

Material, Constructive and Communicative Components in the Design of Modern Printed Publications in Ukraine

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Abstract

The study focuses on the modern Ukrainian book design. The material and constructive components of printed publications, their typical design and unique artistic and polygraphic solutions are characterized. It is focused on the most common types of covers. On the basis of statistical data, the trends in the issue of hardcovers and paperbacks in Ukraine in the last two decades have been revealed. The main trends in digital technologies in book cover design are outlined. Types of textual information, which is placed on book covers, are singled out. Attention was paid to the peculiarities of the design of translated books, reprints, series and book sets. Distinctive features in the decoration of book head, tail and fore-edges, dust jackets, partial dust jackets, and slipcases are revealed. The books that won the annual *Best Book Design* competition within the framework of the Book Arsenal International Festival are singled out. The important role of communication between researchers, writers, artists, editors, publishers, lawyers, printers, booksellers, librarians around the issues and best practices of communicative book design is emphasized.

Keywords

Book, printed publication, hardcover, paperback, dust jacket, slipcase, book head, tail and fore-edge, ribbon bookmark, endpaper, communication design, digital technologies

1. Introduction

Despite the development of new information technologies, the printed book continues to serve as an important channel of social communication, accumulating knowledge and experience gained by mankind over thousands of years and transmitting it across time and space. This durability is ensured by the design of printed publications. It turned out to be quite ergonomic and effective for solving the tasks set for the book. This concerns a codex edition, a block of folded sheets or gatherings bound at the spine and covered with a binding. The codex form of the book has not undergone significant transformations since its invention, but the appearance of the publication has become different, taking into account the changing practices of its production, distribution, and use, reacting to the emergence of new materials and technologies, responding to trends, and borrowing design approaches from other cultural and creative industries.

The design of a book (especially its cover) plays a crucial role in its fate. A potential consumer may ignore the publication, or they may be attracted to it, pick it up from a shelf in a stationary bookstore or public library and satisfy their need to know the world. The bookcover is studied from the point of view of book studies, art studies, literary studies, commodity studies, semiotics, printing, advertising studies and other scientific disciplines. In fact, the multidisciplinary nature of such studies is emphasised in the publications of Polish researchers Katarzyna Szczesniak and Jakub Maciej Lubocki [1, 2].

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2. Related Works

The design of book publications has always attracted the attention of Ukrainian researchers who published on the pages of *Bibliolohichni Visti (Bibliological News)* and other book studies journals in the 1920s and 1930s. However, they focused primarily on ancient books. In 2005, a monograph on the binding of manuscripts and old printed books was published, representing the development of bibliopistics, a scientific book studies discipline about the history, technique, and art of binding decoration [3]. The author offers a detailed scheme for describing an ancient binding, which can serve as a guide for developing such algorithms for book bindings of later periods.

The formation and development of communicative design (including book and magazine design) in Galicia in the second half of the 19th and first third of the 20th centuries is traced in the dissertation and publications of Olha Borysenko, a researcher at the Ukrainian Academy of Printing [4]. Kyiv art historian Olha Lahutenko published a monograph *Ukrainian Book Cover of the First Third of the Twentieth Century* [5], and later a synthetic work on the history of Ukrainian book graphics of the 20th century [6]. Hisel Kazovsky's work focuses only on the book graphics of the artists of the Kultur Lige, a Jewish cultural and educational organisation that operated between 1918 and 1924 [7]. The album-monograph *Beyond Borders* by Myroslava Mudrak, a professor at the University of Michigan, is dedicated to Ukrainian book graphics, with its upper chronological limit of 1914–1945 [8].

A number of articles by the Kyiv art historian Petro Nesterenko in the journal *Slovo i Chas (Word and Time)* are devoted to the cover design of Ukrainian publications [9–11]. The researcher gave a brief overview of book covers of the 1950s and 1960s by the Kyiv publishing house “Mystetstvo”, analysed medallion portraits of the classics of Ukrainian literature, which are typical for the frames of anniversary multi-volume editions of the 1930s and 1960s, and described the slipcase as a decorative and graphic means of book design in the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Oksana Hadzhiy analysed how the Ukrainian adult book has changed visually over the 30 years of Ukrainian independence, focusing on design trends within a particular period [12]. A unique selection of works by illustrators who worked in book graphics is contained in the publication *Illustration in Ukraine* [13].

Reproduction of bookcovers is an important component of printed and digital publishing catalogues. Such illustrations form a visual series in works on the history of Ukrainian book publishing, literature, culture, or the development of the modern publishing market and its infrastructure (in particular, Kostiantyn Rodyk's *Sisyphus XX: Book vs. Politics* [14]); they illustrate critiques and reviews in literary and critical journals (in particular, the journal *Krytyka (Critique)*, which is published with the subtitle “international review of books and ideas”).

Thus, most studies by Ukrainian researchers analyse the development of book design from the perspective of art history and focus on publications printed in the second half of the 19th and 20th centuries. Our work focuses on Ukrainian books of the 21st century and we are interested in their design in the context of their communication potential.

3. Methods

The study aims to highlight traditional approaches and innovative practices in the design of books published in Ukraine over the past two decades. For this purpose, we provide quantitative data on the output of publishing products in various types of bindings; draw attention to the most common structural types of bindings and covers, their communication potential; identify the atypical characteristics in the design of publications; and consider the features of the dust jacket, endpapers, book head, tail and fore-edge, and other structural elements of modern printed publications.

To achieve the research goal, we used observation, which involved a targeted study of the publishing repertoire, bookstore assortment, and library collections in order to identify publications that represent different forms of graphic design; thematic and typological method, which is important for systematising publications according to various criteria; statistical method to identify the quantitative relationship between specific phenomena of communication design and their media in the array of publishing products; comparative method, which allowed to identify similarities and differences in the design of publications of the same works and authors.

