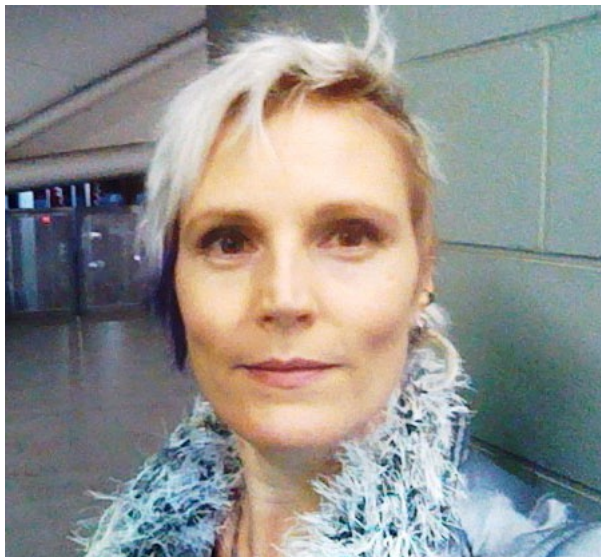


The Age of Ebook Acquisition - Tools and Trends

by Alison C. Foster

Ebooks are an accepted and expected format for quality research and academic content. As a result, ebooks are a fast-rising portion of library collections and budgets. ProQuest is leading the technology and distribution of scholarly aggregate ebooks around the globe. This report on both ebook purchasing and usage, with insight into publishing trends, the ebook lifespan, and factors that drive the industry, shows a few surprises and a glimpse of an exciting future of opportunities for ever-increasing value to library services. Theological libraries are heavily affected by this story, but are also active participants. EBL and Ebrary report data show trends across the ANZTLA group returning great value using a combination of acquisition tools, including the demand-driven acquisition (DDA) model. This report shows actual figures with examples to describe: theological ebook content analysis, overall comparison of ebooks in the bigger picture compared to five years ago, collective ebook usage details (e.g. unique titles, users, loans, frequency, length), and the return on investment value of acquisition models.



The Move Toward Ebooks

It's happening. The increase in the importance of ebook library services is largely due to the demand for remote and 24/7 access to meet patron needs just in time. As a result, ebook acquisition is on the rise. Academic libraries in the Australian-New Zealand (ANZ) region are moving toward e-preferred or "e-extreme" collection policies, and library management systems are intended to follow suit. In a report from the Publisher Communications Group, Academic libraries reportedly spent 18.9% of their budget on ebooks during 2013, and a 2% rise in the book budget is anticipated for 2014 on the whole. However, a 3.9% book budget increase is anticipated for academic institutions in Asia-Pacific, with an anticipated rise of 18.1% on ebooks during 2014 (dominated by ANZ). The increased academic book budget does not match the proportion of ebook expenditure growth, as ebooks take a larger percentage of the annual book budget year on year. Australian academic institutions lead the ebook curve and these libraries have had the largest influence on ProQuest to design an ebook management system and user platform to meet the needs of both library staff and end users.

Ebook Library (EBL), now a ProQuest business, launched its aggregated ebook library platform from Perth in 2004. One theological library began contributing to the product in 2007. In 2011, a large group of theological libraries started using EBL ebooks, as a result of a special offer to the ANZTLA consortium. Today, there are over two-dozen ANZ theological libraries using EBL or Ebrary ebooks. These libraries have surpassed the general academic trends and show much larger, and more rapid, growth in ebook acquisition on average.

Over the last seven years, EBL ebook acquisition has grown an average of 33% at each ANZ theological institution per year. This reflects a growth rate nearly double of what was reported by the Publisher Communications Group for academic institutions in the region for 2014. Not surprisingly, the subjects primarily purchased, in descending order, are Religion, Education, and Business & Management. In 2008-2010, each institution purchased an annual average of 70 ebook titles. In 2012-2014, this figure has grown to an average of 96 ebook titles per year.

