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Developing a Policy for Kindle and iPod Content: One's Library Experience

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6. Does the patron want a color copy of the article? Color scans are sometimes difficult to obtain through normal ILL channels.

Purchasing Books Directly from Vendors Through OCLC — Now that some publishers and book vendors have their own **OCLC** symbols, it is possible to purchase books through **OCLC**. A leader in this trend is **Better World Books, Inc.**, based in Mishawaka, IN and using the **OCLC** symbol "QUICK." **Better World Books** collects its inventory through book drives and donations from colleges, universities, libraries, and thrift stores. Items borrowed from **Better World Books** may be purchased by the borrowing library or by the patron, and profits go toward "non-profit literacy programs" (**Better World Books**, *http://www.betterworldbooks.com/*).

eBooks — Another new trend to watch is the practice of loading entire eBook collections from one or more vendors into a library's catalog but only purchasing those that are selected and used by the library's patrons (**Cassell**, 139). A twist on this approach is using the library's **Amazon** account to download new titles — which are notoriously difficult to borrow through ILL — to a **Kindle** or similar device for checkout to the patron (Oder, *http://www.libraryjournal. com/article/CA6666004.html*). Only the requested title is loaded onto the device, and once the **Kindle** is returned to the library, that title is removed.

All of these are interesting and still-developing areas of collection development, and I suspect more will be written on each idea in future years.

Conclusion

Many libraries love purchase-on-demand because it is cheaper and usually faster than, or just as fast as, traditional ILL. Local resources may be put to better use rather than investing time and money on union catalogs and other databases (**Hulsey**, 77), and items purchased by demand of the patron tend to circulate more often than items purchased through other means (**Ward**, 103). In addition, interdisciplinary titles that may be missed by subject bibliographers are frequently requested through purchase-on-demand programs, making for a more well-rounded collection overall. (**Anderson** et al., 8)

Many patrons love these programs because it provides them a voice in what their libraries collect. The traditional collection development model does not include graduate students. But because graduate students are generally heavy users of ILL, purchase-on-demand programs allow this important group of researchers to influence a library's collection (**Anderson** et al., 9). Patrons may also be able to keep purchased material for longer than is normally allowed for borrowed items, and speedy turnaround time is also popular. Whether the program is implemented simply or a hybrid or specialized approach is adopted, purchase-on-demand is yet another tool for libraries trying to please patrons in today's customer-centered environment.

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Developing a Policy for Kindle and iPod Content: One Library's Experience

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Kindles and other electronic book readers, **iPod Touch**, and other audio files are beginning to be made available to users of academic and public libraries. Despite the twenty-first century technology, the content for both types of devices still requires some sort of policy, just as their print counterparts have needed the same. What kind of policy do they

need, and how detailed a policy is required? **Eastern Kentucky University Libraries** developed a user-driven model, and adjusted the policy with experience.

The idea of offering the **Amazon Kindle** and the **Apple iPod Touch** to **EKU** faculty, staff, and students began to take shape in the spring and summer of 2009. Library leadership

thought that patrons who had never used a **Kindle** or **iPod** would enjoy becoming familiar with these devices, and those already acquainted with them would appreciate the opportunity to check out a **Kindle** or **iPod** from the library. In addition, the library had entered into a part-

nership with the **EKU First Year Program**, whose purpose is to orient new students to campus. Part of that orientation includes the **EKU Reads Project**, in which freshmen read a selected book and then, during their first semester of college, become engaged in the academic life of learning and scholarship through discussion of the book. The library and the **First Year Program** decided that the 2009 book, *The Glass Castle* by **Jeannette Walls**, should be made available to students as an eBook on a **Kindle** and as an audio book on an **iPod** in addition to print copies of the book. The **First Year Program** purchased four **Kindles** and eight **iPods**, and the library agreed to circulate the devices; each contains a copy of *The Glass Castle.*

Four **Kindles**, eight **iPods**, one title. Now what? The library determined that the **Kindles** and **iPods** would be housed at the main library's circulation desk. The loan period for each device was set at two weeks. Content would be loaded and devices synced for the users by the circulation staff. The acquisitions team would be responsible for payment of each download, and a cataloging staff member would update content information to bibliographic records in the OPAC for the **Kindles** and the **iPods** respectively.

Finally there came the question of content for the **Kindles** and the **iPods**. The library decided to keep its policy for these devices as simple as possible. First, the content would be entirely determined by the user. He or she would select the titles for the **Kindles** and **iPods**. Second, lest the user become giddy at the thought of adding content to the devices, and select a number of titles, the library decided that each user would be allowed to select up to two books or magazines to download each time the **Kindle** or **iPod** was loaned to that user. Third, the content on each of the four **Kindles** would be identical; the content on each of the eight **iPods** would also be identical.

