

**Standing Order:
The Relationship Between
Book Publishers and Public Libraries in Canada**

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

The Canadian book industry consists of many inter-connected stakeholders including writers, publishers, editors, printers, distributors, bookstores, book buyers, the media, educators and libraries.

Although it is often tempered by an intermediary – a distributor or other vendor who handles sales to libraries on behalf of the book publisher (Barnes, 2005), the relationship between two of these stakeholders – book publishers and public libraries – is of particular interest to those in the field of Library and Information Science. This is because, even today, with the increasing importance of the Internet, electronic books and databases, DVD's, and digitized files for libraries, when you say "library" to a person on the street, the first thing that's likely to pop into their head is the image of a building filled with books.

In public libraries across the USA, Canada and Europe the most consistent use of libraries by patrons is for borrowing

leisure reading, usually fiction. In US and Canadian public libraries, 80 percent of patrons surveyed state they come to the library to borrow books, and fiction accounts for 60 percent-70 percent of library circulation. (Moyer, 2005)

Obviously, a symbiotic relationship exists between these two sectors. But what is the true nature of this relationship? Do book publishers see libraries as one of their main customers, guaranteed to continually support them by ordering copies of all their new books, often ordering multiple copies of their books and helping to make the difference between a book that breaks even or loses money in the tight margins of the Canadian book publishing industry? Or is there always the nagging suspicion on behalf of book publishers that a popular book that is lent out by a library ten times equals ten lost sales?

How do libraries view book publishers? Do they see them as the lifeblood of their institution, providing a constant stream of new materials in all genres that helps to keep patrons coming back and make the library a focal point of the community? Or do they have concerns about the book publishers' ever-increasing prices for the books they produce, do they think that publishers produce too many titles per year or even whether book publishing as it currently exists will even continue to survive as new technologies develop?

1.1 Project Methodology

In this paper, I intend to consider these questions and more. I will do this via four methods. First, I will complete a search of the library (and other) literature to determine what has been written about book publishers, public libraries and, what (if anything) has been written specifically about the relationship between the two of them. Second, I will present a case study of an award-winning, mid-sized regional Canadian literary press, Coteau Books of Regina, who publish books across a variety of genres and have done so for over thirty years. The input of founding members, current staff, authors who are also librarians and board members (one of whom is also a librarian in the Saskatoon Public Library system) will be invaluable. Next, I will summarize the first two parts of this study, looking at current trends and issues and extrapolating what my findings might mean for the entire Canadian book industry. Finally, I will prepare a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix #1) which will summarize the findings of my study. It will be presented to the FIMS community at the University of Western Ontario in early August 2006.

Although the main focus of this study is the relationship between public libraries and book publishers within Canada, I will include data about other types of libraries, other methods of publishing and other geographic regions where applicable.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Book Publishing

Publishing Canadian books has always been an experiment. Like the great experiments of building a transcontinental railway and a national broadcasting system, it constitutes one of the nation's defining acts. Publishing, after all, is a people's way of telling its story to itself.

– from the Introduction to The Perilous Trade: Publishing Canada's Writers by Roy McSkimming, 2003

The definitive history of the Canadian book publishing industry is Roy McSkimming's book, The Perilous Trade: Publishing Canada's Writers. Published in 2003 by McClelland and Stewart (fittingly, known as "The Canadian Publishers"), this book is a comprehensive look at the development of the Canadian publishing industry. After describing how Canada has relied on imported British and American books through most of its early history, the bulk of McSkimming's book concerns itself with the post-World War II period when the Canadian publishing industry, much like the rest of the country, came into its own by distinguishing itself from its traditional British roots as well as the influence of the much larger nation to the south. No longer a colonial outpost nor a de facto 51st American state, Canada has developed a worldwide reputation for the quality of its books and authors over the past half-century.

McSkimming is a literary journalist and former publisher and he brings this insider's knowledge to the material in a heavily researched but eminently readable text. Every notable press (and the related personalities who run them) is covered as are the major issues in Canadian publishing – both of the past and those that still exist today. These include subjects such as how the influence of large American presses have been replaced by an even larger influence of gigantic multinational corporations, the monopolistic dominance of a single Canadian-owned but no less influential book retailer and the struggles of small regional presses to maintain their quality in the face of continual budget cuts.

Another, less formal but no less revealing glimpse into the recent history of the Canadian book industry is provided by Imagining Canadian Literature: Selected Letters of Jack McClelland. This engaging volume reprints letters to and from the irrepressible head of McClelland and Stewart as he corresponds with his press' various authors, other publishers and the book media in tones ranging from affectionate to angry. As the Antigonish Review states about this book: "the reader takes on the role of cultural voyeur, becoming privy to both the world of the Canadian publishing industry as well as the personalities of some of Canada's best known writers." (LoveGrove, 1998)

Yet another book-length take on the Canadian publishing industry is provided by Hip and Trivial: Book Publishing and the Greying of Canadian Nationalism by Robert Wright. This book focuses mainly on the “CanLit” and related “KitLit” booms that have occurred since the 1970’s. Starting from the assumption that “kids don’t read”, the book goes on to assert that young Canadians have grown up in a literary culture and that these young people *do not* read less (or less voraciously) than older Canadians but that they use different techniques – reading multiple volumes simultaneously, receiving information from the Internet and other electronic resources – to be just as successful with their reading strategies as their parents and grandparents. The role of publishers in creating this “Culture of Literacy” is examined in depth.

An insider’s guide to the American publishing industry is provided in Book Business: Publishing Past Present and Future by Jason Epstein, a former editorial director at Random House who was the first recipient of the National Book Award for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. Although focused on the American publishing industry, because of the close integration of the two country’s publishing industries, many of the stories and experiences have relevance to a Canadian audience.

Finally, for a more factual overview of the book industry, a handbook like the Bowker Annual Library and Book Trade Almanac provides a yearly synopsis of key trends, events and developments in the book industry as well as information about legislation, funding programs, statistics on book prices, numbers of books published, library expenditures, salaries and other budget items. It also includes a calendar of book-related events plus contact information for key organizations and important individuals. There is also a Canadian equivalent of this handbook that provides much of the same information. The Book Trade in Canada is published annually by Quill & Quire magazine and is the definitive guide to the book industry in Canada. The Canadian Publishers Directory, also published by Quill & Quire bi-annually, is a much less expensive option that provides contact information and summaries of all the major publishers in Canada. This publication is only available via a subscription to Quill & Quire magazine.

2.2 Public Libraries

The earliest libraries in Canada belonged to wealthy individuals or were kept by religious institutions. Free libraries, funded by taxes, did not appear until the 1880s. Many library buildings were put up after 1900. From 1901 to 1923 the Carnegie Foundation, an American organization, helped to build 125 libraries in Canada. There

was another burst of library building in the 1960s as part of the expansion of education in that decade.

