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eContent Quarterly - Preview Issue

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about the editors

eContent Quarterly is edited by **SUE POLANKA** and **MIRELA RONCEVIC,** whose deep knowledge of the e-content landscape and vast library and editorial experience combine to bring focus to the journal's purpose. Polanka and Roncevic have a history of previous collaborations, including the development of the 2011 title *E-Reference Context and Discoverability in Libraries: Issues and Concepts.* Roncevic is also a contributor to Polanka's No Shelf Required blog.

SUE POLANKA created the award-winning blog No Shelf Required, which keeps pace with the issues surrounding e-books for librarians and publishers. The blog transformed into a successful book and webinar series with ALA Publishing in 2011 and 2012. Polanka is the Head of Reference and Instruction at the Wright State University Libraries in Dayton, Ohio, president of the Academic Library Association of Ohio, and a member of the ALA Council. She was named a *Library Journal* Mover and Shaker in 2011, tagged as the Ebook Guru. Her column, EBook Buzz, appears in *Online Searcher* magazine. Sue speaks internationally on the topic of e-books. Follow her on Twitter @noshelfrequired.

MIRELA RONCEVIC is an independent writer, editor, and content developer recognized for spearheading a number of initiatives in the LIS field, including the overhaul of reference coverage in *Library Journal*. She has also managed publications of LIS books and newsletters, developed free online resources for librarians (including the Library Grants Center), and was at the forefront of the e-book revolution in its infancy, having managed *LJ*'s first Ebook Reviews column in 2001. Roncevic consults e-content producers in positioning their products in libraries and works closely with librarians to help further their causes. She is the author of Neal-Schuman's 2009 *Library Journal Guide to E-Reference Resources* and ALA TechSource's April 2013 issue of *Library Technology Reports* on e-book platforms. Follow her on Twitter @MirelaRoncevic. ℮

in this issue

Introducing
eContent Quarterly

WELCOME TO THE PREVIEW ISSUE of American Library Association's new digital journal, *eContent Quarterly.* Written by and for information professionals in the business of producing, selling, buying, and managing e-content—including librarians, publishers, aggregators, distributors, and other library vendors—the journal will cover e-content from every angle and in greater depth than is usually available in other LIS publications.

Librarians, publishers, and information providers are constantly experimenting with business models, delivery methods, and usability of digital content. Our aim is to capture these stories, along with their successes and failures, in order to share best practices in the industry. We will also provide timely coverage of new products to help everyone in the information chain make informed purchasing decisions, with less emphasis on descriptions and more focus on the user experience. At their best, the articles will serve to inspire information professionals to implement new ideas and services in the communities they serve.

Librarians, in particular, find themselves facing myriad challenges in today's rapidly changing digital environments. What electronic products best fit their institutions' needs? What factors should they consider when selecting e-content? How do they keep up with technological advances and the sheer volume of products and devices offered to them? And how do they continue to redefine their own roles as they help their institutions migrate from print to electronic materials? These are some of the questions we hope to answer in each issue of *eContent Quarterly*. To help us accomplish this goal, we will seek contributions from a wide range of professionals to help shed light on the versatility of e-content.

E-content is a wide-ranging term, and we intend to adhere to its broadest definition, including coverage of everything from e-book and e-journal platforms,

e-reference sources, and databases to multimedia, digital solutions, discovery services, and other types of e-content designed for use in libraries and educational institutions.

This free preview issue features two articles with very different e-content stories. In the first, Neal Taparia, cofounder and co-CEO of Imagine Easy Solutions, LLC, takes us on a journey of how his company's well-known bibliography tool, EasyBib—which he successfully launched while still in high school with his partner (and co-CEO) Darshan Somashekar—led to the development of an information literacy tool. Released in Spring 2013, ResearchReady is meant for use by K–12 and college students as well as librarians and educators teaching the importance of information authority. Taparia explains how the new product works as well as how it was developed, focusing on the important role the company's in-house librarians played in the development process.

Two librarians with varied backgrounds then take ResearchReady for a test drive to assess its usefulness as an information literacy tool: Ari Sigal (Catawba Valley Community College, NC) reviews ResearchReady from the perspective of a community college reference librarian who does IL instruction for both college and early college high school, while blogger Shannon McClintock Miller (Van Meter School District, IA) reviews ResearchReady from the perspective of a district teacher-librarian. Miller also shares the feedback provided by one of her high school students who she recently encouraged to use ResearchReady while working on an assignment.

In the second article, Rachel Gut, Outreach Services Manager at Dayton Metro Library, shares the story of her library's successful implementation of an e-reader and e-book lending program for homebound individuals. At a time when many libraries across the country are struggling to bring e-books to patrons with disabilities, Gut's article serves to encourage other public libraries to implement similar outreach programs but also to remind them that their key role remains unchanged even at times of great technological progress: to keep the public connected to information, whatever the obstacles. And as Gut reveals, overcoming the obstacles is part of any e-book strategy.

Future issues of *eContent Quarterly* will explore an array of e-content topics, including e-book formats and devices, metadata, user-centered design, children's apps, emerging e-book business models, e-book platforms, and more. The journal will be released four times a year, with the first Fall issue launching in September 2013. Each issue will consist of four feature-length articles representing a variety of professional backgrounds, experiences, and opinions.

