

## **Key Library Priorities for e-Content**

1. *Availability:* Commercially available e-content should be available from all publishers for lending by libraries at their time of publication. Libraries need continuous access to content to build core collections and ensure customer needs are met.
2. *Fairness and Flexibility:* A range of pricing options and terms need to be available to libraries to allow them to develop collections of different size, range and focus. (Licensing models should not be subject to unreasonable premiums and price increases, time and use restrictions that prevent libraries of all sizes from establishing diverse collections.)
3. *Access, Preservation and Research:* Libraries must be able to maintain digital access within license terms and the ability to copy a digital text for historical preservation purposes and/or print disabled accessibility, if required, such as in the case of orphan works, and text mining for research purposes (academic libraries.)
4. *Resource Sharing:* Resource sharing through mechanisms such as interlibrary loan, consortiums, and reciprocal borrowing, need to be available for e-content. For instance, interlibrary loan of monographs could be established based on the principle that 'one copy remains one copy', meaning that users of the lending library would not have access to the work if it is on interlibrary loan.
5. *Transferability:* Libraries need the ability to transfer content to another platform within the terms of the existing license to ensure libraries are not bound to a particular platform.
6. *Protection of Privacy:* Libraries and their users must be able to make informed decisions about the control and use of personal information including reading choices. Libraries seek the option to minimize the transmission of personal information that can be linked to individual users.

**Last Updated:** February 3, 2015

**FAIR  
EBOOK  
PRICES**

**Suggested wording for Board resolution:**

[Name of Board] directs [name of library] to join *Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing* to advocate for fair pricing models for ebooks.

## **Campaign Key Messages and Q&A**

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### **Key Messages**

- *Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing* have formed a coalition to raise awareness of the high prices that multinational publishers charge public libraries for ebooks.
- Demand for ebooks continues to grow rapidly – in fact, digital content is the fastest growing area of borrowing for public libraries.
- But multinational publishers impose unreasonably high prices, creating a barrier for public libraries to offer universal access to this content. As a result, public libraries offer fewer ebook titles, fewer copies for readers to discover and there are often longer wait times for these materials.
- We want as many people as possible to visit [fairpricingforlibraries.org](http://fairpricingforlibraries.org) to learn about the issue, let us know what they think and spread the word on social media.

### **Q&A**

#### **Why are *Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing* conducting this campaign?**

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the high ebook prices that the “Big Five” multinational publishers (Hachette, HarperCollins, Macmillan, Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster) charge public libraries. Canadian public libraries face challenges in ensuring universal access to this content.

We want to let more people know about these issues so they can understand why there are fewer ebook titles, fewer copies for readers to discover and often longer wait times. We also want to collect information that can be shared with multinational publishers and other stakeholders as we work to achieve fair pricing. (See [fairpricingforlibraries.org](http://fairpricingforlibraries.org) for specific pricing examples).

#### **Who are the members of *Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing*?**

*Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing* is a coalition made up of the Canadian Library Association, Canadian Urban Libraries Council, Federation of Ontario Public Libraries, Nova Scotia Library Association, Ontario Library Association and Toronto Public Library to raise awareness of challenges faced by public libraries as a result of high ebook prices charged by multinational publishers.

## **FAIR EBOOK PRICES**

### **Why is ebook pricing an important issue for public libraries?**

The popularity of ebooks presents an exciting opportunity for libraries to connect with the public in new ways, but it also presents challenges.

In some cases, libraries pay three to five times more for ebooks than consumers (see [fairpricingforlibraries.org](http://fairpricingforlibraries.org) for specific pricing examples). There are caps and time limits on ebook use. This means there are fewer titles, fewer copies for readers to discover and often longer wait times. Major publishers have set pricing and terms that jeopardize libraries' ability to provide universal access to content in all its forms.

### **Do many people read ebooks?**

Digital content is the fastest growing area of borrowing for public libraries. Campaigns to raise awareness of the availability of digital content have resulted in significant increases in borrowing rates.

Public libraries have responded by reallocating budgets and opening conversations with publishers to resolve issues with supply and discoverability. Based on 2013 Canadian Urban Libraries data, e-book budgets for reporting libraries have increased an average of 425% since 2010. Digital content is consuming an ever increasing portion of most libraries' materials budgets; in 2010, Canadian Urban Libraries spent an average of 13% of their materials budget on digital content, and in 2013 it was 23%. Canadian Urban Libraries spent \$5,801,543 on e-books in 2013, and this number will have increased in 2014. We also have purchasing power – in 2014 alone, Toronto Public Library's budget for downloadable and streaming content was \$2.8 million.

