8 STEPS TO BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE EBOOK COLLECTION

ADVANCING
DISCOVERY

Over the years, we have developed best practice guides for acquiring and implementing an eBook collection. However, as time has passed, the landscape has evolved significantly. eCollections have become increasingly commonplace, purchasing models have changed, publishing technologies have advanced, library budgets have become more constrained, and user expectations have soared. In light of these transformations, we believe it is time to revisit these steps, assess the changes, and provide you with our most up-to-date insights on constructing a thriving eBook collection.

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1. Define your Collection Development Strategy

Traditionally, librarians have built their eBook collections by either gradually selecting individual titles or obtaining licenses for entire subject collections to ensure a comprehensive range of information. However, as librarians increasingly demanded more flexibility in their acquisitions, publishers have responded by offering a wider variety of licensing options.

One such option is evidence-based models, which provide access to a vast pool of content for a limited period and allow librarians to identify the most frequently utilized titles for continued access. With the multitude of choices available, it becomes crucial to determine what is essential for your users.

When considering the most effective approach, it is important to weigh the benefits of licensing with continuing access, particularly when the content will be needed over several years. On the other hand, for disciplines with lower research intensity, licensing single titles may be more suitable. Alternatively, if budget constraints or long-term content requirements are the primary concern, opting for 'access only' arrangements could be a more viable solution.

As accumulated usage of an eBook collection grows over time, the cost per download significantly reduces. 20 years after purchasing Springer Book Archive collections, a library will see accumulated usage of fourteen times that of the first year.

Which ever approach you decide to take, here are some quick tips:

- Use the latest data to reveal high-demand, frequently searched subject areas. Springer Nature supports this through its Librarian Portal and Account Development team.
- Consider book types included in the model - reference materials and monographs adapt better to online search.
- Seek user feedback on recent acquisitions and how they are typically approaching texts, including: chapter-downloads, non-linear exploration of the text, online highlighting and annotation.
- Always consider the volume of archive material in a collection and the longer-term pay-off of this material. The citation half-life for books is typically longer than that of journals with the average number of citations peaking several years after publication.

2. Evaluate Business Models

Once you've established which strategy will best serve your users and match your strategic goals, the next step is to carefully evaluate vendor policies. Keep the following in mind:

Concurrent users:

Compare and assess offerings with different numbers of concurrent users. It could be more cost effective to choose a model that limits the amount of concurrent users, but at the same time restricts your patrons to use your collection.

MARC records:

Vendors should supply easy-to-import MARC records so you can quickly integrate electronic collections into your library catalog and avoid the time-consuming, expensive task of manual catalog integration. Systems such as KBART Automation make content discoverable and accessible in a fraction of the time it used to take.

Access Only vs Continuing Access & Packages vs Single Titles:

Take into account different business models and what rights you have to the content. Some subscriptions models need to be renewed annually to ensure access, while others allow your users to have continuing access at a one-off purchase, but also evidence-based models that give you access to a large pool of content for a limited time, and allow you to lock in continuing access to the most used books. Licensing books in a mix of these models could be the most cost-effective way for your organization, considering disciplines with high research or student use. Also, consider the cost of acquiring individual books and the time it takes before your patron has access when choosing your licensing options.

Digital Preservation:

Libraries need reliable, long-term access to eBook content, regardless of changes to the publisher. Look for perpetual access to libraries in any contract and participation in archive programs such as LOCKSS , CLOCKSS or PORTICO to safeguard your content.

Digital Rights Management (DRM)

Consider models that include Digital Rights Management. Generally, DRM restricts your patrons in freely using the content in copy/paste and printing and downloading.

Reliable, user-friendly platform:

You need to be sure your eBook platform performs around the clock and is supported by 24/7 customer service, if something does go wrong. Researchers need continual access to collections and the best user experience has been proven to drive up usage and research output.

Publication Quality:

Check your eBook supplier provides the content as high resolution PDFs and ePub versions, which can be downloaded on any mobile device to ensure the best user experience.

