Understanding and Using E-Books

This introduction to eBooks covers key considerations around the purchase, access and use of eBooks accessed via the Library collection.

DID YOU KNOW?



Not every print book is available as an eBook.



Not all eBooks are available for purchase by libraries – some books are only offered on an "individual sale" basis and can only be accessed and used by one person. This restriction often applies to eTextbooks, meaning that the Library is unable to purchase copies for student use.



eBooks purchased by the Library must be available for "institutional" use, enabling them to be accessed via the Library website.

KEY LIBRARY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PURCHASING EBOOKS

Purchase considerations:

Is the book available as a "stand alone" purchase, or is it only available as part of a collection?
eBooks which are only available as part of a specific collection are usually not a feasible option, as the entire collection would have to be purchased.

Is the book available at a reasonable price?
eBook prices vary considerably, depending on a range of factors including the type of book (eTextbooks can be very expensive), the discipline area, or even the publisher.

Is the book available on a database platform the Library already uses?
Contract, cost, licence and access conditions have to be negotiated for each platform the Library uses. Some platforms/purchase options do not meet requirements in terms of the licence conditions imposed, access/authentication, privacy, reporting or reliability.

Do the options for accessing the book fit one of the Library's preferred "access models"?
An eBook has to be available in a way that best meets the needs of all library users. Some publishers impose very restrictive conditions of use or additional limits (e.g. can only be accessed by students in a specific course).

Is the book available for outright purchase, or only on a subscription basis?
There is a growing trend for publishers to make eTextbooks available only on a subscription basis, so that instead of purchasing the book once, effectively it is purchased every year. The cost of an individual book can be very high, and there are often restrictive usage conditions (limited or no printing/copying/etc.). Subsequently this option is not currently being pursued.

Access model considerations:

Publishers determine how "accessible" a book will be – how many users can access the book at any one time, and how the content can be used (downloaded, copied, printed, etc.). These factors are considered when the Library

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is making purchasing decisions.

The Library's preferred model is one that allows an unlimited number of users to access the book simultaneously (often referred to as "unlimited concurrent users").

The next option is a one-user or three-user access model (meaning that one or three people respectively can use the book at any one time). This model is often referred to as "limited concurrent users". The Library may purchase multiple limited user licences to enable more access.

Note: eBooks are purchased using a similar approach to the purchase of print books, which is based on the number of student enrolments in a unit. Occasionally, the cost of an eBook (especially eTextbooks) will determine whether additional copies can be purchased.

USING EBOOKS

eBooks in the Library collection are accessed through a range of database platforms. Consequently, there are variations between databases, and individual eBooks, in terms of the number of users who can access the book at one time, and the options for downloading, printing, saving and copying content.

The following aspects of eBook use can impact how the content can be used:



Digital Rights Management (DRM)

Many e-books are protected by DRM systems. DRM controls the use of digital content and determines access restrictions and availability. The ideal eBook is DRM free!



Copying, printing, saving and downloading

Most publishers allow you to print, copy or save 10% of a book. Most books can be downloaded for a specified number of days, but this is dependent on the licence conditions. If a book cannot be downloaded, it must be read online.



eBook file types

The most common file types for e-books are PDF and ePUB (electronic publication). PDF's are useful for printing, whilst ePUBs adapt to your mobile device screen size. Most eBooks can be accessed on a range of mobile devices.

INCLUDING EBOOKS IN EREADING LISTS

Most Library eBooks can be included in eReading Lists by either:

- Using the Library Search function within eReading Lists to find relevant books in the collection.
- Or using the Cite It tool.

The 'Add items to an eReading list' section of the **eReading Lists for Staff: Support Guide** contains the instructions to add an item to your eReading List.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

If you need further help, you can contact the Library via one of the following options:

- **Self-Service Portal:** Submit an online request
- **Phone:** 1300 666 620
- **Email:** my-librarian@cqu.edu.au

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