The study of specific editions involves their book analysis, external and internal interpretation. Book analysis involves dividing a publication into parts (components of content and form), identifying certain parts (elements of cover design), studying their features, determining their place and functional role in the book as a whole, and establishing the nature of their interaction with other parts.

4. Design features and communication potential of book publications

4.1. Material and design features of the covers

The binding is an important structural element of the cover design of a printed publication, which covers the book block. It plays the role of a mediator between the content of the book and the person trying to read it through symbolic or object images, short texts, and the type and texture of the materials used.

Book bindings are made of soft or hard materials. For this reason, they are differentiated into hardcovers and paperbacks. Paperbacks cover a book block in different ways, most often that's saddle stitched and tape bound covers. Publishers mostly choose tape bound covers, often with flaps that add strength to the binding and provide more space for texts and illustrations. Saddle stitched covers are used for methodological guidelines, dissertation abstracts, and regulatory and instructional brochures in university and academic institutions. Despite the thick paper, due to intensive use, the covers of the publications wear out quickly. For this reason, librarians are forced to make new bindings for them.

An important structural element of a hardcover book is the endpaper, which binds the cover with the book block. They are made of thicker paper than the book block. Depending on the type of design, endpapers can be blank (uncoloured), background (coloured but not printed), textual or illustrated. Depending on the type of image, an illustrated endpaper can be ornamental, decorative, or with a plot. Some books have holes of various shapes in the bindings, through which fragments of the endpaper are visible (figure 1).



Figure 1: Books with holes in the covers

The construction of the hardcover is stronger, more complex (boards, endpapers, gauze flaps, spine material, other reinforcing elements) and more expensive. It is usually chosen for publications designed for active or long-term use (textbooks, encyclopedias, collections of works, etc.). In publications for preschool children, the corners are rounded to protect the young reader from injury. Books for adults could be also designed in this way, for example: *How to Remember: A Practical Guide to Memory and Recall* by Rob Eastaway (“Family Leisure Club”, 2018), *Eat, Drink, Lose Weight: Health Without Diets* by Natalia Samoilenko (“Knyholav”, 2018), *To Dot the I’Story. Storytelling for Screenwriters, Writers, and Bloggers* by Serhiy Havrylov (“Pabulum”, 2019), *NeprOsti* by Taras Prokhasko (“Terra Incognita”, 2018), and the short story collection *Izolation* (“Ranok”, “BaraBuka”, 2021).

In the practice of contemporary book publishing, bindings with cardboard boards fully covered with a piece of paper with glossy, matte, or selective lamination are common. Occasionally, publishing houses release gift, anniversary, and exclusive books in half-cloth binding, covering the boards with one type of material and the spine with another, such as *Sisyphus XX: Book vs Politics* by Kostiantyn Rodyk (“Baltiia-Druk”, 2019) or *Noble Cuisine of Galicia* by Ihor Lylio and Marianna Dushar (“Old Lion Publishing House”, 2023). Sometimes publishers imitate a different spine material using a

different colour for the spine in a full-cloth binding. Some books are binded into integrated flexible covers, which consist of a single piece of thick cardboard, is cheaper to produce, strong, and flexible. This is how “Old Lion Publishing House”, “Vivat”, “Pabulum” and other Ukrainian publishers bind their books. Occasionally, the hardcovers are softened by placing a layer of thin foam between the boards and the paper covering. Such bindings are pleasant to the touch. Embossed and debossed elements on elegant covers also bring aesthetic and tactile pleasure.

Publishers are particularly creative in the design of some books. They introduce additional elements into their material construction, or design them atypically, taking into account the content of the book. Covadonga O’Shea’s book *The Zara Phenomenon* has an original design. The publication has felt handles attached to the dark green hardcover, which together imitate the paper bags used to pack textiles and other products in the stores of the transnational retail chain “Zara” for a long period of time.

Some bookcovers by “Vikhola” publishing house are designed in an interesting way. The front flap has a perforation with an inscription “Tear off here – you’ll get a bookmark :)”. The reader can easily tear off a strip of thick paper and put it between the pages in the book, marking the right place. An apt quote-aphorism is placed on the bookmark, which accumulates the main message of the published work. For example, in Volodymyr Stanchyshyn’s book *It Takes Two to Make a Relationship Work*, this is the statement: “Only by learning to be with ourselves will we learn to be with others”.

Different types of bindings not only protect book bindings from mechanical damage and ensure a long lifespan of the publication, but also make it look more attractive, reveal the main “ID information”, express the main theme, idea, problem, plot, also act as a kind of advertising poster, stimulate sales and encourage reading.

4.2. Digital technologies used in book cover design

Most book cover designs are created using the Adobe software package. The Adobe Photoshop graphic editor allows to work with raster graphics, perform colour correction, and set up colour profiles. The Adobe Illustrator graphics editor is used to create and edit vector images. Adobe InDesign is used for layout and design, fine-tuning of text, and pre-press checkup of files. The degree to which designers use certain software in the process of creating a cover depends on their personal preferences and creative tasks specifications.

If a raster image is used to design a book cover, it can be scanned illustrations created by hand using various techniques, or drawn directly in Photoshop or another graphic editor, such as Procreate (if illustrator works on an iPad), or photos (taken by designer themselves or purchased from stock photo sites).

Depending on the bookcover type, designers can create multiple files for the cover using different software. A full-cloth binding cover design usually requires only one file, while in the case of a half-cloth binding, there may be separate files for the boards and the spine. Separate files are also created for the various finishing options: die-cutting, embossing, varnishing, or foil coating – containing vector outlines of the element required for such finishing.

A new trend in book cover design is the introduction of augmented reality (AR) technologies into publication design. Such publications contain QR codes or image elements that can be activated by gadgets using specially developed apps or Instagram effects and engage readers in additional interaction. The vast majority of publications with AR elements on the Ukrainian market are children’s fiction and educational publications [15, p. 135]. Usually, such interactive journeys start right from the cover, for example, in the editions of the fairy tale series by “Art Nation Publishing” and “The White Owl” publishing house, in *Forest Song. Mavka* by “Kyiv House of Books” (figure 2).

