

P1:

Thank you for dedicating some time to fill out this survey. This survey asks booksellers in Canada questions about their businesses and experiences in the book industry supply chain, focusing on independent bookstores in the trade market. Please be as forthcoming as possible, your answers will enable data-driven decision-making across the industry and inform all those interested in the state of bookselling in Canada. BookNet Canada will send all participants an advance digital copy of the study before the public release in the fall.

### **Sections:**

- [Introduction](#)
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### **How your data is used:**

Personal identifying information (name, email, store/company, and role) is gathered for follow up and response tracking, and is not shared outside of BookNet Canada. Data will only be released in aggregate form and all responses will be kept completely anonymous. You can read more in our Privacy Policy [here](#).

### **Instructions:**

Please provide as much information as possible and to the best of your ability.

- For some sections, in particular the financial section, you will need your Income Statements from both 2020 and 2019 (via your accounting software).
- You will also need access to your POS system for various analytics.
- When asked about figures from 2020, use the data you have that begin nearest to January 1, 2020 and end nearest to December 31, 2020 (1/1/20 – 12/31/20).
- When asked for specific numbers, provide round numbers (for percentages or dollar amounts) unless otherwise indicated. Examples and details for answering are provided in italics under questions.
- When asked questions about physical brick-and-mortar stores, answer using one location even if you have multiple locations.

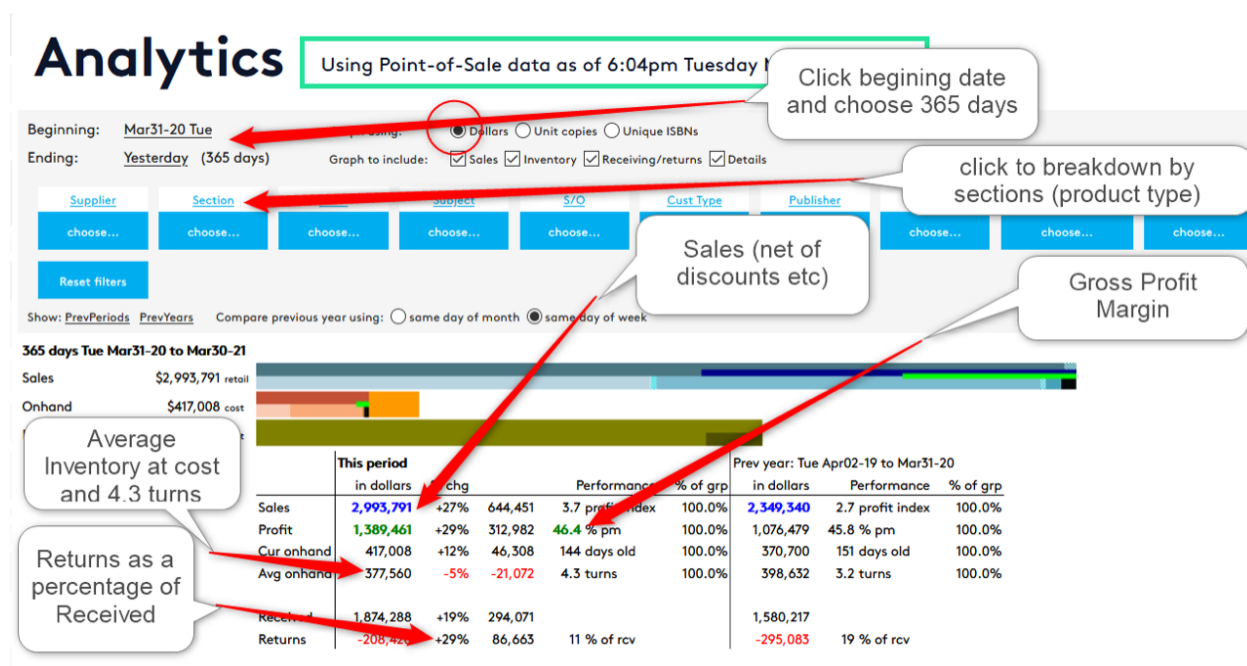
- Bookmanager users: You can obtain the information needed for some of the questions below from your store's Analytics dashboard. See the sample screenshot below. (Copy or Save the image to reference it.)
  - In the top left, make sure that the 'Beginning' and 'Ending' dates are set to get 2020 data: Jan. 1, 2020 to Dec. 31, 2020 (1/1/20 – 12/31/20) — or as close as possible to those dates.
  - Set output to 'Dollars'.
  - You may need to make changes to the settings under the 'Section' and 'Cust Type' filters to answer some questions.

