

Tapping into Ebooks: Ebook use in Canada 2022



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Introduction

Ebooks are an integral part of the Canadian book market. Nearly 20% of all books purchased by Canadians in 2022 were ebooks, according to the [Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022](#). At the same time, almost 70% of Canadians reported reading an ebook in 2022 in the [Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2022](#). BookNet Canada has been tracking the impact of ebooks since our 2008 report *Click to Continue*, which modeled the future impact of ebooks on consumer spending, to our last survey of Canadian ebook users in 2018.

Tapping into Ebooks: Ebook Use in Canada 2022 continues to benchmark ebook use in Canada, revealing the buying, borrowing, and reading habits of Canadian ebook consumers. This study also tracks the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ebook use, by comparing data from 2022 with past years.

Methodology

This study incorporates data from our annual publications the [Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022](#) and [Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2022](#). This study relies on both published and unreleased data from these consumer surveys.

The *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022* includes results from quarterly surveys of Canadian book consumers about their book acquisition behaviour during April, June, September, and December 2022. The 2022 edition of this study contains data from 10,840 Canadians, 2,004 of whom were considered book buyers and 2,174 of whom were considered book borrowers.

For the purposes of this study, 728 Canadians surveyed for the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022* were considered ebook buyers and 580 Canada were considered ebook borrowers, having bought or borrowed an ebook from the library in 2022.

The *Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2022* presents data from a survey of Canadians fielded in January 2023. The survey queried Canadians about how they spent their leisure time in 2022, with a focus on reading. The 2022 edition of this

study contains data from 1,290 Canadians, 1,001 of whom were considered readers.

For the purposes of this study, 669 Canadians surveyed for the *Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2022* were identified as ebook readers, having read at least one ebook in 2022.

For both the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022* and *Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2022*:

- The survey was fielded online through an external provider, to their consumer panel of nearly two million Canadians. The survey was limited to those with internet access who were able and wanted to participate in our panel in exchange for non-monetary incentives as offered by our survey partner (e.g., loyalty reward “point” programs).
- Respondents were English-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older, located throughout Canada, and representative of the Canadian population based on age, gender, and geographical region. Selective sampling was based on demographic results from Statistics Canada.
- There is a margin of error of ± 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, meaning that statistics for this group could fluctuate about 3% in either direction if the survey was fielded to the entire Canadian population.
- The data is unweighted.

This study was prepared by BookNet Canada staff.

Highlights

- 36% of Canadian book buyers purchased ebooks in 2022, at an average price of \$12.62 per ebook.
- Overall, 17% of all book purchases were ebooks in 2022.
- 27% of Canadian book borrowers borrowed ebooks in 2022, with the number of Canadian ebook checkouts increasing 32% from 2019 to 2022 according to OverDrive.
- 16% of all Canadian readers preferred ebooks in 2022 and almost half of ebook readers agreed or sometimes agreed that they would not read a book in another format, if an ebook was not available.
- Most Canadian ebook readers read ebooks on either a smartphone (34%) or tablet (32%) in 2022.
- Canadian ebook readers use a variety of ebook features while reading, including night display (72%), table of contents (72%), and zoom (71%).
- Canadian ebook consumers buy, borrow, and read diversely.

Ebooks in Canada

Canadians are reading ebooks. Almost 70% of all Canadian readers surveyed for the [Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2022](#) read ebooks in 2022 and according to the [Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022](#), 36% of all Canadian book buyers bought ebooks and 27% of all Canadian book borrowers borrowed ebooks last year.

Canadian ebook consumers of all types in 2022 share a similar demographic profile to all Canadian book consumers, with some exceptions:

- Canadian ebook **buyers** are more likely to identify as a woman (60%); live in an urban area (50%); and be retired (24%);
- Canadian ebook **borrowers** are more likely to identify as a woman (64%), live in an urban (53%) or suburban area (39%); and have a graduate degree or professional diploma (24%); and
- Canadian ebook **readers** are more likely to identify as a man (52%); live in an urban area (52%); and be providing care for someone, such as a parent or child (64%).

Full demographics for Canadian ebook buyers, borrowers, and readers, along with the demographics of all Canadians, are available in appendices A, B, and C.

The following study is divided into three sections:

- ebook buying, which delves into the behaviours of ebook buyers as reported in the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022*;
- ebook borrowing, which explores the behaviours of ebook borrowers as reported in the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022*; and
- ebook reading, which analyzes the behaviours of ebook readers, regardless of ebook acquisition method, as reported in the *Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2022*.

Ebook buying

In the [Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022](#), 36% of Canadian book buyers bought ebooks. Though the majority of the purchases for these ebook buyers were ebooks, they made up 61% of all their book purchases, 26% of their purchases were print books and 14% were audiobooks. This is distinctly different compared to all book purchases reported by the Canadian book consumer survey in 2022, where only 17% were ebooks, while 73% were print books and 6% were audiobooks.

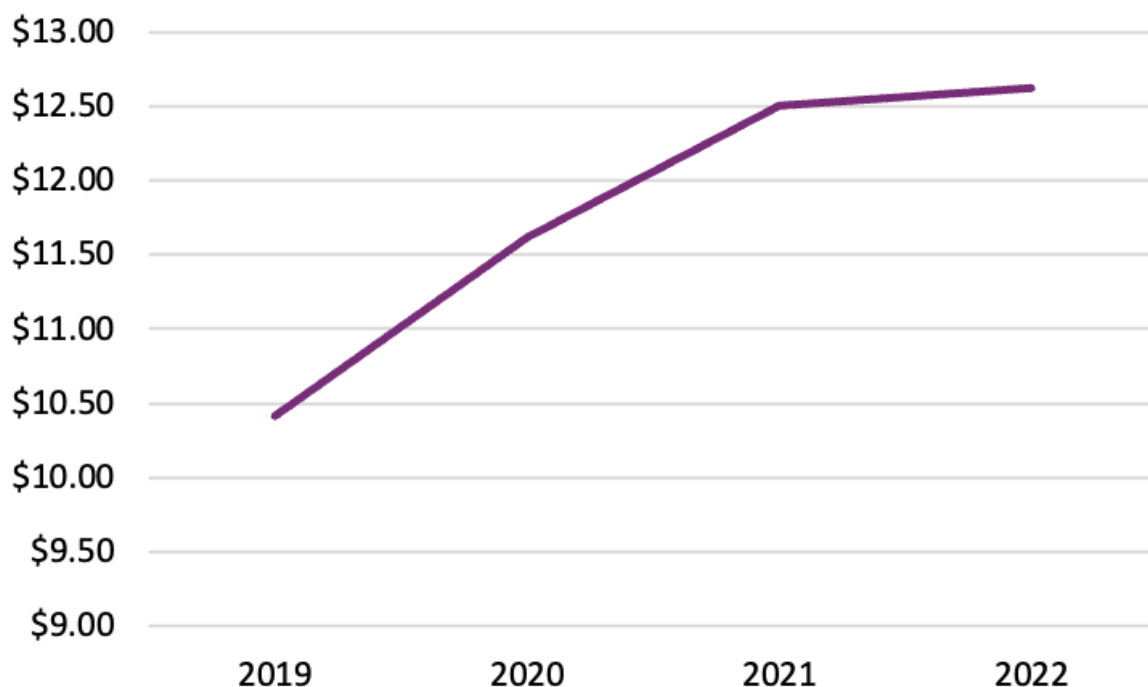
Looking year over year, ebook purchasing has remained steady for Canadian book consumers at 17% of all book purchases — 17% in 2019, up to 19% in 2020 and 20% in 2021, and returning to 17% in 2022.