There are today over 1000 public libraries in Canada. They contain about 52 million books and loan about 155 million items to borrowers each year. There are also major libraries in all the universities and about 7500 school libraries, containing almost 48 million books. Many companies, hospitals, and other institutions have libraries. – from the entry for *Library* in The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2006

Perhaps because it's what they do, there is no shortage of books on various aspects of the Canadian publishing industry – histories, sociological analyses, profiles of the leading personalities and events. Canada's public libraries, on the other hand, appear to have a large gap in terms of similar publications dedicated to their segment of the book industry. There are a few works on the development of public libraries in Canada but most are quite dated.

The Canadian Library Association is responsible for a number of works on the history of libraries in Canada. One of the most recent is Readings in Canadian Library History 2 which was published in 1996 and includes a number of essays on various topics related to library history including a history of Canadian libraries up to 1991, profiles of notable personalities

and special topics such as the special case of rural libraries and the usage of computers in libraries.

A slightly older but more focused study is called Project Progress: A Study of Canadian Public Libraries which was commissioned by the Canadian Library Association in 1981. The CLA also has a digital copy of an article titled "1934-1946 The Long Last Lap" about the early years of their organization on their web site which, although not directly concerned with public libraries, gives a lot of useful information by telling the history of the development of Canada's main organization for librarians.

Other overviews of the history of public libraries in Canada include a couple of scholarly works. One of these is a Masters thesis by Phyllis Gale called The Development of the Public Library in Canada published in 1965. The history of Canadian public libraries appears to be a popular topic for Masters students at the University of Chicago in the late 1960's. Another dissertation published in 1969 was titled Libraries in the Life of the Canadian Nation, 1931-1967 by Elizabeth Homer Morton.

Although book length studies of the development of public libraries in Canada are few and far between, there are many scholarly articles on the topic. One of the best of these is

“Dividends: The Value of Public Libraries in Canada” by Leslie Fitch and Jody Warner which was originally published in booklet form by the Library Action Committee of the Book and Periodical Council. This study looked at the various ways that libraries influenced Canadian society, both in straight economic and other methods. Their findings about the effect of libraries on Canadian society are enlightening. They cover everything from the fact that libraries support children and enhance democracy as well supporting the local economy and Canadian culture in general.

There is also no shortage of information about various aspects of the public libraries at the provincial level – from finances to histories to statistics – which are usually produced by governments or organizations that are somehow affiliated with the library. Some examples include the Ontario Ministry of Culture’s 2003 Ontario Public Library Statistics report, Lorne and Karen Bruce’s Public Libraries Boards in Postwar Ontario, 1945-1985 and Quality and Access: The Future of Public Libraries in Manitoba: A Strategic Plan for Public Library Development which was produced by the Manitoba Public Library Advisory Board. In fact, Mr. Bruce, who is Public Services Librarian in the McLaughlin Library at the University of Guelph has written several articles on public library history in Ontario. He has also compiled a comprehensive list of monographs related to Ontario public

libraries that is eleven pages long. It can be found online at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/~lbruce/documents/Ontbibl.PDF>.

This excess of information makes sense as public libraries are a provincial responsibility and each province's libraries have developed in ways that reflect the unique culture, politics and economics of each respective province.

The most recent of these provincial studies is a book titled A Book In Every Hand: Public Libraries in Saskatchewan written by Don Kerr, University professor, Saskatchewan governor of the Canadian Heritage Foundation and longtime member of the Saskatoon Public Library board. Published by Coteau Books in partnership with the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association for that province's 2005 Centennial this book captures many of the developments that might be of interest to anyone looking at the evolution of public libraries in other regions. Although Saskatchewan (and every other province) is unique in how their public libraries developed, there are numerous commonalities - the first Mechanic's Institute libraries, the battles for funding, the role of notable librarians - that make this book relevant no matter which province's public libraries you are interested in studying.

2.3 Book Publishing and Public Libraries

Over the past ten years, dwindling acquisitions budgets and library cutbacks, closures and staff reductions have had a dramatic effect on sales of Canadian books by Ontario book publishers to this market. In particular, children's book publishers have noted a significant decrease in library sales. This, coupled with a shrinking trade marketplace, proved deleterious for the growth of the domestic book publishing industry. There is a need to better understand how purchasing is done and how to market to decision makers in the library community.

– from the Introduction to "Canadian Books Count", The Organization of Ontario Book Publishers, 2005

If there is a lack of books on the development of public libraries in Canada, the situation is even worse when you are looking for books about the relationship between libraries and publishers. In fact, there does not appear to be a definitive book on the relationship between book publishers and libraries at all.

There are however, other options for finding out about the relationship. One is to look at current collections development textbooks; another is to study the collections development policies of large Canadian public libraries. There are also numerous studies and scholarly articles on the subject. One of the most timely and informative was a study entitled "Canadian Books Count" which was released in late 2005 by the Organization of Ontario Book Publishers. This study's purpose was "to gain an understanding of the collection acquisition process of Public Libraries and School Libraries in Ontario,

gather information on acquisition budgets, assess the proportion of Canadian books in current library collections, and determine the factors that influence book selection decisions. In addition, attitudes towards Canadian books in libraries were examined, and ways to encourage librarians to buy more Canadian books were identified, as were perceived barriers to increasing acquisitions of Canadian books.” (Organization of Book Publishers of Ontario, 2005)

The study was comprised of twenty-two in-depth interviews with various industry stakeholders including librarians, publishers and others followed by an online survey that was completed by four hundred and thirty-four libraries. Numerous findings are of interest for the purpose of this study:

- There is no common acquisition process for public libraries.
- 81% of the dollar value of public library purchases are via wholesalers (aka “jobbers”)
- Librarians who are pressed for time often rely on the lists and catalogues supplied by publishers and/or wholesalers to make their selections which makes these items extremely valuable in marketing books to libraries.

- Wholesalers provide two important benefits to librarians: one-stop shopping and volume discounts.
- Most publishers recognize the importance of wholesalers and target their marketing efforts at them rather than directly at acquisitions librarians.
- If publishers do market directly to libraries, it's much easier to target large libraries with central buying systems than smaller and/or rural libraries.
- Patron requests are the number one reason that books are purchased.
- This is followed by award nominations (for example, Governor General's Awards, Giller Prizes, Silver Birch and others) and positive book reviews (mainly in Quill & Quire and the Globe & Mail.)

“While it is never the most important factor, Canadian authorship, content, setting and themes are generally taken into consideration when librarians select books for their collections.” A problem occurs because there is often a lack of awareness among librarians about whether a publisher or author is Canadian. Outside of budget constraints, this was seen as the major impediment to adding

Canadian content to collections. (Organization of Book Publishers of Ontario, 2005)

Among the public libraries that did respond to this question, they estimated the percentage of their collection as "Canadian" at 26%. But as was stated, the majority of libraries do not track Canadian authors, partly because there is no standard definition of what defines a Canadian author. Is it someone who was born in Canada? Who lived (or lives) in Canada? Anyone published by a Canadian publisher?