### **Why are ebooks treated differently than print books?**

Print books are purchased as physical copies that the library owns. Rights holders typically license – rather than sell – access to digital resources. As licenses are contracts, libraries receive the rights articulated in the agreements including caps and time limits on ebook use.

### **Does this mean that the library doesn't actually own the ebook?**

Libraries purchase licenses for ebooks – we don't own them, which is another issue for long-term access.

### **What information is available at [fairpricingforlibraries.org](http://fairpricingforlibraries.org)?**

Issues facing public libraries are outlined on the web page. The page includes examples of the price gap between consumer and library prices, illustrated by a selection of popular titles. The page includes a poll, social media sharing with the hashtag #FairEbookPrices and email collection for those interested in updates on the issue.

## **FAIR EBOOK PRICES**

### **How do you want people to respond to this campaign?**

We want as many people as possible to visit [fairpricingforlibraries.org](http://fairpricingforlibraries.org) to learn about the issues public libraries face with respect to ebook pricing. We're asking people to spread the word on Facebook and Twitter with the hashtag #FairEbookPrices so we can track the conversation. Those interested in updates on this issue can submit their email address.

We will share the response to this campaign with stakeholders including other public libraries, government and publishers.

We also want people to keep borrowing ebooks and other digital content from public libraries. The booming popularity of this content is one of the strongest arguments for increased access.

### **Publishers are going through a tough time. Are the high prices justified?**

We recognize publishing in Canada and around the world is undergoing great change, but imposing unreasonably high prices for ebooks is not the answer.

Public libraries play an integral role in a vibrant book industry. We promote literacy and a love of reading that encourages people to acquire more content of all varieties, both borrowed and purchased.

### **What is the status of these multinational publishers selling to libraries?**

Refer to pages 8 and 9.

### **Has anything else been done to achieve fair pricing?**

Advocacy efforts for fair ebook pricing and access have been underway in Canada since 2010. There has been significant progress with much improved access to ebooks for public library customers. Many Canadian independent publishers make their content available as do the major publishers. However, multinational publishers continue to impose terms such as unreasonably high prices.

### **Who are the multinational publishers the campaign refers to?**

The "Big Five" publishers are Hachette, HarperCollins, Macmillan, Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster. Together these companies control roughly two-thirds of the North American consumer book publishing market.

## **FAIR EBOOK PRICES**

### **What about independent publishers?**

We do not face the same pricing issues with independent publishers. Many independent and Canadian publishers make their ebooks available at reasonable prices and with reasonable terms of use.

### **Do public libraries in Quebec face the same pricing issues?**

Public libraries in Quebec face the same pricing issues when it comes to the “Big Five” publishers. However, Quebec publishers make their ebooks available at reasonable prices, much as independent publishers do in the rest of Canada.

### **What about fair compensation for authors?**

We support fair compensation for authors and we are not suggesting we should be paying the consumer price. What we are saying is that unreasonably high ebook prices mean we are limited in what we can purchase for our readers. We have a mandate to provide universal access to a broad range of content regardless of the format.

### **What is the pricing model that would work for libraries?**

We are advocating for a hybrid of existing pricing models as one that would work far better because it introduces both fairness and flexibility into the model. This hybrid model offers libraries of all sizes the ability to make choices about maintaining copies in perpetuity at a higher price, and other copies of the same title at a lower price within a restricted timeframe. As an example, if 100 copies of an ebook are selected, a public library could choose to pay a premium price for 10 copies with ongoing and perpetual access. The remaining 90 copies could be purchased at a lower rate with those copies expiring in a year. This allows libraries to meet customer demand for copies when they are most popular and preserve access to the content in the longer term with fewer numbers of copies than were required up front.

As part of this model, we have advocated that the \$85 and \$100 pricing is too high as a premium price. Something in the \$40-\$60 range is more reasonable as a premium price. The lower price option could be higher than the consumer price, but not significantly as the content would expire in a year.

