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MA Thesis

Turning the page:

E-books in the Academic library

## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Chapter 1: Acquisition and Access.....	5
1.1 Transitioning into an institution of access.....	5
Reliability and Dependability Issues .....	7
1.2 How does the library acquire e-books? .....	8
Patron-Driven or Demand-Driven Acquisition .....	9
Pay-per-view model.....	10
Patron-Driven Acquisition and Pay-per-view hybrid model.....	12
Acquiring e-books via Open Access .....	14
1.3 Technical issues and complexities during the acquisition process of the e-book.....	18
E-book Licenses .....	18
User's Rights and Restrictions .....	20
E-book Interlibrary Loan.....	21
Chapter 2: Administration and Economy .....	23
2.1 Budget Allowance .....	23
Duplication of content .....	24
2.2 Managing the E-book collection .....	27
E-book Cost Calculations .....	27
E-book Preservation .....	30
Removing outdated e-book titles.....	32
2.3 Open Access Titles in the Academic Library .....	34
Providing Access to Open Access Titles.....	35
Inclusion in the catalogue.....	36
Advantages and Disadvantages of Open Access titles in the Library .....	37
Chapter 3: The User-perspective .....	39
3.1 E-books and its users.....	39
What do the users want?.....	39
Raising Awareness .....	41
3.2 User-friendliness .....	43
Reading Experience.....	43
3.3 Technical Issues .....	46
Technical Issues in different e-book platforms .....	48
Privacy Issues .....	52

Conclusions .....	54
Bibliography.....	58

## Introduction

*“The library is a growing organism”*

*S.R. Ranganathan*

In 1931 S.R. Ranganathan developed his theory of library science by setting out five rules that the librarian ought to follow in order to make sure that the library is working efficiently and is also honouring the user's demands. Despite the fact that, naturally, his theory cannot be directly applied to the reality of the library as an institution of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when adjusted it still makes sense for the librarian of today and it still remains a theory that speaks to the code of ethics of the majority of librarians. Particularly interesting for the library of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is Ranganathan's last rule which reads that 'the library is a growing organism' as the conflict between gradually shifting into an institution of access and less of ownership challenge today's librarians' tasks and beliefs. According to Ranganathan, the library has to be in a continuous change fitting to the environment in which it functions and should not be a static institution. It has to adjust to the prescriptions of the present in order to remain alive and keep growing as well as deliver to its users and fulfil its purpose as an institution.

In this paper, I aim to explore the changes that were introduced to the academic library because of the strong presence of the electronic book in the library's catalogue. I will try to review the advantages and the disadvantages brought to the institution of the academic library because of this rising importance of the e-book as well as the benefits and the drawbacks it introduced when it comes to the users of the academic library, i.e. the academic staff and the students alike. It is the presence of the e-book in the academic library setting that has introduced the shift from ownership to access and challenges the library's traditional role. As it is stated by many experts in the field and younger librarians that are an integral part of the age of access, collection building as it was traditionally practised in the academic library is coming

to an end because of the proprieties of the e-book.<sup>1</sup> The nature of the e-book has introduced new possibilities for access that cannot be shared or compared with the printed collection in the library. Traditional acquisition routes that focus on ownership are shifting year by year and the library is leaning more on providing access rather than focusing on building a strong analogue collection.

In my first chapter, I intend to research the most common acquisition models that the library follows in order to be granted access to e-book titles either by publishers or by aggregators. For the sake of clarification whenever the term aggregator is used it is to describe a service provider that collects or ‘aggregates’ varied e-book titles and digital material from multiple publishers in order to provide relevant material for the library.<sup>2</sup> I focus mainly on user-centered models of acquisition like the Patron Driven Acquisition (PDA) or the Pay-per-View model (PPV) which rose out of necessity for the academic library to remain a sustainable institution and to make use of their annual budget in a more cost-effective manner. I will also explore newly founded library co-operation initiatives that aim to bring academic libraries together and fight back the on-going crisis in their field by supporting each other and sharing acquisition costs.

I also sought to point out the technical issues that derive from these models and from the overall existence of the e-book in the academic library. I will attempt to illustrate exactly how the license agreements between the library and the publishers or aggregators restrict the use of the e-book as well as what kind of freedoms the users actually have when accessing e-books provided by the academic library.

Moreover, I will highlight the complications that derive from already existing policies, such as the Interlibrary Loan (ILL), which is widely practised for the library’s analogue collection but it becomes rather problematic with the introduction of e-books.

As stated, the library is a growing organism and the fast pace of technological innovation demands adjustments and modifications to traditional practices. This

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<sup>1</sup> R. Anderson, “The Death of the Collection and the Necessity of Library-Publisher Collaboration: Young Librarians on the Future of Libraries”, *Scholarly Kitchen*, 17 November, 2015, n.pag. < <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2015/11/17/the-death-of-the-collection-and-the-necessity-of-library-publisher-collaboration-young-librarians-on-the-future-of-libraries>> (28 May, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> T. Jakopec, "E-book Aggregators: New Services in Electronic Publishing.", *Libellarium : Journal for the History of Writing, Books and Memory Institutions* 8.1 (2015), p.32.

transition that the academic library is currently undergoing is not a worry-free one. Adapting to an era where the importance of access triumphs over the importance of ownership challenges the core of the library as an institution. The electronic book and digital materials can potentially compromise its reliability and dependability as they are not as predictable and as straightforward in usage as the printed collection. Nevertheless, despite its disadvantages access to electronic material is a demand of the patrons so the academic library needs to find a solution so as to ease the experience of its users with the electronic collection and minimize the damage caused by the growing importance of access.

In my second chapter, I will look into the administration details and implications when it comes to managing both an analogue and electronic collection. I will research common practices in academic libraries when it comes to the duplication of content, i.e. having the same individual title both in print and as an electronic book, as well as research into the real costs of the e-books for the academic library taking into account the model of acquisition that is chosen each time.

Given the fact that we are in the midst of change, how do the libraries manage to tackle these obstacles and distribute the budget accordingly so as to satisfy the majority of their users and maintain a comprehensive collection? According to a 2011 survey (including over 1,200 public and academic libraries), the largest portion of the budget is spent on paying for the staff and the accommodating facilities and only about 28% is spent on content and the maintenance of the systems that support the collection.<sup>3</sup>

The survey also revealed that most of the libraries' budget is spent on the acquisition of printed material and printed serial collections (of about 62%) whereas the e-books and generally digital materials are taking up about 31% of the libraries' overall acquisition budget.<sup>4</sup> It is striking, however, that this survey, questioning the users of the libraries' involved, revealed that most of the users are interested more in what the library can offer them in terms of access rather than in terms of ownership (i.e. the analogue collection). It is evident by the demands of the users that the shift from ownership to access is necessary for the academic library to survive. From

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<sup>3</sup> D. Kaser, "On Average: How Your Library Budget Stacks up.", *Computers in Libraries* 31.2 (2011), p.34.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

maintaining a large analogue collection that is not being used or for that matter is only rarely and remotely used the library has to invest its budget into further expanding its e-book and digital collections.<sup>5</sup>

Currently, the elephant in the room for all academic libraries is the issue of Open Access publishing and the library's role in Open Access material. Does the library have a responsibility to include and accommodate Open Access titles in its catalogue? Is it wise to invest a portion of the annual budget for the support of such an initiative? Open Access is a relatively new model in the publishing world has caused a stir in all the book industry, and consequently the academic library as well. Open Access e-book titles introduce both advantages and disadvantages in the academic library. On the one hand they introduce a new source of materials for the academic library as well as representing the Open Access movement as a cause. On the other hand, it is yet another complication in an already misty e-book landscape. There is still a lot of confusion in library staff circles as to what to do with Open Access material but it cannot be denied that it is a force to be reckoned with in the publishing world and the library's amount of involvement remains to be seen.

Lastly, in the final chapter of my paper, I aim to research the user perspective when it comes to the use of the e-books in the library. Academic librarians still need to get better acquainted with the library's users in order to make informed decisions about the library's e-book collection. Research into the user's details such as age, and curriculum would help the library determine what is lacking in the e-book collection and how the users feel about using e-books in the academic library setting. Finally, I will focus on the advantages as well as the technical issues that stem from the e-book collection in the library but as perceived by the users. How they experience certain shortcomings when it comes to the e-book collection and how the shift from ownership to access affects them as users.

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<sup>5</sup> D. Attis, et al. "Redefining the Academic Library Managing the Migration to Digital Information Services." *Library* (2011), n.p.

## Chapter 1: Acquisition and Access

### 1.1 Transitioning into an institution of access

One of the many challenges brought about by the e-book is challenging the very core of the library as an institution. Libraries, as early as the 3rd century BC when the astonishing Library of Alexandria was established, were considered to be a place where information was stored and could be physically accessed by its users. The last few decades, however, with the introduction of digital material and with its ease of access by patrons, users now demand a different kind of service from the academic library. There is an ever-growing trend not only in libraries but also by the people who supply the library with materials, the publishers, to gradually focus on the provision of instant access regardless of physical space instead of ownership, which was the main focal point of the academic library for centuries.

In 2011 Kevin Kelly stated that in the near future nobody will own e-books but will rather access them, mentioning that people won't be building book collections, including virtual ones but will rather opt to access e-books through streaming services.<sup>6</sup> Which is true of the academic library of today. The mere format of the e-book does not comply with the traditional definition of ownership. Its volatile form that is heavily controlled by its supplier dictates the need for access instead of that of ownership. It is equally important both for the library and for its users to comprehend what an electronic book collection implies. Because the e-book occupies the virtual world in the end what the library 'buys' is not something concrete like a printed book but rather a license that provides access to the e-book.

Today's researchers, students, professors and all potential users of the academic library, often remain oblivious to the fact that they do not need to be physically present in the library in order to access the information that they need. This fact is the epitome of the change that the library is experiencing at the moment that most of its

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<sup>6</sup> N.S. Baron, *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015), p.138.



materials can be accessed at any given moment by its authorized users. The system that allows the library to provide access to not only e-books but also any kind of digital material, such as journals or dissertations, that can be accessed online, deconstructs the traditional ownership role of the academic library.<sup>7</sup>

The way e-books are accessed is through licensing agreements that ultimately determine the cost of the e-book, is one of the reasons that there is currently friction between academic libraries and publishers as to what the terms of the license should be and how the e-book title should be accessed. While it is of little importance to the end user of the e-book through which way the library has chosen to provide access to an e-book title either buying or renting the access, it makes a significant difference to the publisher as the profit from a title depends on the way that library and its users make use of it.<sup>8</sup>

Publishers are currently taking advantage of this increasing need for information available instantly and accurately in order to produce more revenue, but it is exactly this need for more that is dwindling the library's resources and results in the library looking for alternative sources. This system was sparked by technological innovations that made a reality certain actions that were considered to be impossible in the recent past. Fifty years ago, researchers could not even picture a reality where they could access the information they needed from practically anywhere in the world, or simply the fact that information and resources wouldn't be actually hosted inside the library but occupy the digital sphere.

Librarians always had to adapt to the changing ways and formats of dissemination of knowledge and information and it has never ended badly. But a shift in the entire core of the academic library is not an easy one to adapt to. Abandoning ownership for sake of access is not an easy change to adapt to as print and ownership provide stability in a centuries-long tradition for the academic library. The difficulty lies in the fact that publishers and aggregators are the ones that are calling the shots as they are the ones that provide the materials for the library and can set any kind of rules and restrictions for their content. Therefore, it is the librarian's responsibility to educate the library

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<sup>7</sup> S.M. Matheson, "Access versus Ownership: A Changing Model of Intellectual Property.", *Legal Reference Services Quarterly* 21.2 3 (2002), p. 155.

<sup>8</sup> A. van der Weel, "From an Ownership to an Access Economy of Publishing.", *LOGOS: Journal of the World Publishing Community* 25.2 (2014), p.41.

staff on copyright laws and negotiate with the publishers in order to be able to remain reliable even as an institution of providing access to information and not physically owning or storing this information.<sup>9</sup>

### Reliability and Dependability Issues

While the many blessings of access over ownership are very clear, including quick and easily retrievable information, the shortcomings that have surfaced because of this change in the nature of the library are also very important to be addressed. The transition from ownership to access and not actually 'owning' a large portion of the material that the library makes available for its users could potentially harm the library's reliability. Because the library does not, in fact, own a lot of the material that it makes available, it could be the case that many e-book titles seemingly available in the library's catalogue have been retracted by the publisher, thus creating confusion to the users who are unaware as to why they cannot access a particular title that they can find in the catalogue.

The possibility of being able to provide access to an endless number of titles that would be physically impossible to store on the grounds of the library is, of course, an ideal scenario for any library that aims to provide as much material to its users as possible. Nevertheless, digital material such as e-books do not share the stability of print; they could be retracted either by the publisher without warning or after a breach of the license agreement by one of the library's patrons.<sup>10</sup> The electronic material also raises the question about preservation for the academic library. While this is a straightforward matter for their analogue collection it is not without complexities when the electronic material is included in their catalogue. Naturally, it shouldn't fall on the library's shoulders to secure access to the content that they purchase from publishers and aggregators, but unfortunately, it does. It is rather often that the hosting platforms used by publishers are not being kept up to date and as result the material in the library's catalogue malfunctions.<sup>11</sup> Or it might even be the case that a collaborating publisher or aggregator goes bankrupt and the electronic material

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 172.

<sup>10</sup> Matheson, p.169.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

instantly becomes unavailable, despite the fact that the library has already paid for it and is supposed to be the access point between its users and this material.

