The Changing Roles of Acquisitions Librarians and the eBook Acquisitions Landscape for Academic Libraries

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THE CHANGING ROLES OF ACQUISITIONS LIBRARIANS AND THE eBook ACQUISITIONS LANDSCAPE FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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Introduction

This panel presentation is divided in two sections. The first section will focus the history of libraries with an emphasis on the evolving tasks and roles of Acquisition activities from the earliest collections to modern times. Following, will be an exploration of the issues facing Acquisitions Librarians as they enter the world of e-book purchasing. The session will conclude with an invitation to the audience to share their ideas, concerns they may be having and processes they may have explored or implemented in the e-book landscape.

Brief Stroll through the history of library acquisitions

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All cultures have had libraries. For every culture, either “civilized” or “non-civilized” there is a need for some kind of record keeping, be it in the form of tangible or intangible objects. And for each library, there exists a need for a Keeper. In many early societies, this role fell to the Shaman or Medicine Man- the first “Librarians.” Over time, a library began to be defined as a “place where books are kept for use but are not for sale.” (Richardson, 57)

The earliest methods of acquiring materials often involved the pillaging of another library’s collections, usually during times of war or conquest. One of the first descriptions of a “keepers” acquisition methods and the earliest of accession records is found in the story of King Ashurbanipal of Assyria at Nineveh in 637 BC. After successfully defeating his half-brother in a war, Ashurbanipal stole whatever materials he could find. His accession records, 125 tablets in all, list decrees of Assyrian kings, accounts of wars, works on astronomy, astrology, ecclesiastical matters and history, as well as dictionaries and reading books among the collection he amassed. (Savage, 10/11)

The Library of Alexandria, certainly the largest and most famous of ancient libraries, collected books from all over the known world. Many works at the time were hand copies of original texts sold or traded in a growing number of bookstores throughout Greece and Rome. Utilizing the services of “agents,” the collections quickly grew. It should be noted that these “agents” were not adverse to the usual pillaging, stealing, seizing of items, etc. At the Library of Alexandria, accession records were also used. Newly acquired books were warehoused and formally accessioned with tags displaying the author’s name and ethnicity- this was due to many Greeks only using one name. Many books also had tags indicating provenance; those seized from ships were marked “ek ploion” meaning “from the ships.” (Casson, 34/35)

In Greece and Rome, libraries were also flourishing. Taking a more holistic approach, Greek libraries were often combined with gymnasiums. Existing accession records indicate donations of a number of books to satisfy a student’s tuition bill. (Casson, 102) In Rome, the use of paid scribes to

copy texts contributed to a growing book seller trade. The use of acquisitions agents proliferated. Unfortunately, one could not always trust what they found in a bookstore as the quality of the item was contingent on how many times it had been transcribed. In addition, there was much rivalry and impatience amongst collectors and ultimately demand exceeded supply. (Casson, 103)

The Ceasars – both Julius and Augustus- were highly instrumental in designing and implementing a system of public libraries in Rome. While Julius died before seeing his vision actualized, Augustus saw it through to fruition. He employed a man by the name of Asinius Pollio as the first Procurator or Chief Librarian. Using much of his own money, having just returned from a successful campaign in the Illyrian region, he established two departments for the acquisition and accession of materials- a Latin and a Greek Department, and hired two assistant procurators to oversee purchasing. (Savage, 16)

When Constantine the Great moved the capital of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople, he broadened the subjects of materials to be collected. He started an aggressive campaign to collect, not destroy, Christian books, collecting them as vigorously as secular or pagan titles. To Constantinople he brought many learned scholars with a hardy thirst for books. With an increase in monastic building, he encouraged the use of monks as scribes. It was this shift that probably saved much material from later destruction during the fall of the Empire. (Savage,24)

With the fall of the Roman Empire, learning and subsequently the once thriving book trade, declined. Some scholars have even concluded that excessive reading may have contributed to the overall laziness that contributed to the ultimate fall. The work of book copying was now virtually the sole purview of monks. Unfortunately, as religious tides shifted, the monks need for materials brought them to scrapping off the inks from pagan works and reusing them for more Christian orientated subject matter. (Savage, 33)

Throughout the Dark and early Middle Ages, various political upheavals, wars, etc. continued to impact the growth and contents of collections. In this writer's opinion, collections were either saved or burned contingent on the marauding culture's values towards books- if they were a book appreciating society, they seized the collection, then burned the library. If not, they just burned the library, along with everything else.