"Developing a tracking code, based on an industry definition of 'Canadian books', will be critical to the implementation of an ongoing measurement system of Canadian book sales." (Organization of Book Publishers of Ontario, 2006)

Besides establishing a definition of what is Canadian and implementing a system to track this, there are other things this study recommends that publishers do. Their marketing efforts should target all decision-makers and influencers including librarians and other staff plus library trustees, wholesalers, distributors and members of the general public. Materials that can be used by librarians to promote awareness among patrons (posters, bookmarks) are also important as is creating a "buzz" about books via innovative promotional activities and positive reviews. Librarians felt strongly that publishers should

assist libraries in arranging author visits and take full advantage of the Internet by including author bios, photos, excerpts, awards, media notices and other relevant information on their web sites.

A study done in 1998 by Pat Cavill for the Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP) has an enormous amount of information about the relationship between libraries and book publishers as well. Collections: How and Why Canadian Public Libraries Select and Buy Their Canadian Books builds on a 1997 study by Cavill titled Transition: Changes in the Public and School Library Market. This latest study assessed the presence of a representative sample of 100 mid-list Canadian- published titles (30 adult fiction, 30 nonfiction and 30 children's books) in the collections of thirty-three of the largest public libraries in Canada. The results showed a strong commitment to buying Canadian titles and goes on to suggest methods for best marketing to libraries (for instance, the Toronto Public Library accounted for 35% of the purchasing power of the 33 libraries surveyed and 7 of the top 10 libraries were in southern Ontario.) The study also included case studies with librarians in Mississauga and Saskatoon on their acquisitions processes.

Another article that provides information on this relationship is "Book Pricing: Publisher, Vendor and Library Perspectives" by Matt

Barnes et al. which summarizes the views of the three main principles on how the relationship between them works and should work as well as the major issues and problems in the current situation:

Competitive markets typically manifest a natural tension between buyers who wish to maximize value and sellers who wish to maximize profit – a well-known scenario in supply chain economics. However, as many libraries struggle to contend with deep budget cuts, this natural economic push and pull has been amplified. (Barnes, 2005.)

Another article which was cited in the previous section on public libraries – “Dividends: The Value of Public Libraries in Canada” provides much information, not only about the role of public libraries in Canada but also, their interaction with book publishers.

Public libraries buy a significant amount of print materials, which helps to ensure that the book trade in Canada remains thriving and healthy. The following figures reflect the importance of public library markets: in 1995, Canada’s large urban public libraries spent in excess of \$48.5 million dollars on print and non-print materials: Close to \$30 million of it was spent at Canadian wholesalers, publishers, booksellers, distributors and retailers. There are over 4,000 other libraries across the country whose budgets also support the Canadian book and periodical industries.

All of the above information about libraries, publishers and their interaction when considered at the macro level. But what happens you get to the micro level? What happens when you get right inside the office of a small publisher? What is the take

of the publisher, staff and authors who work in a publishing house when asked about the relationship their organization has with public libraries? A case study of Coteau Books, a small regional literary press will provide the answers to these questions.

3.0 Case Study – Coteau Books

3.1 Overview

Coteau Books is a small regional literary press based in Regina, Saskatchewan. Founded in 1975 by writers Robert Currie, Gary Hyland, Barbara Sapergia, and Geoffrey Ursell, its initial mandate was to publish western poets who weren't getting attention from larger Toronto-based presses. Coteau quickly outgrew that mandate and expanded to publishing literary fiction and anthologies. Since then, they have published drama, children's and young adult fiction and creative non-fiction.

In Coteau's thirty years in business, their authors and books have been nominated for and won a variety of awards at the provincial, national and international level including two Governor General Awards, the most prestigious literary awards in the country. (Coteau Books Awards, 2006.)

More recently, Coteau has had great success with a variety of general trade non-fiction works, starting with a 1999 coffee table book called "Gold On Ice: The Story of the Sandra Schmirler Curling Team" which had the unfortunate coincidence of coming to market just as Sandra Schmirler was diagnosed with cancer and then went on to sell tens of thousands of copies after she died. A more recent success in the non-fiction market was a book called A Book In Every Hand: Public

Libraries in Saskatchewan (2005) which shows the close connection Coteau has with public libraries.

3.2 Fiscal Realities of Publishing in Canada

Before I begin exploring the specific relationship Coteau Books has with public libraries in more depth, I would like to give some background on the fiscal realities of book publishing in Canada. A publisher's financial situation and annual budget can have wide-ranging implications on everything it does from the number of books produced annually to whether there is money for marketing programs to libraries like posters and author visits.

The majority of Canadian-owned publishers (ie. the ones who are not a subsidiary of a richly-funded, synergistic multinational entertainment conglomerate) have to rely on government funding to assist with their publication programs. There are a variety of reasons for this. Like American presses, Canadian publishers have similar costs in terms of author royalties, production, distribution costs and retail discounts. But most Canadian presses focus their sales on their home market meaning they are targeting a potential customer base that is one-tenth of the size of their American counterparts.

If you like gallows humour, you'll like the story Canadian publishers regularly tell each other: "We give 110% for every book we produce -

we give 10% to the author, 30% to cover production costs (editing, design, layout, marketing), 25% to the distributor, 40% to the bookseller and 5% to overhead costs to keep the lights on and the heat running.” It sounds like a bad joke but it’s true. Canadian publishers often operate at a 2% profit margin or less (Cameron, 2006). Without government subsidies very few publishers could exist in this country at all.

Coteau receives its funding from a variety of sources, most of which are similar to any small or mid-sized, Canadian-owned press. They receive funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage via the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP) which is a formula-based grant based on sales – the more you sell, the more you receive. As a literary press, Coteau also receives funding from the Canada Council for the Arts where artistic merit of their books is the criteria that determines the amount they receive, not sales figures. On a provincial level, Coteau receives funding from the Saskatchewan Arts Board and the Cultural Industries Development Fund. Finally, they also receive funding at the municipal level via the City of Regina Arts Commission. When one-time opportunities or project-specific grants are available, Coteau is also a recipient of these. For example, they received funding as part of Saskatchewan’s Centennial in 2005 to produce a series of young adult novels called “From Many Peoples”,

named after the province's motto and detailing fictionalized accounts of the experiences of children in various ethnic groups in the early days of the province.

On top of the narrow profit margin and the reliance on government funding, another disadvantage to being a small regional Canadian press is that Coteau sometimes doesn't even reap the ongoing benefits from the achievements of its most successful authors. This is because the first-time authors that write a majority of Coteau's books often move on to larger presses that have bigger advances, bigger marketing budgets and more influence in the market if they have any success at all with their first book(s). Some of the names that have graduated from the Coteau "farm system" to larger publishers include well-known, award-winning Canadian authors such as Bonnie Burnard, Sharon Butala and Fred Stenson.