Circulation of the **Kindles** and **iPods** at the **EKU Libraries** became effective with the start of the new school year in August, 2009; both quickly became popular with users and have circulated constantly throughout the fall. And what titles have users chosen? For the most part, selections have consisted of titles of popular interest. For instance, by the end of the semester, all four titles of *Twilight*, the popular vampire saga by **Stephenie Meyer**, have been added to the **iPods**; **Dan Brown's** *Angels & Demons* and *Da Vinci Code* are also a part of the **iPod** collection. **Kindle** titles include **Seth Grahame Smith's** *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and **John Grogan's** *Marley & Me.* Not all fiction is of recent publication; one **Kindle** title is *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. A number of non-fiction titles have been selected as well for the **Kindle**. **Al Franken's** *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them* is one such selection; another user chose *Glenn Beck's Common Sense*. The **iPod**

includes *I Am America (and So Can You!)* by **Stephen Colbert** and *Firstlight*, a collection of essays by **Sue Monk Kidd**.

Early in the semester, however, the user-driven model hit an interesting bump in the road: a patron selected the *Encyclopedia of Cybercrime* for the **Kindle** content. Circulation staff members expressed concern about the content as well as the cost, which was over $50, considerably higher than the costs of previously-selected titles for either the **Kindle** or the **iPod**. Concern was also expressed about the readability of the title on a **Kindle**. A work of fiction or nonfiction reads well on a **Kindle**; an encyclopedia poses a few more difficulties because of the nature of its organization. There was a need for this title, or a user would not have made this selection. But is a reference work suitable for a **Kindle**? Would the title be read by any other **Kindle** user, excluding the patron who initiated the request? Access to this title, solely on a **Kindle**, could prevent others from using a resource that could be valuable for various disciplines on campus, including the programs of law enforcement taught in the university's **College of Justice and Safety**. Circulation staff, as well as other librarians aware of the situation, concluded that the title would serve users better either in an eBook or print book format, where it would be accessible to more users and more than likely be more user-friendly in these formats than on a **Kindle**. Finally, the price gave the staff pause; this title had been the most expensive title purchased for a **Kindle** to date. Should that amount of money be invested in a title for a **Kindle**?

Based on this experience, the policy for the **Kindles** and, by extension, the **iPods**, was further defined. Following discussion between the circulation staff and the library's collection development advisory team, a policy was written to solve this problem. At the outset, the policy recognizes that the library does not want to take away the recommendations of users for the content of the **Kindle** or **iPod**, but neither does the library want to add content of a scholarly nature that would be accessible to patrons only by the means of these electronic devices. The policy states specifically that selections for the **Kindles** and **iPods** should comprise fiction and non-fiction of general interest for a library user. Limits are next placed on the cost of content. A title for a **Kindle** should not exceed $25 and the cost of content for an **iPod** should not exceed $35. If requested content exceeds this price, or if the content is of obvious research or scholarly focus, that content will not be purchased for the **Kindle** or the **iPod**. The library does intend to meet the need of a library user requesting titles above the set price limits or of a title of research or scholarly content; after all, that user's needs are important and should be met. In this kind of instance, the library takes the request and orders the title in either print or electronic format. With this policy in place, the **Kindle** and **iPod** content continues to be along the lines of general interest, and yet the needs of the user requesting a more scholarly work, or a work that exceeds the set price, are met as well.

Probably the thorniest problem for the circulation staff with this modification of the policy concerns the definition of content, or, when is a selected title considered scholarly, and when is that title considered of general interest? The policy offers two examples for the circulation staff to use; both are based on selections made for the **Kindle**. *Team of Rivals: the Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln,* a non-fiction work by **Doris Kearns Goodwin**, paints a portrait of the **Lincoln** cabinet; although rich in scholarly detail, the book is written for a general audience. The title costs under $25 for the **Kindle**. Thus, the title meets the two criteria specified by the policy and can be added to the **Kindle**. The second example is the title that brought about the modification of the original policy, the *Encyclopedia of Cybercrime*. The word "Encyclopedia" indicates that the title is designed for research purposes and that its content is going to be of a more scholarly slant than in other non-fiction books. The price is over the set $25 for a **Kindle**. This title, then, does not meet the criteria of the policy. These two titles are presented as examples to guide circulation staff. There remains the possibility that a staff member may not recognize a title as scholarly and add the requested book to the **Kindle**; after all, the staff member is serving users at the main desk and is also making every effort to meet a user's needs quickly and efficiently. In other words, it is better for the user if a scholarly title does get downloaded on a **Kindle** or **iPod** if it is under the price limit, than to quibble about whether the title is scholarly or more general. Service to the user always comes first.

The remainder of the written policy for **Kindle** and **iPod** content addresses the needs of users who do indeed request a title of research interest (and recognizable as such) or is over the price limits of $25 or $35. The library cannot turn away users who make such requests. In these cases, the circulation staff first informs the user of the policy for **Kindle**/**iPod** content. The staff then gathers information about the requested title and forwards that information, along with the requestor's title, to the acquisitions team. The staff of that team then assumes responsibility for the request.

After implementation, the content policy for the **Kindle** and **iPod** is working effectively. Content for each device has consisted of fiction and non-fiction titles of general interest. Procedures are in place for more expensive titles or research titles that will meet user needs in other formats, including eBook and print. Continuous circulation of both the **Kindles** and **iPods** throughout the fall semester shows that both devices are popular with the **EKU** campus. Where electronic book readers and audio devices go from here is anyone's guess. But just like print books before them, the **Kindles** and the **iPod Touches** have needed a policy so that a library user's needs are met successfully. 🐾