In the early fourteenth century, several keepers from a number of monastic libraries developed one of the first Union Catalogs- the *Registrum Librorum Angliae*- which contained title level descriptions of the works held by approximately 160 monastic libraries. Scholars now had a guide to help them locate materials. (Savage)

In Britain, with the reign of Henry VIII, religious houses fell into disfavor and Henry's armies decimated many monasteries. Fortunately, a librarian by the name of John Lelend was able to convince Henry that materials should be confiscated and not destroyed, and that they could be used to build a grand royal library. Through his intercession, many materials were saved, but only after they had been culled for material offensive to the crown. (Savage, 57)

In Italy, a gentleman by the name of Poggio Bracciolini was known as "The Great Collector." Bracciolini recognized that when many monasteries were rendered non-functional, the fleeing occupants often left behind major collections of works. Bracciolini took total advantage of the

situation and basically rummaged his way throughout Europe, rescuing huge amounts of works. A description of his motto remains:

“No severity of winter cold, no snow, no length of journey, no roughness of roads, prevented him from bringing the monuments of literature to light” (Savage, 68)

And then, everything changed. Johan Gutenberg and his printing press revolutionized the book industry. By 1518, no extant classic of the first rank remained unprinted. (Savage, 75)

In 1627, French scholar and librarian Gabriel Naude published an influential work in library science entitled *Advice on Establishing a Library*. (Wikipedia) Utilizing the principles he had developed, Naude acquisitions built the library at Mazarine to rival the Bibliotheque Nationale. An intimate correspondent has left this account of Naude’s methodology:

“The booksellers’ shops seem devastated as by a whirlwind. He buys up everything, printed or manuscript, in all languages, leaves the shelves empty behind him, and sometimes comes down upon them with a rule, and insists upon taking their contents by the yard. Often, seeing masses of books accumulated together, he asks the price of the entire lot; it is named; differences ensue; but, by dint of urging, bullying, storming, our man gets his way, and often acquires excellent books among the heap, for less than if they had been pears or lemons. When the vendor comes to think over the matter, he concludes that he has been bewitched.... It is on record that Naude was only once outwitted in buying books; then the salesman was a Scotsman.” (Savage, 105)

As collections increased in size, the necessity of accurate record keeping became increasingly important. One methodology was the use of the accession record. (Bodleian Library, ECCO) Catalogues were increasingly used by sellers to advertise their items. (ECCO) In 1749, the first catalogues which contained reviews of the books listed appeared; the use of reviews allowed for a much more rational approach to collection building and book buying.

While archivists often point to the French Revolution as an important time for the development of modern archives, libraries flourished as well. Early on, the revolutionary government recognized the need to save books from destruction and commissioned a group of collectors, benefactors and librarians to acquire collections from dissolved monasteries, private collections and churches. This was a first step towards consortial purchasing. Under this model, the Royal library doubled in size. Of course it should be mentioned that in addition to purchase and trade, the usual methods of pillaging and seizure were often employed. (Savage, 100)

In addition to the acquisitions commission, the administrative functions of the Royal Library were divided into eight departments, each responsible for one functional area of operations. The administrative vision of these departments is described as:

“A happy family of eight keepers, bound to one another in the bands of fraternity, enjoying the same salaries and possessing the same powers.” (Savage, 102)

The group remained intact for 30 years.

In America, the first library was established in Charleston, SC at St. Phillips Church. As America expanded its boundaries westward, the use of travelling agents among book sellers and libraries once again proliferated. (Randall, 70/71)

In 1853, the American Library Association was formed “to enable librarians to do their present work more easily and at less expense.” (ALA.org) Soon after, individual state library associations were formed.