Ebook pricing

Most ebook buyers spent between \$1 and \$49 on ebooks in a given month in 2022 (61%). Other ebook buyers spent \$50 to \$99 on ebooks a month (18%), \$100 or more (11%), or \$0 (9%). This is similar to all Canadian book buyers in 2022, most also spent \$1 to \$49 on books in a given month (64%), while others spent \$50 to \$99 (18%), \$100 or more (13%), or \$0 (5%).

Over the entire year, Canadian ebook buyers said they spent an average of \$12.62 per ebook. This number has been increasing steadily over the last number of years, up 21% from an average of \$10.41 in 2019. Yet, the amount spent per ebook has increased more than any other format — hardcovers increased 9% from 2019 to 2022, paperbacks increased 4% from 2019 to 2022, and audiobooks decreased 9% according to the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022*.

Ebook prices paid by Canadian ebook buyers, 2019–2022



Many Canadian ebook buyers paid full price for ebooks in 2022 (45%) — more than in previous years, but still less than the 55% of all book buyers who paid full price for their books in 2022. Ebook buyers also took part in ebook-related loyalty programs, such as:

- Amazon Prime — 36% of ebook buyers vs. 39% of all buyers; or
- Kobo Super Points — 12% of ebook buyers vs. 5% of all buyers.

Ebook discounting models used by Canadian ebook buyers, 2019–2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Paid full price	44%	42%	41%	45%
Book was discounted/in a sale/had money off	34%	37%	37%	32%
Other special price/offer	5%	4%	8%	8%
Bought as part of subscription	10%	8%	7%	7%
Used a coupon/money-off voucher from the shop	6%	6%	6%	6%
Bought as part of multi-buy deal (e.g., 3 for 2; 2 for \$20; Buy 1 get second half price)	1%	3%	2%	2%

Overall, more than half of Canadian ebook buyers reported that they received excellent value for money from their ebook purchase (52%), with 34% reporting good value, 13% reporting fair value, and 2% reporting poor value. In contrast, only 46% of all Canadian book buyers reported receiving excellent value for the books they purchased, across all formats.

Ebook purchasing behaviours

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of Canadian ebook buyers in 2022 purchased ebooks online at 96%. These purchases occurred either at an online retailer (46%), through a mobile app (30%), or as a digital download (19%). Mobile app purchases increased significantly in 2022, up from 19% in 2019.

Ebook purchasing channels for Canadian ebook buyers, 2019–2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Online	48%	44%	57%	46%
Mobile app	19%	21%	19%	30%
Digital download site	26%	28%	21%	19%
Chain bookstores	3%	2%	1%	2%
Indie bookstores	1%	2%	1%	1%
Book club	2%	1%	1%	1%
General retailers	0%	1%	0%	0%
Discount stores	1%	0%	0%	0%

The most popular reasons why Canadian ebook buyers purchased their books at a specific location in 2022 were:

- good price/offer/promo — 22%;
- convenient place to shop — 18%;
- easy checkout process to buy books — 17%;
- book(s) in stock/available immediately — 17%; and
- good selection of books — 15%.

In 2022, Canadian ebook buyers increasingly became aware of the ebooks they purchased by reading another book by the same author (26%), browsing or searching online or in person (23%), recommendations or reviews (19%), and social media (13%).

Ebook awareness for Canadian ebook buyers, 2019–2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Read other books by author/illustrator	23%	28%	25%	26%
Browsing or searching online or in person	19%	18%	18%	23%
Recommendation/review	11%	18%	19%	19%
Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.)	7%	10%	12%	13%

Ebook buyers and all Canadian book buyers found the ebooks they purchased online in 2022 in much the same ways:

- Searching for a specific book — 32% of ebooks buyers vs. 41% of all book buyers
- Browsing by genre/subject — 18% of ebook buyers vs. 16% of all book buyers
- Browsing by author — 11% of ebook buyers vs. 10% of all book buyers
- Sales/offers/daily deals section — 10% of all ebook buyers vs. 6% of all book buyers
- Searching for another book — 7% of ebook buyers vs. 9% of all book buyers

Much like past years, most ebook buyers made the decision to buy the ebooks they purchased based on their interest in the ebook’s subject (29%). Other purchasing reasons can be found in the table below.

Purchase decision-making factors for Canadian ebook buyers, 2019–2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Like/interested in subject	27%	25%	30%	29%
Like the series	20%	21%	18%	21%
Low price/on special offer	21%	22%	24%	21%
Description of the book	28%	20%	24%	20%
Recommendation/review	10%	15%	16%	17%

Most ebook purchases in 2022 were planned.

- 37% planned ahead to buy a particular ebook at a specific time.
- 23% planned to buy a particular ebook, but not necessarily at a specific time.
- 19% planned to buy an ebook at that specific time, but had not planned to buy a particular ebook.
- 18% did not plan to buy an ebook at a specific time and made an impulse purchase.

More than all Canadian book buyers, ebooks buyers bought, rather than borrowed, ebooks. Their reasons for doing so were:

- to be able to reread it whenever they want, as much as they want — 17% of ebook buyers vs. 15% of all buyers;
- to have it right away — 17% of ebook buyers vs. 14% of all buyers; and
- because it was cheap — 13% of ebooks buyers vs. 10% of all buyers.

