Ebooks in education
Realising the vision

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Foreword by
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Jisc

Ebooks in Education: Realising the Vision

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Foreword

Madeleine Atkins

Higher Education Funding Council for England

In 1840, the essayist Thomas Carlyle wrote that "the true University of these days is a collection of books". On this evidence alone, it's safe to say that Carlyle may not recognise the universities of today. Decades of significant developments in pedagogy, research methods and journal publishing, enabled by expansion, globalisation, research assessment, and the impact and knowledge exchange agendas have transformed our understanding of what a university can be, for the better. The UK's universities are dynamic, innovative and inventive places, geared up to embrace and solve the challenges of the 21st century.

Were he alive today, Carlyle would however no doubt be comforted to see that books of all sorts – textbooks, monographs, edited collections, critical editions and exhibition catalogues – continue to be hugely important to authorship, scholarship and education in many disciplines. He might therefore be somewhat disconcerted to learn that many people feel that the book is falling out of favour in academic life, with electronic journal articles and electronic course materials becoming more prominent in all universities, and with one university in the USA even having opened a new library containing not one single physical book.

Whether the book is in jeopardy is debatable. But the great challenge to conventional print books is obvious: the twin developments of digital text and the internet have brought about major and rapid advances in all areas of our lives. All of us are now accustomed to writing and producing our own documents electronically, communicating electronically, storing and retrieving information

electronically, and, increasingly, accessing it anywhere on a wide range of devices. In this context, the humble print book can feel rather anachronous and students will rightly expect at least basic electronic access to their course books in the same way that they can access almost everything else they need: freely, immediately and online. As students' demands change, a transition to the print book's successor, the ebook, therefore seems both necessary and inevitable.

This publication by Jisc Collections describes very lucidly the current state of such a transition. Through some really eye-opening examples, we see how ebooks have been incorporated successfully into educational practice, improving the learning experience for students, particularly students with disabilities and distance learners. We see exciting partnerships with research institutes, the development and promotion of an ebook app, the creation of an open living book, and new collaborations with ebook publishers and vendors to provide access to e-textbooks to students. Such success stories reflect well on e-books more generally, showing us that they are reaching the level of maturity needed for widespread adoption. And the benefits here extend beyond the purely practical, as described neatly by the University of Leicester who recognise that ebooks can help them improve teaching, reduce costs and enhance the student educational experience.

If the encouraging stories told in this publication reveal anything, it is that ebooks are perhaps even more necessary and inevitable than previously thought. But in examining the situation further, we are acquainted with some of the significant challenges that ebooks have yet to overcome, most chiefly around functionality, curation and access. These challenges are not insignificant and should not be underestimated. One of the most pressing of these is the challenge of delivering open access to research publications, maximising their potential readership and impact on wider society. Open access has its own distinctive drivers and opportunities, as have been outlined here by Peter Suber, and are fully recognised by HEFCE in our own policy for open access in the next REF exercise. But open access for books has substantial cultural, technological and financial challenges, many of which are not well understood. I am also delighted that this publication will be followed up in 2015 by a much-anticipated report by Professor Geoffrey Crossick on the opportunities and challenges for monographs and open access, which will help to illuminate our understanding of this difficult area.

In the 21st century, universities must be at the forefront of embracing the opportunities brought about by new technologies as well as understanding and overcoming their limitations. For these reasons, I warmly welcome this new publication on ebooks in education, which sheds much-needed light on the significant opportunities for ebooks to transform and improve the learning experience for students. Throughout this publication the inventiveness and perspicacity shown by academics and librarians to deliver improvements to education by embracing the opportunities of ebooks are striking. It is clear that the future of ebooks in higher education is in safe hands.

Ebooks in higher education:
a strategic priority?

Christine Fyfe
University of Leicester

University leaders and managers concern themselves with developments that align with institutions' strategic priorities, deliver competitive advantage, improve teaching and research performance, reduce costs and enhance value for money. Ebooks have the potential to engage with all these strategic priorities. Following the successful integration of ejournals into the academic workflow, ebooks promise much to universities aspiring to enhance students' educational experience, enrich research resources and streamline services. They have greater potential to transform the reader experience than ejournals and yet they have experienced a long and difficult birth, suffering from digital rights management, integration, discoverability and functionality challenges. It is taking much longer than expected to arrive at a position in which ebooks have a dominant and realiable part to play in students' learning and in universities' provision of texts to support both teaching and research. Indeed in the UK, while ebook provision and use via libraries is growing rapidly (for example, the University of Leicester Library acquired 1086 ebooks in 2008/9 rising to 406,576 in 2012/13) library spending on books is still dominated by spending on print. The 2011/12 Annual Library Statistics published by the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL 2013) report that

across the 147 higher education institutions making returns total expenditure on printed books was £46.4 million and on ebooks £14.8 million.

Both the higher education sector and the publishing industry are undergoing a prolonged process of experimentation with service and provider models in a complex environment characterised by many variables and choices. As a consequence of this complexity, and of the fast pace of change, there has been insufficient time to pause and reflect on key topics such as user behaviour, the impact of the changing balance between electronic and printed books (either at individual user level, or at provider level), the rate of change towards e-only provision, and the future role of libraries.

Faced with this bewildering landscape, university leaders may easily fail to appreciate the transformative potential of ebooks to help to address a range of challenges encountered by institutions. In this chapter I attempt to explore some of the roles which ebooks may play in building successful educational institutions.

Key strategic drivers

Ebooks have the potential to engage with three key strategic priorities common to most universities: to enhance the student experience and academic outcomes within an increasingly competitive environment; to drive innovation in learning, teaching and research; and to help to use space and human resources more effectively and efficiently.

Enhancing the student experience is clearly a key strategic driver for all universities, sharpened by ever increasing global competition for well-qualified students. The abolition of student number controls in England from 2015/16 and the introduction of new private providers will drive further striving for competitive advantage between institutions. Students' (and their parents') expectations of value for money and investment in their education continue to rise within a context in which many will have a much wider choice of institution than in the past. A recent report by Moody's (2014) painted a picture of a stratified competitive environment for English higher education institutions in which responses depended on institutions' market position. Moody's described an environment in which most institutions will need to jostle for position, making strategic investments in order to attract students. League tables, which are highly influential in student choice of institution, constitute a further element of the competitive landscape. Competition clearly is not limited to student recruitment; universities also strive to improve the educational outcomes of their students in order to prepare them for employment and to reinforce institutional reputations.

Ebooks contribute to this scramble for competitive advantage by offering the exciting possibility of enhancing the student experience – what it is like to be a student – and producing better educated students. At a fundamental

level, ebooks enhance educational benefit by improving access to titles that students are expected to read. Ensuring timely access to key books has been a fundamental, and largely intractable, challenge for universities and their libraries for many years, and lack of sufficient copies has regularly featured as the top complaint in student surveys over many years. Ebooks enable libraries to move away from inadequate and unpopular solutions to high demand for particular books, such as reliance on short-loan print collections. Making access to books more convenient, anytime, anywhere helps to meet student expectations and to assist students who are juggling the demands of study with complicated personal commitments. There remain significant challenges with institutional licensing or purchase of online textbooks in particular, but nevertheless ebooks are having a significant impact on improving student satisfaction with book provision.

There is evidence also that ebooks are not only becoming widely accepted, but also embedded in students' expectations of core provision. The University of Leicester Students' Union annual Student Voice Report for 2014 chose to ask two questions on learning resources. In answer to the question "How much of your reading is available online?" 65% of the 769 respondents indicated that most or all of their reading was available electronically. Most of this, at undergraduate level, would be books and book chapters. The second question asked "How useful would each of the following [resources] be to your learning?". Ebooks topped the list which included lecture capture, journal subscriptions, more physical books in the library and social learning space. Of the respondents, 60% deemed ebooks to be "very useful" to their learning, compared with 44% awarding physical books in the library the same judgment. It is telling that the student compilers of the survey highlighted these as the most important questions to ask, and that ebooks received strong support against other hot topics. The survey aligns with national usage statistics for ebook sections which record over 123 million requests in 2011/12 (SCONUL 2013), demonstrating that for students they have entered the mainstream.

Students increasingly resent the expectation that they should purchase books themselves, especially in the context of increased tuition fees. The National Union of Students and individual student unions have run successful campaigns to highlight what they see as hidden and unacceptable additional charges of undertaking a programme of study. Some universities, including my own, have supplied individual copies of core print books or ebooks for students which serve to enhance student satisfaction and perception of value for money. Further potential is offered by ebooks to personalise the provision of reading material to enhance the attractiveness of the offer to students.

Ebooks evidently enable universities to enhance substantially the range of titles available to students through the purchase of large packages of titles assembled by aggregators or by individual publishers. While there is inevitably some redundancy in large packages, the level of use of the popular titles and the penetration across the package will often justify the cost. As was evident

when digital journal backsets became available, the opening up of back-list titles in electronic form boosts usage and helps to support the wider reading required for writing essays and dissertations in a much more convenient way than traditional print-based document supply. Academics at the University of Leicester confirm that they and their students read and cite more titles if the content is easily accessible.

The availability of patron- or demand-driven acquisition, in which a number of selected titles are made available to institutions, but the purchase of individual titles is triggered only when an agreed usage level has been reached, may seem to be a direct contrast with a strategy that relies on the purchase of large packages. In some institutions a more targeted approach to acquiring ebooks will be appropriate, but in others targeting can happily coexist with a range of other approaches. Both approaches are ways of maximising the chance that the reader will find and access what they want immediately, responding to an expectation of instant service. This contrasts with a considered collection building approach by libraries, highlighting a consumer focus that contributes to enhanced service and greater satisfaction.

Universities have long been involved in programmes that include professional placements, integrated work experiences or in other offerings that require students to study remotely. Students are now able to access key texts via mobile devices, and this has significantly enhanced the educational value of these activities. The educational power delivered by ebooks, of being able to access original texts from the patient's bedside, at the archaeological dig, or in the laboratory is enormous.

A further strategic benefit of ebooks is the part they can play in providing access to texts for students with disabilities. The ability to change font size, colour and contrast helps these students to have equivalent access to texts and a comparable experience to students without disabilities. In this way, ebooks support universities' widening participation agendas.

Driving innovation in teaching learning and research

The second strategic driver is innovation in teaching, learning and research. Ebooks can be embedded in online programmes or made available through virtual learning environments. The University of Leicester's MSc Security, Conflict and International Development by distance learning provides an instructive example of innovation. This programme, offered by the Department of Criminology, is aimed at those working, or intending to work, in international development. Students may be working in military environments, remote locations or as peace workers, far away from conventional study facilities. All students are provided with an iPad loaded with the course materials and relevant ebooks, and have access to a course app. Students are able to

access material without an internet connection, which is often unavailable or unreliable in their employment environment. This is what the students say:

- I love the fact it is mobile, as I am constantly on the move. Travelling with books would be unrealistic.
- You can access all the materials without having to carry lots of books and means you can study any time any where.
- Firstly I am more motivated, as it is structured and organised. I am getting through more than I would if I was solely given a recommended reading list.
- My opinion of the course materials is very high: this is a fully immersive multimedia form of learning with core texts, videos and internet links etc presented in a clear flow. An extended bibliography gives you the option to explore the subject areas much wider.
- With the use of ebooks and the ability to download electronic academic documents from the library account, its almost paperless learning. For example, I will often be using a note taking app, ebook reader app and mindmapping app concurrently when studying while listening to music, also coming from the iPad. I only have to remember the charger!

It is striking how students respond positively not only to the accessibility of content, but also to the coherence and seamlessness offered by this approach to course design. Without ebooks, this distinctive programme would be considerably diminished, but the benefits of the approach are potentially applicable to all students. Only having to remember the charger neatly encapsulates the transformative potential of online delivery, of which an essential element is ebooks.

The rich potential offered by enhanced ebooks in terms of interactivity and multimedia is a further area for innovative design and delivery of content.

Ebooks have the power to enhance the approaches available to researchers who engage with text. The large scale digitisation of books, in addition to digitised copies of specialist collections, has made vast quantities of material discoverable and readily accessible, and has contributed to the growing importance of digital humanities. The ability to mine text (where permissible and practical) opens up new areas for enquiry and analysis, by identifying patterns across a corpus, or by highlighting features of texts that would not be discernible through traditional methods of reading.

Repurposing space

The 2011/12 SCONUL Annual Library Statistics (SCONUL 2013) record that its member libraries occupy a total of some 1.4 million square metres of space for traditional library activities, although it is not recorded what

proportion of this space is occupied with the storage of printed books. This is an underestimate as not all libraries were able to provide the data. Commentators agree that print and ebooks will co-exist for a long time into the future, but it is evident that a continued move to ebooks will, over time, permit the reduction of prime space allocated to printed books, allowing significant quantities of space to be released for other purposes, including formal and social learning space. This move is already underway, promising to deliver significant financial and academic benefit to institutions. It will be possible in many institutions to reduce off-site book storage space, delivering further efficiencies.

A further consideration for university managers is the extent to which access to and use of ebooks will occur outside the library service (for example through texts being provided by academic departments) or outside the institution altogether. Large-scale book digitisation projects (such as Google Books and Project Gutenberg) are obvious examples where students and researchers access material independently from the institution. The growing interest in open access ebooks from commercial publishers (for example Brill Open Books, Palgrave Open), the emergence of specialist open access publishers, and the exploration of new models provide a further dimension to the ebook landscape. Interest in open access ebooks is further evidenced by a range of high level explorations, including the current HEFCE examination of open access monographs and long-form scholarly works, the OAPEN-UK research project and the Jisc work to investigate the need for and shape of a national monographs strategy.

Universities and libraries will also wish to develop as creators and publishers of ebooks, which may form an economically viable approach to reviving university presses and enable textbook production.

Closing comments

Students and researchers experience access to book content, either whole books or sections, via personal purchase of print or ebooks, library print collections, library individual ebooks (selected by library), library individual ebooks (selected by readers through demand-driven acquisition), open access ebooks and document supply (borrowing from other libraries). Ebooks are on the cusp of becoming mainstream in learning, teaching and research. They offer significant opportunities to enhance the richness and effectiveness of education across all these areas and to deliver advantages to institutions. If we are to realise the vision, we need more research into the complexities of delivery, production and access to provide leaders with the evidence they need to influence institutional strategies.

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Ebooks in further education

David Scott

Dundee and Angus College

The adoption of ebooks in further education (FE) colleges across the UK has been driven forward in large measure by the Jisc funded ebooks for FE project[1]. This initiative, which was established in 2009 and ended in August 2014, has provided all colleges in the UK with free access to a collection of approximately 3000 ebooks from a range of well-known publishers. In attempting to paint a picture of the landscape of ebooks across this very varied sector we have surveyed the views of librarians in 25 colleges which make heavy use of this collection, as well as taking note of recently published reports. The survey covered issues such as: ebooks strategies; access to ebooks; integration of ebooks with other institutional systems such as virtual learning environments (VLE) and library management systems (LMS); barriers to usage – cultural, technical; and the ebooks landscape in the next three years. It was sent to a range of colleges which reported high use of the ebooks collection by their students and staff, as defined by the monthly statistics provided by Jisc Collections. A high proportion of the institutions surveyed were in the top twenty of student users of the Jisc ebooks collection. Inevitably with such

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[1] http://fe.jiscebooks.org/

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a survey, the recurrent top users were larger colleges, but they did represent views of colleges from across the UK.

Survey of FE libraries

FE is weighted heavily towards vocational education and training. The information needs of staff and students are therefore largely focused on up-to-date relevant materials which support teaching and learning. Ebooks provide college libraries with the opportunity to increase access to high-demand textbooks and supplement their print collections. Their enhanced features and functionality help address a number of accessibility issues. We have not identified any strong strategic drivers in colleges on the development of their ebook collections; however, there is a desire expressed by all librarians who were surveyed to provide an alternative to multiple copies of textbooks. In the main this is driven by costs, but a number mentioned the influence of new library builds and refurbishments with reduced floor space available for book collections. One college ensures that it always purchases an ebook (if it exists) for any core text that is on a recommended booklist. Another college, which provides higher and further education qualifications in equal measure, builds its ebook collection by reference to course validation recommendations. In the past 18 months this college has also extended its provision for higher education students using resources available through the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library (SHEDL). Aside from the Jisc ebooks collection, the main additional sources of ebooks for colleges are the major aggregators such as Dawsonera, Coutts and MyiLibrary.

Authentication

Shibboleth is the main access and authentication system used in the libraries we surveyed, with Athens and IP addresses as less flexible alternatives. This appears to be a better position than four years ago, when it was reported that "over a third of colleges have yet to become Athens or UK Federated Access Management (Shibboleth) compliant" (Cox *et al.* 2010, p.8). Accessibility problems were still reported by 24% of survey respondents in an ebooks evaluation report as late as 2013 (Conyers and Dalton 2013, p.28) though it made clear that this referred to wider issues than just authentication. However, with an increase in mergers of colleges that are geographically distant from each other, changes in modes of delivery of the curriculum, and an increase in independent study methods, it has become even more important to be able to provide access to ebooks and other digital resources both on and off campus.

Embedding of ebooks

Embedding the ebooks collection into the teaching and learning processes of colleges and their library services has developed well since it was reported in 2010 (Cox *et al*. 2010, p.27) that there was a lack of synergy between the staff involved in developing the ebooks collection and those involved in maintaining and populating the institutional virtual learning environment (VLE). All of the respondents in our recent survey reported that their ebooks were embedded into their VLE, with a number stating that this was implemented at the individual course level, providing students with direct access to relevant materials to complement their studies. At one college, academic liaison librarians worked closely with curriculum and learning technology teams to ensure that their ebooks were linked to all courses, and this strategic approach had had an impact on the use of the collection as well as building strong professional relationships. One college had specifically promoted their ebooks to online and distance learning students who had traditionally received a poorer, less comprehensive library service. All libraries surveyed had enabled their collection to be searchable on their library catalogue with most suggesting that this had increased both the awareness of and the use of ebooks as well as facilitating off-campus access to library materials.

Barriers and problems

Cultural barriers continue to impede progress in the adoption and use of ebooks. Negative staff and student attitudes were mentioned in a 2013 report (Conyers and Dalton 2013, p.27). However, our recent survey of librarians would suggest that this resistance is focused today amongst a smaller number of traditional lecturers who are less digitally competent and more comfortable with the printed book. Conversely, it was reported by the librarians that we surveyed that a number of teaching staff (as well as academic liaison librarians) are using ebooks as a teaching tool, either in class sessions with an electronic whiteboard or building their use into online learning activities or assessments. Buy-in from lecturers is seen as key to making students aware of and enthusiastic about the use of ebooks and there is strong anecdotal evidence that a joint approach between the library and teaching staff often results in a positive impact on their perception and overall usage. One college library reported that in working closely with their supported learning team (a staff resource which supports the additional needs of disabled students and those with a learning difficulty), they had developed a continuing professional development (CPD) programme which ensured that both teaching and academic support staff were made aware of and able to exploit the advantages of the enhanced functionality of ebooks.

Technical issues are still a major source of frustration in accessing ebooks easily. This was reported in 2013 (Conyers and Dalton 2013, p.29), and in our survey most of the librarians complained about navigation issues for staff and students in using ebook platforms. There were strong views expressed about the need for standardisation across the range of suppliers' platforms. FE colleges subscribe to the Jisc ebooks collection as well as purchasing books from Dawsonera, Coutts and others. They all have different platforms which can be frustrating for the end user and can promote negative attitudes towards the use of ebooks to support their studies, particularly among those who are used to the ease of downloading and accessing books on to devices such as Kindles and iPads. The ease of use of these devices is often seen in contrast to the perceived difficulties of accessing ebooks. Equally, there were views expressed about the "clunky" look and feel of some of the platforms as well as the additional software and procedures related to digital rights management (DRM) often required to download ebooks.

Libraries are still facing difficulties in acquiring electronic versions of textbooks, particularly up-to-date versions. Textbooks are a vital element in the publishers' business model; they sell vast numbers directly to students as well as libraries. Jisc Collections are in a good position to work with publishers to ensure that more up-to-date and relevant books are available to the sector.

Innovations

Libraries have become increasingly adept at promoting their services to their users, and many employ a range of measures to ensure that ebooks are seen as an increasingly important part of the overall service. Apart from adding all the ebook titles to the library catalogue and also linking them in a variety of ways to specific courses developed by teaching staff on their institutional VLEs, they are also promoted in a number of creative and engaging ways. Colleges have developed a range of enhanced induction workshops, as well as working closely with curriculum staff on the development of study and research skill programmes which enable students to become aware of and adept at accessing and using ebooks. The advantages of ebooks are built into the teaching and learning process with lecturers demonstrating their use during lectures and classes, as well as devising activities and assessments which demonstrate their increased accessibility, flexibility and functionality. Some libraries have adopted the bookshop approach to signposting, using QR codes on shelves to provide further information and a direct link to the individual ebook. Complementary to this, some libraries are using DVD style boxes or cards to promote ebooks which they shelve or place adjacent to other relevant print-based textbooks. Posters, flyers and placing details of the ebook

collection on the college website, student online portal and social media pages all play a part in their promotion.

Colleges have reported that their ebook collection has proved invaluable to their online and distance learning students. Not only has it enhanced the service to these learners but it has also enabled the library to reduce the administrative processes required to provide print-based texts by post. The benefits to this relatively small number of specific users could well be a key driver to support the information needs of many more full-time and part-time students at the increasing number of merged colleges across the country. A number of these merged colleges are geographically far apart, with practical difficulties for students in accessing resources at more than their local campus. For example, in 2012 there were 43 FE colleges in Scotland, but in April 2014 there were only 13, some of which have campuses more than 40 miles apart. Ebook collections will be even more important in ensuring that students have access to relevant resources when they need them.

Future prospects

All of the librarians we contacted thought that the demand for ebooks by students was likely to increase over the next three years. The increase in the number and range of smartphones has resulted in a consequent increased demand by students for mobile access to their timetables, course materials and as study support tools such as ebooks. It will become a focus for Jisc Collections and consortia such as the SHEDL and the Welsh Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF) to support the demand for up-to-date ebooks to ensure that student and staff demands are met. Further work is also required in trying to establish a set of standards in the processes involved in accessing, downloading and repurposing the content of ebooks. There are strong messages coming from the sector that the process for students is too cumbersome, with many confused and frustrated by the varying licence conditions.

Ebooks are now a significant element in the FE library service. I cannot overestimate how powerful a driver the Jisc Collections ebook initiative has been in providing a critical mass of materials freely available to students across the UK. There are now more ebooks on offer from publishers, and access to them has improved from the days of patchy arrangements focusing on fixed PCs with IP address authentication. Shibboleth access is now much more prevalent. There are creative partnerships in place in many colleges between library and lecturing staff which have promoted the practical uses and advantages of ebooks – increased accessibility, flexibility and functionality. Problems remain in the supply of ebooks, however; librarians find it hard at times to source good quality materials, and often the licences are complex and at times restrictive. There is work to be done by Jisc Collections on behalf

of the FE sector nationally in securing a step-change in the supply of ebooks and the establishment of standards to ensure easy and effective access and usability.

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Ebooks and the distance learner

Claire Grace and Gill Needham
The Open University

What we can do for students now

Emily is in her second year studying psychology with the Open University (OU). She chose to study in this way while working full time as a classroom assistant in a primary school. Her best friend from school, Carole, is a year ahead, attending a campus university as a full-time student. Carole is also studying psychology, and the two friends meet up from time to time to share gossip, compare experience and sometimes help one another with their work. They meet for a coffee one Saturday. Carole is a little late. "I'm so sorry" she says "I've been queuing up in the library, trying to get hold of this book I need from short loan for the weekend – my essay's due in next week." "I get the feeling you weren't successful?" "No I wasn't, and I'm really stuck now – it's only published in print. I might just have to buy a copy – it's paperback, but it's £25 I would rather not spend." "Well, that's one problem I don't have" says Emily. "How does that work, exactly?" Carole asks "How do you get hold of library books?". "Well, the books we are expected to read are all there for us online – the only 'real' book I have for the course is the one set book I had to buy at the beginning".

Carole's question and Emily's subsequent explanation is the crux of the question we shall address in this chapter – "Why are ebooks important in

distance education?". For OU students, all of whom study at a distance, their library service *is* the online library, and ebooks are increasingly important to their overall learning experience. It has always been a challenge to offer distance learning students a library experience which is at least equivalent to that of a conventional university. The OU library has been addressing this challenge for the last fifteen years with a significant amount of success.

In the early days the OU library was able to provide access to journal articles as they became available in digital form. But journal articles tend to be more relevant to students in the later stages of their degree, so there was little material available in digital form aimed at first- and second-year undergraduate students. The advent of ebooks, and in particular the growth in academic texts available in ebook form, has allowed us to deliver content online which is more relevant to students studying at levels one and two. Flexibility of access is of paramount importance. Like Emily, the majority of OU students are in full-time employment, and many are also juggling family commitments. Books have to be available to them anytime, anywhere and in the most appropriate formats.

During Emily's studies she will encounter and use ebooks in a number of different contexts. There are two distinct models of providing ebook material at the OU. Some "e-textbooks" will be embedded in the online course materials delivered via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Moodle, an open source platform that is used at the OU. These are currently procured by the University's production unit, known as Learning & Teaching Solutions (LTS), who will have arranged payment to clear the rights for either whole textbooks or individual chapters for use by students on this particular course. The university has now adopted a commercial textbook platform to provide easy access and integration with the VLE. Previous versions of Emily's psychology course included a course reader (a collection of rights-cleared journal articles and parts of books) in print. For the latest version of the course Emily is studying, the reader is online and is delivered via the University's structured content markup system that is used for all the core course materials. This means that the content can be delivered in any format and hence on to any desktop or device. "It's so flexible" says Emily "when I went on holiday I downloaded all the course materials and the readings onto my Kindle – I read them on the beach and by the pool, so I didn't get behind at all. I was even able to join in a tutorial while I was away."

The other model is provided by the OU library and is based on providing links to a selection of resources to support the course. These links are managed by the library to ensure that they are "persistent", i.e. they are robust and can cope with changes in supplier, and they are "pushed" into the VLE using RSS feeds. The OU library has recently developed a new back-end system, known as Liblink, that manages this process. When a new course module is developed, a librarian will work alongside the module team to identify and suggest relevant ebooks and other content to be used. Links are likely to be to

chapters, rather than an entire book. So, for example, there may be an activity written around the chapter.

