

EBL CLIENT DRIVEN ACQUISITION TRIAL

Report of the ebook working party

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Executive Summary

As agreed at LMC, June 2007 a trial of the EBL client driven acquisition model for ebooks was carried out from September 2007 until the end of March 2008. The trial was deemed to be a success in terms of the criteria for evaluation proposed by LMC and it is recommended that the Library continues with the use of the model on the basis that a clearly defined subset of the EBL records, with publication dates 2007 and later, is loaded to the Library catalogue to limit the potential expenditure; that expenditure is monitored closely and loading of titles adjusted if deemed appropriate; and that a number of issues identified during the trial, as outlined below, are addressed by EBL.

The actual recommendations (recorded as Section 9 of this document) are as follows.

1. The EBL client driven acquisition model is continued.
2. Not less than \$800,000 from the acquisition budget should go into General funds for client driven acquisition in 2009. Funding arrangements should be monitored and reviewed annually.
3. Measures are implemented to control the level of expenditure by limiting content to titles published from 2007 onwards as well as continuing to exclude some publishers as in the trial.
4. Expenditure should be monitored closely. Loading of batches of new records should be stopped if expenditure patterns indicate overspending.
5. The current setting of autopurchase on the third loan should be retained.
6. There should be no mediated loans or purchases.
7. Other client driven acquisition models should continue to be monitored.
8. Direct purchase of non EBL ebooks and ebook packages should continue.
9. Measures are implemented to improve communication of EBL features to the Library staff who are supporting clients and to the Library clients themselves.
10. Measures are taken to speed up provision of OCLC full replacement records.
11. Discussions take place with EBL regarding
 - responsiveness to requests, provision of statistics and specifically to technical issues as noted below.
 - improving the user interface
 - technical development particularly in relation to record loading and overcoming duplication.
 - provision of reliable catalogue updates based on customer profiles.
 - investigation of more seamless and transparent ways to keep the Library catalogue in sync with the EBL database, and
 - archiving arrangements offered by EBL.

In addition it is recommended that the EBL autopurchase model continue to operate at its current reduced scale (limited content) for the remainder of 2008 for which a maximum of \$150,000 be allocated from the budget to General funds.

1. Introduction

The Library has been acquiring selected individual electronic web-based ebooks since 2002 when Monash participated in a trial subscription to netLibrary titles with other Victorian university libraries. Prior to this, large collections comprising largely out-of-print material such as Early English Books Online (EEBO) had been purchased. Since that time access has been provided to over three hundred thousand ebooks.

Sources of ebooks

Ebooks can be acquired direct from publishers or from aggregators who on-sell some of the output of a large number of publishers. Publishers vary in their approaches, with some selling all their print titles in ebook form and some only selectively. Some sell directly as well as through aggregators and some are selective about which titles they sell via which method. This sometimes creates challenges for ordering ebooks.

The Library acquires titles both directly from publishers and from aggregators. There are four main ebook aggregators – Ebook library, netLibrary, Ebrary and MyiLibrary – and there is a high level of content overlap between them. While buying direct from the publisher generally entails fewer restrictions on printing and copying, an advantage of using an aggregator is their broad coverage, which helps with ordering and cataloguing workflows.

Acquisition models for ebooks

Ebooks can be acquired by purchasing perpetual access or by subscription. The Library has generally favoured the purchase model, for both reasons of both ongoing management and value for money. An exception to this is when subscribed titles are continuously updated, such as the Oxford English Dictionary

Ebooks can sometimes be purchased/subscribed to individually by title or in collections. The Library purchases both individual ebooks and collections. While individual selection allows for anticipated high use titles to be targeted, collections of ebooks are typically heavily discounted and are cost effective in providing more titles for our expenditure.

Selection of ebooks

Apart from the acquisition of major collections of out-of-print and rare books, the Library's selection of ebooks has been partly based on evidence of high demand. Titles where the print copies are on reserve or have been heavily used have been selected where possible. While this has proved successful in a limited way high demand print titles are not always easy to identify and are often harder to match with available ebooks. Success is also limited by the fact that acquisition of the ebook occurs after unmet demand for the text has become evident. This method has been supplemented with individual selections from ebook lists by Subject Librarians. One of the greatest impediments to ebook selection is discovery of what is available because of the growing range of providers.

As noted earlier, the Library has also been selecting collections of ebooks. Typically these are offered by publishers, including Springer and Elsevier, and may represent

a significant part of their monograph output and sometimes all of it. The prices of these ebook collections are generally much lower than the sum of the prices of individual titles. The provision of a greater number of titles does offer more choice to the end user even if it is limited to a particular publisher.

2. The EBL Client Driven Acquisition Model

Ebooks Corporation Limited is an unlisted public company, founded in 1997, that specialises in the provision of e-books. Their academic library e-book platform is Ebook Library (from hereon referred to as EBL). In 2005 Ebooks Corporation, introduced an, at the time, unique access and purchasing model for EBL titles called “Client driven acquisition”. This model is described below.

The foundation of client driven acquisition is that the Library chooses to make available to its users all, or a selection of, the EBL catalogue (currently over 70,000 titles). This is generally through the Library catalogue, or access can be provided directly to the EBL portal. EBL provides for a number of different lending and purchase models that a library can configure to suit its particular needs. It can choose either mediated or unmediated control of these options (or a combination of the two).

In the unmediated process, titles are purchased automatically once they are loaned (read online) more times than a library determined threshold (generally ranging from 3-5 uses). Library clients can browse a particular ebook online for up to five minutes without a loan being registered. After the five minute free period, and if the ebook is not already owned by the Library, the client is offered the option to continue to read online, acceptance of which registers as a loan. The client can also opt to download the book which also registers as a loan. The Library is then charged a percentage (which varies between publishers) of the EBL price of the book. The Library will not be charged again if the same client accesses the same title within a 24 hour period. Once the number of loans (also called reads) reaches the defined number the title is automatically purchased.

Purchases can be mediated by the Library. That is, the Library can opt to have all loans costing in excess of a designated sum subject to approval. Patrons seeking to access these titles are invited to request a copy within the system and this generates an email request to the Library which then decides what action to take.

Once the ebook has been purchased outright (owned) generally 325 “loan instances” are permitted each year for that title, although for a small number of titles unlimited use is allowed, If the number of loan instances is exceeded in a given calendar year, borrowing is suspended until the end of the year, at which time the 325 loan instances are restored. Alternatively an additional copy can be purchased automatically. The browsing capability also applies to an owned title with a client able to browse for ten minutes before the loan is initiated.

The lending model is a non-linear one, which means that simultaneous use by clients is permitted (for both owned and non-owned titles).

3. Terms of Reference

In June 2007 Library Management Committee (LMC June 12 2007) approved that the Library should implement the EBL Client driven acquisition Model (referred to in the LMC submission as “Lending/purchase model for ebooks; client driven selection”) for a period of 6 months after which time an evaluation would be undertaken.

The criteria for evaluation, as specified in the submission to LMC, were to include:

- Level of use
- Patterns of use
- Ease of use
- Level of duplication
- Problems entailed in loading and removing catalogue records
- Cost
- Ability to get management reports
- Staff time required.

This report evaluates the trial on the basis of these and other criteria that became more evident as a result of the trial. The report was written by the ebook working party comprising Joan Gray, David Horne, Winifred Hirst, Michael McLellan, Robert Stafford (Chair) and Robert Thomas.

4. Trial Implementation

Timeframe

The trial was originally planned to commence in July 2007 and to run through December 2007 covering the second semester. Delays in selecting and loading titles meant that the trial was not fully operational until after the major load of records was completed in late September. Usage statistics, however, were kept from August 24 2007 until May 31 2008.

Selection of Titles

It is important to note that prior to the EBL trial the Library already had a significant collection of ebooks - over 72 ebook collections covering more than 300,000 titles, including over 700 EBL titles. This meant that the Library already had significant numbers of ebooks from other vendors which might have been included in the EBL collection and needed to exclude these from the file to be loaded to the catalogue. In addition, two categories of publisher (28 in all) were excluded, namely those whose ebooks would be acquired from other sources (eg OECD and Springer collections) and publishers whose books were deemed as not relevant to the Library's collection policy. This resulted in EBL sending a file of over 39,000 records with URL links which were loaded into the Library catalogue over several weeks in September 2007.

