

Understanding BookManager's Sales Comparison Reports

When you send BookManager your weekly sales report for books (ISBNs) you are entitled to see a graphical view of your weekly, as well as a consolidated view of sales from all other participating stores.

This document will explain how to interpret and use the various parts of the report.

Using the Scheduler in BookManager, your ISBN sales made from Sunday through Saturday are sent to BookManager sometime between the

close of business on Saturday and early Monday. Beginning mid-day Monday (Tuesday when Monday is a holiday) we consolidate and clean the sales data before building this sales comparison report. When the report is ready, the stores who wish to be notified that a new report is available will receive an email.

The report is available at bookmanager.com (or from your store's bookmanager-hosted site) under **Reports → Sales Comparisons**. You must be logged in and your account must have permission to view this data. If, after logging in, you cannot view the report you may need to contact us so that we can give you permission. The Setup → Permissions page has a confidential item that you must enable for each employee that is to have access to the report.



Choosing the right parameters

The top of the screen has the following settings:

Sales Comparisons (using retail prices)

Sales volume: Actual Sales Weighted Sales
Canadian region: West East Secular Christian
Subject:
Date range:

Sales Volume: **Actual Sales** uses the actual retail dollar quantity sold for each ISBN. **Weighted Sales** are usually the same as Actual Sales unless the quantity sold for an ISBN at the store is significantly different than what was sold of the same ISBN at all other locations. These sales are often one-time events and they can skew your ability to identify trends, which is why the report uses Weighted Sales as the default

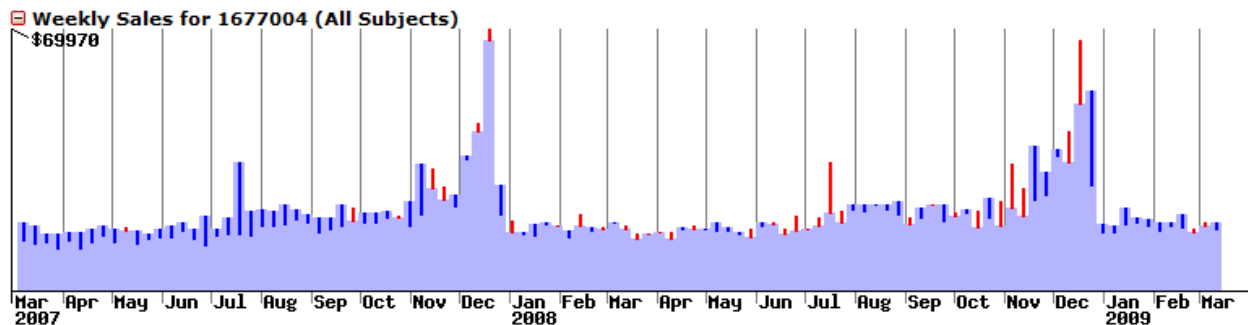
option. If you sold a large quantity of a title in one week, you can change the option to see how it impacted your overall sales (especially if you change the Subject option and choose the title's subject).

Canadian region: When you click **West**, only sales from stores located west of Ontario are used. **East** is every store east of Manitoba. When both options are unselected, the entire country is included (default). **Secular** stores are all non-Christian stores and **Christian** stores are only those who sell primarily Christian books.

Subject: Most books have a primary subject assigned to them in our TitleLink database. You can view any particular subject and then compare your sales in that subject against your peers. Some subjects have relatively low sales, and as such the weekly changes can appear quite erratic in your store.

Date Range: Choosing a date range does not change the top two graphs (because they always show 104 weeks of data), but it will affect the rest of the graphs.

Your sales for the past 2 years (104 weeks)



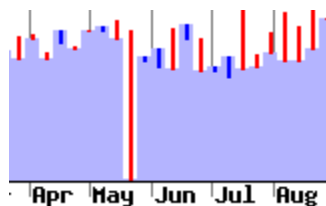
The blue colour is used in all graphs to identify your sales data; green is used for the consolidated data from all locations. The rightmost vertical bar represents the most recent week's sales. Each bar represents one week of sales (from Sunday through Saturday) and is repeated for each of the previous 104 weeks. When a week's bar has dark blue at the top it means that your sales increased from the same week in the previous year. The size of the dark blue bar is relative to the amount of the increase. When there is a red bar at the top of a week's sales it means that your sales declined from the same week in the previous year. For example, if you were to use a ruler and make a line at the top of the red bar you would likely find that it lines up with the top of the blue bar (dark or light), from the same week in the previous year.

