

PUBLIC LIBRARY EBOOK LENDING INITIATIVE
Request for Information
(RFI)

eBOUND Canada
Canadian Urban Libraries Council

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Introduction

Canada's English-language publishing community (represented by eBOUND Canada) and Canada's public libraries (represented by the Canadian Urban Libraries Council - CULC) are working together for the creation of a made-in-Canada solution that, potentially, will provide eBook lending capabilities to all Canadian public libraries from Canadian publishers, with the opportunity for international publishers to join in. The solution will facilitate sales of both eBook and print materials from the same publishers to library patrons, with the appearance of patron transactions taking place in the library discovery layer (catalogue).

We will know we are successful when:

- Canadian-owned and Canadian-controlled publishers can sell or lease their digital content directly and indirectly to public libraries, and
- When Canadian libraries can purchase eBooks and digital content from multiple vendors of their choosing, and
- When public library discovery layers seamlessly permit patrons to borrow and download content, without the appearance of leaving the library's site or using third party vendors, and
- When digital content and print material are capable of being sold to members of the public through public library discovery layers, with local or preferred booksellers becoming an option for fulfillment where available, and
- When all publishers have the capacity to market their digital content to public libraries, and
- When libraries have the ability to merchandise that content through their discovery layers.

If our joint goals are to be successful, four key elements must in place:

1. Publishers and public libraries must agree upon reasonable options for the use of published material.
STATUS: Positive negotiations are taking place and both parties are confident that agreements can be reached.
2. Library discovery layers must have the capacity to query and retrieve bibliographic data from various sources and integrate patron borrowing transactions for eContent, based on library agreements with publishers. This includes the capacity to display integrated physical and digital loans and holds in the patron's account information.
STATUS: Some vendors now provide such discovery layer catalogues and others have announced similar products.
3. Library discovery layers will facilitate and allow for the potential sale of digital content and print material directly to the public in a way that keeps the sales within Canada and, in the case of print, that allows for each library system to determine appropriate booksellers or vendors, if they opt for this service.

Status: Some vendors and discovery layer catalogues now provide the potential for this functionality.

4. There must be a secure, trusted, Canadian-controlled electronic storage location where digital content that has been purchased or licensed to public libraries can be housed or accessed by those libraries. This location must allow for the portability of material at the libraries' discretion. By the term portability we mean that the intended storage location will provide a service to publishers and libraries by contract but that the owner in accordance with peer-to-peer agreements retains ownership and control of material. It is assumed that some digital content currently held in other locations may be moved to the eBOUND/CULC site.

Status: This element of the made-in-Canada eBook solution is not yet available and is an important component of this RFI. Before attempting to build a solution, eBOUND Canada and CULC wish to determine if there are vendors interested in providing this capability.

Purpose of this RFI

The purpose of this RFI is to identify potential partners who would be interested in providing a Canadian-controlled infrastructure for the storage and distribution of digital content that can manage lending agreements between publishers and libraries as well as transactions between libraries and patrons.

We are, at this stage, seeking partners who feel their organizations possess existing technology that can meet our requirements or who feel their organizations can quickly provide such technology. The information gathered from your organization through this RFI will be used to identify suppliers for follow-up engagement in a future Request For Proposals (RFP) process leading to a pilot project and, later, to full implementation across Canada.

The information gathered about your company and services at this stage of the process will remain confidential.

Scope

When fully implemented, the partnership between eBOUND Canada, CULC, the selected vendor(s) and other appropriate entities is intended to facilitate the eBook transactions taking place between Canada's public libraries and publishers. It must accommodate open standards (such as EPUB 3 and ONIX), and may include open source solutions or loosely-coupled web services. It is not intended to include academic libraries at this time.

When fully operational, this project is intended to provide interaction with publishers and distributors of all sizes in Canada - small, medium, large (including organizations having their own Digital Asset Management systems) and with all sizes and types of public libraries.

The selected vendor or vendor partners will participate in a year-long pilot that is intended to include at least six public library systems serving at least 4,000,000 people. It is also intended to include at least 10,000 titles. The pilot stage may result in as many as 8,000,000 annual patron loans. It is possible that, if immediately successful, the pilot period may be shortened.

