The management of e-book collections and their implication on the economic management of the library

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Abstract
Purpose: The addition of digital formats such as specialised magazines and e-books to libraries, has led to a dramatic change in management format with respect to those involved in the reading process: users, publishers, distributors, booksellers, and authors; and in turn, the way in which libraries are planned and managed.

Design/methodology/approach: The article makes an analysis on the implementation of e-book and way to influence the economic management of the institution for it has been analyzed relevant literature on the implementation of electronic books not only in the library field but in other sectors, the article uses various sources to offer conclusions on the interest not only economic but also to improve quality of service offered to its implementation in libraries or centers documentation.
Findings: Not only is there space-saving in libraries but also a new manner in which to consume information that libraries must adapt to as soon as possible given the increasing demands of users in this connection. All of the above has given rise to changes in the economic management of libraries.

Originality/value: These changes must be assessed before making a decision regarding the purchase of e-book collections and their subsequent organization and management, which indirectly change many of the tasks currently carried out by library staff members, thereby optimizing times and processes for the benefit of increased visibility of the electronic collection.

Keywords: libraries, e-books, financial management

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From specialised journals in digital format to e-books
E-books represent the second stage in the evolution of the digital revolution. Their presence in libraries and the users’ knowledge level is still low, but the development of specific collections by publishers, advances in on-line distribution systems and improvements in e-readers are changing this situation, which in turn will have important consequences for the production and consumption of such materials beyond those of a purely technological nature. Whereas a clear change in the use of scientific information was evidenced as a result of the launching of scientific journals, in the case of e-books, an even greater change is being evidenced given the large majority of users encompassed. Furthermore, while electronic information was exclusively for the specialised users in each sector, e-books reach any user of any discipline, and especially the end consumer, extending to leisure spaces, schools, etc, since the entire population is a potential user of this type of devices. Scientific journals are now an established and irreversible model of the incorporation of electronic publishing in the processes of scientific communication, especially in research libraries. However, the response to digital books has been mixed, taking into consideration that they were introduced in libraries in the same years as journals, but with a lower level of acceptance by users. This
reaction was due, inter alia, to the lack of specific reading devices allowing documents with a large number of pages to be read comfortably as in the case of books.

Seen in this light, the first question that needs to be asked are as follows: in what key ways should the manner in which collections are managed be changed in order to be efficient and reduce costs to the potential user of such digital products?

The general advantages arising are as follows:
- Multiple access is allowed.
- Continuous access at any time and place.
- Instant delivery.
- Saving of shelf space.
- Prevention from damage, loss or theft.
- No shipping and handling.
- Access to out of print materials.

However, there are some drawbacks:
- Cost of e-book readers.
- Difficulty in accessing computers or the Internet.
- Resistance to change in reading habits.
- Lack of knowledge of software / hardware.

Moving directly to the focus of this article on the changing of work processes in the library relating to the management of e-book collections, the integration of e-books in the library primarily has implications for three areas of processes and services:
- Purchasing Service
- Organization planning service
- Collection circulation service

1. Purchases
Experience in the management of electronic resources acquired by librarians over a decade ago is relevant in many respects to meet the new challenge of incorporating e-books in libraries. The business model for the acquisition of e-books is in a defining
stage with proposals such as establishing a higher price for libraries to offset possible losses on the sales no longer made. Although the price of a printed book is the same for both consumers and libraries, the arrival of e-books has led to a change, since libraries are required to pay more for books given the multiple use of this resource.

Another model proposes the purchase of a copy, followed by the payment of a license fee every time someone downloads it, prints, etc. Generally, business models hover between the plurality of access provided by new technologies and proposed restrictions on same publishers to safeguard their interests. In e-book marketing models, specific aspects respond to idiosyncrasies of the monograph and the publishers' caution against the risk of this format to their business.

- Package selection or Pick and Choose. Publishers generally allow both options. Package purchases prevent librarians from having to make a selection, although there will be high demand for some of the titles while others will scarcely be consulted due to the imbalance of the selection, with titles of high interest to users and others of only relative interest. The package license option is cheaper in terms of total titles than individual stock selection, but the latter ensures that the titles selected are more relevant.

- Access License and purchases in perpetuity. Publishers also offer buyers the opportunity to buy books in perpetuity, or purchase an access license which is renewable on an annual basis. Each option has advantages and drawbacks: the first of which is price, given that a permanent copy is always more expensive, although the same book will not be paid for repeatedly each year. However, the license option also enables the collection to be continually renewed.

- Publisher versus aggregator - One of the most controversial aspects of e-book marketing is the immediacy of the relationship between the publisher and user, which could affect other agents until now required in the marketing of books such as booksellers and distributors. These agents are likely to be replaced by the publisher directly, or by a marketing platform such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or in Spain, Libranda, TodoeBooks, Leer-E and Luarna, which sell e-books from several publishers.