Please refer to the table below for a comparison of a few factors indicating the increase in relevancy of ebooks in ANZ theological libraries over the last five years, in most instances growing over thousands of per cent:

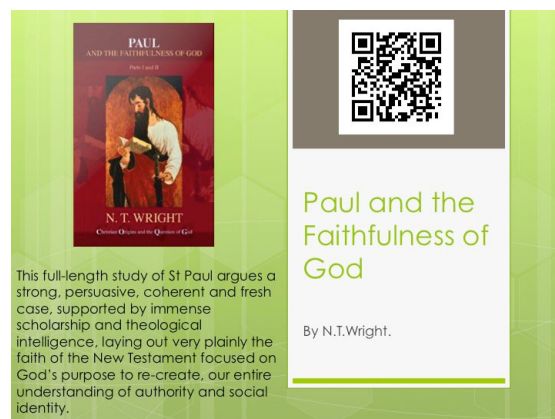
Comparison of ANZ theological libraries using ProQuest ebooks in 2009 and 2013

| | During 2009 | During 2013 |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| ProQuest ebook libraries | 2 | 23 |
| EBL DDA libraries | 0 | 8 |
| Unique EBL patrons | 273 | 2,757 |
| EBL Ebooks owned | 152 | 6,082 |
| EBL Ebooks used | 356 | 3,588 |
| Downloads on EBL | 372 | 6,341 |
| Usage sessions on EBL | 1,734 | 23,065 |

Not many ANZ theological libraries have an e-preferred collection policy, but the inclusion of electronic books in collection policies must progress. Lisa Nash, Librarian at the Catholic Education Office (CEO) Parramatta, stated that library staff first look for the electronic format when making new acquisitions. They prefer the ebook format to meet the increasing demand for multiple copies and to support distance education. Lisa believes ebooks have about a two-year uptake cycle, so ebook demand is anticipated to build over time.

“Discoverability is paramount for ebooks. To promote ebook usage, the Catholic Education Office (CEO) Parramatta library staff feature an ebook using a QR code and send it out to their network of staff, which results in increased usage and downloads on the specific title.”

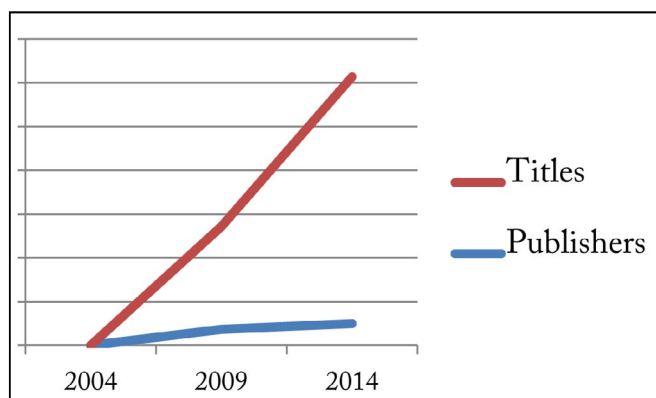
Discoverability is paramount for ebooks. To promote ebook usage, the Catholic Education Office (CEO) Parramatta library staff feature an ebook using a QR code and send it out to their network of staff, which results in increased usage and downloads on the specific title. They have created a service named *The Virtual Library display*: a set of printable slides with information, links and QR codes on ebooks dedicated to a topic. They have also curated a variety of ebook collections with links to each on their website. Below is an example of a featured ebook at CEO Parramatta:



Theological Ebook Content

As an ebook aggregator, EBL has a wider view of e-publishing beyond any one single publisher. EBL aggregates content onto a single platform on behalf of over 500 international publishers. In 2004, EBL began with 12 unique publishers and 2,129 ebooks identified with quality theological content. In 2009, this grew to 22 publishers with about 25,000 titles, and then in 2013, over 30 core publishers with more than 60,000 ebooks (separate list available). There are currently 667 publishers contributing to the EBL titles in the Religion subject category. In addition, there are a further 8 core theological publishers with ebook content available via the Ebrary platform, which will be available along with EBL content in the new integrated ProQuest ebook platform coming in 2015. Like EBL, Ebrary's acquisition catalogue has grown at a similar rapid rate.

Increase in the aggregated theological ebook content since 2004



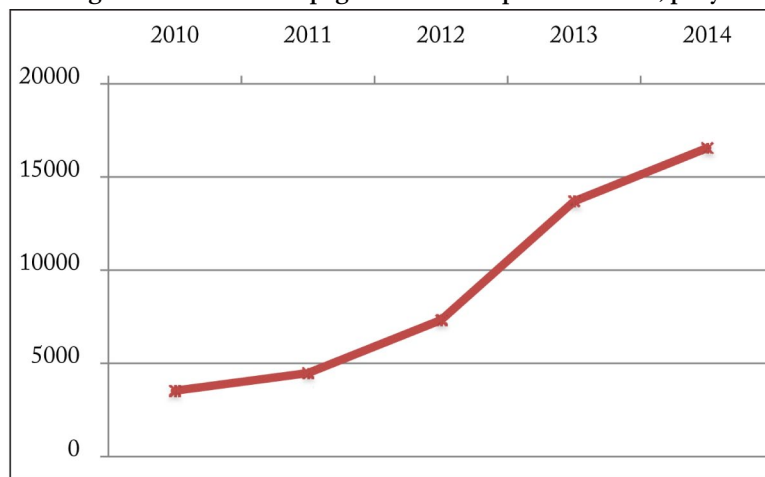
“Most publishers inform EBL that they support simultaneous release of the print and electronic version of titles. ... Publishers who work with ebooks manage their perceived risks by leveraging a variety of lending models and digital rights management (DRM) technology, which will vary between vendor platforms.”