In the above example you will see a large red line in Jul 2008, which indicates that sales in that week were much less the same week in Jul 2007. However, the Jul 2007 bar shows a large dark-blue bar indicating that sales went way up from Jul 2006 (approximately double according to the height of the dark-blue portion). In July 2007 the latest Harry Potter book was released and it appears to have accounted for 50% of the store's overall sales in that one week. In July 2008 there was no such book and therefore, sales dropped back to a more normal level. Also, the store in the above example, did a

major promotion in beginning of November 2007 (large increase in sales), and in 2008 it appears that they held the same sale, but about two weeks later. This explains the large drop in sales in early November and a large increase two weeks later. The week before Christmas is obviously the busiest of the year. However, in 2007, Dec 22 was a Saturday (cutoff for that week's sales) and in 2008 Saturday was Dec 20 (two days sooner). This explains why there was such a huge drop and then a huge increase over the two-week period (in the books business, it seems that the last three days before Christmas are significant!).

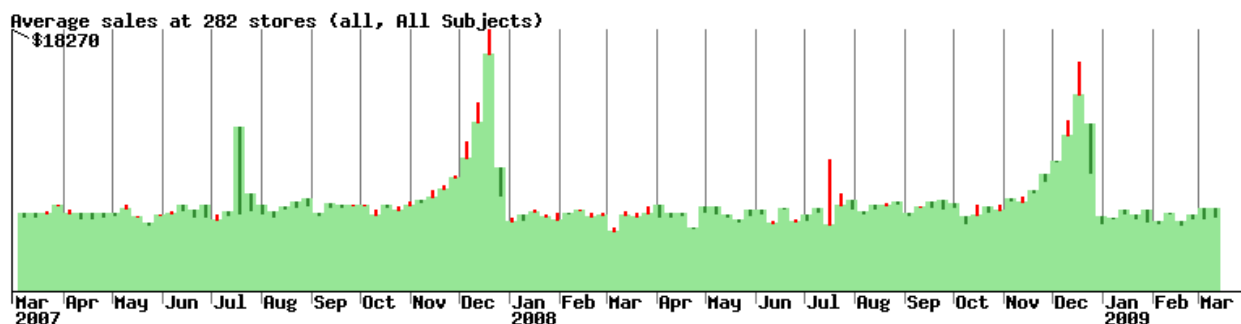
Looking at the graph in general I can see that in 2007 there was something positive going on that caused sales to consistently beat the same weeks in the previous year. In 2008 it appears that further increases (compounding) were not possible (i.e. much less dark blue as well as some red). Since January 2009, there appears to be changes that are resulting in new growth.

Note: When you play with the options at the top of this page, this blue graph of your sales will only change when you change the "Subjects" option; the other options have no effect on this graph.



If you come across a week with sales that is either all red (at the end of May in the above example) or all dark-blue (no example shown), it indicates that we did not receive your sales for that week in either the current or previous year. When the bar is red, it means we did not receive your sales for this year (a 100% drop) and when it is dark blue it means that you did not send sales for the same week in the previous year (you went from 0 to 100%). Getting your sales report in weekly becomes more important over the long term. (And now you know why we are so insistent with calling every Monday for your sales report!)

Sales at all other stores for the past 2 years (104 weeks)



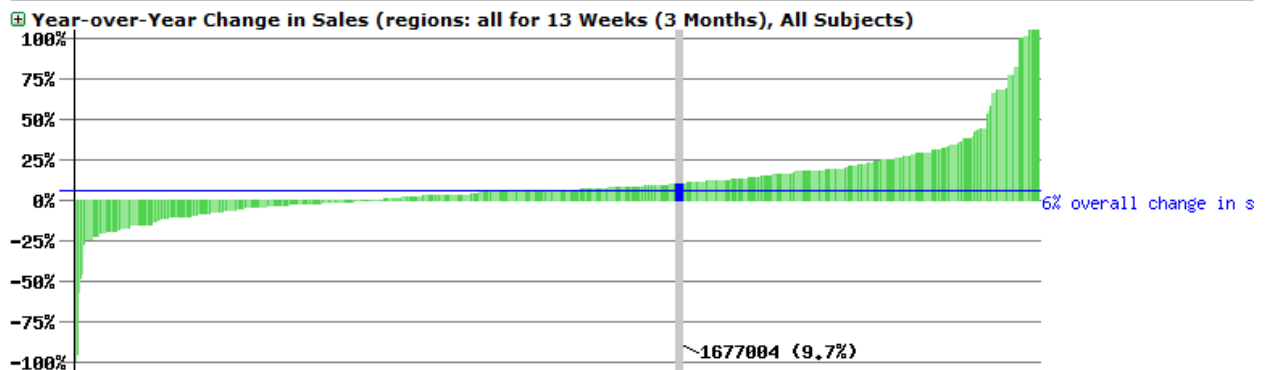
The green graph is the same as the blue one except it is using the sales from all the stores selected in the "Canadian Region" option. If you change the "Subject," this graph will be further restricted and show the trends for only a particular subject.

