

# ROMStat Report

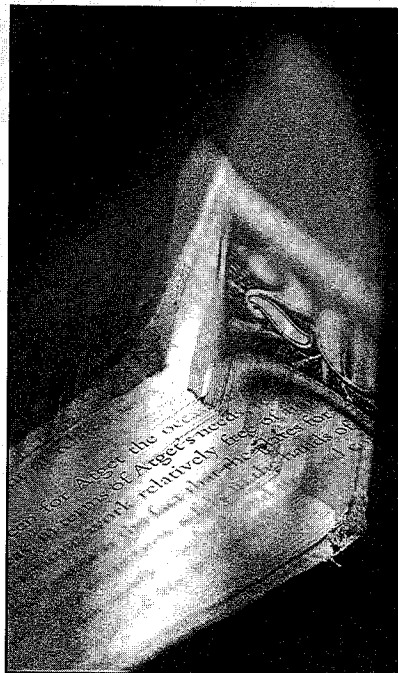
## Romance-Publishing Sales Statistics for 2002

by Libby Hall

Update your press kits and get these new numbers in mind. Romance generated \$1.63 billion in sales last year — an increase of 120 million! Read on for all of last year's statistics.

### A Note about Researching These Statistics

Did you know that you can go to the "Monthly Releases" link on the RWA Web site and find a list — sorted by sub-genre — of all romance titles released every month (for current and past months)? RWA tracks and reports the releases as a service to members who want to promote their books and to readers who simply want to see what's available in any given month. However, that's not the only reason we track and post the monthly releases. The lists provides RWA with an archive of all romances out every month (online, the record goes back five years at this time); and that record of romances, sorted by sub-genre, house, and author, provides me with the raw data I need to tabulate many of the statistics you see here. I cross-reference RWA's Romance Releases list (which is compiled by former RWA Secretary Claudia Yates), with bookstore sources, and the Ingram Book Company distribution catalog.

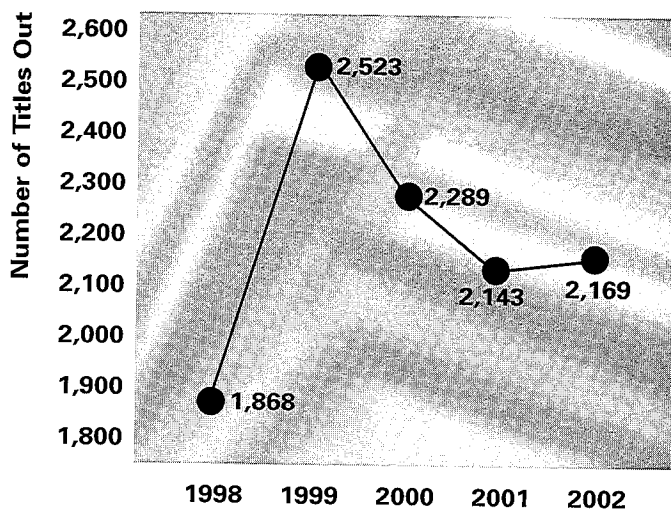


### Want to Research, Too?

I further cross-check all of this data online at the Web sites of the various romance publishers, and you can, too. I was pleased this year to discover some of the publisher Web sites are getting easier to navigate, making it easier to find the archives and sort and print romance backlists by year. Frustratingly, some of the publisher Web sites remain difficult to navigate, with very limited sort/search capabilities.

Funny thing #1: there often wasn't a correlation between the listings for one book in two places on a publisher's Web site (data about one given romance out in one particular month didn't always match numbers for the same book listed in another area of the site). Some sites were great, however. Ballantine was tops. On their site, I could call up all romances by publication date. The info included whether paper or hardcover, contemporary, historical or romantic suspense,

## Tracking Total Number of Romance Titles Released by Year



date and year released and price. Kensington was great with its backlist, except its archives only had January-June 2002 listings. Avon was good on current and next month's releases; you just have to keep returning to it every month throughout the year and can't do yearly tabulations in one sitting. The least convenient sites were those that let a guest search by title, author or ISBN only.

Funny thing #2: The list of romances on the publisher Web sites didn't always correspond to the number of books found in distributor catalogs or on bookstore shelves. As a bean-counter I like checks and balances, but the Web doesn't appear to be the place to find them.

### Outside Data

In addition to my online sleuthing and plugging the Romance Releases data into my ROMStat spreadsheets. I use the Ipsos-NPD study — an independent market research firm that studies book trends — and the ABA's year-end reports on other genres, to add comparative data about mysteries, science fiction, and other genres.