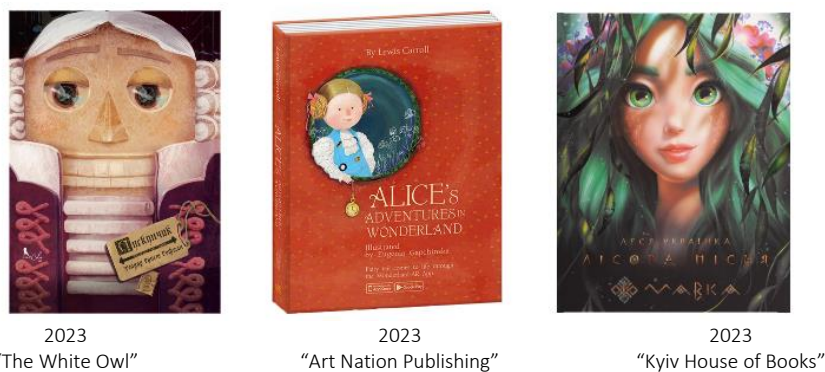


Figure 2: Book covers with augmented reality elements

Another new trend worth mentioning is the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) to create images for book covers. For example, in the design of Maryna Ponomarenko’s poetry collection *The Book of Love and Fury* (“Old Lion Publishing House”, 2023), artist Ksenia Zabrodska used illustrations created with the help of the artificial intelligence neural network Midjourney to emphasise the artistic images of contemporary poetry in a special way.

Another example of the AI use is the experimental book for children *I Want to Go to Mars* (“Ranok”, 2023), which was written and illustrated entirely using artificial intelligence (as indicated on the cover). In this project, designer Oleksandr Kovalievsky also used Midjourney, while minimally interfering with the generated image.

The cover for Valeriy Puzik’s book *Love, Dad* (“Laboratory”, 2023) was also created using the Midjourney neural network (cover designer Kateryna Yatsushek) (figure 3).



Figure 3: Book covers created using generative artificial intelligence

The ever-evolving digital tools give book designers and illustrators more and more opportunities to develop creative projects. Of course, this also brings new challenges that need to be overcome: more complex design or printing process, the need for constant technical support, and unclear copyright issues. However, new technologies are increasing the visual and multimedia diversity of such publications, as well as the reader’s interest in them.

4.3. Statistics of the book publishing market

Since 2003, the Book Chamber of Ukraine has been publishing statistical data on the production of paperbacks and hardcovers. The basis for such data is the mandatory copy of printed publications that producers are required to send to this institution under current legislation. Taking into account the number of publications received by the Book Chamber, it can be stated that in terms of the number of titles in 2003–2022, paperbacks dominated the publishing repertoire. On average, 64.33% of titles were covered with paperbacks, and 35.67% with hardcovers. As can be seen from figure 4, over the analysed period, the gap between publications in different covers has been decreasing over time. There is a downward trend in the proportion of paperback editions: 72.45% in 2003 versus 58.25% in 2022.

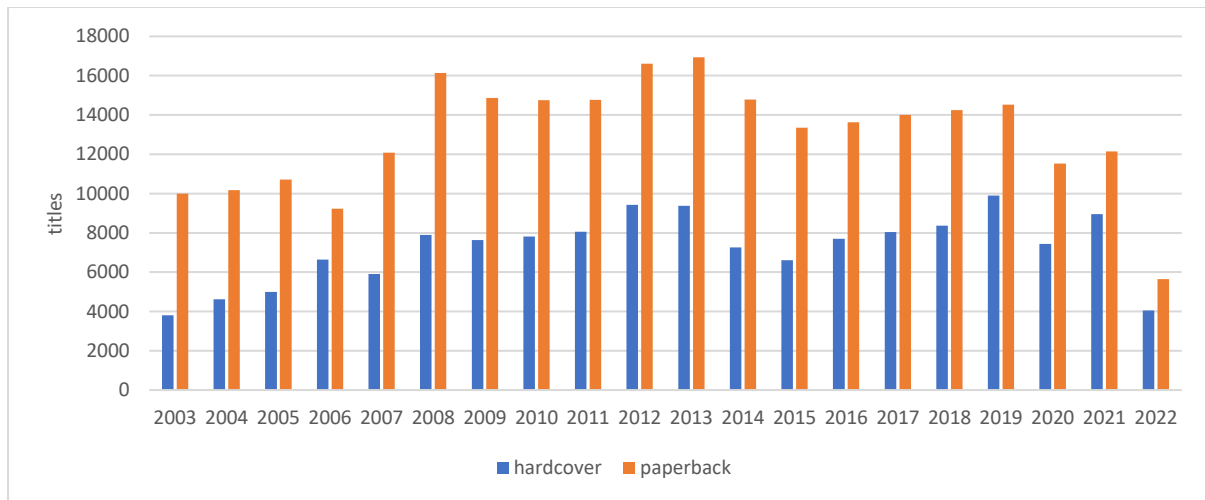


Figure 4: Production of printed publications in hardcovers and paperbacks in Ukraine in 2003–2022 by title

Source: Compiled independently on the basis of the statistical collection *Print of Ukraine* [16]

The decline in absolute book output was driven by socio-economic and political factors: the financial crisis of 2008, the annexation of Crimea, the occupation of parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in 2014, the coronavirus pandemic that swept Ukraine and the whole world in 2020, and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops in 2022. The decline in book publishing in terms of circulation was even more significant than in terms of titles (figure 5). In 2022, compared to 2003, the printing of hardcovers decreased by 3.5 times, and paperbacks by 3.2 times.