One of the most influential men of the times in terms of libraries, was Melvil Dewey. In addition to implementing many changes in the structure and complexion of libraries, Dewey was instrumental in not only founding the New York Library Association, but in persuading the New York Legislature to match funds for library purchases if the collection passed inspection. (Wiegand) This program continues today; it has evolved into the NY State Coordinated Collection Development Aid program. While collections no longer need to ‘pass inspection’ participating libraries must adhere to certain conditions including participating in coordinated collection development activities and resource sharing activities. (CDLC)

As libraries and the organization continued to grow, ALA became more active in its scope of activities. In 1901, the Committee on Book Buying was formed to combat the rising prices of books. Through their activities, retail prices were fixed for one year from the date of publication- publishers could no longer raise prices collectively and at will. When the skyrocketing costs of European products became unbearable, coupled with publisher refusal to adhere to the book buyers’ agreement, librarians went “on strike.” From 1903-1908, Librarians joined together to boycott publishers by delaying purchases, relying on the OP market, buying remainders, arranging consortial purchases and lobbying in Washington for legislative relief. Their efforts eventually paid off- in 1915 a number of publishers were found guilty of violating the Sherman Anti-trust act for price fixing. (Raney,)

By the 1920’s there was a rising cognition of the librarian as a professional and much debate began as to what standards should be adhered to within library school curriculums. In addition to the usual cataloging and reference courses, advocates were also calling for the teaching of administrative skills with an emphasis on budgeting, purchasing and foreign materials purchasing. (Shaw,22) Others emphasized a more global approach, advocating for a main educational emphasis on “literature, history and social sciences for that is where most book purchasing is...but you should know you don’t look for information on enzymes in an engineering text.” (Shaw,305)

The preferred personality traits for library school applicants were an additional piece of the debate. It was generally accepted that the two most important traits for librarians were humility and tact. It was also recommended that

” ‘crabbed age’ should be avoided, that librarians need to be intellectually liberal, mentally and spiritually young, and have outside interests so they don’t become so wrapped up in their work that life and affairs assume such a queerly twisted and warped aspect that both personality and mentality will lose much force and efficiency.” (Shaw, 305)

In 1927, the Bureau of Public Personnel Administration for the State of California issued a report on a proposed classification and compensation plan for library positions. Among the professional positions identified was “Order Librarian.” (Coulter, 661/662)

With the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930's, libraries were forced to face shrinking budgets and to develop creative ways for dealing with them. Two very significant ideas emerged- the use of centralized purchasing with a concentration of orders to one vendor and the dawn of the Blanket Plan, a precursor to approval plans. In addition, the automation of services began appearing in libraries. Initial attempts at automation involved the use of a punch card; originally used for circulation activities, it was soon adapted for use in acquisitions departments, as well. (Casey,106) However, in 1933, an ALA publication entitled *Living with Machines* cautioned against librarians allowing machines to take over.(ALA)

Following the Depression and with the start of the World War II era, consolidation of services remained important. Librarians began recognizing that a lack of holdings information amongst neighboring libraries could lead to much duplication and saturation in some subjects, with a dearth of collection in others. This led to the development and use in the United States of Union Catalogs.(Randall,60) Discussions also began occurring as to the most efficient way to streamline the three main acquisitions methods- purchasing, exchange or gift donations (with or without begging)- into one centralized operation. Libraries began to line departments up by size and to identify duplication of workflow between acquisitions and cataloging departments.(Randall, 84)

A push for cooperative purchasing led to the formation of the Farmington Deal in 1942. Named after a town in Connecticut, the Farmington Deal was developed by ARL to bring about the purchasing of at least one of every book published which might be of interest to a researcher in America by at least one member library, with an emphasis on foreign material. The huge scope of the project doomed it to failure with the added insults of unreliable foreign book vendors, a lack of selection standards, as well as the all too well known cataloging back log. One program that was successful in assisting libraries in acquiring materials was the Cooperative Acquisitions Project sponsored by the Library of Congress. (Randall,91)

By 1949 there appears to be a developing awareness of the professionalism required to successfully fulfill the tasks of acquiring library materials, and the title for these types of librarians changed in the literature from Order Librarians to Acquisitions Librarians. It became increasingly apparent that in order to fulfill their duties, Acquisitions Librarians needed to not only know basic library skills, but were required to combine business skills with a thorough knowledge of the publishing business. (Lyle,366)

For many Acquisitions Librarians the line between professional duties and non-professional (clerical) duties remained blurred. Recognizing this as a problem, in the early 1950's the ACRL Committee on Preparation and Qualifications conducted a survey of 170 selected colleges and universities to try and determine which tasks were being completed by which group. The study concluded that there were clearly tasks that should be performed by non- professional vs. professional librarians. It also concluded that "Too few [Head] Librarians realize this and many good librarians are being wasted in such positions." However, 74% of respondents felt there was no need for advanced educational preparation for professional librarians- anyone could be trained to do the job. (Lyle 291/292)

According to the *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, it was generally accepted in both small and large libraries that the Acquisitions Department performed five basic functions:

- Coordination of the selection of materials
- Administration of the funds to buy them
- Gathering of operational statistics
- Meshing of acquisitions procedures with other departments
- Attention to productive relations with the book trade (Kent, 67)

The emergence of technology into the library world had a great impact on the workflow and productivity of library services, including acquisitions. Early machines, such as the cardatype, read tab cards and could receive input from a keyboard. Output could be channeled to as many as four typewriters. Once bibliographic and order data were entered, the machine could produce a 3" x 5" purchase order packet to be sent onto other departments and the book vendor. (Voight, 43/44) The first vendor supplied system, BATAB₁, was developed by Baker and Taylor in 1969. BATAB utilized batch processing software that ran on a local mainframe to perform a full range of functions from reading selection lists, producing purchase orders, provided for detailed fund accounting, track claims, cancellations, and open orders and could produce reports. (Kent, 237)

The invention of the Approval Plan by Richard Abel was touted as a major time and money saving tool. Abel, the manager of the Reed College Book Store in Portland, Oregon developed a process whereby vendors could preemptively buy books and then send them to libraries based on individually profiled criteria. The concept of Approval Plans elicited much debate in the library world; from 1968-1979 Western Michigan University sponsored multiple conferences to explore and debate the efficacy of Approval Plans. Abel, unfortunately, allowed the scale of his operations to outpace his finances and the company failed in 1974. It was bought out, however, by Blackwells. By 1982 the ARL reported that 85% of large libraries had approval plans. (Kent,2)

„Who am I?’ was the big question in the touchy/feely 80’s with contemporary literature full of studies on what makes up a librarian. Multiple approaches to studying the issue were undertaken involving testing for common personality types and traits amongst librarians. The conclusion- it is “Not possible to state that the librarian is a distinct personality type.” (Fisher,45) One tongue in cheek version did present a stereotypical synopsis of various librarian roles; Acquisitions Librarians were referred to as “Entrepreneurs.” (Fishel,16)

The introduction of the Internet changed everything, once again.

The ability to have information at your fingertips and the proliferation of Integrated Library Systems has served to help blur the roles between Collection Development, Acquisitions and Cataloging. The use of selection lists, Edifact ordering and Promptcat cataloging has streamlined many Technical Services operations. Virtual approval plans which utilize electronic slip notifications prior to sending a book have reduced staff time handling approval plan purchases and processing. And, the proliferation of electronic resources and the handling of licenses has turned many an acquisitions librarian into a pseudo lawyer. (Dunham)

And then there are ebooks. The future is here.

eBooks and Demand-Driven Acquisitions Model in Academic Libraries

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David Lewis had noted “Complete the migration from print to electronic collection” as the first part of his five- part strategy for maintaining the library as a vibrant enterprise for the campus it serves in his 2007 article (Lewis 2007). Ross Atkinson reaffirmed in his 2004 article entitled “Reflections on the acquisitions librarian as change agent in the transition to the electronic library,” saying that “Acquisitions adapted rapidly and adroitly to online publication, with the result that it has become in many ways even more central to library operation than it was in the traditional environment. ... Acquisitions, as the operation responsible for the business and human connections between the library and the vendor, has therefore become more indispensable than ever. “ (Atkinson, 2004). Also in Chandra Prabha’s article (2007), Prabha pointed out “Shifting from print to electronic journals in ARL University Libraries,” the author stated journal collections in ARL university libraries reached a “tipping point” between 2005 and 2006 and that, for the first time, electronic journals dominate print subscriptions. So without a doubt, we all know digital is the first and foremost format that people are accessing journal content these days. But how about books? Is going digital also the future for books? I believe the answer is yes once the regulations and standards are set in place along with the overcome of other obstacles currently being recognized by stakeholders (publishers, vendors, aggregators, libraries, etc.) involved. Academic e-books became surfacing the commercial market in the 1990s in a much slower pace than e-journals. Large scale of digitizing books wasn’t taken notice until Google announced the Google Print Library Project in partnership with five major research libraries in 2004. Slowly but steadily, books started following the path of academic journals by going digital as we see more and more new books published in both print and e-book formats or even born-digitally only as we’ve seen more and more in recent years. However, e-books still have not really taken off in library communities as vigorously in the United States compared to academic libraries in Asian and European countries where we’ve seen steadily increasing numbers of e-books being added since early 2000s. Petros Demetriou of DA Information Services (Australia) did a presentation entitled “Transformational Happenings in Publishing and Procurement” predicting that the year of 2009 would be the “tipping point” for e-book purchases dominating the print counterpart. It’s not clear that if Demetriou was projecting the e-book market in Australia only but still the quantity of e-books made available by publishers has drastically increased in recent years is a known factor that can’t be overlooked. I’ve been consistently impressed by the functionalities newly published eBooks offer these days and strongly believe they will continue to get better with advancement of technologies.