Only 1% of ebook buyers bought a book for someone else, compared to 8% of all Canadian book buyers in 2022.

As book consumers, ebook buyers were more likely than all Canadian book buyers in 2022 to agree or sometimes agree with the statements:

- Having books in accessible formats (e.g., braille, large print) matters to me — 70% of ebook buyers vs. 67% of all buyers.
- I see marketing campaigns/ads for the types of books I'm interested in — 66% of ebook buyers vs. 62% of all buyers.
- I pre-order books/buy books pre-sale — 54% of ebook buyers vs. 52% of all buyers.

Interestingly, ebook buyers were less likely than all Canadian book buyers to agree or sometimes agree with the following statements:

- I prefer to pay for a bundle of content more so than buying one single item — 66% of ebook buyers vs. 72% of all buyers.
- The environmental impact of the book industry matters to me — 65% of ebook buyers vs. 68% of all buyers.
- I finish reading a book before I buy or borrow a new one to start — 62% of ebook buyers vs. 64% of all buyers.
- I add books to my online cart to get free shipping — 60% of ebook buyers vs. 65% of all buyers.
- I prefer books that have been published in the last year or so (new releases) over older books — 57% of ebook buyers vs. 61% of all buyers.

Behaviours and attitudes of Canadian ebook buyers, 2019–2022

	Yes	Sometimes	No	Yes and sometimes
Having books in accessible formats (e.g., braille, large print) matters to me.	37%	33%	30%	70%
I prefer to pay for a bundle of content more so than buying one single item.	33%	33%	34%	66%
I see marketing campaigns/ads for the types of books I'm interested in.	20%	46%	34%	66%
The environmental impact of the book industry matters to me.	33%	32%	35%	65%
I finish reading a book before I buy or borrow a new one to start.	15%	47%	38%	62%
I add books to my online cart to get free shipping.	27%	33%	40%	60%
I prefer books that have been published in the last year or so (new releases) over older books.	19%	38%	43%	57%
I pre-order books/buy books pre-sale.	17%	37%	46%	54%

Ebook subjects

In 2022, most ebooks purchased by Canadian ebook buyers were Adult books, at 88%. Of the rest, 10% were Young Adult books and 2% were Children's books. The majority of these books were Fiction titles (70%), with the rest being Non-Fiction (30%).

The most popular Fiction subjects for ebook buyers in 2022 were:

- Romance — 22% of ebook purchases vs. 12% of all book purchases;
- Mystery and Detective — 17% of ebook purchases vs. 14% of all purchases;
and
- Suspense and Thriller — 16% of ebook purchases vs. 14% of all purchases.

Meanwhile, the most popular Non-Fiction subjects were:

- Self-Help — 20% of ebook purchases vs. 17% of all purchases;
- Biography and Memoir — 17% of ebook purchases vs. 22% of all purchases;
and
- Business — 12% of ebook purchases vs. 6% of all purchases.

Apart from subject categories, Canadian ebook buyers read broadly in 2022 and searched for:

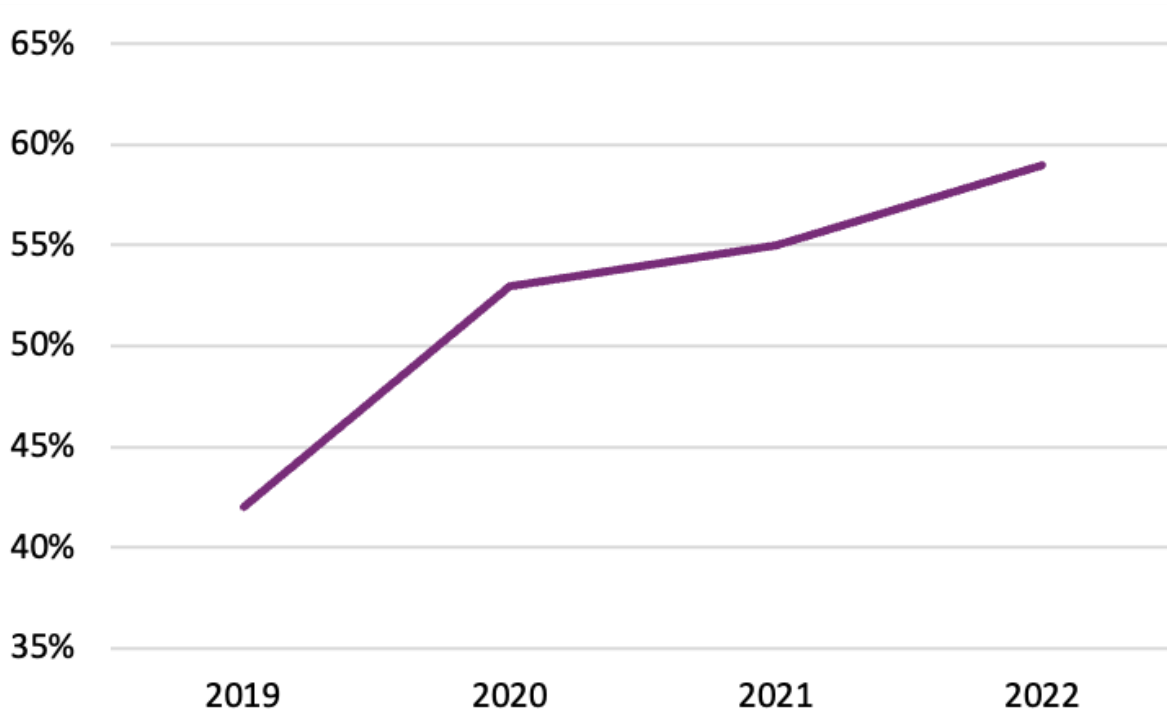
- Books by Canadian authors/illustrators — 34%
- Books about Canada or regions within Canada — 25%
- Books about a group or culture written by people from that group or culture — 23%
- Books by Indigenous authors/illustrators — 13%
- Books about Indigenous peoples — 12%
- Books that are partly or fully written in another language — 8%

Ebook borrowing

The [Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022](#) reported that 27% of all Canadian book borrowers borrowed ebooks in 2022. Over half of all books borrowed from the library by ebook borrowers in 2022 were ebooks (59%) — the other 30% were print books and 11% were audiobooks. This percentage of ebook borrowing has been increasing over the last number of years, up from 42% in 2019. At the library

