



LIVRES CANADA BOOKS®

# Exporting Academic and Scholarly Books

A Guide for Canadian  
English-Language Publishers

## Exporting Academic and Scholarly Books: A Guide for Canadian English-Language Publishers

© Livres Canada Books, 2016  
All rights reserved.

ISBN 9781927784686

Published by Livres Canada Books, the national association of the Canadian book publishing industry for promoting export sales.

Prepared for Livres Canada Books by R. Peter Milroy of Chapel Green Communications. While every effort has been made to report information correctly, the publisher assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information supplied by the author, and disclaims any liability for loss or damage caused by errors or omissions. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author.

Livres Canada Books  
1 Nicholas Street, Suite 504  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 7B7  
CANADA

[www.livrescanadabooks.com](http://www.livrescanadabooks.com)

# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
Why Should Canadian Scholarly and Academic Publishers Export their Books? . . . . .	2
Objectives . . . . .	3
Terms of Reference . . . . .	3
<b>THE ELEMENTS OF EXPORT . . . . .</b>	<b>5</b>
Selecting Titles for Export . . . . .	5
Sales and Sales Channels . . . . .	7
Marketing . . . . .	7
Logistics and Distribution . . . . .	9
Sales Agents and Distributors . . . . .	10
Information Exchange . . . . .	13
Pricing and the Exchange Rate . . . . .	14
<b>THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT . . . . .</b>	<b>16</b>
Print Books, E-books, and Print-On-Demand . . . . .	17
<b>EXPORT MARKETS: WHO ARE THE BUYERS? . . . . .</b>	<b>21</b>
Academic Libraries . . . . .	21
University Course Markets . . . . .	28
Individual Scholars and Researchers . . . . .	30
Trade Consumers . . . . .	31
Marketing . . . . .	32
Building and Maintaining Relationships . . . . .	34
<b>EXPORT MARKETS: WHERE ARE THE BUYERS? . . . . .</b>	<b>36</b>
International Outlook . . . . .	36
United States . . . . .	37
United Kingdom . . . . .	41
Other European Countries . . . . .	44
East Asia and the Antipodes . . . . .	46
Canadian Studies . . . . .	51

<b>RIGHTS SALES</b> . . . . .	<b>52</b>
Territorial Rights . . . . .	52
Translation Rights . . . . .	53
Rights Agents . . . . .	54
Rights Agreements . . . . .	55
Conferences . . . . .	56
Book Fairs . . . . .	56
<b>CONCLUSION</b> . . . . .	<b>59</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: Distributors and Sales Representatives</b> . . . . .	<b>61</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: Rights Agents</b> . . . . .	<b>70</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: Publisher Consortia</b> . . . . .	<b>73</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: Library Vendors and Wholesalers</b> . . . . .	<b>75</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: E-book Aggregators</b> . . . . .	<b>78</b>
<b>APPENDIX F: Book Fairs</b> . . . . .	<b>79</b>
<b>APPENDIX G: Associations and Conferences</b> . . . . .	<b>85</b>
<b>APPENDIX H: Libraries</b> . . . . .	<b>88</b>
<b>ABOUT THE AUTHOR</b> . . . . .	<b>93</b>

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the preparation of this report, a number of Canadian academic and scholarly publishers were contacted and asked to complete a survey about their export activities and aspirations. A number of follow-up interviews were organized with the respondents.

These publishers generously provided information on their export activities and interests:

Linda Cameron, University of Alberta Press

David Carr, University of Manitoba Press

Leslie Dema, Broadview Press

Lynn Fisher, University of Toronto Press

Michael Harrison, UTP Higher Education

Renée Knapp, Between the Lines

Brian Scrivener, University of Calgary Press

Errol Sharpe, Fernwood Books

Lindsay Sharpe, Brunswick Books

Bruce Walsh, University of Regina Press

Philip Cercone of McGill-Queen's University Press, Melissa Pitts of UBC Press, and Lien De Nil of Livres Canada Books read this document in its developmental stage and offered very useful suggestions.

Royden Muranaka of East West Export Books generously took time to discuss the current state of scholarly book exports in Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

# Introduction

Canadians are exporters. Our economy was built on exporting staples, namely, fish, furs, and wood, and later minerals. Today we export a much wider variety of tangible and intangible products, including cultural products. In 2008, published works accounted for \$628.1 million—37% of Canada’s overall cultural goods exports (this is down from a peak of 46% in 1997).<sup>1</sup>

Canadian cultural workers and cultural products have become increasingly important to the national economy and to the representation of Canada to the rest of the world. The impact of our literary culture has been substantial, and Canadians are justly proud of the international recognition of names like McLuhan, Munro, Ondaatje, MacMillan, Atwood, and Gladwell, among others. For authors of that level of prominence, publication in other countries is a straightforward proposition and is usually arranged directly with foreign publishers by their agents. Canadian publishers play a vital domestic role in the success of these authors in the trade market, but rarely gain from their sales under foreign imprints, which are not calculated as Canadian book exports.

Books can be exported in several forms: as printed volumes, as digital book files that can be printed in the country of sale, and as electronic books. The ease and speed with which e-books can be sold and delivered across oceans and continents is potentially transformative, both culturally and financially. However, despite predictions about the demise of print books, a substantial majority of buyers and readers continue to favour print, and in the last year, e-book sales in many categories are flat or have fallen.<sup>2</sup> This lends support to the potential for printing in situ from digital files.