The increasing dependence of the academic library on access instead of ownership is creating a lot of management issues and is generating questions on the part of its users like to what extent they can rely on the library to deliver the material and the titles that they need. The academic library above all has to remain an institution that inspires trust and reliability to its users, and the ever-increasing tendency towards access is challenging the library's ability to deliver what it promises to its users.

## 1.2 How does the library acquire e-books?

The library's acquisition routes influences significantly the library's administration and policy making and the experience that its end users will have with the digital collection. As opposed to the straightforward acquisition methods that derive from centuries of print culture, the e-book lacking the same properties has introduced the need for several other models of acquisition that have been practiced in the library since. Despite the breakthrough they have caused in terms of access, there are still implications and complexities that accompany the use of e-books in the academic library. Recent studies in the field reveal the landscape for e-books to still be problematic when it comes to acquisition and management, but quite promising as well.<sup>12</sup> The main issue for acquiring e-books seems to be the suffering and dwindling library budgets in combination with the very high pricing requests demanded by the publishers. Taking advantage of the current situation publishers have devised 'Big Deal' packages which include a large number of e-book titles or journals that if the library chose to purchase as individual titles would cost a lot more money than they do as a bundle. Even though superficially that would seem like a sustainable and feasible solution to the increasing budget cuts, it raises several complications. Once

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<sup>12</sup>W.H. Walters,"E-Books in Academic Libraries: Challenges for Acquisition and Collection Management." *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 13.2 (2013), p.190.

the academic librarians go through the ‘Big Deal’ packages one by one it is immediately visible that a large number of the e-book titles included are obsolete dating from many years ago and in most cases, their printed equivalent is already available in the library.<sup>13</sup> In an attempt to combat budget cuts and for the library to remain sustainable, several models of acquisition have been developed. By using more user-centered acquisition models instead of opting for ‘Big Deal’ packages, the library’s collection may appear to be somewhat smaller and less diverse but that would probably result in a more relevant and cost-effective collection.<sup>14</sup>

### Patron-Driven or Demand-Driven Acquisition

It is the duty of an academic library to be able to provide relevant and up-to-date digital material for its users. But a librarian’s task to maintain the collection and make sure that everything in the library is running smoothly does not always leave time for crucial decision-making when it comes to careful title selection for the catalogue. This is why most librarians work on a speculative mind-set and provide a just-in-case collection for their users, i.e. a collection based on the usage that is expected but not guaranteed that it is, in fact, going to be used in its entirety. With the growing popularity of digital material, however, libraries are trying to focus more on demand needs rather than use a speculative mind-set. And this is because it is no longer cost effective to purchase large e-book collections without knowing that they are actually going to be relevant and thus used by the library’s patrons. This is mainly why the patron-driven acquisition (PDA) developed. Even though this user-centered model has been and still is practiced for the acquisition of printed books as well, the applications of new technologies allow for the delivery of the e-material to be instantly accessible to the user.<sup>15</sup>

The underlying logic behind this model is that naturally, the library cannot afford to purchase all relevant material in all fields of study in order to make every single one of its users happy. The academic library, being an institution that has to be

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<sup>13</sup> J. Proctor, “Avoiding Ebook ‘big Deals’: Alternatives to Ebook Backlists.”, *New Library World* 114.7/8 (2013), p.304.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p.305.

<sup>15</sup> T.S. Arndt, *Getting Started with Demand-driven Acquisitions for E-books : A LITA Guide*. Chicago: ALA TechSource, an Imprint of the American Library Association, 2015. LITA Guide. p.1

sustainable, has a set budget that has to be spent rather carefully in order to make sure that the majority of patrons have access to useful material. So by using this model, users are now presented with a much wider array of materials previously remaining in the shadows or simply not part of the library's speculative material selection.

It is note-worthy that PDA may, in fact, be cost-effective but that does not necessarily mean that the library will spend less money applying it, and that isn't the main goal of PDA anyway. As Rick Anderson has mentioned,<sup>16</sup> 'I only expect it [PDA] to help ensure that all the money I spend will go to materials that my patrons actually need.'<sup>17</sup> So the goal is not to save money, although of course, that would be the ideal case for the library, but to be able to offer the users the material that they actually want instead of spending their budget trying to guess what it is that their patrons want. Moreover, PDA is also based on the assumption that books that are chosen by one user are more likely to be used by other users as well in the future, rendering the purchasing of the book a logical option for the library.<sup>18</sup>

### Pay-per-view model

Another model that rose out of the library's dire need to make cost-effective choices and save on its budget is the pay-per-view model of acquisition (PPV). Its mere title is self-explanatory, the library only pays for material that is actually being viewed and accessed by the library's patrons. Despite it being a very straightforward model when it comes to usage, there are several implications attached to it that affect directly the library as an institution as the material that is accessed on a short-term basis and will not be part of the library's long-term collection building. PPV also gained popularity in an attempt to control unnecessary spending on pricey 'Big Deal'

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<sup>16</sup> Rick Anderson is Associate Dean for Collections and Scholarly Communication in the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah. He speaks and writes regularly on issues related to libraries, scholarly communication, and higher education, and has served as president of NASIG and of the Society for Scholarly Publishing.

<sup>17</sup> R. Anderson, "What Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA) Does and Doesn't Mean: An FAQ", *Scholarly Kitchen*, 31 May, 2011, n.pag. <<https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2011/05/31/what-patron-driven-acquisition-pda-does-and-doesnt-mean-an-faq>> (29 May, 2017)

<sup>18</sup> Arndt, p.2.

packages that require a significant amount of the library's budget in order to be accessible but are not widely used by the patrons.<sup>19</sup>

PPV is a model that is very closely connected with the patron-driven acquisition model that was discussed earlier. They are both models focused on the perspective of the user, and acquisition of e-books stems from their requests and needs. However, a pay-per-view model does not equal a purchase for the library, much like the PDA does. Usually, applying a PPV model does not contribute to the library's collection as the digital material that is accessed is short-lived and the license usually expires after a given number of hours of usage.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, given the shortcomings of the library's budget, PPV is able to provide a connecting point between the patrons' growing need for more relevant material faster and the library's inability to keep spending a large portion of the budget on 'Big Deal' packages.<sup>21</sup> Providing access to 'Big Deal' packages does indeed hurt the library's budget but academic libraries also have leverage over actually purchasing one e-book at a time, thus saving money for the library, making a larger variety of different journals and e-books available at a much lower cost.<sup>22</sup> However, as mentioned, the problematic nature of a 'Big Deal' package is that ultimately most of the time the price that comes with it is unsustainable for the library's budget and uses up most of the library's resources, making it impossible to invest the money in print, individual e-book titles or generally any other relevant material to enrich the collection.<sup>23</sup> So it often boils down to one or the other when it comes to providing access and most libraries opt for the easy way out of a 'Big Deal' package rather than risking the library's budget.

But is a 'Big Deal' a saving grace for the academic library? Or is it ultimately draining library's resources that could be used to acquire more relevant material for the users? Such an issue is rather complicated and difficult to address and it depends heavily on the library's goals and needs. In 2013, a survey conducted by Mississippi State University (MSU) revealed that the university library was actually paying more

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<sup>19</sup> N. Hosburgh, "Getting The Most Out of Pay-Per-View: A Feasibility Study and Discussion of Mediated and Unmediated Options.", *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship* 24.3 (2012), p.204.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.210

<sup>21</sup> P.L. Carr, "Forcing the Moment to Its Crisis: Thoughts on Pay-Per-View and the Perpetual Access Ideal." *Against the Grain* 21.6 (2010): p.14.

<sup>22</sup> T. Lemley & J. Li, "'Big Deal' Journal Subscription Packages: Are They Worth the Cost?", *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries* 12.1 (2015), p.2.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, pp.3-4.

money to renew 'Big Deal' packages with publishers Springer and Wiley than it would cost them to acquire access to the most used titles of the package individually.<sup>24</sup> Following the survey's results, the library proceeded to cancel two large packages with Springer and Wiley which resulted in saving the amount of 400,000\$ of the library's budget. However, the library after cancelling these two large packages lost a significant number of titles from its collection which became immediately evident to the library's patrons who couldn't access the material they needed from these two publishers anymore.<sup>25</sup> In retrospect, it was revealed that the library should have taken into account the affected patrons as well instead of looking only into the hard numbers of the survey. Overall, deciding to cancel 'Big Deal' packages is not as simplistic or as straight-forward as it might seem. PDA and PPV have undoubtedly a lot to offer when it comes to collection building but should only be adopted strategically by the librarians while carefully weighing all the advantages and the disadvantages for the academic library.

### **Patron-Driven Acquisition and Pay-per-view hybrid model**

As already mentioned, both PDA and PPV derive from a user-centered perspective where patrons are given the responsibility to call the shots when it comes to what should be included and what should be left out in the academic library. The main drawback of a PPV model is that it costs the library money and requires a share from the library's budget and yet it doesn't really contribute to the library's collection, at least not in the same way as the PDA model does where a purchase is initiated upon a user's request. As a solution to this shortcoming of a PPV model, libraries can create a scheme where a certain number of downloads by the patrons equal the purchase of a title or the initialization of a subscription, thus providing perpetual access for the users.<sup>26</sup> This would result in the library re-ensuring that the content that they pay to make available will be in fact part of the library's collection and available for their users long-term.

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<sup>24</sup> M.A. Jones, D. Marshall and S. A. Purtee, "'Big Deal' Deconstruction.", *The Serials Librarian* 64.1-4 (2013), pp. 138-139.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.139.

<sup>26</sup> P.L. Carr and M. Collins, "Acquiring Articles through Unmediated, User-Initiated Pay-Per-View Transactions: An Assessment of Current Practices." *Serials Review* 35.4 (2009), p.272.

## Disadvantages of an unmediated PDA and PPV model

When the library chooses to implement PDA and PPV without any mediation by the subject librarians of each field there are several dangers that could potentially hurt not only the library's budget but the collection as well. So when implemented in an unmediated way, both of these models seem to somehow bypass the role and the importance of the librarian as an expert of not only providing the information but also selecting and evaluating the material that is included in the academic library.<sup>27</sup> A study conducted in 2011 aimed to explore this matter by comparing the librarians' selections and the patrons' selections in a range of selected PDA titles. The study revealed that the patrons had chosen their titles with admirable similarity to the choices that the librarians made and the differences were present but not extreme.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the patrons' choices were mostly driven by their current research needs whereas the librarians chose the titles taking into consideration long-term and future needs of the library's users.<sup>29</sup> Therefore it could be said that the librarians' selections would be a better use of the library's budget when it comes to effective collection building.

Another hidden danger lies in the fact that many of the patrons might actually due their ignorance, convenience or ignorance to do some research in the library's catalogue, request digital material that is already available through the library's print collection thus, resulting in a duplication of content, that is quite the opposite of the library's mission to remain cost-effective and sustainable by careful management of the annual budget. In pilot PDA plans it has been observed that the budget's resources are being drained in a very fast pace often resulting in the need for additional funding for the library.<sup>30</sup> A PDA model specifically targeted for the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.273

<sup>28</sup> L. Shen et al., "Head First into the Patron-Driven Acquisition Pool: A Comparison of Librarian Selections versus Patron Purchases.", *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship* 23.3 (2011), p.216.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> M. De Fino and M.L. Lo, "New Roads for Patron-Driven E-Books: Collection Development and Technical Services Implications of a Patron-Driven Acquisitions Pilot at Rutgers.", *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship* 23.4 (2011), p.330.



acquisition of e-books might also result in a competition between e-book titles and print book titles when it comes to the budget allocation.<sup>31</sup>

All these issues reveal that the implementation of PDA and PPV practices are in fact very useful for the library's budget but the librarian's role still remains at the core of the title selection and ideally there should be a collaboration between the users and the expert librarians in order to ensure that the library's collection is relevant and cost-effective.

### Acquiring e-books via Open Access

In times of crisis, academic libraries are trying to explore all their alternatives when it comes to purchasing materials for their patrons, so the scholarly community won't suffer, or at least suffer less when it comes to having access to material that is vital for research. While trying to avoid pricey journal subscriptions and large e-book bundles through PDA and PPV another emerging alternative could be offered by the controversial Open Access movement. But what exactly is Open Access material?

Open Access is free, immediate, permanent online access to the full text of research articles for anyone, web wide. Open access helps to ensure long-term access to scholarly articles. Unlike articles that are licensed in traditional article databases, libraries can create local copies and institutional repositories of these resources. Libraries, by working together to make repositories of open access literature, can ensure continued access to these scholarly publications into the distant future. Open Access (OA) means that electronic scholarly articles are available freely at any point of use. In general, Open Access (OA) publications are those made freely available online to anyone anywhere, with no charges imposed for access.<sup>32</sup>

It is important at this point to distinguish between Green Open Access and Gold Open Access varieties as they have very different implications for academic libraries. Green Open Access is a rather simple procedure where the author submits the manuscript to

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> N.A. Joshi, R. M. Vatnal, and G.A. Manjunath, "Open Access Initiatives : A Boon to Academic Libraries.", *Library Philosophy and Practice* August (2012), p.1.

an Open Access repository which is also known as ‘self-archiving’.<sup>33</sup> However, to make their articles Gold Open Access authors need to submit their manuscripts to an Open Access publisher as they would do for a conventional publisher.<sup>34</sup> Naturally, the library’s involvement is a lot greater when it comes to Gold Open Access material as this is the material that will be published by an Open Access publisher and that needs to have some sort of funding to back the publication procedure.