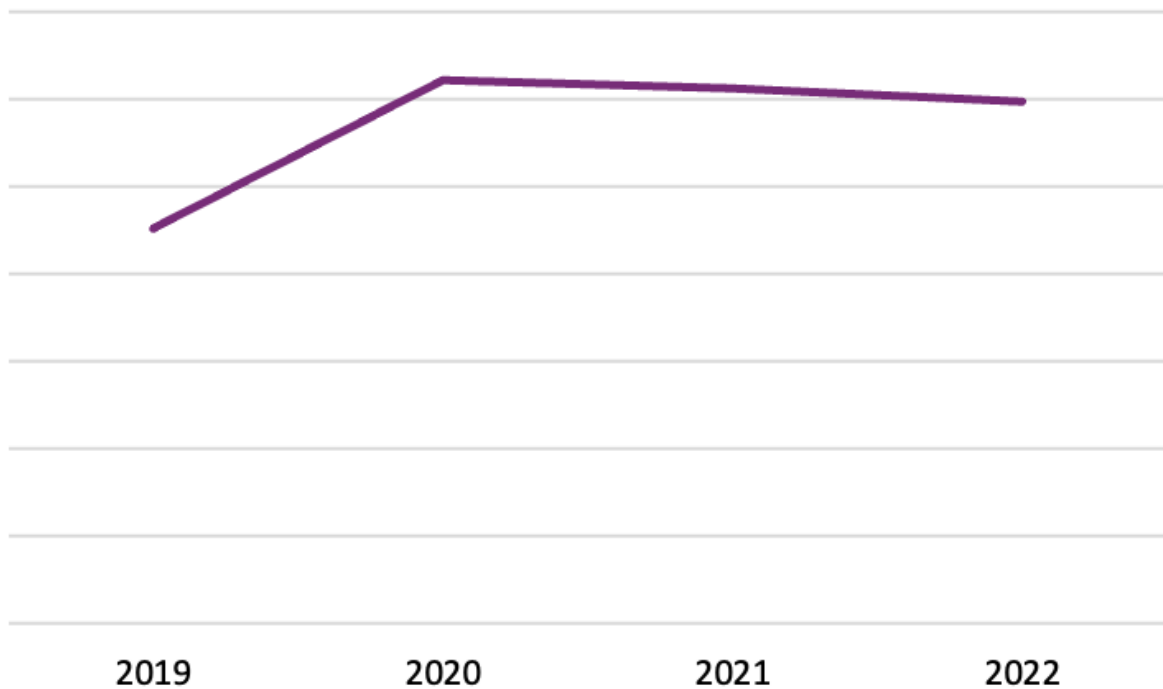
overall, only 21% of books borrowed by Canadian book borrowers were ebooks, while 71% were print books and 8% were audiobooks.

Ebook borrowing by Canadian ebook borrowers, 2019-2022



This increase mirrors increases reported by [OverDrive](#), the world's leading digital reading platform for libraries and schools. Data provided by OverDrive shows an overall increase of 32% in the number of digital library checkouts from 2019 to 2022.

OverDrive ebook library checkouts by Canadians, 2019–2022



Ebook borrowing behaviours

Canadian ebook borrowers visited the library both online and in-person in 2022 for a variety of reasons, including:

- to pick up hold(s) — 38%;
- to browse for books to borrow — 26%; and
- to discover a new book, author, and/or illustrator — 23%.

Library visit behaviours (in-person and online) by Canadian ebook borrowers, 2019–2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
To pick up hold(s)	59%	25%	32%	38%
To browse displays and shelves for books to borrow	50%	18%	17%	26%
To discover a new book, author, and/or illustrator	N/A	N/A	N/A	23%
To put books/materials on hold	33%	16%	21%	22%
To read magazines/newspapers	17%	12%	11%	12%
To study/work/research	12%	13%	12%	10%
To use the computers/internet	15%	12%	10%	10%

The dramatic changes seen in these top two categories from 2019 to 2022 is directly related to Canadian book borrowers’ ability to access the library during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. In-person library-related behaviours, and browsing especially, have notably increased for all Canadian book borrowers in 2022, a trend we have discussed in more depth [on our blog](#) and in the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022*.

Just like all Canadian library book borrowers, most ebook borrowers only borrowed books from the library in 2022 (74%). Yet some ebook borrowers did borrow other things, mostly DVDs (9%) and magazines (7%).

Yet, ebook borrowers were almost as likely as all book borrowers to borrow books for themselves and other people in 2022:

- 63% of ebook borrowers borrowed generally for themselves, compared to 64% of all borrowers.
- 20% of ebook borrowers borrowed generally for another adult, compared to 20% of all borrowers.
- 4% of ebook borrowers borrowed generally for a young adult, compared to 4% of all borrowers.
- 12% of ebook borrowers borrowed generally for a child, compared to 12% of all borrowers.

The most popular ways Canadian ebook borrowers became aware of the books they borrowed in 2022 were:

- browsing genre/subject area — 40%;
- browsing books by author/illustrator — 36%;
- having searched specifically for this book — 35%;
- having read other books by the author/illustrator — 31%; and
- getting a recommendation or reading a review — 23%.

Ebook borrowers, like all Canadian book borrowers, were most likely to take these actions in 2022 when deciding whether or not to borrow a book:

- Read the book description — 53% of ebook borrowers vs. 54% of all borrowers.
- Check to see if the library has it — 52% of ebook borrowers vs. 48% of all borrowers.
- Read reviews about the book — 34% of ebook borrowers vs. 30% of all borrowers.
- See what subject/genre the book is in — 30% of ebook borrowers vs. 28% of all borrowers.

- See who the author/illustrator is — 28% of ebook borrowers vs. 25% of all borrowers.

Decision-making behaviours by Canadian ebook borrowers, 2020–2022

	2020	2021	2022
Read the book description	54%	51%	53%
Check to see if the library has it	39%	43%	52%
Read reviews about the book	37%	32%	34%
See what subject/genre the book is in	36%	29%	30%
See who the author/illustrator is	37%	27%	28%
Look at the cover	32%	22%	22%
Read or listen to a sample or excerpt	24%	18%	19%
Read about the author/illustrator	26%	18%	14%

Canadian ebook borrowers borrowed books from the library instead of buying them in 2022 because they wanted to save money (54%) or they didn't want to spend money on them (50%).

Similarly to ebook buyers, and in contrast with all Canadian borrowers, ebook borrowers agree or sometimes agree with the statements:

- Having books in accessible formats (e.g., braille, large print) matters to me — 68% of ebook borrowers vs. 67% of all borrowers.
- I finish reading a book before I buy or borrow a new one to start — 67% of ebook borrowers vs. 71% of all borrowers.