While there is no shortage of online and print publications keeping pace with e-content in libraries, *eContent Quarterly* will strive to go beyond merely informing you of cutting-edge products and services and address e-content issues with more clarity. We hope the articles will inspire you to draw from the experiences of others to create your own e-content story worthy of being shared with our readers.

If you'd like to write an article about how your institution is braving an e-content challenge, or if you are in the midst of developing or releasing a

product librarians and information professionals should know about, don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to collaborating with industry leaders who have had great influence on the way e-content is consumed in libraries as well as with emerging companies and individuals whose ideas may bring exciting new developments to the field.

Thank you for reading and contributing.

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How Bibliographies Inspired Innovation

From EasyBib to ResearchReady **Neal Taparia**

I STILL REMEMBER THE EXCITEMENT of coming home after school, sprinting up the stairs to the loft where my family computer resided, and logging on to a page with a counter. Every time the counter went up by one, I smiled, and when it grew by two, three, or five, it felt like a birthday.

Just months before, my friend (and business partner) Darshan and I had launched EasyBib.com. We were juniors and seniors in high school at the time and were frustrated with bibliographies. Before starting a paper, we dreaded the commas, periods, and italicizing required in each citation. The idea behind EasyBib.com was to automate the process of creating bibliographies by allowing users to enter bibliographic data for each source quoted.

We'd meet at Darshan's house every day after school and on weekends and work on EasyBib. While we both had taken computer science classes, Darshan had more experience building websites. He worked on the technical and creative side using a framework called ColdFusion, while I focused on familiarizing myself with the MLA handbook and the formatting rules to ensure that the citations were correct. After two months of continuous work on EasyBib, we released the first version in February of 2001.

Not long after the launch, we realized we were on to something—our friends at school loved the tool. We started to spread the word about EasyBib through various channels, from invading AOL chat rooms online (remembers those?) to printing out pamphlets to leave at barbershops. And thus grew the habit of

checking that counter. It represented the number of people using EasyBib. Fast forward to 2013—we no longer count visits just for fun. EasyBib has become a full-time operation, with over forty million student users annually.

Prior to working on EasyBib full time, Darshan and I had consulting and investment banking jobs in New York City, respectively. We both wanted to continue working on EasyBib full time right after graduating from college, but our parents pushed us toward corporate jobs. To their credit, we both benefited a great deal from those early work experiences and learned a lot—from strategy to financial modeling. By 2008, we had accumulated a number of new ideas about EasyBib, so we decided to leave our day jobs and focus all our energies on improving EasyBib.

It felt like déjà vu—we were back in a room, working hard at EasyBib again, checking that counter. Eventually we graduated from our apartment desks and coffee shops to an office space in Manhattan and a decent salary. We were even able to hire employees, including two librarians. Today EasyBib is one of several electronic tools and services offered by our company, Imagine Easy Solutions, all designed with the goal of revolutionizing the way people learn.

Discovering Information Illiteracy

In order to understand the health of our business, we measure everything—visits, clicks, popular source types, and how and when students cite sources. For instance, one of the first things we learned when we looked at our data was that websites were cited significantly more often than other sources. As a result, we made sure a website was the first source a user could cite when coming to EasyBib (there are fifty-nine "source" options in total, including commonly cited sources like books, newspapers, journals, and library databases).

This type of data has given us tremendous insight into how our users—who range from middle school students to graduate students—conduct research. It's well-known that *Wikipedia* is a student's go-to source for research, but we knew this back in 2005. Ironically, when we surveyed librarians and educators at the time about using *Wikipedia* for research, most were against it, yet our data continued to show that *Wikipedia* was cited more often than any other website. This didn't surprise us. When students google keywords, *Wikipedia* is usually the first site they see, so they gravitate toward it. Our data only confirmed what we had suspected: that many students knew little about information authority or that they had little interest in exploring beyond *Wikipedia*.

There were also other student behaviors that stood out as somewhat peculiar. User-generated sites like Yahoo! Answers and YouTube were frequently cited. Some students would even cite EasyBib and Google as the "source" of their information. Many tended to work on their assignments at the last minute, which often resulted in the low number of citations in their bibliographies. This suggested to us that students had poor research and organizational skills and very little understanding of the fact that a lack of attribution in a research paper is a form of plagiarism.

It became clear to us that many students were simply information illiterate. And it really hit home when we read a story a while back about a Rutgers student expelled for plagiarizing. While she cited her sources in her paper, much of it was made up of quotes and apparently lacked original thought (this is often referred to as patchwriting). From our college years, we knew this was common, and we had always felt strongly that original thoughts and critical-thinking skills were an essential part of the educational experience. It was around this time that we decided to put the data we had acquired through EasyBib to good use and address issues of information literacy.

Promoting Information Literacy

Aside from marketing EasyBib to students, we wanted to add some tools and features to it that would help librarians teach and reinforce citation and research habits of their students. In 2010 we launched School Edition, a subscription version of the tool created specifically for K–12 and academic librarians. Then a year later, we joined forces with the OCLC to launch Library Edition, which includes all our information-literacy tools and features but also allows the library to embed its OPAC right on EasyBib.

