



Public Libraries encouraged as Penguin Random House shows leadership with ebook price reduction

Last week, major international publisher Penguin Random House announced reduced ebook prices for libraries. The new model will help public libraries achieve their goal of providing universal access to ebooks, which is a high priority given booming borrowing rates and high demand for this content. Canadian public libraries have been campaigning to have costly ebook prices for libraries reduced and licenses made more flexible so library collections can keep up with the increasing demand for digital materials.

"Penguin Random House is the first among the major multinational publishers to revise their ebook prices and licensing practices, so we want to acknowledge the leadership they have shown in taking this important step," said Sandra Singh, President of the Canadian Library Association (CLA). "We think this is a sign that the large multinational publishers are getting the message being sent by libraries and the public."

Under Penguin Random House's new terms of sale, public libraries will own ebook titles they purchase in perpetuity. Prices for best-selling ebooks will be reduced by more than 20 per cent. The pricing model also recognizes the impact of the low Canadian dollar on public libraries' ability to buy ebooks, eliminating the higher price cap formerly set for Canadian purchases. While this is a significant step in the right direction, there are other components in libraries' preferred pricing model that still need to be addressed, specifically the ability to choose to purchase copies of the same title in perpetuity at a premium price or on a shorter term basis at a lower price.

"Libraries of all sizes, from coast-to-coast, have identified high ebook prices and restrictive licenses as serious barriers to maintaining robust collections and being able to provide up-to-date and in-demand titles in all formats," added Singh. "Canadian independent publishers have already put sustainable models in place and are valued partners in providing information to the public. We are heartened by Penguin Random House's revisions to their book pricing for libraries and hope the remaining multinational publishers will follow suit."

CLA is a member of the Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing, a group that is raising awareness of the restrictive pricing models and high prices that multinational publishers charge libraries for ebooks.

The libraries will continue to advocate for a more reasonable and flexible pricing model with all five multinational publishers (Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins, Macmillan Publishers, Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster). Some multinational publishers charge libraries as much as three to five times more for ebooks than the consumer price, while others place caps and time limits on use. This means there are fewer titles and fewer copies for readers to discover.

-30-

About CLA:

The Canadian Library Association is Canada's largest national and broad-based library association, representing the interests of public, academic, school and special libraries, professional librarians and library



workers, and all those concerned about enhancing the quality of life of Canadians through information and literacy. For more information please visit: www.cla.ca.

Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing is a coalition made up of the Canadian Library Association, Canadian Urban Libraries Council, 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. For more information, visit www.fairpricingforlibraries.org or follow the conversation on Twitter and Facebook with #FairEbookPrices.

For more information, contact:

Valoree McKay, CAE

Executive Director, Canadian Library Association

Phone: 613-232-9625 | **Email:** info@cla.ca

Rob LeForte

Public Affairs

Phone: 613-233-8906 | **Email:** rob@impactcanada.com