Beyond the pilot period, this initiative may result in the participation of several hundred library systems and the loan of many millions of items. The additional partner or partners we are seeking must demonstrate the ability to provide a robust, stable and scalable solution that could also be used during full implementation following the pilot. The solution must also have the ability to adapt to changes in the market and in technology.

We are hopeful that this RFI offers the vendor community the chance to look at our aspirations and to have the opportunity to add to our venture. We have the option of building the necessary infrastructure that is envisaged but, if possible, would prefer to work with a suitable partner or partners whose core business is aligned with the delivery of electronic products.

It is possible that this process will introduce new business practices, new standards, or new and innovative technologies. To this end, we are not assuming how selected vendors may wish to be paid for their participation. Instead, we are open to hearing funding options and suggestions from respondents.

Qualifications

The minimum qualifications needed for companies to be successful in this RFI process are outlined in Appendix A. However, it is important to note that we are seeking vendor partnerships that can offer made-in-Canada solutions or, failing that, products and services that necessarily meet and can prioritize, to the highest degree, the specific and nuanced needs of the Canadian market. These needs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Information and assets to be housed in Canada
- Portability of and access to information and digital assets by libraries
- Management of metadata that is significant to the Canadian market and inclusion of that metadata in patron-facing interfaces. Specifically, Canadian authorship, Regional BISAC codes, publication dates
- Management of metadata in both English and French

- The ability, during a testing period, to process a minimum of 8M transactions through participating organizations in the first year.

RFI procedure

This is a two-stage process involving a Request for Information (RFI) followed by a Request for Proposals (RFP). Responses to this RFI are considered confidential, and will not be shared beyond the evaluating committee.

To respond to this RFI, please complete the attached form and return it **no later than 11:59pm on July 11, 2012**. Response at this initial stage merely registers your company's interest and ensures that you receive more detailed information related to the second, RFP stage of this process.

Contacts

For questions regarding this RFI, you are welcome to contact:

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Time frame

Following are important deadlines and dates related to this RFI.

May 31, 2012	RFI is sent out
June 19, 2012	Last date for questions
June 29, 2012	Questions answered, circulated to all respondents
July 11, 2012	Last date for responses to RFI

Desired start date for pilot: January 2013.

Background on Key Partners

eBOUND Canada

eBOUND Canada was born out of the digital efforts and programs of the Association of Canadian Publishers, and was incorporated as a distinct and separate organization in 2011.

Acting as an intermediary between Canadian publishers and vendors in the global eBook supply chain, eBOUND's mandate is to advance all aspects of digital publishing in Canada, particularly eBook conversion, retail distribution, digital asset management, and research and education.

CULC/CBUC

The Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC)/Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CBUC) was formally incorporated in 2008 with a mandate to strengthen the capacity of Canada's urban libraries.

CULC/CBUC members collectively serve more than 7.5 million active users who annually make more than 384,000,000 annual uses of 522 physical locations plus virtual services. In 2010 CULC/CBUC members loaned more than 185,000,000 items. Member library systems spend over \$90,000,000 on material, including over \$11,000,000 on digital resources. Customer activity that takes place in CULC/CBUC comprises more than 80% of all Canadian public library use.

FORM TO COMPLETE IN RESPONSE TO THE RFI

The information gathered about your company and services at this stage of the process will remain confidential.

Question	Answer
Company name	
Company address	
Company web site	
Main products/services	
Primary market/customers	
Number of employees	
Ownership (e.g. privately held, public)	
Description of products or services that are already delivered to customers today, and could be comparable to what is requested in this RFI	
Customers using comparable products or services (including contact information)	
Conditions listed under Scope and Qualifications and throughout this RFI that can be met today	
Conditions in the RFI that cannot be met	
Contact person responding to this RFI	
Position or role	
Telephone	
E-mail	
Additional Contacts	
Name	
Position or role	
Telephone	
E-mail	
Brief description (no more than one page, attached) of how your organization expects to meet the intended scope, including your initial thoughts on compensation for service provision.	

SCHEMA: Please also include a schema to indicate how your products or services will interact with library catalogues or other potential vendors and services.

