**ebooks@cambridge Advisory Group**

**Collection Management and ebooks**

The collection management goals of ebooks@cambridge are:

* to support individual libraries’ ebook acquisitions within an interdependent collaborative framework
* to encourage each library to integrate ebooks, as appropriate, into their library acquisitions and reader support
* to ensure, as far as possible, that all ebooks acquired are available to all current staff and students from any location
* to encourage efficient ebook purchasing, especially to avoid unnecessary duplication at the title level
* to ensure that all readers and librarians are kept informed of new ebook availability

So this document is not a Collection Development Policy as such. It is intended to inform staff at the UL, Faculty, Departmental and College libraries who are reviewing their library's policy, and to advise those selecting and acquiring ebooks.

No one library or group of libraries has either the resources or expertise to deliver a complete, comprehensive ebook service to all our staff and students. What we do have is a set of skills, experience and sources of funding across all sectors which can be harnessed for the common good. We want to ensure that each library makes informed, local decisions about accommodating ebooks in their collection, within a University and College-wide framework.

In line with the 2010 Business Plan, we assume that the ebooks@cambridge service, with an Administrator based at the University Library, manages and co-ordinates licensing, discovery and access arrangements. Acquisitions librarians at the University Library, Faculties, Departments and Colleges are responsible for selection and ordering of individual titles and subject-specific packages in liaison with the service. Large cross-curricular packages will be acquired by the service after discussion with relevant libraries and the ebooks@cambridge Advisory Group.

1. **Budget**

Contributions made by the Colleges are currently aggregated to a fund for ebook purchases, with priority being given to titles for undergraduate study. A portion of the fund is assigned to each Tripos subject according to a formula agreed by the Advisory Group, normally based on the number of undergraduate students studying the subject, and is made available to the Faculty and Department library. Insofar as it is possible to distinguish the demand for particular volumes, College funding is not directed to the purchase of titles required exclusively by a graduate readership, so those F/Ds who support a significant number of postgraduate students are less likely to draw on the Colleges’ fund.

Faculty and Departments librarians are currently offered options for purchasing ebooks via the ebooks@cambridge Administrator, or directly from suppliers with whom the University holds a licence. Therefore their contributions can be made directly to the aggregated fund, or to pay for purchases made by the Administrator, or they fund their own purchasing.

The University Library makes a contribution towards the aggregated fund, provides the services of the part-time Administrator and, from 2011-12 her part-time assistant, plus support services, the Electronic Resources Database and the ebooks@cambridge website.

1. **Acquisitions**

The Administrator of the ebooks@cambridge service is responsible for negotiating and maintaining licence agreements, maintaining budget information, ordering ebooks in response to requests and reading lists, arranging access and discovery, maintaining the database of catalogue records, and associated information services such as the website and supporting librarians and readers.

Faculty and Department librarians can choose from a range of options for ebook ordering:

1. Facs/Deps contribute an agreed sum into the central pot at the beginning of the financial year (as in previous years)
2. Facs/Deps commit to contributing a certain amount during that year and are invoiced later on by the service at agreed times
3. Facs/Deps contribute as and when they wish to spend on ebooks.
4. Facs/Deps place orders for ebooks directly with our agreed suppliers from their own budgets. The ebooks Administrator will ensure that the Colleges’ funds for their subjects are made available.

A catalogue record for each ebook should normally be added to the Electronic Resources Database (ERDB) which returns results to searches run on LibrarySearch. If Fac/Dep librarians place orders for ebooks they are requested to provide the ebooks@cambridge Administrator with the necessary information for catalogue records to be added to the ERDB.

In addition, Faculty and Department librarians may also use their CUP credit to acquire ebooks on the Cambridge Books Online platform, but are requested do so in consultation with the ebooks Administrator.

College libraries are requested to send recommendations for ebook purchases to the relevant Faculty or Department librarian who should either place or decline the order, or forward the request to the Administrator with comments, depending on which option for ordering they have chosen. Care must be taken to avoid declining a request for an ebook which may be of relevance to another F/D.

