



## **Public Libraries Stand United for E-book Pricing Action**

*Leading organizations representing the vast majority of public libraries across the U.S. and Canada are calling for change in the models available for libraries to provide access to digital content*

In public library systems large and small, urban and rural, demand for access to digital content like e-books and e-audiobooks has exploded, becoming an indispensable part of the way our patrons learn, work, and interact.

Digital content allows patrons with disabilities, seniors, or people served by libraries too far away to easily visit to benefit from the public library like never before. However, this access is under a real threat because the terms under which libraries license this material are increasingly unsustainable.

### **The e-book licensing status quo is a crisis for public libraries and patrons across North America.**

While consumers pay \$13 in perpetuity for an e-book on average, libraries typically spend \$55 – or more – for one 2-year license. Many libraries are now spending 50% or more of their collections budgets – taxpayer funds – on disappearing, limited-access content, giving them less ability to support lesser-known authors and smaller publishers. Meanwhile, wait times for readers of all ages have exploded, as libraries spend more to get less in our digital collection. As a direct result, U.S. states and Canadian provinces are increasingly turning to consumer protection legislation as a response to this untenable situation.

We can and must do better for our readers, authors, libraries, and publishers to advance literacy, cultural enrichment, and lifelong learning for all.

**Our organizations, representing the vast majority of public libraries across the US and Canada, call on the Big Five publishers, as well as platform providers, to come to the table to work with libraries to identify and implement sustainable solutions, no matter the format.**

Mutually-beneficial solutions exist. These include the importance of usage-based e-book models that guarantee our communities actually have access to the materials their libraries have paid for, and the option for libraries to purchase perpetual-use models so we can ensure the preservation of knowledge remains a cornerstone of the public library.

Public libraries protect copyright and invest millions of dollars in curating collections that increase author discovery and promote titles and reading, and our book borrowers are book buyers. We're important partners for publishers, and have shared concerns including declining literacy rates and fighting threats to intellectual freedom.

It's time for a new dynamic, based in collaboration and mutual respect, that can build off those shared interests. It's time to finally address – rather than ignore – this crisis.

This helps everyone – libraries, authors, patrons, publishers – thrive.