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The Case for Stocking New Books
An Open Letter from the Higher Education Committee of the
Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP)

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The Association of Canadian Publishers represents 115 small- and medium-sized publishing firms from all parts of the country. Our membership includes approximately 20 companies that publish books and other resources for the Canadian post-secondary market. We value our long and mutually supportive relationship with campus bookstores, and we sincerely appreciate the important work you do to support higher education in changing and challenging circumstances.

I am writing on behalf of our members to address an issue recently encountered by some members of the ACP Higher Education Committee: some bookstores have been stocking only used copies of texts that have been adopted for some courses. We understand that bookstores are under pressure to offer only the lowest-priced options. But we believe there are important reasons to avoid the practice of stocking only—or primarily—used copies.

First, we believe students deserve the choice of purchasing new books. We know that some students actually prefer to purchase new—a copy with no dog ears, no yellow highlighting, no scribbled notes, no pages about to fall out. This is something we hear from instructors as well.

Second, a system where publishers continue to pay substantial costs (such as those for complimentary copies for instructors) and receive no corresponding revenue is simply not sustainable. For each new adoption publishers supply desk copies at their own expense, not only for the primary instructor, but often for several teaching assistants as well. These costs are in addition to the significant investment required to publish original Canadian learning resources – the writing, editing, design, and print and digital production required to bring a book to market.

Everyone sympathizes with students of limited means, but neither the authors nor the publisher get paid when a used book is sold, and both depend on getting paid in order to be able to continue to produce new materials.

The Higher Education members of the ACP strive to be good partners in education, and to offer value for money. We're not the massive international companies that people picture when they criticize publishers, and we're not the ones famous for creating unnecessary new editions. The majority of our authors are Canadian professors writing for audiences of Canadian students. We work together to produce high-quality, affordable books that make a meaningful contribution to Canada's higher education system.



We're not asking bookstores to stock new resources exclusively, but we believe that students and faculty should have the choice to buy new. If they are only offered used copies, soon there will be no new copies. We hope that campus bookstores will show their support for Canadian authors, Canadian pedagogy, and the sustainability of the Canadian publishing industry by stocking a quantity of new copies of every title adopted for course text use.

Yours sincerely,

Glenn Rollans
Chair, ACP Higher Education Committee
glenn.rollans@brusheducation.ca