Taking the Plunge with eBooks

Jennifer Friedman
Librarian for Collection Resources and Access
Harvard Graduate School of Design
Why eBooks?

He was slow in learning how to talk. "My parents were so worried," he later recalled, "that they consulted a doctor." Even after he had begun using words, sometime after the age of 2, he developed a quirk that prompted the family maid to dub him "der Depertor," the dopey one, and others in his family to label him as "almost backwards." Whenever he had something to say, he would try it out on himself, whispering it softly until it sounded good enough to pronounce aloud. "Every sentence he uttered," his worshipful younger sister recalled, "no matter how routine, he repeated to himself softly, moving his lips." It was all very worrying, she said. "He had such difficulty with language that those around him feared he would never learn."*1

*1 His slow development was combined with a nervous reticence in social situations, which led

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Benefits

- No local storage costs
- No local access costs
Benefits

- They can’t be stolen, lost, damaged or shelved in the wrong area

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Benefits

- They can be accessed outside the physical library at any time

Photo by Marcin Wichary, available under a Creative Commons license.
Benefits

- The text can be searched electronically
- Less need for duplication of popular titles
Benefits

No more fighting!

- Highly accessible for distance users
- Often allows multiple simultaneous users

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Challenges

• User expectations

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Challenges: User Expectations

- What we have for them:
Challenges: User Expectations
Your patrons may already be buying these titles:

Architecture and Landscape Best Sellers
1. The Plan of Chicago
2. Sustainability at the Cutting Edge
3. Introducing Revit Architecture 2010
4. Good Gardens with Less Water
5. Mastering Autodesk Revit Architecture 2011
6. Terra Incognita
7. Formwork for Concrete Structures
8. The Gothic Enterprise
9. Architecture Design Notebook
10. Victorian Houses and their Details

(from http://www.ebooks.com)
Challenges: User Expectations

Your patrons already have a good selection of titles:

**Amazon Kindle Titles:**

- Architecture - 1,936
- Graphic Design – 633
- Art - 2,783
- Individual Artists - 196
- Dance – 236
- Music - 30,300
- Fashion – 69
- Photography - 2,440

- Plus, Google Ebookstore, Taylor & Francis Ebookstore, Cambridge Ebookstore and Books on Board carry many of the same titles that libraries already purchase in print (Wiley, Springer, Elsevier, etc.)
Challenges: Variety

- There’s a wide variety of devices:
  - eBook readers (Kindle, Nook, Sony, etc.)
  - Laptops
  - Smart phones
  - Other mobile devices
- There’s a variety of formats:
  - Nook, Sony, Kindle, Smartphone apps, Adobe Digital for handheld readers, EPUB XML, DRM-Free PDF, Reader, ACS4 for handhelds, MobiPocket Reader for PC, Microsoft Reader for PC, Adobe Digital for PC or Mac, PDF, DX Reader for PC and more
Challenges: User Interfaces

- Reading comfort of the physical page vs. the screen
- Restrictive or limited viewing functionality
- Different UI for every vendor
- UIs not optimized for visual materials (images, architectural drawings, plans, maps)
- UI functionality changes
Challenges: Costs

- Cost models/access fees/platform fees
- Comparing the total cost of a print item vs. total cost of an eBook
Challenges

- Lack of control over selection
Challenges:

- Preventing duplication
- Getting records for eBooks into the catalog as quickly as possible
- Long-term preservation
Challenges: DRM
Challenges: DRM

- No standards for DRM or licensing
Challenges: DRM

- DRM and licensing can ignore copyright law
  (i.e., circumventing DRM for alternative formats for accessibility issues)
Challenges: DRM

- Restrictive DRM (no or limited printing, no downloading, can’t use with portable readers or software for laptops or mobile devices, the question of ILL)

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There’s No Cookie Cutter Solution
What Questions Do I Need To Ask?
The Needs of Your Community

- How are they using the print?
- Are they browsing the books for images?
- Are they looking for images, plans, elevations and the like to scan at a higher resolution?

