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Seeing the Whole Elephant in the Room: A Holistic approach to ebooks

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Seeing the whole elephant in the room: a holistic approach to ebooks

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Introduction

We chose the title for our presentation to reflect that fact that ebooks are often the "elephant in the room"—something academic libraries are taking on board without always considering their many implications for users and staff. Ebooks can also be likened to the story of the Blind Man and the Elephant where each stakeholder sees only a part of the whole but fails to grasp the entire elephant (or in this case, the entire ebooks lifecycle). For example Public Services staff witness user frustrations with ebooks with less than intuitive interfaces and Digital Rights Management (DRM) restrictions and wonder why Collections/Acquisitions staff have selected them. Collections/Acquisitions staff, on the other hand, are struggling behind the scenes with multiple business models and complex license negotiations.

The University of Guelph (UG) Library is a research library in Ontario Canada supporting a student body of approximately 21,000. Last year, the Library struck an Ebook Strategy Working Group to address the whole elephant in the room with respect to ebooks: challenges around selection, licensing preservation, sharing, promotion, discovery and access.

The complications inherent in acquiring ebooks, in contrast to print books, are best summarized by Sue Polanka (2012) who emphasizes that "You are not just buying content. You are buying content, software, licenses, DRM and an ongoing relationship with a vendor."Add to this the sheer scale of ebooks in terms of number of titles and it becomes apparent that the transition from print to ebooks has challenges even beyond what we experienced when we embraced e-journals. The need to examine the various aspects of the ebook ecosystem and to place these in a framework to help guide decision making for ebooks was the impetus behind the ebook strategy project. In this complex environment how can we best support our staff and users when it comes to ebooks?

The scope of the project was very broad. We wanted to encompass the entire ebook life cycle including: selection and acquisition, budgeting, electronic resources management (ERM), discovery (including cataloguing, metadata, link resolver and discovery service), user experience, preservation, resource sharing through interlibrary loan, teaching and learning, promotion and communications, monitoring and assessment. We decided to tackle this multifaceted project holistically by drawing on staff expertise in Collections, Acquisitions, Electronic Resource Management, Copyright, Licensing, Liaison, Information Literacy and User Experience Design:

Pam Jacobs – Acting Head, Information Resources
Robin Bergart – User Experience Librarian, Discovery & Access
Linda Da Maren – Manager, Acquisitions and Data Materials Maintenance
Linda Day – Electronic Resources Librarian
Jennifer Easter – Liaison Librarian, University of Guelph-Humber

Alan Gale – Information Resources Librarian
Heather Martin - Manager, Electronic Resource Management & Reserves Team
Judy Wanner - Librarian, Learning & Curriculum Support Team

Our time frame was ten months at the end of which we produced a detailed report. With such a broad scope our main goal was to provide a series of recommendations that would lead to increased access to and usability of ebooks for our users, more informed decisions when selecting ebooks, more efficient workflows, a common understanding about ebooks among UG Library staff, provision of feedback to vendors regarding preferred business models and platform and format usability, digital preservation of ebooks and improved communication with our users about ebooks.

Methods

We used evidence wherever we could find it to create an ebooks strategy for our library. Throughout our report we used the following framework for examining the different aspects of ebooks:

i.   We assessed our *current state* of practices and perceptions around ebooks. This involved gathering ebooks collections and use data, interviewing library staff in relevant areas about their workflows and about their own ebook use and perceptions, and conducting a detailed student user experience study.

ii.   We did an *external scan* External Scan to review the recent literature on ebooks in academic libraries including articles, white papers, conference presentations; and research into available ebook vendor business models.

iii. We detailed the *critical issues* to be examined with respect to all aspects of ebooks both in general and specifically to UG.

iv.   We drafted *recommendations* from trunk to tail-- from streamlining staff workflow in selections, acquisitions, and cataloguing to improving the user experience. In some cases, we recommended that further study was required.

The Ebook Strategy Working Group tackled this enormous task by dividing the work into two sub-groups. Pam led the group exploring all the "behind the scenes" work of selection, acquisitions, licensing, and all the other pieces that go into staff decision making and workflow. Robin's group conducted a user experience study to explore the users' perspectives on ebooks. The User study was a significant component of the Working Group's mandate and is presented below in its entirety.