Besides the need to catch up with emerging technologies, libraries across the country also face the similar budgetary tightening issues as a result of the serious economic crisis that are facing since late 2008 across the nation. So the issue of how to stretch the budget and make most of it became the top agenda for libraries within the U.S. The first time I heard about the concept of “demand-driven acquisitions” (also called “patron-driven acquisitions” or “Patron Driven Access,”)(Sutton, 2003) a few years back, I thought it was such a great concept. As much as it sounded like a right and logical thing to do, we didn’t really have to be extra strenuous on what we buy back then at least not until the serious economic downturn came along earlier this year. With the library self study going on at the same time in 2009 for Lucy Scribner Library at Skidmore College, my mission

as the Acquisitions Librarian is to re-examine our acquisitions process and how we had been spending our budget and seek potentially more meaningful ways to stretch the budget without sacrificing the resources and services we provide to our faculty/students/staff. So for my part of research for the self study, I decided to look at demand driven acquisitions more closely in particularly gearing towards eBook purchasing/leasing models that I found promising as part of the solutions to cope with the troubled economic situation we are all facing.

E-Book has been a hot topic in the annual Charleston conferences and in publishing industry in general for the past few years. A quick search on the term “e-Book” in the Chronicle of Higher Education, you would find over 160 articles/news pieces on the result list. I’d like to share a short list of some of the reports and direct quotes from the pieces that I found worth noting on this topic.

8/5/2005 “The Once and Future E-Book,” Chronicle of Higher Education

“...The weakness of e-books might be that they put text on the screen and mimic a printed page. Why try to do what print does so well, so much so that a user’s impulse is to hit the print button? In that model, the e-book is just a delivery system, not a rethinking of what a book is or might be in a digital, as opposed to hard-copy, setting.” Remarks made by Nick Carbone, Director of New Media Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, New York.

1/25/2007 “E-Books: Still B-List, ” Chronicle of Higher Education

““ Publishers are having a hard time figuring out what they need to do” to make the technology catch on, says Bill McKenna, director of digital products at Follett, which offers about 1,000 titles as e-books. Analysts cite a few factors that have stunted the development of the digital-book industry. For one thing, there’s still no generally accepted, standard file format for e-books. For another, since the books are sold online, not in campus bookstores, many students may not even know that buying digital titles is an option. – Brock Read” -- e-Textbooks were what had been referred.

5/10/2007 “A Bright Future for E-Books?” Chronicle of Higher Education

“E-book devices haven’t exactly taken the world by storm, but there’s plenty of hope for them yet, according to Bill Gates. “Reading is going to go completely online,” said Microsoft’s chairman this week [May 2007] at the company’s Strategic Account Summit, in Seattle. Mr. Gates acknowledged that the size and cost of e-book readers have kept many people from doing more digital reading. But those disincentives won’t last forever, he said: “Today, for people who read newspapers and magazines, even the most avid PC user probably still does quite a bit of reading on print. As the device moves down in size and simplicity, that will change, and so somewhere in the next five-year period we’ll hit that transition point, and things will be even more dramatic than they are today.” -- So Bill Gates predicted e-Books will take the center stage sometime in year 2012.

5/30/2008 “Research Libraries Embrace E-Books,” Chronicle of Higher Education

“Sixty-nine percent of university research libraries plan to increase spending on e-books over the next two years, according to a recent [2008] study published by Primary Research Group, Inc. ... Clearly e-book technology has improved dramatically in a short period of time. Only a year-and-a-half-ago college librarians were saying that e-books were not ready for the campus environment.

The study shows that the larger the library the more interested it is in purchasing e-books. And it also shows that foreign libraries are more attracted to e-books, than libraries in the U.S. – Andrea L. Foster.” -- eBook related technologies continue to advance rapidly with notable commercial entities like Amazon, Sony and Barnes & Noble push and compete vigorously in the e-Reader market.