You can change your answers during and after submitting the survey.

- Almost every question is optional.
- You can skip what you do not know and return to those questions later. All responses you have provided will be saved.
- If you want to go back to a prior page in the survey, use the "Back" and "Next" buttons on the bottom of the survey page.
- Use one device to fill out the survey for your bookstore. A partially completed survey cannot be finished using a different device than the one you started with.
- Using the same device, you can reload the survey URL and will be able to see your saved responses starting from the beginning of the survey.

If you need help, email [research@booknetcanada.ca](mailto:research@booknetcanada.ca).

## Sample screenshot



P2:

## Introduction

Before we dive deep into business operations, we'll start with questions about you and your bookstore's general demographics. Personal identifying information (name, email, bookstore/company, and role) is only used for internal purposes to track responses and follow up as needed, and is not shared outside of BookNet Canada.

P3:

## About you and your bookstore

1. What is your name?
2. What is your email address?
3. What is your role at the bookstore?
4. What is the name of your bookstore?

P4:

5. How do you and/or your bookstore engage with BookNet Canada (BNC) / [booknetcanada.ca](http://booknetcanada.ca)?

*Choose all that apply.*

- I listen to the BNC Podcast
- I read the monthly Research newsletter
- I read the weekly eNews newsletter
- I read the weekly retail focused newsletter, *Let's Sell Some Books*
- we email questions/talk to BookNet staff
- we participate in the Cross-Product Retailer Advisory Group (CPRAG)
- we share data to BNC SalesData

- we use BNC BiblioShare
- we use BNC CataList
- we use BNC SalesData
- we use EDI/Pubnet
- we use BNC LibraryData
- no involvement
- something not listed (specify)

6. Is this your bookstore's first time answering the BNC Bookselling survey?

- yes
- no, we answered the 2018 version of this survey
- not sure

P5:

7. Did you or your bookstore staff get new training or education from any of the following specific institutional offerings since 2019?

*Choose all that apply.*

- American Booksellers Association's (ABA) Winter Institute or other events
- BookManager Academy
- BookNet Canada's Tech Forum or other events
- Canadian Independent Booksellers Association (CIBA) webinars or other events
- Paz & Associates (PAZ) (pazbookbiz.com)
- regional trade shows
- Retail Council of Canada's (RCC) store Conference or other events
- no new training or education
- something not listed (specify)

8. Does your bookstore hold membership in any of the following bookselling or business-related associations or organizations?

*Choose all that apply.*

*A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is a collective/association of commercial property owners and tenants within a specific locality who work in partnership with each other to promote economic development and enhance quality of life in their neighbourhood.*

- American Booksellers Association (ABA)
- Atlantic Independent Booksellers Association
- British Columbia Booksellers Association (BCBA)
- Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC)
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB)
- Canadian Independent Booksellers Association (CIBA)
- National Association of College stores (NACS)
- Retail Council of Canada (RCC)
- The Association des libraires du Québec (Québec Booksellers Association)
- Business Improvement Area (BIA) or similar local organization
- no membership
- something not listed (specify)

P6:

9. What do you consider to be the primary market focus of your bookstore, in terms of the age range/type of books sold?

- trade — adult
- trade — children/juvenile
- trade — specialty (sci-fi, mystery, business, comics, etc.)
- all trade
- college/university/higher-ed
- something not listed (specify)

