

New Report From Storytel Reveals Link Between Strong Reading Habits and Better Wellbeing

The 2026 Story Report, a new study from Storytel surveying over 5,000 respondents across five European markets, concludes that those who read and listen to books the most also report the highest levels of well-being. The report also reveals that between 52 percent and 59 percent of the population in each surveyed country feel they spend too much time looking at screens. However, the audiobook listeners seem to have found an antidote, replacing screen time with storytelling while getting chores done.

As summer arrives and the pace of everyday life slows, our appetite for great stories naturally grows. For millions, vacation is synonymous with curling up with a book or pressing play on an audiobook during a long drive, a shift that is noticeable on Storytel as usage on the platform reaches its annual peak during summer.

Heading into this high season, Storytel took the temperature on how book consumption in five European markets is connected to the general well-being of the population. The result is *The 2026 Story Report*, a comprehensive study spanning Sweden, Finland, Norway, Poland, and Bulgaria. The findings reveal a powerful correlation between book consumption in any format and overall wellbeing.

“What we found through The 2026 Story Report is both clear and inspiring: the more we read, regardless of format, the better we feel. Those who make books and audiobooks a daily habit consistently report higher levels of wellbeing.” says **Bodil Eriksson Torp**, CEO Storytel Group. “It’s also exciting to see so many listeners reporting that they’ve finished more books after embracing audiobooks, proving the format is the perfect companion to traditional reading.”

Key Findings from The 2026 Story Report:

1. There’s a clear connection between book consumption and wellbeing

There is a clear “dose-response” relationship between how much people consume stories and their self-reported wellbeing across all five markets. The more someone reads or listens to books, the higher their wellbeing. In Poland and Bulgaria, the effect of listening is proportionally larger and more significant.

Between 84 percent and 93 percent of daily or weekly listeners across the five markets also agree that audiobooks contribute to improving their wellbeing. Norway’s daily and weekly listeners reported the highest impact at 93 percent.

2. Audiobooks fill spaces physical books can’t—and make people finish more books

55 to 68 percent of users cited “doing other things at the same time” as their primary reason for starting to listen to audiobooks — the top reason in every market. 34–54% of audiobook listeners

listen while doing household chores, and 53 to 71 percent of listeners across all markets report finishing more books since they started using audiobooks.'

3. Reading and audiobook listening are antidotes to screen time stress

52 to 59 percent of the total population feel they spend too much time on screens, and 40 to 60 percent of parents agree that audiobooks are a great tool to reduce screen time. A majority of parents believe that their children become calmer (57-76%), more focused (54-77%) and even smarter (65-79%) from listening to stories.

4. Book readers & listeners are considered more attractive

Physical book readers are perceived as more attractive by 47 to 66 percent of respondents across the five markets. Women find book readers and listeners significantly more attractive than men do, regardless of format. Across five countries, 20 to 40 percent of women are more attracted to audiobook listeners, with Bulgarian (40%) and Polish (34%) women topping the list.

5. We're obsessed with crime — and it's good for us

Crime is the #1 preferred genre in four out of five markets, with Bulgaria as the only exception (preferring Fiction, with Crime in second place). Interestingly, crime listeners consistently report high wellbeing scores across all five markets.

The 2026 Story Report is now available as a downloadable PDF on storytelgroup.com.

About the The Story Report

The 2026 Story Report was commissioned by Storytel and conducted by Trackit Insight, a Stockholm-based independent research and insights agency specialising in human-driven consumer data. The survey was designed to explore the relationship between consumption of stories, audiobook habits and wellbeing across five European markets.

Data was collected through online panel interviews in April 2026, with a total of 5,077 respondents across Sweden, Norway, Finland, Poland and Bulgaria — approximately 1,000 per market. Respondents were aged 18-79 years and samples are representative of each national population. Panel recruitment and data collection was carried out by Norstat in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Poland, and by JTN Research in Bulgaria.

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About Storytel Group

We are a storytelling company. Driven by our purpose - "Leading the future of storytelling, we move the world through stories" - Storytel Group inspires and entertains people around the world by blending innovation with tradition. We bring stories to life across various formats for everyone to discover. Anytime. Anywhere.

Storytel Group leads by operating through its two primary business areas: Streaming and Publishing. The Streaming division provides one of the world's most extensive digital libraries, with over 1.8 million audiobook and e-book titles available in 55 languages. This service reaches more than 2.7 million subscribers through the Group's prominent brands, including Storytel, Mofibo, and Audiobooks.com. The Publishing business area produces high-quality content from acclaimed authors across a wide range of genres through renowned publishing houses such as Norstedts Publishing Group, Lind & Co, People's, Gummerus, Bokfabriken, Overamstel Publishers, and Storyside. Storytel Group is headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden. Please visit www.storytelgroup.com for more information.

Image Attachments

[The 2026 Story Report](#)

Attachments

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