"Don't you ever have to go and look for books yourself?" asks Carole. "Yes of course – last year, when it was all a bit new to us, we would be given some keywords and told to go into the online library and search for books on a particular subject. This year, now we are at level two, we are expected to search the online library to find books and journals when we have an assignment to do. There are loads to choose from."

Students can search for ebooks via the library search interface, by title or keywords, or they might wish to browse specific collections like PsycBOOKS®. However, finding library ebooks is not a straightforward process and provides some challenges for students and libraries. The silos that libraries have been using to manage print and digital resources (library catalogues and knowledge bases) rely on metadata about the individual ebook titles being loaded into the appropriate systems. This can be time-consuming and some ebook collections only have metadata available for the collection rather than all the titles in it.

It is also difficult to provide a true browsing experience for our students that recreates the ability to scan the shelves in a physical library. We try to facilitate this by presenting "Selected resources for your study" lists on the website, and the fairly recent addition of book jacket images makes the experience more "real". The need for anytime, anywhere access has meant that our extensive collection of online reference books is highly valued by students (e.g. Oxford Reference Online, Credo Reference, CRC Netbases). Experience suggests that the online library can encourage a more interdisciplinary approach to learning. Emily, studying psychology, will have easy access to relevant books in medicine, management, education and other related disciplines. In a physical library she may perhaps have been less inclined to venture outside her subject area.

Like many other university libraries, the OU library is experimenting with different models for acquiring ebooks, and we suggest that the experience can have an added significance for us. In our first trial of the Patron or Demand Driven Acquisition (PDA/DDA) model, aimed at Emily and her fellow psychology students, we found that students were choosing a range of general, popular and self-help type books, which may well have been available in a conventional university library but would not have been included in our collections, because our content is generally selected in close liaison with module teams to relate strictly and directly to the curriculum.

The problems and their future solutions

While the first half of this chapter has hopefully demonstrated the value and importance of ebooks to our distance learners like Emily, and the efforts

involved behind the scenes, we would not wish to give the impression that all is perfect. As part of our programme of eliciting student feedback, we were able to persuade Emily to join our ebooks focus group. Emily had a number of questions to ask us about her experience of ebooks as a component of her studies. These are the questions she posed:

1. Why do I seem to have to go to so many different places to get my ebooks?
2. Why do so many of the ebooks look completely different and have different rules about what I can do with them, how long I can read them for etc.?
3. Why can't I read them all on my Kindle?
4. Why can't it work like getting books from Amazon or music from iTunes?

We weren't able to provide Emily with satisfactory answers to all her questions. Instead we assured her that these questions would help us to improve services in the future, and to use our influence with publishers.

Let us try to explore the issues behind Emily's questions:

1. Why do I seem to have to go to so many different places to get my ebooks?

This is indeed frustrating and there are a number of layers to the answer. First: the e-textbooks which are procured by LTS and embedded into a module, as explained above, will be accessed on a totally different platform from the platforms that are used to access the ebooks provided by the OU library. Why should this be so? In some cases the e-textbook platform is provided by the same company as the library ebook platform and provides the same functionality – why can they not be combined? The answer is that, in the publisher's view, the different business models governing the sale of the content necessitate different rights management (DRM) to be applied to the two types of ebook and therefore access has to be via separate platforms. This view means that publishers often structure their business to separate the sale of ebooks to libraries from institutional procurement or sales to individual students. How can institutions and publishers improve this situation so that the needs of students are better met and they receive a more cohesive service?

Secondly: the OU library currently has no choice but to acquire ebooks from a range of publishers/suppliers all of which have different platforms which look and behave differently. Could we agree to buy them all from one supplier? This is unlikely while the market is so unstable, with publishers developing different platforms, licensing and access models, causing all offers to differ. Our responsibility is to find the best value and the best user experience in every case.

2. Why do so many of the ebooks look completely different and have different rules about what I can do with them, how long I can read them for etc.?

It would appear that publishers and suppliers are experimenting with various business and licensing models. These govern the need for different functionality to be delivered to the end user in different platforms. This makes perfect sense to the supplier but none whatsoever to the user. For Emily it would appear reasonable to expect every book to allow unlimited access and a reasonable amount of downloading and printing but this is far from the case, as the length of time allowed for access can vary significantly. As librarians we can and should continue to put pressure on our suppliers to take the issue of user experience far more seriously and deliver products which meet students' reasonable expectations. We need to be far more proactive in this area.

3. Why can't I read them all on my Kindle?

The Open University is now producing its course materials in standard EPUB format which can be rendered to any device. This is regarded as good practice in the digital world and is particularly important for distance learning students who need to access content wherever they are. As a library service we would appear to be failing our students if we are unable to deliver ebooks in the same way. It is hoped that the initial discussions carried out under Jisc's umbrella to establish publisher guidelines for mobile delivery will help to progress this issue. We are selling Emily and her fellow students short in failing to meet expectations in this regard.

4. Why can't it work like getting books from Amazon or downloading music from iTunes?

Indeed, these services should and do act as the benchmark for user experience in the digital world, perhaps more because of familiarity and content range than merely usability. Just as libraries have continued to fail to offer a search experience which meets the expectations of Google aficionados, we are unlikely to achieve this in our ability to provide flexible, seamless access to content. Sadly, the academic book industry has seemed to lack the vision and courage to come up with a truly game-changing business model. Can we help to move the process of experimentation forward by articulating a clear vision of what we would like to be offering to our students like Emily? Here are our suggestions for a future vision for ebooks, based on our experience of supporting distance learners.

- Ebooks in the future will provide far more sophisticated functionality than a print book or a single "popular" ebook on a handheld reader.

- Students will be able to search the content within the books, and access and use parts that are relevant to them, without barriers. This will include the ability to connect content within the ebook with content from other sources.
- Students will be able to access ebooks via a single interface or even a single platform. If there are different platforms, they will be able to move seamlessly between titles regardless of platform.
- Ebooks will meet the highest standards we set for accessibility (to meet the needs of our 12,000 students with disabilities) and they will work effectively on any mobile device.
- The platform(s) will provide a single sign-on authentication that allows students to download and use ebooks of all types wherever they are.
- Search will be integrated across e-textbooks, library ebooks and ebooks that the student has bought, so that the student can transfer between the different "types" of ebook through seamless search and discovery.
- Ebooks purchased by an individual student using their OU student identity would be discounted for them through prearranged deals with publishers. They would be able to annotate, comment on and share these books with their friends.

Although this chapter has focused on the experience of an OU student and the challenges faced by the library on her behalf, we believe that many of the same challenges will be increasingly relevant to the sector as a whole, as online learning moves from margin to mainstream. If librarians, publishers, suppliers and technologists work hard enough together, we may be able to realise the vision articulated above before Emily completes her studies and before all the future Caroles are affected to the same degree. We may have to wait a little longer for the iTunes moment – the true game changer.

Ebooks: the learning and teaching perspective

Suzanne Enright

University of Westminster

Ebooks are here to stay and have "come of age" as a fully accepted format for publishers, readers and libraries in the library and education sectors[1]. Ebooks (that is to say, electronic versions of academic books, textbooks, reference books, scholarly monographs, annuals and other "one-off" publications) are recognised as a strategic element for UK higher education (HE) library services, and their use as a tool to better serve the needs of our users remains a hot topic.

The key drivers pushing the University of Westminster to strengthen the digital aspects of our service (with the usual caveats about availability, price and appropriateness) are: strategic imperatives within the institution, changes to user behaviour and changes to the external environment, including the publishing model.

Context

Digital collections are a growing component of library services and the wider digital library development. The various drivers for the digital future

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[1] Ebooks and Econtent 2014: Beyond Ebooks at University College London. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dis/conferences/ebooks

of the book (or monograph) as a component of today's academic publishing landscape, the benefits and barriers for universities – locally, nationally and internationally – have been articulated variously and often. There has been a plethora of research, surveys and conferences devoted to the wide ranging world of ebooks, and I do not intend to examine them here. However, I will highlight key aspects of today's environment that I think are of especial interest to library service designers and providers.

Three recent studies, all from the USA in 2013, contextualise today's environment around delivery of digital services: firstly, there is OCLC's report *Meeting the e-resources challenge* on the effective management, access and delivery of e-collections for HE libraries[2]. It presents case studies of experiences structured around key tasks in the e-resource management workflow, including: selection, acquisition, describing, discovery, access and renewal of licensed content within libraries' electronic collections.

Secondly, there is the *ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and IT*[3] in which Educause collaborated with more than 250 USA HE institutions to collect responses from more than 112,000 undergraduate students about their technology experiences and expectations, and which explores the ways in which new, better, or more technology can impact students' relationship with information technology. It found the cost of textbooks was the most important value factor for students to use ebooks or e-textbooks, but a need for portability and availability outweighs that. As mentioned also in the context of my institution below, unfortunately the user experience is frustrating given complex platforms and incompatible devices.

Lastly, the *Ithaka S+R US Library Survey*[4] examines how the leaders of academic libraries are approaching systemic changes in their environment and the opportunities and constraints they face in leading their organisations. From a collections standpoint, it found that spend on ebooks hadn't really increased since 2010, and yet its Faculty Survey (2012) found more than half of faculty members assert that ebooks play an important role in research and teaching.

Local context at the University of Westminster

Our ebook collections

At time of writing (Spring 2014) the University of Westminster spends around 70% of our materials budget on electronic content (£330.3K in 2012/13). Our digital library collection includes nearly 87,000 ejournals, 330,000 ebooks and over 140 databases; these generate around 3 million electronic usages

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[2] http://www.oclc.org/en-UK/publications/newsletters/enews/2013/36/02.html
[3] Educause Centre for Applied Research (ECAR) http://www.educause.edu/library/resources/ecar-study-undergraduate-students-and-information-technology-2013
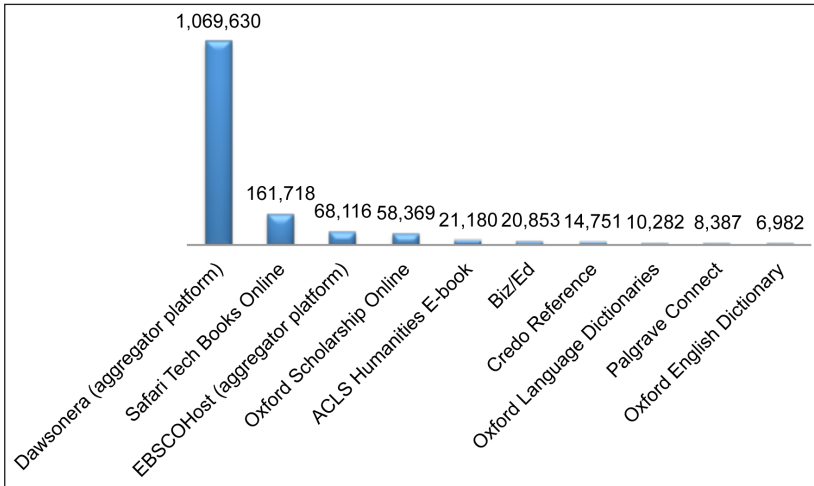[4] http://sr.ithaka.org/research-publications

Figure 1: Top ten ebook resources — usage 2012–13.

annually. Access is these is split across about 1 million journal articles, 1.5 million ebook sections and 500,000 database searches, making this one of our key delivery areas. The ebooks we provide are, unsurprisingly, a mix of purchased, subscribed and open access (OA) including nearly twenty ebook collections. Notwithstanding the availability of the vast resource that is the Jisc Historic Books collection, the majority of our usage comes from single ebook purchases (course textbooks) which have been selected by the library, by our academics and through a Patron Driven Acquisition (PDA) pilot, and which are available through aggregator platforms such as Dawsonera, Safari Tech and EBSCOHost. The most popular collections support our faculties of Business, Science and Technology, Social Sciences & Humanities, and Law, as well as multidisciplinary reference (see **Figure 1**). Within the institution, strategies for ebook management rely on relationships with the academic community to support targeted and strategic collection development around high profile, high impact content such as one-off ebook, ebook collection and course text purchases; all purchases must be in support of strategies for learning and teaching, and research.

Ebook discovery and promotion

The integrated management and discovery of the digital collection is through the Ex Libris suite, with its Primo service badged for our users as *LibrarySearch*. During 2012/13 we logged over 650,700 physical visits to our libraries (we record visits to three out of four libraries) and made nearly 685,000 loans. This compares to about 6 million electronic visits (about 3m ejournal/ebook and database and about 3m LibrarySearch sessions). We ran a small pilot on PDA,

and used what we found out to support evolving models and to drive up user satisfaction; this includes targeted ebook PDA rentals for "just in time" access to ebooks content to satisfy interlibrary loan requests (an increasingly common model in HE). It is feasible that more targeted use of PDA could benefit Westminster, but ongoing work would be needed to monitor use of patron selected titles, and provide management information comparing PDA titles against academic/library selected material to find a balance that works both for our users and for our budgets.

Meantime, we continue with advocacy to promote digital resources, and the benefits of our ebooks portfolio, ebook collections and new acquisitions to students and staff in order to optimise usage. We recognise the need to increase support for new students unfamiliar with the "user unfriendly" aggregator platforms, as most do not provide a satisfactory user experience;

Ebook learning and teaching strategy

In relation to the University's strategy for learning and teaching, Deans of Faculties and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning are involved with the university's current Learning Futures initiative, including a strand on "transforming learning and teaching". This developmental work is based on the Community of Inquiry model (Garrison and Anderson 2011), which provides a coherent framework to underpin all the different strands of the Learning Futures programme. Of particular relevance to the library service are some of the key principles.

(a) A focus on the educational experience and higher-order skills, which puts the educational experience right at its heart. It places emphasis on critical thinking and reflection, but it also stresses the importance of the social dimension of learning. Work on Graduate Attributes, including digital and information literacy, will underpin this.

(b) A solid and realistic basis for integrating technology into higher education and promoting blended learning. The model recognises the potential of technology, but dismisses the use of technology for technology's sake. If technology is to be used, it must add value – it should provide a means through which learning is facilitated. This is true of the library's digital resources as well.

(c) Recognition of the enormous value of the face-to-face educational experience. Blended-learning approaches should not be viewed as replacing these experiences.

(d) A basis for the promotion of a blended-learning approach, which offers the potential to create a community of inquiry independent of time and location through the use of information and communication technologies. The power of blended learning is that it respects the advantages and preferences of face-to-face, whilst recognising the enormous

strengths of online learning. Realising the potential of e-learning does not imply that traditional education is obsolete, rather that e-learning's capabilities can actively enhance traditional educational ideals. The educational rationale for blended learning is the ability of a blended-learning design to engage participants in critical reflection and discourse by creating a flexible and sustainable community of inquiry. Blended-learning designs can extend time and tasks that sustain a community of inquiry beyond the limited frame of the traditional face-to-face classroom.

Aligning services to strategy

Our challenge is to align our services with the theoretical framework as it evolves. Meantime, I expect work to emerge within the Learning Futures initiative to explore user behaviour with students given the ongoing evolution in the use of digital resources, ebooks and changes to the supply model. Today, aggregators such as CourseSmart and VitalSource prefer conversations directly with academic colleagues to promote a 1 to 1 student textbook model, with associated class note sharing facilities, finding new ways to increase their market share by tailored cost negotiation based on full-time equivalent users/length of course, while bypassing the library as the traditional funder of such resources. This implies that libraries would not support a student-centric model which gives access to a set course book through the virtual learning environment (VLE), or direct via the publisher platform. Moreover, it implies that we do not want to engage with supporting access to resources after a student graduates as part of an institutional lifelong learning agenda. Such business models are challenging, as they expand the need to support content from more publishers on yet another dynamic platform. The library is usually better placed to manage the process including procurement, licensing and access management and to help users meet expectations of the experience whether through on- or off-campus access, and across a range of mobile devices.

Use of ebooks

A quick turnaround survey of taught course students via Blackboard around use of ebooks at the university in March 2014 showed that most respondents (60%) used ebooks weekly, or at least monthly, with most use being related to textbooks and reference works (90%) to help complete coursework assignments. Ease of use and access across multiple devices are considered essential, not just desirable. Anecdotally, ebook users utilise the content in short targeted bursts, and we know they use other resources including print books and content on other devices, at the same time. While it is difficult to compare the

value of physical against virtual usage on such a small sample, these findings underline the digital shift and the importance of digital library activities to our users. Preliminary results from the 2014 LibQual survey at the university highlight again the message that students on taught courses need access to the "*main texts and readings I need for my work*" and make "*electronic resources accessible from home or office*" amongst their top requirements. While this is not a surprise, it underlines how we have to ensure we weave ebooks into our offering as a genuine way of improving the student experience, not as an add-on.

With regard to core texts in relation to learning and teaching, we are watching the current pilot for core text provision that the London Universities Purchasing Consortium (LUPC) is currently running with Queen Mary London. Phase 2 (from September 2014) will be opened up to a wider cohort of interested institutions and we are gauging faculty interest and funding. Some of our academics are also experimenting with WileyPlus fully integrated inside Blackboard for their modules.

IT challenges

Within our service we are exploiting access via the VLE (Blackboard), and have a project underway to bring in new reading-list software to further facilitate planning and budgeting. The reading-list software will offer new opportunities for the library to work with academic staff and students on managing lists, reducing out of date/out of print items previously listed, and positively acquiring alternative ebooks, subject to availability and pricing. For ease of deployment and to increase user engagement, it remains important to integrate access solutions into existing workflows and systems as much as possible. We use existing authentication systems to simplify access and to increase reliability and resilience (as an institution we use the Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) internet standard) and we offer Shibboleth login where practical. There is new work under way in respect of institutional IT access and identity management, which we intend to help us exploit managed user groups' access more effectively. That said, for users, there are known, big problems to solve – the multiplicity of formats and platforms, the restrictions on use, the restrictions on using devices, formats and access routes they prefer, and the limited functionality and incompatibility with non-academic ebooks. Another aspect will be the "open" agenda – exploitation of Open Educational Resources (OER) as well as access to more OA ebooks as ways to manage cost and optimise impact.

I would add that Westminster has good support for visually impaired users, including sourcing of text files from publishers, and recent feedback has indicated that ebooks can be a viable offering. However, digital rights management (DRM) and the need to download specialist digital publishing software

still present a barrier to usage, not least with a cost implication for users on- and off-campus. Not all visually disadvantaged users wish to use only the text-to-speech function, and more industry development in partnership with organisations such as Jisc TechDis will be required to provide a more viable solution. We look forward to the development of more user-friendly alternatives, including digital watermarking.

What the user wants

In terms of the user's learning experience, it is important to take a more user-based approach and to remember why s/he needs the content in the first place or what "job" they are doing (e.g. to get an assignment done). Often (in an ebook context) we focus on the function of delivery online or ebook formats. What has passed into the sector's folk memory is the presentation by Joshua Harding, a second year medical student at Warwick Medical School, at the 2013 UKSG Conference who (politely) took publishers and librarians to task for simply not moving fast enough to give him what he wants. What he said he wanted (and wasn't getting without paying for it personally) was everything integrated in his personal iPad based "ecosystem"; this included:

- Intuitive navigation
- Interactive features – movies, animations, music, podcasts, slideshows, images, 3D models
- Search function through the entire book
- Highlighting text, making notes and sharing them
- Purchasing per chapter
- Free content updates

"From my limited perspective, much of what is wrong with the system comes down to the fact that publishers and libraries have to plan well in advance and make changes slowly... Students on the other hand are able to change direction quickly and easily. The problem exists because the market has changed so radically in the past few years that students have been able to adopt the new technologies well before the industry and libraries were able to make changes to support these students."[5]

An "above campus" shared service

A second internal element is the requirement of greater efficiency and economy in the management of all professional and support services as the HE financial environment shifts and reshapes. Ebook management requires a

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[5] http://www.slideshare.net/UKSG/0930-harding

heavy investment in staffing (time and skills sets) in every HE institution (HEI), as ebook procurement, metadata, licensing and accessibility are (and are increasingly) complex. As a member of the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) Shared and Collaborative Services Strategy Group, I have been an active supporter of the development of KB+[6] as a centralised, shared, above-campus knowledge base of data useful to electronic resources management (ERM) at institutional level, recognising the potential for these activities to be integrated into a shared service "above campus" based on automated and integrated workflows to avoid single points of failure. As of May 2014, KB+ has data from over 170 institutions with some 550 registered users of the service.

Most recently, as part of the Jisc co-design programme, the KB+ project team, supported by the University of Huddersfield, undertook a consultation exercise to identify and assess the pain points relating to ebooks[7] and post-cancellation access[8] as reported by academic libraries and their users.

Drawn from over 500 delegate submissions across a range of HE libraries, a total of 47 pain points were identified by librarians and further validated through a voting process during the study. It grouped problems into four categories: ones that that seem intractable (too big/too complex/out of our control); ones we can solve locally ourselves; those requiring local resolution, but which would benefit from above-campus support; and those that can only be tackled through above-campus or community action (e.g. through a shared service). Each of the top 12 pain points (25%) received majority endorsement (over 66%) for "above campus" support as a solution. These "dirty dozen" are recognisable by any library service director:

- Improve e-book compatibility with mobile devices
- Compatibility with accessibility software
- Share knowledge on procurement issues
- Standardise and simplify licensing
- Adopt a community approach to negotiating with publishers
- Single ebook acquisition and discovery service including pricing and models
- Better usage statistics – Journal Usage Statistics Portal (JUSP) for ebooks
- Normalise ebook ISBNs
- Provide continuing and archival access
- Preservation of DRM-free content
- Finding out what ebooks are available
- Share techniques for local statistics collection

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[6] http://www.kbplus.ac.uk/kbplus/about
[7] http://knowledgebaseplus.wordpress.com/ebooks-co-design-project/ebooks-full-report/
[8] http://knowledgebaseplus.wordpress.com/pca-co-design-project/pca-full-report/

While this list will come as no surprise, it is disappointing that publishing models and services as they exist today cannot help us to solve them.

External drivers – a time of intense scrutiny

Today the digital future of the book in the HE environment is the focus of intense scrutiny; this is important for all aspects of HE services supporting learning, teaching and research. Four important initiatives – by funders, by Jisc and other sector bodies and library services – are currently taking place which are worthy of special mention here as their outcomes can help solve some of the wider, intractable issues:

(a) The Jisc pilot co-design project on a national monograph strategy: its report, expected be published in Spring 2014, forms the final output from the first phase of a project which ran from July 2013 until January 2014 in collaboration with SCONUL and Research Libraries UK (RLUK)[9]. Part of its work has been around identifying the need for an infrastructure that can give access to both digital and hard-copy monographs via a stable business model with appropriate collaborative approaches to licensing and digitisation, and which would offer innovative approaches to publishing and new formats.

(b) OAPEN (Open Access Publishing in European Networks)[10]: this primarily explores open access monograph business models in the humanities and social sciences, and the goal is to foster the creation of new content by developing future-orientated publishing solutions, including an open access library for peer reviewed books;

(c) The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) expert reference group on Monographs and Open Access Publishing[11] has been set up to develop increased understanding about the challenges and opportunities for open-access monograph publishing.

(d) The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the British Library have launched a two-year research project on the academic book of the future in the context of OA publishing and continuing digital change.[12]

These developments are against the background of frustration with the publishing model, its unsustainable mixture of formats and platforms and changes in the behaviour and expectations of students and other users. As

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[9] http://monographs.jiscinvolve.org/wp/
[10] http://oapen-uk.jiscebooks.org/oapen/
[11] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/rsrch/rinfrastruct/oa/monographs/
[12] http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/News-and-Events/News/Pages/The-Academic-Book-of-the-Future.aspx

a sector, we are also experiencing another shift with publishers withdrawing textbooks from unlimited concurrent users and imposing limits. For all HE library directors, the holy grail remains publishing models that are sustainable and affordable.

University publishing initiatives

Today some HEIs are considering moving to become e-textbook creators as well as OA publishers. In March 2014, Jisc Collections invited UK HE institutions to participate in a three-year national project to explore the viability of institutions becoming e-textbook publishers[13]. The project will assess the following question: *"Will the institution as e-textbook creator help students by providing a more affordable higher education, and promote a better, more sustainable information environment for libraries, students and faculty?"* The term "e-textbook" is defined by Jisc Collections as: "a coherent package of learning materials in electronic form that is fundamental to a course of study at an Further Education College (FEC) or HEI" and which should be reusable, accessible, interoperable, and durable. Moreover, as learning objects e-textbooks must be capable of supporting the different activities and interactions that teachers, or learning designers, might use or encourage; be capable of integration into a range of virtual/managed learning environments; support multiple uses through multiple devices in multiple environments (including offline where appropriate); be benchmarkable for functionality and range of learning materials against the products of accepted commercial market leaders; and be fully hospitable to FECs'/HEIs' requirements in terms of accessibility, such as supporting text-to-speech, magnification, choice of colours for backgrounds and texts, and adhere to recognised standards. An accompanying landscape report by David Ball sets out the current environment and issues in rich detail.

   In Scotland, the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library (SHEDL) aims through collaboration and combined purchasing power to achieve a shared digital library with easier access to online content to support research and learning and teaching. Its HE libraries ebook purchase tender work has highlighted to the library community that the publishers they use are making available few (if any) of the textbooks that they want to be able to purchase collectively in their ebook packages; consequently they are all grappling individually with challenging and expensive data rights management when they wish to obtain textbook material. Given there is a common interest in addressing this, the libraries are discussing how they can cooperate to share the costs of e-textbook publishing, and then release the material by OA. SHEDL is to

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[13] http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/News/Institution-as-e-textbook-publisher-call-for-participation/

explore this approach by commissioning a set of pilot e-textbooks to support undergraduate and postgraduate study in certain fields of suitable significant interest across the SHEDL partners (e.g. Scottish law, devolution and government, offshore renewable energy, science and policy, renewable energy in maritime high-latitude environments, and Gaelic language).