P7:

10. Does your bookstore have multiple locations?

- yes
- no

[if no: skip to P9 top of page]

P8:

11. Are you answering for a single location or multiple locations?

- single
- multiple

[if multiple, skip to P12 top of page]

P9:

12. How long has your bookstore been in business?

- less than 3 years
- 3–6 years
- 7–10 years
- 11–14 years
- 15+ years

13. If you have opened a new bookstore or location in the last few years, what influenced the decision/motivations?

P10:

14. In which province or territory is your bookstore primarily located?

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- New Brunswick
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Québec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon
- N/A — online store only

15. What type of area, based on population, is your bookstore located in?

- large city or urban area (>500,000)
- mid-sized city or urban area (100,000–499,999)

- small city or (sub)urban area (20,000-99,999)
- small town or rural area (<20,000)

P11:

16. Does your bookstore's physical space include other integrated businesses (i.e. coffee shop, craft store, etc.)?

- no, bookstore only
- yes
- N/A — online store only

17. What is the total square footage of your bookstore?

P12:

*If you are answering for multiple locations, please combine all locations when answering for the rest of the survey unless specified.*

18. How many people were employed full time or part time at your bookstore(s) in 2020?

*Please enter a numerical value. If none, enter '0'. Keep your answer in mind as you will be asked in the "Ordering, returns, and operations" section to allocate staff hours to certain activities in a typical week.*

- full time
- part time

19. Has this changed because of COVID-19? If so, how?

P13:

## Systems

20. What is your bookstore's main accounting system?

- BookManager (accounting module)

- FreshBooks
- NetSuite
- QuickBooks Desktop
- QuickBooks Online
- Sage/Simply Accounting
- Wave
- Xero
- ZipBooks
- custom
- unsure
- something not listed or more than one (specify)

P14:

21. What point of sale system (POS) do you use as your main system in your physical bookstore?

- BookManager
- ComicHub
- ComicSuite
- Lightspeed
- PrismPOS
- Shopify
- Square
- WordStock
- custom
- N/A — online store only
- something not listed (specify)

22. How long has your bookstore been running an ecommerce or online store?

- 1 year or less
- 2–4 years
- 5–7 years
- 8–10 years
- 11+ years
- N/A — no ecommerce/online store

[if Q22 is not '1 year' or N/A, skip next Q to P16]



P15:

23. What barriers are/were preventing your bookstore from moving online?

P16:

24. Which platform does your bookstore primarily use to run your ecommerce/online orders?

- BookManager
- Lightspeed
- Shopify
- Square
- WooCommerce
- custom
- unsure
- something not listed (specify)
- N/A — no ecommerce/online store

P17:

Ordering, returns, and operations

25. Which book catalogue system(s) does your bookstore use?

*Choose all that apply.*

- BookManager
- CataList
- Edelweiss
- paper catalogues
- unsure
- something not listed (specify)

P18:

26. Rate the efficiency of the following ordering, receiving, customer support, and shipping processes in your bookstore.

Columns: *[use weights]*

- very efficient

- somewhat efficient
- neutral
- somewhat inefficient
- very inefficient
- N/A

Answer options:

- entering bibliographic records for forthcoming titles
- selecting titles
- selecting quantities per title
- submitting/sending orders of new releases
- re-orders
- receiving orders/deliveries
- paying invoices
- doing inventory
- handling customer special orders
- delivering to customers
- customer support
- returns to suppliers

27. In a typical week in 2020, how many staff hours were spent on each of the following activities?

*In your answer, give us your best guess, using “.5” to refer to the nearest half hour. If any are not applicable to your bookstore, enter “0”.*

*For example: If you had two full time employees (each working 35 hours in the week), two part time employees (each working 15 hours in the week), and yourself (working 45 hours in the week) you would have a total of 145 hours to allocate to the activities below.*

*[note: ability to include decimals; unChoose box for numerical data]*

- working at till
- ordering new books from suppliers
- re-ordering books from suppliers
- filling online orders
- hand selling/talking to customers
- selling to special markets (libraries/schools)
- preparing/making displays
- marketing planning
- advertising
- receiving and shelving books
- returning books

- handling accounts receivable (A/R)
- handling accounts payable (A/P)
- bookkeeping
- managing events
- other

28. Approximately what percentage of your total shipments/deliveries to customers (not shipments to publishers) were handled by each of the following methods in 2020?