- Do they often compare books side by side?
The Needs of Your Community

- Are patrons asking for books to be on their iPhones, iPads, Kindles and other mobile devices?
- Is there a distance education program that would benefit from eBooks?
- How will your patrons find eBooks?

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Selection

- Assess your collection needs – will this be a new permanent format stream for materials?
- Are you looking for a large batch of similar materials (selecting a collection) or are you looking to focus your purchase on specific areas (selecting title by title)?
- Should you consider a pilot project for title by title selection or should you experiment with a larger collection?
- Is currency important?
- Will your workflows need to change to prevent duplication?
Selection

- Do you purchase pro-actively like print or do you look at an on-demand model?
- Purchase for the general collection?
- Focus on reserves and other high-use titles?
- Focus on reference?
- Experiment with patron-driven selection?
- Will this be part of your regular funds or will you have a new spending line based on the format?
UI Functionality

- Is the interface friendly and intuitive and does it have features patrons expect?
- Can a patron create an account where they can save favorite books or have other enhanced account features?
- What’s searching like? Is it full-text searching? What does the results screen look like? Is it easy to get something with a known-item search? What kind of results do you get with a broad topic search? Does the search function spell-check?
- Can users browse by subject areas and other facets as well as search?
UI Functionality

- Once you’re in an eBook, is it easy to get back to the starting screen or your results screen?
- Are the pages displayed in a way that’s easy to read?
- Can the text be resized?
- Can you zoom on images and other visual materials?
- Can you highlight text or take notes?
Get a copy of the license and review it thoroughly.

Can you print? How many pages can you print and how often?

Can you download a book? Can you download a chapter? In what format is the download available? Can that format be read by mobile devices?

If visual materials are not available due to rights restrictions, is that made clear to the users? Is that made clear to you before you purchase the title?

Are there permanent links at the title level?

If it’s restricted to access through web-based software, is there a mobile version for access?
Pricing Models

- Is cost one-time or subscription-based? If it is a one-time purchase, is there a subsequent access fee? Is the fee per book and is there a maximum access fee?
- Is access single user, multiple user, “short-term circulation”/rental or another format? Are different models available for different prices?
- Are you interested in purchase on demand? Pricing models include purchase after X clicks as well as “rent” twice, then purchase.
Access

- Is authentication via IP?
- Can we interlibrary loan these eBooks?
- Can these books be integrated into course sites like Blackboard?
- How will you advertise new eBook purchases (especially title by title) to your community?
Cataloging

- Does the vendor provide MARC records?
- Are those records free? If not, what is the cost?
- What’s the quality of the records?
- How will the records work with your ILS?
- How long will your process take to get records into your catalog?
Long Term Preservation

- Is the vendor participating in a digital preservation initiative like Portico?
- If there is an issue with the vendor, how will you gain access to the eBooks?
- If the vendor no longer carries the title or there’s a publisher change or any other circumstance, how will you gain access to the eBooks?
- Are there other costs associated with long-term perpetual access?
Other Questions

- If you’re holding the print item in your hand, how does it compare to the eBook? Is it consistent?
- Usage statistics – can you get them through the platform and how robust are the statistics? Can you get title by title usage information down to the page level?
- If usage statistics aren’t available readily through the platform, will the vendor provide usage statistics to you via email in a regular time frame?
Other Questions

- How often does the vendor remove individual titles from packages and how are you notified?
- For vendors that sell individual titles, do any of those titles ever go “out of print” and if so, how will you access them?
- What kind of technical support does the vendor have?
- Can we have a trial and is the trial restricted in any way?
I’m Ready! Now What?
Where To Start?

- Ebrary (now owned by Proquest)
- NetLibrary (now owned by Ebsco)
- EBL
- Knovel
- Springer
- Wiley
- Gale
- Oxford University Press