While OA methodologies are likely to provide a more cost-effective route to the provision of textbook information, the challenge of funding the research, authoring, publishing and maintenance costs remains. The SHEDL business model is being developed and they estimate the likely timetable for a full e-textbook production may take two years or even longer. The process will most likely invite competitive bids for the overall subject and individual chapter coverage, and they estimate that the costs of producing an e-textbook on a reasonably defined subject area may be in the region of £3000 to £5000, including an author royalty of £500 to £1000. It is anticipated they would seek to use of variants of models used by e.g. Knowledge Unlatched, Open Library of the Humanities, Jisc Collections and Ubiquity Press. Publishing models that are sustainable and affordable will be a paramount consideration.

At the time of writing, the University of Westminster is establishing the University of Westminster Press in partnership with Ubiquity Press for some of these same reasons. It will provide a university-branded dissemination channel for high-quality research, for the production of online articles and journals, digital and print-on-demand monographs, conference proceedings and other forms of peer-reviewed research output, increasing the profile and standing of Westminster's research, providing an income generation channel and supporting our research engagement and excellence missions. A Westminster thesis series is also under consideration. It is to be hoped that we can also move into the e-textbook publishing space over time. The press will provide us with an online publishing platform and service supported by international peer-review networks, and will demonstrate the university's commitment to the OA agenda and facilitate high quality publications (in particular from early career researchers).

This will contribute to the disruption of conventional commercial models of scholarly communication and advance the OA agenda, addressing issues prevalent in the current commercial model, by significantly reducing the costs of publishing and addressing problems such as loss of copyright. The Ubiquity Press is based on a collaborative model (Ubiquity Partners Network) involving a network of peer review, and a governance structure involving participation from members of the Ubiquity Partners Network. Our press will operate under the oversight of a board with editorial and governance responsibilities.

Standards of editorial practice will be benchmarked to those of established and reputed academic publishers. Peer review is facilitated through Ubiquity's partner network of expertise. In the initial three-year term, the aim is to

publish three journals and five books. In the initial stages, it is anticipated that publications will be solely from Westminster, but further development is planned to enable publication of externally produced outputs. The publishing model is based primarily on a Gold OA approach, with article processing charges and book processing charges. The key difference from standard commercial models is that the charging system is designed to be affordable and sustainable, and charges will be significantly lower than those of commercial operators. The details of pricing are currently under consideration by the university. The inception of the university press is an important development for the university in the context of OA publishing, including the new REF OA requirements. We are seeking the active engagement of faculty research leaders and colleagues currently involved in academic publishing.

Closing comments

There are continuing and even increasing concerns about the processes involved in the management and delivery of ebooks, relating both to library functions and to the end-user experience. As the core texts model(s) and OA/OER resources mature, and student-as-consumer expectations grow, provision of core texts will not be an easy challenge. Varied and mixed economies are currently being experimented with, including text provision (print or electronic), text plus device provision, tokens towards text cost (used on Amazon, aggregator platform or on-site bookshop) and direct student purchase. The potential for change is still "around the corner", but the complexity of the issues and the seemingly intractable nature of the problems continue to exercise service directors, our staff and users.

It is likely that, with the spotlight now on the future of the monograph, the distinctiveness of an institutional ebook support offering will become a more important issue for institutions across HE. The drivers include content cost, current publishing models, active promotion of OA and even cohort size. It will interesting to see where the move to "blended content" takes us as libraries begin to exploit both our paid-for and open (OA/OER) content more systematically. That said, a large part of the innovation and "competition" is taking a very consumerist approach. Much of what service directors (and many scholarly publishers too) talk about is, naturally enough, from the supplier point of view (and this includes the library as supplier).

As service directors, we must always try to shift more towards a user perspective and constantly ask ourselves "is this going to change the user's learning experience?" What unites us all at a local level is the customer-centric drive to provide content to support both our current student cohort and life-long learning. The big question is how and when we can all reimagine content so that the norm for ebooks is that they have become true "natively digital" in origin, with imaginative built-in interactivity features and multimedia

elements, including video and 3D objects, to enhance the learning experience, rather than being a more or less faithful electronic version of a traditional print textbook with all the drawbacks inherent in that.

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Ebooks and accessibility

Alistair McNaught and Huw Alexander
Jisc TechDis and SAGE Publications

What do we mean by accessibility and what are the issues?

Accessibility is to ebooks what labelling is to the food industry. When you purchase a ready meal from a supermarket you expect to be able to check the ingredients straight away. Will it be suitable for my friend with the nut allergy? Is it suitable for vegetarians? By recognising that different people have different needs and preferences, the industry makes it easy for people to choose the things that suit them and many retailers make a point of signalling their "dietary accessibility" to boost sales. In a similar way, different readers have different needs and preferences, yet it can be very difficult for them to find out whether the book they are about to purchase or read will meet any of their reading needs or interoperate with their assistive technologies such as screenreaders or text to speech.

Happily, ebooks have the potential to meet a very wide range of accessibility needs. For example, with the right format and the right construction, ebooks can offer:

- Magnification with text reflow. Magnification alone is of limited benefit if it makes it harder to navigate the page. If, however, line lengths

can reflow when text is magnified so that the line still fits the width of the screen, reading speed is significantly improved.

- Colour/contrast changes. People with some visual impairments or dyslexics with scotopic sensitivity can find reading much easier if they can adapt text and background colours or contrasts. This also benefits people working in very dark or very light environments.
- Text-to-speech support. Text to speech is a mature technology that allows text on screen to be voiced by software. Good quality human sounding voices are commercially available in a wide range of languages.
- Alternative texts for images/tables. A text description of the main points of an image or table helps convey information to blind readers, but often helps sighted readers in their interpretation of the information.
- Compatibility with assistive technology devices. Screenreaders perform a text to speech role, but also allow audio-only access to the menus and other features of the delivery platform – provided the product has been produced to recommended accessibility standards.

Ebooks with these features are accessible to a very wide range of users, including non-traditional readers – for example people with print disabilities. The term print disability refers to any disability that hinders an individual's ability to access hard-copy printed text. It is more than visual difficulty, and includes those who have difficulty decoding printed text – for example dyslexic people. Equally, spinal injury or involuntary muscle spasms may hinder someone from physically holding a book. Ebooks can potentially transform access to content for these very varied users. However, the potential benefits are not always realised. It is not unusual for barriers to accessibility to be accidentally introduced at any stage of the supply chain. Typical barriers can include:

- File format choices influence accessibility – for example PDF documents that are a "photograph" of text cannot be read out, recoloured or reflowed to fit a larger font size. Flash-based "flipbooks" can be difficult or impossible to use if you need magnified reflowable text or access to text to speech,
- Lack of accessibility awareness in the production team – even if accessible formats are used, production decisions (like tagging headings for typographical appearance rather than semantic meaning) can strip away benefits for disabled users.
- The interface of the delivery platform (e.g. ebook library systems) may lack features like font and background colour change – even when the format of the ebooks supports it.
- Lack of information or communication of the accessibility features that exist – for example, many products have no accessibility guidance, despite print-disabled people being up to 10% of the readership.

- The hardware devices (e.g. ebook readers/tablets) on which the files are displayed may lack accessibility features – for example colour/contrast options.

Procurement checklist for library staff

One of the issues with accessibility is that it can seem to get bogged down with incomprehensible technicalities – if a sales representative says "it's Section 508 compliant" or "it was designed to WCAG specifications", it's difficult to argue even though neither of you has any clue what those statements mean in practice.

In 2012 Jisc TechDis was commissioned by a group of university libraries to research the provision of alternative formats[1]. The final report included good practice pointers in terms of procurement practices. Jisc TechDis is very focused on the user experience so the procurement advice from the report boils down to eight plain English questions – most of which can be demonstrated there and then with the product. These questions will not guarantee 100% accessibility for all assistive technology tools, but they will allow non-specialist decision makers to ask highly pertinent questions which will help weed out products with poor accessibility.

- What is the maximum font size and does text reflow when you enlarge the font?
- Can a user change background/foreground colours or contrasts?
- Are there keyboard-only equivalents for all mouse actions?
- Is text marked up so it can be navigated in a meaningful way (for example by heading level)?
- Can text be selected and read by text-to-speech tools?
- Are text descriptions available for graphics and images?
- Which assistive technology tools has the system been tested with?
- Where can I find guidance for all these features?

Risks and opportunities

Practice perpetuates culture and cultures perpetuate practices. The model described shows how a publisher or supplier with little awareness of accessibility gives end users little information on their accessibility features. Many print-impaired people have only a scant idea of how ebooks could meet their needs, and even library staff and disability officers are not necessarily aware of the wide benefits that accessible digital text provides. This ignorance can lead

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[1] Jisc TechDis. Libraries and alternative formats research. Parts 1–5. http://www.jisc.techdis. ac.uk/techdis/multlinkres/details/main_site/laafr
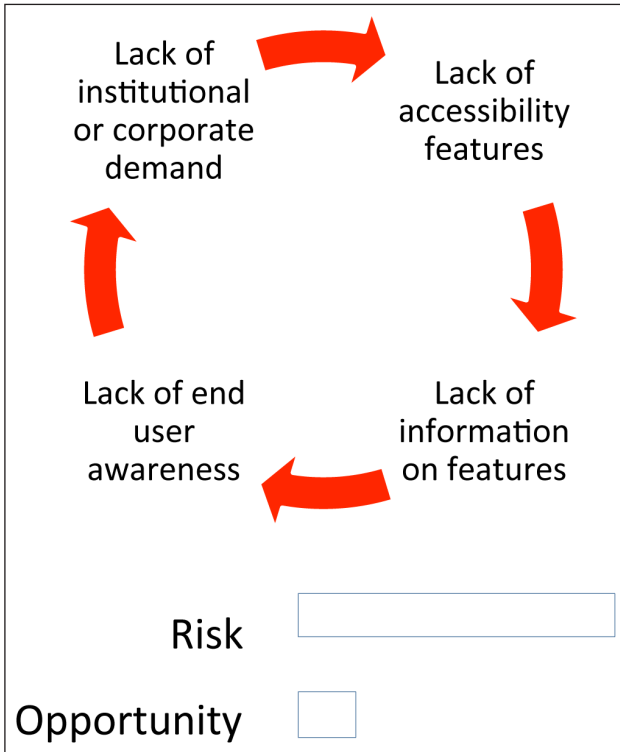
Figure 1: Flow diagram showing how lack of accessibility and accessibility information perpetuates end-user ignorance, reinforcing the status quo. This is a high-risk approach because customer awareness can change very rapidly, particularly if they come across a more accessible rival supplier.

to a dangerous complacency for less accessible publishers. Customer awareness can change in a single day by reading an article or attending a webinar or a conference. Research by Jisc TechDis[2] in 2012 showed that 10% of the 49 higher education institutions (HEIs) surveyed had accessibility as a "deciding factor" in their procurement policies. Colleges and universities can implement such policies faster than publisher workflows can adapt to keep in the market – giving accessible publishers a significant market advantage. **Figures 1** and **2** illustrate the difference between the "hope the issue will go away" approach and a more proactive "let's show the customer what we can provide" approach. The key point here is that accessible suppliers can sustain existing

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[2] Libraries and alternative format research. Part 4: Are some organisational approaches more effective? pp. 3-5 http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/assets/Documents/laafr4.pdf
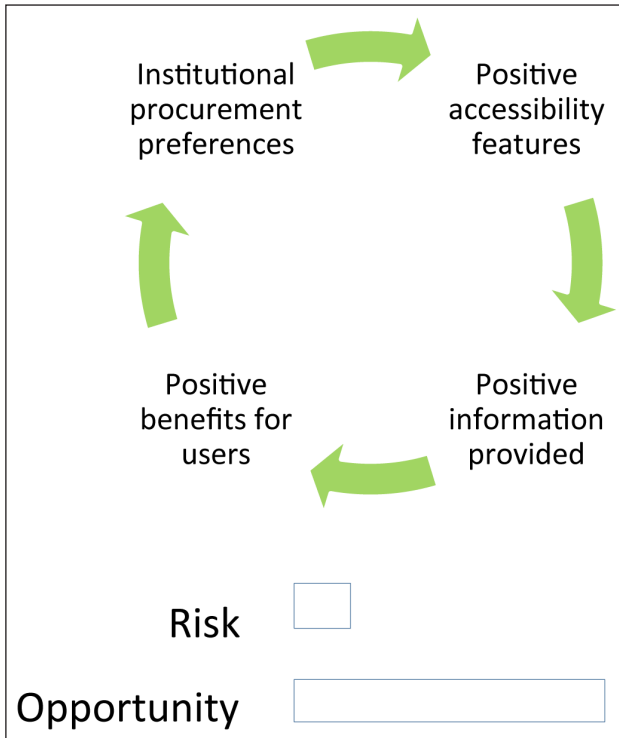
Figure 2: Flow diagram showing how proactive publishers perpetuate a demand for their accessible products.

markets and create new ones. As we see later in this chapter, proactive accessibility provides significant new opportunities.

How are accessible publishing practices evolving?

The transition to a digital publishing world has facilitated the provision of new, innovative products and content to our audiences. The natural corollary of this shift has been the opening up of content to people with visual impairments or print disabilities. Awareness of print disability within the education environment has risen sharply over the past decades, but it is only now that the tools have been made available to effectively meet the needs of this community. Previously the provision of content in an accessible form (Braille, spoken word) was a time-consuming and expensive process. The digital revolution is allowing for a wider range of content to be made available in a more timely and cost-effective fashion. The disadvantages experienced by the

visually impaired or print-disabled student are being peeled away. In essence a level playing field is emerging which affords everyone equal access to the content that they require for their studies.

Changing mindsets

This new accessible environment is still nascent and there is much work to be done, but publishers are now much more embedded in the process. The redraft of the *Creative Skillset Nation Occupational Standards for Publishers*[3] resulted in 40 mentions of accessibility themes. The previous standards had zero. Content can be designed and created with accessibility at the forefront of publishers' minds. An "accessible" book now means a "better" book. This constitutes a tremendous shift in the mindset of publishers – one wrought by the need to design content with the delivery method as a central concern. Society itself has changed considerably in the last decade and the dependence on access to information in digital form at the point of demand, be it from a tablet or smartphone, has fundamentally altered the approach of publishers.

Changing opportunities

Digital has afforded a myriad of opportunities to publishers, both in the type of content that can be created and the ways in which in can be delivered. Fortunately, among the main beneficiaries of this sea-change are the visually impaired and print disabled communities.

HESA statistics[4] show that between 600–700 print impaired students could be expected in an average-sized university. If each learner only required two core texts a year that would still result in well over a thousand requests per institution. Current requests to publishers are well below that for most institutions[5] but they are rapidly increasing. They will increase even further. Changes in the disabled student allowance put more expectation on learning providers

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[3] http://standards.creativeskillset.org/assets/0000/0572/Book_and_Journal_Publishing_2012_FINAL.pdf

[4] The range in values reflects the fact that whilst specific learning difficulties, visual and motor impairments are the main print impairments, other disabilities (like mental health) can create a need for alternative access. Within a single disability there can be a big variation on the impact on print impairment. Finally, the figures for average size university can be significantly skewed by the inclusion of the Open University. The figures quoted are regarded as a conservative estimate. https://www.hesa.ac.uk/dox/dataTables/studentsandqualifiers/download/Disab1213.xlsx

[5] http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/assets/Documents/laafrfull.pdf Median of annual alternative format requests to publishers = 5-15/year…. not the thousand plus that might be expected.

Requests for Accessible Material from SAGE

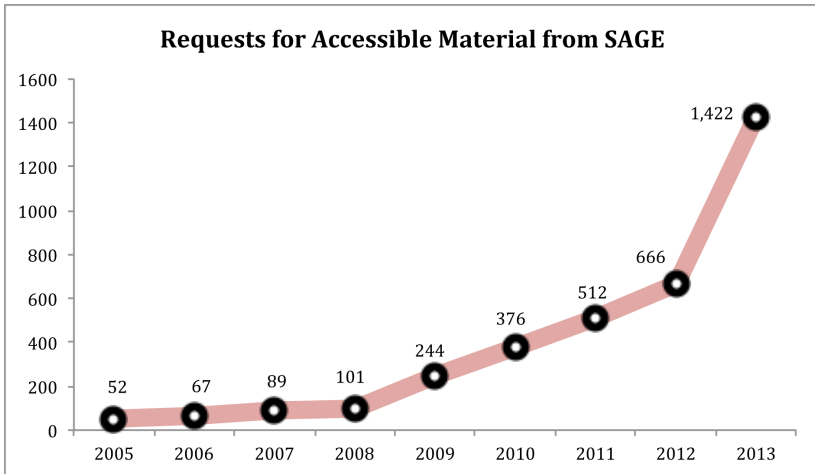| Year	Value
2005	52
2006	67
2007	89
2008	101
2009	244
2010	376
2011	512
2012	666
2013	1,422

Figure 3: Graph illustrating a nearly 30-fold increase in accessibility requests over eight years with a gradually accelerating demand.

to take responsibility for sourcing accessible content in the first place. Annual requests for digital versions of textbooks by librarians and disability officers (by year) are shown in **Figure 3** for SAGE Publications.

As explored below, SAGE embraced the demand and made fundamental changes to effectively meet this challenge. But this has involved close collaboration with stakeholders, and has had far-reaching ramifications across the business. These kind of figures illustrate the drivers for change. Although the demand for physical copies of textbooks is unlikely to go away, publishers have a vested interest in ensuring that the processes that lead to either physical books or ebooks result in an accessible electronic version. The more accessible the mainstream products become, the fewer costs will be incurred in meeting specific learner needs.

Support and guidance for publishers

The Publishers Association, the Publish Licensing Society, EDItEUR, Jisc TechDis and the Royal National Institute of Blind People have provided the industry with invaluable advice on how to deliver content of the highest quality to our whole audience (see Further reading and resources). The *Accessible Publishing Best Practice Guidelines for Publishers*[6] is a truly indispensable guide

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[6] Hilderley, S. (2011), *Accessible Publishing Best Practice Guidelines for Publishers.* http://www.accessiblebooksconsortium.org/inclusive_publishing/en/accessible_best_practice_guidelines_for_publishers.html

to the business of publishing not only accessible content but better books. The advice provided by the aforementioned groups is also supplemented by the conference circuit, where the provision of accessible content is a consistent discussion point. Attendance at events held at the London and Frankfurt Book Fairs, Association of Learned and Professional Publishers (ALPSP), University College London's Digital Forum, the Independent Publishers Guild (IPG) and the guidance provided by the Publishers Association Accessibility Action Group[7] will allow you to keep informed about the changes in the industry. The Trusted Intermediary Global Accessible Resources (TIGAR[8]) project currently being developed by the International Publishers Association will be a huge step forward in the provision of accessible content on a global scale. The opportunities are far-reaching and exciting, and publishers are endeavouring to make a difference, to disable barriers to access and enable learning environments. In the following case study we shall examine the reasons behind the decisions SAGE have taken to help foster this community and the benefits that have been reaped from these decisions.

SAGE and Accessibility: A Case Study

In 2008, SAGE saw firsthand the rise in interest amongst our customers for accessible content. Until this point the provision of files to the visually impaired and print disabled had been a fairly ad hoc process undertaken by the rights and permissions department. The rise in demand, however, was seen as an opportunity to build relationships with our customer base and champion the provision of content to the library community.

Engendering support within the business

The SAGE Vision Statement advocates that SAGE play "a creative role in society by disseminating teaching and research on a global scale, the cornerstones of which are good, long-term relationships, a focus on our markets, and an ability to combine quality and innovation." In redeveloping our approach to the provision of accessible content and support of students, we began by turning everything upside down. The central tenets of the business proposal presented to senior executives were those of speed and simplicity. The most consistent issue identified by librarians regarding content was the time it took publishers to provide the files. Solving this issue was intrinsic to implementing

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[7] McNaught, A. (2014), *Overview of guidance for publishers*, compiled by A. McNaught to support the Publishers Association Accessibility Action Group presentation at the London Book Fair. http://tinyurl.com/LBFaccess
[8] TIGAR Service: http://www.accessiblebooksconsortium.org/tigar.en/

a successful makeover of our systems, and the answer was simple, if possibly controversial. The aim would be to respond to all enquiries within 15 minutes of receipt – a plan that would involve prioritising all requests for accessible content above every other project or request. SAGE provides all accessible content free of charge, and proposing that we prioritise a non-revenue stream above say Amazon had the potential for a difficult conversation with the upper echelons of the company.

This difficult conversation did not arise. The proposal was made that from a legal, ethical and commercial point of view implementing this proposal would serve to benefit SAGE both qualitatively and quantitatively. The goodwill generated by this approach would build stronger relationships with the library community, university faculty and students, and would support our commercial interests. The executives at SAGE immediately discerned the benefits and the ties that could be forged by reshaping our provision of accessible content in line with the SAGE Vision Statement. It was also, simply, the right thing to do.

Implementing a simple, customer-centric approach

The policy was swiftly adopted and the profile was raised across SAGE. The message was a simple one. All accessibility requests would be handled centrally through the sales department and everyone within the company knew this. It solved the speed issue in one motion, as any issue linked to accessibility could be passed to the appropriate person. The rise in the number of requests was thus met by a simplification in the processes for delivering the content files. Complicated licence agreements were pared down to simple usage rules, dedicated FTP sites were created, and the whole of our digital archive was redeveloped to focus on ease of discoverability of our own in-house content. In essence the process became a one-stop service whereby the librarian requested the content and we would deliver as soon as possible (the record being within two minutes of receipt). The workflow has been simplified in **Figure 4**.

The goal for SAGE was always to disseminate teaching, and the swiftness of our response would enable our visually impaired and print disabled customers by giving them the material at the same time as their peers. Again, the level playing field at work.

Influencing the bottom line

This decision was vindicated by the positive responses we received from our library partners, and ultimately we were honoured to receive the inaugural Jisc TechDis Publisher Lookup Award for Library Services in 2010. We are
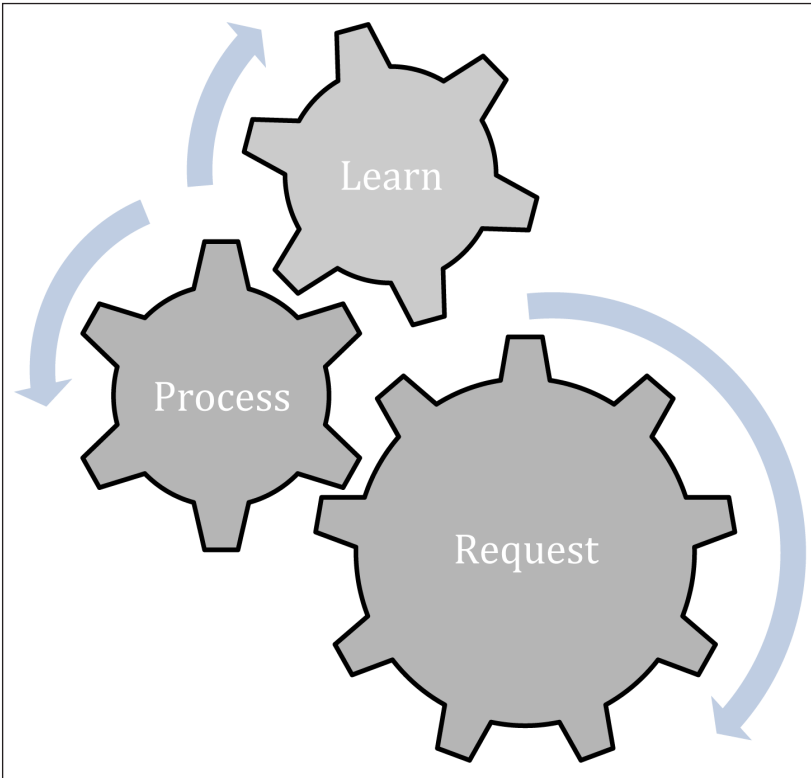
Figure 4: SAGE's workflow for the provision of accessible texts – the priority is to process the request then learn from process in order to improve the fulfilment of future requests.

happy to have developed close working relationships with over 500 academic libraries worldwide, a number that is growing every day.

The efforts made to promote accessibility within SAGE have also informed our publishing decision-making and the development of our own products and platforms. SAGE publishes in both the book and journal sectors, and the development of our digital platforms has been undertaken with a keen eye on the accessibility of the content. Accessible content is better content. It has not always been an easy process and it has been a steep learning curve at times, but the benefits have been manifold. An eye-opening comment from the recent ALPSP meeting by Rachel Thornton, Copyright Clearance Officer at Leeds Metropolitan University, was that librarians were requiring faculty to adopt only titles that had accessible content available. A fair request by librarians and one that SAGE is able to support through the systems we have put in place. No one should be left without access to content that their peers are readily able to consume.

The SAGE checklist for publishers

Based on SAGE's experience the following recommendations are aimed at publishers who are seeking to improve their dissemination of accessible content to the library community: the mnemonic should prove helpful… **A.C.C.E.S.S.I.B.L.E.**

Archive

Gather all your digital files into one central repository organised by year of publication and ISBN. Searching for content will be simplified and efficient. The dual benefit of this undertaking is that you will discover content that can be sold through conventional ebook channels.

Centralise

Assign responsibility to one person for accessibility issues within your company. So many of the issues surrounding the provision of content are explained by a lack of responsibility within the company, and requests falling through the cracks between departments. Define the role and the responsibilities and make sure that in-house staff know who to turn to when a request is received.

Communicate

As well as communicating internally make sure that your efforts are being advertised externally. Clearly state your policy on your website and make sure that your contact details are present on the Publisher Lookup website. Prepare a short FAQ document for customer-facing staff so that they know what to answer when faced with questions regarding accessibility. Giving field sales staff the opportunity to say "Yes, we can do that" will increase the chances of winning that adoption.

Explore

Keep yourself informed. Attend conferences and seminars on the issue of accessibility in publishing and wider society. The Accessibility Action Group set up by the Publishers Licensing Society is a hub of such information and news.

Simplify

Simplify everything from workflows to usage rules. The processes for supplying accessible content do not need to be complicated. Librarians and

publishers are already inundated with work, so strip away the layers of bureaucracy and make the fulfilment of requests as simple as possible. Rules for the use of content do not need to be draconian – they need to be viable, straightforward and informative. If you cannot trust a disability librarian in this world, who can you trust?