EBL also sent new title file updates during the trial. Prior to loading, these files were matched by the vendor against a Monash new ebooks file and duplicates were removed when identified. More detail of the initial and subsequent load processes and associated problems is provided in Appendix C.

Conditions of Access

The Library opted to set the automatic purchase at the third loan as this was deemed the most cost effective. The Library also opted for meditated access to titles where the loan fee exceeded US\$25. This was because some publishers were perceived as charging a high percentage of the purchase price for loans and the Library wished to avoid such loan charges, opting to purchase these titles if access was requested. All requests for access were sent to the Electronic Resources Officer and the Collection Management Librarian.

Promotion

It was agreed not to promote the availability of these new ebook titles or the purchase lending model.

5. STATISTICS

5.1 Usage

Figure 1 below shows broad usage figures that indicate that while only 1,616 of the total 50,319 EBL titles loaded into the Library catalogue were purchased, over 14,000 titles or nearly 30% were accessed. There were nearly 12,000 unique users and 67% of these returned to use EBL titles.

Figure 1 – Overall Usage Figures

Total Usage		% Percentage	
# of Selected EBL titles visible:	50,319	<i>77% of total EBL catalog</i>	
Total Unique Titles Accessed:	14,232	<i>28% of total visible</i>	
Total Unique Patrons:	11,931		
# of Repeat Patrons:	8,006	<i>67% of patrons</i>	
Short term loan (STL) – Unique titles accessed:	8,991	<i>18% of total visible</i>	
Owned Titles – Unique titles accessed:	2,246	<i>61% of purchased titles</i>	
Browsing - Unique titles accessed:	11,076	<i>22% of total visible</i>	

5.1.1 Types of Use

The usage figures were further broken down by types of usage – browse, read online (short term loan) and download - as shown in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 also shows the total number of usage sessions both before and after purchase, which indicates that titles were used almost twice as much after autopurchase as they were before purchase.

Figure 2 – Types of Usage

Auto-Purchased Titles	
Usage sessions before purchase:	8,395
Usage sessions after purchase:	14,439

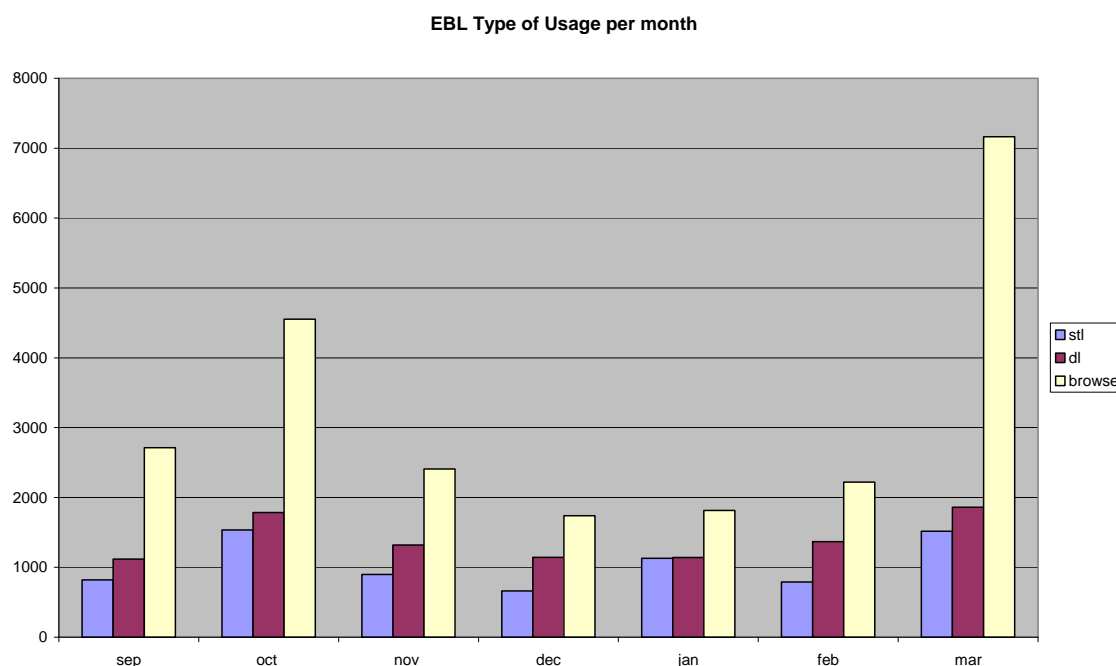
Browse Usage	
Total Browse Sessions	22,755
Unique users	9,830
Unique Titles	10,997
Average Browse Time - in minutes	3.79
Average # of Browse sessions per user	2.31

Read Online (Short Term Loan) Usage	
Total Read Online Sessions	11,465
Unique Users	5,928
Unique Titles	5,994

Average Read Online Time	18.98
Average read online sessions per user	1.93
Longest time spent reading online/24 hours (in minutes)	8h 9m
Total pages accessed	241,021
Average pages accessed per session	21
Download Usage	
Total Number Downloaded	13,678
Unique Users	5,609
Unique Titles	7,447
Average # of download titles per user	2.44

One fact illustrated by these figures is that browsing accounts for almost half of the use of the titles. The importance of this is that library users gain exposure to a large range of titles while not incurring any cost (that is, there is no charge for browsing). The average browse time is less than 4 minutes. There is, however, no direct correlation between types of use leading to an auto-purchase other than the greater the usage the higher the number of purchases

Figure 3 – Type of Usage by Month



Note – columns in each month from L to R are loans, downloads and then browsing.

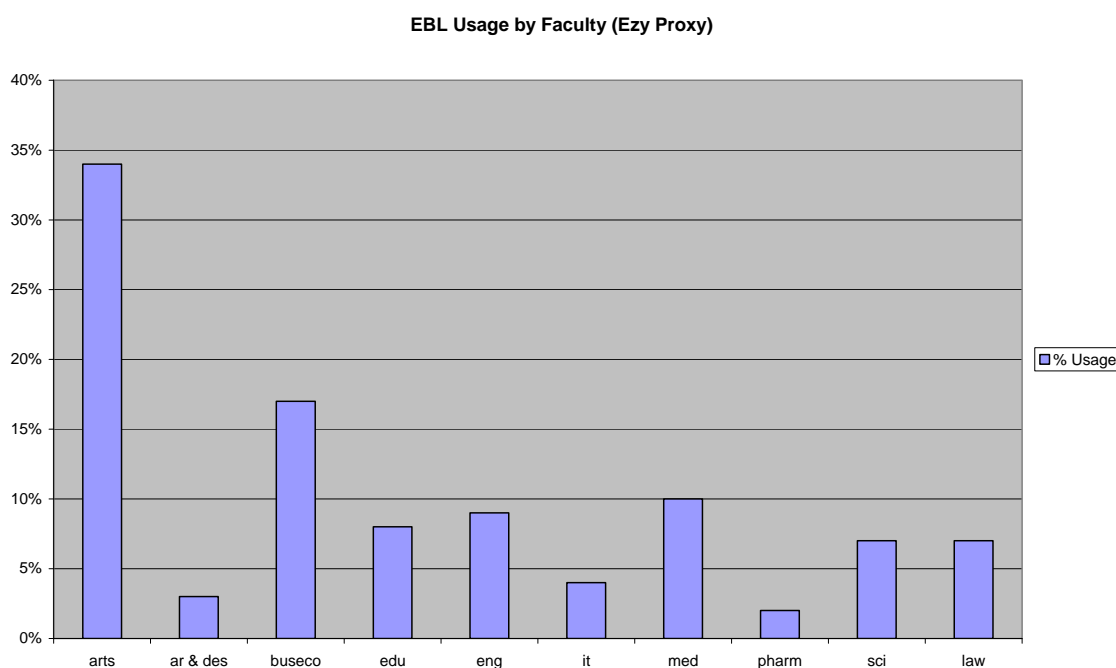
5.1.2 Types of users (clients)

As noted earlier in this section the EBL data showed that there were almost 12,000 users of whom 67% visited the site again. As this told nothing of University community use additional data were gathered on who was using EBL from within the University from the Library's Ezyproxy server. This data provided a log of identified users by faculty. While this data is presented here it should be noted that not all

users are identifiable by Ezyproxy so this is a limited subset of EBL use. While it is not known what the proportion of total use was by undergraduate or postgraduate students or by staff the Ezyproxy data suggests that staff and postgraduate use represented over 40% of the use in every month and closer to 50% during the vacation period. This would indicate that EBL supports research and teaching, as well as learning.

