The Effect of METADATA on Book Sales

Analysis of the Relationship Between Enriched Metadata and Book Sales

A study conducted by La Société de gestion de la BTLF in partnership with L’Association nationale des éditeurs de livres and HEC Montréal’s Professorship en données massives pour les arts et la culture

Presented by Patrick Joly - Executive Director, BTLF

We would like to thank The Canada Council for the Arts for its support.
BTLF – Who are we?

- Leader in implementing international standards in Quebec’s French language book industry.
- Hub for technology integration in Quebec’s French language book industry.

Our mission:

- To improve the marketing of French language publishing products in Canada and Quebec;
- To promote and encourage the marketing of Canada and Quebec’s French language publishing products abroad;
- To encourage and facilitate communication and cooperation between publishers, booksellers, distributors, librarians and other actors of the book industry.
Our main products

- **Memento:**
  - A comprehensive online catalogue for French language publishing products in Quebec;
  - The key source of information for libraries and supply chain professionals and a communication tool for libraries and bookstores in the book acquisition process.

- **Gaspard:**
  - Real time sales information service for French language books in Canada;
  - A business management and analysis tool, *Gaspard* provides a comprehensive portrait of Canada’s French language book;
  - Many best-seller lists by theme;
  - Annual market review;
  - Personalized scorecards, Categories vs Industry;
  - *Gaspard* samples about 60% of the market.
A few words on the Quebec Book trade

The Act Respecting the Development of Quebec Firms in the Book Industry (Law 51), adopted in 1981, aims at increasing territorial and economic accessibility by supporting the establishment of a province-wide network of accredited bookstores and at developing the book industry infrastructure.

The Act applies to booksellers, publishers and accredited distributors as well as institutional customers.

It has allowed the creation of a rich publishing activity in Quebec. Roughly 50% of copies sold in the province are from Quebec-based publishers.

Retail sales in Quebec French language book market represents roughly 300 M Euros per year.

As a result: The richness of the publishing activity in a relatively small market has resulted in a large number of small publishing houses (limited staff and resources)
**Monique Bégin : entretiens**

**Daniel Raulet**

**ISBN** 978-2-7646-2460-9
**EAN** 9782764624609

**Éditeur** BOREAL, Montréal
**Collection** Trajectoires

**Marché canadien** (Livre, disponible, édite, accompagné et TVQ à titre indicatif seulement)
**FAN** 9782764652460
**Disponibilité** Disponible - En stock : > à 20 unités(s) en date du 3 février 2020
**Prix** 27,95 $
**No Interne** B0013782
**Distributeur** DIMEDIA (exclusif)
**Paru le** 11 octobre 2016
**Dernière mise à jour** 21 février 2018

**Support** Livre
**Description** Broché ; 312 pages

**Public** Tout public adulte

**Thème** Politique et administration publique / Vie politique / Hommes et femmes politiques

**Genre** Documents, essais / Témoignages

**Dewey** 320.92 Biographie
Gingras, Yves

L'impossible dialogue : sciences et religions

Yves Gingras

ISBN 978-2-7646-2412-8 Voir OPAC
EAN 9782764624128

Editeur BORÉAL, Montréal
Collection Essais et documents

Marché canadien (Prix, disponibilité, stock, exclusivité et TVQ à titre indicatif seulement)
EAN 9782764624128
Disponibilité Disponible - En stock : > à 20 unité(s) en date du 3 février 2020
Prix 27,95 €
No Interne B0009234
Distributeur DIMEDIA (exclusif)
Paru le 8 février 2016
Dernière mise à jour 21 février 2018

Support Livre
Description Broché ; 352 p.

Public Tout public adultes
Thème Religions et spiritualités / Religion / Religion et société
Genre Documents, essais / Essais

Dewey 261.5 Christianisme et disciplines profanes
Matière Religion et sciences — Histoire

Résumé
Cet ouvrage examine, dans la langue dure (du XVIe siècle à nos jours), les luttes pour l'autonomie de la recherche scientifique face aux institutions religieuses.