- The environmental impact of the book industry matters to me — 63% of ebook borrowers vs. 65% of all borrowers.
- I prefer books that have been published in the last year or so (new releases) over older books — 51% of ebook borrowers vs. 59% of all borrowers.

Ebook subjects

The *Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2022* tracks the book subjects read by Canadian ebook borrowers in 2022 and in it we found that they read mostly Fiction (74%) and Non-Fiction (54%) titles, with some Young Adult (13%) and Children's books (9%). The most popular Fiction subjects read by Canadian ebook borrowers in 2022 were:

- Mystery and Detective — 56%;
- Historical Fiction — 29%; and
- Fantasy — 28%.

The most popular Non-Fiction subjects for Canadian ebook borrowers in 2022 were:

- History — 36%;
- True Crime — 35%; and
- Biography and Memoir — 33%.

The *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022* offers insight into the range of books Canadian ebook borrowers search for. Canadian ebook borrowers searched for:

- Books by Canadian authors/illustrators — 39%
- Books about Canada or regions within Canada — 30%
- Books about a group or culture written by people from that group or culture — 30%
- Books about Indigenous peoples — 17%

- Books by Indigenous authors/illustrators — 16%
- Books that are partly or fully written in another language — 13%

Ebook reading

According to the *Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2022*, 67% of all Canadian readers read at least one ebook in 2022. This number has been steadily increasing since 2019 — up from 61% in 2019 and 64% in 2020 and 2021. Most Canadian ebook readers in 2022 read an ebook daily (25%), with 8% reading more than one a day and 17% reading once a day. Other ebook readers read once a week (23%), once a month (18%), less than once a month (15%), or a few times a year (18%) in 2022.

Frequency of ebook reading by Canadian ebook readers, 2019–2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
More than once a day	9%	9%	8%	8%
Once a day	20%	20%	18%	17%
Once a week	21%	25%	23%	23%
Once a month	18%	18%	16%	18%
Less than once a month	12%	13%	16%	15%
A few times a year	20%	15%	19%	18%

Most Canadian ebook readers reported having the same amount of time for reading ebooks in 2022 than in past years (53%), while 24% said they had more time. We can compare that to all Canadian readers where 57% said their ebook reading time stayed the same in 2022, 17% reported an increase, 18% a decrease, and 12% were unsure.

Time for ebook reading by Canadian ebook readers, 2019-2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Increased	26%	35%	26%	24%
Stayed the same	53%	48%	52%	53%
Decreased	14%	14%	18%	20%
Unsure	7%	3%	5%	3%

Over half of all Canadian ebook readers in 2022 read between one and five ebooks last year (57%), while 23% read 6 to 11 ebooks, 15% read 12 to 49 ebooks, and 5% read 50 or more.

Ebook readers also read books in other formats in 2022 — 96% read print books and 72% listened to audiobooks. Altogether, 23% of Canadian ebook readers prefer ebooks as a format in 2022 — higher than the 16% of all Canadian readers who prefer ebooks. That being said, 50% of all ebook readers in 2022 prefer print books, 17% prefer audiobooks, and 10% don't have a preference when it comes to book formats.

More than all Canadian readers, ebook readers were more likely to agree or sometimes agree that their choice of book format depends on which is available or stocked (75% of ebook readers vs. 67% of all readers). At the same time, 47% of ebook readers agreed or sometimes agreed that they wouldn't read a book in another format, if an ebook was not available (16% won't and 31% sometimes won't). This percentage is up from previous years. In 2021, 37% agreed or sometimes agreed that they wouldn't read a book in another format, while in 2020, 38% agreed or sometimes agreed.

Across all formats, 44% of Canadian ebook readers read between one and five books last year, 31% read 6 to 11 books, 18% read 12 to 49 books, and 7% read 50 books or more.

Ebook selection

Most ebook readers spent from \$1-\$49 on ebooks in 2022 (37%), with many others spending \$50-99 (22%), \$100-149 (13%), \$150-199 (9%), or \$200 or more (9%) on ebooks. Only 10% of Canadian ebook readers did not spend any money on ebooks in 2022, compared to 20% in 2021.

In 2022, 78% of Canadian ebook readers agreed or sometimes agreed that they get good value for ebooks at the price they pay — 43% agreed and 35% sometimes agreed. This number is higher than in past years. In 2021, 38% agreed and 38% sometimes agreed that they get good value for ebooks, while 40% agreed and 38% sometimes agreed in 2020.

Like in past years, the most popular way Canadian ebook readers acquired ebooks was from an online retailer or app, followed by a free internet site — at 21% and 20% respectively. Another 19% of ebook readers also acquired books from the public library in 2022, less than in previous years.

Ebook acquisition by Canadian ebook readers, 2019–2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
From an online retailer or via a retailing app (e.g., Kobo, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc.)	34%	27%	27%	21%
From a free internet site (e.g., Project Gutenberg, etc.)	20%	19%	18%	20%
From a public library (e.g., OverDrive, Libby, Hoopla, cloudLibrary, etc.)	31%	25%	18%	19%
From a subscription service (e.g., Kobo, Scribd, Kindle Unlimited, Marvel Unlimited, etc.)	8%	12%	11%	11%
From a free illegal site (a torrent, Dropbox, etc.)	4%	3%	6%	5%
Other	3%	14%	19%	24%

While the percentage of Canadian ebook readers using subscription services has remained steady over the last number of years, ebook readers are increasingly sharing their subscription logins with others — 36% shared or sometimes shared their logins in 2022, up from 28% in 2021 and 25% in 2020.

The most popular way that Canadian ebook readers discovered the books they read was by word of mouth (28%), similar to all Canadian readers at 30%. Canadian ebook readers also discovered books through:

- online book retailers — 24%;
- the public library — 24%;
- bookstores — 23%; and
- social media — 23%.

What influenced ebook readers' choice to read a specific book the most through these channels in 2022 was the subject or topic (42%), the author (31%), and the book's description (29%).