APPENDIX A: BASIC TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The following provides the expectations of the CULC/CBUC and eBOUND community for a digital repository that will facilitate library purchasing and the lending of eBooks to patrons. Additional detail may be provided as the project progresses.

REQUIREMENTS FOR LIBRARY PATRONS

Searching and Browsing

Digital content is fully integrated into the system that the library uses for its physical materials so that library patrons discover and borrow from a single interface. The repository must share real-time data with the discovery layer or ILS, must be Unicode compliant, and must not have a patron interface.

The repository must pass the following information associated with each title to the discovery layer/ILS for display:

- Digital formats and file sizes
- Valid lending periods
- Current availability
- Holds queue length
- Title/copy unique identifier
- Language of item

In addition to base bibliographic data in both English and French, the ability to pass value-added data should be available, including but not limited to:

- Book cover images
- Sample chapter and front matter such as table of contents, preface, etc.
- Reviews
- Summaries
- Links to video, promotional content, author tour dates and other data stored elsewhere
- Awards

Borrowing

From the perception of the library patron, content borrowing will take place within the library's discovery layer/ILS and the patron will not experience being transferred to a third party interface to complete the borrowing transaction.

For each patron, the repository must pass the following information associated with each item to the discovery layer/ILS:

- Direct download URL
- Digital format and file size
- Checkout date
- Expiry date
- Number of times renewed (if applicable)
- Title unique identifier

For the purpose of holds management by each patron, the repository must pass the following information and integrate with other formats:

- Digital format and size
- Hold queue position
- Availability status
- Hold expiry date
- Pick up by date
- Notification email or callback URL
- Ability to suspend holds

Managing Account

The repository must pass the following information to the discovery layer for patron account management functions:

- Account unique identifier
- Holds remaining (for titles that require queuing; library may limit the number of holds a patron can place at one time)
- Checkouts remaining (libraries will limit the number of concurrent checkouts, customer will need to know number checked out at one time)
- Default settings (e.g. lending periods)

REQUIREMENTS FOR LIBRARY STAFF

The repository must provide an administrative interface to library staff for selecting and acquiring material and monitoring use.

Search must include the following and/or parameters:

- Date added to the system
- ISBN
- Title
- Series title
- Format
- Original publication date
- Publisher and imprint
- Creator or creators
- Country code and region
- Subject/genre
- Audience
- Language of item

System must accommodate differences in pricing and licensing terms.

Purchasing tools must include cart building functionality and exportable data options.

Reporting options available from the administrative interface should include:

- Number of items borrowed by:

Title
Series title
Subject/genre
Publisher
Day, month, hour
Lending period
Device/application
Format
Language of item
Top titles borrowed
Holds per item, per subject/genre, per publisher, by day, by month, current
Number of searches per title, top searches
Number of unique customers, new borrowers by month/year
Site traffic: visits and page views by title, browsing category
Order history: purchases, holdings

REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLISHERS

The repository must provide an administrative interface to publishers, distributors and digital management services for uploading and managing content and monitoring use.

Features should include:

Batch uploading of titles
Ability to apply established terms for lending
Form interface for uploading individual titles
Ability to monitor use by:
Title
Series title
Creator or creators
Country code and region
Format
Language of item

Reporting options available from the administrative interface should include:

Number of items borrowed by:
Title
Subject/genre
Library
Day, month
Device/application
Format
Language of item
Top titles borrowed
Holds per item, per subject/genre, per library, by day, by month, current
Number of searches per title, top searches
Number of unique customers for publisher, new borrowers by month/year

Site traffic: visits and page views by title, browsing area
Order history: purchases, holdings.

REQUIREMENTS FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Library and publisher support should include direct support for technical issues as well as indirect support:

- Email assistance
- Telephone assistance

Patron, library staff and publisher support should include indirect support through:

- Help screens
- Instructional videos
- FAQs

User Administration for Patron and Library Staff

Authentication is required via the library's integrated library system (ILS) and should use industry standard approaches such as SIP2 and EZProxy.

Digital rights management via Adobe Content Server is required to protect content and apply lending rules.

eBooks must be compatible with existing reading applications such as Bluefire, or apps must be developed and available via the Apple App Store and android market place.