

# Book publishing industry, 2018

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In 2018, on the strength of some bestselling books, operating revenue in the Canadian book publishers industry grew to \$1.7 billion—an increase of 2.0% from 2016. Over the same period, operating expenses rose 3.6%, to \$1.5 billion, resulting in an operating profit margin of 7.6%.

Geographically, three provinces accounted for 97.2% of total operating revenue. These provinces—Ontario (67.2%), Quebec (25.4%) and British Columbia (4.6%)—all posted an increase in operating revenue from 2016 to 2018.

## Total sales increase, driven by exports and children's books

From 2016 to 2018, total sales rose 1.7%. This was attributable, in part, to growth in children and juvenile book sales, along with a 9.7% increase in export sales.

However, from 2016 to 2018, sales in Canada decreased by 0.7%, to \$1.1 billion—driven by a 10.4% decline in sales of educational titles. Despite this decline, educational titles remained the largest commercial category in book publishing—accounting for 49.1% of total sales in Canada in 2018. This was followed by trade books (all formats), such as fiction and non-fiction mass market books, and children and juvenile books.

In 2018, sales of French and other language titles increased by 15.7%, to \$255.4 million, while sales of English titles decreased by 1.6%, to \$1.1 billion.

## Consumer preference moves toward digital purchases

Consumers are buying more books online. From 2014 to 2018, online sales of print books rose 70.2%, reaching \$258.9 million, and e-book sales increased 14.8%, generating \$183.2 million. In 2018, just under one-third of all sales of books published in Canada occurred online, as e-books (13.7% of total sales) or as print books sold online (19.3% of total sales).

The increase in online book purchases since 2014 has contributed to declining sales of print books in brick-and-mortar establishments.

Despite the decline in sales, print books (not sold online) still represented the largest portion of book sales, accounting for over two-thirds of total sales in 2018, down from 76.9% of total sales in 2014.

### Note to readers

*Data for 2014 and 2016 have been revised.*

*Prior to reference year 2017, the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) classified book publishers that published only electronically or online under NAICS 519130 (Internet publishing and broadcasting and web search portals), and data for these publishers were not collected by this survey. However, with the introduction of NAICS 2017, version 2.0, and beginning with the release of data for reference year 2018, online-only book publishers are now classified under NAICS 511130 and are included in the survey estimates.*

*These and other data related to the arts, culture, heritage and sport sector can be found at the [Culture statistics portal](#).*



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**Available tables:** [21-10-0042-01](#), [21-10-0200-01](#) to [21-10-0202-01](#) , [21-10-0204-01](#) to [21-10-0208-01](#) , [21-10-0248-01](#) and [21-10-0256-01](#).

**Definitions, data sources and methods:** survey number [3105](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).