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**Wireless technology
redefines the library**

E-books come of age with their readers

Electronic books are emerging as valuable new resources from STM publishers. **Dan Tonkery**, director of business development for EBSCO Information Services, gives an overview of some of the materials that are available

Students who were born in the digital age expect and prefer all of their information in electronic form, according to reports from large research and major college libraries. It should not be a surprise that books fall into this category as well.

Stored on a digital shelf – either the publisher's e-book platform (Springer's eBook Collection accessed via SpringerLink, for example) or in the library's online public access catalogue (OPAC) – e-books are immediately accessible to patrons for reading, saving, printing or downloading. Researchers can access them from PCs, laptops or handheld devices. STM content is particularly suitable for e-books. It is time-critical and online delivery makes it easier to update. It is also typically reference in nature so is generally short enough to read online.

Publishers are taking note

The e-book industry experienced several years of starts and stops. Now, however, mainstream STM publishers are giving serious attention to developing their books, reference works and book series

publications in an electronic format. All of the major STM publishers have experimented with different platforms, various business models and taken a risk with providing their book collections online. While usage is just starting to grow, feedback indicates that publishers have another hit product on their hands. And, in response, STM hosts such as MetaPress have completely redesigned their software to incorporate the book format into their electronic offerings.

Compared to their print counterparts, e-books offer many benefits to libraries. These include the elimination of manual and physical processing, the expansion of material accessibility, availability and usage, saved shelf space and no risk of damage or theft. Libraries also receive MARC records and COUNTER-compliant usage statistics to streamline the administrative and evaluative processes that are associated with providing access to e-books.

The model of e-books is following the model of e-journals. E-book packages are being sold primarily via annual subscription or annual lease.

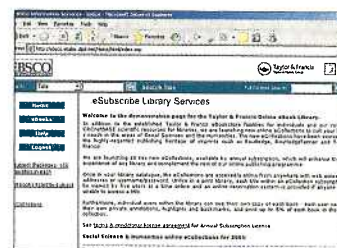
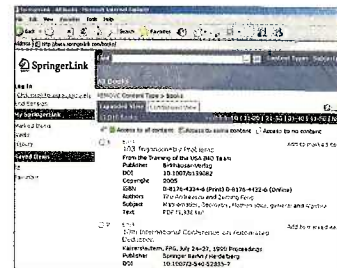
Publishers are also bundling their e-book and e-journal content into one combined interface. This structure complements the core strengths of subscription agents like EBSCO that facilitate ordering and renewals and enable consolidated payment.

Libraries may order customised, full or fixed-subject collections based on the needs of their institution. EBSCO is currently collecting book metadata to add to both the EBSCOhost and EBSCO A-to-Z knowledge bases, which will enable cross-platform searching and linking. As a result, end users will be able to access e-journal and chapter-level e-book content simultaneously.

EBSCO currently offers e-books in various bundle and access models via Springer, Wiley InterScience, Taylor & Francis, Cambridge University Press, and the Pan American Health Organization.

Some of the resources on offer

The Springer eBook Collection was the world's first online book collection tailored specifically for the requirements of researchers and scientists. It currently includes more than 12,000 works in the STM fields and more than 3,000 new titles are to be added each year. These titles are packaged into 12 different online libraries (with no overlap in content) in the categories of architecture, design and arts, behavioural science, biomedical and life science, business and economics, chemistry and material science, computer science, earth and environmental science, engineering, humanities, social science



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