E-PUBLISHING: A RAPIDLY MATURING INDUSTRY

Electronic publishing has had an unprecedented impact on what is available for libraries to acquire and on purchasing practices. Unfortunately, as the number of useful digital products and users' desire for them escalate, many libraries also are facing unusually severe financial constraints.

Publicly funded libraries have had drastic funding cuts because of state budget problems. Private academic institutions also have suffered because of reduced return on endowment investments.

Moreover, many in the higher education community believe that declining budgets are not simply the natural consequence of cyclical forces but instead represent a fundamentally changed outlook that will continue for some time.[1]

These analysts argue that cuts in university funding occur because education is no longer regarded as a public good to be supported automatically and unconditionally. If this idea is truly the case, academic libraries at state institutions will be able to afford only a fraction of the growing array of electronic resources being brought to market.

Even richly endowed libraries may be challenged, since costs show no sign of significant decline and attractive products continue to appear in rapid succession.

Chapter 1 describes current growth areas in e-publishing and the increasingly rich offerings available to libraries. The focus throughout this report is on nonserial products, with reference to serials only in so far as they affect overall budgets and financial management strategies.

Chapter 2 briefly discusses rising costs and the raised expectations of users.

Chapter 3 describes strategies libraries are using to balance increasing demands and available resources.

Chapter 4 details the impact of e-publishing on day-to-day acquisition processes.

Chapter 5, "Alternative Acquisition Routes," describes methods for adding to collections besides purchasing. It discusses the impact electronic publishing has had, in particular, on interlibrary loan—the traditional substitute for ownership.

Chapter 6 describes how e-publishing is changing libraries.

Progress in e-publishing

Beginning in the mid-1990s, a handful of publishers started to explore the possibilities of delivering information to libraries and their users via the Internet.

Among the earliest offerings were indexing and abstracting services that had previously been distributed in CD ROM format, primary source texts from Chadwyck-Healey, and Academic Press journals, the first major bundled collection of electronic and print versions of serials.

In the last 10 years, librarians have come a long way from where isolated, fledging e-publishers experimented in isolation with emerging technologies. Today libraries interact with a robust electronic publishing industry capable of offering highly advanced and reliable products in an increasingly global marketplace. E-publishing is no longer the preserve of a few innovative risk takers.

Now most big publishers in the library market have electronic products on offer. Only print book publishers as a group have thus far been uncertain about moving their content online. New attitudes are emerging in this segment of the industry, however; and these attitudes are treated extensively in this report.

The electronic products marketed to libraries are full-featured and sophisticated. Linking, a futuristic and exciting concept in 2000, is now commonplace. Links can be made from catalog records to journal titles and from article titles through link resolvers to the full-text article, wherever it is located.

Resolvers also can tie into interlibrary loan or generate various related searches. To compete effectively, vendors know their products must be OpenURL-compliant, and they know that they must keep pace with other new demands and technical developments.

Vendors also take for granted the need to offer alerting and personalization services, save functions, print and e-mail capabilities, and reports on use. To remain on the cutting edge, e-publishers continually invest in ways to make their products more appealing and more functional.

Besides adding new features, publishers also are on the lookout for new content to package and deliver. The American Psychological Association (APA) is a good case in point. First APA created *PsycArticles* to supplement its abstracting and indexing service, *PsycInfo* with full text.

Next, APA built *PsycExtra* offering access to the gray literature of psychology; that is, important material published outside scholarly peer-reviewed journals. The new *PsycBooks* will launch fall 2004, with APA monographs plus classic texts from other publishers.

If a library wants to subscribe to the full package of APA materials, the retail price (with access fees) for the smallest four-year school or community college would be about $6,000. At the top of the scale, for universities with more than 25,000 FTE, the total cost approaches $60,000. (Consortium and other discounts are negotiable.)

As this report shows, many other major e-publishers are expanding the scope of the material they cover in similar ways. Acquiring and packaging more and different kinds of content requires increased investment in enabling technologies, and, in turn, leads to higher prices.

FTE: full-time equivalent

Note

[1]Two recent articles advance this view: Alan Guskin, "Dealing With the Future Now," *Change*, July/August 2003, p. 10-20, and David W. Breneman, "For Colleges This Is Not Just Another Recession," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 14, 2002, p B7-B9.