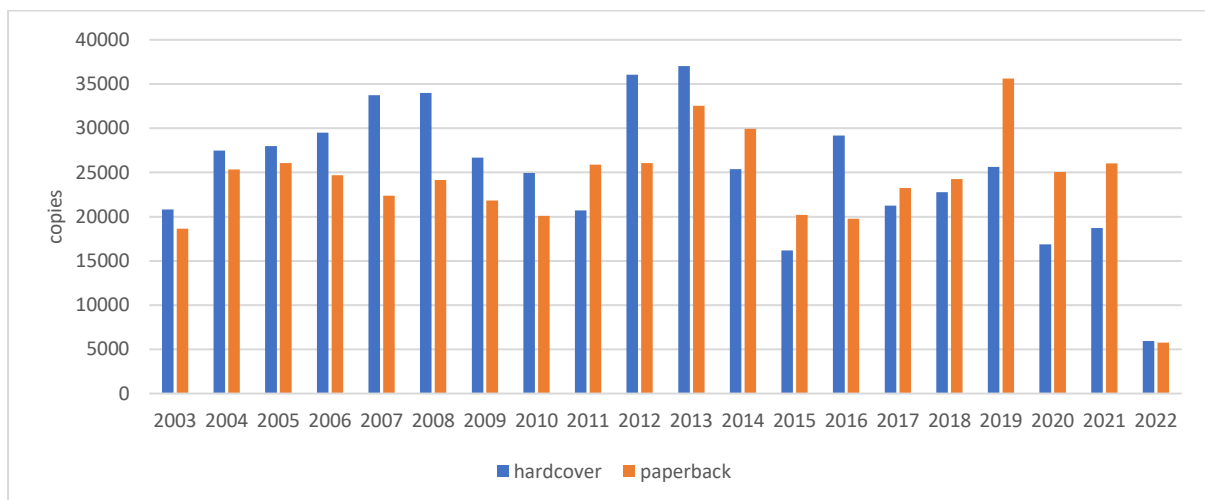


Figure 5: Production of printed publications in hardcovers and paperbacks in Ukraine in 2003–2022 by circulation

Source: Compiled independently on the basis of the statistical collection *Print of Ukraine* [16]

As can be seen from figure 5, until 2010, hardcovers prevailed among the editions in circulation. According to publisher Anton Martynov, the paperback did not take root in the Ukrainian market because it was poorly perceived by readers [17]. In 2007 and 2016, the total annual circulation of hardcover editions was one and a half times higher. Since 2017, more copies had paperback covers, which is also due to an increase in their quality. This type of cover is now favoured by publishers of university books, academic monographs, and non-fiction literature, including “Yakaboo Publishing”, “Vikhola”, “Monolith”, “Knyholav”, and “Dukh i Litera”.

Focusing on the different tastes, conditions of use, and solvency of consumers, Ukrainian publishers sometimes produce same titles in different editions. For example, by Laurence Rees’s *World War II Behind Closed Doors: Stalin, The Nazis and the West* costs 349 UAH in paperback and 399 UAH in

hardback; Michael Heller and James Salzman’s *Mine!: How the Hidden Rules of Ownership Control Our Lives* costs 299 and 399 UAH, respectively. In total, the online store of the “Laboratoria” publishing house offers 24 books in various designs [18]. Mostly, paperbacks are smaller in size and format, and their price is on average 30% lower.

4.4. Communication objectives of the cover

Book covers play an important role in informing potential readers about their content. The message they convey can either reproduce the content of the publication or distort it, mislead, or confuse. For example, the cover design of the book *Untouched Words* by “Discursus” publishing house (first image in figure 6) does not give an understanding of what this publication is about, what type it is, and who it is intended for. The title suggests that it is a lexicographical work. Given the images, one might assume that it is a collection of lyrics. However, when you open the book, it turns out to be a collection of scholarly articles about the work of the Ukrainian poet and translator Volodymyr Svidzynskiy.

A similar situation occurred with Oksana Dumanska’s book *The Way Protein Bodies Exist*, published in 2005 by the “Pyramid” publishing house (second image in figure 6). The illustration on the cover and the title gave the impression that this was a popular book on genetic engineering about biological macromolecules. However, in fact, it is a work of fiction written in the form of a teenage girl’s diary. This discrepancy was noticed, and in the 2008 reprint, the book got a new title *Schoolgirl from the Suburbs* and the cover image was changed to more accurately convey the content and better match the genre of the book (figure 6, third image).



Figure 6: Publications whose content and type are difficult to identify by the image and title on the cover

Not all potential recipients can read the portrait images on the covers, which, according to the publishers, seem easily identifiable. For example, despite the acronymic clue, not everyone will recognise philosopher Hryhorii Skovoroda on the cover of his selected works edition entitled *The Best* (“Terra Incognita” publishing house, 2017; illustrated by Danylo Movchan). A reader who has free access to the shelves of a library or bookstore will easily read the author’s name on the spine. However, seeing the book in an exhibition or shop window, one might not identify the image with the figure of the famous Ukrainian philosopher.

The current standard *Editions. Paperbacks and Hardcover. General Requirements and Rules of Design* regulates the list of initial information that must be placed on book covers. The mandatory information includes the name(s) of the authors and the title of the publication. Additionally, the name of the official institution in normative publications, the label “volume” and the volume number in multi-volume publications, the name of the series and its logo, and the issue number in serial publications are recommended to be placed on the front of the cover; the back of the cover should contain a barcode and advertising information [19]. Ukrainian publishers reinforce this information with additional slogans about the book, series, publishing house, logos of competitions in which the publication has won awards, quotes from the book or from reviews or feedback from famous people, etc. (figure 7).

