



Nunavut Library Association
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June 29, 2015

Honourable George Kuksuk
Minister of Culture and Heritage
Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Iqaluit NU X0A 0H0

Dear Minister Kuksuk;

The Nunavut Library Association is writing to express its concerns regarding the e-book market in Canada and its implications for library services in Nunavut.

Over the past decade digital information has become a major part of the publishing industry. E-books have become a significant part of our daily lives. People purchase e-books to read on their mobile devices, both for personal reading and to support their professional work. Canadian libraries have embraced this publishing trend by making e-books accessible to their patrons.

However, libraries are facing a significant challenge to their key mandate of providing universal access to information because of unreasonably high e-book prices. Publishers have implemented a policy of differential pricing for their sales to libraries. As a result, a book which would be *sold* to you in an electronic format for \$15.99 is *licensed* to a library for \$85. Using this licence publishers can impose a limit on the number of times an e-book can be loaned to borrowers; by software “wrapping” the e-book file the publisher forces the library to purchase the license again after an arbitrary numbers of check-outs.

The major publishers have adopted an interpretation of intellectual property law which classifies e-books and other electronic resources as “software” rather than as an object. Software can be licensed to a buyer rather than sold and this has effectively given publishers control of their product through Digital Rights Management (DRM). Libraries cannot own the content of their digital collections or set their own use policies. Using DRM publishers also have unprecedented control over our libraries’ financial capacity to provide access to e-book information published for professionals, academics, students and the general public.

In Nunavut, free, universal access to e-books through our libraries will be a key to improving the literacy levels of our young people and making educational e-resources available. Finding a new business model that works for libraries and publishers will require intervention from our governments working with the library community. The Canadian Library Association (CLA), in



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association with the Toronto Public Library (TPL) has recently launched their “CLA/TPL Fair E-book Prices Campaign” and asked library associations and governments to join them in addressing this problem.

The Nunavut Library Association urges the Government of Nunavut to work in cooperation with its federal, provincial and territorial partners to limit the ability of publishers to apply DRM technologies to their publications and to reduce the costs of e-books for our libraries.

Yours truly,

Yvonne Earle
President, Nunavut Library Association

cc. Premier Peter Tuptana
Hon Paul Quassa, Minister of Education