The University Library UL staff are requested to send recommendations for ebook purchases to the Administrator.

Assessment of cross-curricular packages shall be considered on a case by case basis by the Advisory Group in consultation with those Faculty and Department libraries who have an interest. The criteria used will normally be as above.

Donations of ebook material from whatever source shall normally be accepted in liaison with the ebooks@cambridge service. However, gifts which require excessive maintenance, subscription or other costs, or which fall outside agreed collection development priorities, may be declined.

1. **Updating a collection development policy**

Librarians are encouraged to incorporate ebooks into their collection development policies, and may wish to consider the following points:

* The level of use of ebooks by their members
* The format preferences of staff and students
* The availability of relevant texts in ebook format
* The use of ebooks in your F/D VLE
* Availability of University-wide, standard access and good quality catalogue records
* Potential future developments, eg self-publishing by academic staff, provision via Amazon Kindle, Apple iPad and other mobile readers
* Potential for chunking and Demand driven acquisition (see below)

1. **Selecting and ordering ebooks**

4.1. F/D librarians who are ordering ebooks may wish to consider the following:

* The comparative costs of the print and ebook
* The likely requirement for multiple print copies (including College as well as F/D libraries). The likely level of demand for an ebook (consider trials and check results against anticipated number of users)
* Whether an option to download the ebook is available, and on what terms
* The ability to repurpose content eg for VLEs
* Whether the option to purchase by chapter is available/is preferable

The value of an ebook does not entirely depend on its price. Other considerations reflect the terms of the licence, for example whether acquisition is by subscription or purchase, the number of simultaneous users, the ease of access and usability of the platform on both PCs and mobile readers, whether other titles e.g. from the same reading list are located on the same platform, the ability to copy or download the text and other features offered by the supplier.

Librarians should consider the impact of ebook use on their print collections, for example : is it necessary to keep print copies on reference, length of loan of print copies; reallocation of staff duties, etc.

Librarians may also wish to consider providing ebooks to students on Kindles, iPads and other single user devices if this is preferred, and/or no e-copy is available for libraries to purchase.

4.2. Purchasing an ebook F/D librarians are advised to check the following first:

* Is a free/Open Access e-version available and acceptable? (eg would Google Books be sufficient? Or see list of free ebook providers at ebooks@cam website)
* Establish whether the text is already available in Cambridge or on order by checking the ERDB. For titles for which we don’t have catalogue records yet (eg Oxford Scholarship Online), check the relevant platform. Establish whether the text is included in any packages either purchased, or on order (ERDB).
* Establish whether the title is available as an ebook from a supplier with whom we have a licence and at what price
* Order the ebook from the appropriate supplier, informing the ebooks Administrator and ensuring that the order is transparent to other librarians.

4.3. Demand/Patron Driven Acquisition

This is an alternative method of ebook acquisition which is in place at a number of UK universities and on offer from two of our suppliers. F/D librarians who would be interested in going ahead with this should contact the Administrator in the first place.

Method:

* Agree a sum with vendor (this can be staged in batches, so much per term).
* Agree which ebook titles will be made available / loaded into ERDB (important to only make available titles that we would be prepared to purchase), also ensuring we don’t include ebooks we have bought already (crucial step!)
* Do not advertise. All selected ebooks on vendor’s platform are accessible to readers, a purchase is triggered after an agreed number of effective hits. Purchases continue to be made until the money runs out. (Monthly invoices)

Points to consider:

* Allows F/D librarians to control ebook acquisitions without the need to check lists and place individual orders, although initial setup is labour intensive and maintenance is required.
* Readers have access to a wider range of ebooks until the money runs out
* Purchase is delayed until point of need and demonstrably reflects reader requirements
* Purchases include titles for which librarians might not be aware there is a need (eg from “hidden” reading lists - but will these be selected in the first place?).
* Given the sums involved, F/D librarians may prefer to collaborate
* It commits a chunk of budget to one supplier
* Level of use in one year is not necessarily a reliable indicator of future use (same as print)
* Supply and quality of catalogue records may be an issue
* Catalogue records for titles not purchased will become dead links and require removal.

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