It's not all bad news on this front though – other established authors choose to return to (or, if the project is a good fit, to start with) Coteau as their publisher of choice because of Coteau's reputation for producing high-quality, award-winning books. This list includes young adult author, Arthur Slade who published his Governor General's Award winning Dust with HarperCollins but publishes his "Canadian Chills" series with Coteau, Duncan Thornton who was nominated for the Governor General's Award for his first young adult

book, Kalifax but continued to publish the other books in the series with Coteau, Myrna Kostash who is one of Canada's best known non-fiction authors who published her first Coteau title, Reading The River: A Traveller's Guide to the North Saskatchewan River with them in 2005 and Order of Canada member, Ken Mitchell who has published with many different presses during his career but returned to Coteau with his most recent book, The Adventures of Donny Coyote.

3.3 Coteau's Relationship With Libraries

We were just about to start production on our third and fourth books (Mick Burrs and Lois Simmie) and somehow we discovered that the Provincial Library had a typewriter that made it appear as if the text were typeset. We had several friends there, and they arranged for us to come in during the evening, with no one else around but the janitor, so we could use this typewriter. Our printer gave us special clay-based paper, and [Coteau co-founder] Barbara [Sapergia] carefully typed Mick's poems and Lois's stories. If you made a mistake you had to discard the sheet and start again. While Barbara typed, I proofread. It took us many evenings. And that's how the Provincial Library helped Coteau Books get started. After those books, we paid for real typesetting.

- Geoffrey Ursell, Publisher and co-founder, Coteau Books

Although the relationship between Coteau Books and the public library system is less direct than it was in those early, heady days of the press, the principles still feel that they have a strong relationship with libraries for the most part.

Nik Burton has been the managing editor of Coteau Books since 1996. He responded with fairly in-depth answers to an e-mail query that I sent him about the past, current and future relationship of Coteau to public libraries, both in terms of how things operated and also what was good and bad. (See Appendix Two for his complete response.) I also received a lengthy response from Wenda McArthur, a long-time librarian in the Saskatoon Public Library system who has also been a Coteau board member for many years (Appendix Three) and a shorter one from Deborah Rush who is Coteau's Marketing and Sales manager (Appendix Four.)

All of them provided many enlightening comments and it is revealing to see, given their respective roles, where their opinions match and where they diverge. I would strongly recommend that anyone reading this report take the time to read their comments in their entirety as the information they provide is valuable.

Some of the highlights from their responses were as follows:

Nik Burton states: "[A benefit of dealing with libraries is that they are still] a reliable avenue to creating awareness in the public's mind about the awareness of our books." It is of particular note that he sees libraries' main benefit as creating awareness rather than as a vital outlet for sales in and of itself. He answers all of my questions in great depth but perhaps his most illuminating comment is his final one

which summarizes his view on the relationship between publishers and libraries:

Librarians resent what they feel as the publishers' sense of entitlement to the space on their shelves, and the lion's share of their acquisition budgets. They see many publishers who produce whatever they want, whether there's a demand for it or not (mission driven), and then expect library purchases, with no sensitivity to the fact that today's library has to meet the expanding demands of its patronage community with shrinking financial, facility and staff resources, or suffer the consequences at the hands of the head-counting budgeteers.

Wenda McArthur begins her comments by discussing how libraries have written collection policies which typically support the buying of Canadian books and wonders why more publishers don't challenge libraries where gaps are found. (I suspect this is a question of the effort required for publishers to do this not being worth the potential reward.) She also touches on the fact that publishers should focus on figuring out a way to get libraries to buy multiple copies rather than just single titles (which technically means they are following their collection policies but isn't as much help to the publisher as selling multiple copies would be.) At the same time, McArthur is realistic enough to admit that people simply don't read short fiction and poetry in enough numbers to justify buying single copies, let alone multiple copies. Although I could not find a formal statement for this, I have heard from librarians that a book that

circulates less than once per year is considered an inefficient use of library resources – both to purchase and house the book. One final point of interest was her observation that “Library boards, you’ll be happy to know, tend not to want to cut collection budgets. They cut other things, but do seem to realize they should buy materials.” What must be checked is whether a library maintains separate collection budgets for books and other items or if they all belong to the same budget line. If all collections are purchased from the same pool of money, books still have to compete with high demand items like DVD’s, CD’s, computer software, graphic novels and so on and this may reduce the number of books that are purchased overall.

As with the other respondents, Deborah Rush’s comments are valuable as well. The Coteau Marketing and Sales Manager observes that “reviews are by far and away our best marketing tool” which is something that Wenda McArthur mentioned, although in the context of this being a limiting factor where selectors rely too heavily on reviews to make their purchases. Deborah Rush summarizes her view of the relationship in the terms you might expect from someone focused on marketing and sales:

We should be working together more as a basic economic principle...supply and demand. We have the supply to address the [libraries’] need for demand.

3.4 A Sample of Coteau Books in Canadian

Public Libraries

The comments from Nik Burton, Wenda McArthur and Deborah Rush give an anecdotal take on the relationship between publishers and libraries but it is informative to see if the reality matches their comments. Is there a significant representation of the range of Coteau titles in public libraries across Canada?

To assess this, I decided to do a holding study. I chose a variety of libraries that represented all regions of Canada and all size from small rural systems to large urban ones. I then chose a number of books that I felt represented the range of Coteau's publishing mandate, authors from across the country, award-winners and recent releases.

On the following page are capsule summaries of the books as well as a brief explanation of why they were chosen.

<p>1. <i>A Promise of Salt</i> – Lori Miseck, Edmonton (Nonfiction) 2002. – won the Alberta Book Award for non-fiction in 2002</p>
<p>2. <i>A Song For Nettie Johnson</i> – Gloria Sawai, Edmonton (Short Fiction) 2001. – won the Governor General’s Award for Fiction in 2002</p>
<p>3. <i>Dinosaur Hideout</i> (2003), <i>Dinosaur Breakout</i> (2004), <i>Dinosaur Stakeout</i> (2006) – Judith Silverthorne, Regina (Young Adult) – popular series by well-known Saskatchewan children’s author. “Dinosaur Stakeout” has just been released and presumably most libraries who purchase one title would want to own all in the series.</p>
<p>4. <i>Heroic Adventures of Donny Coyote</i> – Ken Mitchell, Regina (Novel) 2003. – most recent novel by Order of Canada member.</p>
<p>5. <i>The Gift of the Hawk</i> – Randy Lundy, Regina (Poetry) 2004. – winner of the Sask Book Award for First Peoples Publishing</p>
<p>6. <i>The Hour of Bad Decisions</i> – Russell Wangersky, St. John’s (Short Fiction) 2006. – the first collection by a prominent Canadian journalist was part of Coteau’s Spring 2006 releases and along with <u>Dinosaur Stakeout</u>, is the most recent book on this list.</p>

Here is what I discovered in terms of the holdings of each of these books in public libraries across Canada.

	Halifax	Montreal	Sudbury	London	Winnipeg	Weyburn	Fort McMurray	Kelowna	Yellowknife	Total
A Promise of Salt	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	1	1	7
A Song for Nettie Johnson	9*	8	1	10	2*	2	1	1	5	39
Dinosaur Hideout	3	0	0	3	1	11	0	1	1	20
Dinosaur Breakout	3	3	0	4	0	2	0	1	1	14
Dinosaur Stakeout	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heroic Adventures of Donny Coyote	0	0	0	0	6	2	0	0	1	9
The Gift of the Hawk	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
The Hour of Bad Decisions	2 [†]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	17	11	1	20	10	20	2	4	9	94

* - Count includes one sound recording produced by CNIB

† - Books shown as being on order

Italicized locations are part of a regional system.