Speed

From simplicity comes speed. Installing a bureaucracy-heavy approach to delivering content to the visually impaired or print disabled will only serve to take up your time and theirs. The aim should be to get the content and knowledge in their hands as swiftly as possible. Put yourself in their shoes. Imagine how hard university is at the best of times. Now imagine it without access to the books you need to study. Perfectly impossible. Make it possible.

Inform

Use the information gleaned from your accessible publishing programme to inform the decisions taken at the heart of your business. Develop your platforms in a manner consistent with your accessibility policies – make the best content possible for every audience. Identify trends in your accessibility requests that will inform your digital strategy – at SAGE if someone requests content that has yet to be digitised then it is processed as a priority and feeds into our commercial ebook channels. Use accessibility requests as a guide to demand.

Build

Build accessibility into your entire production workflow. Explore the opportunities afforded by EPUB2 and EPUB3 and a fully XML-first workflow. But don't ignore the humble PDF. A finely crafted PDF can be an example of great accessibility and a widely saleable asset in the library community.

Listen

Listen to your customers. They will all be saying the same thing, whether from within the accessibility community or outside. Everyone wants better access, better information, better platforms, better books. Do not let accessible issues be a secondary concern, make them central. The user experience is everything.

Enthuse

If you've done something good, produced something wonderful or made a terrible hash of it, share your experiences. We all make mistakes, it is how we learn from them that is important. Make appearances on the conference circuit to communicate what you have done, what worked and what didn't. Sharing ideas and policies is the only way to improve the services we each strive to offer.

Learning providers as catalysts for change – sourcing alternative formats and providing feedback

There are many different ways of obtaining text in digital format – and these were explored in some detail at the E-books and accessibility conference[9] coordinated by Jisc TechDis in 2013. A notable statistic from this was the annual cost of scanning textbooks[10] for print disabled learners – £50,000 to meet the needs of seven learners. Publishers able to provide accessible content either directly from their mainstream ebook offers or indirectly via an accessible PDF are an extremely attractive option compared to those that can't.

There are different ways in which accessible content can be obtained and Jisc TechDis have put together detailed guidance with a helpful flow diagram[11] that takes a number of different factors into account in order to help library and disability staff work out the quickest and most cost-effective way of meeting learners' needs.

The Publisher Lookup website[12] was created by Jisc TechDis and the Publishers Association in order to facilitate easy communication between library/disability staff and publishers. The Publisher Lookup website provides an opportunity for library and disability staff to leave feedback on publisher responsiveness – both to praise good practice and to highlight poor practice. Publishing is a complex business with multiple demands. The Right to Read Alliance has worked hard to make accessibility a positive marketing benefit. Jisc TechDis, a key member of the Right to Read Alliance, sponsored the Publisher Lookup awards to raise awareness of good practice in the industry. Providing positive feedback to publishers is essential in helping to justify changes to practice. The Publisher Lookup awards brought positive

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[9] E-books and accessibility ugly duckling or adolescent swan? (2013), Senate House, London, 13 Feb. http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/events/detail/2013/ebook13022013

[10] McMahon, A. (2013), Presentation entitled: "Accessible books – who pays?" http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/assets/documents/events/130213ebooks_amcmahondundeeuni.ppt

[11] http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/assets/Documents/guidetoaltformat.pdf

[12] http://www.publisherlookup.org.uk

Figure 5: The Jisc TechDis Publisher Lookup Awards raised awareness of both good practice in the business process (Elsevier, Palgrave MacMillan and SAGE) and responsiveness to library requests (SAGE, Hodder Education and Wiley Blackwell).

publicity to five publishers including SAGE, who were successful in both awards (**Figure 5**).

Conclusion

Publishing has been able to make giant strides in recent years in the provision of accessible content. Help is now widely available to publishers unsure as to how to implement a successful accessibility programme. The emergence of organisations such as Load2Learn[13] in the UK and BookShare[14] and AccessText[15] in the USA provide platforms for the delivery of content, and removes the complexity from the process.

The numbers of students seeking accessible content will continue to grow in the years ahead. By engaging with the issue now, publishers will be able to shape the future by building relationships with the network of decision

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[13] Load2learn. Delivered by RNIB and Dyslexia Action. https://load2learn.org.uk

[14] BookShare is the world's largest online library for individuals with print disabilities. https://www.bookshare.org

[15] Accesstext Network. All post-secondary institutions in the USA are eligible to join the network at no cost. Members can request files and permissions from leading publishers with one simple form. http://accesstext.org

makers across higher education. Pressure also needs to be exerted on device makers and digital vendors so that content is open to all. It is then that we will see the true benefit of digital, and a convergence of demand and supply where anyone who wants to access information will be able to do so in the format that they desire. It is hopefully a day that is not too far away, and by working together we can accomplish it and just make books better. Inclusivity in every respect will be essential; we have the tools at our disposal and it is time to use them.

Further reading and resources

Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2002. http://www.legislation.gov. uk/ukpga/2002/33/contents

Free online training resources on accessibility. http://www.visionip.org/ inclusive_publishing/en/

Guidance on alternative text formats. http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/ technologymatters/altformat

Jisc TechDis guidance for publishers. http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/ keyinitiatives/publishers

Online accessibility self evaluation for library staff. http://www.jisctechdis. ac.uk/techdis/resources/oaseslibrary

Publishers Association's guidelines for provision of content to VIPs. http://www.publishersassociation.org.uk/index.php?option=com_ docman&task=doc_download&gid=273&Itemid=

Research report on alternative format provision in HE. Sponsored by CLAUD group – Creating Libraries Accessible to Users with Disabilities. http://www. jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/multlinkres/detail/main_site/laafr

Academic ebooks and the mobile user experience

Mark Williams and Ben Showers

Jisc Collections and Jisc

How did you go bankrupt?

Two ways. Gradually, then suddenly.

Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises

These two trajectories – gradual, almost imperceptible change and then sudden, rapid transition – define much of the technological change that has confronted universities and colleges over the past few decades. While this progression is not unique to academia, it does seem particularly marked in the academic sector, from the initial caution shown to the web and the lack of institutional presence online to the experimentation with mobile learning, which remains experimental and largely peripheral. Serious change always seems such a long way off, until it changes everything.

In contrast to the development of the Kindle and iPad and the associated content platforms of Amazon and iBooks, the "revolution" in digital academic content seems to be indefinitely waiting in the wings. Much of the innovation in digital academic content has been in academic ejournals which have for a number of decades cemented themselves as the primary mode of delivery for

scholarly articles. With increasing rapidity, however, students' and researchers' changing requirements and expectations mean that they expect an intuitive and mobile platform approach to the discovery of, and access to, ebooks and digital content. Academic users are no longer willing to make exceptions for scholarly content.

In this chapter we make an attempt to explore the changing requirements of students and researchers regarding access to scholarly digital content, and the challenges and implications for content and service providers in adapting to these changing expectations. Primarily, there is a focus on the consumption of ebooks and digital content by users, ensuring that institutions and publishers take a user-centric perspective in the ways digital content is delivered and used. It also provides an opportunity to explore the particular value of ebooks for the scholarly enterprise. They offer a way to enhance the experience of engaging with the texts themselves – access to the underlying data, interactive images, annotation functionality, and so on. There is also the potential for new models and approaches to inform the research process itself – being able to access the content in new ways, such as text and data mining, for example.

Fundamentally, this chapter is an attempt to move academic ebooks beyond the current paper (pdf) archetype and towards something which exploits the inherent potential of digital content. Ebooks deliver a user experience that exceeds the expectations of students, researchers and users.

The landscape

Plenty of reports on the web detail trends of mobile versus desktop usage and, although such reports may differ in terms of the timescales they predict, they mostly agree that mobile usage will exceed desktop very soon.[1] The fact that we no longer concern ourselves with statistics about smartphone sales versus feature phones shows how *de-facto* web consumption on a mobile device has become. The one distinction worth making is between the use of mobile tablets and the use of smartphones, although even this distinction loses relevance outside of conversations around content usability and authentication.

It is in this mobile ecosystem that academic ebooks have to exist. Even in the traditional desktop scenario, where publishers and institutions have tinkered with the ebook platforms and content to fit a reasonably consistent template, there is significant variability among the products, something that institutional librarians have had to take into account when developing their user guides.[2] Once the huge variety of mobile devices and operating systems is introduced into the equation, the consistency of the user experience can be severely compromised.

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[1] http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/2645115
[2] http://adat.crl.edu/ebooks

It is user expectation that impacts the actual definition of what an ebook is. Users who are used to having a straightforward consistent experience when using an individual, commercially purchased ebook for their own leisure enjoyment are often confronted with a completely different experience with an academic ebook in a mobile context. So much so, one wonders whether the same definition of an ebook really applies to the two scenarios. Depending on the ebook provider, a user won't be able to read the book anytime, anywhere on their device, nor will they be able to lend the book, to underline passages, or to save the entire book. They may not even be able to open the book because of authentication issues, in which case the question needs to be asked: Do they even have in their virtual possession, a book?

It is this gap in user experience that causes consumption of an ebook on a mobile device to fall behind other experiences. Academic ebook provider platforms differ to such a degree that institutions are forced to develop bespoke instructions on their use, something which would be anathema to a large scale retailer of commercial ebooks – and something which certainly defies current web design best practice of intuitive interaction.

The equation is admittedly more complex than at first glance. An ebook is not simply a single file. Effectively it is the sum of a publisher platform. It is a file that holds content and supports discovery, a content file ideally developed to common standards such as EPUB[3]. In addition to this, there may be reader software such as Adobe Editions wrapped around the platform, and beyond this, there may also be variety of authentication procedures attached. All of these elements then have to operate on a variety of operating systems and devices. The sum of this complex relationship is greater than the challenge of any individual element.

Because of this complexity, the presentation of ebooks within an app in the mobile environment becomes very tempting. In an app, the developer has far greater control over the processes occurring, which should lend itself to a more bug-free and issue-free user experience. The tendency by publishers to focus on apps for mobile delivery can be attributed to both demand – after all, this is the way in which many users consume other content on their devices – and the fact that half the mobile tablet space is essentially app-driven by design, such as the iPad. So app deployment on smartphones can remove some of the usability issues discussed here – issues with the platform, such as discovery and download and with the content, and readability on a three-inch screen.

But app-driven ebooks pose significant authentication challenges. Many apps use device twinning, in which a user first authenticates to a platform in a traditional web environment, often using IP or federated access, and then requests a code that is then sent by email. They can then use this to authenticate their mobile device. It is a pragmatic solution, but one that in many ways

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[3] http://idpf.org/epub/30

undermines the UK's current academic licensing models and authentication systems. By receiving a key code and twinning their account, the user is effectively authenticating the phone but not the user. If the phone is lost or stolen, or simply borrowed, access is often possible for periods of up to 90 days – there is no industry standard here. Only with the use of two-factor authentication or the use of activation lock software, making the user enable password protection on the phone, is this vulnerability mitigated. However, there is an ironic twist here. For the user to enable twinning and receive an initial authentication code to enable them to access their resource while mobile, they frequently need to be on campus in the first instance. They are required to be within the designated IP range, or to navigate a federated login on a very small screen, which is of course the very issue they are trying to avoid by enabling device twinning.

Device twinning is, however, still one of the more pragmatic solutions from the user's point of view. However, authentication can be far more complex. A user will often have to juggle logins for an app store, Adobe Digital Editions, a federated access account and a social ID just to access the same piece of content on a range of devices. There is often further difficulty arising from the policies of the user's own institution, if social web apps such as Facebook have been blocked. On a small-size mobile device screen, those additional obstacles can become unmanageable. The effects of a single bug or problem encountered by the user become multiplied as the number of processes necessary for a user to gain access to and read an ebook increases.

Fortunately, the additional tools that a user frequently has to download in order to read an ebook successfully, such as Adobe Editions, can at least be installed on a user's mobile device by the user themselves. But in a locked-down institutional desktop environment that may well be impossible. This again leads to users having a very different and inconsistent experience when accessing the same content on different platforms.

Consistency of experience is a must, with an expectation that users on a mobile device will require offline access, will be able to annotate on and offline, will be able to cut and paste according to the agreed licence, and have a flowing layout that is readable on and adapts to the full range of devices.

Providers of commercial mainstream content have learned the lessons that making content difficult to access can lead to users exploring alternative ways of getting that content. If an institutional user illegally streams a resource for which their institution already holds a licence, this tells us that it is not a question of affordability but one of usability. Platforms such as Adobe Digital Editions do offer ebook providers the ability to set up borrowing rather than purchase ebook offerings, but at a cost of ease of use. A poor first-time experience on an ebook platform for a user may well be their last as they explore other resources. This should be considered by publishers as they make choices as to what to protect through Digital Rights Management (DRM) and what not to protect.

Feedback from institutions also demonstrates that ebook performance on mobile devices is considerably "buggier" than in any other environment. Clearly, the range and limitations of the browsers, platforms and devices in question are larger than the typical desktop experience. This makes it harder to design and code for, and consequently requires more effort put into testing to allow for the range of devices to be used with the content. Simply emulating generic mobile experiences is not sufficient for this, and if it takes more resources to ensure an ebook product is properly tested and fit for mobile purpose, then that resourcing should be provided, rather than providing an experience that may just dishearten and drive users away. Additional associated costs should be worked into the ebook model.

Some studies have shown that many users prefer not to read ebooks on mobile devices, although the important question is – why?[4] If the discovery and delivery phase is so difficult, then this will surely cloud the user experience of the actual consumption of content. A reflexive answer that small screens are an issue for the user avoids confronting this, and flies in the face of the trend for larger mobile device screens. While we need to do more work on finding out what users want to use mobile devices for, we need to remove what barriers we can, and ensure that accessing ebooks on a mobile device is seen not just as added value, but as a core component of a licence and user experience of that resource.

Meeting user needs with academic ebooks

Removing the barriers for the enduser is essential if content and service providers are going to able to meet the expectations and requirements of our users. If we fail to remove this friction for the users, they will simply adopt the path of least resistance, finding easier, and possibly less trusted and secure, ways to find and access the content they need.

There have been over the past few years a number of efforts to begin collaboration and sharing of best practice and exemplars in the online and mobile delivery of ebooks and digital content. Some of these, like the Library Success Wiki[5] and the Mobile Technologies in Libraries blog[6] are collaborative, community attempts to impose some order on the disparate and fragmented mobile content environment in universities and colleges. Building on this work, Jisc, along with a group of academic librarians[7], hosted two workshops to see whether it was possible for the community (libraries, publishers,

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[4] http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2013/06/11/what-do-academics-want-a-survey-of-behaviours-and-attitudes-in-uk-higher-education/

[5] http://www.libsuccess.org/M-Libraries

[6] http://mlibraries.jiscinvolve.org

[7] http://mlibraries.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2013/07/25/jisc-collection-mobile-issues-workshop/

aggregators and systems vendors) to come together to clarify the ways they could meet user needs and overcome the shared challenges in achieving this. As a result of these workshops there has emerged what has been dubbed a "mobile manifesto" for improving mobile services to students and researchers.

A mobile manifesto for ebooks

To ensure that libraries and publishers can deliver the kinds of content and services that students and researchers expect, the manifesto aims to provide concrete activities that will fulfil the core requirements that emerged from the library and publisher workshops. These include a number of specific statements of intent, including:

1. Authoritative record of relevant mobile products

The proliferation of mobile resources and devices makes testing and assessment of resources an onerous task for any individual library or organisation. A crowd-sourced list, or record, has the advantages of spreading the workload and developing consensus on user experience. Libraries and publishers should develop this partnership and the process and ongoing end results need to be effectively surfaced for the community.

2. A mobile standard

While not quite a fully-fledged standard, this would be a checklist against which the functionality of a mobile resource can be measured. The work done by the Book Industry Study Group on the EPUB support grid[8] and the EPUB3 standard (which is designed for reflowable content) provides a model for how this might work. Librarians would be able to see instantly the kinds of functionality they could expect from a particular mobile resource and be able to advise users on what they can expect to be able to do with it.

3. Product roadmap/status updates

There is a clear need for a grading system for mobile products that express the status of the development. For example, grades may include whether a product is in trial or will have a continuous upgrade path. This could form part of the authoritative record of mobile products already discussed in section 1 above.

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[8] https://www.bisg.org/epub-3-support-grid

4. Accessibility and compatibility

Any mobile development should enable content to be accessed easily and read on all mobile devices, using clear flowing text. This should meet not just WC3 accessibility standards[9] but also general ease of use requirements for all users accessing via mobile devices. Accessibility of content on mobile devices benefits everyone. Similarly, cross-platform compatibility is required to ensure that content and resources can be seamlessly accessed on different mobile devices. Users should be able to start reading an article on their desktop and pick up where they left off on their iPad as they travel home on the bus.

5. Access and authentication

Accessing content should be made as simple and intuitive for the user as possible. There are only a certain number of access scenarios, and all publishers should have the same common requirement of achieving secure authentication to their resources. This can be done through collaboration between libraries and publishers, and agreement and consolidation around agreed standards based on models previously discussed.

The manifesto is primarily a way to surface the shared challenges and concerns of the community in providing access to ebooks for its users and customers. It also provides a locus for discussion of these issues and a common source for exemplars and best practice to be shared and updated, both nationally and internationally.

Fundamentally, it is the beginning of the necessary collaboration between all the stakeholders involved in ebook creation and provision. They can begin working together to tackle the challenges that must be overcome to provide users with a positive mobile experience. It also marks the start in further work Jisc and the library partners would like to do to begin taking some concrete action in the mobile ebook space.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted some of the major challenges that currently confront institutions, libraries, publishers and other stakeholders in the scholarly content supply chain in providing mobile access to those resources. Taken together, these challenges form a systemic and "hard" problem; a problem which requires work on multiple fronts and in partnership and collaboration with others. It is not easy to overestimate the scale of the problem that is faced in delivering a mobile experience that students and researchers would expect when accessing and using scholarly ebooks.

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[9] http://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility

But progress is being made, and while there are a number of initiatives from the stakeholders involved, there is also a recognition that many of these problems cannot be solved without collaboration. And the need to solve these issues is a priority.

Overwhelmingly, the message is that we must begin to act. While change so far for academic content has been gradual, this will not be the norm. The pace of change is going to increase, user expectations will change in relation to these new developments, and the technology we are beginning to adapt to will disappear to be replaced with something else. If we cannot meet the needs of our users while the pressures on academic content remain relatively benign, then the inevitable suddenness of future change threatens to overwhelm our capacity to provide content and services at all.

Ebooks acquisition as a shared service

John Tuck

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The growing demand for ebooks has been evident in libraries for many years. Depending on your viewpoint, moderate or extreme, ebooks are deemed to play an important role in the development or the decline of libraries. A measured forecast is outlined in *Academic Libraries of the Future*, a report from a project sponsored by the British Library, Jisc, the Research Information Network (RIN) and the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL 2011, p.14):

"All the scenarios assume that at some point beyond 2020 libraries will have made significant progress towards completing the digitisation of paper-based records. Practically all scientific books, papers and other records post-1900 will have been digitised. Arts and humanities materials will have the majority of post-1950 books, papers and records digitised. Remaining paper materials required for teaching or research will normally be digitised on demand. Some special collections (e.g. extensive collections of frail manuscripts) are likely to be the exception. Libraries will develop and change to encompass the new practices and technologies."

On the other hand, in *Academic library autopsy report, 2050*, Sullivan (2011) considers e-books to have exerted a baleful influence:

"The academic library has died...Although the causes of death are myriad, the following autopsy report highlights a few of the key factors. 1. Book

collections became obsolete…Most of these collections originated in physical libraries, which signed their own death warrants with deals to digitize their books."

However, the specific feedback that provided the momentum for the idea of a shared ebook acquisition service came from more localised sources: the students and librarians within the M25 Consortium[1] and the Museum Librarians and Archivists Group (MLAG)[2] institutions and feedback from Royal Holloway students, in surveys such as the National Student Survey and i-graduate's Student Barometer. These included:

"The library has good books on critical theory that would have been helpful to read online especially as they were not in the library", "More ebooks would make it easier to access the material" and "More ebooks please!"

As for librarians, the growing importance of ebooks was demonstrated through their participation in an ebooks survey carried out in 2011 by the M25 Consortium, Jisc Collections and MLAG, a network of archivists and librarians working in museums and galleries throughout the UK. The survey elicited 55 replies from 50 institutions and covered ebook platforms and services used by member institutions, content formats, subjects and publishers of interest, ebook business models used and possible options for consortial purchase.

Based on an assumption that the two consortia or their nominated agents would consider negotiating and centrally administering the acquisition of ebooks collections on a collaborative basis, the institutions were asked about their views on the suitability of a number of options such as: individual title purchase, individual title subscription, package purchase, package subscription, patron driven acquisition, short-term rental and access on the basis of a limited number of simultaneous users. The survey highlighted some divergent views and issues needing clarification. For example, some respondents stated a preference for a strong, robust, national approach rather than the proposed regional, consortial approach, and others identified possible conflict with existing preferred ebook platforms. In some smaller specialist institutions, respondents raised the possibility of the specialism being a barrier to a consortial approach, while others held the view that the consortial approach would be an opportunity for specialist institutions to offer more ebooks and/or achieve better pricing on specialist titles. There were also questions on how an M25 Consortium and MLAG consortia agreement would fit with other purchasing consortia agreements. The Steering Groups of the M25 Consortium and MLAG considered the feedback from the survey, and

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[1] The M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries is a collaborative organisation geared to improving library and information services within London and south east England. It has 57 members including small colleges, large universities, national institutions, museums and societies (http://m25lib.ac.uk)

[2] http://mlablog.org

noted that 26 of the respondents had indicated that a patron driven acquisition (PDA) approach seemed to be quite or very suitable.

This interest led to the setting up of a joint M25 and MLAG task force, not so much to deliver the service but to explore and respond to the questions raised by the survey. In timely fashion, the opportunity arose in March 2012 to submit a bid for funding under Jisc's Digital Infrastructure programme to address many of these questions and fulfil the specific aim of delivering reports, guidelines and navigation tools for consortia seeking to embark on collaborative purchasing of ebooks using PDA.

The successful bid was entitled E-BASS25 (E-Books Acquisition as a shared service in M25). The project was led by Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL) on behalf of the M25 Consortium. Specific named partners for E-BASS25 were Kingston University, the Science Museum on behalf of (MLAG), Jisc Collections and Sero Consulting Limited[3, 4].

What is meant by PDA?

Funding was awarded to the E-BASS25 project to identify experience and best practice from existing PDA examples and engage with stakeholders across the board in order to define their roles and expertise in this area.

A key starting point for the project was to provide a definition of PDA and investigate acquisition models that offered particular opportunities and benefits. PDA was defined as a "just in time" purchasing model which gives library users more control over which books are purchased and added to library collections. Although librarians still have a role in selecting the range of titles that are available to users, the library only pays for items that patrons use. Purchase, rental, usage, and evidence-based models were then defined and described as follows[5].

PDA purchase

This is a straightforward PDA model which uses the available funds to purchase ebooks based on demand from customers. A selection of available titles

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[3] All outputs of the E-BASS25 project can be found at: http://ebooksguidance.jiscinvolve.org

[4] Thanks are expressed to all members of the E-BASS25 project team who delivered the goals of the project to schedule and who, between them, contributed most of the content of the above report: Dominic Tate, project manager (University of Edinburgh), Anna Grigson (LSE), Kim Coles (Royal Holloway University of London), Amy Warner (Royal Holloway University of London), Carolyn Alderson (Jisc Collections), Ben Taplin (Jisc Collections), Helen Woolfries (Kingston University), Anna Vernon (British Library), Rupert Williams (Library Services, University College London — Qatar), David Kay (Sero Consulting Ltd) and Owen Stephens.

[5] These models are described in more details in a video *EBASS25 patron-driven acquisition (PDA) e-book purchasing models* (http://ebooksguidance.jiscinvolve.org/wp)

is agreed between the library/consortium and the supplier and MARC records are loaded in the library catalogues. Users have full access to the ebooks.

PDA rental

The library consortium spreads the available funding more widely, agreeing to rent access to content up to agreed limits, before purchases are triggered. A selection of available titles is agreed between the library/consortium and the supplier and MARC records are loaded in the library catalogues. Users have full access to the ebooks.

PDA usage

This model makes use of "micropayments" to count up the actual use of the ebooks in the collection, for example a charge per page viewed. The library sets up a PDA agreement with a supplier to make a range of ebooks available to users. Once the titles have been selected, the library makes the content visible and discoverable to users. Users have full access to the ebooks. Each significant use of a book triggers a charge to the library. If the total charges payable for the book reach a given level, then the book is deemed purchased and becomes a permanent part of the library's collection. If the library decides to end the PDA agreement, access to any books which have not been purchased is withdrawn, and the library removes records for these books from the catalogue.

Evidence-based selection (EBS)

The library sets up a PDA agreement with a publisher to make a range of ebooks available to users for a defined period. Typically, libraries select one or more of the publishers' collections to be made available for a year. The library pays a fee upfront, which is typically greater than the cost of subscribing to the collection, but less than the cost of purchasing the collection. This fee will eventually be used to purchase books, but no titles are selected at this stage. The library makes the content visible and discoverable to users and users have full access to the collection for an agreed period of time (typically a year). No further charges are made.

Identifying user needs

Led by Sero Consulting, two workshops, one at the beginning and one at the end of the project, focused on user needs. The first brought together 30 librarians from 19 institutions and the second more than 45 from over 30

institutions. The first workshop considered various acquisition models as well as the underlying drivers and motivations for each, from the perspective of libraries and suppliers. The participants were in strong support of an evidence-based PDA approach and a survey to explore further the drivers and motivations.

A survey was undertaken, predominantly of M25 Consortium members, and evoked 30 responses (more than 50% of M25 members) The responses indicated that PDA was viewed favourably by a significant majority and seen as a user-centred approach that should be applied to more aspects of the library collection (80% of respondents) and should not be dismissed as a temporary supplier-driven tactic (73%). The main motivations in offering user ebook choice were seen to be the availability of key titles (100%), encouraging user movement to e-access (80%) and supplementing the print collection (73%). The most significant blockages preventing ebooks from fulfilling their potential were identified as the business models offered by publishers (87%) and the availability of titles, especially e-textbooks (73%). Linked to this was the view that best value in ebook acquisition was potentially to be delivered by a range of models that contribute to collection development as well as satisfying immediate demand.

