

# Best Practices for E-Book Implementation

## Collection Development

- If you are purchasing from a vendor who lets you do title by title selection, you may want to consider turning collection development over to the library staff who do selection for print in these subject areas.
- You may also turn collection development over to the staff responsible for your other digital content: subscription databases, website, etc.
- If participating in a consortium collection, where multiple libraries share access to the same collection, be as active and as participatory as possible to advocate for the types of titles that your users would want.
- Create a simple online form through which users can suggest e-books for you to purchase. If you already have a purchase suggestion form for other materials, simply add e-books as an item type to be suggested.

## Access Configuration

- Provide multiple access points including links to e-book collections (as you would online databases) as well as links from MARC records in your catalog.
- Make sure that you test remote patron access for both methods of access.
- EZproxy is an inexpensive way for libraries to provide remote patron authentication that is standard across vendors, and it works from database menu links as well as MARC record 856 links, which take users directly to a specific title. Many ILS vendors also offer remote patron authentication modules that are similar to EZproxy.
- It is also important to test access from terminals in the library. Policy decisions need to be made regarding access of e-books from OPAC terminals vs. Internet Terminals. Do security systems (proxies etc.) in place on these terminals prevent users from using these resources in the library?

## Cataloging

- Evaluate the quality or source of MARC records provided by the vendor before you select a vendor.
- Decide how often you will load batches of MARC records balancing workload and currency of your catalog.
- Decide how you will handle MARC records in your catalog for weeded e-books.
- Decide if you need to create dummy item records in your catalog.
- Check that ISBNs are not print ISBNs. This can sometimes cause overlaying of print holdings on e-book bibliographic records.

## User Support

- Have enough staff who are trained and familiar with actually using the service. So that they can help your users with basic troubleshooting.
- You should have support from the vendor to solve problems that your staff can not.
- Be aware that there are limits to supporting the PCs and devices that your users have outside the library. If problems are limited to one user and cannot be replicated, it may be that neither the library nor the vendor will be able to solve 100% of user issues.

- Designate someone to be a liaison between front line public service staff and backend technical support

### **Staff Training**

- Be sure to train staff in-person *before* you launch a new collection of e-books. If staff is not familiar with or comfortable with the technology, they will be unable to promote it or to assist users when they have problems with the technology.
- Train all staff at some basic level on the e-books. Circulation staff is often the staff our users have the most contact with, and there are plenty of opportunities for staff to mention e-book alternatives when placing holds on long waiting lists, looking for a title that the library only has as an e-book, or telling users titles can't be renewed any more and presenting the e-book as another alternative.
- If purchasing e-books that are downloadable, spend a few hundred dollars to buy several different devices (or borrow them from staff who have the devices) and allow staff to experiment with downloading e-books to their work computers and then transferring them to the various devices. If they've actually done it once, they'll be much more comfortable explaining the procedure to a user.
- Provide staff with FAQs about each collection, such as what types of books are included, what the download/burn to CD limitations are, what devices are compatible, etc. Also provide them with talking points for any potential friction areas, such as the lack of iPod compatibility.

### **Promotion**

- Contact local media notifying them of your e-book collection. Highlight some of the benefits of e-books to the community, as well some of the more engaging titles that you are now offering.
- Have promotions in your libraries. Create bookmarks, posters, table signs— advertising the new e-books and giving users a place to go for more information, like a simple URL on your website like [mylibrary.net/ebooks](http://mylibrary.net/ebooks). Have an “Introduction to e-books” class for the public.
- Have promotions on your website: remember that many potential e-book users won't be coming into your physical libraries. Promote your new e-books using your blog, newsletters, homepage, e-mail notices, etc.
- Raffle off an MP3 player for use with your e-audio books.
- Raffle off a PDA for use with your downloadable e-books.

### **Usage Statistics**

- Start measuring use of your e-books collection right away.
- Measure something standard across all your collections (such as number of downloads or checkouts), if possible.
- Monitor statistics monthly, and produce quarterly reports showing usage over time in your various collections.
- Figure out cost per download or cost per access, and compare across collections to see where you're getting the most use for your dollar.