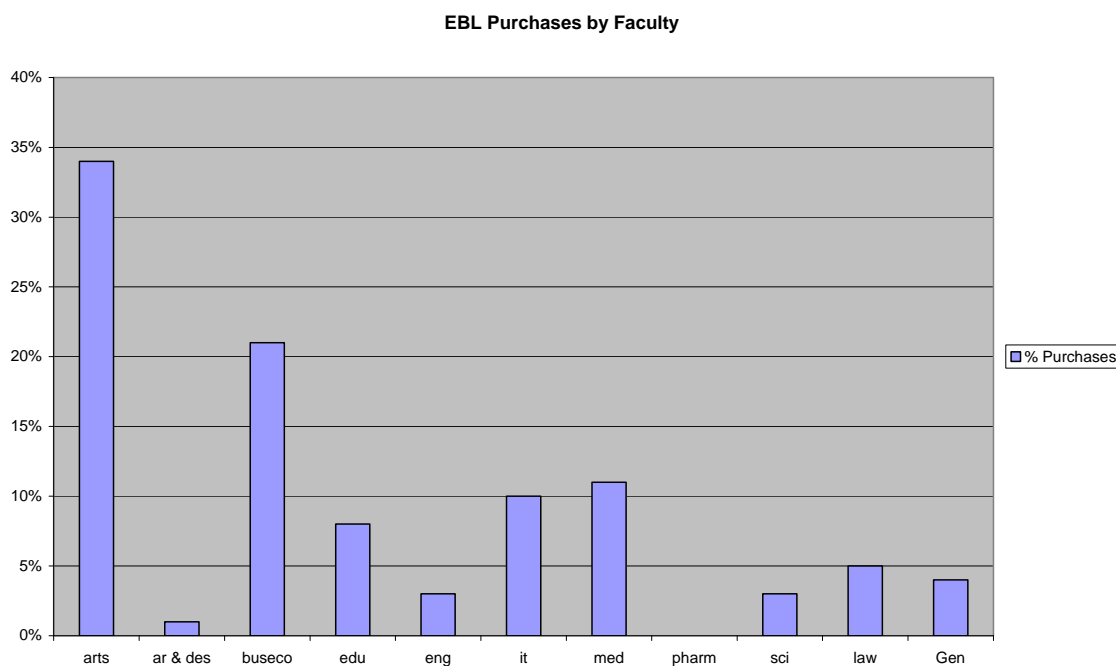
The Ezyproxy statistics also show (Figure 4) that, against possible expectation, the major use of the EBL titles came from the Arts Faculty. As shown in the following chart 34% of usage came from the Arts faculty with Business and Economics next at 17%.

Figure 4 – EBL Usage by Faculty (Ezyproxy)



Additional data was gathered based on purchases made, as opposed to overall usage of EBL, with a manual check being made of all autopurchases and a faculty assigned to each title based on the content of that title. Interestingly, this sample (Figure 5) shows that of the titles purchased, 34% were designated as Arts Faculty titles and the percentages for other faculties were very similar to the Ezyproxy usage statistics.

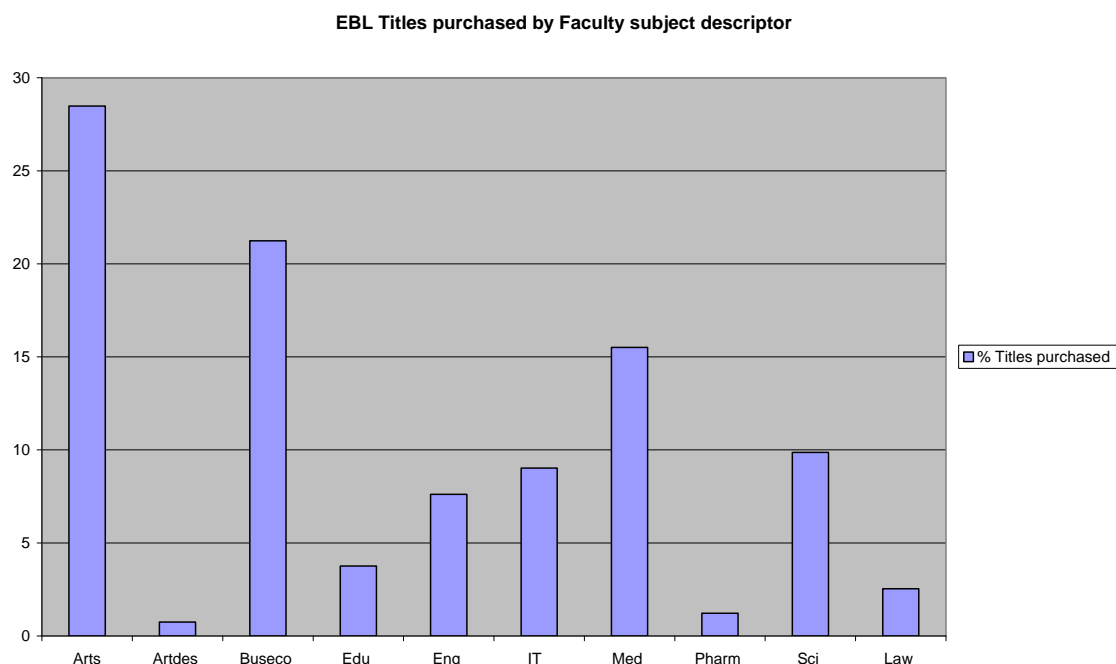
Figure 5 – EBL Purchases by assigned Faculty



Note: 3% in the above figure were classed as 'general', a category not present in the Ezyproxy figures.

These figures were also compared against a number of other subject/faculty based measures. That is, as a separate exercise the e-cataloguing team was adding subject descriptors to the catalogue records after they had been loaded. At the time of this report these had been added to about one third of the titles purchased from EBL. Even though these figures (Figure 6) apply to all titles purchased through EBL (not just autopurchases) they again confirmed that the largest percentages were purchased for Arts (28%) and Business and Economics (21%).

Figure 6 - EBL purchases by cataloguers' faculty subject descriptor



These figures clearly suggest that the EBL demand driven model has been taken up by the Arts and Business and Economics subject areas more than others. While to some extent the pattern of Faculty use reflects the relative size of the Faculties, it may also reflect the fact that these areas are not already as well served by e-book platforms and publishers as are the science and technology areas. It should be noted that the Library already has many ebook collections in science and technology and removed major publishers in these areas including Elsevier Springer and CRC Press from the EBL database.

5.1.3 Most used titles

The other important aspect of usage to be measured was the kind of material that was being used and selected by the clients. Statistics were kept of the total number of uses of all titles in the database and Figure 7 below shows the 10 most used titles.

Figure 7 – Most Used Titles

Top 10 titles - Total Usage	Sessions
Adoring Audience : Fan Culture and Popular Media	249
ART of Risk Management : Alternative Risk Transfer, Capital Structure, and the Convergence of Insurance and Capital Markets	240
Introducing Sociolinguistics	204
SPSS Survival Manual : A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS	175
Media and Power	168
Australian Restitution Law	153
Curriculum Studies Reader	147
Orality and Literacy	132
Australian Export : A Guide to Law and Practice	124
Journalism : A Critical History	122

In sampling the 1616 purchased titles, over 40 were books on research methodology, which collectively were loaned some 400 times in the period. As noted elsewhere in the report, this indicates that EBL supports research as well as learning and that the titles used were highly relevant to the academic needs of the University.