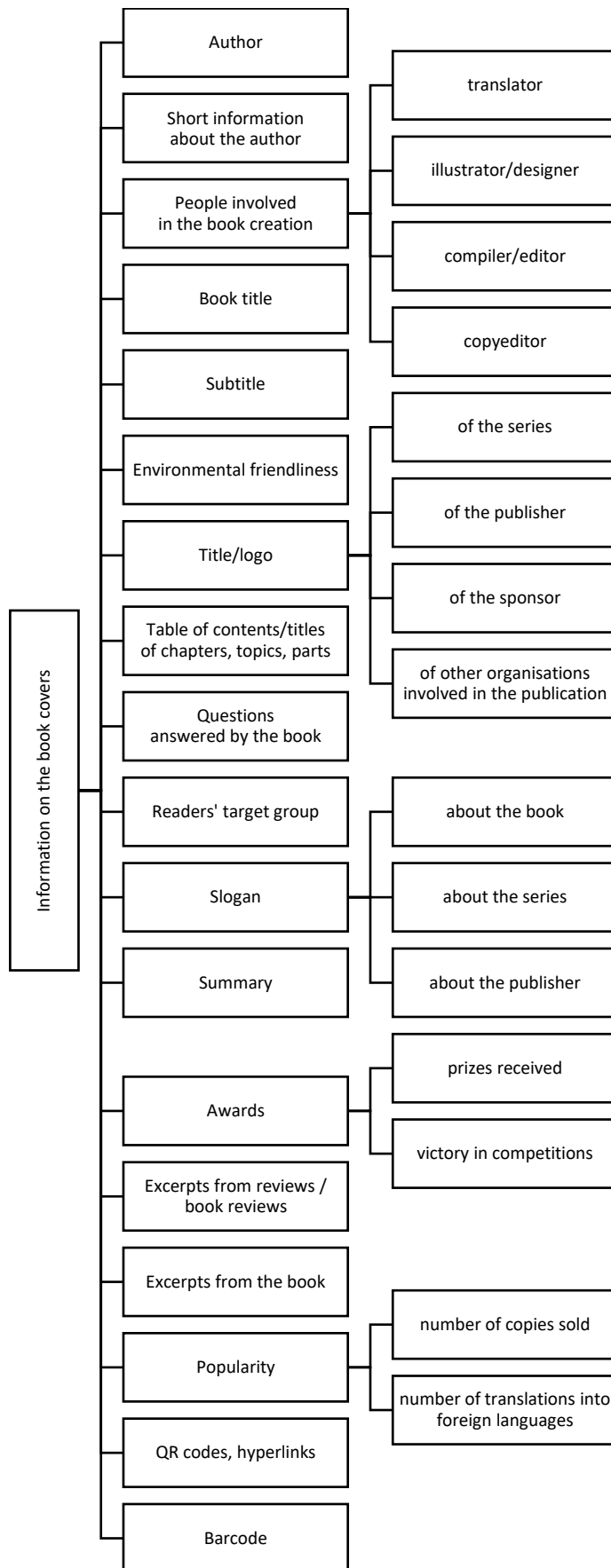


Figure 7: The most common information presented on the covers of Ukrainian publications

This standard requires that at least 9 mm wide book spine should contain the author's name and the title of the publication (shortened if necessary), and in multi-volume books — the label “volume” and the volume number, first and last letters (words) of the dictionary entries contained therein [19, p. 3–4].

Publishers also place other information on the book spine: the reader's target group (class, age), type of publication, year of issue, logo or series name, publishing mark, author's portrait, image that is relevant to the book's subject matter, etc. It is important that the spine contains at least minimal information about the book, otherwise it will not be able to “make a statement” on the shelves of bookstores or libraries. For example, the “Ye” bookstore still sells *Two Novels: Moscoviada* by Yuri Andrukhovych with a blank spine. It was published in 2014 by the “Lileia NV” publishing house and has not been sold out despite the author's popularity. Today, more and more publishers show the front cover and spine when presenting books in online stores (figure 8).



Figure 8: Presentation of the book *Ukraïner. Ukrainian Insider* in the online store of the “Old Lion Publishing House”

The standard requires that the original information on the spine be reproduced from head to tail. This practice is common in European countries, as it makes it easy to read the title on the spine and on the front of the cover when books are laid out horizontally on shelves, which is important for stationary bookstores and libraries. However, this approach has not yet taken root in Ukrainian book publishing, which we attribute to established traditions, ignorance or rejection of the provisions of the standard. As a result, Nadiia Zubko notes, book spines with different text directions are lining up on the shelves, which creates visual disharmony in the layout of the books and causes dissatisfaction among perfectionist readers [20, p. 196].

In addition to textual information, images are intended to reveal the book's content to a potential recipient. Depending on their type, different types of cover design are chosen: based on font, ornamental and decorative, subject and thematic, portrait or symbolic. Covers can become a surface for reproducing paintings or graphic works created in the past, if they appropriately represent the time and place of the events in the published works. Images help to build an associative chain and arouse interest in the book's content. According to a sociological study commissioned by the Ukrainian Book Institute, cover design and visual aesthetics of a publication are generally the factors that influence the purchase of publications by 7% of respondents [21, p. 154].

4.5. Cover design of translated and reprinted books

Ukrainian publishers often publish translated books in a cover that duplicates the design of the original. This requirement may be specified in the licence agreement. At the same time, some editions translated into Ukrainian have different covers. When designing them, they take into account the preferences of the local reader and make appropriate accents. For example, the cover of the British edition of Alexandra Shulman focuses on the author (larger font, photo), while the Ukrainian edition highlights the title (figure 9), since the former editor-in-chief of British *Vogue* is less well known here. The cover of Mary Warner Marian's *100 Ideas That Changed Photography* is designed differently, based not on keywords but on the camera lens image.