Most publishers inform EBL that they support simultaneous release of the print and electronic version of titles. Bookseller, Yankee Book Peddler, has discovered a shrinking gap; about 47% of print titles become available in electronic format within 8 weeks. Course textbooks are predominantly still available for purchase only in print format. Publishers who work with ebooks manage their perceived risks by leveraging a variety of lending models and digital rights management (DRM) technology, which will vary between vendor platforms.

Ebook Usage Among Theological Libraries

The ANZ theological libraries have had over 6,000 unique users of EBL ebooks since 2008. 11% of these users read 20 or more ebooks during this period. On average, each ebook user across all these institutions has used 9.8 ebooks (for an average of 4.4 days on loan). At each institution with EBL ebooks, on average, patron ebook usage has risen from about 1,400 pages read online in 2008, to a projection of over 16,000 ebook pages read online during 2014. This reflects a 1,043% growth in usage, five times greater than the growth of ebook acquisition (acquisitions grew an average of 206% per institution during the same period). Over 702,000 pages have been read online in aggregate across the group over the last seven years.

Average number of ebook pages read online per institution, per year



Usage indicated in the graph above indicates only pages read while reading on the online EBL platform. Downloads of the entire ebook, with additional pages read, cannot be counted in this report because the usage takes place offline and is not tracked by the EBL system. Online reading of EBL ebooks in ANZ theological libraries accounts for about 70% of usage to date. Therefore, these usage figures are indicative, but not comprehensive, with an additional 30% of ebook reading occurring in the downloaded version.



“If patrons choose to open and borrow any of these DDA-available ebooks, then the library can opt to either pay-per-use or purchase the ebook via a mediated (hands on: review each request) or non-mediated (hands off: instant access) workflow. The pay-per-use model enables libraries to stretch their budget across the widest universe of content and to facilitate access to ebooks at a fraction of the full book price.”

Over time, ebooks also show a high rate of repeat usage, indicating that the lifecycle of a title may last for some years. In 2010, ANZ theological libraries had seen only 2 titles with over 100 uses, with an average of 4 uses per title. Since then, over 75 ebooks have seen more than 100 uses, and the average number of uses per title has more than doubled: to 8.7.

Acquisition By Demand

Since the start, EBL is more than just an ebook-hosting platform. Part of EBL's expertise is the technology to manage ebooks, using customer workflow to inform the sophisticated EBL administrative tools for library staff. Pioneering the demand driven acquisition (DDA) model for ebooks is a large part of this expertise. EBL aimed to help libraries to leverage the digital medium to facilitate library services that are more advanced than offered in the print paradigm.

Libraries use DDA to create access to ebooks without buying them first. If patrons choose to open and borrow any of these DDA-available ebooks, then the library can opt to either pay-per-use or purchase the ebook via a mediated (hands on: review each request) or non-mediated (hands off: instant access) workflow. The pay-per-use model enables libraries to stretch their budget across the widest universe of content and to facilitate access to ebooks at a fraction of the full book price. As a result, about half of EBL's customers around the globe are using the DDA model to some extent. Many libraries have realised the savings of this model and have published papers and presentations on their experience. However, theological libraries have not adapted this acquisition model as quickly. Only about 35% of ANZ theological libraries are using the DDA model today.

The Catholic Education Office at Parramatta was the first theological library in ANZ to use EBL DDA and intends to spend 85% of their ebook budget on DDA during 2014. For the first eighteen months, they began to build an ebook collection by automatically purchasing any borrowed ebook (beyond the free browse period). Today, CEO Parramatta manually approves each request for an ebook loan, and purchases the requested title about 99% of the time. In a brief interview with Lisa Nash, Catholic Education Office Parramatta Librarian, she recommended using a non-mediated approach to DDA, especially when building an ebook collection.