6/24/2008 “Survey Finds That Only Half of College Students Use E-Books,” Chronicle of Higher Education

“ ... Of 6,452 students worldwide who responded to the survey, 3,132, or 49 percent, said they never use e-books. The remaining 51 percent use e-books less than one hour to more than 10 hours per week. The survey was conducted by Ebrary ... Here are some other findings of the survey: Fifty-seven percent of students who never use e-books say it is because they don’t know where to find them. Fifty-one percent of students say that when they have a choice, they opt to use an electronic version over a print version of a book “often” or “very often.” Seventy-seven percent of students who use e-books say they find and gain access to e-books through a library web site. U.S. students use e-books less than their foreign counterparts. – Andrea L. Foster” -- e-books awareness issue was repeatedly mentioned throughout various library surveys and literature as one of the major roadblocks for a widespread adoption of e-books within the academic environment.

4/16/2009 “College Bookstores Move to Put Electronic Textbooks on Their Shelves,” Chronicle of Higher Education

“It will now be easier for students to find electronic versions of textbooks at several bookstores, thanks to a new partnership between textbook publishers and an association of college booksellers. But will students choose the paperless option? ... Richard W. McDaniel, founder and president of the [Collegiate Retail] Alliance argued that one reason electronic textbooks have been slow to catch on is that they have not been available for most titles – and when they have been, they have been hard for students to find. ... The question now is what students end up choosing when a cheaper, digital option is available right next to the old-fashioned printed textbook. – Jeffrey R. Young” -- Availability of textbooks in e-form and the awareness issue have been raised again here.

6/4/2009 “6 Lessons One Campus Learned About E-Textbooks By Jeffrey R. Young,” Chronicle of Higher Education

Six lessons learned when Northwest Missouri State University tried to deliver all of its textbooks electronically. Their findings as quoted below:

“1. Judge e-books by their covers. not their jacket art, but the device and software used to display them.

2. Learning curves ahead. [one of the students expressed to the reporter] “They should have a week in class where they explain how to use it [e-book].” -- the same point also raised by Bennett and Landoni saying that “users require a shift in attitude away from the current perception that everything must be on the printed page, towards the varied possibilities offered by e-Books” (Bennett, 2005)

3. Professors are eager students. Faculty members are known to be reluctant to change their teaching approaches. ... But ... the professors [at NWSU] said they wanted to try something new, and argued that the experience would help students. -- I wonder how our faculty here thinks about e-Textbooks (a good follow-up study topic for my research)

4. Long live batteries. ... Sony's Reader and Amazon's Kindle boast longer battery lives than laptops, so longevity is an advantage of those gadgets.

5. Subjects are not equally e-friendly. ... At least laptops can display color. E-reading devices handle only black and white. That's a major handicap for science or medical books that rely on illustrations.

6. Environmental impact matters. Ms. Brobst [a student] said she would now choose e-books over printed ones, not because she thought they were better but because they save trees. ... A few comments in the university's surveys echoed that sentiment, and administrators said they were surprised at the degree to which such consciousness affected students' opinions."

8/13/2009 "iPhone Textbook Apps Just Keep Coming by Josh Fischman," Chronicle of Higher Education

"... CourseSmart, an e-textbook supplier, has come out with a reader app that draws on a library of 7,000 college texts from a dozen publishers, including McGraw-Hill Higher Education, Pearson, and Elsevier. The app is free, and the e-books seem to be cheaper than hardcovers. The idea of looking at a diagram of a molecule on a small screen might be off-putting, but the app does have a decent zoom and scroll feature that makes such things easier. You still can't make notes in the margins, thought. ..." -- Well who knows making notes in the margins might just be possible in the near future from an iPhone e-reader app?!

12/14/2009 "The Future of E-Books By Mark Bauerlein," Chronicle of Higher Education

"One of the biggest stories in publishing right now is the promise and direction of eReaders. ... Here's a piece in The Wall Street Journal that cites consumer research estimating 900,000 of the devices will sell this November and December. At Amazon, the Kindle has become the top-selling product. Other sellers, notably Barnes & Noble (the Nook) and Sony (the Reader), are joining the market now, too, though delivery time is frustratingly slow. Prices for the readers have dropped, and so have the prices for best-sellers available for download." -- Hardware price will most likely continue to drop just as every other new invention we've seen in daily life. As those devices continue to evolve and improve, what libraries could so is making small investments on certain chosen hardware in order to expose the available options in accessing e-text to library patrons and promote the use of eBooks before making any larger scale investments.

