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

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5. Discuss Implementation with Technical Staff

Enlist IT to discuss requirements and timelines 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

by **Caren Milloy** (E-books Project Manager, JISC Collections; Phone: +44 (0)20 3006 6003) <c.milloy@jisc.ac.uk> *www.jiscebooksproject.org*

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

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aggregators and publishers to work together rather than in isolation of each other. Surely a collaborative promotional method would work in both their interests?

At the moment, the coordinating role is left to the librarian who must integrate the MARC records, raise awareness, liaise with academic staff on selection and reading lists management, run information literacy training courses for academics and students, keep the library Website up to date, talk to the VLE owners and integrate the eBooks into the VLE. What is hugely frustrating at the moment, as **Richard Cross**, a VLE expert explained, is that the lack of coordination by publishers, aggregators, library management systems and VLE providers is actually preventing the creation of a virtual learning environment that is intuitive, scalable, seamless and easy for students and academics to use. The impact that this has is that academics find unhelpful workarounds that are not intuitive, do not aid the discovery of eBooks, do not encourage students to use eBooks and often, make the VLE team reluctant to let the academics have any control over content integration, which in turn slows the development of the VLE. Each vendor is working in its own silo, creating bespoke solutions with their own standards that in fact, prevent the seamless interoperable environment that is required to promote and embed eBooks that support taught course students.

The message from the presentations was quite clear; a holistic approach to promotion is required, where publishers, aggregators, librarians, VLE vendors, LMS vendors, academics and **JISC Collections** all work together to ensure that cross promotion is occurring to ensure that it is easy to embed e-textbooks in teaching and learning environments. With this in mind, the librarians attending the workshop were split into groups and invited to discuss the following questions and come up with priorities for each:

1. What are the challenges that librarians face when promoting and embedding the use of e-textbooks?

2. What can **JISC Collections** do to help librarians address these challenges?

3. What can eBook publishers and aggregators do to help librarians address these challenges?

4. How might all stakeholders use new technologies to help promote and embed the use of e-textbooks in education?

So what are the challenges that librarians are facing? Interestingly, and in what shows the continued prevalence of the issues, the results from the workshop directly correlate to the eight issues identified in the *Feasibility Study on the Acquisition of e-Books by HE Libraries and the Role of JISC*.[3]

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secured a home for the library on the first floor of the **Winyah Indigo Society** building. If you haven't been to Georgetown, it's a great place to visit the next time you are in the area. And watch for our interview, coming up.
www.imls.gov/news/2008/011408.shtm
www.libsci.sc.edu/histories/vts/epw28.html
www.georgetowncountysc.org/library/

And speaking of private libraries (above), see our interview this issue, p.53 with **Eric Emerson** who is the **Executive Director** of the **Charleston Library Society** in downtown Charleston. It's on lower King Street and has a wonderful ginko tree out in front. When you walk in, you step back in time. Definitely worth a visit the next time you are in town!
www.charlestonlibrarysociety.org

Bookstores are also in the news! Was perusing the latest issue of **Vanity Fair** (February 2008, p.82). There is a fascinating piece "A Novel Haven: The literary elite gather at Square Books," by **Doug Stumpf**. It's about **Square Books**, a unique **bookstore** in Oxford, Mississippi, owned by **Richard Howorth** and his wife **Lisa**. "If anyone ever tells you books and bookstores are dying, just send them to **Square Books**." I wonder if **John Riley** has ever been there? Or **Jack Walsdorf**? Speak up, guys!

What can JISC Collections do to help librarians address these challenges?

Some of the priorities and ideas identified by the librarians had also been suggested in the *Feasibility Study* as possible actions that **JISC Collections** could take. It may appear therefore, that **JISC Collections** has not moved that far since the release of the report, but in fact, (and maybe a promotional fault of **JISC Collections** for not announcing what it is working on), many of the priorities are under progress.

One of the top priorities identified was the need for a single point of resource discovery facilitated through a comprehensive catalogue of free, quality assured MARC records of all eBooks available with links to all the content and platform providers. Such a one-stop-shop would help librarians to overcome the confusion that currently exists as to what is and what isn't available and allow them to select eBooks in consultation with their academics. In addition, quality assured MARC records would mean faster integration into catalogues which in turn would raise awareness of the availability of eBooks within the institution. **JISC Collections**, as part of the **National E-book Observatory Project**, created a central location where MARC records for the eBooks licensed in the project were deposited, quality assured, and made available for download. The **National E-book Observatory Catalogue Records (NEOCaR)** highlighted some very important issues regarding the quality of the MARC records and the allocation of electronic book ISBNs. With this evidence, **JISC Collections** in collaboration with the **JISC E-books Working Group** and other key organizations will be exploring how best to facilitate the creation of national catalogue that includes quality metadata that meets the needs of librarians.

