

E-BOOKS : BASIC ISSUES, ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES



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Manuscripts formed majority of library collection in ancient libraries. Invention of printing technology in mid- 15th century revolutionized the production of books in printed form. Publication of books and journals on magnetic media microfilms and microfiche followed suit in the 1930s. In fact, space problems, which the libraries were facing, led to the use of magnetic media publication of books. But this media could not find acceptance of their users due to several factors such as strain on eyes, cumbersome retrieval of information, etc. Meanwhile computing technology was developed in 1960s, and with it, some time later towards the end of 20th century, were invented other media such as optical discs, digital versatile discs for recording of information. Since information is now available on a variety of media in a variety of forms, the libraries will have to reformulate their collection development policies to incorporate new challenges and concerns into the acquisition process, such as site licensing, copyright issues, procurement of information in all forms on all media, and how access will be provided to various electronic resources. The most recent trend in the book industry is the development of electronic books (or E-Books), which has the potential to be the most far-reaching change since Gutenberg's invention.

DEFINITION OF AN E-BOOK

Nelson (2008) 18 has defined an e-book as, "an electronic book that can be read digitally on a computer screen, a special e-book reader, a personal digital assistant (PDA), or even a mobile phone. In other words, e-books are consumed on a screen rather than on paper". A text or monograph which is an electronic format. E-Books are simply digital versions of books that can be obtained electronically and stored and read

on a traditional personal computer, a common handheld device or a dedicated E-Book 'reader'. In many ways, E-Books seem perfect. They are easy to obtain and they offer advantages over hard copy books (such as searching, built-in-dictionaries and linking). E-Book is an electronic version of a book without any change.

We access them anyway, anywhere and anytime. E-Books are basically text based files we can search for a certain part of an E-Book without having to flip through it endlessly. The ability to have a number of books with us at one time is really great. In addition to being able to carry a large number of E-Books on Pocket PC at one time, The Pocket PC is not only smaller than a paper back book, it also performs all of those other functions that Pocket PC excel at. The E-Book remains on the Provider are Website and can be accessed for a fee. Readers can 'purchase' the books to receive indefinite access. The contents of a book are stored in a system connected to a high-speed, high-quality printer, from which printed and bound copies are produced on demand.

More than 20 years ago, Michael Hart began Project Gutenberg with the idea of creating an 'electronic library' by transferring printed texts into electronic form. This was the beginning of the concept of creating digital libraries, and electronic books are a major part of the concept of digital libraries (Crowford, 1990). Michael Hart believes that libraries of future will consist of computer searchable collection, which can be transmitted via disks, phone lines, or other media at a fraction of the cost in money, time and paper as with present day paper media. These electronic books will not have to be rebound, reprinted, reserved, etc. They will not have to be reserved and restricted to use by one patron at one time. All materials will be available

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to be all patrons from all locations at all times. This is the core idea behind the addition of electronic texts to academic libraries. To be able to serve all of their patrons whether they are online, distance education students or those living on campus, the addition of electronic books to academic libraries is an integral part of technological changes that are currently taking place. Academic libraries must offer electronic books in order to keep with the changing pace of technology and changing face of education going into the next century of development (Donaldson, 2002).

CHRONOLOGIES OF E-BOOKS

Wikipedia (2009) 26 described the following history of e-books: 1971: Michael S. Hart launches the Gutenberg Project 1993: Zahur develops the first software to read digital books. Digital book v.1 and the first e-book is published on Murder considered as one of the fire arts (Thomas de Quincy). Digital book offers the first 50e-books in floppy disk with digital book format (DBF). Bibliobytes, a project of free digital books online in internet. 1995: Amazon starts to sell physical books in internet. 1996: The project Gutenberg reaches the 1000 titles. The target is 1.00.000 1998: Launched the first e-book readers: Rocket e- book and soft book. 1998-1999: Websites selling e-books in English like EReader. Com Y ereads.com. 2000: Stephen king offers his book "Riding Bullet" in digital file; it only can be read in computer. 2001: open to eBook. Com' the first website selling e- book in Spanish. 2002: Random House and Harper Collins start to sell digital versions of their titles in English. 2005: Amazon bought Mobipocket like a strategic positioning. 2006: Sony presents the Sony Reader with e- ink. 2006: Libra Digital Launched Book Browse as an online reader for publisher content. 2007: Amazon lunched kindle in US.