From the library perspective, library-driven purchase models, informed by usage statistics over a rental period, were valued highly (90%), as well as those involving the professional expertise of librarians and lecturers (73%). There was a challenge to the value of access based on models not leading to ownership (67%). As for views around the consortium approach to ebook acquisition, expectations were high for using scale to achieve the best price and making a bigger collection accessible (97% in both cases), more so than the reduction of the burden of procurement and administration (80%). The most significant concerns about working in a consortium to acquire ebooks were being driven by others' subject interests that are not relevant (80%), and domination by larger institutions (70%).

In many ways these responses were not unexpected. After all, the respondents were professional librarians grappling with the dual aim of serving the immediate needs of their users and managing longer term collection development in the context of shrinking budgets, while the costs of e-resources continue to rise disproportionately around them.

The views of publishers and aggregators

Through a work package managed by Jisc Collections, the four models were considered with a range of aggregators and publishers, addressing issues such as minimum thresholds of investment and commitment required from consortia entering into a PDA deal with suppliers. Questions were put to the suppliers by telephone interview and the unattributed responses were

summarised by Ben Taplin and Carolyn Alderson in a report, *Publisher feed-back on PDA models*[6].

The purpose of the interviews with seven publishers and two aggregators was to discover which models they thought were feasible or realistic as a consortium purchase and learn their thoughts on the practicalities of how these models would operate. The intention was then to use the information to construct guidelines for institutions considering embarking on a PDA consortium project.

Again unsurprisingly, the evidence-based selection (EBS) model proved popular with the publishers, as it would be relatively straightforward to implement, and would guarantee some upfront payment, helping sales forecasting and planning. Seven responses favoured this model. One publisher likened it to a "paid-for trial", and one suggested that the upfront payment would be an incentive to the institution to ensure the content was used. Others mentioned its greater flexibility and sustainability and one publisher suggested that the EBS model involves a higher level of trust and cooperation between both parties and is therefore "more interesting in the long term".

The other three models were generally seen as being complicated to manage for the publisher or aggregator, entailing a considerable amount of technical work with no guarantee of payment if content is not used. This complexity was seen to increase if micropayments from a large number of institutions were involved.

General reservations were expressed about the potential for each model to offer access to content for free, and the threat posed by ebooks to print sales was still considered as a concern to publishers, especially those in the textbook market. This threat was seen to be magnified by any consortial agreement in which single copies of books are shared across several institutions. This could mean that some publishers limit the titles they make available. However, despite these concerns and reservations, the consensus among the suppliers interviewed was a willingness to explore the practicalities of each model and be flexible in order to accommodate the requirements of a consortium.

Other purchasing consortia

Engagement also took place with the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC), and this led to guidance on identifying the most efficient procurement routes for setting up a consortium ebooks agreement through existing framework agreements such as the Joint Consortia Book Agreement (out to tender at the time of E-BASS25). This guidance is entitled *Procurement guidelines*[7]. It makes it clear that the agreement is flexible

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6   Available with all the other project outputs at http://ebooksguidance.jiscinvolve.org.
7   http://ebooksguidance.jiscinvolve.org

and supports a range of business models including PDA. It provides a robust mechanism for institutions wishing to purchase ebooks, but draws attention to certain factors that might inhibit the evidence-based PDA approach and collaborative purchasing by a consortium such as the M25, for instance, lack of support for procurement directly from a publisher, and eligibility to use the agreement limited to English Higher Education (HE) sector regional purchasing consortia.

Developing systems guidelines

The technical issues to be addressed in implementing a PDA agreement, and how library systems can be exploited to maximise the staff time efficiency savings that PDA offers, were explored and guidelines were produced relating to each model[8]. The guidelines include: the use of MARC records in a library management system; the use of MARC records in a discovery service; the use of a knowledge base and link resolver; discovery in the native interface of the publisher/aggregator rather than locally; and discovery in "next generation" library service platforms.

Through an analysis of each option, the *Systems integration guidelines* draw attention to key points that need to be considered and assessed at institutional and consortium level before a decision is made to embark on collaborative acquisition. For institutions, the points for consideration include the need for clarity and understanding of the discovery method to be used, how frequently records will be updated, and the level of resource required for this. There is also a need for a methodology for the removal of candidate records, the maintenance of high quality records for purchased content, and an appropriate financial tracking procedure to be in place. At consortium level, points to consider were defined as how parity might be ensured across the institutions in terms of discovery procedures, how staffing and systems might be provided for centralised payment and how monitoring of usage would be centralised to coordinate closure at an appropriate payment limit.

Outcomes

Findings from the E-BASS25 workshops and the associated survey, together with the views expressed through the publisher interviews, pointed to a strong preference for the evidence-based model. This, in turn, led the project manager, Dominic Tate, to lay down the following challenge to the M25 Consortium (Tate 2013):

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[8] These were entitled *Systems integration guidelines,* by Helen Woolfries of Kingston University. Accessible at http://ebooksguidance.jiscinvolve.org

"This brings us to the fourth model, PDA Evidence. Seemingly the most popular amongst librarians and publishers alike, this model allows patrons to access a whole range of content during the course of the agreement, with the guarantee that all the money will be spent on whole books at the end. Sounds ideal? Well, almost. Here's the rub. The library can choose which books they buy at the end of the agreement. This is great for library choice, but surely this is not actually PDA? There is an intervention between the patron and the purchase. Surely this adds an administrative burden that PDA was designed to eliminate? Perhaps this model could still achieve cost savings when scaled up to a large consortium? ... A consortium has strength to strike a deal with a publisher because its size maximises sales for the publisher and reduces their overheads of dealing with individual customers. Libraries similarly benefit through reduced overheads and similar costs so consortial purchasing is an obvious win-win. Through the size and diversity of its membership, M25 has the capability of putting together a sizeable consortium for the acquisition of ebooks and it seems obvious that the only way this could be achieved is by using the evidence-based model. Those wishing to participate would club their guaranteed spends together to achieve the highest possible discount. At the end of the term, those books every partner wants would be bought. The remaining fund could be divided up in line with the initial deposit, with each partner choosing their books. A number of publishers may also be interested in trialling this approach to see if success could be achieved in practice. Such an approach would be a departure from conventional purchasing practices and would require significant guidance from the consortium and there is always a chance it might not work, but, hey, perhaps M25 should give it a try? If we don't give it a try, we'll never know. Over to M25…"

This approach combines the features of library intervention with a guaranteed upfront payment for publishers. It cannot, therefore, be described as PDA in the purest sense. However, it does combine key elements of the PDA definition. Properly managed, it does give library users more control over which books are purchased and added to library collections and the library only pays for items that patrons use. It is in this spirit that the M25 Consortium is seeking to take up the project manager's challenge, and is undertaking discussions with Jisc Collections and publishers with a view to assessing the feasibility of a collaborative ebooks purchasing model based on the evidence-based approach and in line with the M25 Consortium strategy for 2013/14 to 2015/16[9].

In the meantime further important work on e-books has been undertaken under the Jisc Co-Design Programme. The *Ebooks co-design report* (Chowcat *et al.* 2014) set out to understand the "pain points" experienced by libraries in terms of management and user experience in dealing with ebooks in all their

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[9] http://m25lib.ac.uk

guises and to identify actions that might be taken at local library, consortium or national levels and in the supply chain to address them.

It is the intention that the outcomes of the *Ebooks co-design report* and the E-BASS25 project can be used to guide and benefit the work of the M25 Consortium in order both to address some of the "pain points" and to deliver an improved and value-for-money service experience for the ebook user.

In other words, ebooks continue to develop in exciting, innovative and disruptive ways. They present challenges and opportunities to many stakeholders: librarians, users, publishers, aggregators, teachers, etc. This is why they are of such importance within the constantly shifting digital landscape.

As for the tipping point and the future of the printed book, perhaps clues can be found in a handwritten inscription recently found in the sixth printing of a Collector's Library edition of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, first published in this edition by CRW Publishing in 2003, and purchased in an Oxfam bookshop in Reading in December 2013:

"To Kate,
In case your kindle breaks.
Happy birthday and
Happy sabbatical,
Lots of love…"

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Case Studies

Ebooks at the University of Portsmouth: a ten year success story

Anne Worden

University of Portsmouth

The University of Portsmouth Library has been making ebooks available since spring 2004, so we can now look back across ten years' provision. From an initial three suppliers and around 15,000 ebooks, Portsmouth staff and students can now access over 476,000 ebooks from 15 suppliers, and in certain subject areas ebooks are an essential part of the curriculum (the 15 suppliers are a mixture of aggregators such as ebrary and MyiLibrary, and individual suppliers such as Oxford University Press, Emerald and MIT Press, plus Jisc Historic Books). Not only do we have a significant number of ebooks, but national data shows that students and staff at Portsmouth access ebooks more than in most other UK universities (SCONUL Strategic Planning Data, 2012/13) with just over 4.7 million ebook section requests in the 2012/13 academic year. In addition to monitoring usage data closely, we have carried out surveys to track student reaction to ebooks in 2005, 2009, 2012 and 2014, with the latest survey gathering views from 1846 students. This case study will include selected results from our surveys.

Early success

Our initial offering of 15,000 ebooks, rather than just a few hundred, led to early success because it meant there was something for most subject areas.

We also made sure that all our ebooks were in the catalogue to aid discovery; Nicholas *et al*. (2008) note that use of catalogued ebooks is double that of those not catalogued. A 2005 survey, together with Athens authentication data broken down across departments, showed us at this early stage that it was humanities and social sciences (HSS) students who were leading the way in the uptake of ebooks. This contrasts with the findings of Abdullah and Gibb (2006) at the University of Strathclyde, although Chelin *et al*. (2009) report HSS students at the University of the West of England coming second to law students in frequency of use of ebooks, and Levine-Clark is reported as finding that social sciences students use ebooks much more frequently than science and technology students (ProQuest 2014).

As there was proven student interest, we targeted HSS academics with hands-on ebook training at the end of academic year staff conference, and we arranged subject cluster training for groups who were less well represented at the conference. Academics could see at first hand the useful features available on ebooks and conversations sprang up across the room about how ebooks could be integrated into teaching. We believe these sessions were instrumental in leading to the continued high usage figures for ebooks at Portsmouth, because they convinced academics of the value of ebooks, and led to the adoption of ebooks as key weekly reading on various taught units. We continue to offer hands-on training on ebooks and other electronic sources before the start of each academic year for new lecturers and those who want a refresher. Gravett (2011) and Chelin *et al*. (2009) both stress the importance of promoting ebooks to academics to achieve success with them in a university setting.

In addition to this training for academics, we provided practice on ebooks as part of information literacy sessions for new undergraduates and postgraduates. As a result of this hands-on practice, students who might otherwise have been put off ebooks because of the technology involved saw how easy it was to search and find something relevant to their work. (Our 2009 survey showed that "Put off by technology" was the most common reason for not using ebooks; this reaction has mostly disappeared now, apart from with some mature students.) It is interesting to note from successive survey data that students in the Faculty of Technology – computing, maths and engineering — who do not have these hands-on introductions use ebooks (and ejournals) much less frequently, with their written comments indicating that some are not even aware of our ebook provision, e.g. "What are ebooks?" (first year mechanical engineering).

A further factor in our success with ebooks is the large number of distance learners registered at Portsmouth – around 1,000 in criminology and approximately 500 across the rest of the university. Extensive online support – including daily monitoring of student online discussion boards — is provided for these students in order to help them use ebooks. Naturally, the factors which make ebooks ideal for providing academic reading to distance learners, particularly 24/7 availability at any location across the world, also help students
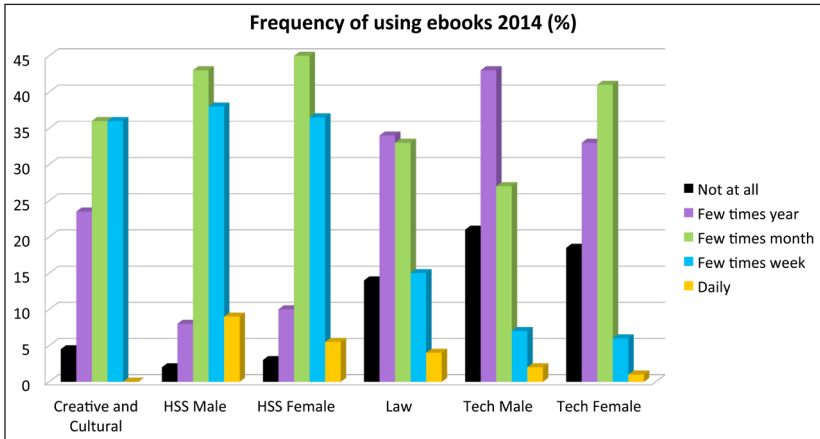
Figure 1: Frequency of using ebooks 2014 (%).

on campus who for one reason or another cannot get to the library. A second year campus-based criminology student provided this comprehensive comment in our 2014 survey of ebook usage (**Figure 1**):

"I use ebooks for different reasons; bad weather/severe winds or pouring rain; I'm running out of time and have to find the info I need quickly; the books I need are already borrowed by someone else; key words and terms/definitions are easy to find and highlighted in yellow; …or I feel lazy and want to stay in bed all day so I search for what I need online ☺; when I'm home and I can't take the books with me because I have luggage limits because I'm flying to get home for the holidays."

For several years our usage statistics showed that titles required by distance learners dominated the top 30, but this domination has dropped off over the last three academic years as campus-based students make even greater use of ebooks, perhaps because of the factors referred to in the next section.

Driving usage even higher

From 2004/05 to 2008/09 we saw a steady rise each year in use of our ebooks. However, in both academic years 2010/11 and 2011/12 we experienced steep increases. These steep rises coincided with deliberately buying ebooks to meet reservation requests (e.g. a book on the European revolutions of 1848 bought because of multiple reservations just before Christmas 2011 had 17,099 section requests in January 2012) and sustained work on increasing the number of online reading lists available to our students. Over the last three academic years we have been systematically checking reading lists to see whether ebooks are available, then linking them into the list if
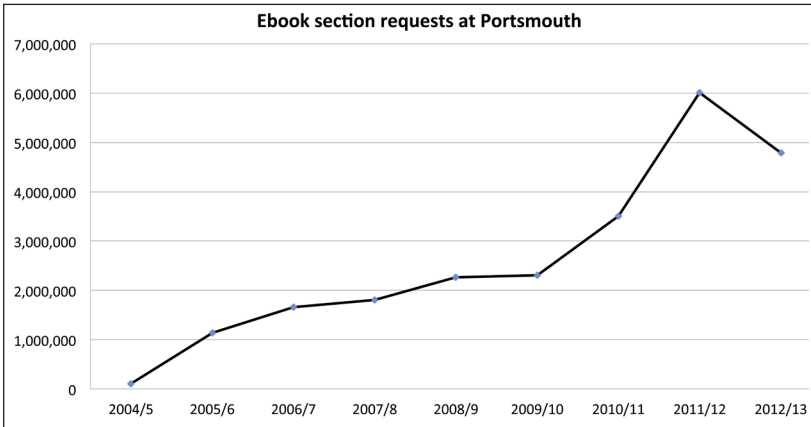
Figure 2: Ebook section requests at Portsmouth.

they are and attempting to buy them if not. Usage data for individual ebook titles in this same time period shows that the majority of books at the top of our usage tables are titles which we deliberately bought either for a reading list, or for a reservation: in 2012 for example, 92% of the ebooks in our top 50 via ebrary were ebooks which we had bought outright, with 76% being on reading lists. Our 2014 survey showed that 39% of HSS respondents and 36% of those in Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI) found ebooks via online reading lists whilst, just as reported by Bucknell (2012) and Chelin *et al.* (2009), the most common method of finding ebooks was by searching the library catalogue, at 76% of HSS and 79% of CCI respondents. In contrast, technology students most commonly use Google (46%), with the catalogue coming second at 39%.

Figure 2 charts the use of our ebooks over the last ten years. Although there was a drop in 2012/13, we believe this is accounted for by a combination of three factors: a smaller number of students in the final year than in the preceding two academic years; a change in the tally of ebook page views as a result of the move to the COUNTER 4 standard of recording ebook use; and a complete restructuring of the curriculum across the university which deliberately tried to reduce some of the assessment burden for students.

From ebooks being an "added extra", used to grab quick quotes or if the print copy was out on loan according to our 2009 survey, our 2014 results show that ebooks are now mainstream, a key part of student activity, certainly for students in HSS subjects (see **Figure 3**). Evidence from our 2014 survey leading to this conclusion includes: in 2009 40% of male HSS respondents and 42% of female HSS respondents claimed to use ebooks for every assignment, whilst in 2014 these figures have risen to 74% and 70% respectively, with figures for history being 87% of males and 89% of females. One male first-year history
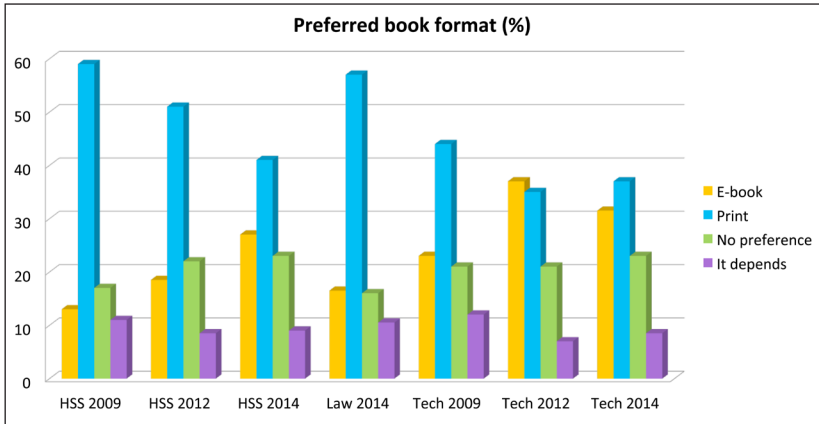
Figure 3: Preferred book format (%).

student stated "I can't get enough of 'em!"; over 80% of HSS and CCI respondents now say that ebooks are either very useful or quite useful for their course, with the figures reaching 93% of male history respondents and 98% of female history respondents (there were 122 replies from history). In 2009 58% of HSS respondents and 44% of those from technology said that, given a choice, they would prefer a print book, whereas in 2014 this had dropped to 40% for HSS and 37% for technology, with only law out of those subjects surveyed remaining above 50% preferring print. The biggest turnaround can be seen in history, where in 2012 56% of respondents expressed a preference for print books; in 2014 the figure had dropped to 38% for males and 24% for females, with only 10% of first year female history respondents saying they would prefer a print book. A factor which could explain this turnaround in history is that, in response to their subject area having the highest number of students in HSS complaining about not enough copies of books in the National Student Survey in 2011, we worked intensively with history lecturers to ensure that all history reading lists were available in our online reading list system. The online lists include links to as many ebooks as possible, plus scans of chapters from those not available as ebooks, and the lecturers ensured that the weekly seminar readings for core units were items available electronically. (History lecturers had been slower than others to adopt this practice in the past.)

Before concluding this section, we touch on our findings regarding the devices used to access ebooks. Contrary to expectation, PCs or laptops are still the dominant means of access, with 73% of technology students surveyed and 82% of HSS students stating they use those. HSS students aged 24–29, male technology students and those from CCI were most likely to use mobile phones at 17%, 13.5% and 13% respectively, compared to 7.5% for 18–23 year old HSS students and 4% for law students. HSS students aged over 30 were

most likely to use an iPad, followed by HSS students aged 24 – 29 year-old and female technology students at 23%, 21% and 20.5% respectively, compared to 13% for 18 – 23 year-old HSS students and 11% for CCI. Use of other tablets was 5% or below for all groups except HSS students aged 24 – 29 at 10%, HSS students aged 30 and above at 8.5% and male technology students at 6.5%. These results indicate that mobile devices have, so far, played very little part in the success of ebooks at Portsmouth.

Addressing the problems created by ebooks

Despite the success of ebooks at Portsmouth, there have naturally been some problems too. Each of our surveys has highlighted concerns, many of which have been resolved by the time of the next survey. However, there always seem to be some people who simply do not like reading from a screen, although the number who mention this problem drops with each survey: "I don't really use them because I find them hard to read off the screen" (year two Illustration).

In 2009 students wanted a greater variety of ebooks and expressed frustration with the instability of the browser and login processes for ebooks, especially at home: "Whilst access is convenient, it is not that easy for off campus students – better options would be good!" (final year politics); "I have found that it crashes a lot" (final year history); "I find it a lot harder to access at home and it often takes ages to load up" (year two sociology). The browser issues were addressed by actions taken by our main ebook supplier, ebrary, who made changes which resolved the problems previously experienced. The issue of more ebooks was also partially resolved through ebrary adding thousands more ebooks to their Academic Complete subscription collection; faculty librarians also began buying more individual ebooks to complement our subscription holdings.

In 2012, students were still not satisfied with the number of ebooks available and wanted to download ebooks to any device they owned. The download problem was again solved via the actions of our ebook supplier, who introduced features enabling students to download the whole book for offline reading for a short period of time (typically two weeks); previously, our ebooks had only been accessible whilst the user was connected to the internet. Meanwhile, as publishers made more of their back-lists available as ebooks, faculty librarians were able to address the issue of quantity of ebooks by buying increasing numbers of titles from reading lists as ebooks. As mentioned earlier, we also tried to buy more ebooks matching reservation requests. Tackling reading lists and reservations finally seems to have resolved complaints over quantity, as this issue became insignificant in the 2014 survey.

In 2014 the big issue for students was the problem of not being able to access an ebook because someone else is already reading it, i.e. turnaways: "Don't understand the online book queuing system? Why do you need to wait for an

online book?" (year one criminology); "When you have to wait in a queue for an ebook it is really irritating!" (year two criminology). From the beginning of 2014 we began addressing the problem of turnaways by generating a monthly report of top turnaways so that faculty librarians could purchase additional licences where possible. We hope that students will see the benefit of this in the next academic year. However, there remains concern over a small number of titles which prove impossible to upgrade.

Conclusion

Over the last ten years, ebooks have become firmly embedded at the University of Portsmouth, with lecturers and students being equally enthusiastic. Although initially the convenience of any time, any place access to a large variety of ebooks was a key attraction, over the last three years purchasing specific ebooks both for online reading lists and for reservation requests has led to even greater success. Since summer 2013 we have been experimenting with patron driven acquisition of ebooks, and it will be interesting to see what effect this has on our usage statistics.

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Instant fulfilment: the successful use of patron driven acquisitions to satisfy interlibrary loans

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As ebooks continue to rise in popularity, the implementation of Patron Driven Acquisitions[1] (PDA), with EBL as the vendor, has already proven a very successful model at the University of Sussex. It allows our users to decide on ebook titles that may become permanent additions to our collection. Using technology to make content more accessible, EBL offers a flexible access model, including free browsing (time-limited), non-linear lending (multiple concurrent accesses to content) and short-term circulation, with the fourth loan triggering an automatic purchase.

With the economic realities of an agreed budget, we make only a subset of the entire EBL catalogue available to our users, carefully chosen with a focus on key subject areas as well as the most recent publications. In order to extend the use of the enormous repertoire of titles offered by EBL, we decided to pilot the use of the entire catalogue of approximately 450,000 ebook titles available through the EBL administrative dashboard LibCentral, to satisfy interlibrary loan (ILL) book requests. We were already offering desktop delivery to our users for journal articles through the British Library, and our aim was to extend desktop delivery to books, fulfilling book requests with ebooks wherever possible. The

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[1] Patron Driven Acquisitions, also referred to as Demand Driven Acquisitions

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pilot service was launched in February 2013 and evaluated through the Spring and Summer terms, generally our busiest months for ILL requests.

Using quantitative statistics on availability, subject coverage, cost and usage, as well as qualitative feedback from users, in this paper I evaluate the success of the pilot with reference to Ranganathan's (1931) five laws of library science:

1. Books are for use
2. Every reader his or her book
3. Every book its reader
4. Save the time of the reader
5. The library is a growing organism

Although Ranganathan first conceived the five laws of library science at a time when the term open access (OA) referred to the newly found freedom for users to browse along the open book shelves, there is an interesting similarity here with what is happening now with OA publishing. Again it allows users greater access to research material, but now outside of the constraints of the library building itself. Although technology has changed the information landscape beyond all recognition, Ranganathan's clearly elucidated laws are arguably (McMenemy 2007) still relevant today, and serve to refocus our attention firmly back on our library users, to reflect on how best we can serve their needs in a climate of economic constraints, higher user expectations and continual change.

Implementing desktop delivery for ILL book requests

We launched the pilot service in February 2013 as part of a new desktop delivery service for ILL with a new form for placing requests online. The default option for a journal article request was "secure electronic delivery"[2] to the requestor's email address, although users could choose from other delivery methods if preferred. For book requests, users were first offered access to an ebook, where available, but we would continue with a request for the hard copy ILL from the British Library, if print was the preferred format or the title was not available as an ebook.