Ebook reading influences for Canadian ebook readers, 2019–2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
The subject/topic	38%	45%	38%	42%
The author	35%	31%	36%	31%
The book's description	32%	35%	30%	29%
Recommendation(s)	28%	31%	26%	25%
The main character/series	21%	20%	20%	18%
It's a bestseller	22%	16%	14%	16%
It has content/information needed for reference	13%	12%	16%	12%
Sample, excerpt, or preview of the book	10%	11%	12%	10%

It was trending on social media (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, etc.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	9%
Front cover or interior images / inside of books	7%	10%	8%	8%
It was adapted for the screen	14%	12%	6%	8%
Large print or preferred format is available	3%	4%	6%	8%
It was selected for me	7%	4%	5%	6%
Nominated for or winner of a literary award	11%	8%	5%	6%
The book comes with a readers' guide or discussion questions	3%	4%	5%	4%

The most popular app used by Canadian ebook readers to access and read ebooks in 2022 was Amazon Kindle at 29% — down from 33% in 2019 and 2020 and 35% in 2021. The next most popular app was increasingly an internet browser at 26% — up from 19% in 2019, 25% in 2020, and 21% in 2021. Google Books (19%), Apple Books (16%), and Kobo (15%) were also popular.

Ebook apps used by Canadian ebook readers, 2019–2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Amazon Kindle	33%	33%	35%	29%
Internet browser (e.g., Safari, Firefox, Chrome, IE, Edge, etc.)	19%	25%	21%	26%
Google Books	15%	21%	16%	19%
Apple Books	16%	14%	13%	16%
Kobo	23%	19%	18%	15%
Adobe Reader or Digital Editions	10%	9%	12%	11%
OverDrive/Libby	14%	12%	9%	10%
CloudLibrary	3%	4%	4%	7%
Hoopla	4%	3%	3%	5%
Scribd	3%	3%	3%	4%
Moon+ Reader	2%	3%	3%	4%
Barnes and Noble Nook	1%	3%	2%	3%
Aldiko	1%	2%	2%	3%
None of the above	10%	10%	15%	11%

To read their ebooks, Canadian ebook readers have decreasingly used a tablet or e-reader, and increasingly used their smartphones since 2019. A total of 32% of

ebook readers read on a tablet in 2022, down from 36% in 2019. Only 13% read ebooks on a dedicated e-reader in 2022, down from 20% in 2019. Meanwhile, smartphone reading has increased to 34%, from 23% in 2019. Computer use for reading ebooks has remained steady at 19%.

Ebook devices used by Canadian ebook readers, 2019–2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Smartphone	23%	25%	29%	34%
Tablet (e.g., iPad, Surface, Galaxy, Kindle Fire, Kobo Arc, etc.)	36%	37%	29%	32%
Computer	19%	19%	19%	19%
Dedicated e-reader (e.g., Kobo, Kindle, Sony, Nook, etc.)	20%	18%	18%	13%
Braille display/terminal	1%	0%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	3%	2%

Ebook features and reading behaviours

Canadian ebook readers used a wide variety of features in their ebooks in 2022. Many ebook readers used or sometimes used:

- The night display when reading in dim/low lighting — 72%
- The table of contents — 72%
- The screen magnification or zoom — 71%
- The bookmark button — 69%
- The font size or spacing — 67%

Ebook features used by Canadian ebook readers, 2022

	Yes	Sometimes	No	Unsure and N/A	Yes and Sometimes
I turn on the night display when reading in dim/low lighting.	37%	36%	24%	4%	72%
I use the table of contents.	30%	42%	25%	2%	72%
I adjust the screen magnification/zoom to be larger.	27%	44%	27%	2%	71%
I use the bookmark button.	33%	35%	28%	3%	69%
I adjust font size or spacing to increase the text size or space out letters/lines.	28%	39%	30%	3%	67%
I use the search function.	28%	37%	31%	3%	66%
I use the reading mode on a tablet or smartphone.	33%	32%	31%	4%	65%
I change text or background colour(s) for a brighter contrast.	25%	37%	35%	3%	62%
I change the text orientation from portrait to landscape.	21%	35%	41%	3%	56%
I use reference page numbers or the percentage metric.	25%	29%	39%	6%	54%
I make notes or highlight text.	20%	31%	46%	3%	52%
I turn on the screen reader to use the text-to-speech feature or a Braille	19%	24%	54%	4%	42%

device.

I use voice control, eye tracking, or switches.

I don't know how to use most or all of these features.

	13%	24%	59%	4%
	25%	32%	37%	5%

When reading ebooks, over half of all Canadian ebook readers in 2022 agreed or sometimes agreed that they:

- delete the ebook from their personal library after they finish reading it — 59%;
- skim or speed read — 58%;
- read while doing something else (e.g., listening to music, watching TV, etc.) — 53%; and
- prefer ebooks with embedded audio or video — 52%.

Ebook reading actions by Canadian ebook readers, 2022

	Yes	Sometimes	No	Unsure and N/A	Yes and Sometimes
I delete the ebook from my personal library after I finish reading it.	29%	29%	36%	5%	59%
I skim or speed read.	19%	40%	40%	2%	58%
I read while doing something else (listening to music, watching TV, etc.)	19%	35%	44%	2%	53%
I prefer ebooks with embedded audio or embedded video.	19%	33%	38%	10%	52%

When reading, ebook readers are more likely than all Canadian readers to agree or sometimes agree that they only read sections of a book that interest them (63% of ebook readers vs. 57% of all readers). They are equally likely as all Canadians to agree or sometimes agree that they stop reading a book if they don't like it (80%).

The same as all Canadian readers, at 37%, Canadian ebook readers searched for other books by the same author they were reading. More than all Canadian readers, ebook readers:

- Shared the experience, book, or photo of the book with others — 25% of ebook readers vs. 23% of all readers.
- Went online to read about the author or follow them on social media — 22% of ebook readers vs. 18% of all readers.
- Added the book to a list of books they were currently reading or finished reading — 22% of ebook readers vs. 19% of all readers.

Ebook subjects

Most ebook readers read either Adult Fiction (67%) or Non-Fiction (58%) ebooks, with others reading Young Adult (16%) and Children's (10%) ebooks. Like previous years, the most popular Adult Fiction ebook subjects in 2022 were:

- Mystery or Thriller — 45%;
- Fantasy — 30%;
- Romance — 28%;
- Science Fiction — 28%; and
- Historical Fiction — 27%.

The most popular ebook Non-Fiction titles for Canadian ebook readers in 2022 remained:

- History — 37%;
- Biography or Autobiography — 30%;
- Self-Help — 28%;

- True Crime — 26%; and
- Cookbooks — 22%.