"Behind the Scenes" Findings

Our internal scan of existing purchases and subscriptions revealed that we are heavily invested in ebooks. The University of Guelph currently has over 400,000 ebooks in its collection. These are accessed on over 65 platforms and come from a wide assortment of publishers. Ebooks are

increasingly being placed on reserve as course readings. Ebooks are acquired on a title-by-title basis via our book vendor, YBP, and directly from providers. Ebook collections are acquired both locally at UG and via our consortia, Ontario Council of University Libraries and Canadian Research Knowledge Network. We do not currently use demand-driven acquisition models or short term loan models to acquire or access ebooks.We work with many vendors and many different business models in purchasing our content. These range from general aggregators such as ebrary to publisher-direct platforms such as SpringerLink.

Budgeting for ebooks is complicated by the ongoing nature of ebook collections (as opposed to one time only) and by the variety of business models from ebook providers. 'Big deal' ebook collections tend to provide a low cost per title but as with ejournal big deals may become unsustainable as the publishers add more and more content each year. The purchase of large ebook collections has been particularly problematic in terms of workflow and records management. Book publishers, who have not traditionally supplied MARC records, have struggled to produce good quality, accurate records in a timely manner. In some cases the publishers have created MARC records of varying quality in house and in other cases they have contracted with third party cataloguing services. In both scenarios, the result is often unacceptably lengthy delays between the purchase of the content and its availability to our users. Our experience in this area has led us to believe that there is a lot of room for improvement and that this is a high priority in our recommendations.

In embarking on this project we had hoped to be able to provide a snapshot of overall ebook usage at our library, but this proved to be much more difficult than anticipated. Even using standardized Project COUNTER statistics is problematic. For instance, Book Report 2 counts the number of successful section requests but what defines a 'section' may differ considerably between or even within platforms. A 'section' may mean a page view, a chapter download or a full title download. If we want to look at the change in usage over time, we need to adjust for collection size and it can be surprisingly difficult to get accurate title counts for ebook collections particularly retrospectively. Also, books with limits on simultaneous users will affect usage – very popular titles may be underrepresented due to turnaways. Books that require users to create a login/password or download special software will deter use. Several recent studies including our own user experience study (see below) have shown that users make ebook choices based on convenience. When users run into barriers they are more likely to choose a more convenient title or, as one of our students said, change their essay topic rather than jump through DRM-related hoops.

Poor records or long delays in making records available will decrease use. Books that can't be discovered won't get used. Beyond the catalogue how does our discovery environment influence use? How do the link resolver, discovery service and Google Scholar fit into the ebook landscape for our users?

All of this is to say that if one were to take our ebook use statistics and do a simple cost/use or return on investment calculation out of the context of all the other parameters discussed here, it would be misleading. Ebooks are not just content (recall Sue Polanka); they come with a range of other considerations that must be factored into any discussion of value. An evaluation of usage

of a given ebook collection is as much about the interface and use restrictions as it is about the content, if not more so.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Our report produced 20 main recommendations as well as many more detailed ones. These are some of the highlights:

Improving the workflows around making ebooks available to our users in a more timely fashion was identified as a high priority. To that end we made a number of recommendations about records management workflows. We recommended that we use our primary book vendor to purchase ebooks and their catalogue records. When that avenue is not available we have recommended that we examine our internal processes of enhancing ebook records to determine how much enhancement is needed and at what point in the process that enhancement should occur. We have also recommended exploring batch editing tools to streamline the enhancement process where possible.

To improve discovery we recommend leveraging our link resolver and discovery service knowledge bases to activate ebook collections where possible.

With respect to *resource sharing,* we have recommended that we explore lending ebooks where licensing permits doing so starting with an examination of our current ebook licenses to determine exactly what our options are in this regard.

Given that our users are confronted with up to 65 different interfaces for ebooks we have recommended the *creation and promotion of support tools* to help our users navigate ebooks.