*Note: This model allows libraries to choose how to build their collections in both the long and short-term. For some titles, libraries may only want copies that expire in a year. The point is, libraries make this decision as part of the selection process and have these different options for the same title.*

## **FAIR EBOOK PRICES**

### **What will happen if prices don't come down?**

If prices don't come down, we'll have trouble fulfilling our mandate of access to information for all. We're not able to buy as many copies as required and can't maintain our ratio of ### [fill in the number based on the specific library] holds per copy for some publishers' eBooks because of high prices, meaning that customers will be waiting longer than they do for print.

# FAIR EBOOK PRICES

## Overview of Issues with Canadian Public Library Access to Ebooks by Publisher

Publisher	Terms	Prices	Notes
Random House Canada	One copy per use; no cap or time limit on use	\$85 for new hard covers  \$30-\$60 for paperbacks	OverDrive announces at the OLA Conference in February 2011 that Random House Canada and a number of independent publishers are making their content available.  In March 2012, Random House (U.S.) announces up to 300% price increase for e-books available to public libraries.
HarperCollins Canada	One copy per use; 26 use cap per copy	\$25 for new hard covers  \$4-\$16 for paperbacks	HarperCollins (U.S.) announces in March 2011 the introduction of a 26 use cap per copy.  In December 2012, HarperCollins Canada content is available on OverDrive.
Hachette Book Group	One copy per use; no cap or time limit on use	\$95-\$130 for new hardcovers  \$10-\$40 for paperbacks	In October 2012, Hachette announces 100-200% price increase for its backlist e-books available to public libraries.  Hachette makes over 5,000 current and backlist titles available to libraries in May 2013.



# FAIR EBOOK PRICES

## Overview of Issues with Canadian Public Library Access to Ebooks by Publisher (... cont'd.)

Publisher	Terms	Prices	Notes
Macmillan Group	One copy per use; 52 use cap per copy or 24 months, whichever comes first	\$60 for virtually all content – hard cover, paperbacks & eBook original shorts.  \$40 for some older content	Macmillan announces in January 2013 it is starting to make its backlist e-books available; in July, the entire catalogue is available.
Penguin Group	One copy per use; re-purchase copies after one year	\$23 for new hard covers  \$8-\$16 for paperbacks	In December 2013, U.S. content from Penguin is available; In July 2014, Penguin Canada is available.
Simon & Schuster	One copy per use; re-purchase copies after one year	\$24 for new hardcovers  \$4-\$16 for paperbacks	Available in November 2014.
Independent Canadian Publishers	One copy per use; no cap or time limit on use	\$16-\$25 for new hard covers  \$8-\$15 for paperbacks	These publishers have willingly worked with libraries to make content available and to find mutually beneficial solutions.

Fair Ebook Prices Campaign  
Sample Social Media Tweets and Posts

**Twitter – Sample Wording**

You can use these suggested posts below for the month and encourage engagement and conversation.

Tweets can be linked to website [www.fairpricingforlibraries.org](http://www.fairpricingforlibraries.org) – always use hashtag #FairEbookPrices. Use web banner image when character count permits.

- Fair ebook prices from multinational publishers are long overdue for libraries <http://www.fairpricingforlibraries.org> #FairEbookPrices
- Canadian public libraries join to demand #FairEbookPrices from major multinational publishers <http://www.fairpricingforlibraries.org>
- Major multinational publishers charge libraries 3–5 times more for ebooks than they do consumers <http://www.fairpricingforlibraries.org> #FairEbookPrices
- Caps and time limits on ebook use mean fewer titles and fewer copies for readers to discover <http://www.fairpricingforlibraries.org> #FairEbookPrices
- Libraries play integral role in a vibrant book industry – we introduce people to new authors <http://www.fairpricingforlibraries.org> #FairEbookPrices
- This issue is critical to the future of libraries and readers' access to information <http://www.fairpricingforlibraries.org> #FairEbookPrices
- Canadian public libraries are committed to raising awareness of this issue and finding a solution <http://www.fairpricingforlibraries.org> #FairEbookPrices

**Facebook – Sample Wording**

Canadian public libraries join to demand #FairEbookPrices from major multinational publishers. Visit [fairpricingforlibraries.org](http://www.fairpricingforlibraries.org) to learn more.

Link website <http://www.fairpricingforlibraries.org>. Use web banner image.