3. Pool resources to reduce costs

The library is the centre of the institution and perfectly placed to collaborate with all other departments to pool resources for content investment, increase usage and avoid duplicate purchases. A regular review of research grants awarded to the institution and investing in collections or titles that support those areas can be a good starting point for expanding your content.

- Check what invoicing options your supplier offers to facilitate collaboration across departmental and budgetary lines.
- Keep a consolidated, updated list of publications acquired from both centralized and de-centralized budgets to ensure funds aren't being allocated to resources you already have.
- Any planned spend should always directly support your institution's overall content strategy.

4. Review acquisitions policy

Before any new eBooks are ordered, budget and policy reviews with Librarian Liaisons are key to understanding the latest user behaviors and needs.

Integral to these discussions should be any policy changes needed to support the acquisition of electronic vs print collections, including the relative benefits of a centralized vs departmental acquisitions approach. Next steps should be to:

- Make eBook licensing model decisions and secure budget approval by department or subject area in conjunction with subject liaisons.
- Define the usage profile for the acquisition, this which can impact vendor choice, licensing agreements, and ultimately, availability of budget.
- Estimate the number of concurrent content users and factor in search behaviors, the number of access points, and printing requirements.
- Assess costs associated with specialist storage of archives versus expansion of your eBook collection.

> "**More than a third** of academic librarian interviewees described their acquisitions strategy as largely faculty-driven; and most took faculty requests and curricular needs into account to some degree, along with other factors – such as usage, budget, consortial options, etc."[1]

> "...the expected cost of owning a monograph is more than **seven times** the monograph's purchase price. This has important financial implications for libraries that are building their collections: the initial cost of populating a collection is a small fraction of the ongoing cost of maintaining one."[2]

(1) Today's Library & the future of Scholarly communication (Springer Nature, 2018)
(2) The Costs of Print Book Collections: Making the case for large scale eBook acquisitions (Springer Nature)

5. Integrate collections and boost discovery

Springer's study into the role of the library within its institution found that, "Nearly all interviewees felt the library should be the campus hub and starting point for content discovery. However, about a third did not offer an option for web-scale search across all library resources. Even the majority that did currently have library discovery services in place noted that truly comprehensive search across all holdings is still illusive, as some providers are unable to integrate some licensed academic databases."[1]

After establishing business needs, libraries should enlist IT services, their cataloging department, or their consortia to agree requirements and timelines for integration of new texts with the library discovery system. The next step is to make your new collection as discoverable as possible. Here are three quick, effective ways to do just that:

Enable link resolvers

Ensure your publisher provides integration with the link resolvers that your institution uses.
Springer Nature integrates with: EBSCO Full Text Finder; ExLibris SFX; ProQuest 360; OCLC WorldCat.

Link to subject collections via online research and LibGuides

LibGuides allow for easy navigation of relevant resources in a specific discipline. As access to many publisher platforms is granted through IP authentication, including EZProxy for off-site users, when you are writing a LibGuide it's good to include direct links to any new eBooks.
Click here to learn how to configure a proxy to work with SpringerLink.

Advance discovery with Metadata

Access Springer Nature KBART title lists at adminportal.springernature.com/metadata/kbart, and MARC records at adminportal.springernature.com/metadata/books. This web tool provides librarians and library cataloguers with easily downloadable MARC and KBART metadata, which can be embedded into library catalogues, as well as title lists for a library's licensed content.

### Upload holdings feed automatically via KBART Automation Service

KBART Automation allows customers to have a customer-specific holdings feed automatically uploaded to the customer-specified Knowledge Base and Discovery Service every week. Springer Nature currently provides SpringerLink KBART Automated Holdings Feeds for Ex Libris Alma, Ex Libris SFX, OCLC WorldShare, TDNet Discover, Ovid Discovery. Click on the following link to learn about how to set up KBART Automation.

6. Promote, promote, and promote again

Ongoing promotion of new collections before, during and after acquisition are essential for driving long-term usage. And with 72% of librarians citing 'promoting greater content usage amongst faculty' as their single biggest focus, efforts behind this are already substantial. To boost these efforts, seek as much support as you can from publishers.

