

ebooks: What to Consider When Bringing Them Into Your Library

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The arrival of ebooks at the Library of Michigan created a remarkable response from the staff. Their initial reaction was that contraptions like the Rocket and Softbook would never replace "real" books, but as they used the paperback-sized devices, the staff marveled over the Rocket's capacity and ease of use. Even die-hard bibliophiles liked the fact that one device carries up to 100 ebooks.

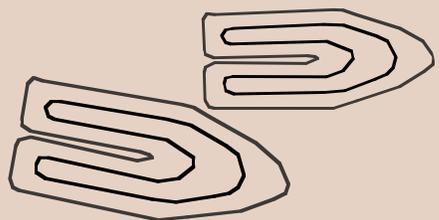
Next, the Library of Michigan began to deal with all the issues of adding a new type of device into its collection. We were concerned with insuring excellent patron access and with customer service, which includes training LM staff on use of the reading devices and explaining the use to the patrons. Early on, we decided to treat the new format as if it were an ordinary print book. We wanted to avoid segregating it from the rest of the collection by imposing fines for replacement of the devices, requiring a credit card number to be left on file with us, etc., since such requirements represent a barrier to access.

The first device considered was the most readily available, the Rocket Reader (NuvoMedia). Initially, the Library of Michigan considered adding multiple devices, possibly as demonstration models. It was also important to us to make sure that we purchased a device that adhered to the Open E-Book initiative, which is a file interchange format that works across different hardware platforms. Due to the trouble of obtaining other devices and the greater number of titles offered for the Rocket, plus its ease of use, we chose the Rocket Reader and brought four more. The technical issues for this device were simple. We set up and loaded the software in approximately 45 minutes. We registered the new devices in 15 minutes.

At this point, for nearly all ebook devices on the market, titles are keyed to a specific device and cannot be used on other devices. Exceptions include netLibrary and Glassbook, which may be read on any PC. If a Rocket is damaged, lost or stolen the titles can be reset to a different reading device. Damaged, lost or stolen devices are reported to prevent the thief from being able to use the reader with purchased titles. While NuvoMedia (Rocket) and Softbook were recently purchased by RCA/Gemstar, support is still provided for those devices.

Initial results are excellent. The reader devices are circulating well less than a month after we added them to our collection. No major problems have been reported by either our patrons or staff. No decision has been made on the device that will be selected to replace the Rocket Pros currently in our collection. netLibrary titles have also been added to our collection.

Access debuts its occasional series of clip sheets for librarians with Kim Laird's story of how she and her staff introduced ebooks to the Library of Michigan. The clip sheets are intended to provide information that will help librarians identify potential new services and offer innovative ideas to improve present services, programs or practices. We hope you'll find these articles helpful and will "clip this" for future reference. We also welcome your suggestions and submissions for future clip sheets.



Public Service Issues

General Issues

What type of ebook reader will we buy?

Must be Open E-Book initiative compatible; must have excellent support; and must have adequate numbers of titles in appropriate categories for our collection development policy.

Options include a specialized reader, such as PalmPilot, REB1100, Rocket Pro, or Web-based, Microsoft, Everybook, Glassbook, netLibrary, or a text-based system such as Gutenberg.

Check-out and Security Issues

Reader devices may be borrowed with a Library of Michigan library card.

Devices will be kept in a locked cabinet, which is accessible from Circulation.

Publicity and Education Issues

Create an instruction sheet to help the patron bring up the Rocket Reader manual on the devices.

Train staff how to handle the devices and how to download replacement files for books that are deleted.

Where Will the Material be Stored?

All titles will be stored on the reading device and on a restricted server that is accessible to Public Services (PS) and Technical Services (TS) staff.

All titles are accessible via password on NuvoMedia's website.

New readers will be purchased as client demands warrant.

Public Services Issues

Education issues for staff and clients: A checklist has been created and some user documentation is in place to hand out to patrons.

Both TS and PS care for the reading devices. TS reports problems, completes downloads of new purchased titles, etc. Circulation reviews readers when returned to make sure all titles are loaded and checks for extraneous material.

Patrons are not allowed to download text material onto the readers.

Both Circulation and Acquisitions check the readers when they are returned or when new material is selected.

Viruses and security: No virus problems are currently associated with the Rocket Readers. Any virus or security problems will be reported to Network and Information Systems.

