

## STATEMENT ON MACMILLAN PUBLISHERS U.S. LENDING MODEL CHANGE FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Canadian Urban Libraries Council / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CULC/CBUC) denounces the new library ebook lending model announced today by Macmillan Publishers. Under the new model, libraries will only be able to purchase a single digital copy of any new title when it is released for sale to the general public and will be forced to wait eight weeks before they are able to buy any additional copies.

In a recent letter to creators, Macmillan indicated that library lending was “cannibalizing sales” and that “45% of the ebook reads in the US are now being borrowed for free from libraries”. This claim is fundamentally untrue. Libraries purchase copies of licenses for their users to access at a premium, which is often three to four times the cost of a retail copy: these premium prices are ultimately being paid by Canadian library users, whose taxes fund libraries. These licenses can only be used by one user at a time, mirroring the lending of physical materials. Macmillan also noted that the growth in library ebook use is driven by “seamless delivery”. The delivery of ebooks to library users is far from seamless – restrictive lending models often mean that users must sit on waiting lists for several months. Moreover, CULC/CBUC calls on Macmillan to share data to support its claim that there has been “active marketing by various parties to turn purchasers into borrowers” and that library apps exist that allow for borrowing from libraries in different states and countries.

While libraries have advocated for a dual pricing model for many years, this new lending model is absolutely the wrong approach. The inability to access enough copies to satisfy demand for new titles will severely limit accessibility and impact the ability of libraries to provide timely content to Canadians. CULC/CBUC agrees with the American Library Association President Wanda Brown’s statement: “Macmillan Publishers’ new model for library ebook lending will make it difficult for libraries to fulfill our central mission: ensuring access to information for all. Limiting access to new titles for libraries means limiting access for patrons most dependent on libraries. When a library serving many thousands has only a single copy of a new title in ebook format, it’s the library – not the publisher – that feels the heat. It’s the local library that’s perceived as being unresponsive to community needs.”

Pilar Martinez, chair of CULC/CBUC, affirms: “Macmillan’s actions are directly contrary to the democratic role of public libraries. Access to digital content is imperative for all members of Canadian society, especially those who have low literacy or other restrictions that limit their ability to read materials in traditional formats. Restrictive access and pricing models also negatively impact those who cannot afford to purchase digital content.”

Recent research on the Canadian Book Buyer from BookNet proves that library users are more likely than non-library users to purchase books. Research from The Panorama Project demonstrates that library promotion has a significant positive impact on retail sales. For print books, which are protected by copyright law from library embargoes, libraries have a long history of serving as a place of discovery where readers can find new content and authors. Digital content should be no different.

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### ALA STATEMENT:

<http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2019/07/ala-denounces-new-macmillan-library-lending-model-urges-library-customers>