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Use and Perceptions of E-books by Academic Staff in Further Education

Elaine Mulholland ^a ... Jessica Bates ^b

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Abstract

This article reports on a study of the awareness, perceptions and use of e-books by academic staff in Further Education (FE) colleges throughout Northern Ireland (NI). It is the first comprehensive study of e-book use by FE faculty in NI and fills a significant gap in the research literature on e-books in education, which has tended to focus on Higher Education and the university setting. Data was collected through an online survey which was distributed to FE faculty across NI. The findings show that although FE academic staff are receptive to e-books and welcome them as a resource, poor reading experience and lack of awareness of relevant titles have had an impact. In particular, the research found that 40% of academic staff, in post less than five years, had not used e-books. Greater availability of titles, promotion, and better integration within teaching and learning emerge as key requisites for effective service delivery and enhancement of e-books within FE, as does the need for better targeted instruction and training aimed at

academic staff. Understanding patrons' views, awareness, needs, habits and expectations in relation to e-books is crucial to help direct collection content while budgets remain tight and physical space limited.



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Keywords

Academic staff; E-books; Further Education; Northern Ireland; Perceptions and use; United Kingdom

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