The second ANZ theological library to implement EBL DDA was Vose Seminary in Western Australia in 2011. Nathan Hobby from Vose presented at the ANZTLA conference in 2013, *Beginning Ebooks: Vose Seminary's Experience So Far*, which describes their support for the DDA model.

At Ridley College, Ruth Millard reports that high demand and reserve titles are offered in ebook format to increase access. This is supplemented by a custom DDA profile to make non-owned ebooks available to students. Access to these items is considered as a special

“Of the ANZ theological library customers who are using DDA for EBL ebooks, they spend about 64% of their EBL funds on demand driven transactions, as an annual average across them.”

case and is facilitated upon request, replacing some ILL (inter-library loan) activity.

Of the ANZ theological library customers who are using DDA for EBL ebooks, they spend about 64% of their EBL funds on demand driven transactions, as an annual average across them. One customer has spent all of their EBL ebook funds on DDA transactions, except for one title they purchased outright. On average, a DDA customer experiences a much better return on investment (ROI) on a cost-per-loan, cost-per-title, and cost-per-use basis. Multiple types of usage reports are available via the EBL administration portal, including additional patron analytics tools to enhance transaction and usage history with patron information.

DDA usage and expenditure compared with upfront perpetual ebook purchases (perpetual access licenses, PAL) show a striking savings. The table below compares the usage and expenditure of ANZ theological EBL DDA libraries against those without DDA incorporated into their acquisition strategy. Here the DDA statistics are also inclusive of PAL sales at these institutions; DDA statistics alone would have shown greater differences between the DDA and Non-DDA values. Another considerable factor not included in these numbers is the point at which a purchase may be triggered based upon demand (which is customisable). Libraries that pay for short-term loans (STL) prior to triggering a purchase see increased savings. The table below compares DDA institutions to those without by calculating their aggregate average cost and usage during 2012 and 2013. Averages and costs also change to show greater ROI using the DDA model over a longer period of time (not shown here).

Comparison of non-DDA and DDA libraries' usage and expenditure during 2012-13

| | Non-DDA | DDA |
|---------------------------------|---------|------|
| Number of titles used | 209 | 604 |
| Number of users | 263 | 282 |
| Average number of repeat titles | 138 | 326 |
| Average cost per title | \$46 | \$22 |

Analysis of the expenditure on content used by patrons at libraries using EBL DDA shows some differences from the expenditure at non-DDA institutions. The difference in the publisher and publication date of these selections is detailed in the tables below. Non-DDA institutions (with 100% firm ordered ebooks) demonstrate librarian selection of content from these top three publishers (totalling 62% of selections), in descending popular order: Baker Publishing, Continuum International, and Wiley. However, content selected at an institution using EBL DDA features titles from these top publishers (49% of selections): Wiley, Taylor and Francis, B&H Publishing. Half of titles purchased upfront (PAL) are from 2010-2013, whereas half of the titles used via a DDA program

are published in 2008–2012. As of June 2014, the DDA titles that have been most used were published in 2010 and 2011.

A comparison of the type of content procured between institutions not using DDA and institutions using DDA by the most popular publishers and publication dates (inclusive of 7 years of expenditure across ANZ theological libraries)

| Non-DDA | % |
|-------------------------|----|
| Baker Publishing | 36 |
| Continuum International | 16 |
| Wiley | 10 |

| DDA | % |
|------------------|----|
| Wiley | 17 |
| Taylor & Francis | 17 |
| B&H Publishing | 15 |

| Non-DDA | % |
|---------|----|
| 2010 | 13 |
| 2011 | 21 |
| 2012 | 20 |
| 2013 | 10 |

| DDA | % |
|------|----|
| 2008 | 10 |
| 2010 | 14 |
| 2011 | 14 |
| 2012 | 12 |

These figures support the value of a broader offering of ebook content, and also that purchased titles selected by demand will continue to see repeat use more often than titles purchased via upfront selection. Additional examination of the 2012–2013 usage at the DDA institutions against the usage of titles owned by non-DDA institutions shows 53% greater repeat ebook usage overall during the two-year period.

Over the last ten years, DDA has proven to be a cost-effective method for ebook acquisition, which is also true for ANZ theological libraries. Many libraries are using a combination of acquisition models as a part of their ebook strategy to maximise both content exposure and cost savings. Ebook acquisitions can be made using robust usage and expenditure data collated by ProQuest, based on proven demand at a single or multiple institutions. In my opinion, usage-based ebook acquisition models will continue to thrive in libraries, and ebook lending models and pricing will continue to evolve based on market demand. In addition, interoperability, accessibility, and discovery are more important than ebook usage, expenditure, and demand.

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