*In your answer, please round up to the nearest whole number (no decimals or percent signs). If any method(s) are not applicable to your bookstore, enter "0", when allocating 100 percentage points.*

- free local delivery
- paid local delivery
- curbside or store-front pickup
- Canada Post
- FedEx
- Canpar
- Purolator
- UPS
- something not listed

P19:

29. What was your bookstore's overall return rate for **books** in 2020?

*In your answer, please round up to the nearest whole number. Do not include decimals or percent signs.*

*Return Rate (%) = net value (\$) of books returned in 2020 divided by net value (\$) of books received in 2020.*

*Bookmanager users: This value can be obtained from your store's Analytics dashboard. Make sure that the 'Beginning' and 'Ending' dates are set to Jan. 1, 2020 to Dec. 31, 2020 (1/1/20 – 12/31/20) or as close as possible to those dates. Look for the value labelled as 'Returns as a percentage of received' in the sample screenshot.*

30. Do you think that the number of returns your bookstore sends back to suppliers is:

- very low

- somewhat low
- about right
- somewhat high
- very high

31. What do you think could be done either at your bookstore or industry wide, to reduce or better manage the level of returns?

P20:

## Marketing and promotions

32. Please rate the effectiveness of each of the following **print or physical** marketing channels in driving business to your bookstore.

Columns: *[use weights]*

- very effective
- somewhat effective
- neutral
- somewhat ineffective
- very ineffective
- N/A

Answer options:

- newspaper or magazine ads
- store newsletter/circular
- direct mail (postcards, personalized offers, catalogues)
- public transit ads
- billboards
- sidewalk sign
- indoor signs/displays
- staff picks

33. Please rate the effectiveness of each of the following **online or digital** marketing channels in driving business to your bookstore.

Columns: *[use weights]*

- very effective

- somewhat effective
- neutral
- somewhat ineffective
- very ineffective
- N/A

Answer options:

- Google Ads (formerly Adwords)
- search engine optimization
- Facebook ads
- enabling shopping/embedding products on Instagram
- social media content
- email newsletters
- website blog
- 49th shelf
- media interviews
- reviews
- awards

P21:

34. How frequently does your bookstore use each of the following social media channels for promotion or customer engagement?

Columns: *[use weights]*

- every day
- at least once per week
- at least once per month
- less often than once per month
- never or N/A

Answer options:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- Tumblr
- Twitter
- YouTube
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- other

P22:

35. Of the following co-op practices, which three are most important to your bookstore?

*Choose up to three.*

*[Randomized, except for last choice]*

- payment for window/in-store displays
- point-of-sale materials
- online/digital advertising
- print advertising
- author visits
- product brochures
- displays
- posters
- in-house magazines
- something not listed (specify)

P23:

36. How many loyalty/points rewards program members does your bookstore currently have?

*Please enter a numerical value. If your bookstore doesn't have such a program, enter "0".*

37. If your bookstore has a loyalty/points rewards program, what kind is it? Does it effectively lead to increased sales?

P24:

## Financial sections

In the following sections on operating expenses and revenue/sales and profit, please combine your bookstore's brick-and-mortar store(s) and ecommerce/online store(s) in your answers.

If you don't know the exact amounts please give us your best estimation.

If you are unable to find the information needed to answer a question, please note that in the open-ended question at the end of each section.

P25:

## Operating expenses

38. In the next few questions we are going to ask you to break down your operating expenses (costs of rent, payroll, advertising, etc.) by category type for 2020. Would you prefer to enter values as a percentage or a dollar amount?