Du même auteur
Science, culture et nation
Leçons au frère Marie-Victorin : correspondance sur la sexualité humaine
L'affaire Maillé : l'éthique de la recherche devant les tribunaux
Recherches sociographiques, Vol. 58, No 2. Le Nord québécois
Histoire des sciences

Autres titres de cet auteur...

De la même collection
François-Xavier Garneau, poète, historien et patriote
Une démission tranquille : la dépolitisation de l'identité
Sales for title with enriched metadata were 12 times greater than those for title without metadata.

The question to ask

Does enriched book metadata improve sales?
Goal: To measure the effect of enriched metadata on sales of French-language books published by Canadian publishers in Gaspard-participating bookstores and other points of sale.

Data source: BTLF database on titles published between September 1, 2015 and May 15, 2019 by Canadian publishers that recorded a minimum of one sale during the period, a total of 19,558 titles.

Data studied: Presence or absence of the following: cover image, back cover, summary, reviews and biography.

Particularity: Taking into account the number of titles published per publisher and the number of titles sold per author in the analysis of the effect.

Replication of the analysis for digital books.
Methodology

- Studied publishing periods
  - Year 2016
  - Year 2017
  - January 1, 2018 to May 19, 2018

- The publisher and author linked to a title are both classified into one of three categories, respectively based on the number of titles published during the year preceding the publication date (publisher) and the number of copies sold since 2010 (author)

For example: Titles published in 2017

Table 1: Definition of the Types of Publishers and Authors for Titles Published in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low/Small</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Top/High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author (nb of copies sold 2010-2016)</td>
<td>0 to 302</td>
<td>303 to 6 526</td>
<td>more than 6 526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher (nb of titles published in 2016)</td>
<td>3 or fewer</td>
<td>4 to 20</td>
<td>more than 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- For each title, the number of copies sold during the year following the publication date is calculated
Taking into account the type of publisher and author allows for the monitoring of the effect these two variables have on the impact of metadata on sales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of publisher</th>
<th>Nb of publishers</th>
<th>Avg quantity sold per title</th>
<th>Nb of titles published</th>
<th>% of titles with at least one of 5 types of metadata</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small-volume</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>1 423</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-volume</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>3 349</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large-volume</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>8 084</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Allows to verify if the impact differs according to the size of the publisher/author.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of author</th>
<th>Nb of authors</th>
<th>Avg quantity sold per title</th>
<th>Nb of titles published</th>
<th>% of titles with at least one of 5 types of metadata</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-seller</td>
<td>3 710</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>6 545</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-seller</td>
<td>2 285</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>3 357</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-seller</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>1 246</td>
<td>2 954</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Statistics on the Presence of Metadata

Table 4: Percentage of Titles with Metadata per Type of Publisher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of publisher</th>
<th>No metadata</th>
<th>Cover image and summary only</th>
<th>Cover image w/o summary only</th>
<th>Cover image, summary and others</th>
<th>Other types of metadata w/o cover image</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small-volume</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-volume</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-volume</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Observation 1**

Greater sales with metadata for medium and high-volume publishers

**Graph 1:**

Average Quantity of Copies Sold per Title With at Least One Type of Metadata and Without Metadata, per Type of Author and Type of Publisher

Bracketed figures relate to the number of titles processed overall while figures not between brackets relate to the average quantity sold per title. The letter $S$ indicates a statistically significant difference between the two figures at the right.
Observation 2

The presence of a cover image has a significant impact on medium and high-volume publishers and on medium and top-selling authors.

Graph 2:
Average Quantity of Copies Sold per Title With and Without a Cover Image, per Type of Author and Type of Publisher

Bracketed figures relate to the number of titles processed overall while figures not between brackets relate to the average quantity sold per title. The letter S indicates a statistically significant difference between the two figures at the right.
Observation 3

The presence of a cover image before the publication date significantly increases sales for lower-selling authors.

Graph 3:
Average Quantity of Copies Sold per Title According to the Availability of a Cover Image Prior to the Publication Date or After it, per Type of Author

Bracketed figures relate to the number of titles processed overall while figures not between brackets relate to the average quantity sold per title. The letter S indicates a statistically significant difference between the two figures at the right.
Observation 4

Adding a summary without a cover image has no impact; with a cover image present, the summary has an impact on top-selling authors and on medium and high-volume publishers.

