



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

13.

### E-Content Campaign

<b>Date:</b>	June 17, 2019
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

### SUMMARY

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The purpose of this report is to ask that the Toronto Public Library Board request that Toronto City Council formally indicates its support of the Canadian Urban Libraries Council's/Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada's (CULC/CBUC) campaign to improve Canadian public libraries' access to ebooks and other econtent by passing a resolution and forwarding notice of that resolution to local Federal Members of Parliament and candidates in October's Federal Election.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### **The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:**

1. seeks Toronto City Council's endorsement of a draft resolution outlined in Attachment 1, requesting the City of Toronto to:
  - a. indicate their support for CULC's/CBUC's efforts to increase access to ebooks and other econtent for library users in Toronto and across Canada;
  - b. call on the Federal government to investigate the barriers faced by libraries in acquiring ebooks and other econtent and the problems that poses for vulnerable demographic groups in Canada; and
  - c. ask the Federal government to develop a solution that increases access to ebooks and other econtent across Canada and assists libraries in meeting the cost requirements to acquire ebooks and other econtent.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

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There is no financial impact arising from the recommendation in this report.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

At the January 21, 2019 Library Board meeting, a presentation was made regarding the CULC's/CBUC's #eContentforLibraries campaign led by Toronto Public Library. The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness of the issues facing Canadian public libraries regarding econtent access and pricing, to engage public libraries and their customers across the country, and to encourage multinational publishers to open a dialogue with public libraries. The two-week, largely online campaign was focused on eaudiobook access issues and ebook and eaudiobook pricing.

Building on the momentum gained through the #eContentforLibraries campaign, CULC/CBUC has embarked on the next phase in the process, that of building support amongst governments for Canadian libraries' ability to access ebooks and other econtent.

## **COMMENTS**

Members of CULC/CBUC spend approximately \$100 million in public funds annually on library acquisitions. Despite that significant expenditure, libraries increasingly struggle to develop their digital collections (ebooks and eaudiobooks) due to prohibitively expensive pricing models. Moreover, some important titles, including Canadian ones, are not made available to Canadian libraries by multinational publishers.

Those restrictions and costs make it difficult for libraries to provide important services that contribute to thriving and engaged communities, including vulnerable groups like seniors, low income families, youth and new Canadians.

CULC/CBUC is asking municipal leaders to recognize the important role that libraries play in our communities and to help to advocate for a solution to the barriers that Canadian libraries face in accessing ebooks and other econtent. Accordingly, it is requesting that municipalities formally indicate their support of CULC's/CBUC's campaign to improve Canadian public libraries' access to ebooks and other econtent by passing a resolution and forwarding notice of that resolution to local Federal Members of Parliament and candidates in the October Federal Election.

Although libraries are governed provincially, the Federal government is being targeted as it is best placed provide a comprehensive, Canada-wide solution to the digital access issue

## **CONCLUSION**

By participating in the latest phase of the #eContentforLibraries campaign, the Toronto Public Library Board will play a part in increasing government and stakeholder awareness of the negative impacts that obstacles to acquiring ebooks and other econtent have on libraries and in ensuring that Canadian libraries can meet the growing demand for ebooks and other econtent.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian

**E-Content Campaign - Draft Municipal Motion**

WHEREAS, the City of Toronto recognizes the important role that libraries play in our community. Libraries and the early literacy programs that they run are integral to developing proficient readers and ensuring that children succeed in school. More and more, digital literacy programs run by libraries also help ensure that citizens can contribute to our digital world. Additionally, vulnerable demographic groups, including seniors, low income families, youth, and new Canadians rely on access to libraries as an important tool for their participation in the community – from education to searching for jobs to consuming Canadian cultural materials, and

WHEREAS, libraries in our community recognize that our users increasingly seek to access e-books and other e-content offered by multinational publishers, and that access to those publications is too often curtailed by prohibitively high licensing fees or else entirely denied to Canadian libraries, and

WHEREAS, libraries must be in a position to offer e-books and other e-content to their users as part of their service offering to our community, particularly given the contemporary rapid pace of digitization of educational and cultural materials.

Now, therefore be it resolved that the City of Toronto does hereby:

1. Indicate our support for the Canadian Urban Libraries Council in its efforts to increase access to ebooks and other econtent for library users in Toronto and across Canada;
2. Call on the Federal government to investigate the barriers faced by libraries in acquiring ebooks and other econtent and the problems that poses for vulnerable demographic groups in Canada; and
3. Further ask the Federal government to develop a solution that increases access to ebooks and other econtent across Canada and assists libraries in meeting the cost requirements to acquire e-books and other e-content.