- percentage
- dollar amount

<if percentage, skip to next Q on P27>

P26:

39. What were your bookstore's total operating expenses in 2020?

*This question is mandatory in order to convert dollar amounts into percentages for calculating aggregate results.*

P27:

40. What were your bookstore's overall annual expenses for 2020, without GST, in the following categories?

*In your answer, give us your best guess and please round up to the nearest {{ Q38 }} (no decimals). If any type(s) are not applicable to your bookstore, enter "0".*

- rent
- hydro/utilities (if not included in rent)
- internet & telephone
- supplies & equipment
- shipping
- outsourced services (subscriptions, software, legal, accounting, etc.)
- events (on-site and off-site)
- advertising & marketing
- wages & salaries
- benefits
- training & professional development
- something not listed

41. How did operating expenses in your bookstore change between 2019 and 2020?

Columns: *[use weights]*

- increased 26% or more
- increased 11–25%
- increased 1–10%
- stayed flat
- decreased 1–10%
- decreased 11–25%
- decreased 26% or more
- N/A

Answer options:

- rent
- hydro/utilities (if not included in rent)
- internet & telephone
- supplies & equipment
- shipping
- outsourced services (subscriptions, software, legal, accounting, etc.)
- events (on-site and off-site)
- advertising & marketing
- wages & salaries
- benefits
- training & professional development
- something not listed

P28:

42. Before we move on to revenue/sales and profit, is there any operating expense data you haven't shared because it was too difficult to find, gather, or understand from your accounting, POS, or ecommerce systems?

P29:

Revenue/sales and profit

43. What was your bookstore's 2020 Canadian revenue (gross)?

- \$10M+



- \$5M – 9,999,999
- \$2.5M – 4,999,999
- \$1.5M – 2,499,999
- \$1.35M – \$1,499,999
- \$1.2M – \$1,349,999
- \$1.05M – \$1,199,999
- \$900K – \$1,049,999
- \$750K – \$899,999
- \$600K – \$749,999
- \$450K – \$599,999
- \$300K – \$449,999
- \$150K – \$299,999
- \$0 – \$149,999

P30:

44. Over the next handful of questions we are going to ask you to break down your **revenue** (by product/category type) and **gross profit** (margin) for 2020. Would you prefer to enter values as a percentage or a dollar amount?

- percentage
- dollar amount

<if percentage, skip to P32 top of page>

P31:

45. What was your bookstore's total revenue/sales number in 2020?

*This question is mandatory in order to convert dollar amounts into percentages for aggregate results.*

*Bookmanager users: This value can be obtained from your store's Analytics dashboard. Look for the value labelled 'Sales (net of discounts)' in the sample screenshot. Make sure the date range is set for the year 2020.*

46. What was your bookstore's total gross profit for 2020?

*Gross profit = Total sales - Cost of sales*

*This question is mandatory in order to convert dollar amounts into percentages for aggregate results.*

*Bookmanager users: This value can be obtained from your store's Analytics dashboard. Look for the value labelled 'Profit' in the sample screenshot. Make sure the date range is set for the year 2020.*

*[P31: Page skip logic: After the current page is completed, skip to this page: P33]*

P32:

47. What was your bookstore's total gross profit **margin** for 2020?

*Gross profit margin = (Total sales - Cost of sales)/Total sales*

*Bookmanager users: This value can be obtained from your store's Analytics dashboard. Look for the value labelled 'Gross Profit Margin' in the sample screenshot — it will be a percentage. Make sure the date range is set for the year 2020.*

P33:

48. How much of your bookstore's overall annual revenue for 2020 was derived from retail and wholesale sales?

*In your answer, please round up to the whole {{ Q44 }} (no decimals). If any type(s) are not applicable to your bookstore, or you don't know, enter "0".*

*Bookmanager users: This value can be obtained from your store's Analytics dashboard. Change the 'Cust Type' filter to get the different customer types/channels. Make sure the date range is set for the year 2020. If you don't have these types set up in your system, please make your best guess at the breakdown of sales last year.*

- retail in-store
- retail online (including ecommerce and telephone)
- wholesale/institutional (libraries, schools, etc.)

