

# FAIR EBOOK PRICES

## Open Letter to Multinational Publishers

February 18, 2016

Martha Bucci, Executive Director, Hachette Book Group Canada

Michael Morrison, President and Publisher, HarperCollins Canada

John Sargent, CEO, Macmillan Publishers

Brad Martin, President & CEO, Random House Canada

Kevin Hanson, President and Publisher, Simon & Schuster Canada

Dear [Multinational Publisher]:

[Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing](#) is raising awareness of the restrictive pricing models and high prices that multinational publishers charge public libraries for ebooks.

Public libraries are key players in the publishing industry, both as major purchasers of books and ebooks, and promoters of reading and literacy. However, current ebook pricing models prevent us from offering universal access to this content.

In 2015, we launched a campaign to raise awareness of multinational publishers' ebook pricing practices among library customers, the general public, and government.

Thus far, the campaign has generated significant response on the issue in Canada, as well as the United States. Specific results include:

- More than 20,000 visits to the [campaign website](#), which is referenced frequently in media coverage and social media.
- 30+ media stories in Canada and the United States from prominent media including [CBC](#), the [Toronto Star](#), [American Libraries Magazine](#) and [TVO](#).
- A lively dialogue on social media, with the hashtag [#FairEbookPrices](#) shared thousands of times.
- Ebook pricing was added to the agenda for the meeting this past summer of Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers responsible for Culture.

- A draft resolution was circulated to hundreds of municipalities for a motion to be considered by municipal councils to support this issue.

We welcome Penguin Random House's [reduced ebook prices](#) for libraries. We hope other multinational publishers will follow this direction and arrive at more reasonable and flexible pricing for public libraries.

Specifically we are advocating for:

- A hybrid of existing pricing models that introduces fairness and flexibility. This model would offer libraries of all sizes the ability to choose to buy the number of copies and also the type of copies (perpetual or limited access) that meet their needs.
- A reasonable premium price for ebook copies with ongoing and perpetual access, as the \$85 and \$100+ pricing is not sustainable.
- A lower price option for ebook copies with limited access because of time or use restrictions. This pricing should be slightly higher than the consumer price.

We are very committed to finding a solution that will allow public libraries to fulfill our mandate of providing universal access to content in all its forms, and welcome the opportunity to have a productive discussion with you on this issue. Please let us know when you are available.

We look forward to your response.

Jefferson Gilbert  
Executive Director  
Canadian Urban Libraries Council

*This letter will be available on the campaign website, and will also be referenced in outreach activities. We will continue with media, social media, and government outreach until we arrive at a reasonable solution.*