eBooks at Western Michigan Univ.
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sis creates additional financial costs and significant delays in loading the records in the online catalog. Quality control and adherence to cataloging standards needs to be addressed by eBook vendors.

**eBook Applications**

As more and more institutions both public and private offer online courses through distance education, access to eBooKs becomes a standard means of providing a “library.” The value of an eBooK collection grows in proportion to the content provided. For Western Michigan University participation in eBooK acquistitions began with a distinctly academic focus. A group purchase among Michigan academic libraries focused on subjects identified as important by the group. Since the first purchase, the group has added annually to the collection. In addition, a statewide public collection was acquired by the Library of Michigan, the state library, adding titles not included in the academic collections.

Almost all of the Michigan academic libraries participating in the group purchases offer some form of distance education. The initial collections purchased were from netLibrary and allowed one user access at a time. A circulation period was set at 6 hours for all books. To accommodate Western’s needs for titles requested for e-reserves, institutional copies were purchased as well. The e-reserve titles either duplicated the academic collections or were unique titles. E-reserve books from netLibrary were given a 2-hour circulation status. Titles from eBrary and other eBooK collections do not require circulation periods since the eBooKs can be accessed by multiple users, an advantage for specific class reserves.

Both distance education needs and those of electronic reserves are well served by eBooKs. eBooKs can also be helpful in fulfilling reference queries. They allow the user to search an entire text quickly for information regardless of its location within the book. Computer books, which usage statistics indicate are heavily used, readily lend themselves to the user needing information on a particular process, rather than being read from cover-to-cover. In addition to the eBooK collections noted above, specific reference titles from publishers such as Dekker, Elsevier, Wiley, and McGraw-Hill have been acquired to meet these user needs. Rather than acquiring entire collections, the selection of specific titles returns the subject selector to traditional collection development.

**Usage**

Not all of these collections provide usage data and several of those examined here do not provide them at all. In this particular instance, usage statistics are available on the ACLS Col.

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