(Study conducted on June 20, 2006)

Some very broad interpretations can be made based on a quick glance at this table. The impact of winning a major national

award is obvious as A Song For Nettie Johnson is the only book that is held by every system and twice as many copies of it are owned as the next highest book. Book club selections are a great way to sell multiple copies and this is reflected, not only in the holdings of this book in Montreal, London and Yellowknife but also in the multiple copies of The Adventures of Donny Coyote that were presumably purchased for this purpose in Winnipeg. As a regional press, the support of regional libraries is vital and Weyburn's library fulfills this role admirably, holding all but one of the sample titles (not counting the two recent releases on the list.)

On the other hand, both Fort McMurray and Kelowna must be seen as disappointments based on this criteria. Fort McMurray, a wealthy boomtown in northern Alberta, only holds two copies of the sample Coteau books, both by Alberta authors. Perhaps the fact that vast majority of Fort McMurray's population are young male oil workers who spend often spend long hours at their jobs is a factor in this under representation. Kelowna is also disappointing holding only four Coteau titles. A wealthy city in the interior of BC, full of retired senior citizens, many originally from Saskatchewan, should do better.

What this chart does not show but which has been mentioned as an important element by both librarians and publishers is the impact of positive reviews on the purchases of these books. (Don Mills at

Mississauga Public Library has spearheaded a study of this type in the past and told me at the 2006 CLA Conference in Ottawa that his library would be interested in re-doing a study of this type to provide up-to-date information.)

Another way to analyse this data is in light of the "One Book, One Library" idea. Assuming that a publisher's minimal goal is to get one copy of every one of their titles into every library in Canada – a goal that was expressed by Al Forrie, publisher of another Saskatchewan-based literary press that has many similarities to Coteau Books, during a presentation at the 2005 Saskatchewan Library Association conference entitled "Publisher, Teacher, Librarian: A Conversation", Coteau's record appears to be a hit and miss affair. In terms of this straight 1:1 ratio, there are a lot of zeroes in the chart. But if you total the number of the eight random titles (94) that are held by the nine libraries, you find that the average library is holding 1.3 Coteau books for every one library, slightly higher than that ideal 1:1 ratio. (Of course, this still means that there are problems of access to all the books by all potential interested patrons.)

Another point made by Al Forrie is relevant: "aside from the national bestsellers, there is no Canadian-authored book that is available in all major Canadian libraries." This random sampling appears to confirm this statement. Disregarding the two books that

were recently published at the time of this survey, it's still a fact that not one system (including Weyburn) holds at least one copy of all of the titles. Sudbury is the most disappointing holding only one copy of any of the sample Coteau books and most likely only because that book won a high-profile national award.

As a small regional press, one of Coteau's main markets is libraries in nearby provinces but this (admittedly unscientific) sampling indicates that there is still work to do to reach these library systems. This exploration leaves us with more questions than it answers. Why are Coteau books not in more public libraries across Canada? Is this a problem on the publisher's side? On the library side? Both? Neither?

In the next section, we will extend our findings in section two and three to the rest of the Canadian book industry and hopefully provide some answers to these questions.

4.0 Current Benefits and Issues

As the last two sections have shown, there are a variety of benefits and issues in the current relationship between book publishers and public libraries within Canada. These are comprised of things that have a direct impact on the relationship (such as book pricing trends and targeted marketing initiatives) and those with a less direct but no less important impact (technological developments, funding climate.)

The benefits and issues of the relationship between public libraries and book publishers in Canada can be summarized as follows:

4.1 Benefits of the Current Relationship to Libraries

- Libraries are provided with the materials that provide the bulk of their core collection.
- Books produced by Canadian publishers have a relevance to the library's patrons that books from other geographic regions (both in other parts of Canada and beyond) may be lacking.
- Knowing that they can get the latest books that are filled with information of relevance to their lives in their community/ province/country makes patrons into return customers.

- In turn, this helps to make the public library the social-information-cultural hub of its community which is one of the main goals of any public library.

4.2 Benefits of the Relationship to the Publisher

- Publishers are guaranteed a regular customer that is more reliable than the individual book buyer who has numerous options for their entertainment-related disposable income. For example, some public libraries have standing orders for every book that a local publisher produces although this is less common than it once was (Lewis, 2006).
- Many libraries purchase multiple copies of the more popular titles, especially for book club selections or for multiple branches. This can make a significant difference to the bottom line of a publisher.
- Libraries also purchase replacement copies on occasion to take the place of damaged copies. This helps keep the publisher's backlist active.
- Library copies help promote other titles, authors and the publisher itself (The "If you like this author, you might also like

their other title" idea) which can lead to more sales, both to the library and to the patrons.

4.3 Issues Within The Relationship For Libraries

- The price of books is continually going up, even as collections budgets are getting cut.
- Canada's book publishers produce a huge volume of titles every year (12 000+) and libraries must struggle with choosing which titles to purchase and which ones they won't be able to support.
- Related to the last point, there are still gaps in the books that patrons want and need but which aren't being published meaning that libraries may go to other sources (foreign publishers) or simply have this need not be met.
- Libraries don't buy as many copies as they used to, instead relying on interlibrary loan (both from within their region/city and from other systems) to dispense the books. They must also rationalize the books that they do purchase. One publisher reports: "Years ago what would have happened is that the library system would buy a copy for each one of its branches. Now they'll buy three copies and they rely on the

interlibrary loans to distribute it.” (Organization of Ontario Book Publishers, 2006.)

4.4 Issues Within The Relationship For Publishers

- A major concern for publishers is a perception, rightly or wrongly, that a book that’s purchased once but lent out ten times equals ten lost sales. There is a system in place (Public Lending Rights or PLR) that provides annual compensation to authors/editors/illustrators/translators/photographers for their books being freely available in libraries based on how many copies are found in a random sample of libraries. But no similar compensation is provided to publishers.)
- Although most publishers realize this isn’t actually the case on a logical level, on a subconscious level many of them harbour the feeling that this is true. A personal anecdote may illustrate this better. I attended Book Expo in Toronto this year and bumped into a former colleague who works for a Manitoba-based publisher. When I told him I was now in library school, he responded: “Oh, you’re one of those ‘information wants to be free’ people.” From the tone of his

voice, it was pretty obvious he didn't think this was a good thing.

- The total library market for books continues to shrink. One wholesaler responding to the OPBO survey reports that the current market for a typical title in all of Ontario's public libraries ranged from dozens to possibly hundreds for a popular title. "Even for Harry Potter, libraries only purchased a thousand copies then shared them among their branches."

(Organization of Ontario Book Publishers, 2006.)

