



THE NEW ACCESS MODEL

Are we even going to be at the table?

I think many people imagine, as we transition from p to e, that libraries will continue to lend materials in a similar way as we do now – making content freely accessible to all and ensuring equity of access. However there are signs that this may not be so.

Last year some Australian librarians attended the Beyond the Book summit at Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) in Ohio. Pat Losinski, Director of CML, noted that there are currently three main content aggregators: Amazon (device & content), Google (digitised content), and Apple (device and content). In this space, Pat said, the role of libraries in the circulation of digital material is unknown. Libraries have invested large amounts of money in circulation but will e-books change the very nature of the library and will vendors let libraries into this 'circulation-less library' environment?

Another side of this was articulated in a recent article in The Guardian (see box).

This indeed is quite worrying and we are getting some of that in Victoria, with public libraries being told by one publisher they are not allowed to put links to the State Library on their websites to promote the use of online content that they no longer purchase.

Current library offerings are pretty clunky, although they are getting better, and the *Overdrives* and *Bolindas* of the world still provide the traditional library model of buy once, use often. Of concern is a new business model being marketed to libraries, an example being *Freegal*, an online database that provides access to songs from Sony Music's catalogue of artists.

Their library business model is that the library pays for individual downloads. No longer is it about buying a CD to be lent 40 times before it is retired off to CD heaven. Now we are paying per person for someone to use something once. *Overdrive* too is looking at a similar business model for music. It could be

hard to justify to funders that this is a proper use of public funds.

Our profession is going to have to work hard to ensure that people still have free and unfettered access to information. We must ensure we are heard by publishers and that the long public library tradition of sharing community assets is somehow preserved in the digital age.

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the guardian

ebook restrictions leave libraries facing virtual lockout

Benedict Page and Helen Pidd,

The Guardian, Tuesday 26 October 2010

For libraries facing dwindling borrowers and brutal budget cuts, the ebook seems to offer an irresistible opportunity to reel in new readers and retain old ones too busy or infirm to visit during opening hours.

A third of libraries across the country have embraced the new technology, allowing members to check out electronic literature without setting foot in the building.

But following abuse of the system – with China-based readers attempting to circumnavigate copyright laws by joining British libraries and plundering their virtual collections for free – publishers have now threatened to prevent libraries from accessing ebooks. It's a move described by one library boss as "regressive" at a time when they are trying to innovate as they fight for survival.

But the Publishers Association (PA) claims that "untrammelled" remote lending of digital books could pose a "serious threat" to publishers' commercial activity. That is why it has just announced a clampdown, informing libraries they may have to stop allowing users to download ebooks remotely and instead require them to come to the library premises, just as they do to get traditional print books – arguably defeating the object of the e-reading concept.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2010/oct/26/libraries-ebook-restrictions/print> 12/11/2010

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