How should the records for the readers and their titles display in the online patron access catalogs (OPAC)? Location code will show as ebook, the Call Number will show as Call Number. Reader [alphabetic designation], and the Status shows as "Ask at Circ." This will be used for all subsequent types of ebooks acquired (Glassbook, Softbook, etc.), not just for Rocketbooks.

What's available in ebook format? Typing in "ebook" as a keyword search pulls up all titles and the reader/anthology records. Typing in "ebook reader" brings up a list of LM readers. Each reader record contains at least a partial list of titles on each reader. This includes netLibrary titles.

Free titles will be downloaded to the Rockets upon request. PS will decide what free titles they want to retain permanently and will return the reader to TS for cataloging to request additions to the bibliographic record.

Cataloging Issues

Each ebook requires a separate catalog record (even if we have the same title in print).

URLs will be included for appropriate ebooks (cf. netLibrary)

Location information: ebook

Processing procedures: Labeled with Reader [alphabetic character] and barcoded.

Acquisitions has organized the folders by Rocket ID to make it easier to keep track of paid titles. Acquisitions has also created an Excel file on the Reader IDs, Barcode Inventory Number, Serial Number, etc.

A single bib record for each device is created, plus a bib record for each book title held on that reader. The reading devices are treated as anthologies.

Current location code for the Rocket editions is ebook and the 'format' code in the order record is z. In bibliographic records, the format code is that for computer files. The call number for the devices is "Reader A" and so forth.

Acquisitions Issues

Some systems require ordering via procurement/credit card. We can order and download titles within minutes with the Rocket reading devices.

Acquisitions will download onto the server for access by Public Services. The reader is then passed to cataloging for processing and returned to Public Services within the week.

When a Rocket Reader is stolen, damaged, or lost, Acquisitions will

Companies

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Collection of links

request NuvoMedia to move the titles to a different reader and will report the theft. Acquisitions or Circulation will report the loss to Business Services for inventory purposes.

Network and Information Systems/Technology Issues

NIS prefers to support one type of reader.

Security issues will be taken care of as they arrive. The Rockets seem to be secure and do not represent a breach of security for our internal systems.

Circulation and ILL Issues

Loan period: Same as for other books in the collection.

Security issues: Locked in a cabinet behind Circulation.

Location of readers: Note in III says "Ask at Circ."

Reading devices are not part of interlibrary loan services at this time. A demonstration reader circulates with LM staff who are traveling.

General Information

<http://www.rrlc.org/ebook/ebookhome.html>

<http://www.ebookcollections.com>

<http://www.elibrarybook.com>

<http://www.e-bookknow.com>

<http://www.eBookAd.com/>

<http://www.ebooksnbytes.com/publishers.html>

<http://www.electronic-books.com/>

<http://www.e-book-world.com/>

Collection of Links

<http://www.robotwisdom.com/web/etexts.html>

<http://www.ebookconnections.com/epublisher.htm>

Library Specific Information

<http://www.nslsilus.org/alkhome/faq.html>

<http://pml.suffolk.lib.ny.us/rocketebook.htm>

Bookstores

<http://www.powells.com>

<http://www.barnesnobles.com>

Companies

http://www.netlibrary.com/library_home_page.asp

<http://www.nuvomedia.com> or <http://www.softbook.com/> or

<http://www.ebook-gemstar.com/about/index.asp>

<http://www.glassbook.com/>

<http://www.everybook.net/>

Publishers

<http://www.wordbeams.com/>

<http://www.1stbooks.com/>

<http://www.starfire.douglas.ma.us/ebook/>

<http://www.electricebookpublishing.com/>

Open E-Book Initiative

<http://www.openebook.org/faq.htm>

Articles

<http://www.zdnet.com/zdnn/stories/news/0,4586,2314515,00.html>

<http://www.salonmag.com/books/feature/2000/10/20/frankfurt/>

<http://www.time.com/time/digital/magazine/articles/0,4753,58468,00.html>

<http://www.theatlantic.com/unbound/digitalreader/dr2000-11-16.htm>

http://www.publishersweekly.com/index_articles/20001016_91856.asp

http://www.findarticles.com/cf_0/m0BLB/2_23/61298119/p1/article.jhtml?term=electronic+collections+

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Dillon, Dennis. "Digital Books: Making them work for publishers and libraries." *C&RL News*, May 2000. P.391-393.

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/tech/00/06/circuits/articles/15book.html>

Balas, Janet I. "Developing Library Collections for a Wired World." *Computers in Libraries*, June 2000. P.61-63