The second priority identified was the need for a tool to compare the functionality and standards compliance of the eBook platforms. UK librarians, at the moment, tend not to have a preferred platform provider.[4] Rather, they are testing platforms and being forced to take some platforms to get the eBooks that they need. A comparison tool would allow librarians to quickly see which platforms would meet the needs of their users in terms of use. **JISC Collections** had developed the **Academic Database Assessment Tool**[5] to allows librarians to compare databases. This has now been expanded to include eBook aggregator platforms. It will be interesting to see what impact it has on aggregator's development programmes — will they re-focus, will one aggregator become more popular than another and what will they do to develop their USP?

The librarians also agreed that **JISC Collections** should continue its advocacy role and represent their needs to publishers, aggregators, VLE, and LMS vendors. **JISC Collections** is in a great position to be coordinating and raising awareness of the importance of complying with standards and providing

	Issue to address as identified in the Feasibility Study	Issues to address as identified in the Promoting and Embedding Workshop
1.	Ignorance in the HE sector about what e-books are available	Confusion about publishers and aggregators offerings – no easy process for discovering what e-books are available
2.	Low awareness in HEIs of the relevance and value of e-books	Lack of awareness by academic staff of e-books fuelled by difficulties in engaging staff in training, negative perceptions of e-books and lack of ownership of reading lists.
3.	Poor understanding by publishers and library staff of each other's needs	Librarians have to promote to a wide range of users, subject areas, skill sets and currently publishers and aggregators are trying to push the one size fits all approach. Also, the lack of interoperable standards is preventing embedding in the VLE and Library management systems.
4.	Complexity of some access routes to publishers' or aggregators' platforms deters users	Confusion over the differences in platforms, platform functionality, access to the platforms by staff and students.
5.	Too few e-textbooks and core monographs are available	Lack of critical mass of e-textbooks means that students don't see e-books that directly meet their course needs and therefore do not use them
6.	The available e-books are not up to date or relevant to UK users	Content of e-books is not relevant to UK HE courses combined with reluctance to make available new editions online
7.	Pricing models for e-books are not appropriate	Confusion over variety of pricing models and lack of models that allow flexibility required to meet needs
8	Publishers are not making the right textbooks available electronically on the right terms	Licensing models are too restrictive to encourage use of e-books – simultaneous users, printing, linking...not meeting needs of users

licensing conditions that are more customer focused and include the provision of better and easily integrated promotional tools by the eBook provider. Librarians suggested that **JISC Collections** should demand platforms providers meet a minimum set of standards as identified by librarians and technology experts within institutions. **JISC Collections** is taking this idea to its **E-books Working Group** and looking into what the best method is to get the platform providers to adopt **JISC** standards, use of the **JISC E-books Model Licence**[6] and **JISC** banding — is it a MOU or is it **JISC Collections** endorsement? In addition, as part of the **National E-book Observatory Project JISC Collections** is undertaking 12 eBook workshops to explore the value of e-textbooks, what models librarians would like and what the utopia of e-textbooks is in UK HE. The results of these 12 workshops will be disseminated to publishers and aggregators at the **London Book Fair**. Combined with the results from the observatory project **JISC Collections** hopes that new and innovative models for promotion, licensing and pricing will arise.

What can eBook publishers and aggregators do to help librarians address these challenges?

The first thing that publishers and aggregators can do is take a consultative and collaborative approach to marketing, collection development, licensing models, platform functionality and standards compliance. Librarians would like to be listened to and included in discussions that publishers have with academics. The academic is central to the embedding of eBooks and e-textbooks and the publisher can aid this process by ensuring that when they are talking to academics, they tell the academic if the library has access to the eBook.

Librarians can also provide valuable advice and expertise to help publishers and aggregators take intelligent gambles and improve their services and promotional methods. Librarians listen to the gripes of their users, they are constantly striving to keep up with and learn about new trends and information seeking behaviour. Their knowledge is valuable; they should be championed rather than passed by.

After the sell has been made, librarians would like to see more focus on customer service from publishers and aggregators. In particular, they would like promotional material to focus on the value of the eBook in relation to their courses, subject areas etc, rather than

on the platform functionality. Students need simplicity with flexibility. They don't care who published what book, they don't care about the battle between aggregator platforms. All they care about is getting access to the texts on their reading lists for free, wherever they are and whenever they want. Students want to be able to find their e-textbooks easily and make use of them in the manner that suits their subject, course and learning style. Publishers and aggregators need to be providing promotional materials aimed at helping the librarian make sure that staff and students are aware of what is available to them. Personalisation is the key word here. Customisable emails, RSS feeds into the VLE course areas of newly available e-books, RSS feeds into the library website, case studies of how academics have adopted and used an e-textbook in their course, simple SMS texts templates, podcasts on how to use a platform, placement of university logo on the platform, wikis where students can share experiences and ideas of how they have used the eBook for their courses etc. In the online environment, selling the e-textbook alone is not enough, the promotional and customer services provided will increasingly become central to decisions regarding acquisition.

