

Periodical publishing, 2021

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No trend reversal for the periodical publishers industry: Operating revenues decline further in 2021

Operating revenues in the Canadian periodical publishers industry continued to decline in 2021, falling by 16.4% from 2019 to reach \$982.8 million. This is the lowest level seen in this industry's operating revenues, which have shrunk by more than half since comparative data became available in 2013. Operating revenues for the industry remained concentrated in Ontario (58.4%) and Quebec (19.7%) in 2021.

Aside from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising costs of paper, many structural challenges have continued to weigh on the industry. These include the pressures to adapt to a digital environment and the strong competition for advertising dollars from alternative sources. In fact, the largest decline in revenues in 2021 was in advertising sales, which fell \$146.6 million from 2019. Likewise, circulation sales revenues continued to decrease, falling \$32.0 million from 2019.

Despite these challenges, some magazines in Canada have managed to adapt and find new ways to reach their audiences. Many have moved to digital formats, offering online subscriptions and digital editions of their print magazines. This has resulted in growth in digital advertising (+\$7.6 million) and circulation sales (+\$5.9 million) in 2021. Additionally, the share of digital-only titles rose by 1.6 percentage points from 2019 to reach 11.1% of all titles in 2021.

With ongoing changes to the industry, the channels of distribution have changed slightly since 2019. Controlled or requested circulation periodicals remained the largest contributor to the industry, up 2.0 percentage points to account for 40.9% of all periodicals in 2021. Likewise, paid subscription periodicals also increased in 2021 to 23.7% of total circulation.

Since 2017, there has been a decline in other free, complimentary or promotional copies, reflecting ongoing changes in the industry. This trend was further impacted by the pandemic, during which areas with high foot traffic, such as corner stores and malls, were affected by restrictions. The share of other free, complimentary or promotional copies among total circulation declined 4.7 percentage points in 2021 from 2019.

In 2021, operating expenses also declined, down \$199.9 million from 2019, resulting in a higher profit margin of 9.3%. Salaries, wages, commissions and benefits fell \$54.5 million over the same period.

Moving forward: Trends for the industry

As the industry continues to evolve, it will be important for periodical publishers to find new ways to connect with their readers and generate revenues to ensure their long-term viability. The future of the industry will depend on publishers' ability to adapt to changing consumer preferences and to find new and innovative ways to reach and engage their audience.

Note to readers

Data for 2019 have been revised.

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

The [Arts and Culture Data Viewer](#), a new interactive tool that allows users to easily break down economic and social data from Statistics Canada on arts and culture by geographic area and other dimensions is now available.



Available tables: [21-10-0053-01](#), [21-10-0054-01](#), [21-10-0070-01](#), [21-10-0071-01](#), [21-10-0216-01](#) and [21-10-0268-01](#) to [21-10-0270-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5091](#).

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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).