5.0 Conclusion

"What The Future May Bring"

"Ultimately libraries, publishers, and vendors need to work together more as a partnership – two of which are trying to make money and one of which is trying to stay afloat! It is easy for librarians to say they want publishers and vendors to think less of the business and more about service. But librarians need to think about both the business and the service. After all, we are all trying to provide books to the public in a timely and cost-effective manner. Perhaps we will see beyond the "crises" in [scholarly] communication to potential new opportunities." (Alonso, 2003)

In spite of the different histories, needs and goals of each partner, in the end, the relationship between book publishers and public libraries is ultimately one of mutual benefit. Like any relationship, it has its strengths and its weaknesses, its ups and its

downs. For the most part, both sides recognize that there has to be compromise, trust and goodwill for the relationship to be successful. This has been the case over the past 100 years and, appears as if it will be the case into the foreseeable future.

Others involved in this relationship play major roles as well. Vendors are the most obvious participant but everyone from authors to editors to printers to booksellers and book buyers, the media and educators has an impact on this relationship.

Other forces have yet to have their full impact determined. Technology, in the form of electronic books, is making major changes in the world of academic libraries as scholarly publishers are increasingly coming on board with the electronic licensing of their content after years of mistrust and suspicion. (Forrest, 2006.) For the most part, literary and trade publishers have been more reluctant to take this step – partly because of their different audiences and partly because of the costs involved. That is not to say that this isn't happening. "Coach House Books [of Toronto] is still the only publisher in Canada - and perhaps the world - to publish its entire frontlist in unexpurgated form on the World Wide Web, as HTML 'books'." (Libraries and Archives Canada, 2001)

Another technology-related initiative that will impact libraries is the BookNet Canada project. This project compiles anonymous point-

of-sale data from booksellers across Canada (including alternate retailers such as grocery stores, wholesale clubs and library wholesalers) and makes this information available to other booksellers, publishers and other book industry stakeholders. For example, the bestseller lists currently being printed in Quill & Quire, are generated by BookNet. Unlike the past when bestseller lists were compiled in a more qualitative manner using sample surveys of sales at bookstores, these are now very accurate, based on actual, comprehensive sales data from bookstores across Canada.

Although details about the possibilities for libraries to access this information weren't available on the BookNet web site (and an e-mail to Michael Tamblyn who is the President and CEO of BookNet received no reply) presumably a library could purchase a BookNet membership and also have access to information about the current bestselling books and sales trends, both in their region and across the country. And of course, with library vendors being one of the sellers that are included in their data set, libraries should be able to find out about library-specific trends.

Another item that was touched on briefly in the Coteau Books case study section - the goal of placing one copy of every Canadian-published title in every Canadian public library - perhaps isn't as unrealistic as it may seem, especially for larger public libraries.

ACP reports that about 12,000 Canadian titles are published each year. At an average cost of perhaps \$17.50 per title (*Canadian* dollars, and not taking into account any wholesalers' discounts), the entire list of Canadian publishers' titles could be acquired for \$210,000. Perhaps that commitment is too much to expect of our larger libraries, or even a few regional consortia of libraries. Surely, though, acquiring all of the 'literary' titles published each year – about 2,000 of them for an estimated expenditure of \$35,000 – is not beyond the financial capabilities of most medium and larger public libraries, nor of all academic libraries in institutions with arts programs. (Cameron, 2006)

This doesn't account for the fact that the actual cost for libraries to purchase, process and shelf a book is estimated to make the final expense 1.5x the cover price (McKechnie, 2006). But it still a laudable goal, both for publishers and libraries.

Perhaps the last word on the subject should be given to the prototypical librarian, Nancy Pearl, who was the inspiration for the popular Librarian Action Figure. In an interview with ABEBooks.com, Ms. Pearl was asked "How should libraries and the book industry work together?" She replied that "in general libraries and the book industry work together well" but went on to say that there is always more they could do. She cited the specific example of her own book tours to promote Book Lust and More Book Lust. "I do wish that more publishers would recognize that libraries are great venues for author events, and think of libraries when they're planning author events."

She says that events at libraries draw as well as bookstore events, allow book sales by a local bookstore or the local Friends of the Library group and are a natural connection. (ABEBooks, no date)

It's a microscopic example but one that is indicative of the many larger issues that have been discussed in this paper. Book publishers and libraries work well together for the most part but must always keep each other in mind and be aware of the possibilities to strengthen the relationship.

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Appendix One – PowerPoint Presentation
(Half-Hour Presentation to FIMS 501 Class – August 1, 2006)

The full version of these slides, with speaking notes, are
available online at:

[http://jason.hammond.net/mlis/
standingorderpresentation.pdf](http://jason.hammond.net/mlis/standingorderpresentation.pdf)

Appendix Two – Response of Nik Burton, Coteau Books’ Managing Editor to E-mail Query About Coteau’s Relationship With Public Libraries

How has the relationship developed over the years?

Coteau's relationship with libraries has evolved as we, and libraries, have evolved. From the direct contact of early days, to the coming and going of standing orders that used to exist for our books, to the prominence of library wholesalers and publisher sales forces.

How does Coteau currently get its books into public libraries?

Some, but not all, buyers at public libraries are visited by the sales reps of our sales and distribution operation, Fitzhenry & Whiteside. More prevalent, I'd say, is that our people sell our books to ULS and other library wholesalers, and libraries get them that way.

How does Coteau market to libraries?

Primarily through direct mailing of our catalogue. Displays at library conferences. There are also the events we sometimes still have with libraries.

Some of the benefits of dealing with libraries in the past?

Libraries don't return the books they buy. Libraries used to see themselves as having a cultural activist mandate for their collection -- they were champions of local and Canadian literature, educating their reading audience as to what was out there as opposed to only catering to demand. Libraries were often great places to have book launches and other literary events.

Some of the benefits of dealing with libraries today?

They are still, in many cases, a reliable avenue to creating an awareness in the public's mind about the existence of our books.

Any new benefits in the future?

How are libraries likely to change in the future? If we had a clearer idea of that, we'd be a little better able to tell whether the future changes will actually be a benefit. We don't.

Major issues dealing with libraries in the past?

- slow to order new books
- since most librarians were educated somewhere else, there was often

an awareness issue that had to be dealt with, to get them up to speed on the local books available

- buying around -- still a major issue is librarians who can't pry their heads out of the Baker & Taylor rep's sample kit
- "library discounts" -- who ever came up with this idea? Why on earth would an institutional end-user expect a discount from list?

What are some of the current issues?

- buying process, in places where it isn't just B&T, has gotten horrendously complex and opaque; we have little idea how we might influence it in our favour
- weeding of collections eliminates many books from easy public access -- the "discovery", the "impulse borrow" that lead to breakthroughs
- acquisition budgets are suffering, and the pressure to buy other materials than books can affect how many books are being bought
- chamber of commerce businesses closing their own resource centres and demanding those services from the public library, yet continuing to lobby for the debilitation of library budgets, putting the squeeze on literary or "soft" resources
- the pressure to chase the same best sellers as the bookstore is doing, in the name of patronage numbers, is horrendous
- libraries see themselves as multifunctional "resource centres" or "information supermarkets", not as repositories for the published wisdom of the society, and as community gathering centres
- "chip stud" librarians who are out to prove they aren't the negative-stereotypical librarian by embracing anything and everything that is new and electronic, and will alter their mandate to justify it

What are some of the future issues?

