



eBOOK ARCHIVES

and the changing shape of Montana State
University Library

ADVANCING
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eBook Archives and the changing shape of Montana State University Library



Montana State University is home to almost 17,000 students and over 1,000 faculty. It has been classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as one of 108 research universities with "very high research activity." MSU's Center for Bio-Inspired Nanomaterials and Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry recently received a \$1.2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health. Amongst the university's largest colleges are Engineering, Agriculture and Letters & Science.

In 2016, MSU Library purchased a collection of 56,000 eBooks from the Springer Book Archives. The collection dates from 1842–2005 and has made a large number of previously rare or unavailable print titles accessible to the university's students, researchers and faculty. We recently spoke to **Hannah McKelvey, Electronic Resources and Discovery Services Librarian and MSU graduate** to find out what kind of impact the Springer Book Archives were having on the library, its staff and its users.

How has the physical space at MSU library changed in recent years and what kind of impact have eBook archive collections had on this?

The library at MSU attracts a lot of visitors and its popularity with students, faculty and researchers is growing every year. After the student union, the library is the building with the biggest footfall on campus which is something we're really proud of. At the same time, freshman enrolment is increasing each year and our library's been at full capacity for a while. This is one reason for moving more of our book collections – particularly the archives – onto digital platforms.

Over the past 3 years, we've been able to open up more study space and add more tables and comfortable seating for students to enjoy as a result of removing lesser used titles and shifting our stacks around. The library now has a really good mix of group and individual learning space, with two floors dedicated to quiet study, and an additional thirteen group rooms which are always in high demand. We've definitely seen a shift towards more collaborative study and it's really important that we encourage and support this style of learning. The extra space created by moving print collections out of the library has had a big impact on this.

How much do print collections feature at MSU library today?

There's still demand for works in print, so we continue to house plenty of print books as well as purchasing print material, and the basement is taken up with Periodicals. But moving to online collections, such as the Springer Book Archives has meant that we've been able to shrink our print collections and free up more study space on the lower floors. We do have a very popular print collection called Bobcat Browse near our coffee shop that features books recommended by students, faculty, and staff at MSU. Aside from that, we have reference works, periodicals and other print books that support the curriculum.



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What were the library's main motivations for purchasing Springer Book Archives?

Space was a big factor, but it wasn't the only reason for our purchase of 56,000 digital book titles from the Springer Book Archives. We now have a growing number of students that aren't regularly on campus, but still need access to the same content they could get if they were in the library. MSU offers distance learning courses, so some students never set foot on campus, but they still need access to all the resources our full-time students based on campus enjoy.

With such a large collection of archive eBooks covering the full range of MSU disciplines now available digitally, we're able to support a growing number of distance learning students and really give them an equivalent learning experience to those on campus.

Another really important factor for us was having 100% confidence that the Springer Book Archives platform was stable so that access to the collections would never be disrupted for users, regardless of their location. If we weren't convinced that the platform was robust enough, we would have been more hesitant about purchasing it.

Who made the decision to expand MSU's digital book archives?

Our Head of Collection Development, Doralyn Rossmann, was a big driver behind the decision to purchase more extensive eBook archives. We had partial access to the Springer Book Archives from 2016 because we already owned a lot of backfiles, but having a more complete collection that spanned multiple disciplines and several decades, rather than just selected years, was a big motivation for purchase.

What kind of ways do you see the Springer Book Archives helping your students and researchers?

We often get students coming to the library with an assignment to complete who've been told by their professors to get hold of a specific book title. Sometimes we'll need to convince those students that the content they find in an eBook is the same content they would get from the print copy - they often think it's something different. With digital book platforms there's much less of an issue with limited copies of titles and students having to wait to get access.

One of the other challenges we have is that our students access a lot of different content platforms that vary widely in access restrictions and ease of navigation, so we often need to provide quite a lot of training and guidance. For me, the really important feature of Springer Book Archives is the simplicity of the platform. A big part of this is that there's no Digital Rights Management so our users have no restrictions to accessing, downloading or sharing titles and that level of freedom is so valuable.

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What benefits do you see for the library and its users when you compare Springer Book Archives to print collections?

As well as the flexibility Springer Book Archives gives our users, the other big plus – for students in particular – is the print on demand option. Faculty will often recommend students get a physical copy of some titles and they can buy these for a fraction of the full price with the print on demand service. So our users really have the best of both worlds: they can access digital versions of eBooks from an extensive archive collection without restriction, and print versions are more affordable than before.

After purchasing the Springer Book Archives, we can compare backfile data from the platform with our print collections and use this to inform weeding decisions. This means that we can be strategic about the print titles we remove from the library – we can free up space, whilst being confident that we’re retaining the right print collections for our users. The fact that the Springer Book Archives aligned really well with MSU’s curriculum and research focus was another big positive.

Digital book archives also really help our library staff when they’re training distance learners and those based at other sites. Print is still a core element of the service we offer, but it’s really important for us to be able to create more space within the library. I’ve found the stability of the Springer Nature platform very reassuring – it gives me the confidence that there’ll be no disruption to access for our users. And the assurance of unlimited, unrestricted access to comprehensive collections for our entire university really is the biggest plus of Springer Book Archives. Knowing that these collections are easily accessible to any user, anywhere and anytime is so important.

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Measuring the impact of archive content

MSU now owns more than 56,000 Springer Book Archive eBooks, with almost 6,000 unique titles having been viewed or downloaded between 2013–16. We saw a total of 35,000 chapter downloads in 2016 alone and we expect that figure to have significantly increased by the end of 2017. We’re seeing more and more users accessing Springer Book Archives content and we expect the use of archive titles by both students and researchers at MSU to continue growing in the coming years.

■ We are seeing more and more users accessing Springer Book Archives content

Product Information

Content from over 160 years of publication – the Springer Book Archives

The Springer Book Archives consists of high quality digital versions of books from Springer (and around 40 imprints) published between 1842-2005, including many previously out of print titles.

Available as one-off purchases with continuous access in German, English and Palgrave packages, the titles included are digitized to a high standard with optimum metadata.

For more information, contact us:
ebooks@springernature.com

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