Overall, Canadian ebook readers read more broadly than all Canadian readers. In 2022, ebook readers read:

- Books that were made into movies or TV shows — 45% of ebook readers vs. 40% of all readers
- Books that had a sequel (duology, trilogy, series, etc.) — 37% of ebook readers vs. 34% of all readers
- Comics, manga, or graphic novels — 24% of ebook readers vs. 20% of all readers
- Books in a language other than English (including multilingual books) — 20% of ebook readers vs. 16% of all readers
- Poetry, books in verse, or plays — 18% of ebook readers vs. 14% of all readers
- Controversial books or books that have been banned elsewhere — 17% of ebook readers vs. 13% of all readers

The most popular languages that Canadian ebook readers were reading in 2022, other than English, were French (35%), Mandarin (13%), and Spanish (10%).

Canadian ebook readers also read books that were by or about:

- Canadians/locals — 27% of ebook readers vs. 24% of all readers
- Black, Indigenous, or person/people of colour — 16% of ebook readers vs. 14% of all readers
- LGBTQIA+ people (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, aromantic, non-binary, etc.) — 9% of ebook readers vs. 8% of all readers
- People with immigrant status — 15% of ebook readers vs. 12% of all readers

- People with a disability (physical, mental, or emotional activity impairment/limitation temporarily, episodically, or permanently, etc.) — 14% of ebook readers vs. 10% of all readers
- People who belong to religious minorities (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, etc.) — 17% of ebook readers vs. 14% of all readers

These ebook readers were also slightly more likely than all Canadian readers to agree or sometimes agree that:

- Books should be representative of a variety of experiences — 92% of ebook readers vs. 90% of all readers.
- It is important that books about a group or culture should be written by people from that group or culture — 74% of ebook readers vs. 72% of all readers.
- It is important that authors accurately represent their material through research, fact-checking, and/or hiring reviewers and sensitivity or beta readers — 86% of ebook readers vs. 85% of all readers.

About BookNet Canada

BookNet Canada is a non-profit organization that develops technology, standards, and education to serve the Canadian book industry. Founded in 2002 to address systemic challenges in the industry, BookNet Canada supports publishing companies, booksellers, wholesalers, distributors, sales agents, and libraries across the country.

BookNet Canada acknowledges that its operations are remote and our colleagues contribute their work from the traditional territories of the [Mississaugas of the Credit](#), the Ojibwa of Fort William First Nation, the Anishinaabe, the [Haudenosaunee](#), the Wyandot, the Mi'kmaq, and the Métis, the original nations and peoples of the lands we now call Beeton, Brampton, Guelph, Halifax, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Vaughan. We endorse the [Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#) and support an ongoing shift from gatekeeping to spacemaking in the book industry.

The book industry has long been an industry of gatekeeping. Anyone who works at any stage of the book supply chain carries a responsibility to serve readers by publishing, promoting, and supplying works that represent the wide extent of human experiences and identities, in all its complicated intersectionality. We, at BookNet Canada, are committed to working with our partners in the industry as we move towards a framework that supports “spacemaking,” which ensures that marginalized creators and professionals all have the opportunity to contribute, work, and lead.

BookNet Canada’s services and research help companies promote and sell books, streamline workflows, and analyze and adapt to a rapidly changing market. BookNet Canada sets technology standards and educates organizations about how to apply them, performs market research, and tracks 85% of all Canadian English-language print trade book sales through BNC SalesData.

BookNet Canada has extensive research available on our [website](#), both free and for purchase.

- [Winning Kidlit: The Impact of Children’s Book Awards 2022](#): A comprehensive report on the impact of 15 children’s literary awards on the Canadian book market.

- [Canadian Leisure and Reading Study 2022](#): Insight into the behaviour of Canadian readers in 2022.
- [Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022](#): New results from our quarterly survey of Canadians about their book buying, borrowing, and more in 2022.

To stay updated on current and future research, subscribe to our monthly [BNC Research newsletter](#). To stay up-to-date on all BookNet Canada news and information, [subscribe to our weekly eNews](#).

If you have any questions or comments about this or other studies, please contact the research team at research@booknetcanada.ca.

Industry-led and partially funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage, BookNet Canada has become, as *The Globe and Mail* puts it, “the book industry’s supply-chain nerve centre.”

Learn more at booknetcanada.ca.

Appendix A: Demographics of Canadian ebook buyers from the Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022

Gender identity

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
Male	40%	46%	47%
Female	60%	54%	52%
Non-binary	0%	1%	0%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%

Age

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
18-24	11%	10%	6%
25-34	21%	18%	11%
35-44	15%	17%	13%
45-54	16%	18%	16%
55-64	15%	18%	22%
65+	21%	20%	32%

Region

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
Atlantic	6%	7%	7%
Central	60%	60%	57%
Prairies	19%	18%	20%
West Coast & Northern Territories	16%	15%	16%

Location

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
City or urban area	50%	48%	45%
Suburban area	33%	36%	36%
Small town or rural area	17%	16%	19%

Education

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
Less than high school	2%	1%	3%
High school graduate or equivalent	16%	15%	21%
Some post secondary education, not completed	13%	11%	13%
College or university degree/diploma	47%	50%	47%
Graduate or professional degree	22%	23%	15%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%

Employment status

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
Employed full time	42%	44%	33%
Employed part time	10%	11%	9%
Self employed	9%	9%	7%
Not employed	5%	5%	7%
Retired	24%	21%	34%
Student	6%	5%	3%
Homemaker	3%	4%	4%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%

Relationship status

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
Single (never married)	34%	30%	27%
Living with partner	9%	10%	10%
Married	47%	47%	46%
Separated	2%	2%	3%
Divorced	6%	7%	9%
Widowed	2%	4%	6%
Other	0%	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%

Household size

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
One - myself	20%	21%	26%
Two	40%	35%	41%
Three	17%	21%	16%
Four	13%	15%	11%
Five	7%	5%	4%
Six	2%	2%	1%
Seven	0%	1%	0%
Eight	1%	0%	0%
Nine	0%	0%	0%
Ten or more	0%	0%	0%

Household member ages

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
Under 3 years of age	4%	5%	3%
3-5 years of age	6%	6%	4%
6-8 years of age	7%	8%	5%
9-10 years of age	6%	7%	4%
11-12 years of age	6%	8%	4%
13-17 years of age	15%	17%	12%
None under 18 years of age	70%	64%	70%