Following discussions with our collection development librarian, we agreed to use the same access model for satisfying ILL book requests as for our current PDA model, largely because our users were already familiar with this. When a user opens a title for the first time, there is a five minute browse period (ten minutes for owned titles)[3] that is not counted as a loan instance. A

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[2] Secure electronic delivery is a service offered by the British Library for supplying journal articles as encrypted PDF files using the FileOpen digital rights management tool – http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/atyourdesk/docsupply/help/receiving/deliveryoptions/electronic/index.html

[3] Titles your library has purchased or autopurchased via the EBL system
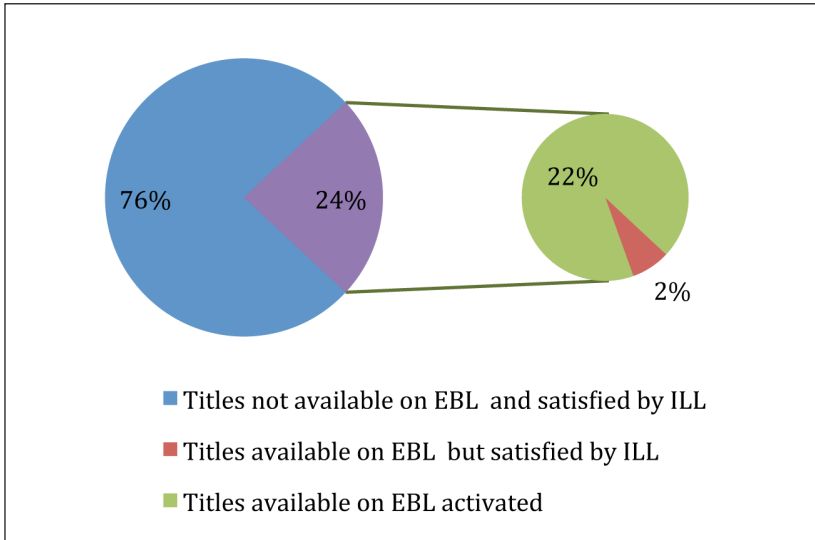
Figure 1: Percentage of ILL titles available on EBL.

loan is triggered by a user initiating a print, a copy or a download of the title or when the browse period expires. A loan period lasts for 24 hours and within this time an individual can read online, download the ebook, print and copy text, within certain limits, and access the ebook anytime within the 24 hour period. Additionally, we set a limit of £150 on the purchase price of an ebook and allocated £5,000 from the ILL budget for the pilot. Above £150, we would order through the ILL system unless no other lending locations were found.

Each day, all interlibrary book requests were checked against the full catalogue of EBL ebooks for a direct match, using the advanced search. We set up a list within LibCentral to track titles used to satisfy ILL requests and also set up a new fund code for ILL to track costs. Activating an ebook title is achieved simply by turning visibility on from the results page or from the item full record. The requestor was notified by email that the title was available as an ebook and a link to the ebook was sent along with further access information. Additionally, if an ebook was not their preferred option, the user was invited to get back to us and we would continue with a traditional ILL request and order a print copy from the British Library, in which case a £2 admin charge for obtaining an ILL would apply.

Once an ebook is activated in LibCentral, it becomes part of our Sussex EBL collection and is discoverable through Library Search (powered by ExLibris Primo)[4], although it does not appear on the library catalogue, Capita Prism,

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[4] Primo is ExLibris' solution for discovery and delivery – http://www.exlibrisgroup.com/category/PrimoOverview – allowing users to search across the library catalogue as well as ebooks, ejournals and other online resources
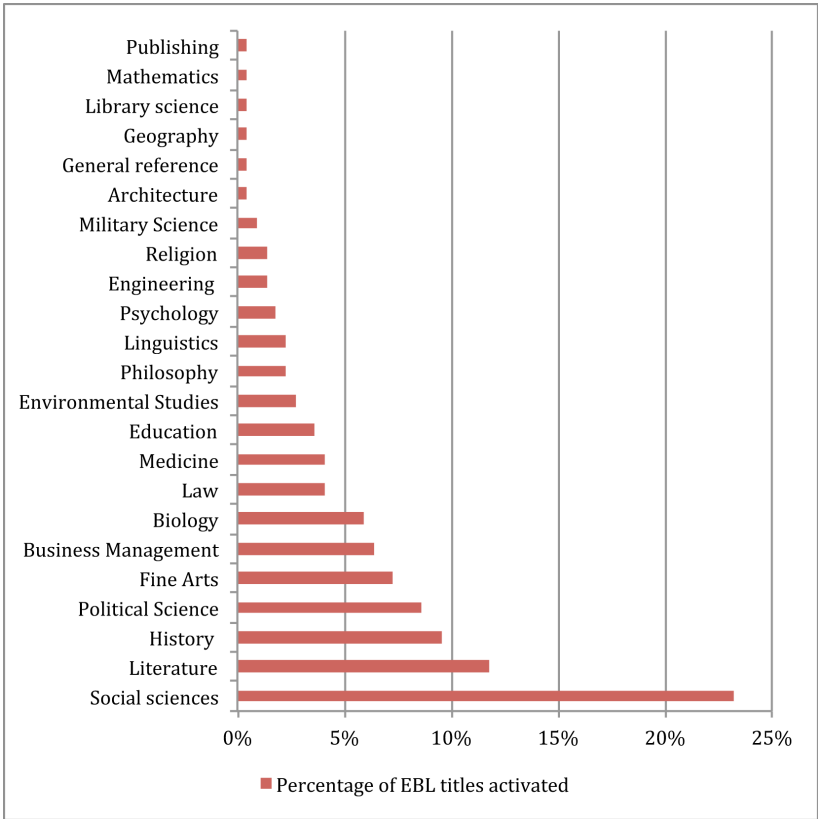
Figure 2: Subject categories.

unless the title becomes an automatic purchase on the fourth short loan. EBL provide a weekly list of purchased titles as well as the associated MARC records which are added to the library catalogue.

Summary of findings

Availability

Over the six month period of the pilot, we were surprised at the number of ILL book request titles that were available through the EBL full catalogue (**Figure 1**). Of the 996 interlibrary loan book requests fulfilled during this period, 238 (24%) of the titles were found to be available on EBL. Of these, 220 were activated and 18, although available, were not activated as the requestor's preference was for a print copy.

The reasons given by users for preferring a print copy to an ebook fell into several key categories:

	No. of Titles	% of titles	Cost (exc. VAT)	Average cost per title
EBL titles leading to automatic purchase (4th SL)	24	11%	£1,874	£78.08
EBL titles with between 1–3 SLs	130	59%	£2,000	£15.38
EBL titles browsed (less than 5 mins)	66	30%	£0	£0.00
Total	**220**		**£3,874**	£17.61

Table 1: Cost of EBL titles.

- Needing to read the whole book and not comfortable reading online for any length of time
- A problem accessing the ebook due to IT Services password not working [temporary problem with user's account]
- Technical restrictions on the number of pages that can be printed [this can vary from one publisher to another]
- Preference always for a print copy rather than an ebook

Overall the feedback from users has been very positive, with favourable comments on the speed of delivery offered by the new service in providing online access to the material requested. The traditional ILL takes five to ten days to arrive, depending on the lending location, compared to within 24 hours to provide access to the ebook. In addition to a small number of users with a preference for a print copy, there were an equal number of requestors that specified they would prefer an ebook, if available.

Subject coverage

The top five subject categories covered by ebooks used to satisfy ILL requests were: the social sciences (51 titles), literature (26), history (21), political science (19) and fine arts (16) (**Figure 2**). For comparison, the top five subject areas (based on the user's department) for the ILL requests were very similar English literature, art history, history, international relations and politics, and media and film. With around 450,000 titles made available for selection from key academic publishers, such as Taylor and Francis, Oxford University Press and Palgrave Macmillan, EBL offers a wide range of academic material that matches the needs of our users.

Costs

Of the 220 ebooks activated on EBL, only 24 titles became automatic purchases, triggered by the fourth short loan (**Table 1**). The majority of titles
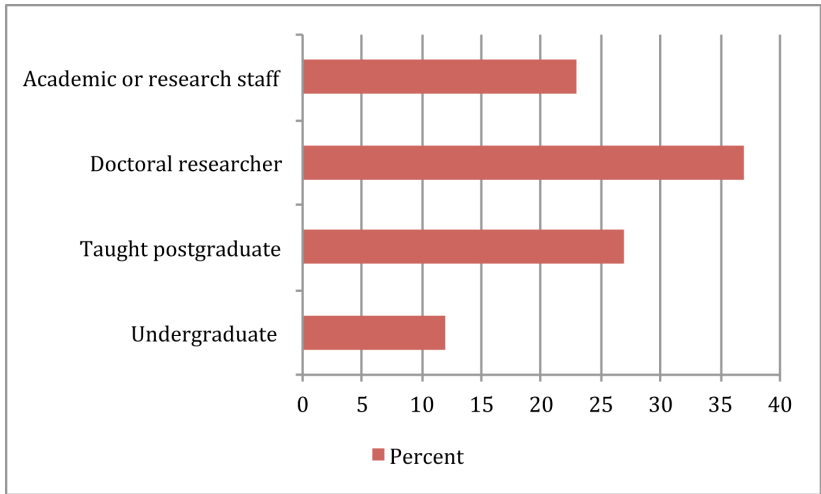
Figure 3: Borrower type.
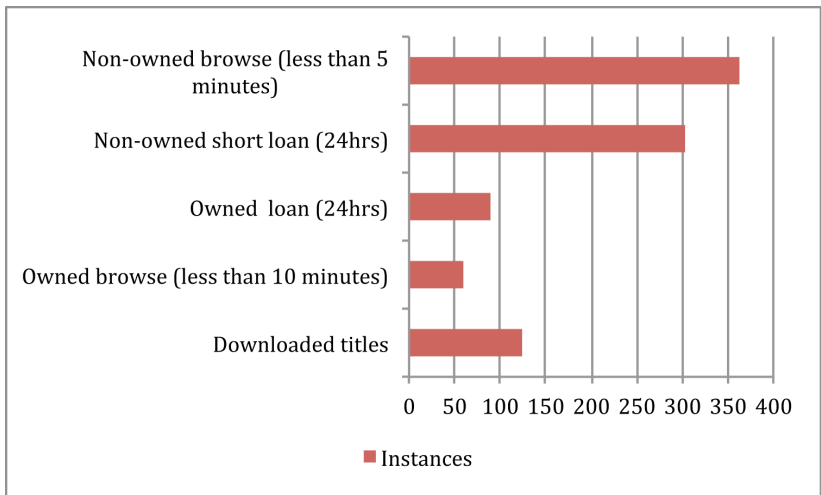
Figure 4: Usage type.

received only one short loan (30%), 14% received two short loans and 15% three short loans. The average cost per title varied considerably depending on whether the reader accessed the ebook for one or more 24-hour loan periods. The cost of a loan period is set by the publisher and can vary considerably; however a guide price for a 24 hour loan is 10–15% of the purchase price.

The most surprising result was the high percentage (30%) of ebooks that were only "browsed" by the reader and did not result in a short loan. The
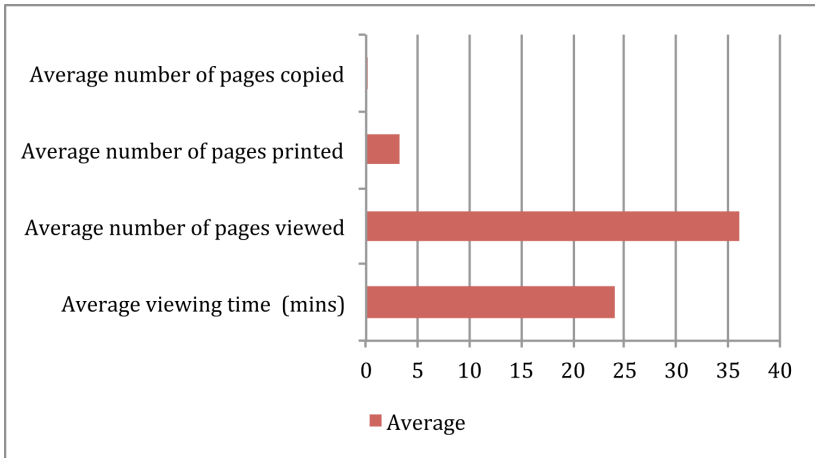
Figure 5: User activity.

browse feature of EBL allows the reader to view a non-owned ebook for up to five minutes without triggering a loan. With 66 titles viewed without a charge, this brought the average cost per title (loans and purchases) down to £17.61. Although this cost remains higher than the direct costs of a traditional interlibrary loan from the British Library, £11.60 (at the time of the pilot) plus return carriage costs, 24 titles became owned titles during the pilot and therefore remain part of our permanent collection. For comparison, if all 220 items had been obtained through the British Library, the full cost would have been £2,772, taking into account the £2 handling charge paid by the requestor on collecting an ILL.

User activity

The highest use of ebooks was by doctoral researchers (37%), closely followed by taught postgraduates (27%), academic and research staff (23%) and finally undergraduates (12%) (**Figure 3**). The combined figure for ILL requests received from postgraduates was 56%, academic and research staff 19% and undergraduates 25%. Comparing these figures indicates that the range of material offered by the EBL catalogue generally satisfies the readership level required by users of the ILL service.

Usage data within LibCentral revealed some interesting patterns (**Figure 4**). Downloading was very popular with over 50% of titles downloaded. During the pilot, we received very few queries from users regarding the technical issues of using EBL ebooks, indicating that users generally found the user interface easy to navigate and were able to download the ebook to a range of devices successfully.

Significant use of the free browsing period was an unexpected result. Our initial concerns at the start of the pilot were that a higher number of titles would result in automatic purchase, significantly raising the cost of the pilot above the allocated budget. In many instances, a browsed title subsequently results in a short loan at a later date; however, in other cases, previewing the contents of the book within the browse period was long enough for the user to decide they did not need to read any further. This pattern of user behaviour sometimes occurs with traditional ILL, where the item is collected from the library and returned almost immediately as the requestor realises that the book does not contain the level of information they were expecting.

Further analysis of use of individual titles revealed low levels of printing or copying of text from ebooks, suggesting that users' needs were met by reading online without the need to print out a paper copy of extracts from the work (**Figure 5**). However, this result may require further examination, as feedback from users indicated some issues regarding the limits of printing from an ebook. EBL uses digital rights management to prevent users printing or copying more than the number of pages allowed by the publisher. This amount varies according to the publisher, which is confusing to users and also acts as a barrier to using the material in different ways.

The average duration online of a short loan was 24 minutes and the average number of pages viewed was 36. This gave us some useful insights into the use of books requested through the ILL service and indicates that users are dipping into a book, with a focus on a particular section or sections, rather than reading cover to cover.

Evaluating the results

The results of the pilot were very encouraging, with plenty of positive feedback from users, costs comparable to traditional ILL, and the new service offering improved access to required reading anytime, anywhere. Revisiting Ranganathan's five laws of library science, we can measure the success of the pilot by examining how well the new service met the fundamental expectations of library users and contributed to the development of effective library services.

Books are for use

Ranganathan's first law of library science is about ensuring books are accessible and easily available for use, with consideration of the location of the library, the development of systems that accommodate the use of library materials, and shelves open stack for the user to browse. McMenemy draws our attention to the relevance of this law to the digital technologies of the 21st century, commenting:

"Books are indeed for use, and if conversion from analogue to digital creates many more users for the one title, then I am sure Ranganathan would have welcomed such a process with open arms" (McMenemy 2007, p.98).

The PDA model of opening up access to a wider selection of scholarly material online has proven a great success with our users, expanding the boundaries of the library to access anytime, anywhere. Extending the use of the full catalogue of EBL PDA titles for satisfying ILL takes this one step further, providing desktop delivery of essential reading within 24 hours of request.

Every reader his or her book

Ranganathan (1931) devotes several chapters of his work to this second law emphasising the need for modern librarianship to serve the needs of *every* reader and to encompass a wide variety of interests and provide books in an accessible format. He is concerned with the equality of access to books and therefore access to education, with the role of the librarian being to remove any barriers to access and understand that individuals will have different needs.

> "On the other hand their [library staff] business is to know the reader, to know the books, and to actively help in the finding by every person of his or her book" (Ranganathan 1931, p.291)

The results of the pilot service has demonstrated that use of the EBL full catalogue of ebooks, with its wide subject coverage, has provided an excellent source for finding material required by our users. Additionally, the use of Primo, the discovery service behind Library Search, ensures that once activated ebooks continue to be easily discoverable by other library users.

In many cases, the ebook format is welcomed by the requestor; however, as the results on user activity show, some readers may prefer a print copy in certain circumstances and on these occasions we will use the traditional ILL service to obtain a print copy. Ebook loans satisfy the need of our distance learners very well in crossing the boundaries of space and time. But the barrier of technical protection measures prevents users from printing or copying more than a publisher has allowed under the licence which may restrict the reader from using the material in the desired way, something Ranganathan's second law warns against.

Every book its reader

The principle of the third law is the complementary reverse of the second law, "Every reader his or her book", stating that every book should be helped

to find its reader. The interlibrary loan service is central to this law, where library staff are locating and connecting the book with the reader using a range of catalogues and online resources. Although satisfying interlibrary loan requests using ebooks makes this connection between the book and its reader, the results of the pilot indicate that it may not always have the desired result of satisfying the user's requirements as 30% of ebooks activated were only browsed rather than used extensively. Reflecting on this outcome, the flexible model provided by EBL allowing a five-minute browse period is a benefit to users if only to clarify their need for the information contained within the ebook. In terms of traditional ILL, the reader may only have seen the item as a citation in a list of references and may be requesting with the hope that it will be useful to their research. Any tool that allows the user to browse content before a cost is involved is clearly very useful.

Another benefit of the online access that ebooks provide within this context is the opportunity for full-text searching, which assists in the location of relevant information within the work.

Save the time of the reader

The fourth law is recognition of the measure of an excellent library service as its ability to meet the needs of library users efficiently. Ranganathan follows the path of a reader through the library, from returning books to leaving with new ones "critically examining each process that he has to go through, with an eye to the economy of time that can be effected at each stage" (Ranganathan 1931, p.337).

Saving the time of the reader is a central element of the new pilot service. Traditionally there is an expectation of waiting involved in obtaining an ILL from another library, as the speed of delivering a book is limited by the means of delivery, the parcel post or courier system. While journal articles are now routinely delivered by secure electronic delivery, the same improvement in efficiency has not been apparent with the delivery of books until now. Online requesting and desktop delivery of ebooks both serve to save our reader time, providing access to resources without the need to visit the library. Additionally, ebooks save the time of library staff as there are no further processes involved, such as making the book available for loan, renewing or processing the item for return to the lending library.

Leiter (2003, p.417) describes other ways of satisfying this law by "employing the best available technologies to provide quick access to materials". In terms of the pilot, the EBL ebook interface provides the reader with a user friendly, intuitive interface incorporating a range of tools for navigation and use of the resource online as well as downloading to a range of mobile devices.

The library is a growing organism

Ranganathan's fifth law uses the analogy of the library as a "growing organism", describing the ways in which a library must evolve and metamorphose, changing size, shape and format in an effort to remain healthy and stay relevant. This is nowhere more apparent than in the provision of PDA ebooks; new models of delivery, access and content provide a new environment for librarians to develop-added value services and for users to experience new ways of learning. As Wicht (2011) concludes in her article discussing the changing nature of resource sharing,

> "ILL departments in academic libraries are operating in a time of major change that presents new opportunities to expand and redefine services in ways that best serve evolving patron needs".

Conclusions

The results of the pilot service demonstrate that using ebooks to satisfying ILL requests complements our traditional ILL request service, offering a speedier delivery direct to the user's desktop, anytime, anywhere. Analysis of the results with reference to Ranganathan's five laws of library science highlights the benefits to our users, saving them time, recognising individual needs and helping them to find the essential books they need for their study and research.

In discussing the relationship between ebooks and ILL, Gee (2007) notes that:

> "… while some loathe ebooks, many others have become accustomed to using them, often even demanding e-articles for their research, and also are quickly adopting ebooks" (Gee 2007, p.24).

Gee also identifies the cost and efficiency benefits of satisfying requests through access to an ebook in satisfying patron needs. With the benefits of using ebooks for instant fulfilment clearly demonstrated during the pilot, this is a service that we were keen to continue offering and using ebook loans to satisfy ILL requests is now a key part of the service we offer our users.

Finally, revisiting their relevance in the 21st century, Ranganathan's five laws of library science continue to remain appropriate in the digital environment, providing a framework for reviewing service delivery and helping to ensure that every reader does have access to his or her book.

> "Five simple statements that say so much of what we are about and what we strive to achieve for society" (McMenemy, 2007, p.100).

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Creating open access books: a partnership between a university library and a research centre

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This case study describes a partnership that has developed at the University of St Andrews between a particular research centre, the St Andrews Centre for French History and Culture[1] and the University Library. The product of this partnership since 2010 is a unique series of "midigraphs", which are shorter monographs and collaborative volumes of 25,000–50,000 words, published as the St Andrews Studies in French History and Culture. Six ebooks[2] have already been produced, and future publications are planned with a regular publication schedule. The library and the editor-in-chief of the ebook series have a close working relationship which enables this series to be made available as open access ebooks in the university repository, Research@ StAndrews:FullText. The books are also published in paperback with a limited free print run (see **Figure 1**). Titles are rigorously peer-reviewed and, in keeping with the mission of the centre to "enhance public understanding of the Francophone world", the publications are free at the point of delivery and

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[1] Centre website http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/frenchcentre/publications.shtml
[2] http://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/handle/10023/846/browse?type= title&submit_browse=Title

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Figure 1: BIEN, D. D., SMITH, J. M., & BLAUFARB, R. (2010). *Caste, class and profession in old regime France the French: army and the Ségur reform* of 1781. Image from the title page reproduced by kind permission of the owner.

come with no charge for consultation, downloading, printing or circulation, either for private use or for educational purposes.

The development of this ebook series is of particular interest because of its short study format, its humanities disciplinary base, and its use of the repository for scholarly communication, discovery and archiving. However, this partnership was created organically and was never in fact a planned project. Rather, it was the result of the enthusiasm of the research centre for the development of a new platform and mechanism for communication of scholarly research, combined with the availability of open-access services within the university library. The collaboration began as a result of seeds sown in conversation between individual library staff and the research centre, and converged with the realisation that existing library services could be used to provide the institutional repository as a platform for open-access ebooks.

Each ebook in the series carries multiple acknowledgements on its title page verso to mark the collaboration of the St Andrews Centre for French History and Culture with its publishing partners, and it is satisfying to see that one of the partners listed is the University of St Andrews Library. This case study describes how that partnership came about and considers the perspective of the research centre, editor, library and authors, as well as exploring some aspects of the value, usage and visibility of the open-access ebooks. In conclusion, we look forward to the future of the series and its potential impact on publishing initiatives within the wider institution.

The research centre and editorial perspective

Dr Guy Rowlands, the editor-in-chief of the St Andrews Studies in French History and Culture, had the idea of developing a publication format shorter than a traditional research monograph back in 1998. He felt that this would fulfil a need in his discipline, but he was also determined that despite the shorter format the publications should be of exactly the same research quality as full-length research monographs. The idea took a further step forward when he got the inspiration for the name "midigraph" from his four-year-old son.[3] In 2005 he took up his appointment in St Andrews as the first Director of the Centre for French History and Culture. Part of his remit was to launch a publication for the centre. Between 2005 and 2009 he faced the challenges of starting a publication from scratch, getting authors on board, finding a publisher, planning for distribution and marketing. By 2007 the essential idea for the format and scope of the publication series was well developed and it was time to approach publishers with the idea for a print publication. He

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[3] At the time his four-year-old son was in the middle of a childhood obsession with small and large vans. The cross between a long and short van was soon described as a "midivan". Thus the idea of a the midigraph was born!

approached two publishers. One, a large scale monograph publisher, could not see how the short monograph format would fit their existing publisher models and didn't buy into the concept. Another smaller publisher considered the idea, but required a substantial indemnity per publication of £2–3,000. This sort of financial investment broke the business model and was well in excess of the centre's annual budget. These setbacks in following traditional publishing routes were in fact the catalysts for a change in direction.

In the next couple of years the editor-in-chief and the newly formed editorial board became more aware of the ebook environment and much more familiar with digital delivery. They were naturally wary of "self-publication" but increasingly realised that digital delivery could be reputable and respected. Also, ebooks with rigorous peer review and quality layout could fulfil the needs of research communication and perhaps exceed the visibility the series might get if produced only in print and with a price tag. It was at this point that he made the connection with the university library. He realised that digital publication in-house, using institutional services and resources, could be a cost-effective and attractive solution.

A crucial element for success is quality peer review and editorial control. Much work has been done to develop and expand the editorial board across institutions and to bring particular experts on board on an ad hoc basis for individual titles. The editorial board has grown since the first ebook in 2010 and continues to expand.

All costs are funded from the research centre budget which is around £1,200—£3,000 per annum to cover all activities. Costing per issue comes in at the low to mid hundreds, and this allows for the production of two books per year. Costs include some technical work on layout, printing and postage. Editorial work is not costed but is absorbed into academic and research time. The library absorbs minimal staff costs to deposit the electronic books into Research@StAndrews:FullText and does value-added work such as metadata. The analysis of costs and use of existing centralised library services would suggest that this is very good value for money for the small budget available.

Marketing and publicity is targeted to coincide with the launch of each new book. Flyers are sent to all UK university libraries and selected overseas libraries. Alerts and announcements are posted online to major humanities networks such as H-France and H-Net[4] and are designed to reach the most relevant disciplinary audience of humanities researchers and French history and studies researchers. Posts are also made to other discussion forums and book-review sites, for example the Institute of Historical Research.[5] A limited

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[4] http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-Catholic&month=1002&week=a&msg=8gIxfxcx2CgqTNKTUxhHGQ

[5] http://www.history.ac.uk/news/2012-08-31/new-book-centre-french-history-and-culture-university-st-andrews

print run, maximum 75 copies, is provided for authors and contributors, UK copyright library deposit and selected international libraries. The distribution of print is also another means of publicity.

As an institution St Andrews is very supportive of school initiatives and supports the development of research centres. The decision-making and budgetary control for this particular centre is devolved through the head of school for history, and the development of specialist centres in turn develops a group of disciplinary research experts and a fertile environment for the publication of research. This encourages sustainability.

The library and institutional perspective

The development of repository and open-access services in St Andrews has been well documented already (Aucock 2009, Proven and Aucock 2011). A research repository was introduced in pilot phase in 2002, and from 2006 the primary focus was a full service to support the deposit of electronic research theses. Since 2010, and the implementation of a Publication and Research Current Research Information Service, there has been increasing emphasis on open access to research publications authored by researchers within the institution. Activity has increased with the introduction of open-access mandates from funders. More recently, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) consultation and new policy statement in April 2014 has brought open access to centre stage in preparation for the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework.[6] Although monographs are excluded from the compliance requirements in this new policy, HEFCE has indicated a longer-term interest in understanding open-access monograph publishing by setting up an Expert Reference Group.[7] This project, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Science Research Council, was due to report late in 2014.

There is a growing acknowledgement of open-access publishing developments from university research managers. The university has voiced a commitment to making research outputs available to a wider audience, as announced in its Open Access Policy[8], and states: "We encourage academic authors to consider open-access publication of monographs where possible."

