

The 2014 New York's Book Expo America Has Large International Participation

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While the USA book industry might be in turmoil over the Amazon controversy and the assault of e-books on the traditional turf of old-line publishers, there was no evidence of any eventual demise of hard-copy content; in fact quite the contrary.

While there are always huge booths taken by the large US publishers, this year the BEA has gone to greater lengths to integrate the non-US publishers into the fabric of the show and their efforts were rewarded by many European and Asian publishing houses exhibiting.

It has been several years since there was a small publishing house from India at BEA... or even a house showing books about Eastern philosophy and religion. This year the Gita Publishing House took a booth to show their many titles, including translations of the Gita. Dressing in traditional clothes made the exhibitors stand out

a bit and their booth got substantial traffic. This is not surprising given the new interest in Eastern philosophy, yoga, and the now mainstream Krishna Consciousness movement started back in the 1960s.

Per usual there were the publishing arms of various oil-rich countries. The booths get a lot of attention because some of them are elaborate and have beautiful books in them, and not just for Arabic readers.

Saudi Arabia had an enormous presence at the show. While not their first time exhibiting, this year their booth was more centrally located which brought them more traffic. While publishing is not a major industry in the country, the spokesperson for the exhibit said that each year it is expanding, which is not surprising given the high literacy rate of the country.

One country that had a huge exhibit was Qatar which showed off and

extensive collection of original works on the culture, arts, and history of Qatar. One reason the booth was popular was that it had the most comfortable seats in the hall and the staff were very inviting.

One BEA official who asked not to be named said "Most US readers don't understand that book publishing is a global industry and that in the future a lot more non-US content will be showing up in both the stores and online venues for [US] readers to discover."