Acquisition of e-books in Libraries: Problems and Prospectus

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Abstract

Paper depicts the practical issues concerned with purchase of e-books to the libraries. Prominent issues concerned with selection process, terms and conditions related to access to e-books of publishers, mode of payment and regulations concerned with service tax and the income tax deductions at the source are explained. Also deals with providing access to the e-books purchased. The popular aggregators of e-books are concerned here to highlight problems faced by the library users while accessing the e-books.

Keywords: E-Book Purchase; Aggregators of e-books; E-books Agreement.

Introduction:

Libraries in the academic and research institutions have changed their style of functioning. They have started extending information services using electronic media. The library users have also started demanding online information services. Of late, quite a number of popular publishers have started publishing electronic versions of books. The trend is increasing as there is demand from the user community and also the users have become familiar with the use of electronic books and journals. To meet the expectation of the library users and to increase the access to the information sources, libraries have commenced extending remote access using Ezproxy software.

Due to ICT development and knowledge or information explosion today's libraries obligation is force to purchase e-content or digital or e-books to serve the user community. Here there are three groups played vital role to reach the academic users community iepublishers or Aggregators, Librarians, Users Community.

Selection, licensing, acquisition, and management of e-books in academic libraries is very challenging job in the modern day society. The purchase of e-books is to encourage the academician, researchers, students to use information sources whenever they need and to access wherever they need. Introduction of E-Learning will make the librarians and the members of the library aware of the problems associated with the large-scale adoption of e-books in the academic environment. The information presented here may be useful to students and scholars, including librarians considering the role of e-books in the holdings of their libraries. The publishers will also be benefited by developing the infrastructure suitable for the young student communities.

Meaning of e-books: An electronic version of a printed book which can be read on a computer or a specifically designed handheld device. Content digitally born, digitally processed, digitally preserved, served digitally, we call it as e-Book or e-content.

Procurement policy of eBooks: While procuring e-books to the library, librarian has to study the various aspects of purchasing or licensing/agreement policy of e-contents. He has to keep in mind

- Type of e-books to be purchased
- Subscription based or perpetual access
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- Pick and chooses module or collection/package module
- Aspect of accessing of eBooks on IP enabled or user ID and password based access

Basically procurement of the e-books will be decided on the basis of recommendations done by the concerned chairperson/department council. First of all, the librarian has to select the various e-book Publishers/Aggregators who are publishing and extending access to the e-books. Then in the further steps, the information about their terms and conditions has to obtained for review. A committee may also be formulated to negotiate the price and terms of supply and service of extending access to the e-book collection. Generally selection of e-books titles will be based on the departmental needs, mainly considering the requirement of faculty, researchers and students.

**Authorized users:** The members of the faculty, research scholars, students and other technical staff of the institution are the licensee and publishers who facilitate access are termed as licensor. The users are permitted to access based on IP Range/IP Authentication which is commonly known as campus-wide access and another option is to facilitate access based on user ID and password. The publishers also under their agreement allow walk-in users who are usually the guests or occasional visitors of the library.

**Server:** The server either the publisher server or third party server on which licensed materials are mounted may be accessed.

**Access period:** the period for which the institution has access to e-books titles perpetual or yearly based

**Agreement:**
the publishers agrees to grant the licensee the non exclusive and non transferrable right throughout the world to give authorized users access to licensed materials via secured network for the purpose of research, teaching and private study subject to the terms and conditions of the license.

**The Role of ePublishers/Aggregators:**
The eBook service provider has give the service to the authorized users through secured net work.
The major role e publisher is to take care all the e content shall be opened properly. He has to keep track of all the downloads or hits by the users.

**Librarian obligation regarding usage of e-books**
Make such temporary local electronic copies of all or part of the licensed material as are necessary solely to ensure efficient use by authorized users and not to make available to authorized users duplicate copies of the licensed material.
The guests or occasional users/visitors of the library...

**Limitations of e-books:**
The comparative cost of e-books is more than the printed books
Pick and choose models is convenient to the library but it is very high in cost
Publishers/vendors force to sell the e-books through package model

**E-Books can cause eyestrain.** E-Books are read on a computer or special device that is viewed on a screen. The screen does not have the same type of resolution like print on paper has.

**E-Books can be hacked.** E-book Readers are able to connect to the internet to shop for different E-books. Hackers are able to use their computers to hack E-Book readers and E-Books. People are now pirating E-Books just as they are able to pirate music.

**E-books do not have a defined life.** New technologies are always emerging; for example, new computers or hand held devices. Software and hardware can become outdated that contain components that can run a user’s E-Book reader. When upgrading to newer software, the user runs the risk of losing saved books or losing formatting of the document.

**Problems in procuring e-books**
Academic libraries face significant challenges related to the selection, licensing, acquisition, and management of e-books. Some of the difficulties have been highlighted in this paper.
• Only some of the print books acquired by academic libraries are available as e-books.
• License terms vary considerably, and the lack of standardization is a significant impediment to cost-effective e-book management.
• Librarians have expressed a strong preference for title-by-title selection, roughly half of all academic library e-book titles are acquired through package deals.
• Most licenses for e-book packages (collections) give librarians no control over the titles included in the package. Vendors are free to add or remove titles during the term of the agreement, often without notifying the subscribing institution.
• Most e-book packages include a substantial number of titles that are not relevant to the needs of the subscribing library, including backlist titles that would not generate much revenue if offered individually.
• When acquired individually, academic e-books cost substantially more than print editions.
• For scholarly titles, the cost of producing and providing access to an e-book is usually no lower than the cost of producing and distributing a printed volume.
• The preservation of e-books is especially difficult because it requires the long-term maintenance of several distinct elements: texts, file formats, software, operating systems, and hardware.

Findings and suggestions
Sustainable access to e-books is hindered by impermanent physical media, proprietary file formats and software, and restrictive license provisions. Many of these challenges can be traced to a more general problem: the lack of uniformity in license terms, lease conditions, access restrictions, and librarians’ expectations. No one vendor can supply all the titles that libraries need, and each publisher or aggregator has unique procedures for the acquisition and processing of e-books. While accessing the eBooks the users may get so many problems like download, some time book may not open, some accessing format is not compatible. With all this difficulties Libraries force to go for digitization and also preservation digital content to serve the user community, to satisfy the various affiliating bodies like NAACK, AAA committee etc.

References