

Ebooks in Academic Libraries: attuning the market to user needs



**Jill Taylor-Roe
Newcastle University Library
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Once upon a time...



Acquiring E-book content:
A Modern Grail Quest?

Background to the JISC Ebooks Observatory project

- Feasibility study – Oct 2006
- Explored what Academic Libraries were doing re ebooks
- Identified key issues



What the study told us:

- Lack of knowledge in HE sector re which ebooks were available
- Low awareness within HEIs of the value and relevance of ebooks
- Poor understanding by library staff and publishers of each other's needs
- Complexity of access routes to aggregators and publishers platforms
- Too few ebooks available
- Available ebooks not up to date or relevant to UK users
- Pricing models not appropriate
- Publishers not making the right **textbooks** available electronically via the right terms

Why UK higher education has not bought more e-books (JISC Consultation)

- E-book pricing models are not satisfactory (64%)
- There is too little choice of e-book titles (62%)
- E-book access models are not satisfactory (53%)
- We are waiting for the market to settle down (33%)
- We are waiting for JISC to offer better e-book deals (30%)
- E-books are too expensive (28%)
- I do not know what is available (18%)
- There is no demand for e-books here (13%)



Is there any pressure on you to develop ebook collections in your library ?

- 68% said YES 32% said no
- If there was pressure it came from:
- Librarians (54%)
- Students (38%)
- Teachers (27%)
- Management (23%)
- Researchers (9%)





JISC national e-books observatory project

- Project aims:
- Licence collection of ebooks highly relevant to UK HE taught students in 4 key subject areas:
- Business and Management, Media Studies, Engineering, Medicine
- Evaluate use of ebooks through deep log analysis to evaluate impact on key stakeholders
- Transfer knowledge to publisher, aggregator and library community to stimulate ebooks market



- Project Work packages:
- Online User surveys – academics, students and librarians
- Workshops with Librarians across the country
- Provision of range of ebooks in agreed subject areas
- Deep Log Analysis (DLA) of ebooks licenced under the project



JISC national e-books observatory project

- So what have we learnt so far???
- Very challenging to come up with a wide range of affordable texts for the project
- Excellent response to user survey
- Excellent response to library workshops



- **USER SURVEY**
- Initial benchmark against which to measure changes as the JISC national e-books observatory project progresses.
- The survey was circulated to the 127 HE institutions participating in the project and gathered information on current user awareness, perceptions and attitudes towards e-books.
- Over 20,000 responses were received to the survey making it one of the largest e-book surveys ever undertaken.



- 60% of respondents currently use ebooks
- 45.8% find ebooks through their library
- 42.6% find them free on the internet
- 38.6% of users spend more than 20 mins per session reading online
- 54.7% dip in and out of ebooks, 8% read a whole chapter, 5.8% read the whole book
- 75.9% of staff were aware of the ebooks licensed as part of the JISC project
- Students are more likely to borrow books from friends and through the library than purchase them



- Use of the library
- 25.3 of student respondents visit the library daily and 45.2% of them visit it weekly
- Main reasons for going there are to borrow books, browse books or journals and study in a quiet environment
- However, online access was almost as important, especially for women students who valued the convenience of being able to access library resources from home



- Potential for Library ebooks
- 61.8% of students say have used an ebooks at some time
- BUT... only 47.2% say they used library provided titles

Publicity re Ebooks – what works?

31.2% of respondents found out about JISC
Ebook offering via their library website

24.3% found out from the library catalogue

16% found out from library staff

Newsletters seem fairly ineffective – only
3.8% found out via this method



- Headline results from Library workshops
- Given a choice of access models,
- 90% of librarians who attended the workshops felt that libraries should be covering the cost of ebooks and they should be provided free at the point of use for users
- 7% thought ebooks costs should be shared between library and academic depts
- 3% thought that students should pay to access ebooks

- Librarians' Ebook utopias
- The ebook of the future will be content aggregated from a variety of formats and with a multifunctional purpose that is not centred around reading but around interactivity with the learner – the aim being to provide the learner with all their content needs, in a way that suits their learning styles, the assessment requirements of the course they are on and the personalised, easy to use interface that fits with their lifestyles.

More utopias...

- All ebooks will be open access or part open access!
- There will be an internet price comparison with a checklist of business and licensing options for librarians to choose from. You will simply select what you want, on what platform, add it to your shopping cart and directly download the quality assured metadata (that is available from the same place) into the library catalogue. The interface will be standardised so staff and students know how to use it and all terms and conditions of use will be the same too.

From dream to reality: Top 10 drivers that librarians cited as being needed to help achieve their utopias

- Better Technology
- Student Expectations
- Publisher buy-in
- Updated Teaching Styles
- Standardisation of Formats
- Author buy-in
- Budgets
- Space
- New Business Models
- Open Access

Summary points (1)

- JISC project work has confirmed that..
- Not enough ebooks currently available
- Costs/licencing/access models need more attention

- BUT..
- All key HE stakeholders are interested in Ebooks
- Library users are comfortable with concept of ebooks



Summary points (2)

- Is a strong user perception that libraries don't have enough textbooks to meet demand
- Students are NOT buying many books – relying on sharing with friends, free stuff on the internet, library support
- Librarians are often the driving force behind demand for new ebook content and believe they have a responsibility to provide such resources for students

So where do we go from here?

- Read the full survey report at:
www.jiscebooksproject.org
- And look out for subsequent updates there!
- Look critically at your company's current ebook offerings, esp in terms of:
- Content, pricing models, metadata, usage stats

And finally..
Forget the Grail quest

We want “More to Explore!”



Thank you for your attention!

Jill.Taylor-Roe@ncl.ac.uk