Household income

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
Under \$15,000	4%	3%	5%
\$15,000-\$24,999	5%	5%	7%
\$25,000-\$34,999	12%	9%	12%
\$35,000-\$49,999	13%	10%	12%
\$50,000-\$74,999	22%	23%	21%
\$75,000-\$99,999	18%	18%	15%
\$100,000-\$149,999	14%	18%	14%
\$150,000 and over	8%	11%	8%
Prefer not to say	2%	3%	5%
Other	1%	1%	1%

Non-dominant identity

	Ebook buyers	All buyers	All Canadians
Class (working class, low income, etc.)	19%	17%	17%
Religion (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, etc.)	13%	10%	7%
Blackness	3%	4%	2%
Indigeneity	1%	1%	2%
People of colour	12%	13%	10%
Gender (trans, queer, 2-Spirited, non-binary, etc.)	2%	3%	2%
Sexuality (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, aromantic, etc.)	7%	8%	6%
Disability (physical, mental, or emotional activity impairment/limitation temporarily, episodically, or permanently, etc.)	11%	11%	12%
Neurodiversity	3%	3%	2%
Family structure/single	8%	8%	9%
Age (young, senior)	21%	22%	27%
Language (English not the first language)	14%	11%	9%
Other	1%	1%	1%
Prefer not to say	2%	2%	3%
None	37%	38%	38%

Appendix B: Demographics of Canadian ebook borrowers from the Canadian Book Consumer Study 2022

Gender identity

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
Male	36%	41%	47%
Female	64%	58%	52%
Non-binary	1%	1%	0%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%

Age

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
18-24	5%	7%	6%
25-34	12%	10%	11%
35-44	17%	16%	13%
45-54	22%	17%	16%
55-64	14%	18%	22%
65+	30%	31%	32%

Region

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
Atlantic	5%	6%	7%
Central	57%	57%	57%
Prairies	22%	20%	20%
West Coast & Northern Territories	17%	17%	16%

Location

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
City or urban area	53%	50%	45%
Suburban area	39%	35%	36%
Small town or rural area	8%	15%	19%

Education

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
Less than high school	1%	2%	3%
High school graduate or equivalent	13%	16%	21%
Some post secondary education, not completed	13%	11%	13%
College or university degree/diploma	48%	51%	47%
Graduate or professional degree	24%	20%	15%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%

Employment status

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
Employed full time	39%	35%	33%
Employed part time	7%	9%	9%
Self employed	6%	7%	7%
Not employed	4%	6%	7%
Retired	33%	33%	34%
Student	3%	4%	3%
Homemaker	4%	5%	4%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%	1%
Other	2%	2%	1%

Relationship status

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
Single (never married)	23%	26%	27%
Living with partner	11%	9%	10%
Married	52%	49%	46%
Separated	2%	3%	3%
Divorced	8%	8%	9%
Widowed	3%	5%	6%
Other	0%	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%

Household size

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
One - myself	24%	26%	26%
Two	42%	38%	41%
Three	16%	17%	16%
Four	13%	12%	11%
Five	4%	5%	4%
Six	1%	1%	1%
Seven	0%	0%	0%
Eight	0%	0%	0%
Nine	0%	0%	0%
Ten or more	0%	0%	0%

Household member ages

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
Under 3 years of age	4%	3%	3%
3-5 years of age	4%	5%	4%
6-8 years of age	7%	7%	5%
9-10 years of age	7%	8%	4%
11-12 years of age	6%	7%	4%
13-17 years of age	13%	15%	12%
None under 18 years of age	71%	69%	70%

Household income

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
Under \$15,000	2%	4%	5%
\$15,000-\$24,999	7%	7%	7%
\$25,000-\$34,999	10%	11%	12%
\$35,000-\$49,999	8%	11%	12%
\$50,000-\$74,999	20%	21%	21%
\$75,000-\$99,999	19%	16%	15%
\$100,000-\$149,999	17%	15%	14%
\$150,000 and over	9%	9%	8%
Prefer not to say	6%	5%	5%
Other	2%	1%	1%

Non-dominant identity

	Ebook borrowers	All borrowers	All Canadians
Class (working class, low income, etc.)	14%	18%	17%
Religion (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, etc.)	10%	10%	7%
Blackness	2%	3%	2%
Indigeneity	2%	2%	2%
People of colour	14%	13%	10%
Gender (trans, queer, 2-Spirited, non-binary, etc.)	2%	3%	2%
Sexuality (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, aromantic, etc.)	6%	6%	6%
Disability (physical, mental, or emotional activity impairment/limitation temporarily, episodically, or permanently, etc.)	11%	11%	12%
Neurodiversity	4%	3%	2%
Family structure/single	8%	11%	9%
Age (young, senior)	26%	27%	27%
Language (English not the first language)	9%	10%	9%
Other	2%	1%	1%
Prefer not to say	4%	3%	3%
None	36%	36%	38%

Appendix C: Demographics of Canadian ebook readers from the Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2022

Gender identity

	Ebook readers	All readers
Woman	47%	48%
Man	52%	51%
Non-binary or gender non-conforming	1%	0%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%

Age

	Ebook readers	All readers
18-29	27%	22%
30-44	26%	23%
45-54	19%	19%
55-64	14%	16%
65+	13%	20%

Region

	Ebook readers	All readers
Atlantic	8%	7%
Central	58%	59%
Prairies	20%	20%
West coast and Northern territories	14%	13%

Location

	Ebook readers	All readers
City or urban area	52%	49%
Suburban area	31%	33%
Small town or rural area	17%	18%

Education

	Ebook readers	All readers
College or university	54%	52%
Graduate or professional	18%	17%
High school or GED	28%	29%
Apprenticeship	4%	3%
Trade school	7%	7%
Prefer not to say/Other	2%	2%

Caregiving

	Ebook readers	All readers
A parent/elder	14%	12%
A child/young adult	30%	26%
Someone / a relationship not listed	7%	5%
A pet/animal	29%	29%
None	36%	42%

Household income

	Ebook readers	All readers
Under \$15,000	7%	6%
\$15,000-\$24,999	7%	8%
\$25,000-\$34,999	10%	9%
\$35,000-\$49,999	11%	12%
\$50,000-\$74,999	19%	19%
\$75,000-\$99,999	14%	14%
\$100,000-\$149,999	18%	18%
\$150,000 and over	9%	8%
Prefer not to say	6%	7%

Non-dominant identity

	Ebook readers	All readers
BIPOC	8%	7%
Disabled	10%	9%
LGBTQIA+	7%	6%
Working class / low income earner	21%	21%
Immigrant	18%	14%
Religious minority	11%	10%
Prefer not to say	4%	4%
None	40%	45%