Building and Managing E-Book Collections
Building and Managing E-Book Collections

A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians®

Edited by Richard Kaplan

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This book is dedicated to the women in my life,
my wife Jane and daughter Chenda,
whose love and support sustain and enrich me.

They also are my best critics
and challenge me to grow and
be a better person, husband, and father.

I am eternally grateful.
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Preface

Today libraries continue to move ever more rapidly away from print because users want all things digital. The whole process of selecting, acquiring, and maintaining e-books is very different from the print counterpart. E-book selection and management can be very complex, as three quite basic examples demonstrate:

1. Options now exist for leasing versus owning titles.
2. Pricing can be determined by the number of concurrent users needed, as well as by the size of your user population or community.
3. Publisher and aggregator licenses will determine how you can use, or not use, particular e-books, as well as which titles can be downloaded onto e-readers or smartphones.

*Building and Managing E-Book Collections: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians* is intended to help guide librarians in all types of libraries through the fundamentals of e-book collection development; to offer realistic, best practices solutions for selecting, budgeting, and assessing e-books; and to demystify the maze of purchasing models and licensing options available.

There was a time—not too long ago—when librarians and publishers were not sure if e-books would ever catch on. There was concern about who would want to sit in front of a computer screen to read a book. Why would anyone want to get eye strain reading an electronic book with a clunky interface and poor search capabilities? With early e-books, it was far easier and quicker to use an index in a print book than to try to wander through the maze of keyword searches and electronic tables of contents. Some first-generation e-books were simply scanned PDFs of the print copy, with illegible images and small print.

Fast-forward to the present, and now there is universal acceptance for all things electronic and all things mobile. Clunky interfaces have been replaced, as a new field of engineering has embraced user interface design. Readers can see definitions of words in the text, create notes and bookmarks, change font sizes for easier reading, or listen to their e-book as an audiobook. They now have the option of reading on a computer screen, a dedicated e-reader, a tablet, or a smartphone. Academic users
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are driving this revolution, wanting to conduct research and read material in their labs, offices, homes, and dormitories. Moreover, educators want remote access to support online courses and complement learning management systems. Even the general public is now buying more e-books than print through Amazon.com.

Most libraries are shifting budgets toward the purchase of e-books and are buying them in increasing numbers. At the same time, the publishing industry is reacting to this shift by trying to develop new pricing and access models to ensure and enhance their profit margins. All of these factors create a fluid and complicated environment.

Organization


In Part I, the first three chapters offer essential background. Chapter 1, “The Electronic Book—Beginnings to the Present,” provides an introduction to and history of e-books and helps to establish a framework for the rest of the book. An overview is presented on the current state of e-books in libraries and some of the differences in their use and acceptance in public and K-12 libraries, as well as in higher education.

Chapters 2 and 3 examine the current state of e-book publishing. Chapter 2, “E-Book Publishing—A View from the Industry,” is written from the perspective of an executive at a major book distributor. She examines the dynamic tension of an industry adjusting to new market forces and profit venues and trying to create products that keep up with new, ever expanding, information technologies and consumer demand. Chapter 3, “E-Book Publishing—The View from the Library,” discusses the publishing industry from the library perspective. As publishers develop new business models by making e-books available as individual titles or as part of large subject collections with ownership and lease options, the chapter discusses the impact on libraries’ budgets and collection development. Also covered is the issue of how publishers use digital rights management (DRM) software to safeguard copyright and access.

Part II begins with Chapter 4, “E-Books in Public Libraries,” the first real “how-to-do-it” chapter. This chapter covers the process of starting an e-book collection in a public library from selection to staff training to policy setting.

Chapter 5, “Selecting E-Books,” details the selection process, from methods of identifying e-books for purchase, to understanding the many e-book purchasing models now available. Also included is a detailed examination of e-book formats, platforms, and display devices.
Chapter 6, “Licensing of E-Books,” describes how publishers and aggregators create legal documents to establish how the library can, or cannot, use their products. This chapter examines licensing variations among different platforms and use models, as well as its impact on inter-library loan, course reserves, and long-term or archival access. As the different purchasing models and license restrictions are detailed, it becomes clear that each variation has budget implications.