### A Note about Researching the E-Publishers

In the same spirit of checking information, I have conducted an extensive review of e-published romances — extensive as in checking 279 sites that claimed to publish romances. Of those 279, only 25 sites appeared to be legitimate publishers. (Some obviously only published one writer's works or were subsidy publishing or provided links to other sites or were gone or hadn't been updated in months or years.) Many titles and covers were becoming too familiar, so last year I printed out the individual book data. This year I compared those lists. After checking the five largest sites and finding only three new titles, I have concluded the results don't justify the effort.

In addition, print publishers are offering many of their books in all or several of the electronic formats, plus the usual versions (unabridged, abridged, library) of audio tapes. Generally, all hardcovers were available in all the formats from the Web sites.

## ROMStat 2002

So, on to books in print. Romance novels published in 2002 numbered 2,169, up 26 titles from 2001's 2,143 titles. Of these 2,169 titles, they broke down by romance sub-genre as follows:

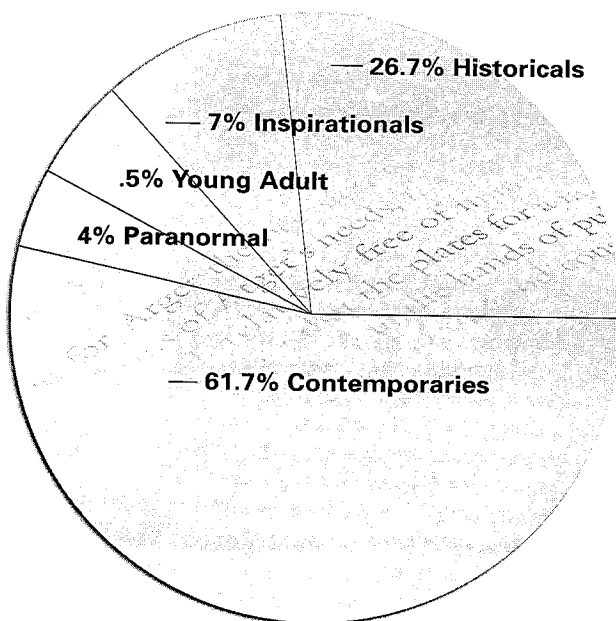
- 1,338 (61.7%) were contemporary
- 580 (26.7%) were historicals
- 153 (7%) were inspirational
- 88 (4%) were paranormal
- and 10 (.5%) were young adult romances.
- Spanish titles released in the U.S. numbered 60, but were not included in the totals.

## Contemporary Romance






Of the 1,338 contemporary novels published in 2002, 739 were in numbered series. In addition to the many in-line continuity series (a series of novels that have a common story arc, spanning the entire in-line series and resolved in the last story), there were three in-line anthologies in the contemporary series list.

For the 599 contemporary single titles, 31 were hardcover, 135 were reprints, 39 were anthologies, 12 were romantic suspense and three were put out in trade-size. Among the 599 titles are several continuity series that were released as single titles under the Silhouette or Harlequin imprint.

## Each Sub Genre's Share of Romances Released



## Sub-Genre Release Numbers Compared to Last Year

		Titles Out in 2002	Titles Out in 2001
 up by 126 titles	<b>Contemporaries</b>	1,338	1,212
 up by 14 titles	<b>Historical</b>	580	566
 up by 25 titles	<b>Inspirational</b>	153	128
 up by 5 titles	<b>Paranormal</b>	88	83
 down by 16 titles	<b>Young Adult</b>	10	26

### Historicals

Of the 580 historical novels, 93 were Regencies while 27 came out as hardcovers, 55 were reprints, 17 were anthologies and one was issued in trade-size.

### Inspirational, Paranormal, and Young Adult

The 153 inspirationals included three anthologies. The 88 paranormals had one hardcover, 24 reprints and two anthologies. In paranormal, time travel is still a favorite, but passionate alpha werewolves (and other wereanimals) and vampires, both male and female, are hot. In the ten YA novels, short series in which a main character or a group of characters undergo trials and tribulations to arrive at new growth appear to still be going strong.

### Reissues and Prolific Authors

Reprints accounted for 9.8% of the titles for 2002.

Betty Neels again has the honor of having the most titles out in one year — with 16 releases. One author had 14 books on the shelves, two had 12 and two had 10. There were five authors who had eight titles out, seven had seven releases, ten had six, while 25 had five titles each and 47 produced four novels. Getting to the big numbers, 126 writers had three novels out, 236 had two books and 783 each had one title.

