

CASE STUDY

Transitioning to 100% Business E-Books: The Case of a Large University Business Collection

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Abstract

The transformation of the e-book industry and the acceleration in academic distance learning programs has been nothing less than extraordinary. Many authors, in many ways, have enumerated the advantages of acquiring e-books for academic users. At our institution, availability, accessibility, acceptance by our patrons, and low footprint of e-books has provided a strong motivation for pursuing this new technology. This article describes how we are decisively moving toward the goal of achieving a 100% business e-book collection.

Introduction

As a central partner in the academic enterprise, the business library seeks to provide scholarship in any medium published and strives to deliver it in the most expedient way possible. In many ways, we forget that we are in the knowledge business, clinging to old formats while the world around us requires adaptation and change. The process of business book publishing, from the time a manuscript is submitted to a publisher to the time it becomes library shelf-ready is slow and laborious. In addition, the monumental problems associated with transporting a hard copy detract from the main purpose of speedy information delivery. The practice of housing print books in mammoth structures with very little circulation statistics to show for is neither efficient nor effective and has not served the goals of business research.

The E-Book Industry

The e-book segment of the publishing industry is growing rapidly. According to IBISWorld, segment revenue is projected to grow an average of 16.5% per year from \$3.04 billion in 2011 to \$6.5 billion by 2016 (IBISWorld, 2012). Due to economic and financial reasons, the book publishing industry had traditionally withheld the concurrent introduction of e-formats to coincide with print. However, lately the industry has recognized that users are ready to accept e-format and are willing to transition from print to electronic (Smith, 2008). Although e-book format share has been developing fast in the general book market, growth in the academic market has been phenomenal. Simba Information (2010) estimates that professional and scholarly books account for 75% of the e-book market. The development of better e-book readers that cater to the needs of researchers in content, form, and medium, and the development of mobile APPS on devices

that can authenticate users, transitioning as much as possible to an all e-book collection may partially explain this trend. Students have also shown that they are very interested in mobile access to books (Dresselhaus, 2012).

Furthermore, the fast growth of distance learning programs to compete with commercial educational enterprises has exposed the weaknesses of old textual formats. In libraries, new discovery services such as Summon have increased immediate exposure of researchers to e-books. Surveys demonstrate that business faculty members are becoming familiar with e-books and use them frequently (Camacho, 2010).

Although some problems persist with regard to licensing agreements, lack of discounts, and inconsistency among platforms (Ashcroft, 2011), my belief is that many of these issues will be resolved as the academic e-book segment grows and as librarians develop stronger bargaining postures.

These exciting developments have led our library to move decisively towards achieving a 100% business e-book collection.

The Setting

The University of Cincinnati (UC) is a state university with over 44,000 students. The university's Lindner College of Business enrolls over 2,800 undergraduates, 400 MBA and MS students and over 50 Ph.D.'s. The college has seven departments: Accounting, Economics, Finance-Real Estate, Hospitality Management, Management, Marketing, Operations Business Analytics, and Information Systems. The business library collection has historically been very strong with over 200 databases, 4,800 full-text electronic business periodicals and a sizable book budget. In addition, our state consortium, Ohiolink, has contributed

significantly to the strength of the serials and book collections.

Moving to E-Books

One of the major obstacles libraries face in acquiring e-books is identifying in a timely fashion what is published in e-book format. Business collection profiles from our provider, YBP Library Services, had traditionally stressed the print version, but the concurrent availability of print and e-books was often not clear. As a result, most notifications did not identify the extent of e-book availability. The solution came when we identified a way of establishing a stand-alone weekly notification plan that identifies e-books as they are added to the various vendor platforms without regard

Table 1: Business and Economic E-titles Available on YBP GOBI by Month

Month	EBRARY 2014	EBSCO 2014
January	374	368
February	473	333
March	261	324
April	564	917
May	326	357
June	387	265
July	290	543
August	426	606
September	394	335
October	435	254
November	350	245
December	286	335
Total	4566	4882

Note: Based on the author's YBP GOBI search for the following LC classes: G155-G156; G550; GT2853; HA154-HA4737; HB-HG; HT321; HT151; KF5400-KF6700; QA76.9; QA274; QA278; RA410-RA413; T55-T60; T173-T174; T49.5; TP368-TP684; TS155; TX910-TX912

to the original date of publishing. Since implementing this plan, we receive weekly business e-book notifications as books are added to major vendors and become available on YBP's GOBI interface. We currently receive 150-200 notifications on a weekly basis. Our collection strategy also involves contracts with three major vendors.