We have also recommended that we thoroughly examine our options for the long term digital *preservation* of ebooks.

The following recommendations arose from the User Experience study as detailed in the User Study below:
- *Advocate to vendors for fewer DRM restrictions and more accessible formats and functionality*
- *Select ebooks with the fewest barriers*
- *Increase faculty outreach*
- *Investigate e-textbooks*

In the end, the members of the Working Group gained a greater appreciation of the complexity of the ebook ecosystem. Our collaboration helped to bridge that gap between technical and public services, and we shared our newfound knowledge and understanding more broadly with the rest of the library. As the members of the Working Group each explored their particular part of the elephant, we also gained an appreciation for the other parts . Gradually a whole picture-- albeit a fuzzy and ever changing one—is beginning to emerge.

The full ebook report is available at http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/news/ebook-report.

User Experience Study & Findings

We conducted a user experience study to gain a better understanding of how our students are choosing and using ebooks for their academic studies. We wanted to learn not only about their stated preferences for ebooks or print books, but the actual choices they made when engaged in their study and research. When did they reach for a print book, and when did an ebook make more sense for them? What advantages and disadvantages did they perceive of each medium? Are the ebooks that the library collects meeting their needs and expectations? Finally, what can we learn about our students' ebook use that will help us improve our decisions in selection, discovery, and access?

Literature Review

The literature on ebook use in academic libraries explores users' preferences, expectations, use and non-use of ebooks. The seminal JISC National E-books Observatory Project was a large scale survey of 120 UK universities and over 52,000 students between 2007-2010 (JISC, 2009). The study showed that ebooks are mostly used for "dipping or power-browsing" like other electronic resources, rather than sustained reading. The notion that students "use" ebooks but "read" print books is a theme that runs through this literature suggesting that print books will always have their place for scholars. Berg, Hoffman, & Dawson (2010) attribute the lack of deep, linear reading of ebooks to the lack of "sense of place" when a reader engages with an ebook. Li, et al. (2011) distinguish the use of ebooks for discovery and keyword searching and print books for reading and annotating. Staiger (2012) worries that "ebooks play into students' perennial quest for the short cut and foster skimpier research" but acknowledges that students also counter this impulse and choose print books to avoid social media distractions or to enjoy the sensuality of a print object. Slater (2010) contends that reading habits are changing irrespective of the medium; both print books and ebooks are "used" rather than read deeply. The problem with ebooks, writes Slater, is "Patrons do not use ebooks because they find their experience of using ebooks incongruous with their experience of using other electronic resources, and many of the unexpected limitations they encounter when using ebooks are not inherent to the format."

The JISC study found that while over 60% of students had used ebooks, print books were still the preferred option. de Oliveira (2012) and Sandberg (2011) cite further studies confirming this preference. A recent diary study of student reading practices revealed that print is preferred for academic long form reading (Foasberg, 2014).

Many of the studies focus on the perceived problems and / or advantages of ebooks as revealed through surveys, focus groups, usability tests, log analyses and the occasional experiment, case study, or diary study. Ahmad (2014) lists the main barriers to ebook acceptance and use as: eyestrain; lack of awareness; Digital Rights Management restrictions; poor functionality, usability, Accessibility and discoverability; connectivity problems, and limited ebook availability in certain disciplines. Carlock & Perry (2008) add unreliable access as a factor that leads users to mistrust ebooks. Citing some of the same problems, Briddon et al. (2009) conclude that

"generally the students' use of ebooks is still on a need to use rather than a preferred option basis."

And yet, ebook *are* used, and as Dewan (2012) and Cassidy, Martinez, & Shen (2012) realistically conclude, they are here to stay. Despite the current problems, they predict that the growth of online education, changing trends in publishing, environmental concerns and the desire to free up shelf space in libraries for study space necessitate the transition to ebooks. Fundamentally, "the very obvious and clear benefit of e-books is their convenience: they can be consulted 24/7 from any location with a broadband connection" (JISC 2009). A recent large survey of 1,300 academic library users showed that while users still prefer to read print, they will at times choose ebooks for their convenience (Corlett-Rivera & Hackman, 2014).

