sector of our entrepreneurship, with a strong past which, with the help of the optimism that can be felt among the exhibitors, is a sector that has trust and attention for the future”.

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