The library open access and research publications team has worked hard to create a set of services and systems which can support open-access publication. A good example is the library journal hosting service using Open Journal Systems (OJS), which began in 2011 and to date hosts eight

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[6] Policy for open access in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework (HEFCE 2014/07)
     http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/rsrch/rinfrastruct/oa/policy
[7] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/rsrch/rinfrastruct/oa/monographs
[8] http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/library/services/researchsupport/openaccess/oapolicy

open-access journals.[9] The take-up of the journal hosting service has been primarily from humanities and social sciences disciplines, and has proved to be a useful exemplar of open-access publishing in precisely those disciplines where monographs are a primary vehicle of scholarly communication. This has sparked interest amongst researchers in these disciplines, and the services offer up the potential to become transferable to the monograph publishing environment.

Repository content has built up to a critical mass of quality full-text content, making it an attractive option for depositing and archiving full text in an institutional setting. Much work has centred on increasing awareness of open access and communicating the changing landscape of scholarly communication. It has concentrated on building relationships with academic schools, research groups and individual researchers, and engaging in dialogue with researchers to improve research support services. This in turn has created an environment which facilitates collaboration.

Rewards have come by steady progress in embedding our services within the research community of the university and being known to be open and receptive to new ideas and initiatives. So when the editor-in-chief had his first conversation with library staff he already expected that the library would play a supportive role and would engage with the publication process. The solution of using the institutional repository to host an ebook series has simplicity, but the library was able from the outset to offer robust and real services which give added value and essential infrastructure to support publishing initiatives.

The library provides a DSpace institutional repository as an established platform for hosting with underlying technical and development support from the Scottish Digital Library Consortium (SDLC). User support is provided by the open access and research publications team and deposit is mediated by the library on behalf of the ebook editorial team. The repository platform provides good discovery and visibility as well as centralised and secure archiving (multiple format versions of the ebooks in PDF and RTF are stored centrally). The repository also provides usage statistics for page views and downloads. Discovery and visibility are further enhanced by the creation of good quality metadata for each publication. Metadata is created using the Dublin Core schema and includes abstract, keywords, full headings for authors and editors, series headings and subject headings and classification using Library of Congress schema. Very similar detailed metadata is created in Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC) format for the St Andrews library catalogue and both the Dublin Core records and the MARC records for the e-books are then made available for discovery and reuse in other databases and discovery systems. Metadata is harvested and made available in established services

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[9] http://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk

such as OAIster[10], WorldCat[11], COPAC[12] and other aggregator sites such as BASE[13] and CORE.[14]

The author perspective

The digital and open-access aspects of these books have not been perceived at all as inhibitors to their potential authors. Authors fully support the model and see this as an accepted way to publish. The shorter format may take some adjustment for authors used to publishing at article or full monograph length, but it can also fit well around collected essays and conference-length pieces and so can prove to be versatile and fulfil a need. A positive example of these publications being endorsed centred on a discussion about inclusion for a tenure portfolio for an academic author in the USA, where key benefits were visibility and access and the very real advantages of being read.

Authors have favourably compared their experience to the traditional print route, describing how their first monographs were expensive to purchase and royalties were small, even though print runs did sell out. Authors want to be read, so an open-access digital approach has high value. They also comment that a quality editorial board, high production values and rigorous peer review are also vital when migrating publication to a non-traditional format. There is now greater acceptance that online and high quality can go hand in hand. When academics publish in an ebook series such as this they are adding momentum to this acceptance process and endorsing it themselves. These ebooks can still be reviewed in specialist journals by peers and experts in just the same way as print books.

Immediate accessibility is seen as a distinct advantage. It can usefully be tied in with online publicity using blogs and author video interviews, and the reader can literally be anywhere in the world with suitable network access to follow the link instantly to read or download the digital copy. Readers don't have to wait for print copies to be ordered for their library at a cost. Academics, including the authors themselves, can easily recommend the material instantly for reading lists and assignments. The format is ready-made for online teaching, where it can be fully integrated as digital material in the course structure. Because the material is already in a good quality digital format, does not need to be scanned, and is already copyright cleared, then it can very quickly and conveniently be used for teaching without the extra burden of administrative overheads. The ebooks are open to the general public and to

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[10] http://oaister.worldcat.org
[11] http://www.worldcat.org
[12] http://copac.ac.uk
[13] http://www.base-search.net
[14] http://core.kmi.open.ac.uk/search

groups such as future students so they help to bridge the gap from scholarship to more general readership, as well as potentially influencing student recruitment and research collaboration.

Authors in the humanities understand and accept that traditional publishers and university presses still have a vital role, and that publishers who move to digital publication may still operate in a profit-making model. However, a specialised research centre can offer advantages over this model. A research centre is often much better placed to commission quality peer review than a traditional publisher. The elimination of any profit motive in publication can also give the editorial board and authors much more control and freedom in their publishing schedule and the choice of manuscripts.

Usage, reach and value

There are many and varied aspects to the usage, reach and value of these publications, some quantitative and some qualitative, and in both cases perhaps not always easy to measure and benchmark. What follows gives some indicators of the impact and visibility of these ebooks in the early stages of their open-access life.

Research@StAndrews:FullText[15] offers download and page view statistics on its content, based on data gathered by Google Analytics. Usage statistics on the ebook series are available for the collection as a whole and for individual ebooks, and can be aggregated over varying time periods. **Figure 2** shows downloads for all six titles in the series, and the current download total up to April 2014 is 1239 downloads, giving an average of over 200 downloads per title. **Figure 3** shows statistics for the latest book in the series, launched in September 2013, which already has figures of over 100 downloads in its relatively short existence. These statistics show healthy usage which compares favourably with the standard print runs and sales of traditional print monograph publications, quoted recently in the OAPEN-UK Project Plan, which notes that these have declined to "little more than 200 in the early years of this century".[16]

Analysis of the geographical origin of traffic to the set of publications indicates the UK, the USA and France as the top three sources. Drilling down to traffic from city level gives some interesting correlations with the subject matter of the books. Top city traffic comes from St Andrews and London, but in the next rank is Paris and then Blois. This would seem to indicate that there is potential direct interest to material related to the history of Blois coming directly from that location and facilitated by digital delivery of the content.

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[15] http://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/gastatistics/collection?handle=10023%2F846&submit_simple=View+Statistics

[16] http://oapen-uk.jiscebooks.org/overview/project-plan
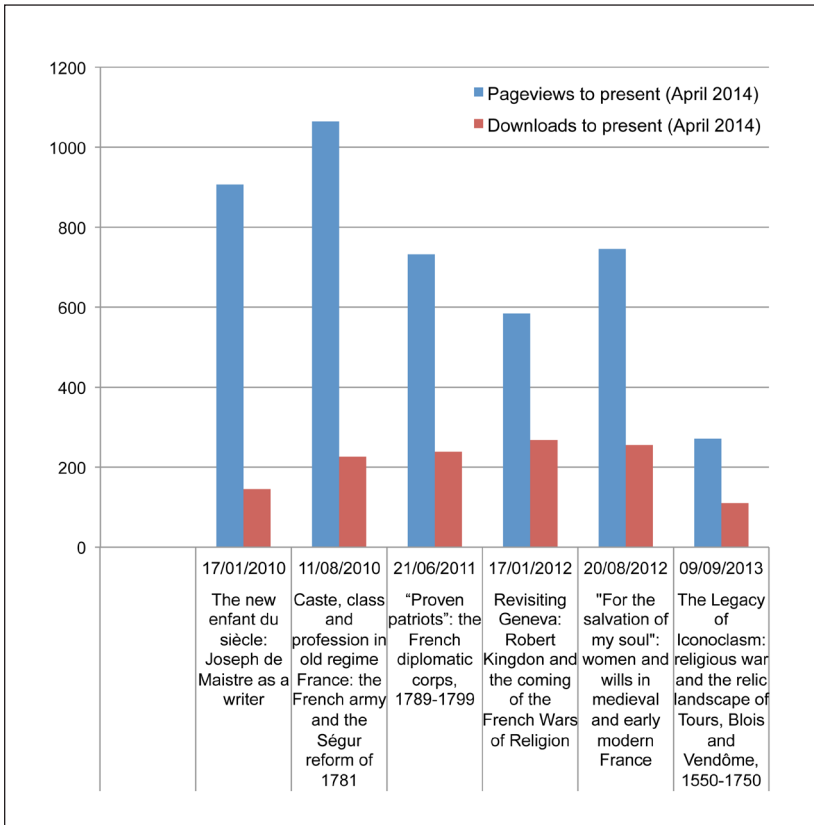
Figure 2: E-book series showing load date, title, page views and total downloads to April 2014.

Research@StAndrews:FullText as a whole received some 130,000 downloads from the site during the four years that these ebooks have been available, with monthly download figures now increasing to a steady average of 5,000 per month. Hits and page views on the site now average at more than 30,000 per month and the yearly increase of hits over the period shows a trend of steady upward growth. Just over 75% of these hits came from Google and Google Scholar, and the analytics for the geographical origin of traffic to the repository clearly show a global audience. The repository platform facilitates ease of digital discovery and delivery, especially because of its proven ability to provide good metadata content to search engines. An increasing amount of traffic is being driven to the site and this in turn has benefited the global visibility of specialist content such as the ebook series.

There are other facets to the reach and value of these publications. The series, and in particular its open-access ebook publication format, was

No. of Page views	
Year/Month	**Page views**
2013/08	0
2013/09	92
2013/10	43
2013/11	24
2013/12	17
2014/01	29
2014/02	12
2014/03	30
2014/04	44
2014/05	28
2014/06	13
2014/07	12
2014/08	4
Total	**348**

No. of Downloads	
Year/Month	**Downloads**
2013/08	0
2013/09	40
2013/10	17
2013/11	8
2013/12	8
2014/01	15
2014/02	2
2014/03	10
2014/04	15
2014/05	11
2014/06	4
2014/07	4
2014/08	2
Total	**136**
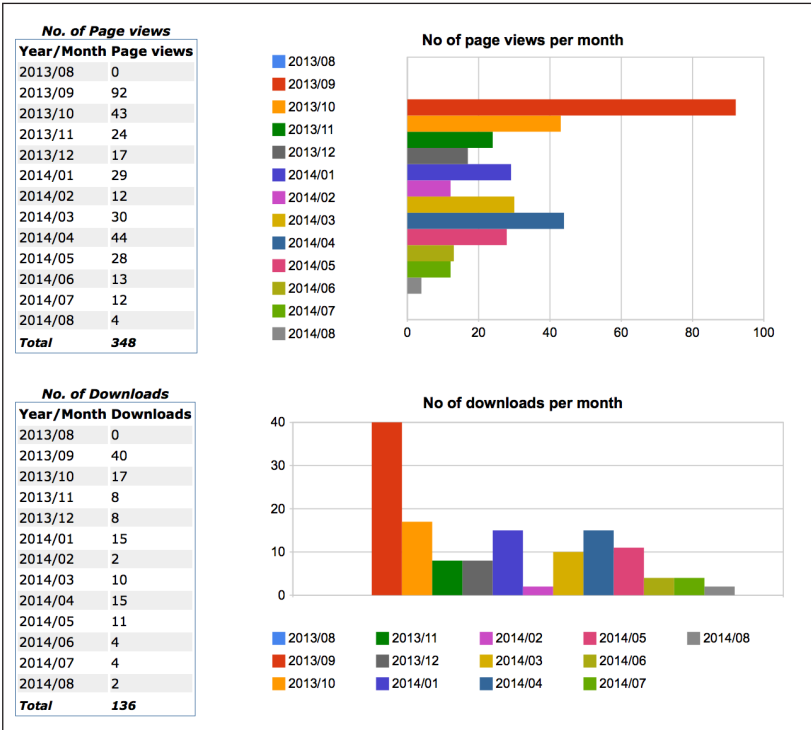
Figure 3: NELSON, E. (2013). *The legacy of iconoclasm: religious war and the relic landscape of Tours, Blois and Vendôme, 1550–1750.* http://hdl.handle.net/10023/4038 Page views and downloads since the book launch in September 2013.

specifically referenced and used as part of the evidence for research assessment in the School of History environment statement for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment exercise. Environment statements count for 15% of the REF assessment and are assessed in terms of "vitality and sustainability".[17] This was in the context of the value of the St Andrews Centre for French History and Culture as an intellectual and social focus for staff and postgraduate students and as an exemplar of how the centre forges strong international links.

In the "author perspective" section, I gave strong indications of the value of this publication format for immediacy of access and teaching and for ease of reuse. Some examples of this are a publication being listed on a syllabus list at the University of California Santa Barbara for a course in Urban Space in Late

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[17]   http://www.ref.ac.uk/panels/assessmentcriteriaandleveldefinitions

Medieval and Early Modern Europe[18], and a subject guide at the University of Reading providing access to free internet resources for French studies, specifically referencing the ebook series.[19] The editor and centre have expressly stated that they want other libraries to make digital copies and provide links. The count of traffic coming in at city level from Exeter points to the links with the Centre for Early Modern Studies at the University of Exeter, where one of the publications' authors is based[20], and the inclusion of the records for the digital ebooks in the University of Exeter's library catalogue. The catalogue provides direct URL links and describes the books as being freely accessible at St Andrews, thus immediately promoting discovery and usage. At Cornell University one publication has been copied and included in their repository eCommons@Cornell monographs collection.[21] All these examples point to the development of a discipline-based open community of reuse around the ebooks.

There is clearly value to the research institute itself. It gains visibility and opportunities for collaboration by promoting its expertise and value through accessible quality publications. The value of the research institute is demonstrated and reinforced within the institution, and the academic institution in turn gets the same benefits.

At the level of personal and professional development, the editor of these publications develops an enhanced skill set as part of the process, such as aesthetic design, layout of publications and desktop publishing knowledge. In the longer term these may be skills that sit better with a centralised publication service, but in the short term they are highly beneficial skills to acquire and understand, and serve to better inform academic researchers about all aspects of the publication process, including business and costing models for open-access monographs.

From the library perspective what better way to demonstrate the effectiveness of open-access publication support services than by collaborating on a successful set of ebook publications? The library uses this series as an exemplar when giving support sessions to academic researchers and postgraduate students, and to raise open-access awareness. The existence of these ebooks can help to develop a dialogue, especially with other humanities researchers, and helps the library to understand the types of research support it needs to provide.

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[18] http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=24&ved=0CDoQ FjADOBQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.history.ucsb.edu%2Fcourses%2Ftempdownload. php%3Fattach_id%3D6286&ei=nlROU-_VJ8vFPZqegaAB&usg=AFQjCNHdFPOp1zYSLYE5 604fNH_bR_ya3Q&bvm=bv.64764171,d.ZWU&cad=rja

[19] http://www.reading.ac.uk/library/finding-info/subjects/french/lib-french-internet. aspx

[20] http://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/history/research/centres/earlymodern

[21] http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/handle/1813/31546

The future

There are some practical aspects to the future development of these publications. The repository platform is functional, but there are plans to enhance it with a more professional look and feel, and to introduce extra publication formats to support more varied reading devices. Detailed licensing for the ebooks still needs to be finalised, and they can then be registered for the Directory of Open Access Books.

Within the university there is a growing buzz of interest and awareness of open-access and digital publication. Not yet a torrent, but rather a bubbling under of people talking and debating and watching the activities of their colleagues in this area and wondering if they should be considering similar initiatives. A series of ebooks may not of itself move the debate along, but as an exemplar of open access in practice, combined with many other drivers and influences, it can potentially change the scholarly communication culture in an institution or within a disciplinary area. The library has noticed a steady upturn in institutional requests to host new open-access journals on its hosting platform.

Another current debate in the university and an agenda item at library and academic strategic meetings is the question of setting up a University Press, which would include the publication of monographs and is very much in line with recent activities in other institutions such as University College London.[22] This might in particular offer opportunities for new researchers and young academics, for example to publish research theses selectively. The recently published "Policy for open access in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework (HEFCE 2014/07)", also now hotly debated within the university, offers another potent driver for open-access monographs when it states that "Where a higher education institution can demonstrate that it has taken steps towards enabling open access for outputs outside the scope of this definition (currently journal articles and some conference proceedings), credit will be given in the research environment component of the post-2014 REF".

Meanwhile, the relative simplicity of the publication process for the St Andrews Studies in French History and Culture continues to promote sustainability and continuity. The next volume is in preparation and is a very topical publication on French civilians in World War One. It will be made available online and promoted following a well-established procedure. In addition it will almost certainly become part of collaboration with the library's own series of events commemorating 1914–1918 and another example of research centre and library partnership in action.

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[22] http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/ucl-press

Acknowledgement

I am indebted to the editor-in chief of the series Dr Guy Rowlands for his valuable contribution to this study and to Dr Eric W. Nelson, Professor in the History Department of Missouri University, for his extremely helpful insights into his experiences as an author of one of the books.

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"Zap our App!"

Janet Morgan, Liz Chester, Jean Sullivan and Elaine Edwards

Coleg Sir Gâr

"Zap our App!" shouts our poster. Our new library app gives mobile access to our catalogue, ebooks, e-mails, college files and even "ask a librarian".

Coleg Sir Gâr is a College of Further Education based in South West Wales offering a comprehensive range of academic and vocational programmes that includes 14–19, Further Education (FE), Work Based Learning, Adult and Community Learning and Higher Education (HE). Annually it enrols in excess of 10,000 learners. The college has five main campuses located at Llanelli, Carmarthen (Pibwrlwyd and Jobs Well), Ammanford and Gelli Aur, and primarily serves the unitary authority area of Carmarthenshire. The College has four libraries which cater for the needs of learners and lecturers across a wide range of curriculum areas, from entry level to higher education. Carmarthenshire is a rural area with 43.9% of the population being Welsh-speaking.

We are continually striving to increase awareness of our resources and improve our users' information literacy skills, so developing a library app seemed to be the perfect way to bring our resources closer to our audience.

App development

During the summer of 2013 we carried out our initial investigations by looking at other FE academic library apps and we discovered that very few institutions had developed an app, let alone a specific library app. The main aim of an app was to take the library closer to our users, with the objective being to provide a broad range of information relating to the library, in particular quick and easy access to our ebooks and Jisc Collections resources.

At a library team brainstorming session, we established a structure for the app. As our library web-page had been redesigned in 2012 it could be used as a template for the information that would be made available, and we wanted it to support the college's Welsh-language policy, so all information on the app had to be bilingual.

The next step was to investigate app creator software; our requirements were that it should be compatible with both Apple and Android devices, free of initial outlay or follow-on fees, user-friendly, available to download freely via QR code, and be customer-focused software – making it easy for our users to get in touch via email or phone and most importantly enable easy downloading of ebooks from the library catalogue. We worked closely with several college departments to achieve our goal. We discussed the idea of a library app with the college's ILT co-ordinator, and Appshed[1] was suggested, as it had been recommended to the library by another college. We agreed that it was the most suitable free software available and was the way forward.

Two members of the library team then delivered a training session on how to start building it. Once the framework of the app was set up, we were left to our own devices to input all the information and links. We took only one afternoon to create it. Once it was developed, the college web graphic designer created the icons which identified the different pages, and our translators worked on the Welsh version. We spent a week testing the links to ensure that there were no glitches once the app went live (**Figure 1**).

The college's marketing department designed promotional "Zap our App" posters and bookmarks and, to keep costs to a minimum, they were printed in-house using the reprographics department. College senior management were consulted for final approval prior to the launch, and the marketing department wrote and distributed a press release, greatly adding to the sense of achievement!

The app development provided an opportunity to work closely with other departments within the college and these links can be further developed in future.

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[1] http://appshed.com
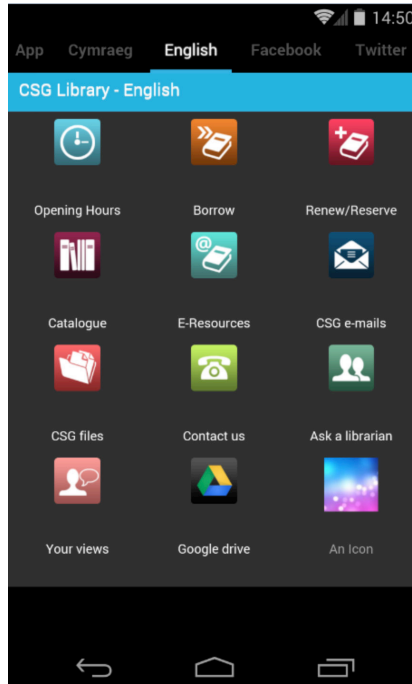
Figure 1: App layout.

Launch and promotion

We were ready to launch it at the beginning of the autumn term; all new and many returning learners were introduced to the app during their library induction. This has been an ongoing process for all new courses starting throughout the year. As our two ebooks suppliers, Dawsonera and ebrary, had produced instructions on how to download their books to mobile devices, we printed these and added them to our collection of library helpsheets. At inductions many of these were collected.

The library services manager was asked to give a presentation to the college's senior management team who gave very positive feedback. Other sessions were then delivered to various curriculum areas in order to increase awareness across the college.

The library holds an annual library open week in October, which gives learners who missed their inductions or were late starting college the opportunity of visiting the library to be informed of what resources are available and what services are provided.

To further promote the app and reach an even wider audience it was decided to run a library app roadshow to coincide with the library open week, thereby

Figure 2: Marketing poster.

taking the app to the users instead of waiting for users to come to us. A team of library staff and a member of the IT department visited each of our campuses and set up a stall displaying our posters (**Figure 2**) and bookmarks, including in the refectories, to make the most of the opportunity and engage with as many learners and academic staff as possible. We demonstrated the app in action and promoted the advantages of downloading it to mobile devices; learners and staff were encouraged to "Zap our App" using the QR code. All users were asked to create a shortcut to the app on their phone or tablet home-screen for the chance to be entered into a prize draw with the opportunity of winning one of four £20 Amazon vouchers (**Figure 3**).

It was a fun event for all involved and the response from all those who downloaded it was really positive, providing easy access to our catalogue, opening times and emails. It proved to be a great talking point and staff and learners were keen to give it a go! However, the downloading via a QR code proved to be a barrier as many people didn't have a pre-installed QR code reader on their mobile devices. Once this problem was identified the URL link for the app was added to all promotional material.

Figure 3: One of our competition winners.

Meanwhile, we were very busy delivering our autumn term digital literacy sessions, and our second-year PGCE learners in particular were thrilled to discover the app, downloading the ebooks on to their tablets and phones during the session. They were delighted to find how user-friendly the app was and to have digital access to library resources. All Library staff were also instructed on how to download the app, so that they could promote "Zap our App" in the library not only during the open week but throughout the year.

All four libraries produced eye-catching promotional displays using posters, flyers and bookmarks, and the roadshow was posted to the library web pages as well as the library, college and librarywales.org Facebook pages to further increase awareness (**Figure 4**). Notices encouraging participation were placed on the College Gateway message board seen by learners and staff. Generic and targeted emails were also sent to academic staff encouraging them to bring their tutor groups in to "Zap our App".

Figure 4: Our Facebook posting.

All this activity justified participation in the Wales Libraries Marketing Innovation Awards for which we received a highly commended in the FE category. Marketing the app has to be an on-going process. Most recently, at a college apprenticeship event, library staff could show the app to all attendees and several more of our academic staff downloaded it.

To continue to raise awareness, to extend the functionality of the app and to learn more about how it could support connection to ebooks on different devices, we are now experimenting with "on the spot" morning break sessions. Here, two of us offer help with downloading our app and with the unfamiliar navigation through to our ebooks. These encounters allow us to meet learners on their own ground and to show them that valuable library resources are accessible to them anywhere.

Supporting our users

We can observe how owners of smartphones and tablets use their devices. We have spoken to office staff, learner support workers, learners and tutors. Their phones are often so new to them that there is often uncertainty. We prevent potential mistakes, calm impatience and reassure. Users of phones

touch links at speed and have very little patience if the desired outcome is not instant.

To help us with this flexible style of support, we purchased a library iPad on which to train and demonstrate. This has proved invaluable during our fortnightly drop-in sessions at our Jobs Well campus, which does not have a library on site. It has been, therefore, the perfect setting for promoting and demonstrating the advantages of the app. Our iPad was set up by the IT department so that wi-fi access to the internet is continuous (unlike personal phones and tablets which "drop out" when the device goes in to sleep mode). This has allowed us to demonstrate the app and all its features whilst using it to support users with all manner of library enquiries. However, the Safari default browser on the iPad was causing us download problems; being new to Apple computers, we asked our Apple Mac expert, who had a top tip: use Puffin!

We are a very rural college and at three of our four campuses there is not a reliable 3G connection; mobile access can be slower than a PC, and our wi-fi connection is not always reliable. Taking on this case study has pushed access to the top of our agenda. We know where there are problems and where some of the best hotspots are, such as a certain window ledge in our very rural Gelli Aur campus!

There are several processes to go through to download our ebooks, processes that create extra barriers to taking the first steps:

- Creating an Adobe account
- Signing in to Google Play or the iTunes store
- Downloading Bluefire or ebrary reader
- Signing in with Shibboleth

These requirements cannot all be set up for an individual during an "'on the spot" or "drop-in" session, so we encourage learners to have a go at starting a process that they can complete independently by following the help sheets or by contacting us in the library. Also, ebrary and Dawsonera use different ebook apps for downloads, and have different loan periods, interfaces and functions. We have to be careful to prioritise a book that will make a difference to the user so that confidence is built.

Such intensive testing has brought to light refinements we need to make:

- To bring closer together the labels and the icons on the app as it is a little confusing at the moment
- To move ebooks to the top of our "media type" list in the OPAC
- Possibly change the links to ebooks so that it is clear which provider the title sits with

We are also now more aware that learners have multiple misapprehensions, for instance, if they do not have an internet contract on their phone they may not know how to turn on the college free wi-fi access.

Conclusion

The software was free of charge and does not contain reporting functionality, so it has not been possible to track the number of users who have downloaded the app. In an attempt to capture data, the library will ask for a question about it in learner exit surveys.

We expect the app access to ebooks to drive ebook usage in the future. It provides an alternative way of accessing our services and resources that is already well-received and likely to grow. The app to ebook study has invigorated our testing of the app as well as of our own phones and tablets! It has extended library staff understanding of the barriers and challenges of mobile access, informing us for future refinements so that we can continue to improve our app to ebook functionality.