In 2012, export sales of Canadian books in all forms and genres accounted for 12.2% of operating revenue.<sup>3</sup> Although Statistics Canada gathers data on book exports,<sup>4</sup> it reports sales of all genres in one combined figure. Independent figures for books in the two genres that are our focus—academic and scholarly books—are obscured in Statistics Canada’s more detailed breakdown of domestic sales.<sup>5</sup> It provided data on only four categories. Academic books are included in Educational (which also covers textbook and instructional books from kindergarten to post-secondary). A category simply identified as “Other” includes the classifications of scholarly, reference, professional, and technical books.

---

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Conference for the Arts, *Useful Statistics*, March 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Millot, Jim. “Declining E-book Sales Hit Home,” *Publishers Weekly*, November 6, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 87F0004X Book Publishers 2012, Highlights, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 87F0004X Book Publishers 2012, Table 3, Detailed financial statistics for book publishers, Canada, 2010 and 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Statscan uses the categories Educational (which covers textbooks from kindergarten to post-secondary), Children’s, Trade (all formats, excluding children’s books), and Other (includes scholarly, reference, professional, and technical books).

It might surprise people in a country that places such high value on disseminating the work of authors with high profiles that Canada's energetic scholarly and academic presses, although small in number, include many of its most successful exporters. The four largest university presses and the two largest academic publishers obtain half or more of their revenue from US sales alone.

Of the 20 independent publishers listed in the directory of the Association of Canadian University Presses as academic and/or scholarly publishers, 12 are university presses. All three of the largest university presses report that exports account for about half of their sales revenue. Two academic presses (one a subsidiary of a university press) that focus on books for university course adoption also have export sales that are comparable to their domestic ones.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, however, several of the smaller presses say that exports account for so little revenue as to be immaterial.

## Why Should Canadian Scholarly and Academic Publishers Export their Books?

- *To expand the market and sales potential for their books:* Given the relatively small part of the world book market that the Canadian book publishing industry comprises, there is room for publishers to rethink the way they select books and take a more global view of the content of their lists. Canadian scholarship and innovation is impressive, and Canadian publishing can represent it well.
- *To help facilitate global dialogue and transmit important ideas:* The principal goal of scholarly publishing is not to make a profit, but to ensure that important ideas, research outcomes, and reflections on cultural values reach a wider audience and promote intellectual discussion and exchange. Exporting the work of Canadian scholars and researchers adds great value to Canada's reputation on the global stage.
- *To build the reputation of the publisher's imprint:* Reaching international audiences and disciplines in which Canadian scholarly and academic presses publish helps a press to define its leadership in specific disciplines and fields.
- *To diversify and build financial stability:* Developing markets in other countries helps diversify a publisher's financial base and, when currency exchange works favourably, can be especially financially rewarding.
- *To moderate the imbalance of trade in the academic market:* Canada is a net importer of books from other countries and its intellectual balance of trade is deeply in the red. Building the importance of Canadian scholarly and academic brands internationally can also help increase their market share in Canada.
- *To attract authors:* All authors want their books to be read, whether for acclaim or profit or both. Scholars want to know that their work will reach their colleagues around the world. Canadian scholars who work in fields that are not specifically focused on Canada often choose publishers from other countries because they believe that their

<sup>6</sup> This information was collected in a brief written survey (followed by a number of informal follow-up interviews) of senior staff at Canadian university presses and publishers of academic books, undertaken by the author in October 2015, called "Exporting Scholarly and Academic Books."

work will reach wider audiences and achieve greater esteem in Canada and abroad as a result.

- *To increase translation potential:* Books that reach audiences outside Canada are more likely to be identified for their translation potential. This has value for authors and publishers alike.
- *To develop business and professional relationships with other publishers and organizations:* Exporting brings Canadian publishers in contact with their counterparts in other countries, from whom they can learn and share common experiences, thereby making them better at their own work.

## Objectives

The purpose of this report is twofold: to provide some basic export tools to help publishers who have not exploited the foreign sales potential of their lists to develop export strategies; and to encourage experienced exporters to think about ways of enhancing their market reach. This purpose is achieved by exploring how publishers might evaluate the potential risk and reward of increased investment in exporting their books by examining their lists and the complexities of the markets where they would be most likely to find success.

In order to achieve this, this report will follow four objectives:

- To introduce the basic concepts of exporting books to academic markets and an overview of the export process for publishers with limited experience working in this area and that are seeking some ways of finding a place for export into their business plan.
- To provide methods for publishers to assess which markets are appropriate for their titles and their available resources and to determine what is needed to extend or strengthen their export activities.
- To present perspectives on the complex strategic issues arising from a rapidly changing environment with which Canadian publishers must grapple.
- To provide some simple tools: contact information for major customers, suppliers, and events, and guidelines for rights agreements.

We will focus primarily on books in the humanities and social sciences as a reflection of the realities of academic and scholarly publishing by independent Canadian presses.

## Terms of Reference

*Academic books* are defined as instructional works—textbooks and other books designed primarily for use in post-secondary education. With a few exceptions, the intent is to make a profit from publishing and selling them. Although the purchaser is usually a student, the primary marketing target is the instructor who is the decision maker and adopts the works to be studied in her or his course.

*Scholarly books* are products of original high-level research. For the most part, they are specialized works with small distinct audiences—usually other researchers and graduate



students. Most scholarly books published in Canada are the products of university presses. They are peer reviewed to ensure their originality and intellectual integrity and also approved by committees of scholars appointed by the university that owns the press. These books are almost always subsidized—as individual titles whose funding comes from granting agencies or sponsoring institutions, and as part of a publisher’s overall publishing program that is supported by the universities that own them as well as by national and provincial funding. Unlike textbooks, university press monographs and collections are published to add to the scholarly record, rather than to make a profit (although financial sustainability is always an important consideration.) The main sales targets are academic libraries, scholars who specialize in the book’s subject area, and graduate level courses.