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ATG Special Report -- 10 Steps to Implementing an eBook Collection: A Guide for Librarians

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ATG Special Report — 10 Steps to Implementing an eBook Collection: A Guide for Librarians

by **Cynthia Cleto** (Global eBooks Manager, Springer) <cynthia.cleto@springer.com>

Introduction

Electronic books and periodicals provide flexibility, economy, and efficiency traditional publications cannot match. However, a wrong move during planning or acquisition can negate these advantages, increasing costs, creating interdepartmental tension, and leaving users with inadequate research tools. To avoid these pitfalls and ensure that libraries enjoy the smoothest possible transition to eBooks, Springer has prepared the following list of best practices for implementing an eBook strategy.

1. Determine Your Collection Development Strategy

Libraries typically assemble their eBook collections through one "pick and choose" or "critical mass" Strategies. The pick and choose strategy, in which librarians acquire individual titles, provides institutions with the flexibility to supplement their print catalogs with targeted selections and ease into an eBook strategy very slowly. The critical mass strategy consists of focusing initial acquisitions on building a mass of subject-specific content large enough to encourage intense usage.

Because pick and choose strategies require less initial investment of time and budget, they are often more palatable to executive decision-makers. However, over the long term, greater overall costs and more restrictive Digital Rights Management (DRM) policies can make pick and choose an unattractive proposition. While critical mass strategies do not provided the specificity of pick and choose, they are more cost-effective, tend to have less restrictive DRM policies attached to content, and provide more overall content usage for a given budget.

When pursuing a critical mass strategy, begin with high-demand, frequently searched material in which content freshness is critical. Generally, reference materials and monographs, particularly in the Science, Technology and Medicine (STM) fields, are most amenable to eBook collections. STM users tend to be more familiar with online research than those of other disciplines, and their research styles expose the advantages of eBooks very quickly. After establishing sufficient area-specific coverage, libraries should seek a test group of early adopters willing to experiment with all available research features. By interviewing these users, you can begin broadening your collections with a realistic assessment of your users' needs.

2. Evaluate Different Business Models

Each publisher will offer different tools and policies. The most critical features to assess are:

- Digital Rights Management (DRM)

DRM technologies protect content publishers' rights by limiting the end user's ability to copy, forward, or otherwise manipulate content. These protections may inhibit users' research methods, countering many of the values of electronic documents (such as cut and paste), or the ability to have multiple users access content simultaneously.

- Concurrent users

Seek out providers with no limitations on simultaneous access, as many electronic titles will have very high demand spikes.

- COUNTER compliance

The COUNTER initiative is the de facto standard for usage measurement in the reference industry. Publishers that do not provider COUNTER-compliant tools will be difficult to benchmark, making cost-justifications difficult and time-consuming or impossible.

- Availability of MARC records

Vendors should supply MARC records in an easily-imported format to allow you to integrate electronic collections into your OPAC systems.

- Ownership vs. subscription

Ongoing subscription models leave your most critical assets vulnerable to contract disputes, the publisher's financial well-being, and other acts beyond your control. Seek out publishers who provide absolute content ownership.

- Archiving policies

Libraries should retain day-to-day and long-term access to eBook content, regardless of a publisher's status. Publishers should provide perpetual content access to libraries in business agreements and participate in an archiving program such as LOCKSS , CLOCKSS or PORTICO to ensure that content persists. Publishers should also provide access to archived versions of periodicals.

- Flexibility

Look for publishers who provide flexible package arrangements to meet your specific needs. For example, content packages based on subject collection or research intensity allow you to supplement your collections cost-effectively by paying for the content you need most.

3. Gain Internal Support

Before releasing new initiatives to users, create a widespread understanding and acceptance of eBooks within your library community. Begin by educating Subject Specialists and Librarian Liaisons on eBook benefits of and discussing the different collection development strategies and business models of various publishers. Invite other librarians who have made successful eBook transitions to share their stories. Content publishers can provide statistics, referrals, and other helpful resources.

4. Plan Policy Changes with Subject Specialists/Librarian Liaisons

Invite all relevant personnel to discuss changes to library procedures and policies for acquiring eBooks. Discuss how eBook acquisition will impact approval plans of titles in print, and what acquisitions and processing operations will change to accommodate the purchase of eBooks. Next, evaluate budgetary sources for eBook acquisition. Designated "book" librarians or individual departments may be unwilling to part with portions of their budgets for a centralized eBook acquisitions department. Enlist the help of other librarians who have implemented eBook programs.

At this point, create estimated usage profiles. Examples of factors to consider include the number of concurrent content users, user search behavior, the number of access points (e.g. one library, multiple libraries, or Web-connected home PCs), and the necessity of printing documents. Take special note of your early adopter's needs. By acquiring appropriate content for these users, you can build internal success stories to build support for future acquisitions.

Intro to Springer and Springer eBooks

Springer is the world's second-largest publisher of journals in the STM (Science, Technology, Medicine) sector, the largest publisher of STM books, and the largest business-to-business publisher in the German-language area. Springer offers access to more than 19,000 textbooks, monographs, book series, and Major Reference Works available on Springerlink.com, and adds over 3,000 eBooks to the platform each year.