A living open book

Peter Suber

Harvard University

This is a case study of my short book, *Open Access* (Suber 2012a). The book is not "enhanced" in the way that a growing number of digital academic books are enhanced. It has no graphics, no multimedia, and no interactivity beyond links, and does not offer different layers or pathways for readers at different levels. From that point of the view the book is conventional and text-oriented. But it has two other enhancements worth highlighting. First, the full text is open access, which benefits authors and readers, and sometimes also publishers. Second, the book has a companion web site of open-access updates and supplements, which benefits all three groups.

Open access

MIT Press and I agreed from the start that the full text would eventually become open access. I wanted immediate open access, but understood why the press could not accommodate me. Our compromise was to make the book open-access under an open licence one year after publication. During year one, the book existed only in print and in non-open digital editions, such as a Kindle edition.

I wanted the book to be open access for the same reasons that I want all research literature to be open access. In the book itself (Section 5.3), I discuss the reasons why open access is more difficult for books than articles, and nevertheless why it can be viable for authors and publishers. I won't digress here on the advantages of open access. The book should speak for itself on those. I'll merely say that my readers and I have realised the benefits for which I'd hoped. I'm grateful to MIT Press for its willingness to make this possible.

I'll focus here instead on the consequences for the press. A good number of anecdotes and studies suggest that open-access full-text editions can stimulate a net increase in the sales of print books. I collect the evidence in the book itself at pp. 109–110, especially notes 8–10 at pp. 200–202, and in the updates and supplements for pp. 109–110. The evidence is promising enough that dozens of academic presses now experiment with open-access editions that coexist with priced print editions.

The same anecdotes and studies suggest that the "net boost to sales" effect works for some books, or some kinds of books, and not for others. To see whether it worked for my book, MIT Press analysed its sales data before and after the first open-access editions appeared in mid-2013.

The open-access editions did not boost the net sales of my book. On the contrary, the month after the open-access editions appeared, print sales were one-third of what they were the month before, and were never as high again. However, two months out, print sales were higher than they were one month out. Instead of an immediate spike in sales followed by a slow decline, we saw an immediate drop followed by a mild bump.

The open-access editions caused a deeper drop in digital sales than in print sales. Not surprisingly, people who already prefer to read digital editions also prefer free digital editions. If the sales of print editions declined more slowly, part of the explanation lies in the appeal of print itself.

Ellen Faran, the director of MIT Press, and I have discussed why the "net boost to sales" phenomenon works for some books, including some academic books, but didn't work for my book. We both think the book's topic is a key variable. (This would be ironic only if increasing print sales were the purpose of open access rather than an occasional side effect.) The book's audience consists of people who care about open access. While some readers are undecided about open access, or critical of it, most support it and are eager to take advantage of it.

Ellen also wonders whether the book is perceived as a reference book more than a monograph. That would matter because the evidence suggests that the "net boost to sales" phenomenon works better for monographs than reference books. The thinking is that when readers have an open-access option, they're more likely to buy a book they want to read in full than a book they only want to consult for snippets. I admit that as I wrote the book, I thought of it more as a monograph than a reference book. But I've since seen evidence to support

Ellen's theory. Four months after she voiced it, *Choice* named the book an out-standing academic title for 2013 in the category of reference books.

Several universities (Cornell, Georgia Tech, Harvard, and the University of Florida) bought print copies of the book in bulk to give to new faculty members. Ellen believes that bulk purchases became harder to justify after the open-access editions appeared. We have no data on whether the open-access editions might have increased individual purchases of the print edition, while decreasing bulk purchases, with the net effect of decreasing print sales. If so, it's particularly regrettable because, as Ellen notes, giving out print editions has more impact than giving out links to an open-access edition.

Updates and supplements

While the book became open access one year after publication, I launched the book's web site on the very day of publication. I created it as soon as I could because I already had a growing collection of updates and supplements to post. These were of two kinds: evidence that I had before publication in mid-2012 but couldn't fit into a short book, and evidence that only appeared after I submitted my manuscript in mid-2011.

The book was supposed to be short. But because open access suffers from wide and deep misunderstandings, and because an overriding purpose of the book was to lay these misunderstandings to rest, I was especially concerned to document my claims in full. In the end, I exceeded my word count in order to include 41 pages containing 153 small-font notes. I'm grateful to MIT Press for letting me do so. Nevertheless, I still had to cut many relevant studies from the manuscript, and wanted to restore them as soon as possible through my online supplements. Moreover, the world of open access is fast-moving, and many new studies appeared during the year when the book was in produc-tion. This is one reason why some books are (nearly) obsolete on they day they are published. I didn't want that fate for my book. The online updates and supplements turned a short book into a long one. More importantly, they turned a frozen and dated book into a living book.

I could have kept the book alive in the traditional way by giving public talks and writing new articles. I did both, but I wanted all the updates and supple-ments to be easy to find and use. I wanted them all in one place, searchable, with links to their sources, and links back to the relevant passages of the book. If I wrote about new evidence in a new article, that article would reach one kind of reader. But at the same time, I wanted to write a paragraph-length summary of the new evidence, with a full citation and link, in the form of a footnote or endnote, for the book web site.

Another way to keep a book alive is to publish a second edition, or even a series of new editions over many years. I could ask MIT Press to consider this. But it might decline and it might be right to do so. Even if the new material

was not voluminous, the sales might not justify new editions. More importantly, I might not want this solution myself. For example, I might want to write voluminous supplements. (It turns out that I do.) I also want to post my updates in real time, not just every few years. Above all, I want to write the updates that I want to write, without running them by an editor or publisher. The book itself went through the standard vetting process at MIT Press, but the updates and supplements are entirely under my control. This gives me a freedom that book authors seldom have. As a bonus, this control also means that I could decide the access terms on my own. Open access came to the main text one year late, but the web site was open access from the start.

Despite the fact that author supplements are not vetted by the publisher, the publisher can still point to them as an enhancement to the published book. MIT Press links to my book site from its own web page on the book, and added the site URL to the second printing of the print edition. Beyond letting me post updates and supplements, the book web site lets me link to reviews, translations, and other editions, including open-access editions. Before the open-access editions appeared, the supplements could only cite the main text by page number. But now that the whole book is open access, each supplement deep-links to the page it supplements. Moreover, readers can deep-link to each individual thread of supplements, and use them as public footnotes summarising the evidence for a claim they may want to assert themselves.

Recent developments

As I write this case study (late April 2014), the book web site has been viewed more than 89,000 times. It links to eight open-access editions, as well as the MIT Press page on the book. It links to 19 reviews with short excerpts. It points to ten translations in progress, and one already online. At least three of the translations are now under way because the translators saw my call for more translations on the web site itself.

Above all, the site contains 236 updates and supplements supporting 121 arguments and assertions from the book. The updates and supplements alone come to more than 38,000 words, or more than 80% of the word count of the original book. And of course the site grows in real time.

Here are three quick examples of the kind of updates and supplements I've been adding:

1. At p. 30 of the book I say, "[C]umulative price increases...forced the Harvard Library to undertake 'serious cancellation efforts' for budgetary reasons." In note 5 at p. 182, I cite two public statements from Harvard. By the time the book came out in mid-2012, I could cite seven public statements from Harvard to the same effect. I now excerpt, cite, and link to them all in my updates to p. 30.

2. At p. 40, I say, "Laid on top of this natural monopoly [created by the fact that different journals don't publish the same articles] are several layers of artificial monopoly." To keep the book short, I decided to give brief rather than detailed coverage to the evidence of monopoly in the journal publishing business. But in the updates to p. 40, I now point to eight articles and web resources for readers who want to go further.

3. At p. 152 I say, "At Congressional hearings in 2008 and 2010, legislators asked publishers directly whether green [open access] was triggering cancellations. In both cases publishers pointed to decreased downloads but not to increased cancellations." By the time the book came out, there had been a third Congressional hearing at which publishers were asked the same question with the same result. I described it and linked to it in my updates to p. 152. The same section of the site now includes additional new evidence that rising levels of green OA have not increased journal cancellations even if they have decreased publisher downloads.

Six months after the book came out, I wrote an article generalising the idea (Suber 2012b) of public footnotes growing in real time to keep the documentation current on important assertions in an article, book, or field. The result is a new container or structure for digital research. I called it an "evidence rack" because it allows any argument or assertion to become a hook on which to hang new evidence as it emerges. My book web site fulfils only part of the vision of an evidence rack, but I'm consciously letting it evolve in that direction.

For me, the book web site shows that a book can be a finished product of a certain length with an unfinished library of supplements of indefinite length. It lets me make additions in real time without delay or compromise. It lets me link to each growing thread of evidence, and because supplements are open access, it lets other scholars do the same. It also lets me expand the documentation and deepen the inquiry of the original book, thinking only about relevance, not length. If I had to keep my supplements short enough to fit into a new edition, then I'd have to omit most relevant new studies, which would recreate the problem that made supplements necessary in the first place. Finally, it lets me do justice, or try to do justice, to a rapidly growing field, together with its nuances and complexities, in a way that no single, short, dated book ever could.

References

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The Plymouth ebook project

Philip Gee

Plymouth University

"Puts everyone at an advantage right from the beginning of the course and not only the people who can afford books."

First year student, Plymouth University

Most of us will be familiar with the term "reading for a degree". All academics earnestly urge students to "read around" the topic of their lectures, and all are familiar with student essays showing little evidence of it. Should we be surprised? A lecturer may recommend reading Chapter 3, but to do so the student must have paid for a copy, or be able to borrow it from a library[1]. Even the best-funded library may be unable to meet demand for key texts near coursework deadlines or exams.

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[1] There has always been another way for unscrupulous students to access books. Those with the skill and nerve could steal from a shop or library. But recently it has become possible to download pirated copies. The amount of skill and nerve required is much lower, and moral qualms may be easy to overcome for students used to getting music and movies that way. I think this will be a major challenge to academic publishers, and a compelling reason for them to encourage schemes such as ours.

Library ebooks will ease the problem somewhat, but these typically have restrictions on the number of simultaneous users and limits on downloading for offline use. The experience of reading them with a slow internet connection can be frustrating, and they are hard to use on the smaller screens of tablets and mobile phones.

No cost to the students

In this chapter I describe the Plymouth ebook project, which provides a set of core textbooks to students at Plymouth University in ebook format, at no extra cost to the student. The project started with my own subject, psychology, and has since extended to cover a number of others.

As a lecturer in psychology, I have long since negotiated with publishers for discounts on textbooks I recommend. Students are more likely to read around the topics I cover if they have a personal copy. By 2010 I was programme leader for BSc Psychology. The Plymouth ebook project started in the autumn of that year, when a colleague suggested I should extend the range of books I negotiated on. Instead of just my own modules, why not all those we recommended to first years?

I set about compiling a list of core textbooks. What is a core textbook? Any lecturer will have encountered students who, having been given a reading list, says they can buy just one of the books. Which should it be? It is those we defined as core. It turned out that in the first year of the psychology degree there were 12 of them. My original plan had been simply to negotiate a price on behalf of our students, just as I had for print. However, my colleagues and I decided we should supply the books at no cost to the student. Even if we negotiated a fabulous bargain, if students had to pay some would choose not to. Giving them away means we can exploit the potential of the books in teaching and learning more effectively. We can teach knowing that every student has a copy of the core text. There were obvious benefits to inclusivity, too. Affordability would no longer be a barrier. Furthermore, with ebooks students can set the font size, background and text colours to suit their needs and preferences, and the text is accessible to assistive technology.

Negotiation with publishers

I explained my plan to the publishers. It soon became apparent that, where print copies were concerned, the discounts on offer were relatively small. I also became concerned about the practicality of delivering a bundle of 12 print books to each of 360 students. Ebooks seemed to offer a number of advantages. First, this relatively new format appeared to enable publishers to

think more flexibly about price. There are longstanding agreements and commercial relationships to be taken account of in the supply of print, but digital material allows a more or less direct business relationship between publisher and university. The other attractions of a package of ebooks for publishers include savings in production and distribution, that their customer buys a copy for every student rather than their selling to only a proportion, and that ebooks are tied to an account and so cannot be sold second-hand. They also benefit from a more predictable customer, with the opportunity to develop multi-year agreements that provide a more stable business environment.

For academics, the main advantage is that they can teach in the knowledge that every student has access to the core reading, and that many have it to hand whenever they have their laptop, tablet or smartphone with them. Few students would carry heavy books around to all their classes, but they have these devices with them most of the time.

Collaboration with the library

I should explain at this point that it was I, as programme leader, who carried out negotiations with publishers, and the scheme was funded from departmental rather than central library funds. I conferred with and had help from library colleagues throughout, but the library budget for first year psychology texts was far too small to cover our ambitions, even if we had opted to spend all of it on these 12 titles. It was clear that if the school wanted to proceed, it would have to provide the funds.

Furthermore, our thinking was not that the books should replace library resources. Rather, we saw this as an opportunity to enhance them. The library had traditionally held around 30 copies of each new edition of core psychology texts. When we set up our ebook scheme, our library was able to redirect spending so we only took three. These catered to students who did not want to use an electronic text, and to those on other programmes who needed to consult a psychology text. Spending that had previously gone on the other 27 copies was redirected to books used by second- and final-year students. Holding more copies of texts that final-year students use, which tend to be more specialist and more expensive, and less likely to be needed for long periods, is a better use of library resources. In this way, supplying core texts to first years enabled us to better serve second- and final-year students.

The interface and software

When we first talked to publishers, they were keen that the books should be made available through their own platform. This would have meant students

could only read books through an online browser, and using a different inter-face for each publisher. It also gives the user the impression that the books are a publisher's property that they have allowed limited access to. We made it clear we were only interested in books that students could have a sense of ownership over, that could be used offline, and that could be read on a mobile device. It should be a similar experience to buying a book for a Kindle.

That the student feels they own the text is important because we hope they will invest time and effort in making highlights and notes on their books, just as many do on personal copies of print books. That they should be download-able for use offline is important because the internet is not always available; students may want to catch up on reading during a train journey, for example. That they could be read on a mobile device was important partly because reading from a tablet is more pleasant than a computer screen, and partly because they might find themselves unexpectedly with half an hour spare. If their books are on their phone, they can use that to fill the time productively. Indeed, we have had feedback from students who have read textbooks while queuing at a supermarket checkout.

We delivered our first batch of ebooks in September 2011. Students were sent an email containing instructions on how to set up an account with the suppliers of the software we were using, VitalSource Bookshelf, along with a redemption code for their books. We chose Bookshelf because at the time it was the only system that allowed download for offline use, and that would work on comput-ers running Mac OS X or Windows, and on mobile devices running iOS or Android, as well as allowing access through a browser on any other device.

Survey of student views

After two weeks, I ran an anonymous web survey of our students. Feedback on the scheme was the most positive I had ever seen. A typical comment was: "Excellent scheme, very impressive use of new media technology. Can't hon-estly believe I'd be starting with every core book dropped into my lap, won-derful surprise."

Very few made negative comments, and those that did almost exclusively concerned extended reading from computer screens: "It can be difficult to sit and read through many chapters at once on a computer screen compared to sitting and reading a paper copy of the text. After a while it can cause strain to the eyes which can be uncomfortable and increases headaches." I believe that, as more students acquire tablets, much better devices for extended reading, this will become less of an issue.

I followed up this first survey with a more extensive one at the end of the autumn term, and again at the end of the academic year. These, and surveys in subsequent years, have given similar results; across more than 1,300 responses, a mean of 95% agree or strongly agree that the scheme is a good idea.

Text comments

One feature that students found especially valuable was that I could make text comments on my copy, and share these with them. I suspect I am not alone in not actually having read much of the main text recommended for my first year module. Each of my lectures ends with a suggestion to read Chapter *x* before next week, but I had never properly read Chapter *x* myself. That is not to say I had taken no care in choosing the recommended text. However, that care consisted of checking the table of contents and skim reading a few sections.

Given the opportunity to share notes with my students, I started to work my way through the text more thoroughly. As I went, I found sections to which I could add comments about examples given in lectures. I also found sections that I disagreed with, where I felt the authors were giving a biased view, that were not well explained, or where I could give a hyperlink to more recent research. Students who subscribed to my notes would see them appear in the relevant places on their own books. These notes had a valuable role in making clear that the textbook was a contestable document, not the last word on a subject. My notes proved popular, especially as some would indicate sections I wouldn't be asking questions on in the exam. The notes clearly helped draw students to the text.

Students also shared notes with each other in informal study groups. The relatively simple technology of note sharing has transformed reading from a solitary experience to a social one. It has helped foster a sense of membership of a wider scholarly community.

Conclusions

The ebook scheme was such a success that we offered to set up similar arrangements for colleagues in other schools. We launched ebook schemes in marine biology, environmental science, earth science, geography, and computer science in September 2012. In 2013, the scheme expanded even further to biology, biomedical sciences, maths and statistics, and accountancy. I now lead a project exploring the possibility of extending it across all undergraduate programmes at Plymouth, and am seeking funding to share our experiences with other universities.

If schemes such as ours are to become more widespread, they must be affordable. Surveys at Plymouth suggest that only about two-thirds of students buy any books at all in their first year. If you average those who do not with the ones who do buy books, the amount spent per student is about £62 ($n = 700$), and that is through retailers who typically take a 30% cut. If the academic publishing industry can be persuaded to supply books to schemes such as ours for the same revenue they currently get from sales to individual

students, the approach will thrive. I am sure most universities would spend more than £62 per student to give first years a full set of core texts.

Widespread core ebooks schemes would benefit academic publishers, universities and, of course, students. They would protect publishers from declining sales, undermine the second hand-book market, and reduce the threat from piracy. Students and their universities would be the main beneficiaries, however. Students would save substantial amounts of money, have unprecedented access to core material, see increased spending on second- and final-year texts, and benefit from technological developments such as the interactive features Plymouth is helping publishers embed in future e-textbooks. And for academics, such schemes will restore the pleasure of teaching students who really are "reading for a degree".

E-textbooks at Coventry University:
a pilot project

Sandy Forster

Coventry University

The government's decision to change the model of funding to institutions of higher education (HEIs) in 2012/13 had an impact on every UK university, and each institution had to formulate a strategy to deal with the changed situation. At Coventry University part of our response was to propose a variable fee structure for courses, based on the actual cost of their delivery. We then proceeded with a "no hidden extras" offering (referred to internally as the "promises" project), which was to provide further resources within the fees. This meant that each student entering the university within the 2012 fee band could expect to receive a pre-defined number of print credits each year of study, safety equipment, drawing materials, field trips and site visits, etc., depending on their course. Most students would also be provided with a number of essential core textbooks, as identified by their course tutors, for each year of their course.

In 2012/13 all students eligible to receive textbooks received them as print copies. We followed up the September 2012 distribution of print books with an online survey in February 2013, asking students if they would prefer ebooks to print. Fewer than 9% responded, and around 86% of those stated that they would prefer print. However, the reasons behind this are unclear. It

is possible that many first-year students had little contact with ebooks other than ebook readers such as the Kindle prior to arriving at the university, and therefore were unable to appreciate the benefits of e-textbooks.

The library initiative

In the light of the small number of responses to the survey and the prospect of distributing a potential 40,000 printed texts to around 6,800 students studying on 240 courses, the library put forward a proposal in April 2013 to run a pilot project to provide e-texts as an alternative to the print across a limited number of courses. We hoped that this would become a viable replacement to the staff-intensive and therefore costly distribution of large numbers of print copies to an ever- increasing number of students. As the supplier of our print books, Ingram Coutts, were able to offer e-textbooks through their digital arm, VitalSource, this would also enable the pilot to run from Autumn 2013.

The potential benefits of distributing e-textbooks to students were numerous. They would be provided with a personal, downloadable copy of the e-textbook in PDF or XML format that they could store simultaneously on up to four separate devices for the duration of their course, no software downloads would be necessary, and the book could be searched, personalised with notes and annotations, and printed out subject to digital rights management (DRM) limitations. Students would be able to find and download their e-textbooks easily via a link in the university's virtual learning environment (VLE) CUOnline (Moodle).

The benefits to the university would also be substantial – a huge reduction in the logistical challenges and costs of ordering, distributing and ultimately returning uncollected items. As we would be delivering the e-textbooks online, this would also negate the need for us to distribute and/or allocate access codes. Other long-term benefits would include the ability to analyse the metrics that VitalSource provide, and a cost saving given the current tendency for e-textbooks to be (sometimes) cheaper than their print equivalent. However, even where the price differential is small, this is outweighed by the savings in distribution and administration costs over their print counterparts.

A small number of departments in the Business, Environment and Science, Engineering and Computing, and Health and Life Sciences faculties expressed an interest in being considered for the pilot, and the university's Promises Board finally agreed that the pilot would be run with the Computer Science Department, within the Engineering and Computing Faculty. Part of the reasoning behind this choice was that these students would also be receiving a tablet as part of their "promises package" and would, in theory, be more likely to engage with downloadable texts.

The pilot

A shortlist of eight book titles was quickly identified from the agreed course texts by early August 2013, to be supplied to Year 1 and 2 students across six courses with a total of 500 students being eligible. Within three weeks, the e-textbook title list was reduced to seven, as one of the books was still available only in print. By the end of September, VitalSource had provided the library with the links to the titles, and these were embedded in Moodle against the appropriate modules ready for the students to follow and redeem. At this point it was made clear that a further title was not available electronically, so we had to place another order for print copies instead. The pilot list of titles was now reduced to six.

Once we had completed the main distribution of print copies and returned uncollected items, it became clear that managing the e-textbooks would not be quite as easy as we had first thought. As the links to the e-textbooks would remain in Moodle throughout the academic year, they could be downloaded at any time, not just in the Autumn term. As there was some delay in obtaining the download statistics, it wasn't until February that the figures for the Autumn term became available to us. The summary information showed that 586 access codes had been redeemed, and this was disappointing since some courses were offering two e-texts and the total number of students was around 520.

More detailed reports were requested at the end of April, since the initial statistics didn't show the details of the courses the students who had downloaded the texts were studying on. Once this information had been provided and analysed, it revealed that our decision to put the links against the relevant module had not provided control at a granular enough level to prevent students on different courses also studying that module from downloading the texts. Other students who were not entitled to download the texts had also been able to do so. These included, for example, part-time students who were only given vouchers to cover half the value in "promises" received by full-time students, and those on pre-2012 fee bands who were not entitled to any "promises" at all. I also realised that other e-textbooks were included in the report which were not within the pilot set, as the Business School and Faculty of Health and Life Sciences had also purchased a number of e-textbooks.

Further analysis of the statistics

The conflict between module and course made analysis of the statistics much more difficult. It appeared that, of the 318 pilot e-textbooks claimed, 71 had been made by students who were not eligible to have them, some of whom were not even in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing. One particular textbook that was intended for 27 students on a course had been downloaded

by 17 students on another course in a different faculty (but still studying the same module) and by only ten students on the course for which it was intended.

The pattern of students claiming their ebooks is also worthy of note. There were 249 e-texts redeemed in October, the first month of the term, with 180 of those in the first week, followed by 21 in November, 20 in December, 11 in January and 5 in February. By shifting the analysis from course level to module level, I found that 53% of the 598 e-text "copies" on the relevant modules had been redeemed. Usage also seemed encouraging – there had been a total of 2193 page views (1386 of which had been online from portable devices) by 2nd June, with 29 highlights having been created within the e-texts. By way of contrast, the first-year students were all eligible to collect print textbooks which hadn't been available in e-text format, and out of the 208 students eligible for print books, only 37 collected them.

It is difficult to assess the apparent results of this pilot in relation to the e-text usage, particularly as there is nothing comparable to benchmark against within Coventry University. The figures supplied by VitalSource do, however, include some of our other e-textbooks on their platform and the one most used (by students in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences) is showing 120 e-texts claimed over the same period with 4,589 page views – an average of 38 pages per student. The two other titles being reported on were bought for Stage 2 students in Business, and they are showing an average of 104 pages per student, so it would appear that the usage on these pilot titles is lower than for other texts bought by the University. That, however, could merely confirm that Engineering students are currently less likely to engage with books during their studies. We might dare to hope that they are more likely to use their e-textbooks than the traditional print.

Summary

Is it easy to make broad statements trying to establish why there has not been as good a take-up as we might have anticipated. It appears, however, that students in other departments are more likely to make use of e-textbooks – possibly because they are being encouraged to work both in the classroom and through lecturer-controlled areas on publishers' websites with close links to their textbooks, and are therefore more comfortable learning within this medium. We are also seeing a steady rise in the use of ebooks bought under the library access models across the institution as a whole. This is the first time that students in Engineering and Computing have been introduced to e-texts so that there is nothing to compare against; there is no way of measuring usage of the print textbooks that have been distributed, either to them or other students, so it is difficult to make informed conclusions about what the data means in real terms. The final analysis of the data also came at a stage

where it was difficult to make contact with the students to have meaningful discussions and find out whether they had understood the personal nature of their e-texts as opposed to the ones made available through the library discovery system.

I am encouraged that just over half of the Engineering and Computing students accessed their e-textbooks when the generally accepted view is that these students don't usually engage with books or the library, and only 18% of the same students collected their free print textbooks. The usage statistics that we have been given do not yet give the full picture for the year, or whether these e-texts will be used again in the final year of the course. It is encouraging to note that the 2014/15 distribution includes new requests for e-texts from other departments, alongside those which have previously been requested as print books with associated e-access cards. The e-textbook continues to evolve, and I feel sure that Coventry University will continue to be engaged in and take an active role in this process.

Index

Ebooks are coming of age in education, as this exciting collection commissioned by Jisc demonstrates.

Case studies, reflecting ebook success stories across the higher and further education sectors, include:

» An innovative app to encourage ebook take-up in a Welsh college.

» A partnership between a library and research centre to create open access monographs and midigraphs.

» Several examples of creative negotiations with ebook publishers.

Insight chapters address hot topics in the ebook universe, including:

» The changing world of access to scholarly digital content in the mobile environment.

» The challenges faced by the library as online distance learning moves from margin to mainstream.

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Professor Madeleine Atkins, Chief Executive of HEFCE

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