5.1.4 EBL Usage compared to print

To provide further data on patterns of use a detailed analysis was undertaken of a sample batch of autopurchased titles and the relationship between them and the holdings and usage of print titles. The sample was of 100 EBL titles autopurchased in the first full month of the trial (October 2007). A report on the subsequent access to these titles was extracted up to the end of April 2008. The titles in the sample were also checked against the Library catalogue. Print holdings of the titles were identified and reports were extracted on the borrowing activity of those print titles held both before and after the EBL autopurchases were made.

Use of sample titles

Of the 100 sample EBL titles 61 were already held in print and 39 were only available electronically. Analysis of the EBL usage (Figures 8 and 9) indicates that titles already held in print are, on average, accessed more often than the titles not held in print (1.65 accesses per month compared to 0.97) and that the electronic availability of a title impacts subsequent demand for its print equivalent. That is, the average (physical) loans per title of the titles held in print per month were 1.3 loans before autopurchase and 0.37 after (this might not apply to high demand reserve materials where there is often unmet demand for print). Some demand for print titles will be met by electronic availability and this offers the advantage of less book handling, shelving, holds and inter-campus loan traffic. In the trial sample there were 263 accesses of materials that would not otherwise have been available.

It could be concluded, therefore, that the client driven acquisition model delivers additional access to materials already held as well as access to materials not previously supplied. Also it does not add material to the collection which is not in demand, which does happen with a portion of the print collection at least in the short-term.

Figure 8 – EBL Usage related to print ownership

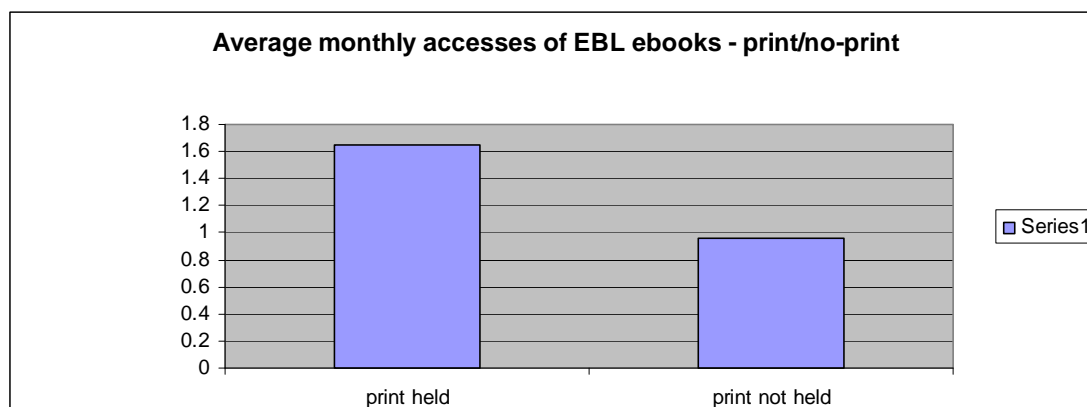
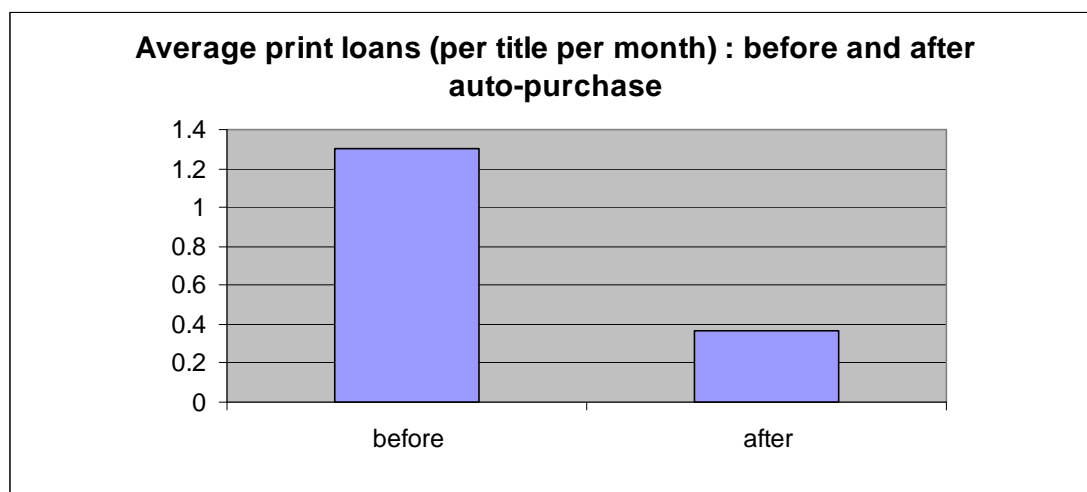


Figure 9 – Print loans pre and post EBL purchase



Additional sample

To further compare print usage to EBL usage, circulation records were gathered for all print books acquired from August 2006 to August 2007. The average number of loans per title during the lifetime of the books in this sample up until March 2008 was 1.88 loans. The average number of loans per title for the sample of 100 EBL auto-purchased titles from October 2007 to March 2008 was 9.75 (not counting the 3 loans required to generate the purchase). Of the 82,735 print items sampled 43,371 (52%) had not circulated at all since purchase. Of the EBL sample only 9% had not been used since autopurchase.

5.2 Expenditure

5.2.1 Overall expenditure

Over the period of the trial \$156,058 was spent via the demand driven model on the purchase of 1,616 ebooks at an average listed purchase price of \$96.57. When the additional cost of the 2 loans that lead to purchase is added - at an average loan cost of \$10.00, or just over 10% of the average purchase price – the average purchase price increases to \$116.57. This means that every title purchased by this method costs the Library, on average, an additional 21% of the listed purchase price.

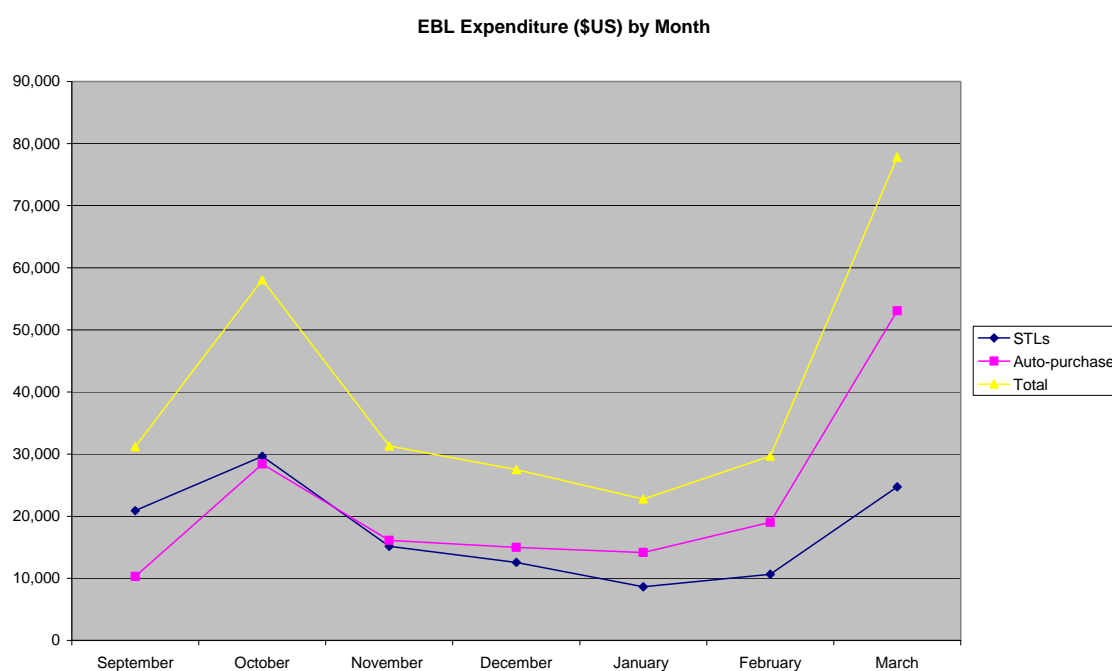
A summary of this expenditure is provided in Figure 10 below. The additional figures shown – 549 books by direct purchase - are for titles purchased outside of the Demand Driven model and accounts for the total expenditure with EBL over the period being greater than \$300,000.

