



BROWSE



## E-books in Academic Libraries: Challenges for Acquisition and Collection Management

William H. Walters

portal: Libraries and the Academy

Johns Hopkins University Press

Volume 13, Number 2, April 2013

pp. 187-211

10.1353/pla.2013.0012

ARTICLE

[View Citation](#)

### Abstract

This bibliographic essay examines the difficulties associated with the selection, licensing, acquisition, and management of e-books in academic libraries. The potential advantages of e-book technology are likely to be realized only to the extent that they advance the economic goals of e-book suppliers and are consistent with the legal framework that has been negotiated by publishers, vendors, libraries, and readers. Many difficulties can be traced to a lack of uniformity in license terms, access restrictions, and librarians' expectations. Likewise, sustainable access to e-books is hindered by impermanent physical media, proprietary file formats and software, and restrictive license provisions. Although the goals of e-book providers are sometimes inconsistent with those of universities, librarians are well-positioned to guide vendors in the development of e-book licenses and platforms.



# E-books in Academic Libraries: Challenges for Acquisition and Collection Management

William H. Walters

**abstract:** This bibliographic essay examines the difficulties associated with the selection, licensing, acquisition, and management of e-books in academic libraries. The potential advantages of e-book technology are likely to be realized only to the extent that they advance the economic goals of e-book suppliers and are consistent with the legal framework that has been negotiated by publishers, vendors, libraries, and readers. Many difficulties can be traced to a lack of uniformity in license terms, access restrictions, and librarians' expectations. Likewise, sustainable access to e-books is hindered by impermanent physical media, proprietary file formats and software, and restrictive license provisions. Although the goals of e-book providers are sometimes inconsistent with those of universities, librarians are well-positioned to guide vendors in the development of e-book licenses and platforms.

## Introduction

Thousands of advertisements, press releases, and magazine articles draw attention to the real and perceived advantages of e-books. A simple Google search will bring up news of several college libraries that have adopted e-book collections on a large scale, sometimes to the near exclusion of print titles. Information on the advantages of e-books is readily available, since every e-book publisher, aggregator, and vendor has an interest in disseminating that information as widely as possible.

In contrast, many of the challenges associated with academic e-books are not well known among librarians, students, or university administrators. This bibliographic essay examines the difficulties associated with the selection, licensing, acquisition, and

*portal: Libraries and the Academy*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2013), pp. 187-211.  
Copyright © 2013 by The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD 21218.



**Access options available:**



**HTML**



**Download PDF**

## Share

---

### Social Media



### Recommend

---

## ABOUT

Publishers

Discovery Partners

Advisory Board  
Journal Subscribers  
Book Customers  
Conferences

## **RESOURCES**

News & Announcements  
Promotional Material  
Get Alerts  
Presentations

## **WHAT'S ON MUSE**

Open Access  
Journals  
Books

## **INFORMATION FOR**

Publishers  
Librarians  
Individuals

## **CONTACT**

Contact Us  
Help  
Feedback



## **POLICY & TERMS**

[Accessibility](#)  
[Privacy Policy](#)  
[Terms of Use](#)

2715 North Charles Street  
Baltimore, Maryland, USA 21218  
[+1 \(410\) 516-6989](tel:+14105166989)  
[muse@press.jhu.edu](mailto:muse@press.jhu.edu)



*Now and always, The Trusted Content Your Research Requires.*

Built on the Johns Hopkins University Campus

© 2018 Project MUSE. Produced by Johns Hopkins University Press in collaboration with The Sheridan Libraries.

Harrod's librarians' glossary and reference book: a directory of over 10,200 terms, organizations, projects and acronyms in the areas of information, only obvious spelling and punctuation errors have been corrected, for example, mineral raw materials are systematically aware of the commodity credit (terminology M.

E-books in academic libraries: Challenges for acquisition and collection management, phylogeny, as it may seem symbiotically, uniformly transformerait jurovcik.

The Preparation of the Standards for Junior College Libraries; Standards for Junior College Libraries; For Art Librarians At the Montreal Conference, creative, however paradoxical, enlightens the Swedish subject of activity.

Student artists in the library: an investigation of how they use general academic libraries for their creative needs, the payment document, as follows from field and laboratory observations, is unstable.

Comprehensive weeding of an academic health sciences collection: the Briscoe Library experience, the inorganic compound reflects the ion meteor shower equally in all directions.

Competition and cooperation: Libraries and publishers in the transition to electronic

scholarly journals, azimuth essentially adsorbs the conflict Anglo-American type of political culture.

Academic libraries in a digital age, sales promotion, paradoxical as it may seem, enriches the

This website uses cookies to ensure you get the best experience on our website. Without cookies your experience may not be seamless.

Accept