- exacerbation of current issues
- libraries wanting to abandon print resources altogether, in favour of only buying electronic rights for the "virtual library". Please!

What might librarians see as benefits and issues in dealing with publishers?

- Librarians who still carry the cultural mission in their work see publishers as their primary allies, packaging literary art into the manageable form that libraries and their patrons can most easily access.
- librarians might appreciate publishers as a "line of defence" that sifts quality information and literary art from the sea of self-generated material that is washing up on all our beaches
- some librarians resent having to pay for books at all, thinking of their

presence on bookshelves as free promotion for the publisher

- librarians who are attempting to compete with bookstores for patrons resent the feeling that they are "second-priority" customers for book shipments in cases where there is pressure on the available copies -- they feel the attitude is that librarians "have" to buy titles, whether they are timely or not -- bookstores don't -- so librarians can wait for the reprint

- librarians resent what they feel as the publishers' sense of entitlement to the space on their shelves, and the lion's share of their acquisition budgets. They see many publishers who produce whatever they want, whether there's a demand for it or not (mission driven), and then expect library purchases, with no sensitivity to the fact that today's library has to meet the expanding demands of its patronage community with shrinking financial, facility and staff resources, or suffer the consequences at the hands of the head-counting budgeteers.

Appendix Three – Response of Wenda McArthur, Coteau Books Board Member and Public Librarian to E-mail Query About Coteau’s Relationship With Public Libraries

I’ll answer these questions or give comments based on my experiences both at Regina Public Library (RPL), where I worked for over 10 years, and Saskatoon Public Library (SPL), where I’ve been for the last 12 years.

This may ramble a bit.

Both library systems have collection policies that support buying Canadian books (Canadian authors, Canadian publishers, Canadian content). Having said that, we tend not to buy regional stuff that isn’t our region—especially non-fiction, unless it seems to be essential information or particularly interesting content. We’re more likely to buy fiction from Newfoundland than non-fiction, for example. I think both systems have scored very well when they took part in the Access Copyright surveys. That is, we do buy lots of Canadian books. It should be possible for a publisher (or publishers’ group, such as the ACP or SPG) to ask for a copy of a library’s collection policies relating to the buying of Canadian books.

Because there are stated collection policies supporting buying Canadian books, I’ve had the thought that some time publishers should challenge libraries on what they buy. That is, if there were time to do this, a publisher could check library holdings and library collection policies and challenge those libraries that aren’t meeting their own policies—that is, that don’t seem to be buying enough Canadian books.

I’ve found a particular problem relating to children’s books. A few years ago, I attended a session at the annual Canadian Library Association conference. The session, as I remember it, was about the reviewing of children’s books in Canada. It was full of children’s librarians talking about buying Canadian children’s books. What came across loud and clear from these librarians from across Canada was that they wouldn’t buy a children’s book without a good review of it. Well, we know how long it takes to get reviews and we know that only a small percentage of Canadian children’s books are ever reviewed. These people will not buy a new Robert Munsch book until it’s

reviewed! So that poses a special problem for publishers. Whether or not things have improved, I'm not sure. I think at SPL we still rely on reviews before buying children's books.

There is a big **exception** to this, and it will make you crazy. SPL and RPL establish profile buying with wholesalers, and will accept almost anything that is sent to them, including children's books. SPL does profile buying with ULS—RPL with Toronto (maybe National?). We buy, both through profile and at our local bookstore, zillions of children's paperbacks, many of which are series books. No reviews of these are ever checked. As you can imagine, some series are better than others. *Captain Underpants*, I'm told, is great fun. On the other hand, I haven't read Mary-Kate and Ashley books, but are they likely quality literature? Lots of children's paperbacks a library buys probably don't meet that library's own selection criteria.

So the problems might be: libraries not buying Coteau children's books, because they haven't been reviewed or because they aren't sent on the ULS profile.

I think it's fair to say that any library buying/collection development comes down to the people involved. Who is doing the selection? Most libraries now have centralized collection development/ordering, so there are only a few people in charge of buying all the materials for a library. This means that the particular skill and bent of the people doing the buying comes into play—that can't be denied, although librarians will tell you how expert and unbiased they are. No doubt if you get a collections librarian who is madly keen on Canadian books, well, more Canadian books will be bought. At SPL, book ordering is still done at a local (that is, branch) level. So a librarian at my branch might be on the lookout for Canadian and Coteau books, whereas a librarian at another branch might not be.

The librarian doing all the children's collection work at RPL spoke publicly (at a Sask Library Assoc conference) about how much she dislikes the covers on Canadian children's books, and how she thinks publishers should smarten up. I think she said she won't buy some books because of their covers. One wonders how much her strong displeasure affects her buying—hard to tell, but it's worrisome.

At SPL, we certainly get the Coteau catalogues, and the library system will buy at least one copy of almost everything. The trick is to get libraries buying multiple copies. SPL has four major branches in addition to the main library, so we can easily be buying 5 copies of a

Coteau book. I doubt that we're doing that. It's unlikely that our system would buy more than one or 2 copies of a poetry book, unless it's Glen Sorestad or someone else local. Libraries with local history depts buy a copy to keep forever in their collection, if it's a Sask book.

And yes, we do weed out books, Canadian, Coteau, and otherwise. Even in a large branch such as mine, we don't keep things forever. But we do expect the main library to keep copies, and, by and large, they do. There are still 6 copies of *Perdue* at SPL, for example (which surprises even me!) Only the main library and local history room have copies of *Night Games* by Currie.

I find librarians aren't very keen on talking to sales reps or going to sessions (Kate Walker Company used to hold a session each season to talk about new books). At the branches, we're not encouraged to see reps or go to sessions. Usually someone from the main library talks to the rep and highlights things in the catalogue, for selectors in branches to see.

The question of libraries' collection budgets is an interesting one, and I can only comment from my experience at RPL and SPL. Both are well funded systems, and monies for collections have been maintained. Library boards, you'll be happy to know, tend not to want to cut collection budgets. They cut other things, but do seem to realize they should buy materials. I haven't analyzed whether or not SPL's collection budget is keeping up with inflation and other rising costs, but I can say that we feel our budget is at least adequate and that we have "enough" most years. I guess all you can take from this is that, while many libraries are probably moaning about cuts to collection budget, you can't be sure that it's the case everywhere. Yes, we do spend big money on electronic resources—either we buy on our own or are part of consortia (Provincial Library in Sask organizes subscriptions). We transfer monies from our print budgets to the electronic lines, but the monies come from the cancellation of expensive print reference books. I can't say if the need for electronic resources has affected the buying of Canadian or Coteau books.