Figure 10 – Trial Expenditure

Total Expenditure		%	
		Percent/Comment	
Total Trial Expenditure	\$278,316		
Total STL Expenditure:	\$122,258	37% of total & 43% of trial expenditure	12,214 STLs
Total Auto-purchase:	\$156,058	47% of total & 57% of trial expenditure	1616 ebooks
Other Expenditure:			
Total Direct purchase expenditure:	\$51,746	16% of total expenditure	549 ebooks
Total EBL Expenditure in period:	\$330,062		
Average auto-purchase price	\$96.57		
Average ebook purchased price incl. auto purchases:	\$85.77		
Average ebook purchased price outside of trial:	\$94.26		
Average STL price:	\$10.00	10.35% of avg price	
Average Total purchase price	\$116.57	Incl. loan cost.	

These costs were also broken down on a monthly basis and while the average monthly cost (Sept 07-March 08) was \$39,759, there were significant peaks in October, the first full month of the trial (\$58,059), and March (\$77,808) - see Figure 11 below. Taking into account that November through February is outside prime semester time the October and March figures could be seen as more typical term time use. For more on this see the Conclusion section of this report.

Figure 11 – Expenditure by Month



5.2.2 Expenditure control

As the trial continued it became apparent that expenditure was higher than expected and it became important to see what measures, other than the daily budget monitoring, could be implemented to restrict expenditure. This focused on the autopurchase threshold and limitation of the content of the EBL database.

Autopurchase threshold

One of the parameters within the control of the Library in the client driven model of acquisition is the number of loans specified as a threshold to trigger an autopurchase. Throughout the trial, purchase was initiated by the third loan. The 100 sample titles referred to earlier were examined in relation to what effect varying this threshold might have. For all 100 titles this third loan was made in October 2007.

The report at the end of the trial period indicated that of the 100 titles sampled 9 had not been accessed after autopurchase. Had the threshold been set at the fourth loan these 9 titles would not have been purchased. The remaining 91 titles would all have been autopurchased and an additional loan (i.e. third loan) would have been paid for each of them before autopurchase was triggered. Based on the average purchase price of \$96.57 and average loan cost of \$10 this would have resulted in savings of \$869.13 on autopurchases and additional loan expenditure of \$910 – that is an additional cost of \$40.87. Post-trial access of the 9 titles not autopurchased would increase this total additional cost. Based on the trial sample there is no financial advantage in increasing the autopurchase threshold above 3 loans.

Reducing database coverage by publication date

As the Library already had significant ebook collections the records for these titles and others from selected publishers were not loaded. However, escalating levels of expenditure as the trial continued indicated that further methods of limitation were needed to provide a sustainable model for client driven acquisition.

Analysis was carried out to determine savings arising from limiting EBL records loaded by publication date. Approximately 40% of expenditure on autopurchases and STL was for titles with publication dates from 2005-2007 - the latest 3 years loaded. (2008 titles are not included as few of them were loaded due to concern about the level of expenditure). In 2009 limiting EBL records to 2007-2009 titles can be expected to have a substantial impact on expenditure. It would also ensure that all the client driven EBL expenditures were on recently published items. It is difficult to predict expenditure levels based on the trial but the suggested figure of \$800,000 should be sufficient to sustain use through 2009 if records loaded are limited as indicated above. The option to stop loading 2009 records would remain available and would further substantially reduce expenditure. Should under expenditure become an issue there would be the option of loading titles from 2006 and earlier.

6. Issues

6.1 Ease of use

The rapid uptake and high use of EBL titles during the trial period, as reflected in the statistics, suggests that the majority of users were able to find material of value to them with relative ease. Specific advantages of the user-driven model include

- access to the extensive EBL collection to search and select from
- a threshold of usage is established before purchase
- demand is met in a timely manner
- access is instantaneous, and
- for the Library, it provides a useful insight into on-going user demand and can help inform collection development.

The Library has received both positive and negative feedback from users. These comments are recorded in detail in Appendix A. The specific areas that created problems included

- access problems to EBL caused by unavailability of the EBL site and local authentication issues
- limits of the platform itself regarding printing and saving and page by page viewing
- lack of clarity of instructions to users, particularly on the difference between reading online and browsing as well as navigation
- navigation, both from EBL back to the Library catalogue (not opening in a separate window) and within EBL itself.

6.2 Catalogue Records

The below section summarises the main points to emerge from the trial regarding the quality, loading and duplication of catalogue records, and associated problems. A more detailed report of these issues is provided as Appendix B.

Quality of the records

EBL initially provides brief, provisional records in US Marc format which provide some access to the titles. Although the records do not contain Library of Congress subject headings, the Table of Contents data in the records provide rich terms for keyword searching.

There is however some misleading data in the records relating to editions. That is, titles published in various editions have been found to have the wrong dates in the date of publication field. For example, for the title “Drugs in sport” the record with the latest date (2005) was found to be the first edition while the record with the earlier date (2003) was the later edition. This meant that the edition with the latest date was being selected and purchased instead of the latest edition. EBL agreed to compensate the Library for the purchase of the wrong editions.

Full OCLC Marc records were purchased to replace the EBL provisional records for all purchases. As an ebook is auto-purchased a request to purchase an OCLC full record is generated. There was a significant delay in receiving the OCLC records as, by the end of the trial, only 13% of titles purchased had OCLC records (see Figure 12 below)

Figure 12 - Purchased titles and OCLC records (at 30/5/08)

*Number of OCLC records loaded	426
Number of records with "eblpurchase"	3264

*The actual number of OCLC records loaded included a few records for titles purchased before the trial and therefore may include some acquired by direct purchase.

Duplication

As the Library had a significant number of ebooks from other providers duplication of EBL titles with existing records for ebook titles was a major consideration for the initial loads and during the trial. One of the major problems encountered was trying to match the data in the catalogue records with the EBL provisional records/title lists. The most reliable matching point was the ISBN but the EBL provisional records/title lists had an array of ISBNs (hdb, pbk, electronic, 10 digit, 13 digit, US ed., UK ed. etc) or in some cases no ISBN at all. This led to duplicate records in the catalogue and created problems for users in identifying the correct or latest title/edition. It also led to considerable additional work in terms of deduplication

Missing catalogue records

Towards the end of the trial it became evident that some titles that were showing as autopurchases in the EBL database did not have records in the Library catalogue.

There could be a number of reasons for this.

- EBL did not supply the records as part of the update process
- Titles suppressed/removed in the catalogue were still visible in the EBL database
- Complexity of matching/deduplicating titles and the batch processing of these resulted in the EBL database being out of sync with the Library catalogue.

At the time of writing this report the cause of this has not yet been identified.

Staff time

Although machine processes were put in place for record loading considerable time was spent developing access queries, running programs, and loading and updating records into the catalogue. Further processing was also required to minimize duplication, change record visibility in the EBL database and to suppress records towards the end of the trial (see Postscript section below).

6.3 Archival access

The purchase of a book from EBL provides permanent access on the EBL server for the Library subject to the annual usage limits per copy. We are entitled to download an archival copy of any of the books we purchase. This archival copy can be printed but the printed copy can only be made available if the normal service is no longer available. The electronic archival copy can only be stored on a single PC – that is there would be no network access. We are seeking clarification from EBL on printing from these archival copies.

The permission to print an archival copy would be of limited use as the majority of EBL autopurchased items are already held in print. Printing and binding would be expensive and the resulting item clumsy and unattractive. We would be more likely to rely on existing print or purchase a standard print copy if necessary. The archival electronic copy would be of limited use, being restricted to a single PC in a single location, but could be of value if it was the only copy in the system. The value of the EBL product is the enhanced access offered to users and the current archival arrangements do not address this.