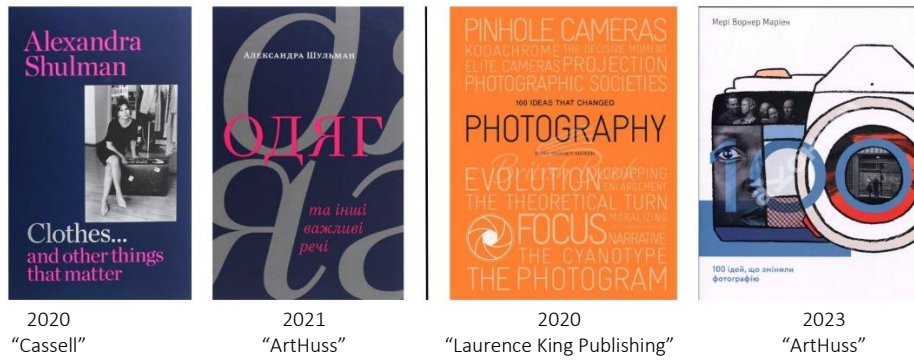


Figure 9: Different cover design in British and Ukrainian editions of the same titles

As figure 10 shows, the Family Leisure Book Club changed the cover design of the Ukrainian edition of Daniel Keyes' science fiction novel *Flowers for Algernon* to a less technogenic one than that of the "Orion" publishing house. Today, the edition with a new cover, designed by Oksana Volkovska in the same style as the author's other books, is distributed in bookstores.

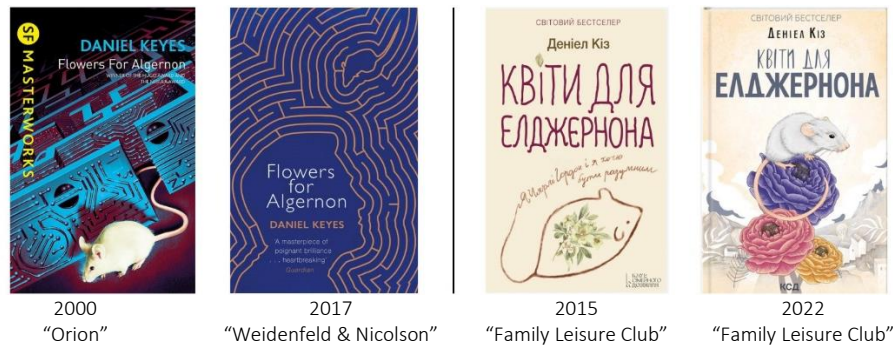


Figure 10: Different covers in the British and Ukrainian editions of *Flowers For Algernon* by Daniel Keyes

Reprinting a book with a new cover is one of the ways to modernize it, align it with the latest trends, and choose better means of visualizing its content. Changes may affect the cover type, image, title and other components of the paratext (figure 11).



Figure 11: Different cover design in reprinted books by "Nash Format"

For example, in the updated reprint of William Zinsser's book *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*, the translation of the title and subtitle is more in line with the original (compared to "magic" words in previous version) and the image of the wizard got removed, the text on the cover back is adapted to the new title, the name of the translator Yevhen Kozhedub is also indicated. Similar transformations have occurred in the publication *Miracle Morning Millionaires: What the Wealthy Do Before 8AM That Will Make You Rich* by Hal Elrod, David Osborn, and Honoree Corder. Here, the changes affected not only the title, but also the illustration, which more accurately conveys the content now.

4.6. Design of multipart publications

Design plays an important role in the preparation for printing and distribution of multipart publications. Individual issues of series, multi-volume, complete editions are issued in a typical manner. In this way, a reader who has seen one issue can easily recognize others on the shelves of libraries or bookstores. The design of individual volumes of the multi-volume edition has the most similarities. They can differ only in number, as in the 50-volume book of works by Mykhailo Hrushevsky of the Lviv publishing house “Svit” (since 2022); in volume number and its title, as in the 12-volume academic collection of Lesya Ukrainka’s works, which was prepared for publication by the Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the author’s birth; in volume number and illustration (photo of the writer at different ages), as in the 10-volume collection of Olha Kobylyanska’s works from the Chernivtsi publishing house “Bukrek” (since 2013). Sometimes, publishing an edition over a long period of time, the manufacturer cannot find cover materials of the same color or shade. Because of this, integrity in the perception of the multivolume is lost. This is what happened in the *Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine*, which was prepared for publication by the “Naukova Dumka” publishing house under the auspices of the Institute of the History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine during 2003–2021. The shade of leatherette, which was used for the 10th volume book cover is less bright and stands out among the others on the shelf, introducing some disharmony.

Typical placement of text and illustration blocks, but different colors might be appropriate in the design of serial publications. This approach is successfully used by the “A-Ba-Ba-Ga-La-Ma-Ga” publishing house, choosing buckram in different colors for the books of the *Ukrainian Poetic Anthology* series. Different colors and images are used on the covers of Terry Pratchett’s translated books from the *Discworld* series published in the “Old Lion Publishing House”, on original works by Daria Ozerna *Optimistically About Health* by “Yakaboo Publishing” (figure 22), issues of the *Classics* series by “BookChef” publishing house and *Non-canonical Canon* series by “Vikhola”.



Figure 22: Design of the book series *Optimistic about Health* by “Yakaboo Publishing”

Books in a series usually have invariant and variable components. It is important that the former support a certain canon in compositional and font solutions and ensure sufficient recognition. The series logo or its name can serve as such an anchor, a unifying element. At the same time, if these elements are not clearly visible on the cover or there is no visual resemblance between the issues, the important consumer benefits of serialisation are lost.

Closed series, multi-volume or set editions on the shelves of bookstores, private and public libraries can form a coherent composition, given that the spine of each issue is a fragment (puzzle). “A-Ba-Ba-Ba-Ga-La-Ma-Ga” uses this design in its series of Harry Potter books and Lockwood & Co series (figure 13). Such solutions are attractive to the reader, but require high-quality printing, namely, the fit of the paper sheet to the binding sides. Shifts and slight image distortions might cause dissonance in the consumer’s perception of the illustration.