Chapter 7, “Budgeting for E-Books,” provides a detailed analysis of the cost considerations for many of the different purchasing models, including title-by-title, subject collections, leasing versus ownership, and patron-driven acquisitions. Also discussed are the cost of adding concurrent users to a subscription and the implications of duplicating print and electronic titles.

Chapter 8, “Cataloging, Locating, and Accessing E-Books,” is a comprehensive, step-by-step examination of how to catalog e-books with detailed examples of different MARC records with identification of important fields. Also included is how to make resources available to users, both through the cataloging record and by managing URLs and proxy servers.

Chapter 9, “Assessment and Evaluation of E-Book Collections,” covers assessing and evaluating e-book collections, including usage data, overlap analysis, survey instruments, focus groups, and the balanced scorecard method.

Building and Managing E-Book Collections concludes with Part III, six practical examples that offer real-world scenarios and helpful tips for successful implementation in a variety of settings:

1. E-Books in a High School Library—Cushing Academy: This is a description of how a private, secondary school library removed the majority of its print collection and replaced it with e-books. Topics discussed include patron-driven acquisitions (PDA) and using Kindle e-readers.

2. Marketing E-Books in a Public Library—Half Hollow Hills Community Library: Strategies used to introduce and publicize e-books in a public library are examined, including getting staff buy-in and training and marketing techniques, such as establishing book discussion groups, having vendor demos, and creating an “electronic petting zoo.”

3. Circulating E-Book Readers—Texas A&M University at Qatar: Discussed is an innovative approach to providing e-readers as a response to a limited availability of English language books in Qatar. The process of establishing and evaluating this service is examined.

4. Changing Library Staffing Models to Manage E-Collections—George Washington University: Managing larger e-collections requires new job responsibilities and skill sets. The author describes staff reorganization and the other organizational changes needed for e-book selection, processing, and cataloging,
as well as tracking license agreements and using electronic resource management (ERM) systems and web applications.

5. E-Book Access Management Using an ERM System—Oregon Health & Science University: The implementation of home-grown versus commercially available electronic resource management (ERM) systems is described. Also discussed are staffing considerations in populating data and maintaining these products.

6. Accessing and Circulating E-Books with E-Readers—Lesley University: This example depicts a small university library’s introduction to providing an e-reader service. A detailed discussion of e-reader and e-content selection, access, and circulation decisions, as well as marketing techniques, is provided.

The chapters and E-Books in Practice examples are intended to provide step-by-step guidance for managing e-book collections. The editor and chapter authors hope you will find that Building and Managing E-Book Collections: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians provides the necessary information to help you make judicious decisions and ensure successful e-book collection development for your library’s users.
I would like to thank the Medical Library Association’s Books Panel who put out a call for someone to author a book on e-books. Thanks for accepting my proposal.

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E-Books in Context
The Electronic Book—Beginnings to the Present

Fern M. Cheek and Lynda J. Hartel

Introduction

E-book: the word calls to mind many definitions and impressions—for librarians, publishers, and individual consumers. Several attempts have been made to define the word “e-book” over the years. Merriam-Webster’s definition of e-book has remained the same from 2004 to 2011, “a book composed in or converted to digital format for display on a computer screen or handheld device” (Merriam-Webster, 2011). Some authors believe the definition of e-book is a work in progress (Gardiner and Musto, 2010). For purposes of this book, e-books will meet the following conditions:

• They are cataloged as books.
• They are accessible via a variety of electronic formats and devices from desktop computers to mobile devices.
• They are born digital (e-book only), or are electronic copies of print books, or are items with the same content as print volumes supplemented with additional content and special features.

Although the notion of computerized books is not new, the modern concept of an e-book is changing constantly. Some libraries and consumers may have a more limited view of what constitutes an e-book, but, as Vassiliou and Rowley (2008) indicate, the definition of an e-book needs to reflect both its persistent characteristics and its dynamic and developing nature.

This chapter provides an overview of the many issues surrounding the history, development, and functionality of e-books and e-book reading devices. As e-books evolve, they present many challenges and opportunities for librarians. The challenges associated with managing e-books in libraries as well as a review of user experiences and requirements are examined.