49. How have sales in your bookstore changed between 2019 and 2020?

Columns: *[use weights]*

- increased 26% or more

- increased 11–25%
- increased 1–10%
- stayed flat
- decreased 1–10%
- decreased 11–25%
- decreased 26% or more
- N/A

Answer options:

- retail in-store
- retail online (including ecommerce and telephone)
- wholesale/institutional (libraries, schools, etc.)

P33:

50. How much of your bookstore’s annual revenue for 2020 was derived from the following types of merchandise?

*In your answer, give us your best guess and round up to the nearest {{ Q44 }} (no decimals). If any type(s) are not applicable to your bookstore, enter “0”.*

*Bookmanager users: This value can be obtained from your store’s Analytics dashboard. Change the ‘Section’ filter to get the different product types. Make sure the date range is set for the year 2020. If you don’t have these sections/product types set up in your system, please make your best guess at the breakdown of sales last year.*

- new books (print, ebooks, audiobooks)
- used books
- remaindered books
- magazines & periodicals (including comics)
- toys & games
- puzzles
- calendars, planners, stationery
- paraphernalia (mugs, apparel)
- something not listed

51. How has revenue in your bookstore changed between 2019 and 2020 for the following types of merchandise?

Columns: *[use weights]*

- increased 26% or more

- increased 11–25%
- increased 1–10%
- stayed flat
- decreased 1–10%
- decreased 11–25%
- decreased 26% or more
- N/A

Answer options:

- new books (print, ebooks, audiobooks)
- used books
- remaindered books
- magazines & periodicals (including comics)
- toys & games
- puzzles
- calendars, planners, stationery
- paraphernalia (mugs, apparel)
- something not listed

P34:

52. Before we move on to COVID-19 related questions, is there anything you haven't shared about revenue/sales data that was too difficult to find, gather, or understand from your accounting, POS, or ecommerce systems?

P35:

## COVID-19

53. Which, if any, of the following COVID-19 governmental assistance programs has your bookstore used?

*Choose all that apply.*

- Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)
- Temporary Wage Subsidy (TWS)
- Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS)
- Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)
- DCH Distribution Program
- other federal government relief program
- provincial relief program

- municipal or regional relief program
- none — we didn't qualify
- none — we didn't apply
- something not listed (specify)

54. What changes has your bookstore made to survive COVID-19 that you will continue to leverage post-COVID?

55. What changes made by suppliers to survive COVID-19 do you want to see continue?

P36:

## Big picture

56. What's working well for your bookstore? What are you proud of?

57. What is your bookstore's biggest challenge, that's not related to COVID-19? Where does your bookstore need support to thrive in the next year or so?

P37:

58. What does success or "enough" mean to your bookstore? What's your vision for your bookstore?

59. Rate the health of sectors within the Canadian cultural ecosystem based on their ability to withstand challenges, adapt, and thrive.

Columns: *[use weights]*

- excellent
- fair
- bad

Answer options:

- your bookstore
- Canadian bookstores
- other independent retailers
- Canadian publishers
- Canadian libraries

P38:

## Conclusion

60. How/where would you like to get results, highlights, or takeaways from the aggregated responses to this survey?

*Choose all that apply.*

*[Randomized, except for last choice]*

- social media thread (Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- study (PDF, EPUB, Word, Google Doc, etc.)
- blog post(s)
- email course
- newsletter (*Let's Sell Some Books*, eNews, Research, etc.)
- podcast episode
- webinar
- something not listed (specify)

61. Lastly, is there anything else you would like to share? An area we should be paying attention to or questions about the book industry you've been thinking about that the survey didn't touch on?

P39:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! Your feedback has been recorded.

We are very grateful for your time, honest feedback and thoughtful suggestions.