Do we spend lots of money on bestsellers and less money on things that won't circulate as well? We try to achieve balance. We have a formula for bestsellers and buy numbers of copies based on the number of requests for a title. But there's a ceiling on the number we will buy, so we don't overspend on bestsellers.

I'll jump here to another topic—the cataloguing of materials. SPL was slow to get into the cataloguing of some of its paperbacks. For years, we maintained a “browsing” uncatalogued paperback collection. That's not to say that we didn't catalogue paperbacks: we buy Coteau books, all of which are paperbacks, and we catalogue a lot of them. But we didn't catalogue them all. So, if you were checking to see if SPL held a certain Coteau title, especially a children's title, you couldn't know for sure if it was in the collection. Thus, if the publisher or any interested party was monitoring whether or not SPL carried its titles, it was not possible to do so. This affected Access Copyright surveys, I'm sure.

I'll make another jump to displays at conferences. Librarians and teachers are notorious non-spenders, at conferences and elsewhere. Also, many librarians attending conferences don't have the authority to buy, especially to buy on the spot. We need approval, purchase orders, rigamarole. Displays promote awareness, but don't expect sales. If you can get librarians to go to author readings or author promotion sessions at conferences, that's a help to make them aware. But some will never attend, and the ones who attend are often the converted. I still think readings and sessions are a good idea. There still are librarians out there who love books. I've attended CLA conference sessions about books—books for boy readers, award-winning books, etc.—that had very good attendance. And librarians tend to like author-reading lunches at conferences—the involvement of food is helpful!

Nik says that libraries see themselves as resource centres and information supermarkets, and, partly, we do. But I say that we also see ourselves as “repositories for the published wisdom of the society,” albeit not to the extent you might like. As I said before, this means that only the main library has a copy of a title, but we do have the title. With our excellent delivery system, that title can get to anyone anywhere anytime. (With interlibrary loan, this applies not just to the city, but to the province and to the whole of Canada and even beyond.) We very much see ourselves as community gathering centres, increasingly, as it turns out, which means we are a lot more than books. But going back to books: I run the busiest branch, second only to the whole of the main library for circulation, in the SPL system. In 2005, my branch circulated 409,574 books. It's hard for you to have a perspective on that figure without comparisons, but, in SPL terms, our circulation is huge. Even looking at it as a raw number—over 400,000 books went out of this one branch in 2005. Libraries are finding a steady increase in circulation of videos and DVDs—actually, in the circulation of all audiovisual materials. But

books are still holding their own. The book circulation at my branch was 62% of total circ, while the circ of videos and DVDs represented 26% of total circ. My point here is: books aren't dead. People still read books.

Time to make sure I answered Jason's questions:

- Getting Coteau books into SPL

The catalogues come here, are circulated, and books are bought. That remains o.k. I worry a bit about the children's books, because of the review factor and because we buy all paperbacks through ULS. Our children's profiles with ULS tend to be for series books, mostly American, although we can buy individual titles. The children's librarian at my branch says she has told ULS that she wants Canadian children's books, but she says that she is not getting them in the numbers she should be getting. We've only been ordering through ULS for a year, and are still working out kinks, but I have concerns that our needs aren't being met. We'll deal with that as a library system, but it means that we might not be getting the Coteau children's books, even though we want them. The wholesalers might be a problem, and might be where Coteau needs to do some work. I'm sure they concentrate on American paperbacks because of the numbers, price, and demand.

- Marketing directly to libraries

I'm not sure this would help. What I can see is finding out the key people and somehow getting to them. But I suspect they're cagey about dodging publishers. Here at SPL there's one children's librarian at the main library who has a lot of influence on what the other children's librarians buy. Would she talk to, or establish a relationship with, a publisher's rep or a Coteau person? I don't know. At RPL, one person does all the children's buying, another does all the adult book buying, so we need to get to those two people if we haven't already. At SPL, there's a fiction specialist, who influences the buying of adult fiction. The librarians in the branches do their own selection (as I say, somewhat influenced by main library selectors), but there's no easy way to get to them all (5 branches with two librarians at each, one branch with one librarian).

Final thoughts:

I haven't done much selection in my librarian life, because my job has been administration/management. When I do select, however, I do the following:

- Buy as many Canadian books as I can

- Buy what I think my public (the people who come into my location) will read. So, sorry Coteau, but people don't read short stories. I'll buy short stories by local authors, but am careful of what short stories I buy otherwise. As for poetry, well, even fewer people read that, as you well know. I'll buy a local author for my branch, and expect the main library to buy other Canadian poetry, or I'll perhaps buy an anthology. With adult books, I'll buy these without reviews—just buy them from the catalogue.

So all I'm saying here is what you know: readers' tastes are what they are. If publishers insist on publishing short stories and poetry, well, libraries will buy the books in limited numbers. That's the reality.

With children's books, I would be more daring than many children's librarians—I would buy Canadian, even without a review.

- Buy what might be less popular but still has an audience. I make a point of buying trade paperback fiction in a wide variety of titles, because I think these are often good literature and are definitely good reading. They're what I read, and there are people like me out there. Not everyone is a mass market, American bestseller, Oprah book reader, and we need to meet all needs. Having said that, not all selectors are like me. One of the paperback selectors at my branch didn't like buying trade paperback fiction because of the price. (I didn't let price bother me—our budget could handle it.)
- Coteau doesn't do much non-fiction, so I won't speak to it.

I think this is more than you expected to hear from me! Enough!

Appendix Three – Response of Deborah Rush, Coteau Books Sales and Marketing Manager to E-mail Query About Coteau’s Relationship With Public Libraries

How has the relationship developed over the years?

We are truly at the mercy of wholesales and their “holists” or standing orders. We have to trust that our sales force , which in most cases is dedicated to wholesalers, is presenting our books properly. Due to the demands of libraries (marc records, etc..) selling directly is not an option.

How does Coteau currently get its books into public libraries?

By reviews indirectly and wholesalers directly, which is some cases are American (Baker & Taylor, Ingram) which presents another dynamic.

How does Coteau market to libraries?

Reviews are by far away our best marketing tool.

Some of the benefits of dealing with libraries in the past?

No returns. And educating their patrons beyond what a local bookseller can do by providing complete collections and all backlist.

Some of the benefits of dealing with libraries today?

No returns and as above, although that is dwindling as they focus on more technology.

Any new benefits in the future?

We hope that Canadian wholesalers will become more efficient/competitive and eliminate any cross border buying.

Major issues dealing with libraries in the past?

That they deviate from just buying multiple ‘hot’ titles (Atwood/Rowling) and concentrate on having complete collections that reflect Canadian publishing and literary/poetry titles.

What are some of the current issues?

Return to breadth and depth in their collections. Every book in every library. Less focus on technology and a return to printed matter.

Future Issues?

(No response)

What might librarians see as benefits and issues in dealing with publishers?

We should be working together more as a basic economic principle...supply and demand. We have the supply to address the need for demand.

Libraries are trying to be too many things to too many people and in many ways are not able to always meet those demands.