

Publishing: e-books, libraries, and hard cover books

Literature



Lecturer Publishing: E-books, Libraries, and Hard Cover Books: The Debate

Introduction For the longest time, we have known books to be physical pages that authors develop/ write, and then get their work published by professional publishing companies. The books are usually hard cover (or soft/ paperback) versions that can be obtained through outright purchases or by borrowing from the local library. Libraries usually purchase books from publishers for onward ending to their members and patrons, who pay a small fee to borrow and use the books. However, the advent of technology has resulted in books being published as electronic copies. The electronic book copies (e-books) are similar to the physical books, except that they are in electronic form. Since electronic books bypass the need for using paper and covers, they are cheaper to 'publish', as opposed to the physical paperback or hardcover books. However, a war has been brewing between publishers and libraries, with some publishers even blocking libraries from accessing their e-books. The results have been that some publishers raise their book prices to libraries by more than 300 percent. This has been occasioned by the belief that e-books can be downloaded and 'borrowed' by many people, who use the same electronic content.

The drastic measures taken by publishers have been due to perception that libraries are making money off them. If a library buys a single e-book copy from a publisher, for say \$ 20, the library only pays \$ 20 for the e-book.

However, the library can lend out the e-book to multiple users in real time; for instance, it can lend an e-book it bought for \$ 20 to fifty users, while charging each user \$ 2 per 'borrowing period'. The major problem seems to delve around the issue of pricing models and the usage of content between e-books and printed books. While libraries consider that e-books and printed <https://assignbuster.com/publishing-e-books-libraries-and-hard-cover-books/>

books have the same content but in different forms; publishers feel that the access, pricing models, and usage should be modified or overhauled. Some publishers have placed a limit onto the number of times that e-books can be lent out by the librarians, while some have completely shut out libraries from their e-books repository. Both the antagonists have their own points and reasons for taking their respective positions; libraries argue that they help drive printed and even e-book sales using their business model (Blumer and Kenton 65-97). The librarians also argue that by being big customers to publishers, they want big-client pricing and its attendant benefits. Publishers on the other hand, argue that e-book lending by libraries is hurting their e-book sales and that electronic books should be priced higher because they do not wear out, unlike printed books.

Thesis

Both antagonists have very valid points, except that their arguments and points of view are all wrong; both should treat e-books like software that are licensed and users pay per use.

This paper will review the issue of publishers and librarians concerning their war on the pricing of e-books; by the publishers to the librarians and the librarians to their patrons. Both the positions of the antagonists will be evaluated and a neutral working solution developed based on the thesis statement. Various reliable and peer reviewed scholarly articles will be consulted and used as the source of the research information. Solutions to the problem will then be proposed, using the thesis as a guide, after which conclusions will be drawn.

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