

VISION STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY ACCESS TO DOWNLOADABLE AND PORTABLE E-CONTENT

Public libraries provide access to a broad range of human knowledge, information, and ideas and serve all readers, regardless of their socio-economic, educational, or literacy status. In order to continue to do this, public libraries have to be able to access information regardless of the delivery mechanism. The Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CBUC) has developed a vision statement to identify public library issues around access to downloadable and portable e-content with the intent of entering into a dialogue with publishers, distributors, and producers of e-content.

The value of libraries to publishers and producers in introducing the public to the world of e-content and creating potential consumers cannot be underestimated. CULC/CBUC member libraries expended almost \$10,000,000 in 2009 on e-content. Member libraries spent nearly \$90,000,000 on materials in 2009. E-book expenditures grew by more than 40% in 2009; libraries predict a further 40% in 2010. Public libraries are a huge support to Canadian authors, publishers and producers of e-content because they purchase large quantities of materials in a variety of formats. In addition, public libraries promote those materials in library branches, through library programs, on websites, and in the local media. They offer training programs on using e-content and provide customers with technical support.

ACQUISITIONS

Libraries need...

- to be able to select and order e-content from anywhere as is done for print.
- to be able to use any type of vendors/producers of e-content. When digital rights management (DRM) is being negotiated, DRM for libraries should be included.
- fair and flexible pricing models that offer options to libraries, (e.g. one copy/one use, simultaneous use, and actual use models).
- simultaneous release of e-content to the consumer and library markets.

COLLECTIONS

Libraries need...

- to own the e-content they purchase. The future of library collections depends on the ability of libraries to collect, describe, organize, and preserve these collections. Publishers and producers of e-content cannot remove titles without libraries' consent.
- to be able to select from a broad spectrum of e-content publishers and producers.
- access to more Canadian content.

DELIVERY PLATFORMS, CIRCULATION, AND ACCESS

Libraries need...

- a shared, non-proprietary delivery platform and interface for the circulation of all e-content that is easy to use. Access to e-content should be allowed through the catalogue and/or through a consolidated site/portal, as determined by individual libraries. Having to search and borrow e-content through different vendors is inefficient and confusing.
- to be able to offer downloading of e-content without customers having to install proprietary software on their devices.
- DRM that allows loaning, customizable loan periods, and the ability to download to multiple devices. These terms should be determined, or at least negotiated, by the individual library.

DEVICE, USE ISSUES

Libraries need...

- device independence; content must be device agnostic. Having files in proprietary formats and for use on proprietary devices eliminates public library access.
- accessibility standards to be in place for all applications.
- open standards (e.g. ePub format for ebooks) for use on multiple devices. It is recognized that even then, producers may have to make adjustments to ensure device compliance.