6.4 Vendor Support

Vendor support throughout the pilot was patchy and it was felt that due to the rapid growth of the company there were not enough staff to deal with customer queries promptly. The delays that ensued were particularly regarding technical queries in the first instance. This meant that the Library had to carry out more work than expected.

After EBL opened its new office in the UK even non-technical support was also less than expected, particularly considering the large investment the Library was making in EBL. There was also more system downtime than might be expected with supplier databases.

6.5 Mediated loans

During the trial there were 152 requests for access to mediated titles – that is, titles with a loan fee of over \$25. With the exception of titles found to be electronic duplicates all were purchased. Early in the trial it was decided that all mediated titles costing less than US\$200 would be purchased by the Electronic Resources Officer and more expensive titles would require the approval of the Collection Management Librarian. In fact all requests for access were acceded to but this could not be achieved in a timely fashion and library clients were generally inconvenienced and often confused by the denial of instant access.

6.6 Alternative models

As noted in the Introduction to this report, there are many ebook platforms from both aggregators and publishers. Ebooks can be acquired by purchasing perpetual access or by subscription and can be purchased/subscribed to individually by title or in collections. The Library's preferred model is purchase of both individual ebooks and collections. Many publisher-based packages such as those from Elsevier and Springer offer superior access conditions and better pricing than EBL or other aggregators and are a convenient and cost-effective way of growing the collection.

EBL, however, is distinguished by the demand driven purchase model. Currently NetLibrary is the only other major platform that has a similar model. The Library already has approximately 4,800 NetLibrary titles in the catalogue. This includes many free resources but also more than 1330 titles that have been mediated purchases (not demand driven). Currently all NetLibrary access has been 'read online' mode with no download facility (which EBL offers). NetLibrary has a single concurrent user limit but no annual limit to accesses (c.f. 324 accesses/annum for EBL). Auto-purchases are triggered by a second access – the first access is regarded as a preview and is not time limited. Printing is page by page which is less functional than that in EBL. NetLibrary titles are more expensive due to a 55% platform charge which is added to the list price. NetLibrary has a larger list of titles, approximately 140,000 – nearly double EBL. While a larger range of titles has advantages it also increases the chance of excessive expenditure – as does the auto-purchase on second access. Overall the cost and features of NetLibrary are less attractive than EBL. If an ebook that is available on NetLibrary but not on EBL is required it can still be ordered.

7. Postscript

Towards the end of the trial and in the months immediately following it became apparent that there was an increasing usage of EBL (see Figure 13 below). Correspondingly, expenditure was higher than expected and measures were sought to restrict expenditure (see figure 14 below).

It was agreed that all records for any titles that had not been used (purchased, browsed, read online or downloaded) should be suppressed from the Library catalogue. When it was not clear if this had any impact on expenditure further action was taken to make only the titles purchased and read online available in the catalogue. It was subsequently realised that the suppressed titles were still visible in the EBL database and because there were further delays by EBL in actioning Library requests it was decided to remove access to the EBL database from the Library databases pages and ebook pages. Expenditure then began to drop. While it was felt these actions were responsible for the reduced expenditure these actions were taken towards the end of term where use may have been less anyway.

Figure 13 – EBL usage during and beyond trial

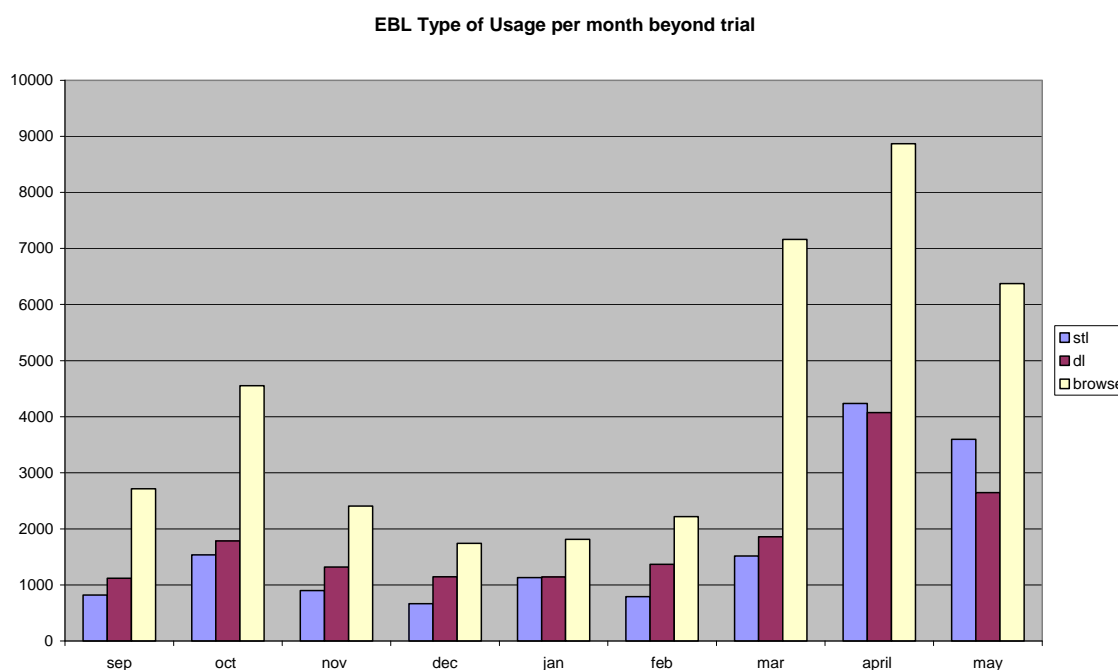
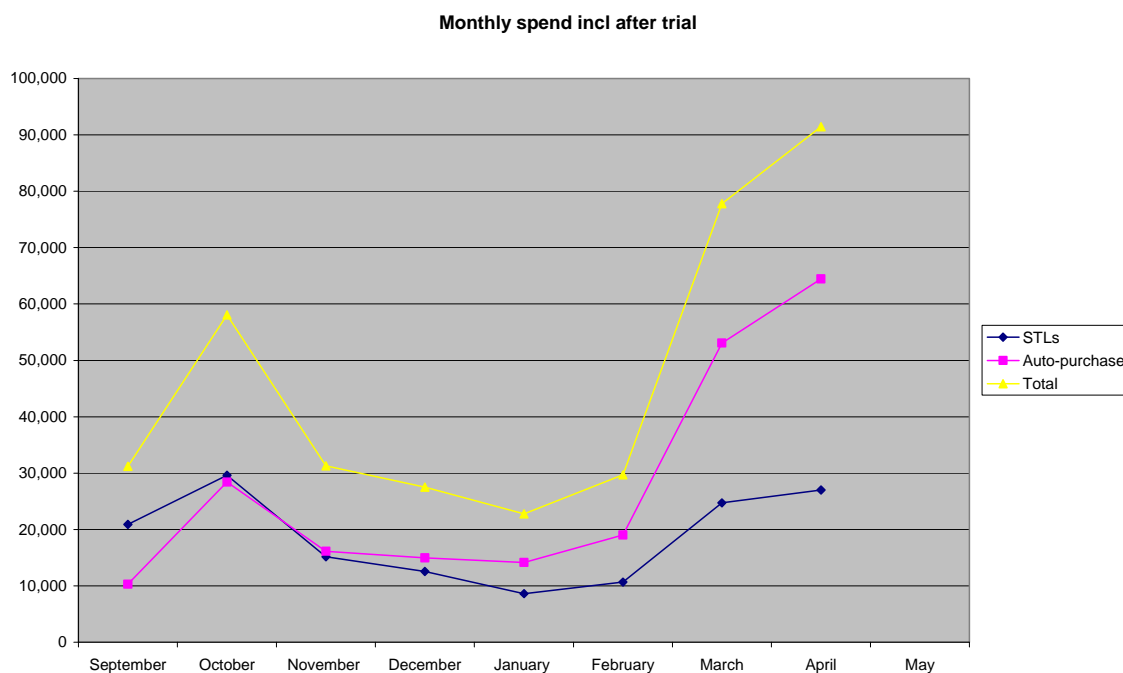


Figure 14 – EBL expenditure during and beyond trial



Various options were considered regarding the future of the client driven acquisition model including

- to discontinue unmediated autopurchasing entirely
- to increase the level of mediation so that, for example, subject librarians had to decide whether a title should be purchased once the loan threshold was reached.
- refine the titles made available on a subject basis so, for example, only those subject areas not otherwise well served by ebooks (e.g. arts) are made available through EBL for auto-purchase
- have a defined spending limit per annum and “turn off” EBL when this limit is reached.
- keep the existing completely open model and assign sufficient money to fund this.
- only make more recent titles available through EBL. This could fit with a “rolling” model whereby titles not used in a certain period of time are deleted. This was the preferred option and was explored further (see “Reducing database coverage by publication date” under 5.2.2 above).

