

→ **Fast** Facts



International publishing

“Two years ago the world’s publishers collectively put out over 1.6 million books. About half of them came from just two countries. Of the books released in 2015 by the 25 biggest book markets, China published 28 percent of the total, and the US 20 percent. The counts include re-editions of older titles, but not self-published books.” China published 470 thousand new titles while the United States published 339 thousand new titles. The UK and Iceland, however, topped the list of new titles per million people, with the UK publishing 2,710 new titles per million people and Iceland publishing 2,628 new titles per million people. Thu-Huong Ha, “China and the US Make Nearly Half the World’s Books,” Quartz (blog), August 18, 2017, <https://qz.com/1057240/which-country-publishes-the-most-books> (retrieved December 4, 2017).



International reading achievement

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment of student performance in reading literacy at the fourth grade. The U.S. overall average reading score was 549, higher than the scale’s centerpoint, which is set at 500 points. This U.S. score was lower than the averages for 12 other education systems, higher than 30 education systems, and not significantly different from 15 education systems. In 2016, 16 percent of U.S. fourth-graders performed at or above the Advanced (625) benchmark, and 53 percent performed at or above the High (550) Benchmark—higher than the international median. Seven education systems (Singapore, the Russian Federation, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Poland, England, and Moscow City) had a higher percentage of fourth-graders performing at or above the Advanced benchmark than the United States. Catharine Warner-Griffin, et al., “Reading Achievement of U.S. Fourth-Grade Students in an International Context,” (NCES 2018-017), Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, December 5, 2017, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2018017> (retrieved January 9, 2018).



Well-being in OECD countries

Household income has increased cumulatively in OECD countries by 7 percent since 2005—roughly half the growth rate recorded between 1995 and 2005. The share of people living without access to basic sanitation has fallen by just over one-third, and more people say they feel safe when walking alone at night. Although it stalled in 2015, average life expectancy has gone up by nearly two years overall. Other aspects of well-being have failed to keep pace. In around half of all OECD countries, long-term unemployment remains higher than in 2005, and labor market insecurity is around one-third higher than when first measured in 2007.

OECD, “How’s Life? 2017,” Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/how_life-2017-en (retrieved January 9, 2018).



Unfiltered news

A new data visualization tool, Unfiltered.News, “maps what important news stories might not be covered in your country, using the Google News corpus to allow [I]nternet users to discover which stories are being covered in certain locations, how different countries cover stories differently, and how issue coverage changes over time.” The project is managed by Jigsaw, the tech incubator formerly known as Google Ideas that is run by Google’s parent company Alphabet. Unfiltered.News, <https://unfiltered.news> (retrieved January 9, 2018).

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