The other reasons ebooks are favoured in academia are the search capability, the comparatively lower cost, portability, and that they are a "greener" option to print books (Jamali, Nicholas & Rowlands, 2009; Jones, 2009; Shelburne, 2009; Shrimplin, Revelle, Hurst, & Messner, 2011))

While libraries must wait for publishers and aggregators to fix problems in user interface, functionality, and DRM restrictions, there are measures libraries can take to increase the adoption of ebooks on campus. Libraries can select ebooks with as few DRM restrictions as possible and favour ebooks that have the option to download chapters in PDF format (Gransby, et al., 2011, Jones, 2009; McLure & Hoseth, 2012, Muir & Hawes, 2013). The size of the ebook collection also increases use as users are exposed to more ebooks relevant to their studies (Lamothe, 2013). Staiger (2012) calls for making chapter level search available in library catalogs and discovery systems to improve discovery. Several studies (e.g. Corlett-Rivera & Hackman, 2014; JISC, 2009) found that running a study of ebooks on campus itself promotes awareness of ebook collections and increases use, and that it is worthwhile to focus on ebooks in library communications, teaching, and promotion (Lonsdale & Armstrong, 2010). The availability of ereaders can greatly improve the reading experience and increase the use of ebooks (Corlett-Rivera & Hackman, 2014; Savova & Garcia, 2012; Shen, 2011; Staiger, 2012). Cuillier & Dewland, 2014 cite faculty engagement and promotion of ebooks as an important factor in students' positive experiences with ebooks.

Our study contributes to the literature on ebooks in higher education by exploring students' subjective experiences of ebooks in their academic work. Our findings corroborate the story told by the literature about students' expectations, perceptions, and behaviours.

Methods

We recruited students from classes that had at least one ebook on course reserve. Nineteen students agreed to participate and 17 completed the study. The students were male and female undergraduate and graduate students from a wide range of disciplines in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Our study included students who identified as First Generation students and as students registered with our Centre for Students with Disabilities.

The study had four components:

1. Each student met with us in person so we could explain the study to them, have them sign a consent and confidentiality form, and ensure we had a mutual understanding of what constitutes an ebook.
2. The students then completed a short online pre-survey about their current interactions with ebooks. The survey questions were used as a baseline to discern whether their perceptions and expectations, as well as their use of ebooks changed over the course of the study.
3. Throughout the Fall 2013 semester, students completed a reflective diary entry each time they used an ebook. We provided prompts to guide their reflections. A reminder email with a link to the online diary template was sent every week. The question prompts were:
    *   Title of book
    *   Date you used this ebook
    *   Which platform is this ebook on? (optional)
    *   What course did you use this ebook for? (optional)
    *   How long did you spend with this book today?
    *   What device did you read this book on?
    *   Where did you use this book (on campus or off campus)
    *   How did you find this book? (e.g. Google, Primo, Course Reserve, Purchased, Public library)
    *   How did you use this book? (e.g. Scanned or searched for specific information; Skimmed it; Read carefully and sequentially; Printed parts I needed to read)
    *   How else did you engage with book beyond simply reading it? (e.g. Highlighting text; Took handwritten notes; Typed up notes; Shared with someone else)
    *   What features of the ebook were helpful to your learning/ research today?
    *   How did you feel about using this ebook today?
    *   Would you have preferred to use a print edition if one were available?
    *   Please provide any other comments about the reading experience or anything else about ebooks you would like to share.
4. Once a participant had completed six diary entries, we conducted and closing interview with him or her. Each participant was awarded a $50 incentive card upon completion. A bonus $50 card was awarded to one participant in a final draw at the end of the study. The interview questions were:
    *   What were some of the challenges you faced in completing this study?
    *   Do you ever experience any problems with the internet connection when you're trying to work?
    *   In your experience, what are the three most important features of ebooks?
    *   Did you ever create a personal user account in an ebook in order to take advantage of extra features?
    *   Have your opinions or expectations about ebooks changed since you started this study? Did this study make you think differently about ebooks?
    *   Do you think your views on ebooks are pretty typical of those of your peers? What opinions or perceptions about ebooks have you heard from other students?
    *   How can the library best support your use of ebooks?
    *   If the Library were to stop purchasing print books, and from now on bought only ebooks, how would this affect your studies?

