Group Therapy-Print Monographs with Complimentary Online Access

Jack G. Montgomery

Western Kentucky University, jack.montgomery@wku.edu

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It has become increasingly common to receive in our library print monographs which include complimentary online access to an electronic version. The print monograph includes a code and instructions, usually printed inside the cover, on setting up an individual user account to access the electronic version. The use of this electronic version is governed by an individual user license, which prohibits sharing of the access information.

Because of the individual user license, the electronic version of the book is useless to us. Have any of you established procedures for processing such monographs? Do you conceal the code and setup instructions so that it cannot be used by anyone? Do you setup the online access, but then not share the access information? Or, do you simply send the book to the stacks without doing anything about the code and setup instructions? We have considered all of these things, but would obviously like to follow an established “best practice.” Anything any of you could share regarding this issue would be greatly appreciated.

R E S O N S E: Submitted by Kathleen Richardson (Technical Services Librarian, Bluegrass Community & Technical College, Lexington, KY)

For Bluegrass Community & Technical College: Generally, we simply send the book to the stacks without doing anything about the code and setup instructions.

We don’t have a policy governing this at our library, although we should, as more items, not just monographs, fall into this category. Our experience so far — and the evidence for this is strictly anecdotal — is that the online resources for which access is provided with the purchase of the printed monograph are not used by our patrons.

Most of the materials in this category we have added to our collection have been medical/nursing/allied health textbooks and related materials, although a few have been in computer science. They tend not to be the textbooks assigned for our institution’s classes but are recommended monographs from the Brandon Hill lists (but updated editions), faculty purchase lists for course reserves and optional reading (relying on the physical version we purchase only), and review sources.

The only ones with online resources we know are likely to be used are monographs ordered by faculty members for their use in course development. In these cases, the faculty member is checking out the items as soon as they are processed and keeping them indefinitely, in which case only one user is ever setting up access, if at all. This seems to be a result of how budgets are handled in my institution, which is a community college. In other institutions, individual departments or programs may have funds to purchase expensive materials of this type or have official allotments from library funds they may spend for program-related materials to be added to the library’s collection. In my institution, individual academic program budgets often have only a few hundred dollars to cover the costs of such materials, along with...
Where the Wild Things Are: eBook Summer 2010

Summer of 42 or Summer of the VuVuZela?

Compared to Summer 2009, a feast of e-reader and e-seller, where publishing's future teetered and tottered over the Google Book Settlement, and each week it seemed brought yet another Nook, Kindle, Sony, BeBook reader device into market, this summer's pace is slower almost by slow motion. Nothing has happened in the “settlement"; publishers push and shove at the negotiation table and in the blogosphere/news environment. Whither publishers? Whither authors? Whither librarians?

Oh, wait, Amazon announced a new Kindle model with 3G and wifi at lower prices joining the already millions of units sold; it's also slimmer — yawn. But Amazon did announce Kindle sales had edged ahead of same-edition hard covers. And users of all devices have been seen enjoying eBooks in every nook and cranny of the connected world. Perhaps it is the summer of the VuVuZela for eBooks, a persistent, nagging hum that won’t disappear.

Hmmm…let’s explore the summer eBook world.

The Shape of Things to Come…

Google is betting the browser to become the de facto reading medium. As long as your device can run a Web browser Google will supply an electronic copy using the open source e-pub standard. The Google Bookstore will supply titles from the library digitization project, publisher-supplied content, and free Web content. Google's goal will be, as always, to match advertising to searches while helping users find books wherever they are sold on the Internet.

Over at Apple, Steve Jobs has bet the orchard on iProducts — primarily the iPad and iPhone. If you haven’t had the chance, drop by your local trendy coffee Internet hub and check out the over-cafeinated, always on Apple boys and girls, putting the collective finger to content on their iToys. It is quite the experience and impressive. Visually, Apple outsues Kindle. There are reading apps that display your books on virtual library shelves; with a light touch you can turn pages just as you would in its print doppelganger. Publishers can enhance the reading experience with elaborate zooming features and hyperlinking to secondary references.

Ironically many iPad users — who also like Kindle eBook pricing, catalog, and availability — use Amazon’s iPad app for a very satisfying reading experience. The app is basically a rework of the Windows app for the iPad. Here Kindle content looks more like a book; there are few, if any, rendering issues that mar reading on the original device.

Yet with all this emphasis on device we may not want to lose sight of what is really going on. Your reader, whichever you choose, needs books, and these books will be variously priced and may even offer an array of features. Plus, you got to get the books on and off your reader.

Amazon owns a huge head start in selling eBooks. For several years now they've set the price and reading expectation. Moreover, they are keeping pace with the competition in lowering device price. And taking a lesson from publishers they are now signing exclusive publishing deals for electronic editions, having recently signed an agreement with author agent Philip Wylie to be the distributor for major authors including Mailer, Updike, Roth — you know, what you read in 20th Century American Novel classes.

At the moment, no other online bookstore has the pricing, device simplicity, and exclusivity Amazon has set up.

So we know what Amazon is doing — making books on devices, content, and authors. When not apologizing for the iPhone 4 antenna, we know that Steve Jobs is smiling all the way to the bank with million plus sales of the iPad. Owners have all the online media they want. They deserve this after forking over more than $700 and waiting in real or virtual lines.

A lesson from all this: eBookstore may be as important as device. We would be remiss to not mention Book Liberator. If you haven’t heard of this personal book scanning machine, check it out. Designed as a less than $350.00 (with camera) book scanner for your tabletop, its inventors and supporters feel it may turn the publishing world upside down. They propose to unpulp pulp.

It looks like a man-sized Rubic’s cube. Without, well, the rubes. Or a magician’s box with clear plexiglass sides. In essence, it is a book and camera stand fitted living inside a clear plastic box. The box lowers down on an open page and flattens it for photographing.

It is labor intensive. The operator must turn pages, raise and lower the box, and take a photo.