### Title Fees

Title fees are the fees that have to be paid in order for an e-book to become Open Access. It functions under the same logic as Article Processing Charges (APC), which in turn is a way through which journal articles can be published as Open Access. This fee which covers all the costs necessary in order for the electronic material to become available as Open Access is either paid by the authors themselves or by the institution or employer that supports the author. In some cases that would be the academic library as well in order to be able to create certain Open Access material and fund the specific work that needs to be acquired. By applying such a model of acquisition the library transforms from demand-driven, for example purchasing journal subscriptions or e-books to supply-drive, thus sharing the production costs to make Open Access titles available.<sup>35</sup> Open access publishing has therefore created a new role for the author and that is the role of the customer. At the same time, it has also created a new role for the libraries that of a publisher. By doing so the dynamics of the market so far are undergoing a change and the author is called to make logical decisions when it comes to publishing the manuscript at stake and following not only the most cost-effective route but the most relevant and useful one as well.<sup>36</sup>

Title Fees in the Open Access publishing setting is still a model under development, and it can be quite difficult to accommodate such expenses in the library’s annual budget. The academic library works on a very strict annual budget and when it is not

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<sup>33</sup> P. Suber, *Open Access* (Cambridge: MIT, 2012. MIT Press Essential Knowledge), n.p.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> H. Morrison, et al., “Open Access Article Processing Charges: DOAJ Survey May 2014.”, *Publications* 3.1 (2015), p.2.

<sup>36</sup> D.J. Solomon, and B.C. Björk, “A Study of Open Access Journals Using Article Processing Charges.”, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 63.8 (2012), p.1485.

in charge for financing a publication or if it won't know that it is going to have to fund the publication of Open Access material, it naturally creates a problem for managing the annual budget, as it is uncertain how much money the library would have to spend on Open Access material.<sup>37</sup>

### **Knowledge Unlatched Initiative (KU)**

The Knowledge Unlatched Initiative is a collaboration between academic libraries in order to be able to share the cost of publishing Open Access titles. Its mission is to create a bridge between the libraries and the publishers in order to ensure that the publication process of Open Access titles runs smoothly and efficiently but also to secure the future of the monograph and that no quality scientific works are lost in the pile of unpublished works.<sup>38</sup> One of the main liabilities of the Open Access movement is the fact that unless the author wants to settle for publishing the manuscript via the Green Open Access route, the publishing procedure has to be supported financially either by the author or by external funding.<sup>39</sup> So, the KU model in the spirit of a 'sharing economy', aims to combine the forces of academic libraries around the world in order to make the Open Access model of acquisition sustainable for each of the libraries' budget and 'unlatch' relevant and quality scholarly works.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Morrison, et al., p.14

<sup>38</sup> L. Montgomery, "Knowledge Unlatched, A Global Library Consortium Model for Funding Open Access Scholarly Books", *Cultural Science Journal* 2015, p.13.

<sup>39</sup> F. Pinter and N. Bown, "Knowledge Unlatched: An Argument for Academic Scholarship in Law to Be Open and How It Might Be Achieved.", *Legal Information Management* 12.3 (2012), p.187.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p.187.

## The KU Model

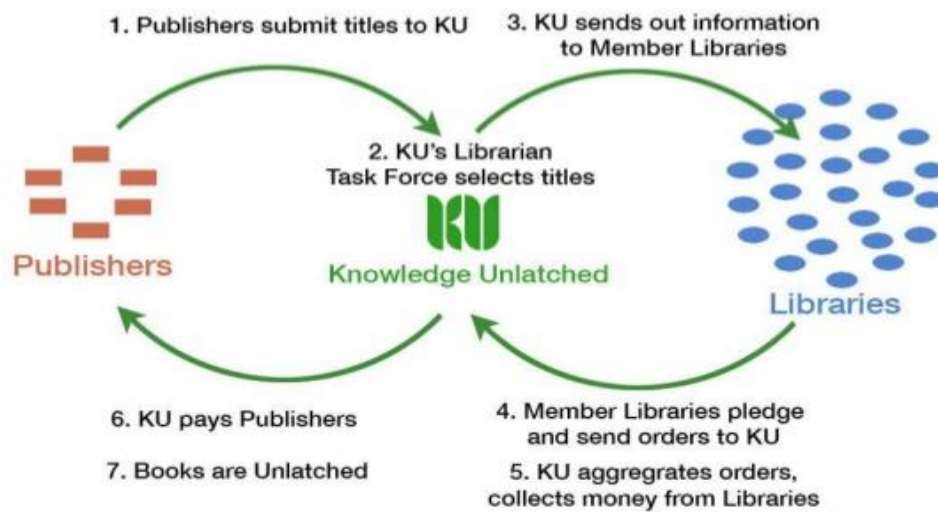


Figure 1: The Knowledge Unlatched Model of Acquisition.<sup>41</sup>

In order to get a clear understanding of how such a collaboration between so many libraries around the world could be achieved, observe the figure above. To start with, the publishers would collect and send the available titles to the Knowledge Unlatched initiative where the KU's task force would select the titles and send them out to all the member libraries. In turn, libraries select the titles individually and place their order and the KU mentioning which titles they wish to purchase, which is a lot similar to how they would place an order to their regular supplier.<sup>42</sup> After receiving all the orders, the KU would collect the money and pay the publishers who would, in turn, make the titles that were selected Open Access.

Much like the Title Fees, such an initiative places the academic library in the role of the publisher, as it is the library that has to make the decision which manuscripts are going to be published and has to expense a part of its budget in order for the titles to be published. Such a responsibility on the behalf of the library has created both positive and negative reactions. On the one hand, it places the library in the centre of the attention as it is the library that ultimately decides what gets to be published and

<sup>41</sup> SlideShare, "Knowledge Unlatched", <<https://www.slideshare.net/KnowledgeUnlatched/knowledge-unlatched-round-2-summary-slides>>, (22 April, 2017).

<sup>42</sup> Pinter, p.188.

what not which could be said to be the opposite of the PDA process. That according to Bryn Geffert, a member of a collaborating library, could be potentially dangerous for the survival of works of ‘esoteric scholarship’.<sup>43</sup> As he stated “scholarship about issues in the developing world is particularly ‘unpopular,’ and yet such scholarship—whose natural audience lives in the developing world—is in particular need of being ‘unlatched’ ”.<sup>44</sup> Initiatives like KU are not likely to defend such a cause as the library would need to think and act as a publisher and think of the most profitable decisions for the future of the library. And while this is an important factor in the decision making no matter the model of acquisition adopted, it would be of more importance when it comes to initiatives like KU.

This initiative aims to mend the problems that academic publishing is facing in the twenty-first century and introduce a new way of collaboration and co-operation in order for the academic libraries to remain sustainable and up-to-date with quality scholarly material. Nevertheless, despite the noble cause of such a model it is important to mention that there are several drawbacks that might hurt its process. Having to agree on which titles to ‘unlatch’ and co-ordinate all the libraries together is a timely process, and time is an extremely important factor when it comes to dealing with publishing and publishers. If the entire process takes too long and it fails to produce the desirable revenue for the publishers, they will, in turn, be dismissive of the initiative as a successful business model. Consequently, the unpredictability of the model for the publishers extends to unpredictability for the library’s collection as they are interdependent.

### **1.3 Technical issues and complexities during the acquisition process of the e-book**

#### **E-book Licenses**

Regardless of the model or models of acquisition that the academic library might use in order to obtain and include e-books in its catalogue, there are several

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<sup>43</sup> J. Howard, “Libraries Test a Model for Setting Monographs Free via Open Access.”, *Chronicle of Higher Education* 60.30 (2014), p.A19.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

technical issues attached that apply to almost all e-book transactions. Before the actual purchase of the title, the library has to familiarize and be aware of the conditions that are attached to the contracts they sign with the publishers and settle on a license agreement before access will be granted by the publisher or the aggregator.<sup>45</sup> During the negotiations, it is very important to ensure that it will be protected against any third-party claims that there is copyright infringement or a violation of any rights that arose during the library's use of the e-book.<sup>46</sup> It is noteworthy to mention that the academic library should proceed very carefully during negotiating the licensing of the e-books with the publishers so as to not be held accountable legally for any misuse that derives from its patrons. The library's responsibility should lie in making sure that its patrons are aware of the licenses' restrictions and all necessary measurements are being applied so as to protect copyright laws and the publishers' interest.<sup>47</sup> Despite the library's best interest in securing the publisher's wishes, however, monitoring all uses of an e-book is an almost unrealistic scenario and thus the library as an institution should not be held accountable for the patrons' usage of the e-books.

Licensing negotiations most of the time are straight-forward and the topics discussed between the libraries and the publishers and aggregators are very similar each time. The main points covered include negotiations of the price, Digital Rights Management restrictions (DRM) which monitor what the users are able to do with the digital material and providing access off campus.<sup>48</sup> One issue that remains unmentioned but it is highly relevant for the library is archiving licensed e-book content. So far, academic libraries heavily rely on suppliers for archiving the digital resources included in their catalogue but it is vital for the library's future to negotiate and devise a plan and an infrastructure able to support the archiving of the content that it provides access to.<sup>49</sup> Securing access to content is vital for the library's collection and should be negotiated with the publishers the signing of a contract.

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<sup>45</sup> S. Polanka, *No Shelf Required : E-books in Libraries*, (Chicago: American Library Association, 2011), p. 111.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.115.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> M. Vasileiou, J. Rowley, and R. Hartley, "The E-Book Management Framework: The Management of E-Books in Academic Libraries and Its Challenges.", *Library and Information Science Research* 34.4 (2012), p. 286.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 287.

To a certain degree, policies that are used when it comes to analogue books in the library can be extended to e-book licensing. For instance, the model one book per one user at a time when it comes to lending printed books is very similar to what has been referred to as the netLibrary model that permits one e-book per one patron at a time. This model only authorizes content to one user at a time while it also safeguards the material from being viewed by unauthorized people.<sup>50</sup> But the e-book is not as static and stable as its analogue counterpart is; users expect an e-book to deliver the same properties that a print book can offer. A survey conducted in 2012 revealed that over 40% of the participants rated annotation as the most important e-book feature which highlights once more the tension between the physical and the digital properties of print books and e-books.<sup>51</sup>

Libraries need to accommodate the fact that e-books formats are changing and developing and thus acquiring and negotiating terms of usage is changing with them.

### User's Rights and Restrictions

The rights and restrictions tied to each title differ depending on the title and on whether the access is provided directly by the publisher or by an aggregator. Academic libraries as institutions of information dissemination want to be able to provide as many rights as possible for their users, whether that would imply downloading sections of the e-book for personal use or even for sharing the content with their colleagues.<sup>52</sup> But of course, publishers and aggregators do not share the library's task of being an access point of information for its patrons. Publishers and aggregators are mainly commercial companies that are concerned with profit and thus the idea of their intellectual property being disseminated in a free-for-all manner is not a very attractive one. Thus, they opt for using strict digital restrictions tied to their e-book collections, making broad usage difficult for the libraries' patrons.

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<sup>50</sup>A.M. Wyatt, "Licenses, the Law, and Libraries.", *Journal of Library Administration* 42.3-4 (2008), p.116.

<sup>51</sup> E. D. Cassidy, et al., "Not in Love, or Not in the Know? Graduate Student and Faculty Use (and Non-Use) of E-Books." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 38.6 (2012), p.329.

<sup>52</sup>Polanka, p.118.

These restrictions can limit the amount of viewing per session, limit the number of pages that can be printed at a single session and also limit the rights of downloading and transferring the content.<sup>53</sup> Even at times when the license either approves such usage by the patrons or doesn't prohibit it at least, users find themselves unable to use the e-book in a certain way if it is tied to DRM restriction software, which shifts the responsibility to the user to prove that certain usage such as printing is in fact allowed.<sup>54</sup>

It is the library's responsibility in order to avoid legal complexities and protect the institution against misuse of the e-books that they purchase, to state clearly the rights and the restrictions of usage in the license agreement that they sign with the publishers or the aggregators.<sup>55</sup>

Due to the fact that the library is not collaborating with a single publisher or a single aggregator for that matter, avoiding the misuse of their e-book collection would be a very daunting and time-consuming task because of the different licensing agreements with each of them. Thus, the library has to make sure that its staff is updated and their users are educated accordingly.

### **E-book Interlibrary Loan**

One other way that academic libraries operate under a system of collaboration has been for several decades the Interlibrary Loan (ILL). This means that whenever an academic library does not have a title requested from a patron in its catalogue, the title can be requested by one of the other collaborating libraries. Interlibrary loan because of the domination of printed material remained a straightforward way of a library borrowing a specific title from a fellow library without having to purchase the title. Despite the fact that in the recent past it was viewed as a rather unpopular practice the

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<sup>53</sup> W.H. Walters, "E-Books in Academic Libraries: Challenges for Sharing and Use.", *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 46.2 (2014), p.89.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 92.