Graph 4:

Average Quantity of Copies Sold per Title With or Without a Summary in the Presence or Absence of a Cover Image, per Type of Author and Type of Publisher

Bracketed figures relate to the number of titles processed overall while figures not between brackets relate to the average quantity sold per title. The letter S indicates a statistically significant difference between the two figures at the right.
Observation 5

Adding a back cover, a summary and a biography to the cover image increases sales for medium and high-volume publishers.

Graph 5:

Average Quantity of Copies Sold per Title with only a Cover Image or with Four Types of Metadata (Cover Image, Back Cover, Summary and Biography), per Type of Publisher.

Bracketed figures relate to the number of titles processed overall while figures not between brackets relate to the average quantity sold per title. The letter S indicates a statistically significant difference between the two figures at the right.
Observation 6

Adding metadata increases sales for Children/Youth, Literature and Lifestyle categories

Graph 6:
Average Quantity of Copies Sold per Title Without Metadata and With at Least One Type of Metadata, per Category

Bracketed figures relate to the number of titles processed overall while figures not between brackets relate to the average quantity sold per title. The letter S indicates a statistically significant difference between the two figures at the right.
What About Digital Books?

Let’s have a look at the data from
Table 5: Distribution of Digital Titles According to the Type of Metadata and the Type of Format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of metadata</th>
<th>Audio</th>
<th>ePub</th>
<th>Mobile</th>
<th>PDF</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography and summary</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>7 503</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>9 008</td>
<td>16 873</td>
<td>90.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews and biography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews and summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews, biography and summary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back cover and biography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back cover and summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back cover, biography and summary</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>992</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back cover, reviews and biography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back cover, reviews, biography and summary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>8 182</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10 085</td>
<td>18 656</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observation 7

The availability of metadata prior to the publication date has a positive impact on ePub sales for medium and high-volume publishers, and on PDF sales for high-volume publishers.

Graph 7:
Average Quantity of Copies Sold per Digital Title According to the Date of Availability of Metadata, per Type of Publisher and Type of Digital Format

Bracketed figures relate to the number of titles processed overall while figures not between brackets relate to the average quantity sold per title. The letter S indicates a statistically significant difference between the two figures at the right.
## Enriched Metadata DOES Help Selling More Books!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation 1</th>
<th>Greater sales with metadata for medium and high-volume publishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation 2</td>
<td>The presence of a cover image has a significant impact on medium and high-volume publishers and on medium and top-selling authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 3</td>
<td>The presence of a cover image before the publication date significantly increases sales for lower-selling authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 4</td>
<td>Adding a summary without a cover image has no impact; with a cover image present, the summary has an impact on top-selling authors and on medium and high-volume publishers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Adding a back cover, a summary and a biography to the cover image increases sales for medium and high-volume publishers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 6</td>
<td>Adding metadata increases sales for Children/Youth, Literature and Lifestyle categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 7</td>
<td>The availability of metadata prior to the publication date has a positive impact on ePub sales for medium and high-volume publishers, and on PDF sales for high-volume publishers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHY?**
Next Steps

- BTLF encourages publishers to submit the most comprehensive metadata possible prior to the publication date to the benefit of all actors of the book supply chain in Quebec.

- Based on these observations, BTLF intends to conduct complementary analysis with members of the supply chain in order to refine and personalize their understanding.

- BTLF wishes to work with publishers in order to help them simplify metadata production and transmission.
Do you want to download the report?

French and English versions available: [http://btlf.ca/etude-de-leffet-des-metadonnees-sur-les-ventes-de-livres-analyse-de-la-relation-entre-les-metadonnees-denrichissement-et-la-vente-de-livres/](http://btlf.ca/etude-de-leffet-des-metadonnees-sur-les-ventes-de-livres-analyse-de-la-relation-entre-les-metadonnees-denrichissement-et-la-vente-de-livres/)

...or [https://bit.ly/3nETRcC](https://bit.ly/3nETRcC)
BTLF would like to thank its partners.