The Transition to E-Books

Rao (2005) boldly stated that the e-book is the most important development in the world of literature after Gutenberg. Certainly e-books are
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gaining in popularity, for both leisure and educational purposes, but there are many different opinions regarding the e-book movement of late. Consumers are now comparing and contrasting their e-book access options and reader preferences. How and why they choose one access format over another varies considerably from consumer to consumer.

Just as libraries have established large collections of electronic journals, they are now establishing large collections of electronic books. Administrators, librarians, and users alike are advocating for greater electronic collections. In academic libraries, space once used for print stacks are now used for additional computers, meeting rooms, classrooms, study facilities, and more. Librarians have been monitoring their e-book collection usage and studying the preferences of their users. Many studies have found that the preferred format depends on the time, place, and purpose for using the information and that users still prefer a mix of print and electronic books (Hartel and Cheek, 2011; Williams and Dittmer, 2009; Appleton, 2004).

Clearly e-books have come a long way in a short time. Editors of a 2003 American Library Association guide on e-book functionality noted that “since 2000, no single e-book device has thus far captured a significant portion of the market” (Gibbons, Peters, and Bryan, 2003: 3–4). In another 2003 article, representatives from large publishing companies had comments from both ends of the spectrum—one representative commenting that they didn’t see e-books becoming a major method of reading books anytime in the next 20 years, while another indicated that e-books would ultimately dominate the market (Hinz, 2003). Fast-forward to 2007, enter the Amazon Kindle. Perfection is in the eye of the beholder, and in this case the Kindle met many of the desires and needs of new e-book users. It offered a lightweight, easy-to-carry reader with features such as a built-in dictionary, the ability to increase font size of reading material, ability to annotate pages, and a large selection of books to purchase. Even with the introduction of the Kindle, a 2009 article stated that “E-books have yet to make a big impact on the general public” (Miller and Pellen, 2009: 1).

In 2011, Amazon provided figures indicating that for the first time it is now selling more e-books than hardback and paperback books (Haq, 2011; Albanesius, 2011). The recent bankruptcy of Borders Group, Inc., has readers, publishers, and other book retailers wondering what the future holds for physical bookstores—both the megabookstores and independent stores. Many in the bookselling business believe that Borders’ troubles began when it did not move as aggressively as its competitors on e-book content and hardware (Sanburn, 2011). It may be, then, that the success of all physical bookstores will depend on how they approach the e-book market in the future.

Microsoft declared that 90 percent of reading material will be delivered in an electronic form by 2020 (Yates, 2001). When it comes to e-books, it is difficult to determine just how many are currently available. A review of the news literature shows a variety of conflicting figures. Many articles on this subject include free, out-of-copyright, public domain
books in their counts, and others count only what can be purchased. A review of the promotional pages on publishers’ websites also provides conflicting information. One figure that seems to be repeatedly used is 10 million, including public domain books (Fleishman, 2010). While the growth of e-books is escalating, it is worth noting that adult paperback books are still the top-selling category of books among all publishers in 2011 (Sporkin, 2011).

Advantages and Disadvantages of E-Books

Librarians and consumers alike are exploring their options and weighing the pros and cons of e-book formats. Overall, there are both advantages and disadvantages to using e-books today, and many of these mirror comments presented when discussing electronic journals in the 1990s.

- The advantages
  - Searchability—Readers can search for and find an exact word or subject in seconds.
  - Modification—E-books can be updated more frequently and seamlessly.
  - Portability—One device can carry thousands of e-books.
  - Variety—There are many e-reading devices and handhelds from which to choose.
  - Readability—Readers can increase or decrease the font size of text and the size of images and figures for ease of reading.
  - Value-added features—Many e-books come with video, audio, quizzes, and animation effects that make them more interactive.
  - Space savings—E-books reduce shelving space requirements for libraries.

- The disadvantages
  - Reading on a screen—It is not always preferable to read large amounts of text online; the long-term effect on eyes is still to be evaluated.
  - Battery power—This can limit the amount of time you read or work with an e-book at one time.
  - Security concerns—Digital formats can be affected by viruses and malware.
  - Permanence—Constantly changing devices and content formats bring long-term access of e-books into question.
  - Lack of standardization—Multiple device and e-book formats can confuse readers.
  - Lending books—Although currently improving, it is still not easy to share e-books.
  - Hidden costs—In academic settings, use of web-based e-books, such as e-textbooks, can lead to increased printing.