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E-books in the University of California Libraries

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ABSTRACT. In response to the acquisition of various e-book packages by individual campuses, the University of California Libraries' Collection Development Committee charged a task force in June 2007 to develop principles to integrate the acquisition of e-books into existing system-wide collection development activities. Based on the work of the task force to date, this article will discuss the current state of e-book implementation on the University of California campuses as well as the draft "Principles for Acquiring and Licensing E-book Packages and Services" developed by the task force.

INTRODUCTION

Individual University of California libraries have been acquiring various e-book packages and individual titles for several years, both through subscription and purchase. As a result, many UC librarians began to ask

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whether it were time to investigate a system-wide license for one or more aggregator packages. In response, the UC Libraries' Collection Development Committee (CDC) determined that there was a need to develop principles to integrate e-books into existing collection development activities and to try to influence the emerging marketplace of e-books. In June, 2007, the CDC charged a task force to develop "a set of guiding principles for collecting books in electronic format, in the broader context of system-wide monographic collection development, shared print goals, mass digitization projects and preservation." The final report of the task force is available on the CDC Web site <http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/cdc/>. The authors of this article are the chair and two members of the task force.

On the basis of the work of the task force to date, this article will discuss the current state of e-book implementation on the University of California campuses as well as the draft "Principles for Acquiring and Licensing E-book Packages and Services" developed by the task force. It will also discuss recommendations for integrating e-books into current UC consortial decision making.

RECENT HISTORY

In 2001, the California Digital Library's Joint Steering Committee on Shared Collections (JSC) charged a task force to "evaluate academic experiences with electronic books." The task force report is available at <http://www.cdlib.org/inside/groups/jsc/ebooks/#reports>. This report shows the considerable advances made in the e-book marketplace over the last six years while at the same time pointing to several unresolved issues.

The report was written at a time when there was considerable uncertainty surrounding the future development of e-books and when the e-book market was still very immature. As Karen Coyle said, "The e-book hype of the 1990s, promising huge libraries of electronic books, available to everyone, everywhere, all the time, burst along with the rest of the dot-com bubble" (Coyle, 2003). This uncertainty is captured by the use of the word "experiments" twice in the task force charge. Overall, the task force "concluded that all the elements that would make the e-book market viable are not yet in place." This echoes a report on an e-book conference in 2000 called E-Book World that stated, "It was clear that the new technology has captured the attention of the book publishing community, but it was equally clear that no one has a good idea on how e-books will eventually be integrated in the larger industry" (Hilts, 2000).

Though e-books may no longer be "experiments," the 2001 task force report does highlight several issues that have not been fully resolved:

- The continued lack of a device that would allow reading an e-book with anything approaching the resolution of a printed book;
- The use of proprietary software systems;
- Limitations on use imposed by licensing requirements and digital rights management systems, particularly in regard to interlibrary loan; and
- Standards and methods for archiving perpetual access titles.

Clearly there have been significant improvements over the last several years. Though widespread acceptance of e-books may have progressed more slowly than some envisioned, it would not be accurate to describe the current situation as a "muddle," as Walt Crawford wrote in 2000 (Crawford, 2000). There have been significant advances during this period in usability, MARC record availability, integration with print vendor systems, licensing, and business models. At the same time, however, it must be recognized that e-book sales are still a tiny proportion of total trade publishing revenue. In 2002, e-book sales were $3.3 million of total trade revenues of $26 billion (Coyle, 2003). By 2005, e-book revenues had grown to $12 million, with the total U.S. book publishing market between $25.1 and $31.6 billion (Crawford, 2006). So even with nearly 400% growth in revenues in three years, e-books still accounted for less than $\frac{1}{20}$th of 1% of total sales. By 2006, e-book revenue was 6% of total book revenue for one major publisher (Strauch, 2007). While the trend in e-book revenues is clearly upward, e-books still have a long way to go to achieve significant market share.

A survey conducted in spring 2007 by the e-book vendor ebrary highlights many of the barriers still remaining to the widespread adoption of e-books. This Global eBook Survey was completed by 552 libraries, 77% of which are academic, and is available through the ebrary Web site at <http://www.ebrary.com> (and see elsewhere in this volume). Major barriers to usage were identified as lack of awareness, difficulty in reading and using e-books, lack of training, price, and restrictive access models. Though at first glance it may appear that little has changed since 2001, the UC CDC believes that e-books are here to stay and that the e-book market has developed to the point where it is worthwhile to charge a new task force.