## Number of Books Out by House

House	Books Out in '02
Avalon	32
Barbour	51
Bertlesmann (Ballantine, Bantam, Broadway, Crown, Dell, Delacorte, Doubleday, Fawcett, Knopf, Ivy, Random House, Waterbrook)	110
BET/Arabesque	62
Baker Books (Bethany, Brazos, Cambridge Bibles, Chosen, Revell)	19
Dorchester (Leisure, Love Spell)	113
Harper/Avon	104
Kensington	219
Pearson (Berkley, NAL, Dutton, Jove, Onyx, Putnam, Signet, Topaz, Viking)	153
Pocket/Sonnet	46
St. Martin's	49
Torstar (Harlequin, Mills & Boon, MIRA, Red Dress, Silhouette, Steeple Hill)	1,113
Warner	23

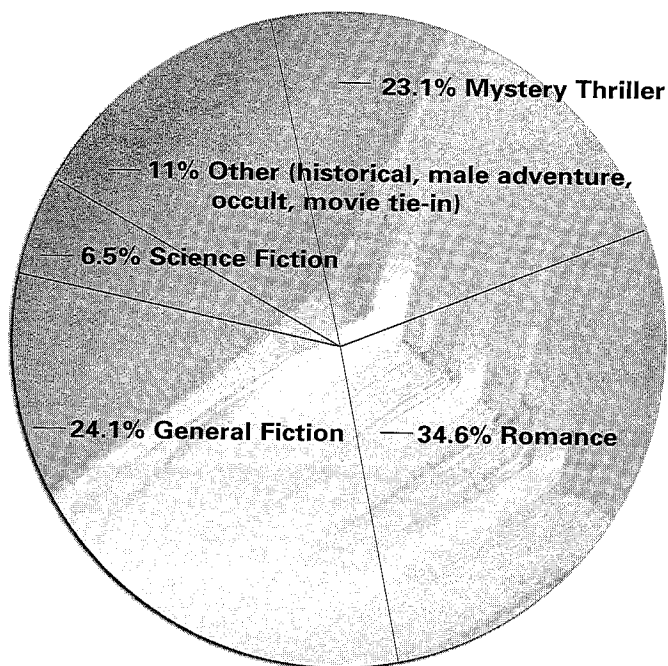
Other houses included Genesis, Imajinn, Multnomah and Tyndal with fewer than 20 romances each. Note that Baker Books has bought Bethany.

**Romance Novel  
Sales in 2002  
Exceeded  
\$1.63 Billion**

**Up From \$1.51 Billion  
last Year!**

# Total Market Share of Romance Sales vs. Other Popular Fiction

(mass-market, hardcover & trade sized formats)



## Sales

Overall sales in the popular fiction market for 2002 were 652,101,000 units, an increase of 37,863,000 volumes (6% increase). Romance sales totaled 225,799,000 units or 34.6% of the total popular fiction market (hardcover, trade and paperbacks). This is an increase of 5,775,000 units sold in 2002 over the 220,024,000 units sold in 2001 or a 2.6% increase in romance sales over the previous year.

Other genres in the overall (all formats) popular fiction market are as follows:

- Mystery/thriller at 151,119,000 units sold or 23.1% of sales
- General fiction is still on the up swing and accounted for 156,897,000 or 24.1% of all sales (17% in 2001)
- Science fiction/fantasy came in at 41,331,000 units or 6.5%.
- Other genres include religious, occult, historical, western, male adventure, adult and movie tie-ins, which together resulted in 11.9% of total sales.

In mass market paperbacks (also called rack-size), romance was 53.3% of sales. In trade paperbacks, romance accounted for 13.5% of sales (a big leap from 8.1% in 2001) and in hardcover, 5.7%.

Leading authors of all genres are published in general fiction hardcover, but the paperback, audio and electronic editions can be issued under general fiction, romance or mystery, etc. This accounts for an overall decrease in the mystery/suspense/thriller and romance categories, although their sales by units rose for 2002.

## Pricing

The average price of a series romance in 2002 was \$4.63 per book (\$4.50 and \$3.99 tied); \$4.99 came in second. The average price of a hardcover was \$23.98 with \$23.95 the most common, but some sold for \$19.95 (mostly reprints). The highest priced hardcovers were \$26.95. Trade size ran mostly \$12.50 to \$13.50. Single title paperbacks ranged from \$4.50 to \$7.99, with \$5.99 being the most frequent price. Tied for second place were \$6.50 and \$6.99, rooting out \$4.99, which was in second place last year. The single title average was \$6.10 per book.

## Big Picture

So what's the big picture? Total sales for romance novels in 2002 exceeded \$1.63 billion. Ta-da!



*Libby Hall, writing as Laurie Paige, is in the middle of a seven-books series involving the Dalton Gang of Seven Devils Mountains in Idaho. Book 4, The One and Only, was a June 2003 release.*