The Springer eBook Collection has garnered awards and accolades from the information and library community in the past year. Springer has pioneered the largest compilation of electronic books, and offers users unlimited, perpetual access, from anywhere around the globe. For more information visit springer.com/ebooks. 🌸

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5. Discuss Implementation with Technical Staff

Enlist IT to discuss requirements and time-lines for loading MARC records so end users can find the texts they need. If you are loading locally, you may require additional hardware and software during the initial loading phase, with a smaller subset of those resources in place for ongoing additions.

6. Choose Collections and Vendors

Within the categories established in Step 1, select your collections and vendors by balancing:

• Collection size and breadth
• Availability of MARC records
• Packaged content versus a pick and choose model
• Archive access
• Unlimited usage and ownership

7. Link eBooks to the OPAC

eBook publishers should provide ways through which patrons can find eBook content.

"The resources are very expensive so when we buy them we want them to be used as must as possible. So it is the library's responsibility as well to promote these new acquisitions."
— *Mr. Antero Laiho, Head of Collections*
University Library of Turku, Finland

That information can be in the form of MARC Records, or URL lists that can be inserted in the OPAC, Linkresolvers, as well as A-Z lists.

8. Communicate to Users

To get the most out from eBook investments, promote your collection to users. Check your publisher's Website for on-site and remote training, banner ads, downloadable posters, and other promotional aids. Also use email, intranets, and departmental forums to spread the word.

9. Download Usage Statistics

Evaluate the speed at which users are embracing your eBook collection and the research methods they are adopting. COUNTER-compliant statistics will allow you to compare your usage with other libraries in various stages of eBook adoption.

10. Review / Renew

After three to six months of use, interview your users and evaluate their future needs. Contact your publisher to plan the upcoming year's renewals and purchases and discuss the technology and processes that might meet their emerging needs. Publishers should provide tools, case studies, and client references to address the majority of these needs, and any new suggestions will drive business and product development in the future. 🌲

ATG Special Report — Promoting and Embedding E-textbooks: The Library Challenge

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In late 2007, **JISC Collections**[1] held a workshop with UK higher education librarians to acquire a deeper understanding of the issues that librarians and information professionals face when promoting and embedding e-textbooks into learning and teaching processes. The workshop aimed, by taking into account the local issues that librarians face on a daily basis, to identify how **JISC Collections**, publishers and eBook aggregators could assist and coordinate with librarians. The workshop was timely for two reasons; first, as part of the **National E-book Observatory Project**,[2] **JISC Collections** had just made freely available to all UK HE institutions four eBook collections consisting of key course texts for UK HE taught course students (as selected by UK HE librarians); and secondly, with publishers and aggregators exploring making e-textbooks available through libraries, it is necessary to revise current promotional methods in light of the new supply chain.

A publisher, an aggregator, a librarian and a VLE expert were invited to present case studies of how they promote e-textbooks and the challenges and issues that they face. What was evident from these presentations was that the lack of available e-textbooks and eBooks for taught course students meant that there was little or no current practice to discuss.

Sue McKnight, Director of Libraries and Knowledge, **Nottingham Trent University**, explained that in gathering evidence for her case study she invited fellow librarians across the UK to share practices. The silence that greeted **Sue** meant that she had to re-focus her presentation on eBooks in general. The presentation from the publisher also focused on eBooks rather than e-textbooks, looking at how they *could* promote them rather than *how* they were promoting them. .

Traditionally, publishers have focused their promotion on academics as course adoption leads to bookshop stock, library stock, and of course, student sales. With the plethora of information available online and with students increasingly expecting the library to provide them with access to their course texts what will this mean for the publisher's traditional process of promotion? In the thoughts of many at the workshop was that publishers have not been promoting, or even mentioning eBooks to their academics. One reason for this may be that in the e-textbook chain a conflict of interest arises whereby the publisher does not really want to risk any potential print sales loss and so does not talk to the academic about electronic versions. The result is that even if an eBook is available for that text, the academic does not know this and does not place a link on their reading list. It is the library that has to bear the brunt of this as students come in and complain that their course text are not available or are already out when actually, they could have simply logged in and accessed them online.

Publishers know that students first consult their reading lists and course handbooks either in print or through the VLE. They know that students will then use **Google** and the library catalogue to find the texts and only then do they actually look at the textbook. If publishers know this then shouldn't they be promoting the eBook to the academic and getting it on the reading list? It appears that publishers are simultaneously trying to sell e-textbooks and not sell them. Meanwhile the student, particularly distance learners and part time students are let down by their library.

For the aggregator, who already has a range of tools that that they use to promote the eBooks in their collections to librarians, it is the link with the academic that is missing. But is this their role if publishers already have a route that they can use there? Aggregators provide a centralized service to librarians and publishers but that service does not currently cover promotion. At the moment the publisher is responsible for promoting to the academic and the aggregator to the librarian with neither talking to each other about their strategies. What is required is for the publisher to collaborate with librarians and academic together and for