Figure 33: The complete images formed on the book spines of J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series and Jonathan Stroud’s *Lockwood & Co.* series by “A-Ba-Ba-Ga-La-Ma-Ga” publishing house

4.7. Using of dust jacket, partial dust jacket and slipcase

Some books, primarily fiction, local history and art history, are additionally covered with a dust jacket. Today, its priority mission is aesthetic. The surface of the dust jacket is larger than the cover, so its communication potential is higher, because texts and images can be placed on the flaps as well. The dust jacket is not only a source of information about the title of the work, author, publisher, series and other data, but also about the content of the book, reviews of opinion leaders. For its production might be used transparent and translucent materials, cutouts might be made, through which parts of the over become visible.

Ryan Holiday and Stephen Hanselman’s book *The Daily Stoic: 366 Meditations on Wisdom, Perseverance, and the Art of Living* was released with a dust jacket, which after unfolding turns into an A2 format poster with the inscription “Keep calm and read in Ukrainian” and the logo of the publishing house “Nash Format”. On the flap of the dust jacket there is also a *Problem Solving Quick Guide* with 10 tips, including: “let go of the unnecessary”, “stop worrying about what people think”, “solve problems as soon as they happen” etc. The dust jacket of the photo album *Decommunized: Ukrainian Soviet Mosaics* by Yevhen Nikiforov (“Osnovy” publishing house) unfolds into a double-sided A2 poster.

In the practice of modern book publishing, the partial dust jacket is used. For example, in the literary and artistic edition of Mark Livin’s works entitled *Zelena, 19* (“Knyholav” publishing house, 2020), the partial dust jacket is designed as a fence, which “hides” what is happening in the garden (figure 14). The book was designed by a well-known illustrator, a winner of international competitions, Yevhenia Haydamaka. The partial dust jackets in the lower part are a typical element in the design of several editions of Ernest Hemingway’s works in the “Old Lion Publishing House”. In the edition of Vasyl Stefanyk’s works, the partial dust jacket has a hole in the shape of the writer’s profile, through which the fabric of the binding is visible. The book was prepared for publication by the Lviv National Scientific Library of Ukraine named after V. Stefanyk in 2020. The four volumes of the project *Ukraine – Europe: Chronology of Development* by the “Krion” publishing house are joined together by two partial dust jackets vertically and horizontally (figure 14).



Figure 44: Partial dust jacket in book design

Especially refined editions are placed in slipcases. Slipcases have different designs (completely cover the books, leave their spines and edges for view), shape (cube, parallelepiped, bags, chests, cradles, etc.), are made for one or more books combined in a certain way (complete edition, facsimile edition and its supplements with a preface and comments, a multilingual edition, series books) (figure 15). Some publishers, in particular “Nash Format” and “Fabula” make branded gift slipcases in which any books can be placed for an additional fee, which were chosen by the buyer. “Laboratoriya” publishing house produces branded dust jackets and cases on customer orders.



Figure 55: Slipcases in book design

4.8. Head, tail and fore-edge in book design

After trimming the book block from three sides, the head, tail and fore-edge sides are formed, which usually have the color of the book block paper. The edges of the pages printed in a certain color are visible on the book block sides. Such labels are placed in dictionaries, which makes it easier to find words that begin with a certain letter. Color-coded sections in school textbooks help a reader quickly turn to the topic or section of the book they want. Sometimes this is how sections are marked in non-fiction. For example, in the book *Visual Collaboration: A Powerful Toolkit for Improving Meetings, Projects, and Processes* (authors — Ole Qvist-Sorensen, Loa Baastrup, illustrator — Sofie Lind Mesterton, “Fabula” publishing house, 2023) five color sections represent five building blocks of visual collaboration — a method of visual work.

Sometimes the head, tail and fore-edge sides of the block are painted, silvered, gilded, ornamented, or with text. This makes the artistic design of the publication completed. However, this design element also performs utilitarian functions: the book block is less dirty and it gets easier to remove dust, especially if the publication is on open shelves in libraries.

The head, tail and fore-edge sides with text are rare. Perhaps the only example is the translated edition of *Beauty* by Stefan Sagmeister and Jessica Walsh at the publishing and printing company “ArtHuss”. On the silver-plated edges of the book block, when bent in different directions, the inscriptions: “Beauty is a function” or “Beauty is a person” become visible. The edition is issued in a slipcase with an embossed, ornamented letter “B” and pleasant velvet Soft Touch lamination.

Special attention is paid to the design of the head, tail and fore-edge sides in the Holy Scriptures and other canonical, liturgical, and prayer publications. Fragments of drawings are placed on them, duplicating the images from the covers, coated with foil. Cut-out indexes are made to speed up the search for relevant Bible books, sometimes the book block sides are protected by covers with fore-edge fasteners (figure 16).



Figure 66: Head, tail and fore-edge design in editions of the *Holy Scriptures* [22]

It is common to add ribbon bookmarks glued at one end to the spine in spiritual and enlightening books. Sometimes, in order to be able to mark the text on different pages, several ribbon colors are used. The bookmark usually duplicates one of the colors of the cover, endpapers, headband or contrasts with them. There could be mixed ribbon colors: in *The National Atlas of Ukraine* (publishing house “Cartography”, 2010) – it is yellow and blue, in *Boyko Wedding in Texts and Photos: Ancient and Modern* – embroidered (publishing house “Snowdrop”, 2019). Bookmarks not only allow the reader to easily return to specific places in books, but also serve as an additional element of decoration. The ribbon bookmark in the books of the publishing house “Nash Format” is a marker of corporate style: most of the prints have such decoration. They are part of the products of “Old Lion Publishing House”, “A-Ba-By-Ga-La-Ma-Ga”, “Knyholav”, “Vivat”, “Pabulum” and other Ukrainian publishers.

When choosing a ribbon bookmark, they pay attention to the color of the endbands on head and tail sides of the book. The endband with a thickened edge strengthens the spine and decorates the book, especially if it harmonizes in tone with the color of the cover, endpaper, and ribbon bookmark. Other elements can stabilize the book too. For example, nutritionist Nataliya Samoilenko’s publication *Eat, Drink, Lose Weight: Health Without Diets* (“Knyholav” publishing house, 2020) uses a fixing elastic band that matches the color of the spine and the ribbon bookmark.

