

Putting education in context

A case study on the importance of educational publishers in producing a diverse range of learning resources that help students understand the world they live in.



CANADA - Country Profile

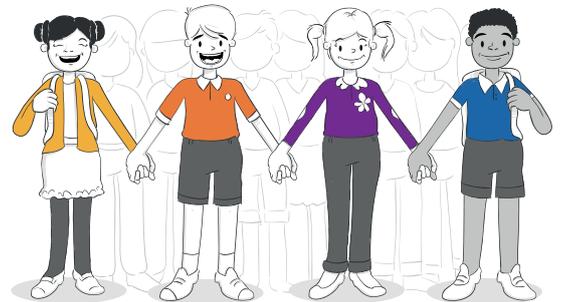
Population: 35,881,659 (2018)

Languages: English, French (both official)

Education expenditures: 5.3% of GDP (2011)

Literacy: 99%

GDP Per Capita: 48,400 USD (2017)



Imagine you are a child and you are asked to calculate the distance between Chicago and Los Angeles. It would be easier if you knew where the cities were located and far more relevant if you were living in the United States. Studies have shown that people learn best when they participate in classroom activities that are based in an authentic context, typically using real life examples¹. It has the added benefit of helping students understand and appreciate their unique cultural heritage. However, in today's Canadian classrooms, this is exactly the type of US example you might have to use. Why?

CHALLENGES OF FAIR DEALING

- Less incentive to produce new localized learning materials
- Reduced diversity and innovation when publishers leave the market
- Leaves teachers with less time for teaching and the added burden of preparing their own materials

To provide a range of high quality, localized resources for students, you need a vibrant publishing marketplace. In 2012, Canada passed a Copyright Modernization Act which allowed for a broad exception for copying of education materials. The unintentional outcome of this act has been to damage what was once a thriving marketplace of Canadian educational publishers and resulted in several publishers leaving the K-12 market. This leaves Canadian teachers with

the added burden of finding, evaluating and vetting their own materials, often imported from the United States and reducing the diversity and choice of available educational resources.

The need to fix our marketplace

“While it might seem like a good idea to save some money, teachers will get to the point where it’s really hard to find high-quality Canadian resources that are tied to the curriculum. At that point, you won’t be able to ask publishers, because they have already left the market”.

Glenn Rollans, President of the Association of Canadian Publishers

THE SITUATION

Canada has a rich cultural and linguistic heritage which varies between each region and its learning resources utilized in schools, have traditionally been written, edited and produced by Canadians. The educational market has always been a highly regulated single market, where the products and learning resources are only marketable to schools and teachers based on set curricula. In Canada, the Copyright Modernization Act has simply added to this challenging environment and left many Canadian publishers without the ability to make a return on investment. The result has seen publishing companies Oxford University Press and Emond Publishing leave the market and many international educational publishers such as Pearson, close their Canadian operations.

RESULTS



Hidden educational costs

Educational exceptions may reduce school spend on educational resources but the additional costs in terms of teacher’s time and efforts to source their own materials lies largely hidden.



No incentive to produce high-quality localized materials

There is little incentive for Canadian authors to create and for educational publishers invest in producing materials as reported sales for educational publishers have gone down 47% since 2012.



Created a culture of distrust

While content delivery used to be a collaborative approach involving publishers, schools and educational boards, it is now a closed process. By excluding publishers from the curriculum setting, they are less invested and staffed to respond to changes and new challenges such as the impact of digital or artificial intelligence.

CONCLUSION

In hostile marketplaces, there is less incentive to commission new local content, to invest in innovation and to provide the quality checks and assurances that produces good learning resources. These factors leave little choice for publishers to leave the market and with fewer competitors the diversity of choice and localization of content suffers.