(Outlines below were part of the PowerPoint file presented at the conference)

EDUCAUSE compiled a document called "7 things you should know about e-books" which was made available online on their website in Nov. 2006. Out of the seven things that EDUCAUSE stressed as important to know about eBooks, I found the following three questions to be fundamental and essential when it comes to eBook application in the academic libraries and higher education. (EDUCAUSE, 2006)

- Why is it significant?
- What are the downsides?
- What are the implications for teaching and learning?

Why is it significant? (Shelburne, 2009)

- Predictions from Bill Gates regarding eTextbooks
- Ability to incorporate multimedia to enhance learning
- Ability to gather usage statistics from subset of the book (ex. individual chapters) compared to the traditional print counterpart
- Around the clock 24-7 access from anywhere in the world
- Greatly improved e-Readers and reading devices that we've seen in recent years
- No worry of issues like missing or lost copy as well book goes out-of-print issues that we normally would have to deal with print books
- Less staff processing time/cost/shelving space required from not having to produce spine labels, stamp & security strip that normally needed for print books
- Google mass digitization project has drastically increase online full text access to books that are in public domain or out of copyright and the number of books digitized by Google under the project continues to grow
- Data collected by "Project Tomorrow," a leading non-profit organization focusing on evaluating K-12 education practice and policies in the United States, indicated that within five years first year students entering college may never have used a print textbooks before
- Faculty and students are more accustomed to the concept of eBooks due to the increasing exposure to eBooks made available by their institution libraries or commercial entities like Amazon or publishers websites
- eBook technologies continue to advance
- A new trend of eBook publishers gearing up with technology providers to make eBooks more nimble for users as well as offer more flexible purchasing models to tailor to a variety of libraries
- Help reduce the cost of education for students

eBook downsides:

- Lack of industry standards for digital rights management and content delivery
- Hard to read books at length online
- Additional technology/equipment requirements

eBook implications for teaching & learning:

- Understanding the learning style and needs of our students has changed as well as the education environment as a whole – a lot to do with technology advancement
- Flexible and easier incorporation and preparation for course packs for faculty
- Better accessibility and navigation among text
- Multimedia support vs. static print text
- E-reserves support a wide variety of content – reduce the need to print on paper

What kind of books and content are most useful in electronic format (Snowhill, 2001):

- Reference books
- Titles with frequent updates (ex. statistics reports, computer manuals,
- Books that incorporate multimedia

What collection strategies will be most useful (Snowhill, 2001)?

- Varies by discipline (Studies in Science and Social Science seem to take on eBooks faster than other disciplines)
- Varies by the degree of acceptance by user (mainly faculty and students)
- Promote eBook awareness before drastically adding a lot more eBooks to collection

What value-added features will increase the role of eBooks play in research process (Snowhill, 2001):

- Searchability
- Ability to cross reference to other e-Content (ex. eJournals, websites)
- Ability to make e-Notes and share those with anyone as well as being able to access them anywhere around the globe
- Off-line readability

How are eBooks being used in the academic environment (Snowhill, 2001)?

- Reference partial content (vs. reading the entire book cover to cover)
- Cross reference to other digital content
- eReserves
- more research needed to be done since this is a relative new form of presenting information compared to the linear text in print

eBook pricing model

- Most eBooks are priced the same as their print counterparts
- Actual price is usually set by the publisher, not by eBook aggregator or vendor
- eBooks are not necessarily more expensive than their print counterparts

eBook platforms/models (the following two eBook aggregators were selected since they both offer some forms of demand-driven purchase options)

- EBL (Ebook Library)
- MyiLibrary (Ingram Digital)

EBL's Demand-Driven Acquisitions (terms and options may change by the time this article is printed)

- EBL features 115,000 titles in all subjects with a particular focus on STM content – adding about 3000 titles each month)
- Freely browse the content of any non-owned title for up to five minutes or up to 10 for owned-ebooks; a loan instance is defined as access by an individual patron within a 24-hour period that exceeds the free browse period
- Automatic short term loan (EBL rental) – access beyond the 5-minute free browse period automatically trigger a short-term loan (pay per use model) which can be price-mediated on a price limit pre-determined by librarians
- Auto-purchase – library has the option of setting up automatic purchase of an eBook if it's been requested for short-term loan over x number of times. Or library has the option of manually review eBooks that have multiple short-term loan requests before making a decision to purchase those eBooks
- Non-linear lending – offers multiple concurrent access to content according to librarian's settings
- Textbook lending model – this model works the same as non-linear lending but access is limited to a maximum of three simultaneous users

