



I recently had a fascinating coffee chat with Federico Lang, founder of Global Book Crawl and a bookseller based in Málaga, Spain.

LiteraryWorld Interview | 5 min

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Global Book Crawl is dedicated to connecting and supporting booksellers around the world. Federico founded the organisation after recognising that independent bookstores, regardless of where they are located, often face many of the same challenges.

High rents, low profit margins, rising operating costs, competition from large online retailers, and changing customer habits are placing enormous pressure on independent bookstores. While every bookshop has its own character and community, many of the underlying difficulties are remarkably similar.

During our conversation, I shared the story of The English Bookshop in Amsterdam and my journey from running a physical bookstore to creating LiteraryWorld. Running The English Bookshop taught me how important bookstores are to their communities.

They are not simply places where people buy books. They are meeting places, cultural spaces, event venues, and places of discovery.

However, the traditional financial model often makes it difficult for independent bookstores to survive on book sales alone.

This experience helped shape my vision for LiteraryWorld and my ideas about the future of bookselling.

Creating the Boutique Bookstore of the Future

I believe there is an opportunity to develop a new boutique bookstore model that combines books with carefully selected products and experiences.



These additional products should complement the identity of the bookstore and sit naturally alongside the books. They might include beautiful stationery, reading accessories, literary gifts, locally made products, art, educational materials, or other items connected to the interests of the bookstore's community.

Many of these products can offer better profit margins than books. If selected thoughtfully, they can create valuable additional income without turning the bookstore into a general gift shop or weakening its literary character.

The aim is not to make books less important. It is to build a stronger financial foundation that allows booksellers to continue doing what they do best.

More Than One Source of Income

Bookstores could also create additional income through events, workshops, book clubs, memberships, partnerships, online communities, and collaborations with local organisations.

A bookstore might host writing workshops, children's activities, author talks, exhibitions, cultural evenings, or specialist reading groups. These experiences can bring people into the space, strengthen the community, and provide income beyond individual book sales.

The future of independent bookselling may depend on developing several complementary income streams rather than relying almost entirely on the margin earned from selling books.



Learning From Booksellers Around the World

One of the most valuable parts of my conversation with Federico was the recognition that booksellers do not need to solve these problems alone.

A bookseller in Málaga may be facing many of the same challenges as a bookseller in Amsterdam, Cape Town, London, or New York. By sharing experiences, successful ideas, and practical solutions, bookstores can learn from one another and become more resilient

This is also closely connected to the purpose of LiteraryWorld.

I want the platform to provide a space where booksellers can connect with writers, publishers, readers, libraries, educators, designers, and other literary professionals. These relationships can lead to new collaborations, events, products, partnerships, and business opportunities.

Independent bookstores have always adapted. The next step is to explore how they can remain culturally important while also becoming financially sustainable.

My conversation with Federico confirmed that this is not just a local challenge. It is an international conversation, and one that booksellers around the world should be having together.