The green graph tends to be less erratic than the blue graph because there is less chance that all stores will be affected by the same market conditions across the country. There is an exception in the above

example, which shows that Harry Potter sales impacted the entire industry (however, if you changed the **Canadian Region** to Christian stores only, this surge is completely eliminated). It also appears that the economic recession of 2008/2009 is not having a significant negative impact on Canadian independent stores (as a whole).

The dollar amount in the upper right corner (\$18270 in this case) is the highest weekly sale (Dec 2007). Some stores sell much more than this and others are less. This is really just an average of all the stores.

Change in sales



The next graph is important because it uses the sum of your sales for the selected time frame (three months in this case,) and then show you how much change there has been from the same period in the previous year. The blue and grey vertical bar is your store and the dark blue is the amount that sales have increased (9.7%). The change in sales at each of the other stores is also plotted with those who suffered the largest decline on the left and those with the highest increase on the right. Stores are divided into three sizes; small, medium and large and so the vertical bars appear as narrow, medium and wide (visible if you look very close). It appears from this that more stores are experiencing increases than those that are in decline. It also appears that your store is doing a little better than the average, but certainly not as much as the best. On average, the store selected (all regions) experienced a 6% increase in retail dollar sales over the past three months. Some stores appear to be having increases of over 100% (perhaps a new store into its second year of business), while others are dropping 50% or more (yikes).

Note: When you first open the Sales Comparison report, the time-frame defaults to one week (last week). Be sure that you change this when you want to see your sales trend over a longer period.

Your store's relative size

Sales Relative to 288 Stores



The next graph shows your store's sales volume relative to all of the other stores (selected in the Canadian Region) starting with the largest and moving down. Some of the stores on the left are actually larger than the graph allows; this is done intentionally to help ensure confidentiality should you become aware of who else is reporting sales to BookManager. We only accept sales from Canadian independent retailers. The sales volume for your store is reported at \$300,485 for the past three months, which represents sales of any product with an ISBN, and does not include other categories such as magazines and other non-book product. It will also be lower than the actual book sales if the Weighted Sales option was used to build the report.

Sales breakdown by BISAC subjects

Volume and Change in Volume by Subject (regions: all for 13 Weeks (3 Months))



The final Sales Comparison graph shows the volume of sales in each of the primary BISAC subject classifications. Your most popular subject is shown first and continues on down to the subject you sell the least of. The horizontal blue bar shows the relative size of sales compared to the rest and the blue and red bars follow the same rules as the first graph (i.e. amount of increase or decrease from the same period in the previous year). To the left of each subject is the actual percentage. In the above example, Fiction represents 21% of all sales at your store and it has increased Fiction sales by 11% in the previous three months. Below each blue bar is a green bar that shows the relative size of the subject to all subjects at all stores selected by the Canadian Region option. In the example, Fiction is 19% of sales at all bookstores, and the stores have increased Fiction by 3% over the same three months in the previous year. Your store has therefore outperformed the average of all stores (11% VS 3%).

When a subject name appears in red (e.g. Travel) it is telling you that your sales in this subject have either not improved as much as the group or they have declined worse than the group. In Travel, the group has declined by 15% but your store has declined by 20%. You may want to pay close attention the red subjects (even if you are showing increases), because it is telling you that your store might not be carrying the books that are selling at other locations. Self-Help has declined at your store, but not as much as the group, therefore the subject is not highlighted in red – there is probably nothing you can do because it may be that the subject does not have a hot-selling title this year.

That's a lot of information to digest. I spend less than two minutes once each week to review the Sales Comparisons while trying to spot some changes to trends. When I see my sales in the red week after week, and your peers don't seem to be having much trouble, I start to look within my own operation. Every now and then I will take more time and examine categories in closer details. From that, I'm off to have a look at the books in the store's sections, and then into TitleBrowser where I try to find some better books to stock. It's all about change....