

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Jan 17, 2018**

SPL joins Canadian Urban Libraries Council in calling on publishers to make more digital content available

Urban library systems across Canada, including Saskatoon Public Library (SPL), are calling on multinational publisher to make digital content more accessible and affordable.

The Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) has noted that while demand for eBooks and eAudiobooks has skyrocketed in recent years, many best-selling titles—including many prominent Indigenous and Canadian-authored works—are not available to Canadian public libraries. Even when they are available, the prices are often excessively high.

Libraries lend digital copies just like physical books—on a one-to-one basis. This is done through third-party service providers, such as cloudLibrary and Overdrive. However, libraries pay exponentially higher prices for digital titles than physical ones—prices of digital copies are often three to four times as high. And many popular titles are not made available in Canada at all.

Despite these barriers, digital content usage rates continue to increase amongst library patrons. At SPL alone, eBook downloads increased 14% over 2016 and 2017, and eAudiobook downloads increased a whopping 75%. Stats for 2018 have not yet been tabulated.

“While eBooks and eAudiobooks are becoming extremely popular, SPL questions why publishers are not making many popular titles available in these formats for Canadians,” explained Carol Cooley, SPL’s CEO and Director of Libraries. “While we have increased the funding allocated to the services offer these products in recent years, we are still noticing a major disconnect between availability and demand.”

SPL is joining CULC in asking Canadians to help resolve these issues by demanding stronger #eContentForLibraries of major multinational publishers, namely: Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins, Macmillan, Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster.

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