EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
California Digital Library, Joint Steering Committee for Shared Collections
Ebook Task Force Report
March 2001

The Ebook Task Force was charged to define operating guidelines and desirable features that will make ebooks most useful for instruction and research in the University of California; evaluate the ongoing experiences at UC campuses; examine other academic library ebook experiments and, identify potential University-wide or multi-campus strategies that should be pursued or explored further.   Task force research concentrated primarily on the commercial availability of ebooks, though non-commercial projects and initiatives have also been reviewed.

Background & Findings
Electronic books offer possibilities for expanding access and changing learning behavior and academic research. Books would never go out of print, and new editions could be easily created and updated. Content could always be accessible, regardless of time or location of the user, and could be read on PCs or on portable book readers. An individual could carry several titles at once on a portable reader, and over the course of an academic career, build a personal library. Added functionalities include full text searching, choice of font size, and interactive functions such as mark-up, citation creation, and note taking. Print text can be integrated with multi-dimensional objects, sound, and film to create a whole new kind of monographic work.   It is possible that there will be a disaggregation of the printed book package as the model for the ebook. Ebooks might disaggregate the conventional unity of the printed book; ebooks may become more marketable through their saleable parts, such as chapters.

However, the task force has concluded that all the elements that would make the ebook market viable are not quite in place. The partnerships in the market, development of standards, software and hardware features, and business models are still regularly changing.

- Publishers have been conservative in moving into the ebook market, though some are beginning to provide a wider range of titles as ebooks.
- The corpus of academic ebooks available is not yet that large or representative of many disciplines, although there are vendors that are aggressively building ebook and e content collections.   Some subject areas, such as computer technology, are covered more fully than other fields.
- Technologies for reading ebooks are still not quite appealing, practical or cost effective enough to have much market penetration.
- Standards for an interoperable ebook format are still under development, and the need for interoperability is still not entirely accepted by the publishing industry.
- There is active discussion in the publishing industry about Digital Rights Management Systems (DRMS) that could tightly and precisely control access and secondary use of information.   DRMS could limit the copyright "first sale" concept radically, impacting libraries' fair use capabilities.
- The maret is currently dominated by the replication of printed books in electronic form, rather than the creation of books which are originally and uniquely electronic.
- Acquisition and collection management procedures are not yet integrated into normal processing routines, and most libraries are still treating ebooks as projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Licensing
The task force reviewed UC CDC *Principles for Acquiring and Licensing Information in Digital Formats* and the CDL *Checklist of Point To Be Addressed In A California Digital Library License Agreement,* and found that the vast majority of the *Principles* and the *Checklist* items apply equally to ebooks as to journals. Particular principles and guidelines to emphasize in licensing ebooks are:

- Ebooks should be made available in a portable and an interoperable format, not dependent on proprietary software or hardware.

- Value added features should be included, such as advanced search capabilities, linking of text, browsability, "marking" and highlighting text, citation tools, bookmarking, interactivity with sources such as dictionaries and media, and linking to outside references, such as cited sources, reviews, and other works by the author.

- Content should be true to any print original, including all graphics and other media, color, and original page display where appropriate. Paging for the print version should be included in addition to online paging.

- For ebooks with no print equivalent, there should be access to all types of content considered a part of the "book", such as graphics and sound.

- Users should have the option of printing, downloading, email and copying.

- Vendor supplied metadata should provide access to titles through common bibliographic access points for OPACs and databases, and should be able to accept open URL queries.

- Licenses should recognize purchase of titles as "first sale" according to copyright to allow for fair use, such as classroom use and interlibrary loan.

- To protect privacy of users, checking out a title should appear as a black box to vendors with no individual user information. Systems should not require users to register, or ask questions that would reveal personal identity.

- Ebooks should allow simultaneous use of a single title.

- Content should be separated from access features. Underlying content should be transferable in a non-proprietary format into a variety of reader software options to maximize reader choice of additional features, and be available for interlibrary loan outside the UC system.

- Pricing for ebooks should include two separate and distinct elements:
  - an initial one time purchase price, which is less than the equivalent print version
  - a separate **small** ongoing fee for access and archiving costs.

- Costs of converting ebooks from proprietary versions should not be passed on to purchasers, although it is recognized that the added features for manipulation of text and the maintenance/archiving carry some costs and value.

- UC should favor business models that shape e scholarship through open scholarly communication supporting fair use and interlibrary loan.

- Statistics should be provided for title-by-title usage, and by campus.

III.C. POTENTIAL UNIVERSITY WIDE OR MULTI-CAMPUS STRATEGIES

Because of the fluidity of the ebook market, and the continuing development of standards for software and hardware that still need to mature before a viable ebook market can survive, the task force recommends a range of pilot projects, so that UC can help develop standards, gain experience with ebooks, and forge partnerships with academic publishers and consortia to continue to monitor progress.

General
1. Review both the UC CDC *Principles for Acquiring and Licensing Information in Digital Formats* and the CDL *Checklist of Point To Be Addressed In A California Digital Library License Agreement* and revise them to apply to multiple formats, not just ejournals, the focus of the current language

2. Create a mechanism for ongoing monitoring of the ebook market, given its current fluid state .

3. Provide training and education about ebooks for librarians and other library personnel in the UC system.

Standards
4. Participate in the development of the Open Ebook Forum (OEB) structure to ensure a library and a scholarly communication perspective for the standards being developed.

5. Join the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and contribute to the development of elements of the standards, especially of identifiers, metadata and interoperability of files and structures that are essential for academic use, such as fair use.

6. Work with other major academic consortia and libraries to influence development of standards for fair use, archiving, non-proprietary software and hardware for interoperability of formats, and ADA compliance.

Licensing and operations
7. Experiment with an ebook vendor for system-wide access, targeting high use materials, such as reserve book materials and core reading lists for grad students.

8. Provide shared cataloging for all titles via MELVYL and campus OPACs.

9. Test the impact of cataloging access by shared cataloging of free ebooks in projects like Project Gutenberg.

10. Since several campuses have contracts with NetLibrary, coordinate efforts toward system-wide access to titles, and to provide a mechanism to address issues of common concern, such as authentication and simultaneous access.

Archiving and Access
11. Experiment with archiving ("BSTOR" or "eRLF") of a single print copy or single e-copy in the UC system. Look to the JSTOR model structure.

12. Partner with an academic publisher, such as UC Press, to provide access and archiving, and to promote interoperability.