Cost

In the majority of cases, academic business e-books cost the same as the print version. However, there is a differential in pricing depending on whether the book is a single-user or multiple-use purchase option. Presently, no discounts are offered for e-books which make it a very unpopular aspect of the selection process. In some instances, there are wide variations in pricing which can add up to 500% to the book cost. In a survey at Auburn University at Montgomery, the differential of print to electronic was \$19.17 in favor of the electronic copy (Bailey, 2015). A few publishers, such as Oxford University Press, charge unrealistic prices for the electronic version of print.

Publisher's Output/Universe

Although the trade e-book consumer market has shown moderate growth in the last few years, in my view, the academic market will move much faster. Statistics on the universe of academic business books published in electronic format are currently not available. However, Table 1 is a representation of the extent of business e-publishing available through two large suppliers of academic books for libraries.

The business publishers enumerated in Table 2 produce the bulk of academic business

books. The percentage of scholarly books not available to libraries is shrinking every day. The only publishers, who significantly impact the business academic market, not presently selling e-books to libraries are: Harvard Business, Financial Times, McGraw-Hill, Pearson, and Wharton. Table 2 shows e-books available on ebrary.

Table 2: Business Titles, of Major Publishers, Available on ebrary

	2013	2014
Springer	585	701
Wiley	593	493
Routledge	587	487
Palgrave MacMillan	298	353
Edward Elgar	157	134
IGI Global	106	109
Emerald	77	96
CRC Press	68	93
Gower	63	90
Ashgate	52	87
World Bank	81	85
Kogan Page	81	84
Cambridge	117	72
OECD	31	71
Oxford	90	69
Jossey-Bass	57	55
AMACOM	47	42
Sage	25	33

Note: The data is very similar for e-books available on EBSCO

Table 3: Transition from Print to E-books Over a 3 Year Period

Year	Print titles	Selected e-books	E-book other sources	Total e-books	Total Books
2009	2005	0	721	721	2726
2010	1546	443	1137	1580	3126
2011	557	1514	1114	2628	3185

Individual Selection vs. Buying Collections

Leasing e-book collections has been around for many years. The model was archaic, inflexible, offered much duplication, had the least amount of selector control, and did not allow for targeting the needs of users.

Librarians have always shown a preference for selecting books rather than leasing collections from aggregators (Vasileiou, 2012). In the last few years, publishers, suppliers, and e-book platform vendors have begun to recognize the value, market potential, and profitability of allowing individual selections with archival rights for the institution. This development has allowed our library to pursue a multifold strategy. First, we opted for individual selections from a wide range of publishers through platform vendors, supplemented by publisher-based plans and minimal leasing of “Collections”. Then, in 2011, we cancelled a major business collection that had been leased, minimized duplication with other owned e-books, and purchased e-books that were originally leased and showed some usage.

Transitioning to E-Books at the University of Cincinnati

In 2009, the business library made no individual e-book purchases. All e-books that we received were from subscription-based plans. We started purchasing individual e-

books mid-2010. In addition we maintained our subscription to publisher-based plans such as Springer, World Bank, IGI Global, Emerald, Oxford, OECD, and ProQuest. Table 3 shows our transition from print to a largely e-book based collection over three years. In our business collection, e-books have increased by 364% over 2 years.

Transitioning to 100% E-Books DDA Plan

In March of 2012 we started a demand-driven acquisition (DDA) program for business, setting up a profile with a major vendor. Each week, we view approximately 200 business e-book notifications and select an average of 50 for DDA records to be added to the catalog. In addition, we also have e-book agreements with other major vendors, so we can firm order books that are not available on our vendor’s DDA plan.

Now in our third year of DDA, we have seen tremendous improvements over traditional e-book buying habits. The universe of books available to our business students have more than doubled, and the records in the catalog are indistinguishable from other owned books (so for all practical purposes, DDA is part of our collection). We intend to keep DDA records to insure availability when needed. Initial data indicate that the collection will be economical, focused and effective. It was startling for us to observe that, even with the best of intentions, we were collecting with

an educated guess that did not relate

Table 4: Three-Year DDA Experience

Year	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
DDA Titles Added to Catalog	1855	1646	1716
Dollar Cost (If Purchased)	\$191,354.00	\$171,299.00	\$167,644.00
Total DDA Titles Triggered	150	171	203
Total \$\$ Spent	\$12,780	\$14,686.00	\$18,440.00

completely to what the users wanted. We are also pleasantly surprised that the academic level of DDA triggered purchases has been superb.