<sup>55</sup> Polanka, p.119.



need for collaboration and sharing of materials nowadays is vital for the academic library's future and viability as an institution.<sup>56</sup>

The growing importance of ILL is also tied to the fact that the introduction of technology has brought about more demanding patrons that render the library incapable of satisfying their every demand. Thus, while beginning as a rather obscure means of acquiring material, it is slowly transitioning as a core means of providing access to the patrons' requests.<sup>57</sup>

The growing number of e-books in the library catalogue has introduced several benefits as well as complications for the ILL. First of all, the ability to share online material would mean that the library can satisfy its patrons' needs instantly as well as cheaply.<sup>58</sup> Whereas previously ILL was a rather lengthy process as the printed titles after being requested they would have to be shipped to the collaborating library, with an e-book title such a problem is instantly solved as the delivery to the user is instant. ILL loan is also a great way of getting hold of material that is rather difficult to be obtained in print such as dissertations and theses.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, despite all their benefits e-books still pose several complications that make their use, and in this case their borrowing and lending, difficult. As stated, publishers and aggregators, where the library usually purchases the e-books, are not keen on making access to the e-books easy in fear of copyright infringement and naturally loss of their revenue if their materials can be purchased only by one library and then be made accessible through ILL to a wide network of collaborating libraries. Now more than ever before the users of the library are aware of what they can access and what they cannot, so having found an e-book title that they would like to use and being denied access to it because of the license restrictions exacerbates the view that the library cannot meet the information needs of today and provide its patrons with sufficient material, which can be easily accessed.<sup>60</sup> It might be the case that the publishers will allow lending of e-book titles between libraries but that would be done following their rules. For instance, HarperCollins was one of the first 'big' publishers

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<sup>56</sup> S.M. McHone-Chase, "Examining Change Within Interlibrary Loan.," *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Electronic Reserve* 20.3 (2010), pp.201-202.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p.202.

<sup>58</sup> W. Gee, "The Conundrum of eBooks and Interlibrary Loan.," *Against the Grain* 19.2 (2007), p. 22.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p.24.

to allow interlibrary loan but it set a limit of 26 loans and the library would be forced to purchase the title again or have it removed from its catalogue.<sup>61</sup>

The University of South Florida (USF), in an attempt to make ILL for electronic resources easier, joined the WorldCat Knowledge Base aiming to collect two sets of data; a holdings report and a report that would show ILL licensing allowances.<sup>62</sup> The results of this effort highlighted the fact that the most important obstacle in achieving successful ILL for electronic resources was the miscommunication between departments within the library. Results surfaced the shortcomings of the Electronic Resources department of the library to organize the individual database and publisher contracts in order to answer ILL's requests.<sup>63</sup> So the publishers are not the only ones to blame for the difficulties into implementing ILL for electronic resources and e-books. It might be the case that sharing electronic resources is not as easy or as straight-forward as print resources but it is achievable as long as there is successful communication first within the library's departments and second with the library and the publishers' licensing agreements.

## Chapter 2: Administration and Economy

### 2.1 Budget Allowance

In order for the academic library to run smoothly, there has to be a team responsible for its finances and making sure that the budget limitations are respected. Such a task due to the increasing budget cuts and the complications attached to keeping up with both a digital and an analogue collection can be proven to be rather gruesome. The most important issue that factors in the budget management is, of course, the effort to provide appropriate infrastructure so as to cater to the patrons' needs and desires while still staying within the budget.<sup>64</sup> This involves the growing importance on the library's ability to adapt to the swiftly changing needs of its users

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<sup>61</sup> J. Percy, "E-book Lending: The Challenges Facing Interlibrary Loan.", *Interlending & Document Supply* 41.2 (2013), p. 44.

<sup>62</sup> R. Donlan and L.M. Schmidt, "From the Editors: E-Resources in Interlibrary Loan—Breaking Departmental Barriers", *Journal of Interlibrary Loan* 22.3-4 (2012), p.120.,

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> G.E. Evans, "The In's and Out's of Library Budget Preparation.", *The Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances* 14.1 (2001), p.20.

while surviving on the same budget. Another significant factor for the academic library is the need to archive and preserve its content, and whether that may be analogue or digital it is a very costly procedure to make sure that the content is available and will remain available for the users for the years to come.<sup>65</sup>

The space that is required by the analogue collection is a very important argument for the shift towards digital and access. Space above all is of crucial importance to the academic library as it can be used as a classroom, meeting point or study space instead of being used as a storage room for collections that are not used by the patrons and that could be stored in their scanned version for the sake of archiving and preserving the knowledge which is one of the library's tasks.<sup>66</sup> While it is true that a digital collection is not a cheap one to maintain in many cases it is actually a lot more expensive to maintain access to the servers that support the digital material than to store a printed collection the high cost of the analogue collection is intensified by the fact that it remains unused by the majority of the patrons.<sup>67</sup> Thus, it actually drains a large portion of the library's budget while it is not contributing and it is not corresponding to what the patrons actually need.

### Duplication of content

Publishers have always strived to provide a single title in a number of different formats so as to accommodate as many research needs as possible, and it was the task of the librarian to decide the format which would be most relevant for the library's users.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, librarians for many years chose to have multiple copies of the same material in a different format (both electronic and print) despite the fact that this had as a consequence that less money from the budget allowance could be spent on new material.<sup>69</sup> But as years go by and every year budget cuts are being made in order to ensure the sustainability of the library, is that still a common, or for that matter appropriate practice for the academic library? In most cases, librarians opted for the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> P. Courant, and M. Nielsen, "The Cost of Keeping a Book." *The idea of order: Transforming research collections for 21st century scholarship* (2010), p.102.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p102.

<sup>68</sup> A. Maple, C. Wright, and R. Seeds, "Analysis of Format Duplication in an Academic Library Collection.", *Library Collections, Acquisition and Technical Services* 27.4 (2003), p.426.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

duplication of content in order to ensure the preservation and access of their materials because of the unpredictable and unstable nature of electronic archiving. But as we move forward the cost of maintaining the analogue collections rises and electronic archiving is developing and minimizing its shortcomings.

In an effort to cut back on costs most academic libraries have a no duplication policy meaning that normally there wouldn't be more than two copies of the same title in the library.

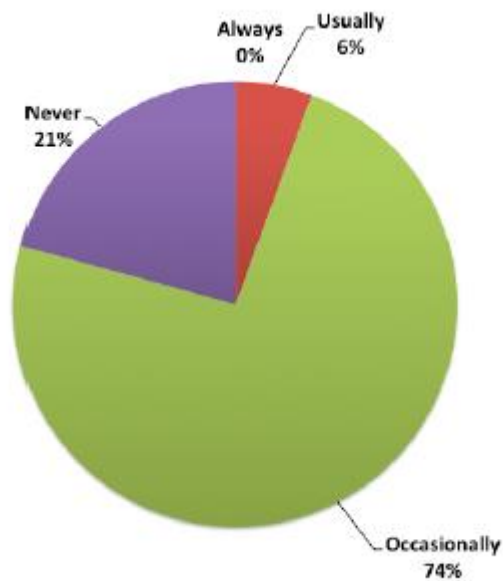


Figure 2: Responses to the question: “When you purchase or license an e-book, how often do you also buy a copy of the same title in print?”<sup>70</sup>

As it can be observed in the above pie chart despite the fact that most academic libraries responded that they occasionally acquire the same title both in print and as an e-book, none of the libraries responded that this is a practice that they always follow and only 6% of the responses claimed that they usually follow such a practice. Judging from this result it is evident that duplication of content is generally to be avoided unless there is a reason behind such an approach.

While users and mainly the university students are almost exclusively retrieving the information they want online through the library's online catalogue,<sup>71</sup> when it comes

<sup>70</sup> Library Journal, “2016 E-book usage in U.S. Academic Libraries”, *Library Journal*, <<http://lj.libraryjournal.com/downloads/2016academicebooksurvey/>> , p.67, (14<sup>th</sup> June, 2017).

<sup>71</sup> Kaser, p.35.

to reading the title cover-to-cover they still seem to have a reference for reading in print rather than reading the title in its e-format.

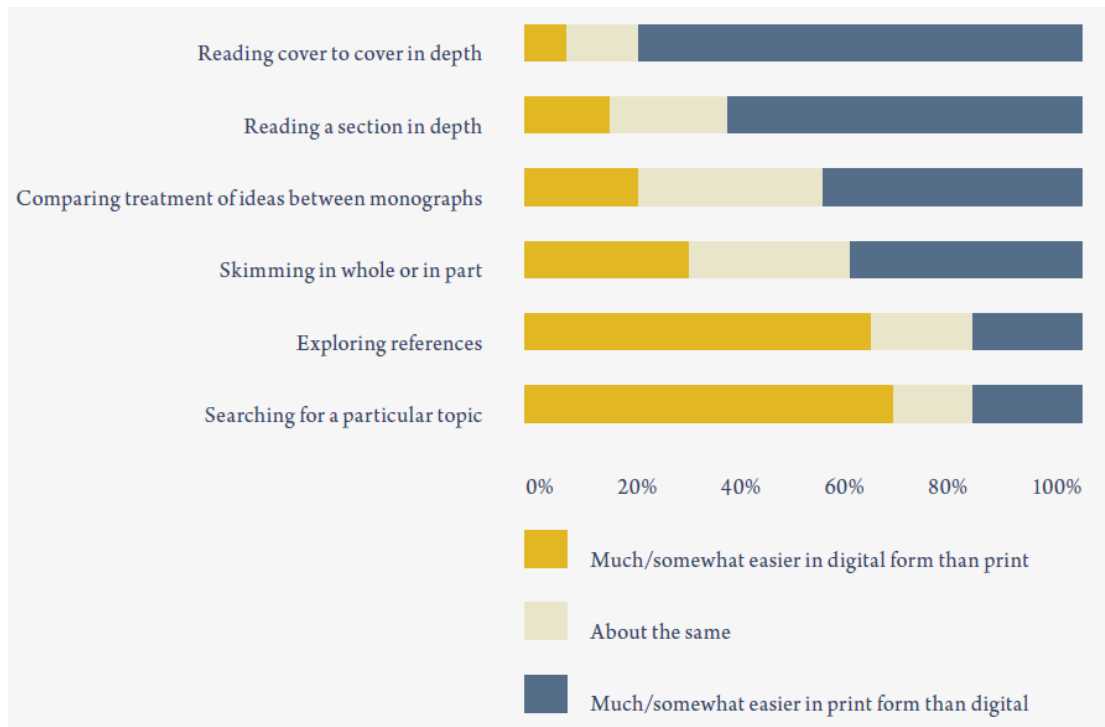


Figure 3: Difficulty level as defined by users when reading a monograph in print and in e-format.<sup>72</sup>

It is clear to observe that depending on the intended use by the patron there is a preference of a different format. However, this does not necessarily mean that the library would have to cater to all its users' preferences, such a task would be impossible. The library is forced to make the decision of whether to have the title either in print or in an e-book format by factoring in the intended usage of the patrons, taking into account the title, the discipline and the users requests and experience thus far. The major complication of such a task as already mentioned by Roger Schonfeld would be that 'the same academics prefer print versions of monographs strongly for some uses and digital versions strongly for other uses'.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup> R.C. Schonfeld, "Stop the Presses." *Ithaca S+R* (2015), n.p.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

## 2.2 Managing the E-book collection

### E-book Cost Calculations

Over the years e-books have become invaluable for the academic library and this has changed the way in which e-books are priced and delivered to the library. The fact that there is a high demand for scholarly monographs in the library is leverage for the publishers as they are the ones that call the shots, setting the prices and dictating the licensing terms. Despite the strong dissatisfaction on behalf of the library, this situation is perpetuated as the publishers benefit from this and are unwilling to negotiate better terms for the library, as the library keeps purchasing e-books even though they are steeply priced. This is closely related to the fact that academic librarians of today have to juggle too many tasks and they lack the time in order to research further and expand their options through negotiating the terms with the publishers, and so in order to avoid lengthy discussions with the publishers that would take up their time.

On the surface, it would seem that the making of an e-book would cost less for a publisher as it doesn't imply printing and distribution costs which are the two costly aspects of an analogue book.<sup>74</sup> Notwithstanding, creating and making an e-book available does not differ greatly when it comes to following the steps of making a printed book, so the publication costs are not greatly reduced. Moreover, in addition to the standard process in the release of a book, an e-book would also require three additional steps which include; the digitized preparation (in multiple formats), quality assurance ensuring that the e-book would be read with an ease of access and is of quality material and digital distribution to several different distributors or retailers, while taking into account the many varying standards and platforms that they have.<sup>75</sup>

Even though, the production process involved in both print and e-books is considered to be fairly similar the choice of one over the other has usually an important impact on the library's budget. This is often referred to as budget cannibalization, meaning that

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<sup>74</sup> S.M. Besen, and S.N. Kirby, "Library Demand for E-books and E-book Pricing: An Economic Analysis.", *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 45.2 (2014), p.130.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, p.130.

when the library spends a larger portion of the budget for e-books that would equal less available funds for print book acquisition.

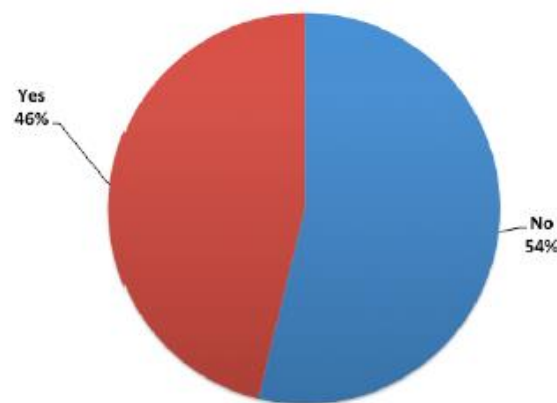


Figure 4: Responses to the question: “Does the money you spend on e-books detract from another budget?”.<sup>76</sup>

Based on the figure above, the majority of libraries (56%) does not sacrifice other parts of the budget in order to acquire access to e-books. Despite that, the percentage that does, in fact, use up the overall budget to favour e-book acquisition is quite high at 46%. Moreover, of that 46% replying yes to that question more than half (52%) mentioned that the money detracts from their print budget.<sup>77</sup>

A determining factor on whether or not it is advisable for the library to acquire a printed version or the e-book equivalent and if it is worth it to invest in either one or none formats of the material is the expected usage of each of the formats. When acquiring an e-book the library often takes into account the flexible nature of the e-book which involves access without the physical presence of the user to the library’s premises and the simultaneous access of multiple users provided the agreement with the publisher allows (whereas with the printed version there can only be one user at a time). But the ability for the library to benefit from these features of the e-book depends on the initial negotiating terms that the libraries agree with the publishers. It has to be clearly stated how many users are allowed to access the e-book at one time, and also on the total usage that is allowed for the library’s patrons and depending on the terms that are agreed an e-book title can either be more or less expensive for the library. For instance, the library would have to pay a lot more to the publishers in

<sup>76</sup> Library Survey 2016, p. 64.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

order to ensure unlimited usage of an e-book than to a limited and strictly restricted usage.