8. Conclusions

The EBL client driven acquisition model is a unique approach to collection development in that it places purchase control in the hands of the user through their use of the material. By implementing the EBL client driven acquisition model the Library provided access for users to a large collection of multi-disciplinary material that would not otherwise have been available. While there were some access issues related to downtime and printing, the usage figures show that the material was well-used. It can be deemed, therefore, that on the basis of a small amount of client feedback, that the trial was a success for library clients.

From a technical viewpoint, there were number of problems regarding record loading and availability and general supplier responsiveness. These issues will need to be resolved if use of the model was to be continued.

Regarding the formal terms of reference –

- **Level of use** was high – higher than expected as illustrated by the need to try and limit use and the resultant expenditure.
- **Patterns of use** showed that clients of all types (undergrad, postgraduate, staff) and from all Faculties made use of the service. The subject content of the material accessed was largely arts, business/economics and medicine, although this was partly influenced by the material offered, as some major STM publishers were excluded. Titles used reflected the academic interests of the University and were generally similar if not identical to print titles held. Levels of use increased significantly in term time although it continued on a daily basis throughout the end of year break.
- **Ease of use** could have been better as the usage options presented on screen are not always clear and there were some issues regarding printing and downtime. These will be discussed with the vendor.
- **Level of duplication** of titles already held by the Library was minimised through careful checking and the removal of titles from the EBL file. However, there was an on-going problem with different editions due to ISBN matching problems, the process of batch loading and the continuing acquisition of ebooks from other vendors.
- **Problems entailed in loading and removing catalogue records** required a deal of library staff time, particularly as the vendor was not as responsive as desired.
- **Cost**, as noted further below, is an issue in terms of managing an otherwise unmediated selection process. Regarding cost per title, with the loan fees included, prices are at least 120 % of recommended print retail price. This is comparable to the cost of the print equivalent if acquisition and processing costs are included and in terms of use represents better value.
- **Ability to obtain management reports** requires training for local staff. Many reports can be generated locally but some reports are only available from the vendor and the Library will discuss the need for greater flexibility with the vendor.
- **Staff time required** in terms of the acquisition process is minimal and is a major advantage of the model. However, more staff time than expected was required for record loading/processing and associated technical activities.

The main challenge to emerge from the EBL trial, however, was how to control expenditure in the client driven acquisition model. That is, as virtually all purchases are unmediated there is a potential for large, uncontrolled expenditure if it is not monitored carefully. Adequate measures to monitor and control expenditure would need to be put in place should the model continue to be used in the Library. The Working Party has focused on this issue and made recommendations based on analysis of the alternatives.

9. Recommendations

For 2009 it is recommended that

1. The EBL client driven acquisition model is continued.
2. Not less than \$800,000 from the acquisition budget should go into General funds for client driven acquisition in 2009. Funding arrangements should be monitored and reviewed annually.
3. Measures are implemented to control the level of expenditure by limiting content to titles published from 2007 onwards as well as continuing to exclude some publishers as in the trial.
4. Expenditure should be monitored closely. Loading of batches of new records should be stopped if expenditure patterns indicate overspending.
5. The current setting of autopurchase on the third loan should be retained.
6. There should be no mediated loans or purchases.
7. Other client driven acquisition models should continue to be monitored.
8. Direct purchase of non EBL ebooks and ebook packages should continue.
9. Measures are implemented to improve communication of EBL features to the Library staff who are supporting clients and to the Library clients themselves.
10. Measures are taken to speed up provision of OCLC full replacement records.
11. Discussions take place with EBL regarding
 - responsiveness to requests, provision of statistics and specifically to technical issues as noted below.
 - improving the user interface
 - technical development particularly in relation to record loading and overcoming duplication.
 - provision of reliable catalogue updates based on customer profiles.
 - investigation of more seamless and transparent ways to keep the Library catalogue in sync with the EBL database, and
 - archiving arrangements offered by EBL.

In addition it is recommended that the EBL autopurchase model continue to operate at its current reduced scale (limited content) for the remainder of 2008 for which a maximum of \$150,000 be allocated from the budget to General funds.

APPENDIX A

Comments of note from the perspective of library users (students and staff)

1. Great to have many books, which can be accessed immediately, resulting from my simple catalogue search
2. Confusing to find that sometimes I can't find 'more like this' subject heading terms, in the Monash Library Catalogue when a title looks almost but not quite what I want
3. The first Authcate from the catalogue generally doesn't get into the book nor show any progress – off putting for a first time user who doesn't know to try again and the lack of response does not relate to a particular machine, user or Authcate
4. Often a blank page, with no explanation, appears when clicking on the catalogue link at other times a message such as 'Connection refused by www.monash.eblib.com.au, please try again later'. This is very confusing and disappointing from a user perspective.
5. The options and benefits of download or read online are not clear to a first time user
6. Skimming a book, to determine usefulness, is difficult with page by page viewing online
7. Being able to read only one page at a time requires some 'getting used to'
8. It is difficult to get from read online to the download option
9. It would be useful to have the options 'download' or 'continue to read on line' as options when the browse period expires
10. It doesn't appear to be possible to get back to the catalogue after browsing a few pages of a book to check other titles resulting from a catalogue search
11. It is very useful to be able to make notes while reading a book and later add the txt file note to my Endnote library
12. Help appears to relate to the company EBL rather than use of an ebook at Monash, and will the feedback encouraged to support@elib.com be answered for the Monash context?
13. Saving a portion of a work to a memory stick on campus will not necessarily allow it to be retrievable or readable at home meaning the student needs to access the again!
14. The downloading processes appears very complicated until settings and Adobe versions are corrected
15. Limits to printing and saving mean getting used to working with the on- line text – not easy at first especially when a title is required for research.
16. I can confirm that accessing them was easy and that it was relatively easy to use them once I got into them. And, I'd continue to use them.
17. I had a few queries at the desk earlier this year about using EBL but haven't had any recently. Maybe this means students are getting used to using EBL.

APPENDIX B

Catalogue Records

For the trial, a selection of the entire EBL catalogue of ebook titles was made available for patron searching, browsing and purchasing via the Library catalogue. As the Library subscribes to a significant number of ebooks (72 + ebook collections which includes 300,000+ ebooks) from other providers we discussed at the start of the project if EBL could exclude these from the batches of records supplied by EBL. There were also 2 categories of publishers we asked EBL to exclude: publishers whose ebooks we would get from other vendors eg OECD and Springer and publishers whose books are not generally relevant to our collection policy.

Before we started the trial the Library had purchased 700+ EBL titles which were individually selected as likely high-demand books and made available in the catalogue.

Initial loading of catalogue records

The decisions noted above were important for the e-cataloguing team to consider before making the records available in the catalogue. To avoid duplication between EBL and other ebook providers, access queries were created to extract duplicate titles from the Library catalogue. These lists were then sent to EBL who deduped these against the titles in their database. Any duplicates found were suppressed in the Monash view of EBL.