UC COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Before proceeding with an examination of the task force's work to date, it will be helpful to describe the collection development process for centrally licensed electronic resources in the University of California Libraries. Though the libraries are constituents of a single system and have a long history of cooperation, they act in many ways as a consortium of separate libraries in matters of joint collection development. There are 10 campus libraries plus the California Digital Library. Though the CDL provides many tools and services, its primary responsibility in the collection development process is to provide licensing services, acquisitions, and cataloging for what are called Tier 1 resources—those resources centrally acquired and available to all campuses.

Recommendations for the acquisition of new system-wide electronic resources primarily come from the bibliographer groups. Currently there are 30 bibliographer groups, each of which is composed of at least one subject specialist from each campus. These groups meet regularly either virtually or in person to discuss issues and to surface recommendations for new resources.

Annually, usually during the summer, a CDL body, the Joint Steering Committee on Shared Collections (JSC) sends a survey to the bibliographer groups to collect their recommendations. It is the responsibility of the JSC to prioritize the requests based on a review of the budget and to prepare the annual licensing work plan that lists those resources that the CDL proposes to attempt to license on behalf of the campus libraries. The work plan is then submitted to the CDC, which is composed of the collection development officers of each of the campus libraries. After approval by the CDC, the work plan is used to guide CDL staff in negotiations with individual vendors.

The results of the negotiations are then presented for a go–no-go decision. If the decision is favorable, a final proposal, including proposed campus co-investment scenarios, is submitted to the CDC. It is important to note that the large bulk of funds to acquire system-wide electronic resources come from the individual campus library budgets and not from the CDL, thus the necessity for CDC approval of licensing proposals. After approval, the proposal is forwarded to CDL Acquisitions, and the Shared Cataloging Program, which distributes catalog records for Tier 1 resources, is notified.

This system works quite well for those resources that are relatively discipline-specific and so can be championed by an individual bibliographer group. Acquisition of multi-disciplinary resources is correspondingly

harder to coordinate. As regards e-books, it is easier to surface a proposal for a discipline-specific collection or a collection of electronic reference works than to find sponsors for a broad multi-disciplinary package from, for example, ebrary, EBL, MyiLibrary, or NetLibrary. For this reason, the current task force has been charged to examine mechanisms by which the libraries can make decisions regarding such packages. These mechanisms include assigning the task to an existing bibliographer group, creating a new bibliographer group, appointing an ad-hoc group, or some combination of these methods. After reviewing the options, the task force recommended that an ad-hoc group be appointed. The CDC has accepted this recommendation and is in the process of appointing the group.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF CURRENT UC E-BOOK ACTIVITIES

One of the first things the task force did was conduct an environmental scan of the e-book activities at each UC campus via a survey. The survey focused on products licensed independently by each campus library. It identified resources that were uniquely held at a single campus and resources held at more than one campus, which could be potential opportunities for system-wide licensing.

Broad ranges of e-book products were covered, and the responses included subject-specific e-books and reference works (e.g., Die Deutsche Lyrik in Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia), general reference works (Gale Virtual Reference Library), and aggregator e-book packages (e.g., NetLibrary, ebrary, EBL, MyiLibrary, and the like). In some cases, libraries had licensed these on their own, because there was no consortial advantage available (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae) or because it was of specialized interest to only a few campuses (e.g., Old English Corpus, Apabi Chinese e-books).

The survey also asked whether campuses had formed local e-book task forces. It was clear that there was still interest in investigating e-books as five of the 10 campuses had e-book task forces (UCB, UCI, UCLA, UCR, UCSD) to assess and address the local needs of the campus libraries and to monitor e-book publishing and technology developments.

The survey also requested feedback about products campuses were investigating locally and suggestions for areas to target at the system-wide level. Some campuses expressed interest in the following:

- Online reference titles purchased on a title-by-title basis;
- E-books for course reserves;
- Multi-subject and subject-specific packages;
- Health and life sciences e-books and selected encyclopedias;
- E-books published in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, or Hong Kong;
- E-books for IT professionals; and
- Selecting e-books via monograph vendor's interface.

The following were some of the issues and concerns mentioned by campuses:

- Unhappiness with access models;
- Inability to easily purchase single titles;
- Untimely provision of MARC records;
- Challenges in acquiring accurate usage statistics;
- Developing better assessment methods;
- Monitoring non-vended content (government documents, grey literature, small press items, other one-offs); and
- Impact of mass digitization projects vis-à-vis licensed e-book resources.