In case the library doesn't want to purchase an unlimited or for that matter limited access to an e-book, there are always other options available, like the Pay-per-View model of acquisition that was discussed earlier. In this case, the library would have to pay only when a user actually uses the e-book. However, by providing access to e-books via PPV and similar models it is very difficult for the library to predict the costs of the e-books and accommodate for them in the annual budget, as the use by the patrons can be unpredictable.<sup>78</sup> There is also a hidden danger lurking when applying pay per access models as the unpredictability of the usage by the patrons could result in spending a larger amount of the annual budget than wanted.

A decisive component in the process of acquiring an e-book is also placed on the license freedoms and restrictions that are stated in the contract with the publishers. More specifically, a crucial element of the license agreement is whether or not the publisher allows for the e-book and generally digital material to be downloaded and printed.<sup>79</sup> Academic librarians and the library's users place great value on whether or not the material they can access online can be downloaded and printed as this would normally facilitate their research process to a great extent.<sup>80</sup> Thus, despite the fact that a specific e-book title might cost more money for the library in order to be accessed by its users and for them to have the ability to print and download its contents, it is in fact more valuable and cost-effective for the library than paying less money to the publishers but not being able to provide these freedoms for its users.

Overall, the library would be willing to spend more money from their budget in order to be able to have more freedom for the materials that they are licensed to use.

Academic librarians after comparing acquisition models and schemes for the acquisition of an e-book title would agree to invest their budget in whichever solution better corresponds to the needs of their users providing that the budget would allow it and that the library can remain sustainable.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p.133.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.



It is also crucial to mention at this point that despite the fact that the majority of academic libraries are still managing to stay within budget and provide access to a wide range of e-books, pricing schemes of today are mostly driven by profit for the publishers which results into an everyday struggle to maintain the library's collection diverse and live up to its responsibility for the academic librarians. In most cases for the library, it is actually cheaper to acquire the print version rather than access to the same title electronically as an e-book. Despite that such a practice would seem rather illogical to most people, it has to be taken into account that the publishers are not ready to give up on print yet. By keeping the e-book prices high and the print equivalent cheaper they ensure that the market and their profit from print book sales are safe.<sup>81</sup>

### **E-book Preservation**

At first sight, one would assume that the printed book is of a more fragile nature than the e-book as its physicality is subject to water, fire and even dirt damage that would render the book unusable. Even though e-books do not share the same weaknesses as the analogue books, their digital nature still makes them quite fragile as it depends largely on the quality of maintenance that their servers receive.<sup>82</sup> It could even be said that their nature is of a more fragile nature than the printed book as the servers that host the digital material or the vendor platforms that develop them could at any given moment and without a warning, stop working, resulting in the loss of invaluable content for the scholars, students and the library. This would be yet another implication of the library's move towards an institution of access.

So the library, by providing access to e-books and digital material has to ensure that these materials will be retrievable and are going to be preserved in order to be used (providing that they were obtained through a model of acquisition that is not short-term). In order to be able to achieve that digital preservation policies have to be applied.

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<sup>81</sup> K. Anderson, "The Expensive e-Book: The Illogical Reasons Why Paper Books Can Sell for Less", *The Scholarly Kitchen*, 15 March, 2011, < <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2011/03/15/the-expensive-e-book-the-illogical-reasons-why-paper-books-can-sell-for-less/> > , (15<sup>th</sup> June, 2016).

<sup>82</sup> S.Polanka, *No Shelf Required 2 Use and Management of Electronic Books* (Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2012), p.71.

Digital preservation involves a series of management policies and activities necessary to ensure the enduring usability (the intellectual content of the item must remain usable via the delivery mechanism of current technology), authenticity (the provenance of the content must be proven and the content an authentic replica of the original as deposited), discoverability (the content must have logical bibliographical metadata so that the content can be found by the end users through time) and lastly accessibility (the content must be available for use to the appropriate community).<sup>83</sup>

Libraries can either collaborate with each other or with specialized preservation agencies to make sure that all the above criteria are being met for their digital collection.

Digital material has brought new complications to the traditional preservation practices, as e-books and digital material, in general, do not share the straightforward nature of the printed book. This does not mean, however, that preserving the analogue collection is an easy task as it requires skilled and experienced staff, money and time in order for the library to be able to maintain it. Preserving the e-book collection cannot naturally follow the preservation procedures of the analogue collection, but it introduces new challenges and raises new issues.

The main issues that are tied to the e-book collection in the academic library are of a legal nature. Because the way or ways through which the libraries acquire e-books are not as straightforward as the acquisition of a printed book, access and preservation of content are rather complicated issues. And at this point, it is important to make the distinction between providing access and preserving the content. The ability of the library to provide access to an e-book does not come hand-in-hand with the authorization to preserve the access through a third party service.<sup>84</sup> Copyright restrictions that are tied to e-books and most digital material in order to ensure the legal usage of the content in most cases forbid meddling with original files and changing content, which is what a preservation service would be required to do in order to ensure the provision of access.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p.73.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p.77.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

Another inherent property of the e-book that might hinder the library's preservation efforts is their content and their format which can vary significantly depending on the provider of the e-book. In order for changes in the printed book to be taken into effect, the publisher would have to publish a second edition with the enhancement or retraction of content. When it comes to e-books, however, when hosted in the publishers' platforms this is a relatively easy procedure, which does not require the same time, money and effort that it does with a printed book.<sup>86</sup> While that is rather beneficial for the publishers, it poses a challenge for the preservation effort. In the commercial world when a new edition of a book is published the older version stops circulating and is replaced. Nevertheless, one of the responsibilities of the academic library is to preserve knowledge, and would, therefore, most likely keep any of the editions of the same printed book available in archives. So, ideally, a similar principle should be applied to their e-book collection, where the preservation agencies associated with the library would opt for maintaining the older version of the e-book and not entirely replacing it with the new edition.<sup>87</sup> Despite the fact that this would be a feasible scenario it presupposes the right contractual provisions and an excellent communication between the library, the preservation service, and the publishers so that it can be assured that everyone is aware of any changes in the e-book collection.

The large availability of digital material and e-content has made the preservation procedure complicated yet exciting for the new possibilities that it implies. With the proper collaboration of all affected parties, challenges could become less and less dire in the future and access will be secured for a large collection of e-books that unfortunately has not been achieved yet today.<sup>88</sup>

### Removing outdated e-book titles

Due to the fact that e-books do not physically take up space in the library, librarians often disregard the fact that some of the e-books are irrelevant or too expensive to preserve or not really necessary for their collection and thus need to be

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p.78.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p.79.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p.90.

tossed out.<sup>89</sup> While the academic library staff regularly makes selections and discards dated and unnecessary material for their printed collection, as physical space is of utmost importance for the library, this is not the case with their e-book collection.

For the sake of ease and also cost-effectiveness, libraries rather often choose to purchase large ‘Big Deal’ packages from publishers that include several titles of e-books, instead of selecting them one-by-one which would result in a more cohesive collection but is highly time-consuming and much more expensive than purchasing a bundle of e-books instead of individual titles. Despite its benefits, this way of acquiring e-books can result in purchasing titles that are not relevant to the library and its users and also that it would be more complicated to weed these titles out in the process of updating the library catalogue.

While the e-book collection does not occupy physical space in the library it can generate several complications in the way that the library catalogue returns search results. Since their introduction, most e-books have been around in the library catalogue for over a decade without being reviewed or discarded if they are no longer relevant for the library. As a result, despite the fact that they don’t create spatial clutter they create virtual clutter by showing up in the user’s searches and compromising their research process.<sup>90</sup>

However, the blame for failing to have quality checks in the e-book collection is not to be placed entirely in the library and its staff. Removing a title from the e-book collection is not as simple or as straightforward as removing a title from the analogue collection’s. In most cases, the library does not have the authorization to meddle with their e-book collection, especially when it is part of an aforementioned ‘Big Deal’ package. Therefore in order to weed out and discard e-book titles that are no longer fitting for the library, the staff has to contact the mediator or the vendor of the title in order to be able to remove it from their catalogue.<sup>91</sup> The library doesn’t acquire every e-book title of the catalogue from the same vendor, and given that different vendors use different platforms and interfaces, the process of removing an e-book title would

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<sup>89</sup> R. E. Miller, “Academic Libraries Should Consider Deselection of Some Electronic Books.”, *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* 10.3 (2015), p.94.

<sup>90</sup> M. Waugh, M. Donlin, and S. Braunstein, “Next-Generation Collection Management: A Case Study of Quality Control and Weeding E-Books in an Academic Library.”, *Collection Management* 40.1 (2015), p.20.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, p.20.

be different each time.<sup>92</sup> Thus, having quality control and weeding out the e-book collection would require a lot of planning and time from the library staff, making the process a lot more difficult than weeding out the analogue collection, which might be one of the reasons why most libraries prefer not to deal with it until it is facilitated by the vendors.

Time management is highly important for the library staff of today, as every day they have to deal with the up keep of both the digital and the analogue collection, making sure that materials will be available to the users upon request. Not being able to evaluate and modify their digital, e-book collection creates complications for the end users, as the catalogue will be cluttered with unnecessary titles, but for the library as well as their task will be further slowed down by having to maintain titles that are no longer relevant.

### 2.3 Open Access Titles in the Academic Library

The Open Access (OA) movement has undoubtedly caused a stir in both the publishing and consequently in the library world as they are directly connected. The changes that the Open Access movement has brought in terms of accessing information are also involved in the changes that the academic library is currently undergoing as an institution. It is evident that the e-book collection in the academic library does not come without complications and the introduction of Open Access titles in the catalogue has only furthered such complications. A major issue that arises with Open Access titles is how Open Access titles are accommodated in the library's catalogue. It is a fact that the information that is becoming freely accessible is growing and that because of that libraries have to work together with other libraries or institutions in order to learn how to share these repositories of freely accessible information in a successful manner.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> S. Barr, "Open Access and its impact on the future of the university librarian", *The Guardian*, 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2012 < <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2012/oct/25/open-access-university-library-impact>> (22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2016).

## Providing Access to Open Access Titles

The ease with which Open Access titles can be accommodated in the existing catalogue of the library is linked with whether these titles will enter the supply chain following pre-existing practices and platforms that are already in practice for the acquisition of e-journals and e-books.<sup>94</sup> So far the two major indices aiming for the better discoverability of Open Access titles, the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) and the OAPEN (Open Access Publishing in the European Networks) library, have only integrated the titles into two discovery services; Summon and EDS.<sup>95</sup> Thanks to these discovery services it might be the case that the user would be able to reach Open Access material via using a web-scale search engine but depending on the layout of the library's catalogue the user might have difficulty in retrieving the same material.<sup>96</sup> For instance, you might be able to find the Open Access monograph if you are browsing through the catalogue's "All Content" option but the same material could not appear if you are browsing through the catalogue's e-book platforms.

The inclusion of Open Access titles in the already existing library catalogue introduces new complications but it might also be a move forward for the library in the long term. It all depends on the library's policies and how much it is willing to invest both time and budget wise in order to accommodate Open Access titles for its users. Because Open Access titles do not directly affect the library's budget unless of course, the library invests part of its budget in order to acquire specific titles, through financing Gold Open Access for instance, the library and its staff do not feel obligated to make sure that Open Access titles are retrievable through their catalogue and through the e-book platforms that are already used. Librarians might be unwilling to add to their already overloaded workflow new responsibilities and roles such as the inclusion of Open Access titles in the library, but it depends on whether or not the library would be willing to make this investment in order to enjoy long-term benefits of Open Access titles instead of just spending the budget via the traditional acquisition route of aggregators and publishers.

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<sup>94</sup> E. Collins, and G. Stone, "Open Access Monographs and the Role of the Library.", *Insights: the UKSG journal* 27.S (2014), p.12.

<sup>95</sup> Web scale discovery services are designed to provide a simple Google-like search box, which enables library users to search all of the library's resources with a single query.

<sup>96</sup> Collins and Stone, p.12.

## Inclusion in the catalogue

While there are still sceptics and librarians that don't want to invest in Open Access, the majority feels the need to be a part of and participate in the Open Access movement.<sup>97</sup> The most common and trustworthy path that librarians use in order to provide access to Open Access titles through their catalogue is the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), which is the most prominent aggregator of peer-reviewed or editor-selected Open Access journals ensuring their academic quality.<sup>98</sup> By using DOAJ as a provider for Open Access titles and making the searches available through the library's catalogue, the Open Access title's visibility is being raised and the patrons of the library can retrieve a lot easier Open Access material that would be otherwise too difficult to get a hold of.<sup>99</sup> Since the material that can be found in DOAJ is freed from copyright there would be no legal implications for the library and they wouldn't need to run it through a service proxy, as authentication would not be needed to access freely available material.

The question remains, however: out of the vast sea of Open Access titles what should be included in the catalogue? As previously stated, information clutter in the library's catalogue severely slows down the research process as it meddles with the search results and makes the relevant material a lot harder to be discoverable and retrieved by the users of the library. So how does the library choose to provide access to Open Access material, is a 'the more the better' attitude a sane practice as it would be a way to enrich the catalogue without spending any of the library's budget or would a 'less is more' attitude actually be more effective?

