

FAIR EBOOK PRICES

Long Overdue for Libraries

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News Release

Fair Ebook Prices are Long Overdue

Canadian Public Libraries Join Forces to Raise Awareness of Issue

June 15, 2015 - Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing have joined to raise awareness of high ebook prices charged by multinational publishers at fairpricingforlibraries.org. Despite booming borrowing rates and high demand for ebooks, public libraries face challenges in ensuring universal access to this content.

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.

“Demand for ebooks continues to grow – in fact, it’s our fastest growing area of circulation at Toronto Public Library with 3.5 million checkouts last year alone,” said Vickery Bowles, City Librarian at Toronto Public Library. “Ensuring universal access to information in all its forms is key to public libraries’ mandate. But we face serious challenges because of unreasonably high ebook prices. We want to let the public know so they can understand why we’re not able to provide as many copies as we’d like of certain ebooks, and also to gather information that we can share with multinational publishers and other stakeholders.”

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

Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing is a coalition formed by the Canadian Library Association, Canadian Urban Libraries Council, Ontario Library Association and Toronto Public Library. Coalition members have worked individually and in partnership on advocacy efforts since 2010.

“On behalf of public libraries across the country, we’re speaking out on this important issue in the hope it will lead to more access to ebook content for all Canadians,” said Pilar Martinez, Chair of the Canadian Library Association’s Ebook Task Force and Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Edmonton Public Library. “We applaud Toronto Public

Library and Ottawa Public Library for their leadership as we introduce more Canadians to this critical issue facing public libraries.”

Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing will continue to communicate its position to several government and publishing stakeholders, and to work collaboratively with other large public library systems across North America. The coalition will hold continued conversations with multinational publishers as part of an effort to establish fair and reasonable prices and obtain more ebooks.

Twitter Chat on #FairEbookPrices

Toronto Public Library City Librarian Vickery Bowles ([@vbowlestpl](https://twitter.com/vbowlestpl)) will be hosting a Twitter chat on Wednesday, June 17 from noon to 1 pm EST to answer questions about ebook pricing for public libraries. Everyone is invited to follow, join and contribute at #FairEbookPrices.

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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.

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