Study Possibilities & Limitations

The value of a qualitative user experience study is that it can elicit the real life behavior of people in their daily life. In contrast with more traditional library research methods (such as the survey), which rely on the participants' self reporting about past experiences, a user experience study captures actual behavior and subjective experiences in situ. Participants in this study kept diaries of their interactions with ebooks as they were using them. The diaries became a rich source of data about their behaviours, perspectives, expectations, and reflections. Four researchers were involved in this study and we corroborated our findings to improve the reliability of the study.

Our study provides an in-depth look at the behaviours of a handful of students at a particular time and place, but the results cannot be said to be representative of the entire University of Guelph student population, much less university students elsewhere. The participants experienced a wide range of feelings, perspectives and uses of ebooks, though we realize that our recruitment method may have excluded certain kinds of students or ebook users. Nonetheless, our findings were consistent with the findings of much of the recent literature on ebook use in academic settings.

Findings

These findings are drawn from the pre-survey, diary entries and interviews. Each participant shared their unique perspective with us, but we were able to find some common themes in their stories.

Ebooks are just another form of online content

Although we tried to establish a shared understanding with our participants of what we meant by ebooks, some participants included ejournals in their diaries. One wrote "I apologize that this was only an article and not a book, but I like to believe it was the same concept…..information found online for my academia."A study by Cataldo & Buhler (2012) suggests "users are experiencing container identity crisis" as they have great difficulty discerning what type of online resource they are encountering. In talking to students about ebooks, it became clear that they did not always differentiate between (or care about the difference between) various forms of online content.

Both ebooks and print books have their place

Though most participants stated a strong preference for either ebooks or print books in the pre-survey, when it came to their actual academic work, they used both. Whether a student chose to use an ebook or a print book at any given time depended on one or more of a variety of factors: personal comfort, availability, convenience, intended use, and cost. One student sums up ebooks versus print this way: "[Both] have their place. I like having the book right in front of me and being able to follow along with my finger and not having to share the computer screen [with my notes], but for accessibility and availability...and it's obviously very cheap...and it also means I don't have to track it down from the library, they definitely both have their merits."

Students who said they would always prefer an ebook noted that there are still times when they must choose print due to limitations in the ebook technology. Academic study demands special ways of interacting with text, and the hardcopy book is often preferable. Many students said that they liked to be able to take notes, bookmark pages, and highlight sections in their hardcopy books, and reading particularly difficult or long academic works, and comparing and cross referencing passages was easier in print:

"We need print books. Ebooks are cool, but I still prefer print books for academic stuff."

"Depending on the subject, if the material is difficult to read, I prefer having a print version of the book so that I can physically make notes around sentences or highlight."

"My problem is if I cite from an ebook and my professor doesn't have access to the ebook, that's a problem. Pagination matters a lot to me. What's the point of reading an ebook that has totally different page numbers than the actual book? [The ebooks that were scanned from the original] are great, because they are exactly the same. But ebooks that are just text and the page numbers are totally different…I am still not sure even how to reference these books, to be honest with you."

"One limitation I normally experience with many ebooks is the ability to cross-reference within the books. Normally this would require that I have a couple of PDF readers open but some books wouldn't allow this."

"If there are diagrams, I want to see them in print, so I can draw around them, make notes, which is easier to do in print. I would also like an ebook version so I can take the image and transfer it into Word with my notes."

 Reading in print was preferred as a change from reading online, and was particularly desired when social media became too tempting. Reading in bed with a book rather than an ebook was preferred. We asked students to consider the library without any print books at all, and most students said they hoped the library would maintain the tradition of collecting print books. Even if they usually preferred the ebook for their reading, they liked being able to study in an environment surrounded by books. Without books, "it would not seem like a library."