So far, libraries that have chosen to support the Open Access movement have been rather selective with the titles that they make visible through their catalogue.

According to the Publishers Communications Group (PCG) 's survey in 2014, 63% of the librarians stated that they have careful selection criteria when it comes to providing access to Open Access titles.<sup>100</sup> The selection criteria included whether or not the titles are peer-reviewed and quality controlled, for example through the DOAJ,

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<sup>97</sup> Publishers Communication Group (PCG). "Open Access Library Survey: An Investigation of the Role of Libraries in Open Access Funding and Support within Institutions.", September (2014), p.12.

<sup>98</sup> E. Cryer and M. Collins, "Incorporating Open Access into Libraries.", *Serials Review* 37.2 (2011), p.104.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, p104.

<sup>100</sup> Publishers Communication Group (PCG), p.6.

if they correspond to each of the faculty's curriculum and whether or not are requested by the faculty or the users.<sup>101</sup>

While it might be tempting to bypass the time-consuming selection procedure in order to choose which of the Open Access titles will end up in the library's catalogue, it makes sense to make this selection and not accommodate all the material that is available as that would result in an immense clutter of information that in the end may not be relevant or beneficial for the library's patrons.

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Open Access titles in the Library**

Despite the fact that the Open Access movement is relatively new in the scholarly world, it has already raised a lot of questions and initiated discussions on the future of academic publishing. Critics and advocates, however, both agree that the movement has not failed and it is highly unlikely for it to fail. In spite of its shortcomings, it has been established in the scholarly community though its future and development remain to be seen. The most likely scenario that will prevail, and which is the one that is true today, is that the Open Access movement will be part of a mixed scholarly communication that will include elements of both traditional and Open Access publishing, which is also true of how libraries operate as well.<sup>102</sup> The success of the Open Access movement heavily depends, among other factors, on the commitment on the part of the academic library for the funding, the provision of adequate staff, and the operation of digital repositories as well as archives that can preserve Open Access titles.<sup>103</sup> Even though Open Access titles have been around for quite some time already, it can be observed that they are not a priority for the academic library.<sup>104</sup>

Investing in Open Access titles would have numerous advantages for the library. First of all, once the title has been made Open Access either by the supported funding of the library or not would mean that the library if it chose to accommodate the title in its

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p.7.

<sup>102</sup> C. W. Bailey, "Open Access and Libraries.", *Collection Management* 32.3-4 (2008), p.368.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p.368.

<sup>104</sup> A. McCollough, "Does It Make a Sound: Are Open Access Monographs Discoverable in Library Catalogs?", *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 17.1 (2017), p.182.



catalogue, it would own the title and not merely have the license to use it and provide local access, as when the library obtains its e-titles through traditional publishing.<sup>105</sup> Open Access titles would mean unlimited access to the academic library meaning that the need for recalls or interlibrary loans becomes eliminated.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, the barriers and the obstacles that the user comes across when accessing an e-book, such as restrictions on printing, limited loan period and a limited amount of users accessing the title are no longer valid for an Open Access title.<sup>107</sup>

However, the many blessings and the noble cause of the Open Access movement, it introduces several complications and issues for the academic library. The fact that there is so much material available for Open Access publishing either as a candidate or already published as Open Access, is making the selection and the inclusion in the catalogue very lengthy procedures. As the academic libraries of today operate under the mixed publishing of both traditional and Open Access, there are several issues that the librarians are called to overcome. From one side, the traditional publishing of digital material and e-books has created the need for elaborate negotiations over DRM and license restrictions. On the other hand, Open Access publishing having resolved the license restriction problem is often problematic as it might be the case that certain Open Access titles are under embargo and thus not available in the catalogue.<sup>108</sup> This may be the cause of user frustration, as the library's patrons usually strive for immediate access and not being able to reach to the material they are interested may hurt the library's dependability.

It is important to highlight at this moment that the library doesn't have to be an avid advocate of Open Access in order to provide access and include Open Access titles in its catalogue.<sup>109</sup> As research and surveys suggest, the vast majority of libraries are already involved in one way or another in the Open Access movement by including Open Access titles in their catalogue or choosing to fund the publication of them in order for them to be made Open Access, and thus it is crucial for academic librarians

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid, p.369.

<sup>106</sup> McCollough, p.191.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, p.371.

<sup>109</sup> K.L. Palmer, E. Dill, and C. Christie, "Where There's a Will There's a Way?: Survey of Academic Librarian Attitudes about Open Access.", *College & Research Libraries* 70.4 (2009), p.319.

to stay informed and keep up with changes in the Open Access publishing world, in order to gain the best out of it for their users.

## **Chapter 3: The User-perspective**

### **3.1 E-books and its users**

Academic librarians often get caught up with remaining up-to-date with every model of acquisition for e-books, staying within the annual budget and ensuring that materials are delivered in a timely and organized manner to their patrons. In order for the library to run smoothly, however, it is crucial to take a step back and research into the end users' preferences and behavioural patterns when it comes to using an e-book accessed through the academic library.

#### **What do the users want?**

It could be of enlightening for academic librarians to research through surveys what the users actually want and which format they prefer depending on their research needs in order to be able to understand better why they make the choices that they make regarding e-books and how can the library enhance and facilitate their experience with the e-book collection.

Library Journal conducted an extended survey in 2012 and did a follow-up survey in 2016 in order to explore e-book usage in academic libraries all across the United States.

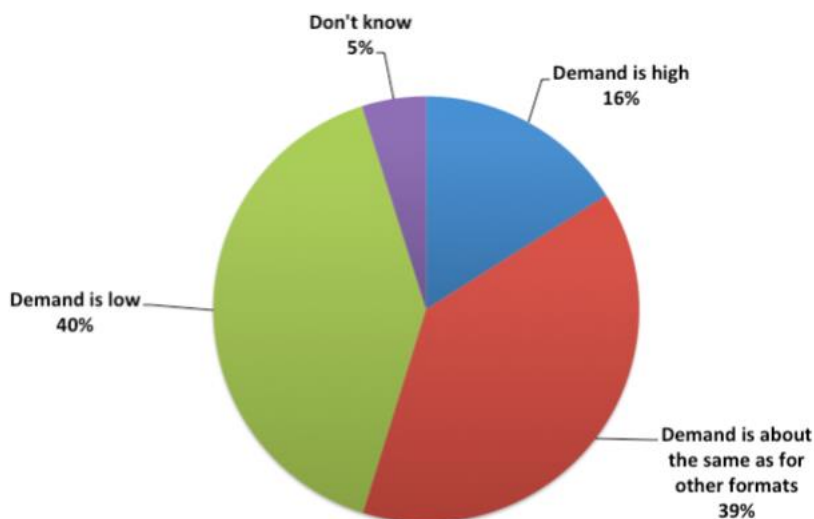


Figure 5: Responses to the question: “Compared to other formats, how would you describe demand for e-books in your library”.<sup>110</sup>

Strikingly enough, even though, today’s students recognize the importance of access during their academic studies we can observe in Figure 5 that the demand for e-books is not that high. About 40% of the respondents mentioned that the demand for e-books is actually low, 39% stated that there are not significant differences between the demand for electronic and print book titles and only 16% claimed that the demand for e-books is actually high.

In order to understand the survey results on the low demand for e-books, there was a follow up question in the survey that questioned the users what kind of format they would use depending on what kind of source they were looking into, of which we can see the results visualized in Figure 6.

<sup>110</sup> U.S. Library Survey 2016, p.50.

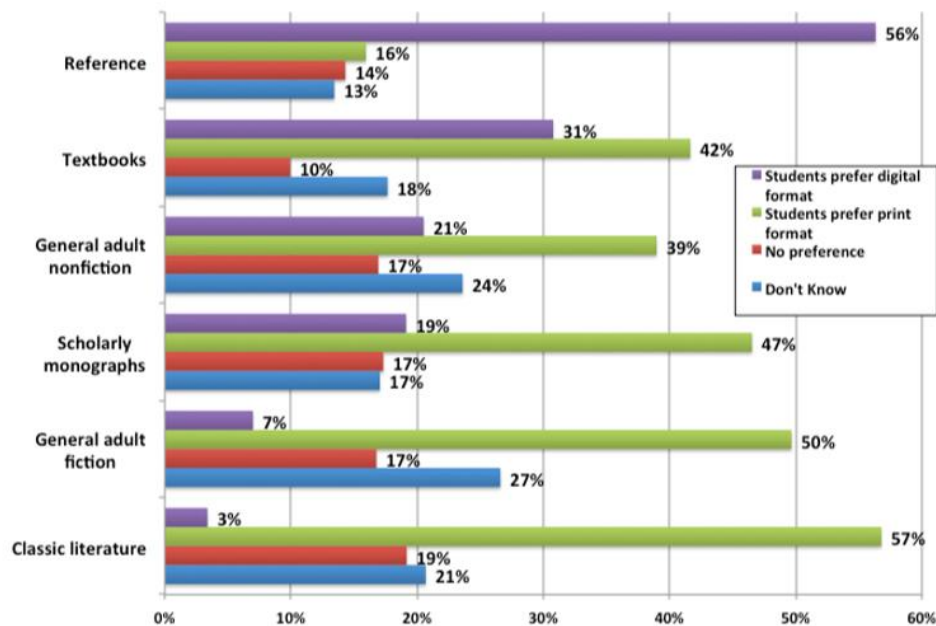


Figure 6: Responses to the question: “For each of the following types of e-books you carry, which format do students usually prefer?”.<sup>111</sup>

We can see that for the vast majority of types of material the users still have a strong preference for print with the exception of reference works where they majority opted for digital rather than print format.

Much like in the Patron-driven Acquisition model, by researching into what e-book material the users are actually currently reading can be the decisive factor for a more relevant and useful allocation of the annual available budget of the academic library.

Researching into who the e-book users really are and what they choose to read from the large availability of the e-book titles maybe be a time costly procedure for the library, but by doing so librarians can use this knowledge in order to make better decisions when it comes to enriching the collection basing their decisions not on intuition but on facts that derive directly from their patrons’ user preferences.

### Raising Awareness

The goal of the academic library is to provide relevant material for its end users which include not only students but professors, university staff and even the librarians working in the academic library. In many cases, however, even though the

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. p.51.

library is able to provide access to a rich array of materials, the patrons that these materials are intended for are unaware of their existence in the catalogue and thus cannot reach them and use them. Among exploring e-book usage in general, the 2016 U.S. library survey also tried to surface what exactly it is that hinders patrons of the academic library to actually use an e-book.

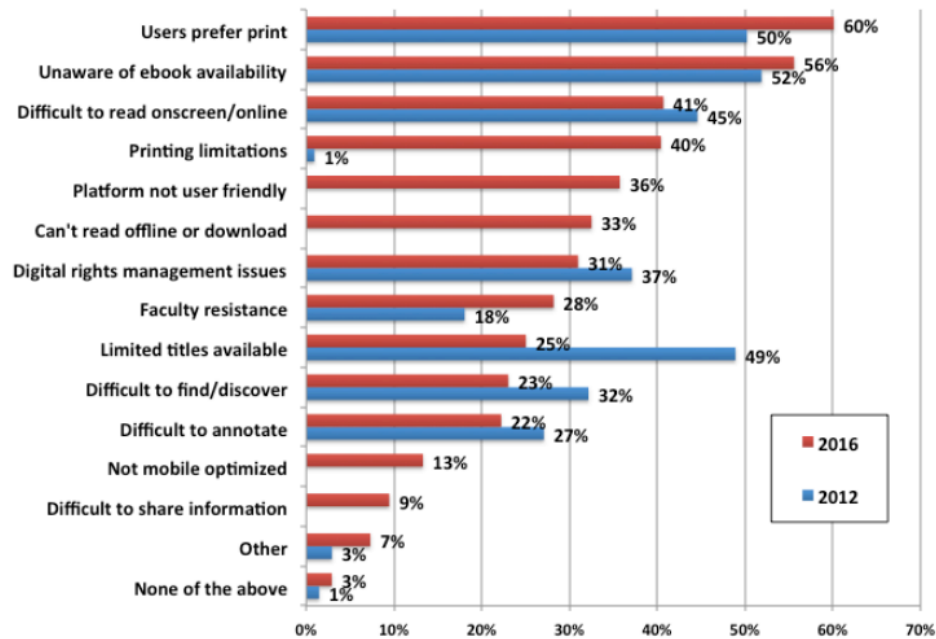


Figure 7: Responses to the question “What hinders students/faculty from using your library's e-books? All academic libraries, 2016 vs 2012”.<sup>112</sup>

As we can observe in the figure above, unawareness of the library’s e-book collection remains one of the top two reasons as to why patrons are not using the collection. Despite the fact that four years had passed since the initial survey of 2012 users remained to the larger extend ignorant regarding e-book collections with their unawareness percentage being raised from 52% to 56%.

Judging from the results it is quite evident that the academic library has to raise awareness when it comes to educating their users. Most students feel lost in the vast amount of information that can be retrieved from the catalogue, and without guidance, they do not know how to filter, use or even comprehend what kind of information they are actually using at the moment. Of course, this will not be an easy task for the academic library, the plethora of different platforms and the numerous challenges that

<sup>112</sup> Library Journal 2016, p.48.

they include makes it really difficult to be able to keep both the students but the staff as well, up to date.<sup>113</sup>

### 3.2 User-friendliness

One thorny aspect of e-books that is recurring whenever trying to research into their inclusion in the catalogue is the question of how user-friendly they really are and how easy they are to use by the patrons. While users and library staff unanimously praise e-books for the instant access and the ability to be used anytime and anywhere without the physical presence of the user at the library, there are still several flaws that render their usage difficult or simply not as easy to use as the traditional printed book.