Publishers of Electronic Books

Net library (w.w.w.netlibrary.com.) also sells e-books to libraries at a price that is very similar to the hardbound book. Onlineoriginals.com. are the online publishers in literary work of English and French. Onlineoriginals.com. distributes content in a number of different formats including PDF, Rocket e-book, and Microsoft Reader and they also offer unique peer review service for aspiring authors. Firstprint.com is an e-book publisher of fiction and notification by new and established authors. DRMS (Digital Rights Management System) is one of the most critical

elements in the development of electronic publishing. Methods of buying E- Books and storing them.

A. Via a PC

o Visit an online bookshop, purchase book as usual. o Book available for immediate download to a PC. o Downloaded to E- Book reader from PC.

B. Via E- book reader

o Plug reader directly into a phone socket and manage the process via the reader itself. o E- Book reader can only hold a limited number of books at one time- virtual bookshelves need to be created. o Copies of books held on PC hard disk. o Book vendor creates personalized online bookshelf on our behalf. o Books copied to reader when required.

Protecting the copyright

Publishers are working hard to ensure that once an E- Book has been purchased it can't be copied. Each E- book being encrypted can only be unencrypted by the reader for which it was purchased with systems of passwords.

THE EMERGENCE OF E-BOOKS

E-Book appeared on the web, easily shared and stored on a hard drive or storage disk, and quickly began to proliferate. Numerous e- book formats emerged and proliferated, some supported by major software companies (like Adobe's PDF format), and others supported by independent and open source programmers. Multiple readers naturally followed multiple formats; most of them specializing in only one format, and there by fragmenting the e- book market even more. The result was lack of an overriding voice we with the public regarding e- books, which kept e-books from becoming a mainstream product. E- Books continued to gain in their own under ground markets. Many e- book publishers began distributing books that were in the public domain, or that were simply old and hard to find. At the same time, authors with books that were not accepted by their publisher began to strike out on their own, offering the books online so they could be seen by others.

EVOLUTION OF E-BOOKS

A huge amount of articles about of e- books is available in LIS literature. Sinha (2008) 20 traced a brief overview on the evolution of e- books. She described that in the early 90s, electronic content became popular as publishers sent print books accompanied by floppy disk or CD- ROMs. This promised added value for

students and researchers' built caused numerous problems for libraries, from processing to circulation. Ultimately, such issues became doubtful since most librarians were double minded that these formats would endure for scientific and scholarly content. With web-based access, however, it's rare to find a library that does not have significant numbers of electronic resources even as it continues to build its print collections. Over the last 15 years or so, both content providers and libraries have overcome, or at least leaned to deal with the many challenges e- books present in terms of pricing, licensing, access and workflow. The American Chemical Society began alerting scholars to new developments through electronic means as far back as 1962. In 1971 MEDLINE was launched and project Gutenberg issued its first electronic text of 'The Declaration of Independence'. In 1970s the large business organizations that focused on electronic publications came to the fore. Dialog and ORBIT emerged in 1972 while LEXIS in 1973. Since then digital products have mushroomed throughout the world. In 1990s it became for the first time cheaper to publish a reference book on CD- ROM than it did in print format (Lee & Boyle, 2004) 14. Meyers (1996) 15 given a reference of an article written by Lancaster titled as "The Evolution of Electronic Publishing" (Library Trends, Spring, 1995). Lancaster notes that "electronic publishing can be considered to have evolved gradually over a period of about thirty years, the evolution having the following manifestations:

1. Use of computers to generate conventional print on paper publications;
2. The distribution of text in electronic form, where the electronic version is the exact equivalent of a paper version and may have been used to generate the paper version;
3. Distribution in electronic form only but with the publication being little more than print on paper displayed electronically. Nevertheless, it may have various 'value added' features, including search, data manipulation and alerting (through profile matching) capabilities;
4. The generation of completely new publications that exploits the true capabilities of electronics. The international digital publishing Forum (IDPF) reports that wholesale trade E- book sales in the United States have increased from \$1.6 million in 2002 to \$11.6 million by the second quarter of 2008 (IDPF, 2008). Outside the US, an example, the digital content Association of Japan (DCAJ)

reported that sales of electronic books increased almost 70% from 2005 to 2006 (Anime News Network, 2007)3. The e – library management conducted an international E- book survey in the spring of 2007 to know the e –books subscription by libraries. The survey results showed that of 552 libraries, 88% owned or subscribed of E-books, with 63% responding that they owned or subscribed to over 1,000 e- books (Mularkey, 2007) 17.

