Has the Train Left the Station? Libraries in a New Age of Transaction

Stuart Hamilton,
Director of Policy and Advocacy, IFLA
War and Peace + Cryptonomicon = 2kg (70oz)
Kindle Fire (413g, 14.6oz) - Kindle Touch (213g, 7.5oz) - Kindle (170g, 5.9oz)
Image courtesy of Thinkdigital
That Was Fast: Amazon's Kindle Ebook Sales Surpass Print (It Only Took Four Years)

Five years ago, if you'd told a fellow book lover that ebooks were poised to surge in popularity and overtake traditional books, you probably would have been met with a scoff and a dismissal about reading too much sci-fi. And yet here we are: Amazon has just announced that it is now selling more ebooks than it is selling print editions, a mere four years after launching the Kindle. Obviously Amazon doesn't own all print or ebook sales, but it's a very impressive milestone.

Then again, the news doesn't come as a huge surprise if you've been following the Kindle's growth. Kindle ebook sales surpassed Amazon's hardcover sales back in July 2010, and they surpassed paperback sales in January of this year. But now it's bested both of them combined. Not that this does not include the free books that many Kindle users take advantage of — these are all paid books.

The quick rise of the Kindle can be attributed, at least in part, to the steep price cuts Amazon has been making. A year ago the device cost $259. Amazon slashed it to $189 in June 2010, then began offering a Wi-Fi-only version last summer for $119. And now it's gone even lower with an ad-supported version for only $114. Amazon says that this new model, which is called 'Kindle with Special Offers', is already selling more than the other Kindle devices.

Amazon also says that 2011 has had the fastest year over year growth rate for its U.S. books sales in over a decade, including both ebooks and print — and that Kindle ebook sales are up 3x in 2011 from what they were this time last year.
E-Book Piracy: The Publishing Industry’s Next Epic Saga?

With the rise of e-book readers like the Kindle, Sony Reader, and Nook comes the scourge of the digital world: pirates.

By Tom Spring, PCWorld

An e-reader such as the Amazon Kindle continue to rise, so follows the publishing industry’s worst nightmare: e-book piracy. For years, books have been voracious consumers of territory, possessing a unique ability to make a relative success of themselves. But as the Kindle becomes ever more accessible, so does the need for piracy.

Safer, with a new form of piracy.

A book, however, is not just a book. It is an object, a tangible item, a collectible. It is not a digital file, but a physical copy. And as such, it is the target of pirates.

Print Books Are Target of Pirates on the Web

Umberto Le Guin, the science-fiction writer, was one of the first to warn the Web about piracy. When she came across digital copies of some books that seemed similar to her own, she contacted the publishers, including a note about the taking of a copy of one of her most popular works. The book, “The Left Hand of Darkness,” was a female-dominant novel. She was the first woman to receive a Nebula Award for best science fiction novel.

Neither Ms. Le Guin nor her publisher had authorized the electronic edition. In the past, piracy of this type would have been impossible. Now, however, the digital nature of the book makes it easier to make copies of it. And so, she contacted the publishers, including a note about the taking of a copy of one of her most popular works.

This is not to say that pirating is a new phenomenon. In the past, books were printed on handmade presses and sold at a high price. But as the technology becomes more accessible, so does the need for piracy.

The End

The problem is not new, but it is growing. As the technology becomes more accessible, so does the need for piracy. And so, the publishers are forced to take action. But as the technology becomes more accessible, so does the need for piracy. And so, the publishers are forced to take action.

Alan Cane: Spread of ebooks may heighten piracy problem

Mr. Cane, a software engineer, was one of the first to warn the Web about piracy. When he came across digital copies of some books that seemed similar to his own, he contacted the publishers, including a note about the taking of a copy of one of his most popular works. The book, “The Left Hand of Darkness,” was a female-dominant novel. He was the first man to receive a Nebula Award for best science fiction novel.

Neither Mr. Cane nor his publisher had authorized the electronic edition. In the past, piracy of this type would have been impossible. Now, however, the digital nature of the book makes it easier to make copies of it. And so, he contacted the publishers, including a note about the taking of a copy of one of his most popular works.

This is not to say that pirating is a new phenomenon. In the past, books were printed on handmade presses and sold at a high price. But as the technology becomes more accessible, so does the need for piracy. And so, the publishers are forced to take action. But as the technology becomes more accessible, so does the need for piracy. And so, the publishers are forced to take action.

The End

The problem is not new, but it is growing. As the technology becomes more accessible, so does the need for piracy. And so, the publishers are forced to take action. But as the technology becomes more accessible, so does the need for piracy. And so, the publishers are forced to take action.
Old school book piracy in Lima, Peru
Post-HADOPI magazine offered for sale in Paris, France. Image Courtesy of GWire
We will provide ebooks!

• Ebook formats
• Ebook lending
• New services
Users’ New Attitudes to Digital

- Social - read and review
- Remix - cut it up
- Convenience. Instant gratification. Simplicity.
- Self-creation. Self-publishing.
- Share it. 0s and Is are cheap.
- How much?! 0s and I *should* be cheap.
What Route for the Publishers?

- Head-scratching?
- Unrealistic?
- Conservative/tentative
- Controlling/restrictive
- The case of Lendle
- Terrified/“In love with their own demise”?
HOME TAPEING IS KILLING MUSIC
AND IT'S ILLEGAL
What Route for the Libraries?

- Slow take up? Have we missed the boat?
- Embracing change where possible?
- Overdrive
- Uneven opportunities - what’s the global picture?
HarperCollins Puts 26 Loan Cap on Ebook Circulations

The new provisions are the first significant revision to ebook lending terms

By Josh Hadro Feb 26, 2011


In the first significant revision to lending terms for ebook circulation, HarperCollins has announced that new titles licensed from library ebook vendors will be able to circulate only 26 times before the license expires.

Mention of the new terms was first made in a letter from OverDrive CEO Steve Potash to customers yesterday. He wrote [emphasis in original]:

[Y]ou have been required to accept and accommodate new terms for eBook lending as established by certain publishers. Next week, OverDrive will communicate a licensing change from a publisher that, while still operating under the one-copy/one-user model, will include a checkout limit for each eBook licensed. Under this publisher’s requirement, for every new eBook licensed, the library (and the OverDrive platform) will make the eBook available to one customer at a time until the total number of permitted checkouts is reached.

Though the letter leaves the publisher unnamed, HarperCollins confirmed today to LJ that it is the publisher referred to.

The publisher also issued a short statement: “HarperCollins is committed to the library channel. We believe this change balances the value libraries get from our titles with the need to protect our authors...”
Harper Collins’ New Licensing Rules

• Increased restrictions
• 26 issues (2 weeks per issue = 1 year)
• Concerns over geographic and territorial rights - ILL
• Concerns over lending practices tied to card issuance
• Concerns over size of consortia and shared collections
Implications

- Licensing replaces purchasing
- Time to re-imagine a typical transaction
- End of first sale doctrine: Whither lending?
- A license to read?
- Monitoring of users?
Conclusion

- Libraries may not be best placed to offer digital lending services
- But will others be able to offer the lending services users want?
- Future depends on how users react to this situation and their own expectations when it comes to digital technology...expectations which are rapidly outdistancing business models, IP frameworks, and 20th century notions of library service
Questions?

Stuart.hamilton@ifla.og
@iflaspa