Single-use versus multi-user access. One of the advantages of digital formats as compared to print books is the multiple use of the document by several people at the same time. In the case of single use, books are lent as if they were a physical unit, in the same manner as the hard copy of a document, i.e. for use by one reader at one time. This is possible through the use of a DRM (Digital Rights Management) device, but it also
limits the fundamental capabilities of the digital format. Generally, scientific publishers
(Sweets, Elsevier, etc.) are less likely to use DRM as compared to platforms.

In times of tight budgets and as in the case of electronic journals, consortium purchasing
is a good proposal, although the specific features of e-books must be taken into account.
On this basis, the library consortia will have to define a specific policy for e-books based
on user needs, content analysis and the development of a consortium platform. Their
role in the development of lines of business which are more in line with the interests of
libraries and the needs of users must also be more active.

2. Planning and organisation service

Two ways of organising electronic books in libraries are under consideration: the
integration of these materials in libraries' OPAC, or their consultation from the
publishers' platforms. The advantage of the aggregators' platforms is that they will enable
users to search for both books and journal or magazine articles, or to search for each
separately. Moreover, integration in the library catalog facilitates queries when searching
for monographic material, as some providers also provide the e-book MARC record free.
However, the use of both is not incompatible. In terms of organization it must be taken
into account that users who are already familiar with internet access will want to locate
information in a basic google search style, as in the case of more specialised OPAC.
Therefore, it is important to have a good metadata description so the user is able to find
the titles in any more general way than just by subject matter, etc. This will involve extra
work in relation to the description and classification of books. The time required to
organize the print library books purchased will be converted in time spent on best
describing the materials for their access by end users. The change in professional profile
was already implicit from the time that Internet use became widespread but the current
globalization of the use of electronic resources requires professionals to manage all of
their time with these activities in mind.

3. Collection circulation

The implementation of this new service will require a promotion plan through different
channels. The desire of library managers is for their investment in the implementation of
this new content to be reflected in usage statistics. Additionally, the budget should be
optimized.
E-book lending in a strict sense involves the e-books inclusion in the catalog or on a specific platform. In public libraries the tendency is to use platforms integrated into the libraries' web, which allow for the design and structure of the institutions' image to be customised. In the U.S. the leading company is Overdrive, which is most famous for its use by the New York Public Library (NYPL), which has approximately 18,300 electronic titles, which when compared to its collection of printed books, amounting to 860,500 titles, accounts for only 2% of the total. However, the advent of new formats is having a significant effect in terms of the number of books borrowed, which in just a couple of years has increased from 607,275 borrowed in 2007 to almost one million in 2009.

A visit to the library is not even required for the purpose of loaning materials, but rather a visit to the website from home or any other location, the only requirements being that the user is a library member and that he provides the proper identification data in order to be able to download books to his computer or device. The downloaded book has the DRM system built-in, which automatically makes the book disappear from one's device once the loan period has been completed, meaning that it is not even necessary to return the book, and consequently there will be no fines for late returns. According to preliminary data, the use of such platforms has resulted in an increase in the number of loans. However, the problem is that there is a loss of the visitors and consequently, the loss of the library as a meeting space.

There are also additional advantages such as the fact that this is a permanent service which is available 24 hours a day, no books are lost due to theft, and the books do not become deteriorated. Therefore, there is no need to replace them and there are no expenses relating to their repair. Despite these obvious advantages there are some problems which have yet to be satisfactorily resolved, such as the fact that DRM e-books limit many of the possibilities offered by the digital format such as multiuser access, i.e. books are lent as if they were physical units, meaning that they can only be lent to one user at a time, so libraries must purchase two licenses if they wish two have two copies of the same book. Moreover, once the books have been lent, other borrowers who wish to read them must reserve them, and once the books are eliminated from the borrower's device upon the expiration of the loan period, they are then transferred to the account of the users who have reserved them.
Conclusion

The increasing popularity of e-books involves multiple changes in almost all aspects relating to the publishing industry and to consumer and reading habits, ranging from the transformation and definition of business models based on the proposals of publishing agents, the transformation of the production chain and changes in the marketing of book and pricing policies, as well as the redistribution of authors' revenues and issues related to safeguarding the rights of both parties. The library, as a manager and content provider, is not alien to this rebalancing, which affects various aspects relating to the management, development and design of services for the purpose of incorporating this new format. These transformations have implications affecting the relationship between publishers and libraries, as well as the internal organization and distribution of tasks assigned to staff members, the development and design of services, and the relationship between users and libraries. All of above aspects are paramount when designing budgets and defining improvements in economic management of the library, through the selection of the finest collections of e-books, allowing for improved use and an expansion of library users.

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