Standards were of course another of the top priorities identified. Publishers and aggregators have to raise their level of standards compliance and they have to use open standards as currently they are restricting the effectiveness of their platforms and the integration of the eBooks. It is again a case of collaboration; to succeed they must understand why it is important to implement standards and what standards are required, this must come from collaboration with librarians, academics, students, technical experts, LMS vendors and VLE vendors. All those involved in provision of eBooks and management systems need to link together. Librarians hope that with a better understanding of the challenges that they face in promoting and embedding eBooks, that publishers and aggregators will become more open and enabling in their licensing rather than restrictive. Models based on what users actually do with eBooks, how they use

eBooks, need to be developed and librarians are keen that publishers and aggregators take onboard the findings from the **National E-book Observatory Project** and realize that flexible and transparent licensing doesn't mean giving content away but is the key to generating more sales.

The last question that librarians were asked to consider was how might new technologies be used to help promote and embed the use of e-textbooks in education?

Whilst there are many technologies available that fall into the Web 2.0 bracket, the librarians were conscious that not all of their users are digital natives and that promoting and embedding should not exclude users that are not technologically adept. They were aware that their promotion role would need to constantly evolve as their users would - how does a librarian prepare for the post digital natives when their searching and technological habits are not known yet?

The answer requires librarians to keep apace with new tools, studies on user behaviour and information literacy skills, and to get out the library and continually interact with the academics and students. Again, collaboration and sharing are essential to the knowledge transfer between librarians, if one institution finds an effective way of creating a reading list using **del.icio.us** or **Library Thing** with direct access to the eBook from the VLE, it benefits all if this can be shared, that is, as long the technology is open and interoperable!

Technology that enables easy discovery and use such as plug-ins and widgets that can be re-purposed into various spaces were favoured by librarians as well as RSS feeds to keep staff and students up to date. Librarians also agreed that the library catalogue has potential to include user comments and reviews of eBooks which may spur other students to use eBooks. If reviews and comments could be tagged, academics could also link this to the VLE sections. There was also call for videos and blogs to be created either by academic or students to promote the use of eBooks in teaching and learning. Librarians were interested in taking advantage of hand held devices and learning more about how eBook readers can be used to provide students with all their reading, whether a chapter, a whole e-textbook or a journal article. And last but not least librarians were also very keen to see the e-textbook evolve into a collection of content that takes advantage of the new tools and technologies available. If each individual e-textbook was a dynamic and interactive website with video, assessments, podcasts that slotted into an uber eBook collection that was cross searchable, easy to use with constant updates, automatic

archiving and interoperable standards wouldn't life be easy!

However the value will be realized much quicker if publishers, librarians, and aggregators really understand the challenges they each face and collaborate to create holistic promotional techniques that capture the attention of the academics and the students. No one should be sitting back and observing. Everyone needs to be pro-active. It's time, as **Sue McKnight** so simply put it, "to get funky and switched on."

Endnotes

1. **JISC Collections** is funded by the **Joint Information Systems Committee** to provide the UK higher and further education community with value for money and quality assured online resources that meet the needs of teaching, learning and research. *www.jisc-collections.ac.uk or visit the wikipedia page http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JISC_Collections*

2. The **JISC National E-book Observatory Project** has licensed a collection of 36 core and recommended reading eBooks in engineering, media studies, business and management studies and medicine. The eBooks which were selected by librarians, are freely available to all UK HE institutions for two years and have excellent terms and conditions of use. The aim of the project is, though a quantitative and qualitative year study, to gather an evidence base of exactly how these eBooks are used and the impact of making these eBooks available, through the library and free at the point of use, on publisher print sales, library circulation and on teaching and learning. Further information is available at *www.jiscebooksproject.org*.

3. The **Higher Education Consultancy Group**. *A Feasibility study on the Acquisition of eBooks by HE Libraries and the Role of JISC*, October 2006. Published by **JISC Collections**. Available at: *http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/jisc_collections/ebooks%20final%20report%205%20oct.doc*. This report was commissioned by the **JISC E-books Working Group** to explores the demand for, a feasibility of, **JISC Collections** getting involved in stimulating the eBooks marketing into making available core and recommended reading text online. This report provided the evidence required to gain funding for the **JISC National E-book Observatory Project** and was very well received within the HE community.

4. The UK HE consultation carried out as part of the eBooks project found that the majority of institutions were still trialling platforms or being forced to use a variety of platforms due to content availability.

5. *http://www.jisc-adat.com*

6. *http://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/model_licence.aspx*

And speaking of **bookstores**, the *Wall Street Journal* recently had an article "Who's Buying the Bookstore?" by **Nathaniel**

Popper (January 18, 2008, p.W11. Turns out that many people with the economic wherewithal are working to continue the tradition of the independent bookstore!

Bookstores and libraries are the places to be! Just went to the HDTV showing of the

opera *MacBeth* at the **Charleston County Library**. It was free and like wow! I am going to as many of these as I can in the future. Have you been to one?

And, being true to **librarianship**, while I