For the most part (with some exceptions), students are reading academic ebooks on laptops and desktops, rather than dedicated ereaders. These devices cause eyestrain, though this is not enough of a concern for most students to reject ebooks. Many students cited the ability to enlarge print and adjust screen brightness as an advantage of ebooks. Paradoxically, study participants mentioned visual impairments and eye strain as being issues that drove them to use ebooks rather than print. "I don't always like reading off of a computer screen because it hurts my eyes and it's easier for my dyslexia to kick-in" one student noted, but then added that she "loved that I could zoom in and out to read the text at my eye's comfort level". Another student mentioned that "magnifying the print was a godsend during this time because my eyes were strained and tired from dry eyes."

Screen space was another issue. It was difficult to take notes online while reading because this requires toggling between the text and the note-taking document. A split-screen was an option, but this could make the text too small, and could detract from the experience of reading. One student solved the problem by taking notes on her smartphone, while another projected her ebook onto her TV screen and took notes on her laptop. One student talked about her messy desk as a reason to use an ebook: "I did not have enough space to comfortably lay my book."

Students also talked to us about the simplicity and comfort in "old fashioned books."   These students' remarks were typical:

"I prefer to have the actual book to read out of and sit in a comfy area and read for long periods."

"I think it would be nice to have both [electronic and print] copies on hand. I do find having a print copy a bit more familiar and I suppose in this way, comforting."

Digital Rights Management and licensing restrictions are significant stumbling blocks
Convenience is cited in the literature as the top reason students choose ebooks over print books. As one of our participants told us, "The most important feature [of ebooks] is to be able to access the books without having to get them out of the library and you can look at a book and scan through it to see if it's what you want."

Ebooks can be accessed from anywhere at any time and the book is never checked out or missing from the shelf. They are also very convenient for searching key words, cutting and pasting text, and storing as files on a computer, which is a much more portable solution than a heavy print book.

Unfortunately, this ideal picture of convenience does not always bear out due to limitations inherent in DRM and licensing restrictions. Sometimes the ebook is *not* the most convenient choice, as these students discovered in our study:

"Well that was odd. I've never had an ebook completely refuse to open for me. I tried pressing 'ebook full text' and a box would pop up saying, 'Sorry, this ebook is in use.' I tried clicking elsewhere and the same pop up shows up. I didn't get to read anything! I even tried to open it using [another platform] but faced the same setback."

"I hate using them online. If I can't download, I probably won't use it, because I need to search it and the online search is terrible for most programs. I want to get it into PDF, OCR that sucker, and then I can access it the way I want to access it."

"One of the issues is not knowing what you're going to get. You kind of expect them to be the same. Some you couldn't copy text, some were hard to scroll through and you couldn't highlight. [It was frustrating] not knowing what I was opening and what I could do with it."

"The quality of the book wasn't as good. It was a scanned image, I think, and it made finding what I wanted a little bit harder. You were only allowed to export 30 pages into PDF format in the hope that it will make it easier to read."

"You want everything you get with a print book, and more. What's the point of spending all this money if it's the same thing?"

Cost of books is top of mind
All of the participants in our study mentioned the cost of books as significant concern and looked for the cheapest way to acquire the textbooks for their courses. In most cases, the electronic version of the course textbook was most affordable. Students talked about buying one etextbook and sharing it with friends, using BitTorrent or Pirate Bay to find free books, or simply making do with Google Books previews and snippets.

Some of the students were unaware that the library provides access to ebooks, which is some cases might have saved them from purchasing their own texts. This study has shown us that we need to improve the discoverability of ebooks on our library website, promote ebooks to students, and investigate the possibility of purchasing more required course textbooks as ebooks. As one student said, "There's a lot of times when I don't buy the textbook and rely on library services to access the book. I think that having the option not to have to put so much money toward textbooks is kind of huge. That's something really valuable about ebooks."

Downloadable, PDF format is preferred
The ideal ebook is in PDF format and can be downloaded and stored on a device. Internet access is not always available or reliable, particularly when a student is commuting. The authentication process adds another layer of complication that may hinder a student from accessing ebooks when off campus. We heard:

 "Since the etextbook is only available through the online access code, you might as well buy the book because it can only be used when there is an internet connection."