The DDA plan is supplemented by minimal print book purchases from those publishers who resist e-publishing. It is also supplemented by a few e-book purchases for books not available on the DDA platform. We are also retaining our publisher-based e-book collections.

We have recently started a process to review circulation statistics, for print books, to identify missing and heavy use items and provide an added electronic copy whenever needed and available. Table 4 shows a three year DDA experience.

Current Total Business Book Collection

In addition to the DDA component, the current business e-book collection comes from several sources. Consortia sources provide a few major publishers such as Oxford, Springer and Wiley. Publisher based subscription provides publishers such as World Bank, IGI; OECD, IMF, and CRC. In 2013/2014, the e-book collection totaled 1,710 DDA titles and 2,937 titles from other sources.. In the same year, we purchased 89 print books from publishers who do not supply electronic copies for libraries.

Trend

Figure 1 shows how e-books replaced print books over a period of 6 years. From a high of 2000 print books purchased in 2008/2009 to a low of 89 books purchased in 2014/2015.

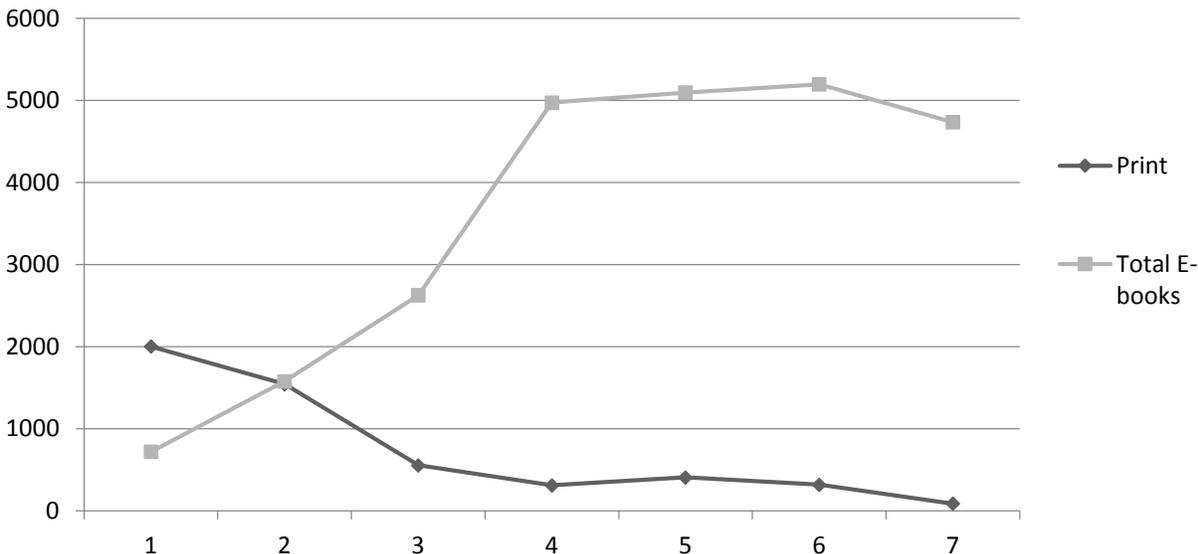
Usage Statistics

One of the most attractive advantages of e-books on some provider platforms is the ability to gauge usage for single books as well as total usage within major subjects. It is also possible to identify use patterns within sub-subjects of business and get statistics for turnaways. In 2014/2015, business pages received 1,965 logins, 61,602 views, and 19,822 pages printed. It is interesting to note, that with such large usage, we have observed very low number of turnaways.

Conclusion

The experience of moving to e-books at the UC Business Library has very rewarding, and the level of acceptance has been remarkable. Our transformation has received

Figure 1: Approaching 100% E-book



much praise and little to no complaints. A monthly new books list of approximately 200 books is sent to faculty and students and is available on the business web site. Usage has been phenomenal, with over 60,000 pages viewed each year. Delivering information at any time or place, and through any medium available, has allowed us to move closer to achieving our goal as a 21st century business library.

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