Traditionally, the hardcover is made so that its edges protrude a few millimeters beyond the pages, protecting the book block from damage. Sometimes paperback books, like pocket bilingual dictionaries by “Collins” or editions of Bibles, might have such edges as well.

4.9. Best book design awards

Many events are held annually in Ukraine and around the world, where experts choose the most beautiful book design. One of these competitions is *The Best Book Design*, which has been organized since 2016 by the Book Arsenal International Festival in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut in Ukraine and with the support of the Frankfurt Book Fair and the Buchkunst Foundation. Among the publications sent to the competition, a short list of winners and laureates in various categories is determined, followed by the grand prix (table 1).

Books are evaluated in the following categories: books for reading, in which the text dominates (fiction and non-fiction); visual books in which the pictorial component prevails (albums, photo books, catalogs, graphic novels, etc.); children’s books; utilitarian books, which include various types of “practical” publications; experiments (self-published, photo books, art books and limited editions, zines, etc.). At the same time, the following criteria are taken into account: innovativeness and relevance of the design; harmonious combination of book content and design; novelty and originality of the visual concept; the relationship between the illustrations and the main idea; correspondence between the style of illustrations and the reader’s target group; convenience and readability of the text; combination of fonts; high implementation quality [23].

As can be seen from the table 1, the Grand Prix of *The Best Book Design* competition was awarded three times to the publishing projects of Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv, representing the Art Studio “Agrafka” from Lviv. For their books, the artists won many international awards and honors, including *Bologna Ragazzi Award*, *European Design Awards*, *Global Illustration Award*, *Premio Andersen*, *Biennial of Illustration Bratislava*, *NAMI Concours Award*, etc. Among the latter — the gold for the book *Optics of God* design in the nomination “Book and publishing illustration” at the annual competition in the field of communication design *European Design Awards*. In 2023, Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv were involved as lecturers in the course *Book Covers: An Intensive for Illustrators and Book Designers*, which was initiated by the school of creative and professional writing “Litosvita” [25].

Table 1Winners of the *Best Book Design* awards [24]

Year	Number of sent publications	Number of shortlisted publications	Grand Prix	The Grand Prix cover design
2016	86	10	<i>Men, Women, and Children</i> by Yulia Musakovska (“Old Lion Publishing House”; artistic implementation: Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv)	
2017	139	15	<i>Decommunized: Ukrainian Soviet Mosaics</i> (“Osnovy” publishing house; design: Dmytro Yarynych, photo: Yevhen Nikiforov)	
2018	152	15	<i>I See That</i> (“Old Lion Publishing House”; authors and design: Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv)	
2019	150	15	<i>Maria</i> (“REDZET” publishing house, artistic implementation: Ilya Zhekalov, Lesya Marushchak)	
2020	160	15	<i>Znak: Ukrainian Trademarks, 1960–1980</i> (“IST Publishing”; design, layout, photos by Ulyana Bychenkova, Nika Kudinova, Alyona Solomadina (U,N,A))	
2021	227	15	<i>On the Move</i> (“Old Lion Publishing House”; artistic implementation: Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv)	
2022	142	14	Not awarded	

5. Conclusions

Thus, the construction of a modern Ukrainian codex book does not differ significantly from that of an ancient book. The main content is concentrated on the pages of the book block, which is strengthened, protected and decorated by the binding (hardcover, paperback, dust jacket, partial dust jacket, slipcase), endpaper, endband and other elements. The heads, tails and fore-edges of Ukrainian books are mostly clean. Occasionally, in anniversary, gift, and bibliophile editions, the head or all edges of the book block may be gilded, silvered, painted, illustrated, or textual. Ergonomic and aesthetic tasks are fulfilled by the ribbon bookmark, which is also a rather rare element that has been increasingly introduced into the book design of fiction and popular science publications over the past decade. The use of new technologies, such as augmented reality and generative artificial intelligence, adds to the opportunities for designers and illustrators to create a modern visual image of Ukrainian book publications.

Ukrainian publishers prefer paperbacks. In 2003–2022, they covered an average of 64.33% of titles. However, in terms of circulation, hardcovers dominate, due to the high share of school textbooks in book publishing. Attractive and creative cover design enhances the consumer value of a publication, distinguishes it from thousands of others, helps in the competitive struggle, attracts the attention of buyers, and promotes the spread of the author's ideas and knowledge among readers.

Book cover is a significant communicative element of a printed publication. It allows not only to identify the publication, but also to reflect the type and species of the book with the help of verbal and visual components, to reveal the content, to indicate the intended purpose and reader's target group, to represent the strengths and thus to promote the book to the reader through bookstores and libraries.

The front and back faces of the cover are still the most eloquent and informative parts, especially when seen by a visitor to a bookstore, library, or exhibition. Modern covers, in addition to the original information, contain summaries, titles of the main chapters, biographical information about the authors, excerpts from published works, quotes from authoritative persons about the publication (blurbs), information about received literary and book awards, quantitative data on translations, reprints, copies sold, recommendation labels, hashtags, holograms, QR codes, information about other books in the series, appendices, etc. It is important for publishers to monitor how relevant both text and image on the cover is to the book's content, whether it misleads the reader, distorts historical truth, or spreads anti-Ukrainian narratives.

The study of the cover design of contemporary books allows us to identify the best publishing practices and promote their dissemination among industry representatives. The problems of visual book design should be discussed on professional platforms during professional stationary events or on specialised online resources. It is important that writers, artists, editors, publishers, lawyers (who are familiar with copyright), printers, bookmakers, librarians (who deal with the creation of books, their replication, distribution and use) join them. The views expressed would give impetus to improving the quality of publications. It is important that these issues are raised in the course of studying relevant topics in formal and non-formal professional education institutions, and are reflected in textbooks and applied manuals.

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