

# Analyzing Book Checkout Trends at the Seattle Public Library: A 5-Year Data Study (2018-2022)

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# 1 Introduction

We present an preliminary examination of 11,749,255 checkouts from the Seattle Public Library system over a five-year period from 2018 to 2022. We intend to use this data – in concert with book review data from Goodreads – to examine Seattle’s literary tastes and reading habits.

Animating this analysis are more general questions about the contours of contemporary American readership.

- Why do some books enjoy widespread acclaim while others fizzle?
- Do popular books explode onto the scene or accumulate readers more gradually?
- How do popular success and critical acclaim differ?
- How has recent publisher conglomeration of publishers changed the literary marketplace?
- And, ultimately, to what degree can the success or failure of a book be predicted?

The answers, we hope, will be illuminating for authors, publishers, critics, taste-makers, and readers alike.

## 2 Plots

### 2.1 Subject Breakdown by Publisher

Figure 1 shows the four most popular publishers based on the number of their books checked out over the 2018-2022 period. Each color on the bar represents the primary subject of a book that was checked out and the size of the colored region shows the proportion of the publisher’s books with the same subject. The specific subjects were chosen from the most popular subjects of all books checked out from the library. The corresponding pie-chart was present in the previous draft of the report and can be found in the appendix of this draft.

This bar chart shows that fiction books are most frequently checked out from the top publishers at the library. We expected nonfiction to be the second most common subject based on our previous findings of subject popularity; however, nonfiction books do not seem to be as popular from these publishers. One explanation might be that nonfiction tends to show up as a secondary subject for most books, although further exploration would be needed to confirm.

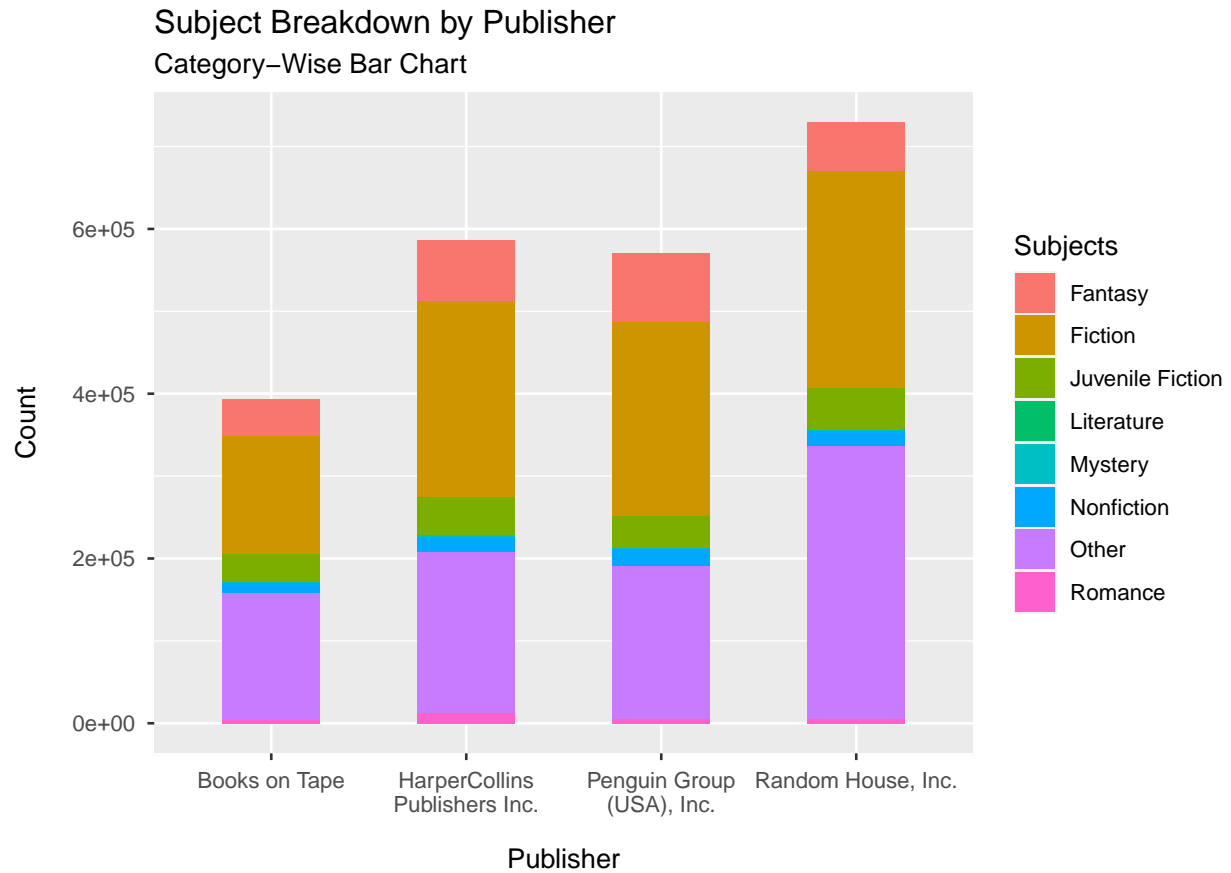


Figure 1: Subject Breakdown by Publisher

## 2.2 Plot 2

Figure 2 shows...

Figure 2: Caption

## 2.3 Plot 3

Figure 3 shows...

Figure 3: Caption

## 2.4 Plot 4

Figure 4 shows...

Figure 4: Caption

## **2.5 Plot 5**

Figure 5 shows...

Figure 5: Caption

## **2.6 Plot 6**

Figure 6 shows...

Figure 6: Caption