- Publishers should be able to provide a variety of print and online promotional tools to support your publicity drive.
- Check the publisher's website for dedicated library resources, including on-site and remote training options, banner ads, downloadable posters, and other promotional aids.
- Use email, intranets, social media and departmental forums to spread the word.
- Regularly repeat this activity to make existing resources work harder for your institution.
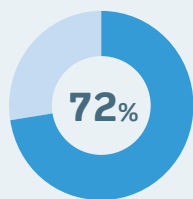
72%

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7. Digital Preservation

Ask your vendor what partnerships they have in place to ensure that content remains accessible and usable to their customers, regardless of media failure and technological change.

Digital preservation organizations such as CLOCKSS and Portico ensure accurate rendering of authenticated content over time.

8. Review and renew

After successful implementation, you'll need to closely evaluate the speed at which users are accessing the new collection, along with other trends including research methods, how they're reading content (eg. Chapter downloads vs full text), how they're accessing content (on or off campus) and how frequently they're printing or ordering print versions of the text. As part of this process, you should review associated Altmetrics for some of your best ranking titles, along with gaps in your existing catalogue.
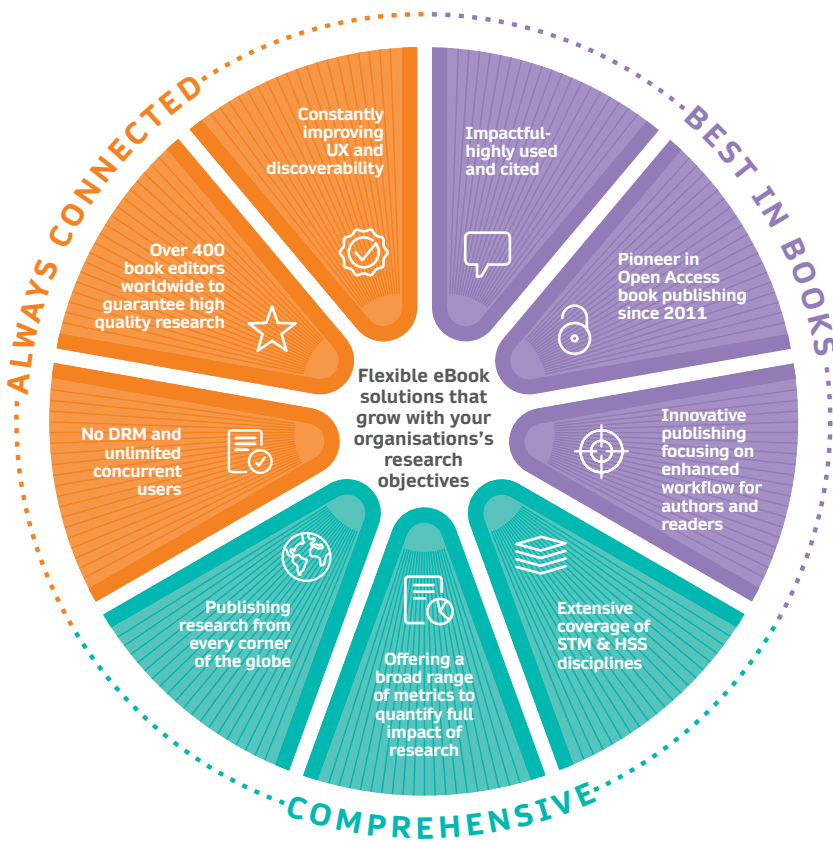
3-6 months after integrating new titles into your collection, interview active users and evaluate their needs. Provide your publisher with feedback on technologies and new content that could support emerging research trends at your institution.

Ask your publisher for tools, case studies, and client references to support your internal communications and get buy-in from the wider institution. Measuring ROI should also be integral to the review process. Your publisher should give you easy access to usage stats so that you can calculate cost-per-download.

Finally, check that your usage data and return on investment are aligned with your overall content strategy.

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