E-BOOKS

Electronic books read on a personal computer or an e- book reader typically use DRM restrictions limit copying, printing, and sharing of e- books. E – Books are usually limited to a certain number reading devices and some e- publishers prevent any copying or printing. Some commentators that DRM is something that makes E- book publishing complex. Two of the most commonly used software programs to view e- books are Adobe Acrobat and Microsoft Reader. Each program uses a slightly different approach to content protection. The first version of Adobe Acrobat e-book Reader to have encryption technologies was version 5.05. In the later version 6.0, the technologies of PDF reader and the e- book reader were combined, allowing it to read both DRM –restricted and unrestricted files. After opening the file, the user is able to view the rights statements, which outlines actions available for the specific document. For example, for a freely transferred PDF, printing, copying to the clipboard and other basic functions are available to the users. However, when viewing a more highly restricted e- book the user is unable to print the book, copy or paste selections. The level of restriction is specified by the publisher or distribution agency. Microsoft Reader, which exclusively reads e- books in a lit format, contains its own DRM software. In Microsoft Reader there are three different levels of access control depending on the e- book: sealed e- books inscribed e- books and owner exclusive e- books. Sealed e-books have the least amount of restriction and only prevent the document from being modified. Therefore, the reader cannot alter the content of the book. Inscribed e- books are the next level of restriction. After purchasing and downloading the e-book, Microsoft Reader puts a digital ID tag to identify the owner of the e-book. Therefore, this discourages distribution of the e-book because it is inscribed with the owner's

name making it possible to trace it back to the original copy that was distributed. Other e- book software uses similar DRM schemes. For example, Palm Digital Media, now known as Ereader, links the credit card information of the purchaser to the e- book copy in order to discourage distribution of the books.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT OF E-BOOKS IN LIBRARIES

E-Book acquisition continues to increase, though most libraries agree that it will be many years, if ever, before their collections become electronic only. However libraries committed to a long- term electronic only goal. Toward that end, they do not acquire print copies. There are a number of sites published primarily by libraries or library experts like Uta (1998) 23, Herzog (2004) 4 and Twists- Brooks (2007) discussed collection development issues and challenges about e- books in detail. Uta emphasized a clear collection development policy for e- books.

EVALUATION OF PUBLICATIONS

E-Books must be judged with respect to following technical features and usability aspects:

A- TECHNICAL IMPLICATIONS

E- Books should be usable with widely available software like internet explorer, mozilla fire fox etc. if special hardware or proprietary software is required, like in Ebrary or Taylor & Francis e- books, you need user's training to use this special software for accessing e- books.

B- TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Standards for setting up and maintaining e – resources are evolving and should be applied to e- books in order to allow seamless interconnection with other information systems and to be prepared for technological changes. Standardized location description (SLD), metadata (for describe the e – books), and archiving (to guarantee future access) are the required areas for standardization.

C- ACCURACY AND CURRENCY OF MAINTENANCE

The provider of e- books must well- maintained and updated his website regularly. Long term commitment regarding maintenance of the offered e- books is a critical selection criterion for the acquisition librarians.

D- USAGE CONDITIONS

In process of selection of e- books we should

review the usage conditions carefully.

E- PRIORITIZATION OF THE PUBLICATION

Among the available collection of the e- books we must select the collection according to information needs of our library users

F. PURCHASING/ SUBSCRIBING TO THE PUBLICATION

Obtaining e- books is much more complex than the purchasing of print books. Access and usage conditions can vary for different publishers and vendors. A number of issues need to be considered:

G. ACCESS CONDITIONS

Librarians must be aware that “obtaining e- book or e- books” usually means leasing access rights for a given time rather than obtaining physical items. At the end a leasing period, libraries may be left without anything. Further access to these e- books will depend on the way the librarian archived and made accessible to his/ her users. It is obvious that archiving should be done by institutions with long term commitment to this issue, and librarians should advocate a stable and reliable solution.

H. USAGE CONDITIONS

Attention should be paid to the following questions while reviewing the agreement about the use of e- books: How are “use” and “user” defined in the agreement? Will librarians be held accountable for how users are (or misuse) the publication? Can the publication be used for inter- library loan? Will the “fair use” concept be adhered to? Will the publication be archived and if so, who will be responsible for archiving it, librarians or vendors? Is future access to titles published during the subscription period covered by the agreement even if a subscription has been cancelled in the meantime?

I. COSTS

Libraries may have an option to choose among various pricing models based on different access conditions (number of simultaneous users, total number of logins etc.). Access through library consortia seems to be an advantageous solution. In addition, the costs involved in e- books are not limited to the obvious access fee, be it through subscription rates, on a pay-per-view basis, or through consortia. A reliable and fast internet connection with standard telecommunications infrastructure is required to keep up with the rising demand.

