

# Digital Solutions in India

CAGR between 2020 and 2026, according to Global Market Insights. By 2027, this market is projected to hit \$80 billion.

On the publishing side, Bloomsbury reported record sales and profit in 2021, which its chief executive attributed to the pandemic reading boom and a reacquired reading habit. Wiley just announced that revenue from its fiscal 2022, which ended in April, topped the \$2 billion mark for the first time in its 215-year history, with 83% of it coming from digital sales. All four major trade publishers in the U.S.—HarperCollins, Lagardère, Penguin Random House, and Simon & Schuster—posted gains in 2021 over 2020. The Association of American Publishers further reported that a strong rebound in sales of K–12 materials and trade books had led to a 12.2% increase in publishing sales in 2021 compared to the year before.

So while the pandemic brings about major challenges—supply chain issues, for instance—the increased appetite for books, reading, and learning is clear and significant. For the digital solutions vendors, the new “normal” has led to discovering alternative ways to work, tweaking tools to ensure data and process security, improving telecommunication and video conferencing capabilities, and helping clients to meet shifting consumer habits and demands. And for those wondering if working from home (WFH) is effective, well, there are plenty of reports out

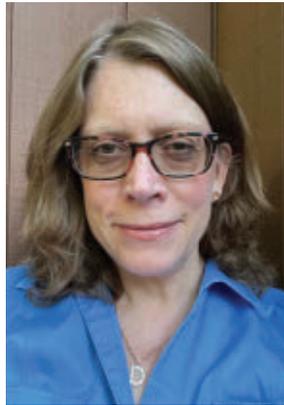
there, from Owl Labs and Global Workplace Analytics, for instance, that tout increased productivity, happiness, and job satisfaction—with companies benefitting directly from a significant decrease in employee turnover, operating costs, and workplace stress.

The pandemic “has given us the opportunity to test alternative working models,” says Bharathram, of Lapiz Digital. “For now, we will continue the hybrid model where our staff comes to the office two or three days a week. We have implemented a multilevel security and encryption system to ensure zero compromise in the confidentiality, productivity, quality,

and turnaround time in delivering the projects to our clients. This hybrid model has in fact resulted in increased productivity and quality. At the same time, we have built in ‘me time’ for staff with regular online team meetings to check on their and their families’ well-being.”

On the consumer end, the pandemic has pushed more people to go online, and this is the biggest long-term change, Bharathram says. “The conventional method of generating sales has also shifted during the pandemic, with more independent and digital-savvy publishers bringing new ideas for digital solutions providers to explore.”

Over at DiacriTech, staff have returned to its Chennai, Kottayam, and Madurai offices. “But we have copy editors, indexers, and project man-



*Deb Taylor, business development director at Westchester Publishing Services*

## Westchester Publishing Services Expands Further

Investment in technology solutions for helping clients with their projects is continuing, says Westchester’s business development director Deb Taylor. “We have expanded our API capabilities, broadened our use of the Dropbox platform and tools, increased automation in our composition processes, and enhanced the user experience of our Client Portal,” Taylor says. “We are also developing more tools to enhance the services we provide to our clients.”

Westchester obtained the Benetech Global Certified Accessible certification last September. “Our team has proven capabilities to produce accessible EPUBs for clients, and this certification gives our clients the assurance that their EPUBs will meet accessibility standards wherever their content is distributed,” says Taylor, whose teams have combined their expertise to establish custom e-book conversion workflows and services for Ingram distribution clients. “Additionally, clients who do not have the resources or modified workflow to create alt-text for their digital products can rely on us for such content.”

In the past year, an additional 100 or so publishers of all sizes have come to Westchester for help with their accessible digital workflow and with creating digital content from print titles. “Publishers are working on maximizing the number of titles that meet EPUB and WebPDF accessibility guidelines,” says Taylor, who is seeing an increased demand for interactive content and

embedded audio and video within the digital titles that her teams produce for clients. “So we will continue to build on our accessibility solutions and help clients to meet their goals.”

Adding more cloud-based services to the Westchester Client Portal is one way of meeting rising client demands. “This will move more of the project workflow onto the Web, thus increasing the efficiencies around project initiation, collaboration, and review of titles in progress,” says chief revenue officer Tyler Carey. “Our team of developers recently created a customized solution that is essentially an extension of our Client Portal. The request came from a legal publisher who wanted to chunk their content into multiple products and formats via an XML workflow. We had to pull primary data from multiple licensed sources and feed that into an online tool, where editors can upload Word documents, and then finalize the manuscript for both print and digital editions.”

Education content development needs are also increasing globally, especially with the learning gaps caused by the pandemic, Taylor says. “Our expertise in this segment has expanded beyond supplemental and Core 4 subject development. We expect to see growth in all subject areas for print and digital platforms, with even more focus on social-emotional learning and culturally responsive reviews and remediation. All these demands will need to be translated and transadapted as well. Our teams are ready to meet these demands and grow with our clients.” —T.T.