

Etextbooks

Coordinating a university-wide approach

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Context

- My own background: public libraries, academic liaison & latterly content and discovery
- University of Worcester
 - 10,075 students
 - Strengths in Education and Healthcare
 - Culture – collaborative and caring
 - Library Service Structure: Professional Admin Services under Library Director and delivery via The Hive
- The “3 Pipe Problem” of ebook availability
 - Semi-monopolistic and highly profitable academic publishers
 - Perverse incentives for academics to publish with for-profit publishers in books which won't be available to their own university
 - Academics choose the set texts but don't pay the financial or emotional bill

Decision time

- Budget decisions – how much physical book spend to flip to ebook
- Kortext or Bibliu?
- Preferred UAA model
- Carefully selected 19 titles based on a mixture of:
 - Academic Liaison Librarian/Reading Resources team knowledge of what we needed
 - School requests
 - Turnaways/usage data

Building internal support

- Briefed management team meetings about the issues
- Spoke to other internal meetings including Academic Liaison Team
- Circulated a briefing note for internal consumption
- Shared with Library Management Team, Academic Liaisons and other library staff

Building support across the university

- Engaged with procurement to help them spot direct etextbook deals
- Briefed and asked for support from Academic Support Managers
- Published etextbook guidance on the web after MANY redrafts!
- Spoke to Academic Schools' senior management meetings while consulting re. research support needs
- Focussed on one particular School with a cosy relationship to a publisher

Difficult conversations

- Noticed the situation with ebook availability getting markedly worse
- Informed of particularly active publisher targeting academics at UW
- Misleading messages re. ebook availability and costs needed to be countered
- Arranged meeting with publisher rep to “put our side”

Ebook SOS and media coverage

- Ebook SOS success and raised profile of the issues
- National press coverage a good hook to hang comms on
- VC signed open letter to UK government
- Fertile environment for comms re. which books academics choose and where they choose to publish

“Time for us to stop publishing with [publisher]! Ridiculous!”

University of Worcester Academic

Negotiating with academics

- Academic referred to me for “approval” on direct etextbook
- Looked into alternative one-time-purchase (OTP) ebook options
- One of the options was the same ebook for the same OTP cost (3-user licence) as the ongoing yearly fee!
- Academic not persuaded: had heard good things about the platform from a colleague and wanted to see if it could improve retention and progression
- Offered assistance in looking at usage and assessing performance at the end of the year – not accepted

Academic Support Managers

- Briefed Academic Support Managers on etextbooks and asked for support
- Provided with almost too much information thereafter!
- Need to clarify what is and isn't an etextbook – purposeful obfuscation in publisher invoicing doesn't help

Spreadsheet wrangling

- Created a spreadsheet to track etextbook adoption in academic Schools
- Tension between asking for enough information and putting off completion
- Broadly adopted Academic Support Managers format but added additional columns
- The information kept on etextbooks by Schools is incomplete

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1	Publisher	Platform	Sales rep	Department	School	College	Course	Module	# of licences/students	Duration of licence	Renewal date	Cost/FTE	Total cost	Total Cost (final incl. discount)	Administrator	Academic Contact	Notes

Future plans

- Assess success of Bibliu – 15 item requests for every activated “seat”. 13 titles of 19 used in first 3 weeks. Top 3 titles attracting 75% of all use:
 - Tortora's Principles of Anatomy and Physiology - 30%
 - ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription - 29%
 - The Royal Marsden Manual of Clinical Nursing Procedures - 15%
- Help academic Schools assess their direct etextbooks – supportive tone important
- Now being consulted on book publishing activity as well as offering advice on APCs for journal articles
- Support Open Access books and textbooks in future

Thank you

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