Many of these issues and concerns pointed to the need to develop principles for acquiring and licensing e-book packages and services.

PRINCIPLES FOR ACQUIRING AND LICENSING E-BOOKS

The task force reviewed the original "University of California Principles for Acquiring and Licensing Information in Digital Formats" <http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/cdc/principlesforacquiring.html> with the aim of broadening these to include e-book packages and services. Many of the same basic principles apply as well to e-books. However, e-books introduce the need for clear statements on additional business and access models, licensing terms, and content and management requirements. The task force, therefore, will recommend a revision to the UC Principles that can include e-books as an important part of the carefully coordinated and collaboratively managed variety of UC library collections.

The e-book revisions to the Principles are intended to apply to two types of e-books: the digitized versions of printed books and those that are born digital. Increasingly, the commercially available packages contain books

that are available only electronically. At the same time, digitization initiatives are ramping up, greatly increasing the volume of digitized versions of print books. In either case, it is important that e-book acquisition and access options may be exercised flexibly and as needed and appropriate to meet changing demands for instructional support. Decisions on retention of e-book titles need to be considered at the time of acquisition as these help inform a preferred access option.

The following e-book principles highlight those that the task force will recommend be added to the original document to guide the University at both campus and university-wide levels in setting the terms of business relationships with providers of e-book packages.

Content-Collection Development

- E-books that replicate print should be true to the print original, including graphics, color, and original page display including numbering;
- In cases where e-books duplicate printed books, including those that result from mass digitization projects, a Shared Print monograph strategy should be considered and planned;
- For effective management and evaluation of e-book packages, title-by-title usage statistics, by campus, are needed; and
- In evaluating e-books that are only in digital form, it is important to have provisions for the archiving of content in a trusted digital repository.

Costs and Pricing

Given the potential for dynamic updating of e-book content, the choice of business terms will vary depending on the need to retain content. Therefore, vendors that offer a range of reasonably priced access options—lease, own, user-driven, and the like—will be preferred.

If there is a differential price for single vs. multiple user access, multi-user access should preferably cost no more than one-and-a-half times single user access and in no event more than two times single user access.

Because the University of California has a coordinated and collaboratively managed variety of library collections and services in which the collections of the individual campuses are enriched by capabilities to access the resources of all the others, "cross-access" should be a contractual option. Cross-access business terms should be based on actual or realistic estimates of UC audience, account for the fact that the university is a

single system, and acknowledge efficiencies in conducting business with one rather than multiple (campus) parties.

Transformative Strategies

The libraries make principled investments in publishing business models that produce high-quality scholarly content and have the potential for transforming scholarly communication. In addition to transformative models that reduce access barriers (e.g., open access models) or that provide a sustainable alternative to expensive for-profit efforts, e-book publishing models, such as those emerging with WordPress, can build on the success of collaborative social networking to further transform scholarly communications. E-books offer the potential of truly integrating commentary and updating ongoing, developing research.

University presses that are redefining their monograph publishing strategies offer opportunities for libraries to collaborate in support of new means of scholarly communications, especially in providing innovative forms of quality or peer review processes. Strategies for the access and use of mass-digitized books can also aid in development of transformative models for libraries.

Licensing

E-book service packages should allow fair use such as classroom use and interlibrary loan. Users should not be required to establish an individual account in order to view titles; such an account may be required for added value features such as bookmarking or highlighting. "Click-through" licenses should not be required.

Functionality and Interoperability

E-book package titles should be integrated in common acquisition vendor tools. E-book services should be interoperable and not be dependent on proprietary vendor hardware.

E-book software should easily support printing, downloading, e-mail, and copying. E-book software should add value through advanced searching, browsability, highlighting, and marking text, citation tools, interoperability, and linking with outside references, cited sources, dictionaries and media, and the like.

E-book vendors that can supply standard MARC records are preferred. E-book software should support access to all types of content, including

graphics and sound. E-book software should protect the privacy of users. Access to e-book packages should be solely by IP range without any additional login or password requirements.

CONCLUSION

This article presents some preliminary findings and recommendations of a University of California Libraries' task force examining the current state of the e-book marketplace. One goal of the task force is to influence this emerging marketplace. Hopefully, the final report of the task force will achieve this objective.

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