ERM Use Case - "New e-book purchase/subscription – select platform"

Developed with The Open University (2 February 2011)

Generic Description – UC5 - The library has decided to purchase access to an e-book. The library first has to identify which vendors/platforms the book is available through, and choose the most suitable route of access, including payment model (outright purchase v. on-demand v. …)

1 – Use Case Description – What happens?

Activity – The selection of a new book title is generally a faculty driven process. While the Open University has a e-only purchase policy operating for journals, this is not as well established for books, although it is a stated aim to purchase e-book version wherever possible. Before agreeing an e-book purchase it is vital to establish the intended use, as this will affect which platform/supplier is used and in some cases may mean an e-book purchase is not appropriate - for example, if the e-book is to be used on a course with 3000 students, where book is intended to be used within a specific time period, a limited concurrent users license is unlikely to be a appropriate.

Volumes – The Open University currently has access to approximately 20,600 e-books. However this figure includes packages, and the number purchased as individual titles is currently approximately 1200 titles. Slightly over 200 individual titles were purchased in 2009/2010. It is anticipated purchase of individual e-book titles will rise in the current year due to policy to prefer e-book format over print.

Actors – Faculty member making request; Learning and Teaching (L&T) Librarians; Acquisitions/Rights/Licensing staff in library; Faculty representative with budgetary authority.

Data involved – Data completed on book and e-book request forms - this includes basic bibliographic details; intended use of book (including module details, number of students on module, whether it is to be used for student assignments, if it is required/background read, if it is a set book, any research use); preferred platform; total cost on each available platform including any additional per-title platform costs (to allow accurate price prediction from screen price); workflow and administrative information such as date of approval, order number, whether access has been obtained.

Workflows – A request for a book is made - usually from faculty (a book request form is available on library website); Requests generate notifications to both Faculty representative and L&T Librarian, Team Leader; If considered to be relevant and suitable for purchase request is forwarded to acquisitions team (decision generally taken by the Faculty rep, but for some Faculties the L&T Team Leader has authorisation to do so within a certain budget limit); Acquisitions carry out basic availability check (via Dawsons and Coutts); If e-book purchase possible, Acquisitions staff partially complete e-book request form and return to L&T Librarian, Team Leader; L&T Librarian, Team Leader establishes detailed reason for purchase from faculty; Acquisitions/Licensing team carry out more detailed investigation into whether the e-book is available through any route with appropriate licensing that will support intended use of e-book

At this stage multiple options for the e-book purchase maybe identified; Acquisitions team may make recommendation (e.g. specific platform).

When a decision has been made, sign off is needed from the Faculty representative with budgetary authority.

At any point in this process it is possible that the requestor changes their mind about the material and decide it is no longer needed.

Current Examples – Any book/e-book request (outside packages and reference collections/works) would act as an example of this activity.

2 – Motivation – What are the pain points?

What are the current problems – Interpretation of information - license terms are key; Have to understand intended use for ebook in detail from faculty; Takes time to turn round information - sometimes suppliers are unable to give immediate answers (e.g. sometimes have to refer to parent office in USA); May have to investigate multiple platforms/suppliers, and investigation could find ebook with suitable licensing terms is unavailable. However despite these issues, the speed of access once the ebook has been ordered means that this is typically quicker overall than acquiring a printed monograph

Efficiency assessment – If the process could be made more efficient this would save staff time

Economy assessment - Picking right package may save money

Effectiveness assessment - Choosing right license model may increase effectiveness and offer ability to reuse material for multiple purposes or on multiple courses.

3 – Intended Benefits – What is the business case?

Library Service – Key benefit is improved efficiency; there are also possible financial savings and better value for money from purchased material

Users – Faculty benefit from obtaining material licensed appropriately for their requirements; Faculty also benefit from faster turn around times on ebook materials; Some publishers/platforms may offer better accessibility arrangements (or the OU may negotiate these) offering improved accessibility to all (e.g. publisher may agree that the OU is at liberty to offer an 'accessible' version of the text in a different file format or without DRM etc.)

Suppliers – Suppliers get right product to right customers; Improved 'catalogue' of all e-book offerings may increase size of overall market.

4 – Consequences of doing it 'above campus'

The proposition – 'e-books in print' - a single place where e-book publishers/suppliers can have their full e-book catalogue listed, with details of licensing and other access arrangements.

What will happen? - Libraries able to find e-books (for those participating publishers/platforms) they wish to purchase more easily, with ready knowledge of how can it be used (answer key questions such as 'can this be used in the VLE?'); Those publishers not participating would risk reduced sales through lack of exposure; N.B. early feedback from existing Swets example suggests that a 'publisher pays to be listed' is unlikely to be successful model.

Potential Risks – Financial benefit to participating libraries/institutions not substantial enough to create sustainable service (in order to succeed the 'above campus' offering must result in real savings to participating libraries/institutions - staff savings particularly); The traditional 'Books in Print' service suggests that a commercial organisation would be well placed to provide this service, and early entry from the public sector could affect this opportunity.

Potential Opportunities – Could offer integration into order process as some book supplier systems currently do - allow requests/orders to be placed on centralised system, and information pushed back to local systems; May bring more uniform publisher offerings (so you can compare like with like); Could drive competition between e-book suppliers and improve offerings or reduce prices; Could offer bibliographic record download.

Consequences of not doing it – The current process is a barrier to efficiency, is wasteful of specialist time.

5 – Implementation Pointers

Mechanism – Operated above campus; shared data (e-books in print, or e-books 'knowledgebase') is key aspect

Inputs & Outputs – Inputs would be searches/requests from library (or possibly patrons). Main output details of offers from publishers, including licensing terms

Standards & Protocols – Onix for licenses; MARC if record download offered; EDI if request/order creation offered

Existing systems – Library Management System; Request forms (web form and Word document); Spreadsheets.

Staffing - No extra local staffing, aim to reduce local staffing (or staff time) spent on investigating ebook offerings across vendors/publishers.

6 – Challenges & Costs – Direct and indirect

Set up and Transition – This will require a minimum of a database/knowledgebase containing ebook data from publishers, import mechanism for publishers, search interface for libraries, batch checking option for libraries to look up multiple items in automated way; possible export of order records to local systems.

Ongoing - quality of data available to libraries is key, so ongoing cost lies in ensuring publisher information is accurate and up-to-date and continually increasing number of publishers/vendors participating.