Ingram Digital's MyiLibrary

- MyiLibrary features 200,000+ titles with the rate of adding 3000+ titles each month
- Content focuses on academic library needs
- Annual platform fee \$500.00
- Single user license eBooks is priced at 1.2 times the print list price allowing for 1-3 concurrent access
- Allow for print/download/ILL up to 60 pages for each login on purchased eBooks
- Email alerts on multi-concurrent access to single-user licensed titles and an option to upgrade those to multi-user license
- Access to eBooks published by 350+ publishers via a single platform
- Counter compliant

Benefits and drawbacks of Demand-Drive Acquisitions (Sutton, 2003; also info. from EBL website)

Benefits –

- Provides access to critical mass of widest selection of titles without purchasing them upfront
- Just-in-time purchases to suit patron needs vs. just-in-case purchases
- Justification of spending
- Eliminate time and guess work for bibliographers
- Immediate exposure/access to most up to date content
- Increase satisfaction among library users, hence
- Potentially promote the use of library services

Drawbacks –

- Titles added may be out of collection development scope
- Budget control issues
- Content limited to what's being made available by eBook publishers/vendors/aggregators
- Still limited participants from publishers/vendors/aggregators side
- The need to continue purchasing print books to bridge the gap

Print on Demand – a technology used to convert digitally delivered content to print format for those who prefer print materials or for those who lack access to the digital content. Both Ingram and Amazon offer print on demand service to its customers at the moment.

eBooks and Higher Education

- How to leverage emerging technologies effectively to facilitate teaching and learning
- Speak Up National Research Project indicates our nation's students are in fact a "Digital Advance Team" (from annual surveys they've conducted since 2003)
- Students are early adopters and adapters of new technologies
- The existence of digital textbooks – 29% of the middle and high school students using some kind of online textbooks or online curriculum (Nelson, 2008)

Ways to promote eBooks usage

- Increase the awareness and visibility of eBooks among library collection
- Integrate eBooks into library catalog
- Make eBook a category of its own or create eBook sub-collections
- Add search widget to library home page, Blackboard or Facebook pages
- Educate users about eBooks starting with faculty members
- Promote websites that offer free eBooks (Dinkelman, 2007)

Conclusion /Future study

Despite the fact that eBook technologies have come a long way compared to even just four or five years ago and all the buzz talks we've been hearing about eBooks in library conferences and professional meetings the past couple of years, the concept of eBooks hasn't been fully grasped and embraced by both the users and academic libraries in the United States. There are still issues that need to be resolved. Among those are formulating industry standards, sustainable business models, convenient and portable reading device (cell phone, laptop or dedicated e-Readers?!), user education, etc . I see librarians play an intricate role in making the transition of print based monographs into eBooks to be a successful reality. We are not doing this to abandon the print books that we all love and enjoy so much for as long as we can remember. In fact, print books will never die and will always exist at least for those books that people do read from cover to cover. I believe for this reason alone, books will continued to be printed for decades to come even though they may be in smaller runs by publishers but we'll continue to find them available from booksellers or libraries. Despite the love affairs most librarians have with print books, we simply can't afford to ignore the fact that the younger generation grow up and live their lives with technologies. As Mark Nelson predicted in his 2008 article entitled, "E-Books in Higher Education," within five years, K-12 students will enter college with a greater acceptance and attitude towards eBooks than today's students (Nelson, 2008). Even though the future still seems to be full of uncertainty and it will probably stay unclear for some time to come. Just as David Lewis (Lewis, 2007, pgs. 431-432) pointed out, "... the work that needs to be done is at the core of what libraries have always done – making knowledge available in communities and organizations." As long as we don't lose sight of what our missions are, I believe we'll get through the tumbling road blocks of new technologies that seem to hit us non-stop in recent years and eventually get through the clouds and be where we'd like to be, not without a lot of expected trials and errors along the way of course. With that thought in mind, we'll continue our research on eBooks related issues in academic libraries. Hopefully some meaningful statistics will be presented in a follow up paper as a subsequent report to our 2009 Charleston Conference presentation.

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