"I tried to use this resource...but the internet was so bad, I had to stop out of frustration. A print version would have been better because it is reliable."

The temptation to be distracted by social media sites while trying to concentrate on reading a text is another reason that downloading a text is preferred to reading while connected to the Internet. We heard: "Having an ebook in class would mean that I'm one step closer to being on Facebook."

PDF is the best format for an engaged reading experience. It is the most reliable for searching, and can be highlighted and cut and paste into other documents. Ebooks that do not have a PDF option are frustrating for prolonged reading. One student noted that "I find the way the pages jump around when moving through the book is something I don't like." Another said: "It's frustrating that you are not able to scan through the book as a whole as if it was a PDF to find information. You have to keep clicking through each section."

Even students who preferred to read print sometimes preferred to print chapters from an ebook rather than borrow a library book, as long as the chapters were available as printable PDFs.

Going forward

Our study and the literature on ebooks in academic libraries suggest there is an appetite for ebooks among our students, for their convenience and time saving features such as search and copy and paste. We also learned that we could be doing more to improve our users' awareness about our ebook collections, as well as working to remove obstacles to facilitate access and use.

We need to learn more about our teaching faculty's use and perspectives on ebooks, as they are an important piece in recommending ebooks to students and emphasizing their usefulness. Faculty might help alleviate any lingering wariness or mistrust among some students concerning ebooks. One avid ebook users told us:

"I think there are still a lot of people, I mean, at least some of my friends, who would prefer to get the [print] textbook because it's conventional, traditional, and there is no uncertainty of what's going to happen…I trust computers quite a bit so I'm fine with it, but there's still a lot of people who are skeptical. I think a lot of people don't know we have them. They don't know there free ones too."

A forthcoming study of student reading practices at CUNY reminds us of "the potential conflict between the pro-digital atmosphere of higher education and the preferences and needs of students" (Foasberg, 2014). As long as some of our students remain skeptical of ebooks or realize they are not always the most effective tool for their learning in every situation, we should carefully consider under what conditions to select ebooks over print.

That said, an unintended but very positive outcome of this study is that students told us they became more engaged with ebooks and more reflective about how they use them while participating in this study. We heard:

"Students don't know about ebooks and all of their features. If they hear it from the library, it sounds boring. I'm glad I participated in this study because it opened my mind and I learned more about the different platforms."

"I didn't like e-books and always shied away from them. But after this study I realize OK, it's not that bad, if I *have* to use it, it's not that bad. You can do keyword search, and it's a storage device, so it's OK."

 One student told us, "I think the study was really interesting and it's nice to see that the library is interested in what the students like, because technology is a big part of our lives. I didn't think [the Library] would do studies on ebooks and would just assume technology is the way to go." Another said: "This study has been a lot of fun. I look forward to chatting with you in person about what I've discovered along the way. Thanks for causing me to reflect on my experiences with ebooks, it has quite definitely changed how I feel about using them, and made me much more aware of the corporatization of knowledge."

When we followed up with this student about this comment, he told us, "This study definitely made me a little more critical of the ebooks I'm using, so yes, I do think I have higher expectations now. When you can see how little you can do with them, how little access I had to

them [restrictions on borrowing, downloading, copying, marking up], how they're super corporate...I get bothered by the fact that access to these things is so driven by the publisher. I think of ebooks as a tool, and the point is they're supposed to be a richer way to research."

This comment reminds us that we need to advocate for our users with the ebook vendors. Our students are seeking downloadable PDF files free of access and use restrictions. We should favour those publishers who are attentive to these needs and engage with those publishers who are still locking down their content.

A recent comment in a library newsletter reminds us that "when librarians started building ebook collections we may have had idealized notions of what they would look like…We may have pictured ebooks as easy to use and as integrating seamlessly with the electronic devices our patrons use for research, teaching and learning. While some of our expectations have been met, many have fallen short of reality" (Reed, 2013). For now, ebooks and print books both have their place and the many factors in choosing one or the other should be considered when selecting for our collections.

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