



# IPA Country Report Publishing in Canada

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## Q1. How was 2013 for publishers in Canada? How is the market doing?

Print sales were down marginally in 2013 from 2012, but e-book sales held up fairly consistently. According to BookNet Canada's study *The Canadian Book Market 2013*, sales were fairly evenly split between juvenile (33.3% of sales), non-fiction (31.2%) and fiction (32.7%) in the trade market.

Two genres that saw significant growth in 2013 are juvenile non-fiction and biography /autobiography. Thrillers, biography and poetry also saw an upswing in popularity.

## Q2. What are the most common concerns raised by publishers?

A recent survey conducted by the Department of Canadian Heritage asked publishers (both French and English) to identify the three biggest challenges facing their firms. The top three responses were (1) Closure of bricks-and-mortar bookstores, (2) Reduced shelf space for books in stores, and (3) Costs of developing e-books.

Quebec's government has announced a 20% reduction in book publishers' refundable tax credits.

**Copyright reform.** Education was added to the Canadian Copyright Act as a fair dealing exception in 2012, which has significantly damaged the market for publishers as educational institutions have failed to renew collective licences and have adopted broad fair dealing policies.

## Q3. How are Canadians' book buying and reading habits changing?

We have lost many bricks-and-mortar bookstores over the past several years, which has changed the way that Canadians purchase books. Online book sales are growing (Amazon holds the bulk of this business), and readers are also more likely to purchase books from non-book retail outlets than they were in the past. Sales through grocery and drugstores, along with big box stores like Costco and WalMart, are becoming more important.

### Fast facts

Population: 35 million  
e-books = 17% of market  
4 in 5 people read regularly

Canadians remain big readers. A recent public opinion poll commissioned by the ACP and other industry organizations found that **4 in 5 Canadians read books regularly**, with fully 23% of leisure time reported to be spent reading books. The amount of digital reading is increasing, and almost half of Canadians report reading digitally. Tablets and e-readers are cited most frequently as being used to read e-books. We saw growth in the number of Canadians reading on mobile devices in 2013.

#### **Q4. How is the e-book market developing?**

The majority of Canadian publishers are now producing their books in digital format, and experimenting with new features and formats in their e-book production. As the number of people reading on mobile devices and tablets grows, publishers are recognizing the need to focus on creating responsive texts that render well on a variety of screens.

A study by BookNet Canada found that the Canadian digital market is holding relatively steady, with about **17% percent of total book sales in digital format.**

More than 13,000 French-Canadian digital books are now deposited in the **Entrepôt du livre numérique**, a digital books warehouse set up by the Association nationale des éditeurs de livres (ANEL) and technology firm De Marque which connects publishers with distributors, bookstores and libraries.

In 2013 ANEL created a management company, SOGANEL, which works with BIBLIOPRESTO.CA on formulating agreements for e-book sales and e-book lending to libraries.

Independent Canadian publishers face challenges in enhancing the discoverability of their books on online stores, and effectively using social media and other digital marketing tools. They are keen to experiment, though, and participate in new business models like serialization, subscription services and bundling. To date, the return on investment in digital publishing programs has been slow for most Canadian firms, but publishers continue to actively pursue this sales channel.

#### **Q5. To what extent is self publishing taking off? How do you see its future?**

Home-grown initiatives like Kobo Writing Life and Wattpad have really fuelled the digital self-publishing market in Canada. Both companies have championed self-published authors, and enabled them to make their writing available to an international audience. Wattpad in particular is viewed as a sort of testing ground for new authors, albeit primarily in the genres of science-fiction, fantasy and romance. Several authors have landed contracts with traditional publishers as a result of their popularity on the site.

Discoverability is a challenge for all publishers in the online realm. Self-published authors will have to be savvy self-promoters to be successful going it alone. It is becoming increasingly necessary for self-published authors to develop technological literacy as well, in order to manage their content and metadata files, as well as their social media channels.

The Writers' Union of Canada recently voted in favour of opening membership to professional, self-published authors. Writers' Union staff have observed a growing trend towards "hybrid authors" – those that both self-publish and publish with traditional houses.

#### **Q7. Which innovations/collaborations in Canadian publishing would you highlight ?**

- **BookNet Canada**, a non-profit organization that develops technology, standards, and education to serve the entire book industry. Stakeholders include both Canadian-owned and multinational publishers, booksellers, wholesalers, distributors, sales agents, and libraries.



- **49thShelf.com** is a project developed in partnership between the Association of Canadian Publishers and Canadian Publishers' Council, which seeks to increase the discoverability of Canadian-authored books online. The site now boasts more than 75,000 titles, and is regularly updated with editorial features, author interviews, and recommended reading lists. New tools for librarians and educators are being added to support the selection and acquisition of books for their library and school collections.

- Canadian publisher **House of Anansi Press** recently launched The Massey Lectures iPad app, featuring multimedia content featuring notable Canadian thinkers. The app combines written content from Anansi's publications of the lectures with audio and visual content from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's archives of the series.

- Vancouver-based publisher **Nonvella** raised capital through a Kickstarter campaign to publish works in the sub-50,000 word range, traditionally a difficult length to publish. Another start-up, **BitLit**, is enabling publishers to offer a print and e-book bundling service to their readers.

- **eBOUND Canada** works with 81 small- and medium-sized publishers to advance their digital engagement, digital asset management and distribution. The organization is also pursuing the sale of Canadian ebook collections to public and academic libraries.

- ANEL has launched a new fellowship program called **Rendezvous**, in which 10 foreign publishers will travel to Quebec each year. Publishers from nine countries were selected for the first programme, which will be held in Montreal in November.

#### Q8. What are the most exciting opportunities you see for publishing in Canada?

The international export market and rights sales remain an important revenue channel for both English- and French-language publishers. There is excitement around the opportunity provided by the online market to introduce readers in different territories to Canadian authors. Alice Munro's recent receipt of the Nobel Prize in Literature was a cause of great celebration across the country, and will serve as an introduction for international readers to the riches of Canadian literature.

As mentioned above, opportunities for e-book sales and loans to academic and public libraries across the country are being pursued through collectives like SOGANEL and eBOUND. The circulation of e-books at public libraries is rising steadily. Canadian publishers are actively looking for ways to develop the e-book sector the eBook and build digital's share of the market.