The first spreadsheet of ebook titles (20973) was sent to EBL in late July 07. After de-duping, EBL sent a file of 39071 marc records to us for loading in August 2007. Software tools were used to preprocess the records and the Voyager bulk importing program was used to load 1000 records at a time over a 2.5 week period in September 2007.

Maintaining catalogue records

EBL record updates

It was agreed that the Library would send monthly lists of new ebooks added to the Library catalogue (purchases from other providers). Access queries were created to extract the lists of titles from the Library catalogue and saved as spreadsheets and sent to EBL.

EBL sent monthly updates of marc record files of provisional records as EBL record updates. These consisted of records for new, changed and deleted titles in the EBL database. There were on average 1,200 new, 79 change and 31 deleted titles in the files. But the first update files were not received until Oct 2007 and the next update files in Jan 2008. After this, updates were received monthly for the remainder of the trial.

Software tools (preprocessing and bulk importing scripts) were used to process the new and changed files and load into the Voyager library catalogue. A Voyager utility program was used to delete records from the catalogue.

EBL purchased titles in the catalogue

Additional processing of catalogue records was required to flag purchased titles from non-purchased titles. A list of newly purchased titles was extracted weekly from EBL LibCentral and then an access query run to match these with the catalogue records and a voyager utility program used to make the changes in the relevant records.

Subject descriptors are being added to the records for the purchased titles.

EBL purchased titles by subject

Figure 1: Purchased titles by subject descriptor (assigned by e-cataloguing team) as at 30/5/2008

Subject descriptors	Number of purchased titles
FACartdes	8
FACarts	303
FACbuseco	226
FACed	40
FACeng	81
FACinfotech	96
FAClaw	27
FACmed	165
FACpharm	13
FACsci	105

Figure 1 shows a breakdown by faculty descriptor across a sample of EBL purchases (1064 titles)

Figure 2: Purchased titles by Dewey Decimal Classification (assigned by EBL and available from EBL LibCentral)

Main classes	Number of purchased titles
000-Computer science, knowledge & systems	273
100-Philosophy & psychology	255
200-Religion	38
300-Social sciences Includes political science, economics, law, education	1482
400-Language	92
500-Science	245

Includes natural sciences and mathematics	
600-Technology Includes Medicine & health, Engineering, Agriculture, Management,	1184
700-Arts & recreation	118
800-Literature	117
900-History & Geography	131

Figure 2 shows the main Dewey classes derived from more specific Dewey numbers assigned by EBL. Title lists showing Dewey numbers are available from EBL LibCentral.

OCLC full records

OCLC records were purchased (US\$1.00 per title) to replace the EBL provisional records for all EBL purchases. OCLC records are full marc records with LCSH subject headings.

As an ebook is autopurchased a request to purchase an OCLC full record is generated. The EBL provisional records are replaced by full records in the catalogue via machine processes. A combination of open source, in-house tools and Voyager bulk import scripts are used to do this. An additional amount of processing was required for consistency as the OCLC records included legacy records from Worldcat which reflected various practices which were current at the time the records were created.

Removing catalogue records at the end of the trial

Several options were discussed to restrict expenditure. It was agreed that all EBL records in the catalogue should be suppressed except those that have been purchased, browsed, read online, downloaded or have a STL (short term loan) A list of these titles was extracted from EBL LibCentral. Numerous access queries were tested to provide the best match in the catalogue for these titles. The data in the lists and in the records was not reliable enough to provide the best match. A Voyager utility program was used to suppress the records that did not match against this list. The unwanted records were suppressed on 22/4/08-23/04/08. EBL was asked to make suppressed titles invisible in their database but there was a delay in EBL doing this.

A further tweaking of the catalogue records was required to make only the purchased and STLs available and all other records to be suppressed in the OPAC.

As titles were still visible in the EBL database a file of unsuppressed records was sent to EBL

A further attempt to restrict expenditure was made by removing access to the EBL database from the databases pages and ebook pages.

Problems/issues

Quality of the records

EBL provisional records are sourced from EBL. They are brief records available in US marc format and provide some access to the titles. Although the records do not

contain Library of Congress subject headings the Table of Contents data in the records provide rich terms for keyword searching.

There is however some misleading data in the records relating to editions. Titles published in various editions have been found to have the wrong dates in the date of publication field eg Drugs in sport. The record with the latest date (2005) was found to be the first edition while the record with the earlier date (2003) was the later edition (3rd ed). What this meant was that the edition with the latest date for an earlier edition was being selected and purchased instead of the latest edition. EBL agreed to compensate the Library for the purchase of the wrong edition.

OCLC full records

Figure 3: Purchased titles and OCLC records (at 30/5/08)

*Number of OCLC records loaded	426
Number of records with "eblpurchase"	3264

*The actual number of OCLC records loaded included a few records for titles purchased before the trial

Figure 3 shows that there is a significant delay in receiving the OCLC records and EBL provisional records being replaced by full records in the Library catalogue. We need to find out if the delay is due to processing of these requests by EBL or whether the delay is caused by OCLC.

Duplication

As the Library had a significant number of ebooks from other providers we recognised that duplication of EBL titles with existing records for ebook titles would be a major consideration for the initial loads and during the trial.

One of the major problems encountered was trying to match the data in the catalogue records with the EBL provisional records/title lists. The most reliable matching point was the ISBN but the EBL provisional records/title lists had an array of ISBNs (hdb, pbk, electronic, 10 digit, 13 digit US ed., UK ed. Etc) These were not available for all titles on the EBL title lists or in the catalogue records sourced from other providers.

Additional deduping was performed regularly when new ebook collections were added during the trial or a specific publisher needed to be blocked eg Icon Group.

Despite these huge efforts to dedupe the EBL records there were duplicates found in the catalogue throughout the trial.

Missing catalogue records

Towards the end of the trial it was becoming evident that some records were missing in the catalogue for the titles that were showing as autopurchases in the EBL database. The Monash EBL view (52000+) was not matching with the number of records in the catalogue (42000+).

There could be a number of reasons for this.

- EBL did not supply the records as part of the update process
- Titles suppressed/removed in the catalogue were still visible in the EBL database
- Complexity of matching/deduping titles and the batch processing of these resulted in the EBL database being out of sync with the Library catalogue

EBL support

There was a delay sometimes in EBL responding to emails when the initial records were being loaded and when setting up the update process. There was also lack of support at the end of the trial. When the EBL records were suppressed in the Library catalogue EBL was asked to make these titles invisible in their database as there was still the possibility that these could be accessed via the EBL database. No action was taken for over 2 weeks despite the fact that the lists to suppress records were derived from the EBL database and EBL would have been able to do this. It was not until we spent more staff time to do further queries and send a list of unsuppressed titles that EBL suppressed the records in the EBL database. This may be due to the rapid growth of the company and few staff to deal with customer queries promptly.

System downtime

The e-cataloguing team experienced periods of downtime when undertaking various processing routines but the service was usually back up again fairly soon.

Staff time

Although machine processes were put in place to make the records initially available and for regular updates there was considerable time spent developing access queries, running programs, and loading and updating records into the catalogue. Further processing was continually undertaken to minimize duplication and change visibility in the EBL database. The closing of the trial amounted to significant staff time in suppressing the relevant records in the Library catalogue and supplying lists to EBL for making the relevant titles invisible in their database.

APPENDIX C

Survey of recent literature

The following points derive from a survey of recent literature (listed in the Bibliography below) and our own observations.

Ebook popularity differs between disciplines, but these differences are not necessarily consistent between institutions

Even where the print is preferred over online versions, users are increasingly using a combination of print and online, as they adapt to reading on the screen. Many users in the JISC study (2008) claimed that they only read from the screen.

Users appreciate being able to search within collections

Titles are accessible from anywhere and at anytime- there is no such thing as a missing book. This is especially relevant in the case of high demand reading list items.

Access is instantaneous – there is no delay waiting for a book to be supplied and processed, by which time the individual's requirement for it may have lapsed.

Ebooks provide savings in costs relating to processing, shelving, storage, and inter-campus loans.

The number of print copies of a popular title could potentially be reduced, although high use of a particular e-book may be a signal that purchase of a print copy is justified.

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