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Wilfrid Laurier University Press named Benetech Global Certified Accessible publisher

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University Press is now a Benetech Global Certified Accessible publisher.

[Benetech](#), a nonprofit that empowers communities with software for social good, issues its accreditation to those publishers that produce digital publications, or EPUBs, that meet a full range of accessibility features required to support the needs of all readers, including those with disabilities and learning differences. Wilfrid Laurier University Press completed the certification through eBOUND Canada, a not-for-profit that enables independent Canadian publishers to engage in the digital marketplace.

Wilfrid Laurier University Press publishes culturally significant scholarly and literary titles, grounded in the humanities and social sciences, that inform and enrich public life for a broad range of audiences.

“Our publications link the work of scholarship to the community through an engagement with narrative, and through the practice of writing. Our titles represent the multiplicity of knowledges and cultures in Canada,” said Lisa Quinn, director of the Wilfrid Laurier University Press. “Scholarship has the power to drive change for social good, but in order to do so, it must not only represent a diversity of experiences and perspectives but connect with and be read by a diversity of audiences. Accessibility is thus a core component of our mission as well as an ethical responsibility. Building our knowledge of accessible production processes and workflows for all formats in which we publish is a continuing priority for the Press.”

Wilfrid Laurier University Press engages consciously with principles of universal design in both print and digital mediums, supporting professional development on accessibility for staff across the publishing process, from editorial to marketing. The publisher takes a collaborative approach in developing and sharing expertise on accessible publishing, participating in industry initiatives and mentorship opportunities in order to support transformation and accountability of the industry.

“All digital content can – and should – be born accessible,” said Brad Turner, vice president and general manager of Global Education and Literacy at Benetech. “Readers can select Wilfrid Laurier University Press’s Global Certified Accessible ebooks trusting that they meet a wide range of accessibility needs.”

[Benetech’s Global Certified Accessible program](#) is the first-ever third-party EPUB certification program to verify ebook accessibility. All approved publishers have demonstrated success consistently producing files in accordance with Benetech’s certification standard. Benetech recognizes these publishers as creators of fully accessible EPUBs. eBOUND Canada, a Global Certified Accessible international partner, completed the evaluation.

...more

Global Certified Accessible publisher /Page 2

"eBOUND believes that all content born digital should be born accessible so that all people can have access to all content," said Deborah Nelson, the chief executive officer of eBOUND Canada. "As such, eBOUND is delighted to have formed a partnership with Benetech to support our Canadian independent publisher clients as they go through the important process of having all content born accessible. eBOUND's goal is to have 80 per cent-plus of our publishing clients producing accessible content by 2024, supporting the goal of the Department of Canadian Heritage, whose generous support has made this work possible."

About Wilfrid Laurier University Press

Founded in 1974, Wilfrid Laurier University Press publishes in the social sciences and humanities, with specializations in Indigenous studies, environmental humanities, feminism and women's studies, communication and cultural studies, life writing, poetry, literary criticism, sociology, social work, and history. We publish work of scholarly integrity and cultural significance, advancing new developments in scholarly discourse and contributing to education within and beyond the university. Wilfrid Laurier University Press publishes in a range of print and digital formats, and is a partner in the Amplify Podcast Network, a collaborative project dedicated to reimagining the sound of scholarship.

About eBOUND

eBOUND Canada is a not-for-profit organization that works with Canadian independent publishers to help them navigate and compete in the digital landscape. Accessible content creation is foundational to the work eBOUND does.

About Benetech

Benetech is a nonprofit dedicated to reducing social and economic inequity through software for social good. Benetech's initiatives are transforming how students, jobseekers and older adults across the globe read, learn and work. We believe that access to information is a human right, and no person should encounter barriers to education, literacy or employment due to differences or disability. Visit benetech.org for more information.

- 30 -