#### Reading Experience

A very important factor in determining a preference of the printed book over the e-book has been the differences in the reading experience of each format. This is quite evident as most surveys that try to shed light on the debate of print versus the electronic book in the library show that students still prefer to read in print rather than on a screen.<sup>114</sup> Measuring the reading satisfaction that the users gain from each of the formats would be a very hard task to undertake, if not impossible altogether, so the library needs to find alternative routes so as to understand better its users and why there is indeed a preference for print, and if there is why there is and which factors it is based on.

In a survey researching the users' attitudes towards e-book usage, it was revealed that the majority chose an e-book mainly for their research projects at the university and homework assignments when only about 8% of the sample were accessing e-books in

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<sup>113</sup> L. Y. Conrad, "The Ebook R/Evolution – Not as Easy as It Seems", *The Scholarly Kitchen*, 24 April, 2017, n.pag. < <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2017/04/24/ebook-revolution-not-easy-seems/>> (14 June, 2017).

<sup>114</sup> L.A. Cummings, A. Larrivee, and L. Vega, "Comparing Electronic vs Print Book Preferences between Students in the Social Sciences, the Arts and STEM.", *Library Hi Tech News* 32.4 (2015), p.4.

order to read them at their own leisure.<sup>115</sup> Again this is an indicator for the user's preference for print: when faced with the dilemma of what format to choose so as to gain the most satisfactory reading experience the vast majority still opts for a printed version. It is also interesting to notice that there is a significant difference in user preferences when it comes to different disciplines. This is particularly evident from the responses of students affiliated with the Arts faculty where only 25% reported that they have a preference for e-books.<sup>116</sup> This could be because especially in the Fine Arts there is a lot of importance placed on tangibility, which the e-book fails to deliver as it can only exist in the virtual sphere.<sup>117</sup> This also shows that different results regarding e-book preferences and usage turn up depending on the sample that is addressed each time. Art students will most likely not have the same preferences as medical or science students, where most of their research material can be accessed almost exclusively online.

Another study, published in 2013 by Franziska Kretzschmar, aimed to explore whether or not the preference for print could be explained in comparison with the shortcoming of the electronic book when it comes to ease and effectiveness. The study was conducted after thoroughly comparing reading printed books and reading electronic text with the aid of eye-tracking devices, as well as surveying the participants for their reading preference in a subjective manner. Astonishingly, the study results revealed the fact that technically in terms of concentration while reading in print and the electronic text there weren't any obvious and noteworthy differences when it comes to their effectiveness.<sup>118</sup> In spite of that however, the participants still revealed a preference for reading in print even though technically that had no direct effect on the reading process, showing that there is still a psychological, unconscious preference for reading in print which is most likely affected by the general cultural background and its implications for reading in print and reading in a digital format.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> C. L. Gregory, "But I Want a Real Book", *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 47.3 (2008), p.269.

<sup>116</sup> Cummings, Larrivee and Vega, p.4.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> F. Kretzschmar et al., "Subjective Impressions Do Not Mirror Online Reading Effort: Concurrent EEG-Eyetracking Evidence from the Reading of Books and Digital Media.", *PLoS ONE* 8.2 (2013), p.10.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

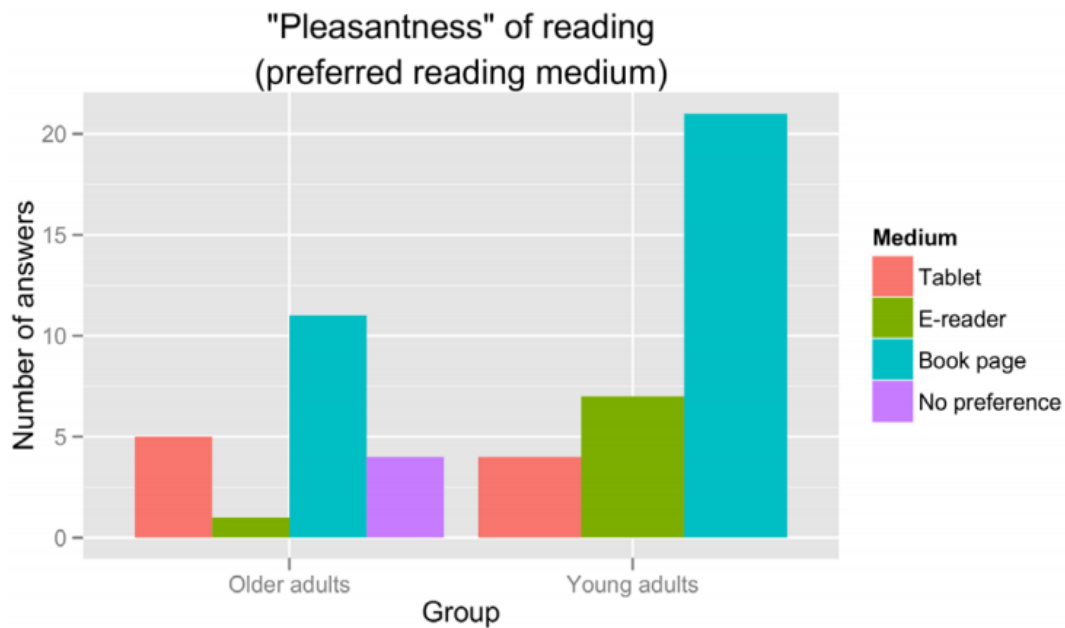


Figure 8: Choice of preferred medium for reading.<sup>120</sup>

Based on the bar chart above, we can clearly observe that the vast majority of both older and young adults opt for the analogue book when asked about the most pleasant experience of reading. The most important insight that resulted from this study is the fact that there is no actual correspondence between the technical aspects of the reading process including the understanding of the text and the distraction factor which was measured by using eye-tracker equipment, and the reading enjoyment that the participants had while reading an electronic text and a printed book.<sup>121</sup> Thus, it could be concluded that we do not lack the cognitive skills to master reading on the screen and have the same results as we would have while reading an analogue book but rather we are biased because of the popular views on digital reading versus traditional reading and our social and cultural background is what drives our subjective choices for a preferred reading medium. In view of such results it is important for librarians, but for society in general as a whole, to educate people about the possibilities and limitations of reading in every format. Of course, every format has advantages and disadvantages but it is important for the user to be able to

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. p.7.



comprehend what kind of implications the characteristics of each format have and not basing the decisions on hunches and intuition but on facts about each different medium.

The thoughts that the readers have over e-books, stems mostly out of the misinformation that is circulated about the electronic text in general and not based on factual truth. This is why survey results report back extended usage of e-books in the library but still a strong preference for print over e-books.<sup>122</sup>

Sentimentality and nostalgia might be one of the reasons that users still feel strong ties with the familiarity of the printed book but it is not the only reason. Another explanation as to why users still voice a strong preference for print is because our reading experience is closely tied to the haptic elements of the printed page. The immateriality of the e-book is what distances the reader while the ability to touch, smell and flip through a printed book is what engages the reader and enhances the reading experience.<sup>123</sup> The way the electronic book tries to mimic the elements of a printed book may estrange the reader even further as this might well be the reason a lot of students choose to print out the e-book pages in order to read them and avoid the screen.<sup>124</sup>

While familiarity and nostalgia over print are still valid reasons as to why survey results still suggest a preference for print over electronic text but it also important to bear in mind that the way we think is closely attached to the materiality of the page and it is a combination of both our sentiment and our physical structure that result into a strong attachment to print.

### 3.3 Technical Issues

As observed despite the fact that e-books are essential for the library's collection and they are extremely practical when it comes to their unrestricted to time

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<sup>122</sup> S. Smyth and A. P. Carlin, "Use and Perception of Ebooks in the University of Ulster: A Case Study.", *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 18.2 (2012), p.199.

<sup>123</sup> A. Mangan, "Hypertext Fiction Reading: Haptics and Immersion.", *Journal of Research in Reading* 31.4 (2008), p.405.

<sup>124</sup> K. Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* (NYU Press, 2011), p.94.

and space usage, the library’s patrons still display a strong preference for the printed books and when asked to make a choice they would, in majority, opt for the printed book instead of the e-book. The following graph represents the main obstacles students come across while using an e-book:

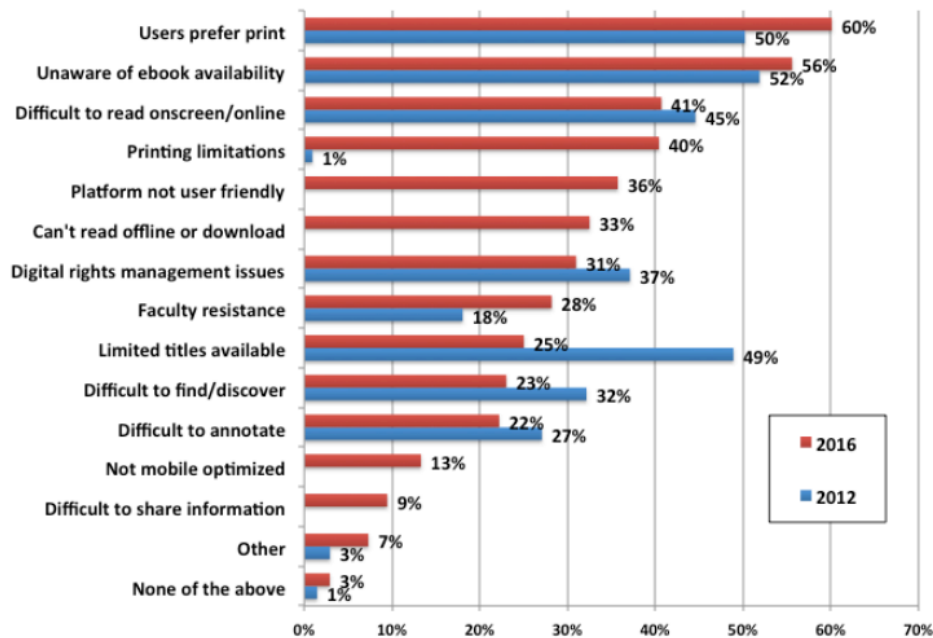


Figure 9: Responses to the question “What hinders students/faculty from using your library's e-books? All academic libraries, 2016 vs 2012”.<sup>125</sup>

As stated earlier, awareness plays a rather crucial role when it comes to e-book usage in the academic library. But besides the students’ unawareness of the availability of e-books, patrons who do in fact know how to find them and use them experience a series of technical problems that derive from the e-book’s digital nature.

The comparison of the different survey results from 2012 to 2016 helps to gain a better understanding of what the current issues with e-book usage are and what do they users want from an e-book. Indicatively, three new technical issues surfaced in the 2016 survey’s responses that were not mentioned in 2012. First of all, the users expressed that the platforms hosting e-books are not at all times user-friendly and thus hindering their usage. Also, with the advancement of technology and the introduction of optimised mobile phones users are now experiencing shortcomings when trying to

<sup>125</sup> Library Journal 2016, p.48.

read an e-book on their smartphone. With mobile phones becoming more and more advanced and with the need to satisfy all our needs with one device, users' expectations are ever-growing and find that the e-book has lagged behind.

Other important technical usage issues that came up have to do with the DRM restrictions enforced by publishers, which according to their users make e-books harder to read. Some of the responses expressed the difficulty to read offline and to download the desired e-book (33%) and the difficulty to share the information (9%) because of the DRM that bound the e-book.

Furthermore, if the e-book is simply a scanned version, and of a poor quality, the users find it impossible to read as they are unable to take notes and navigate through the text searching for keywords that are important to them, an e-book has to be able to deliver all the technological blessings that are supposed to be the advantages of using it.<sup>126</sup>

### Technical Issues in different e-book platforms

During the acquisition process, academic libraries have a large variety of different platforms to use when it comes to accessing their e-book collections, these platforms, of course, are not identical and offer many different services and options depending on which one you choose. Despite the fact that each of them is distinct, however, it is observed that the library is not heavily influenced by the similarities and differences of each platform while acquiring the e-book, and assumes that the same e-book title would be represented either in the same way or at least in a very similar way across different platforms.<sup>127</sup> But that is not always the case as different platforms for e-books have a direct effect on the ways the user can access the e-book and thus have a very strong impact on the ease with which that the user can access the e-book with.

A very important factor for the usability and discoverability of an e-book title is the metadata that is available in order to retrieve it. While most of the e-book platforms provide information about the title, some of them fail to provide information about the

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> E. Tovstiadi, and G. Wiersma, "Comparing Digital Apples and Oranges: A Comparative Analysis of E-Books Across Multiple Platforms.", *Serials Librarian* 70.1–4 (2016), p.176.

subtitles or the series that this title belongs to.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, while almost all platforms provide information about the author or authors, some did not mention the editor or editors involved and thus creating confusion with regards to the citation formation.<sup>129</sup> The provision of accurate metadata is crucial for the successful access to the e-book title, and when the platform that accommodates the e-book fails to provide them, its discoverability and accessibility rate drop rather significantly.

Yet another noteworthy issue is the confusion when it comes to attributing pagination to an e-book. Providing accurate pagination is a significant consideration as it is a necessary component for proper citation of the e-book title when it will be used by academic staff and students for research. The format affects the accuracy of pagination. Platforms supporting the EPUB format have been observed to usually lack any pagination as the EPUB format is able to adjust the text on the screen and ‘create’ the pages to facilitate the reading experience.<sup>130</sup> While the platforms supporting the PDF format for their e-books have been observed to be able to deliver accurate pagination when it comes to the exact page numbers of the e-book, however, there is often a confusion between the e-book’s actual pagination and the pagination of the PDF’s navigation tools which may compromise again the accurate citation process.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid, p.178.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, p. 180.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, p.179.

