



Heated Rivalry: A game changer for Romance books

BookNet Canada · February 12, 2026 · Research & Analysis

We've done a lot of talking about the [Romance genre at BookNet](#) over the years and here we are, back to do it some more — it is close to Valentine's Day after all!

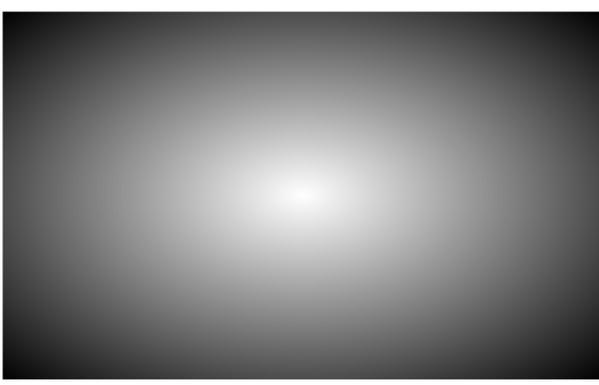
Below, we'll share insights into the buying and borrowing of Romance titles, as well as the performance of everyone's favourite conversation subject: *Heated Rivalry*. But if you want to get the scoop on the ripple effect of the romance boom in the publishing industry, [this upcoming Tech Forum session](#) is for you: A group of industry professionals will share their insights into the opportunities this rise in popularity brings, the surprising ways they're leveraging the trend beyond romance titles, the role of metadata in helping readers, booksellers, and librarians find the perfect match for the trend of the moment, and more. [Register now!](#)

Now, let's take a look at romance data with the help BookNet Canada's [SalesData](#), the national sales tracking service for the Canadian English-language trade book market, and [LibraryData](#), the national library collection and circulation analysis tool, to track the print book sales and library circulation in Canada.

Loans and sales of romance books

Loans of books in the Fiction / Romance BISAC category are flat from 2024 to now, holding at 3% of all library loans for each quarter in that time period.

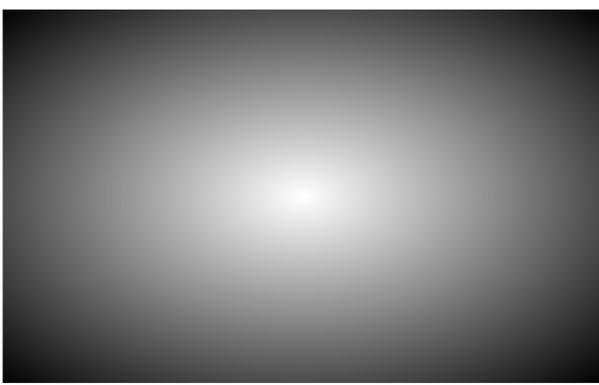
Sales have also been holding fairly steady for each quarter in 2024 and 2025, looking at the unit sales in the graph below. However, we can see that when we add in the data for 2026 to date (covering the period up to the week ending February 8), the share of Romance sales as a percentage of the total market is up.



The *Heated Rivalry* effect

If you've read any pop culture news this year, you've probably already guessed why: It's largely driven by Rachel Reid's *Heated Rivalry*. Originally published in 2019, the TV adaptation premiered on November 28, 2025 on Crave. It's become such a big hit, even [Prime Minister Mark Carney has gotten swept up](#) in the phenomenon.

In fact, if you look at the top-selling titles in the Romance category for 2026 so far, the first six titles on the list are all of the six books in Rachel Reid's [Game Changers](#) series. But, likely due to the name of the TV show, the second book in the series, *Heated Rivalry*, is the one winning the sales face-off. Sales for the title start growing at the beginning of November 2025, but really start to take off in the lead up to Christmas and only keep growing into 2026.



The picture is much the same in Canadian libraries; the holds and loans for the title in September 2025 are what you might expect for a 2019 title — steady. But library patrons might be a more tapped in bunch because at the beginning of October, holds start steadily creeping up for the title. And holds continue to grow right through to February, as we can see that there are more copies on order in Canadian libraries in an attempt to meet reader demand.



We can't wait to see if the impact of the show continues to drive book sales throughout 2026.

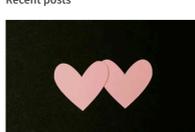
If you want more trends talk, join us for this [Tech Forum webinar about emerging trends](#) (it's a safe bet that we're going to do more since its popularity doesn't seem to be waning), but we'll also be trying to uncover the next trending category once the romance with Romance books has fizzled.

Are you a publisher, retailer, or librarian who wants to see more data like this? Check out [SalesData](#) and [LibraryData](#). Do you have questions about any of our products or services? [Contact us!](#)

Subscribe

Don't miss any new blog posts. Sign up for our weekly eNews to receive updates.

Recent posts



Heated Rivalry: A game changer for Romance books

Insights into romance trends and the performance of *Heated Rivalry*.

[Read More →](#)



Subject spotlight: Science Fiction

Sales and library circulation data of Science Fiction titles during the the fourth quarter of 2025.

[Read More →](#)



ONIX Codelist 72 released

Insights into the latest updates and additions made to ONIX codelists.

[Read More →](#)

Tagged: [canadian contributors](#), [canadian bestsellers](#), [library circulation](#)

♥ 0 Likes ♥ Share

Comments (0)

Oldest First

Preview

Older Post

[Subject spotlight: Science Fiction](#)

🔗 [Blog RSS](#)

The Canadian Book Market 2024 is the comprehensive guide to the Canadian market with in-depth category data.

GET YOUR COPY NOW

Listen to our latest podcast episode



- Research & Analysis (468)
- Ebooks (304)
- Tech Forum (273)
- Conferences & Events (261)
- Standards & Metadata (244)
- Bookselling (221)
- Publishing (197)
- ONIX (189)
- Marketing (152)
- Podcasts (124)
- ebookcraft (112)
- BookNet News (105)
- Loan Stars (75)
- Libraries (67)
- BiblioShare (59)
- 5 Questions With (53)
- SalesData (51)
- Catalist (43)
- Thema (43)
- Awards (30)
- Diversity & Inclusion (21)
- Publishing & COVID-19 (18)
- Sustainability (17)
- EU Regulations (16)
- LibraryData (10)
- ISNI (4)