Advantage of E-Books

1. E-Books take up less space. 2. They are quicker to obtain. 3. E-Books are more updated and upgraded. It can have the most up-to-the-minute information available. 4. E-Books save the time. 5. Usually one gets for more than just the book. 6. Most E-Books are sold with bonuses and related information that usually don't come with the purchase of a traditional book. 7. E-Books help us to save trees and help reduce pollution from pulp mills. 8. E-Books don't use up trees: E-Books use very few natural resources. 9. They are more portable and have quick and easy access. 10. References can be hot-linked: Easy links to websites and other referenced can be placed in an electronic book. 11. It can be custom branded: other people's E-books can be branded with one's name and one can allow others to brand one's E-Books with their name. 12. The technology will get better: this is an emerging technology and people are often slow to change. As the qualities of monitors improve we will be reading electronic books. 13. Authors and editors can create discussion lists on particular topics and data. 14. Progress towards creation of a virtual library.

Disadvantages of E-Books

- o E-Books have no life long.
- o Lower Sales.
- o Requires equipment to be read.
- o Low market penetration.
- o Different standards currently in use.
- o As accessible as print based books.
- o e-Books are now available in a variety of forms like 'PDF' for Adobe Acrobat, text formats, HTML and disks for windows. Keep in mind that not everyone has the latest technology. Mac users often encounter compatibility problems as well.

The Future of E-Books

The Future of E-Books will see a continuing proliferation of platforms with a built in e-reader function. E-reader software has already spread to cell phones, PDAs, portable gaming systems and elsewhere, in addition to residing in dedicated e-reader devices and personal computers. The continuing spread will familiarize more and more people with the e-reading experience and its benefits. **E-reader platforms** will evolve in a variety of ways, particularly in their screen technology. The e-paper screens on today's e-reader devices, for example, will grow from today's 5 to 6 inch diagonals to 8, 10c and 14 inches. The latest sales figures for e-books are out and they

look good!¹³

In the Education Sector: According to Ingram's Education solution unit, e-book sales from January to May surpassed the 2007 figures by 400 percent. Respondents to the survey said there were three key factors that led to purchasing electronic books. They were cost, convenience and interactivity.

In the retail sector: International digital publishing forum, released the October sales figures from the Association of American publishers (AAP). The data shows sales of \$5.2 million, a 73% increase over the same period in 2007. Since the figures represent only the 12 to 15 trade book publishers willing to supply their data, these figures could be on the low side.

In Japan: Mobile phone sales of electronic books grew 331.3% from 1.6 billion yen (about US\$14 million) to 6.9 billion yen (US\$58 million) in 2006. The non phone internet sales of electronic books grew 69.7% from 4.8 billion yen (US\$41 million) to 8.1 billion yen (US\$68 million). Projects are that mobile phone sales of e-books will increase to 11.7 billion yen (US\$99 million) in 2007, compared to a projected 9.4 billion yen (US\$79 million) for internet sales. (The Digital content Association of Japan)

CONCLUSION

E-Books have bearing on all spheres of library management, and traditional collection management is required to be improved to stay valuable. It is not possible to adopt a uniform set of rules pertaining to electronic publication which can be equally applicable to all libraries; each librarian has to find indigenous way out to facilitate local users. A relatively market-oriented approach in evaluating information resources has been adopted on account of the electronic environment. Librarians can decide from among an assortment of access conditions while dealing with e-publications. This newly found elasticity paves way for an externally augmented liability for the individual librarian. Inclusion of e-books as an essential part of library collections has turned out to be quite beneficial in recent years. Whereas libraries were initially skeptical about the utility and desirability of this format of library users, and were reluctant to relinquish collection development activities to publishers and aerators offering E-book collections, libraries are more

frequently engaged in appraising print and electronic books simultaneous for developing subject collections. Now that the publishers offer the electronic editions along side print editions, the task to develop e-libraries has become easier. Does it imply that with these recent developments in the realm of electronic books and an increasing number of options for libraries the printed books will no longer be in vogue? Certainly not. Electronic books merely offer an alternative. The impact of IT is likely to be the maximum on research libraries and the minimum on public libraries. The very thought that books will not totally disappear but will continue to be with us sharing the responsibility of knowledge dissemination with the products of IT and enriching our cultural heritage in soothing indeed. Will

the e-book ever replace printed books? No-not any more than online database have replaced reference libraries. The book publishing industry is alive, well, and healthy. When the technology and marketing of e-books become developed and well accepted, they will certainly find a niche and will be attractive to certain type of users. Print has many rights and powers that e-books don't have. We like e-books but we must allow ourselves to be locked into technology or legal/ social paradigms that impair our ability to support open research, teaching, and public discourse of our community. Librarians' motto is to supply the right information, at the right time to the right person any way by obeying the fundamental five laws of library science.

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