Platform	EPUB 3	HTML	PDF	TXT	Other
ABC-CLIO	No	Yes	No	No	
ACLS Humanities	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	PDF image
Cambridge Books	No	Yes	Yes	No	
CRCnetBASE	No	No	Yes	No	
EBL	Yes	No	Yes	No	
ebrary	No	No	No	No	Flash
EBSCO	No	No	Yes	No	
Emerald	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
Gale Virtual Reference	No	Yes	No	No	Flash
IGI-Global	No	Yes	Yes	No	
Oxford Reference Online	No	Yes	No	No	
Palgrave Connect	Yes	No	Yes	No	Kindle
Safari Tech	Yes	Yes	No	No	Flash
Sage	No	Yes	Yes	No	
Springer	No	Yes	Yes	No	
Wiley Online	No	No	Yes	No	
Yes	4	10	11	1	
No	12	6	5	15	

Figure 10: Choice of file formats across different e-book platforms.<sup>132</sup>

As we can observe in the figure above, most academic e-book platforms use PDF and HTML as formats for accommodating e-books. EPUB is probably not used as widely because its shortcomings make it not fit for the academic market of e-books.<sup>133</sup>

What is more, it is essential for the user of the e-book to be facilitated through the process of navigation while reading the e-book which does not include only pagination features but the ability to retrieve information quickly and efficiently through accurate searches within the e-book. Searching for a particular term within an e-book is particularly important, as studies have shown that most of the patrons use the search functionality of the e-book to locate the passages that are significant for their research and then decide which pages they need to print in order to engage in deep reading of these passages.<sup>134</sup> So it is highly important that the results that the users get back are accurate and on many different levels of the e-book, for instance, chapter, page or keyword.

<sup>132</sup> C. Mune and A. Agee, "Are E-Books for Everyone? An Evaluation of Academic E-Book Platforms' Accessibility Features.", *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship* 28.3 (2016), p.177.

<sup>133</sup> E. Tovstiadi, and G. Wiersma, p. 180.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 181.

Platform	Table of contents	Full-text search	Page forward and back	Specify page #
ABC-CLIO	Yes	Yes	No	No
ACLS Humanities	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Cambridge Books	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
CRCnetBASE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
EBL	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ebrary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EBSCO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emerald	Yes	Yes	No	No
Gale Virtual Reference	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
IGI-Global	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Oxford Reference Online	Yes	Yes	No	No
Palgrave Connect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Safari Tech	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Sage	Yes	Yes	No	No
Springer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wiley Online	Yes	Yes	No	No
Yes	16	15	9	9
No	0	1	7	7

Figure 11: Search and navigation tools in different e-book platforms.<sup>135</sup>

It is immediately noticeable from the figure above that all of the platforms use a table of contents for their e-books, as this is an essential part of navigation for not only the electronic book but for the traditional printed book as well. The full-text search function which as mentioned is crucial for the users of the e-book is as well adopted by the crushing majority of the platforms, with only one failing to provide it. However, it is also crucial to note that some of the platforms do not offer functions such as the ability to locate a specific page and to move forward and back within the e-book title. For a user that relies heavily on e-books for research, it can be a very frustrating experience, having to scroll through hundreds of pages in order to locate the one or ones that will be interesting for the research.<sup>136</sup>

Probably the most surprising result of this comparison between academic e-book platforms was the fact that none of them offered the possibility of adjusting the text when it comes to contrast levels of the text and its background.<sup>137</sup> This, of course, can be very limiting to users with visual disabilities who would be unable to read the text properly unless the contrast could be adjusted accordingly to aid their impairment.<sup>138</sup> The university library, providing access to these platforms have to make sure that all

<sup>135</sup> C. Mune and A. Agee, p. 179.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, p.178.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, p. 177.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

of its users regardless of disabilities should be able to have equal access to all of the material that is available. In order for that to be achieved there has to be strict negotiations with the publishers in order to make sure that the materials reached through their platforms can be easily accessed by all kinds of users.

It is important to research into the different functions these platforms offer so as to gain a better understanding of which platform would be best to accommodate their e-book titles every time. The findings of such a research would also be invaluable for the academic e-book market in general as the shortcomings and the disadvantages of their platforms are exposed so that in collaboration with the library they can steadily grow and eliminate the problems in accessing their titles.<sup>139</sup>

### Privacy Issues

The sound of the word privacy in today's era makes us cringe and contemplate how much information we willingly divulge in order to be able to access the digital world, and what is an even more frightening thought is the fact that sometimes we unwillingly give away personal details and information. While borrowing a book from the library's print collection would be noted for the sake of circulation statistics, how we would actually use the print book and exactly what parts we read would surely remain private. However, the e-books online presence raises several questions regarding our 'invisibility' and privacy while using it. With the introduction of more and more digital material in the academic library, the staff has sought out to take all preventive measures necessary in order to ensure that the users' privacy will be protected. But it has been observed that in the midst of signing contracts in order to provide useful materials for their patrons, libraries actually agree to terms that might potentially expose their users' reading patterns as well as their personal details and information.<sup>140</sup> It is highly problematic when the contracts of agreement between the academic library and the e-book titles' vendors allow the latter to not only extract user

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<sup>139</sup> E. Tovstiadi, and G. Wiersma, p. 182.

<sup>140</sup> A. Glaser and A. Macrina, "Librarians Are Dedicated to User Privacy. The Tech They Have to Use Is Not.", *Slate*, 20 October, 2014, n.pag. <  
[http://www.slate.com/blogs/future\\_tense/2014/10/20/adobe\\_s\\_digital\\_editions\\_e\\_book\\_software\\_and\\_library\\_patron\\_privacy.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2014/10/20/adobe_s_digital_editions_e_book_software_and_library_patron_privacy.html)> (20<sup>th</sup> May, 2017).

information but use it in whatever manner they want, and most of the time it can be observed that such sensitive information as user data is not handled responsibly.<sup>141</sup> This oversight by the libraries was exposed in 2014 when it was revealed that Adobe Digital Editions software, used widely by many academic libraries as a supporting format for e-books usage, not only collected and shared user data to Adobe but it did it without any encryption, in a simple text format.<sup>142</sup>

Another thorny issue of user's privacy includes data that is required in order for them to be able to access the platforms that the e-book they are interested in is hosted. The academic library is able to provide access to the desired digital information in most cases by using a proxy, so the patron has to sign in to their academic account and the access is granted. There are some platforms, however, that in addition to this step in order to provide access to the user require the user to create a personal account (who is thus forced to give away personal information such as e-mail) and then the user is granted access to the digital material. For instance, the ebrary and the EBSCOhost platform, which are very popular platforms for the access of academic e-books, require the user to have a personal account before allowing downloading and printing the material.

In order to be able to protect its users the library has to take note of all the requirements of the platforms it provides access to and informs the patrons accordingly. Despite the fact that it is a very labour-intensive task to keep up with changes in interface of all the e-book platforms as their number is quite large and they keep changing and growing fast, it is necessary to keep track of their requirements in order to be able to serve and protect the users' privacy to the fullest.

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> T. A. Carpenter, "Trust, Privacy, Big Data, and e-Book Readers", *The Scholarly Kitchen*, 9 October, 2014, n.pag. < <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2014/10/09/trust-privacy-big-data-and-e-book-readers/>> (20<sup>th</sup> May, 2017).



## Conclusions

Transforming from an institution of ownership and print to an institution of providing access for the patrons as already discussed, is not a smooth and trouble-free process and it is greatly influencing the library's inner workings as an academic institution. The many benefits such as instant access that is not location bound and a wider range of relevant material facilitate the patrons of the academic library to a large extent. Nevertheless, the difficulty in maintaining a large digital collection includes disappearing titles by the publisher, access obstruction by complicated platforms and privacy issues regarding sensitive user information.

Despite the fact that users praise the ability to access the material they want anytime and anywhere without having to physically make the trip to the library, the situation becomes rather frustrating and problematic when the title they can find in the library's catalogue cannot be accessed, as this is a risk that is created based on the fact that this material does not come from the analogue collection but rather from a publisher's server.<sup>143</sup> Thus, naturally for the user, the advantages of access over ownership and print are in fact present only when the information required can indeed be accessed. On the other hand, the inability of the library to deliver what is promised, i.e. all the titles that exist in the library's catalogue should be retrievable, can damage the reliability of the academic library as the frustration caused to the users would result in the perception of low-quality services on behalf of the library.

It still remains to be seen what the implications would be of an academic library shifting into an institution of access. However, it is evident that nowadays a library refusing to be an institution of access for its users and basing their collection solely on the analogue material is not a sustainable model anymore.<sup>144</sup> The overall issue of limited budget for the libraries would once again apply and a library that refuses to provide materials digitally to its patrons would have to balance the budget between acquiring and managing a large printed collection, and the budget would most probably not be sufficient for both.<sup>145</sup> And as a result, an ownership library would fail

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<sup>143</sup> Matheson, p.168.

<sup>144</sup> L. Kane, "Access vs Ownership: Do We Have to Make a Choice?", *College & Research Libraries* 58.1 (1997), p.63.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

to sustain itself. But, eliminating print altogether and becoming solely an institution of access would not be the solution for the academic library either. As shown by the users' responses to library surveys, they are not ready to abandon print altogether and most of the patrons preferred deep reading a printed book rather than an e-book. Another noteworthy consideration is that not all materials are available in electronic format and the only route of acquisition is to purchase a print copy.<sup>146</sup> What is more, not every book is destined to be read in an electronic format, namely art and design books and artists' books still appear to work better in their tangible, physical formats.<sup>147</sup>

The model most likely to succeed, therefore, is a library that embraces both ownership and access, much like it is currently practiced worldwide. In order for the library to remain sustainable it has to be able to remain an access point of information for its users otherwise their users will look for that information elsewhere.<sup>148</sup> As early as 1993 Irene Hoadley stated that it should not be a confrontation between access and ownership where one would have to win over the other but rather a collaboration of both access and ownership in order for the library to be able to maintain its users preference and maintain itself as a long-lasting institution for the dissemination of knowledge.<sup>149</sup>

It is the librarians' tasks to ensure that a successful model of both access and ownership is followed so that the budget is being distributed in accordance with the patrons' desires and requests. On the one hand, it is clear that the movement towards access and to e-books is not slowing down with libraries moving to an electronic format only for certain types of books and for particular subject areas.<sup>150</sup>

The academic library of today is caught between a rock and a hard place. Decades long traditions are being challenged by the gradually deeper intrusion of new technologies and alternative reading formats. The electronic book and the demand for

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<sup>146</sup> L. Spiro and G. Henry, "Can a New Research Library Be All-Digital?", *The Idea of Order: Transforming Research Collections for 21st Century Scholarship* (2010), p.9.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, p.65.

<sup>149</sup> I.B. Hoadley, "Access vs. Ownership: Myth or Reality.", *Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory* 17.2 (1993), p.195.

<sup>150</sup> K.B. Moore, "Are We There Yet? Moving to an E-Only Collection Development Policy for Books.", *The Serials Librarian* 68.1-4 (2015), p.134.

more and more information daily are progressively establishing a new era for the academic library that is based on access rather than on ownership.

The intricacies and the multi-faced forms of the e-book create complications in this transition for the academic library. Despite being significantly improved since their introduction to the market, e-books still have several shortcomings when compared with the library's analogue collection and can pose a serious threat to the library's reliability as an academic institution.

As a response to the ever-decreasing budget allowances, the library has shifted to a more user-centered model, basing the decision-making process over the collection on what users actually want and use. By choosing acquisition models like PDA and PPV, the library ensures that the e-book and the digital material that they pay in order to provide access are relevant for the patrons and are actually being used instead of taking up virtual space creating clutter and using up an invaluable part of the library's annual budget.

As research suggests it is also crucial for the library and its staff to invest in educating their patrons, as it was revealed that their majority is either not informed at all or misinformed about the capabilities of the library's catalogue and their e-book collections. If the library acquires and provides access to an e-book title that remains invisible as the patrons are unaware of its existence, the investment that the library has made has been in vain.<sup>151</sup>

It is important for the library to be aware of its users and their preferences because they are the ones that the collection is aimed for. A comprehensive e-book collection will be the outcome of careful research into the patrons' reading preferences depending on the situation at hand as well as a thorough and diligent education of the users regarding the collection.

The book industry of today involves complications that were not present a few decades ago such as Open Access publishing and DRM restrictions over e-books. The analogue collection is no longer the sole preoccupation of the academic librarian, and there is a need for competent staff that can manage the complexities introduced in an

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<sup>151</sup> J.A. Buczynski, "Library EBooks: Some Can't Find Them, Others Find Them and Don't Know What They Are.", *Internet Reference Services Quarterly* 15.1 (2010), p.17.

age where access is of utmost importance for the sustainability of the academic library.

In my paper I have not attempted to create a magic formula that would facilitate the academic librarian but have rather researched how e-books function in the academic library, outlined the issues that the library has encountered with developing an e-book collection and have tried to advocate both the perspective of the librarian and the perspective of the end-user. As years of library science have stressed, the library is indeed a growing organism and cannot be treated as being static in nature. In today's reality the saying 'sink or swim' applies to almost every aspect of our everyday life. It is a cutthroat world that demands constant change and adaptability is a necessary virtue in order to manage to survive.

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