Abstract

Purpose
The purpose of this paper is to describe the findings from the qualitative strand of the National e-Book Observatory (2007-2009) project, relating to the promotion of e-textbooks in UK universities by the library, academics and publishers. A complementary paper on the ways in which students and academics locate e-books provided by their library will appear in a future issue.

Design/methodology/approach
Following the provision by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) in the UK of collections of e-textbooks, the project used deep log analysis, benchmark surveys and focus groups to develop a rich picture of library e-collection management and use by students and academics. Focus groups were undertaken with library staff, academics and students; the dialogues were transcribed and analysed using NVivo7 software.

Findings
The qualitative studies found that libraries were using a range of promotional tools, although these were not always finding their targets. Often libraries had no formal promotion strategy for e-resources. Although little in evidence, the value of academic commitment and promotion was emphasised. Promotion by publishers and aggregators is both to libraries and directly to academic staff. Students felt that they were largely unaware of promotion beyond the presence of e-books in the catalogue, and in some cases stated explicitly that they thought more should be done to promote library e-resources to them.

Practical implications
The paper offers pragmatic guidance on promotional methodologies.

Originality/value
The project describes the first major, national usage study of e-books in higher education. The paper contributes significantly to the literature in discussing the importance of promoting e-books to students and staff.

Keywords
Electronic books, Promotional methods, Academic libraries, User studies, United Kingdom

Citation

Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Copyright © 2010, Emerald Group Publishing Limited

To read the full version of this content please select one of the options below

You may be able to access this content by logging in via Shibboleth, Open Athens or with your Emerald Account.

To rent this content from Deepdyve, please click the button.

If you think you should have access to this content, click the button to contact our support team.
Why use e-books rather than the paper version? Apart from the added audio, interactive tasks and built-in dictionaries, the great benefit of e-books is the added capability of the device the e-book is on. Smart phones and tablets almost all have some kind of voice and video recording capability, and often they will be able to support a vast range of free – or very cheap – apps, which can change a mainly receptive lesson or series of lessons into ones in which the students take their e-book and interact with it to produce their own creations. 'A new e-book for iPads, aimed at English language students all around the world, is being developed. Also, don't forget that e-book readers are, of course, great for promoting extensive reading too. 1 Observations on E-Books & The National E-Book Observatory Hazel Woodward University Librarian and Director of the University Press Cranfield University. 2 Outline Background: a slow start ..... E-books: what do librarians want? Reading list materials, principally textbooks Current titles Wider choice of titles relevant to the UK academic community Flexibility in choosing between subscribing or outright purchase Sensible charging bands or prices regime Multiple and concurrent access for users Authenticated access A systematic way of discovering what e-books are available A 'one stop shop' for MARC records. 28 National E-Books Observatory Project: Aims To licence a collection of e-books to support taught course students in four discipline areas. e-books & e-resources. need to be signposted and promoted so that users can find and use your e-stuff. JISC national e-books observatory project: Key findings and recommendations. Why aren't all the textbooks I need available electronically? Unlike monographs and journals, a “student pay” model is the established model for textbook sales in print form. The consensus amongst publishers interviewed in our eTextbook Business Models is that between 70 and 90% of overall revenue comes from students. Publishers are cautious about providing course texts online as there is a lack o