Our original thought was to use EasyBib to help guide students to the most credible sources in their papers. So our staff evaluated the top five thousand websites cited on EasyBib and provided alerts to let users know if what they were citing was "credible," "not credible," or "maybe credible" and why. However, we didn't do this using a fancy algorithm. Instead, we sought help from librarians at schools across the country who developed our criteria for evaluating websites. Our staff then evaluated each of these sites, looking closely at its authority, currency, purpose, accuracy, and comprehensiveness. Librarians familiar with EasyBib appreciated this new service. By alerting students to website evaluation at the point of the citation, we reminded them to think critically about these resources before using them in their papers.

After more discussions with the librarians on our staff, we realized we had barely scratched the surface. There was more we could do to help promote students' awareness of information credibility. We believed, given our extensive analysis of their learning habits and patterns, that many students weren't plagiarizing on purpose—they simply didn't know when or how to cite their sources. And that's when the light bulb went on—students were not learning important information literacy skills in the first place.

We continued to delve deeper by talking to our librarian customers about what we had uncovered, and they corroborated our findings. Academic librarians in particular expressed concern as to why so many incoming freshmen were information illiterate. We also learned that librarians did not always have access to the tools they could use to teach information literacy skills in their institutions. Lastly, there was the question of who should be teaching those skills in the first place: librarians, ELA teachers, or perhaps social studies teachers.

Upon further investigation, studies from the library and information sciences community supported these trends:

- Almost 75 percent of academic librarians feel that, at most, 20 percent of students are prepared for scholarly research upon starting college (Schroeder 2009).
- Teachers believe that judging the quality of online resources should be a "top priority" in the classroom (Purcell et al. 2012, 2).
- "Students rely mainly on search engines to conduct research, in lieu of other resources such as online databases, the news sites of respected news organizations, printed books, or reference librarians" (Purcell et al. 2012, 2).
- Forty percent of college students have never visited their library's website, while 23 percent believe there is better information out there (De Rosa et al. 2011, 56).

These and other statistics eventually led us to conclude that we needed to build a new tool that would promote "research readiness" and

- empower librarians to teach research skills by providing them with robust information-literacy curriculum and content
- help librarians collaborate with other educators to teach research skills by giving them a customizable platform where they can share their research savvy with fellow educators
- give students a lifelong foundation for research and critical-thinking skills by providing them with approachable (and fun!) content, guided by librarians or educators

Introducing ResearchReady

ResearchReady, which launched in Spring 2013, is our solution for information illiteracy. It is a cloud-based learning platform designed to help librarians and educators encourage effective research habits among students in K–12 and academic institutions. Students complete courses and assessments focused on honing their information-literacy skills, while the "administrator" face of the platform allows librarians and educators to track their progress. Through embedded courses, exercises, videos, and games, the platform enables them to monitor whether students have the skills needed for college-level research.

After they log in to ResearchReady, students can take six courses, each consisting of embedded lessons that cover related skills or topics. These courses include an overview of different source types and where to find them, an introduction to the kinds of information sources found online (including *Wikipedia*), an in-depth look at website evaluation, a guide for creating a research strategy, a guide to citing sources and avoiding plagiarism, and information about inquiry-based research processes.

We invested a significant amount of effort into making the lessons on the platform engaging, as we know too well how overwhelming it can be to start a research project. We want ResearchReady to convey to students that with the right tools and skills, writing a paper need not be an arduous process. That's why the lessons use storylines with relatable characters to make the content more appealing, particularly to younger students. Bubo, the smart but information-illiterate owl, for example, is one of the characters on the platform. In the course on inquiry-based learning and research, Bubo goes through the research process as a student would—he finds background information, narrows down his thesis statement, finds sources, constructs his argument, and then writes his paper. Bubo also talks openly about the anxiety born out of the research experience—something many students can relate to.

Throughout the lessons, students are asked to practice newly learned skills with "real-world" exercises and are assessed on their mastery of research practices. There are assessment questions within and after each lesson, both in multiple-choice and free-text formats. In the multiple-choice questions, students' answers are immediately graded and an explanation is provided as to why an answer is correct or incorrect. After the student has completed all the lessons in a course, he or she takes the cumulative quiz.

By Librarians and Educators, for Librarians and Educators

We decided in the early stages of building ResearchReady to bring two librarians on board who would help us create the content that would populate the site. It was important to us that they had a background in information literacy. Even more important, they needed to have worked with students to understand their problems and learning patterns. We hired an academic web services and reference librarian, who witnessed student research struggles firsthand, and a former cataloger and research librarian with an educational background in social studies instruction.

In order to create the curriculum for our six ResearchReady courses, the two librarians spent a year talking to countless other librarians as well as writing instructors and English teachers in order to better understand student and educator pain points and learn what topics should be taught and how. The librarians surveyed kept bringing up the same issues time and again: students didn't know how and when to cite, students didn't know how to evaluate websites, and students were using search engines instead of library resources.

In addition to creating content, the librarians and educators also provided insight into how ResearchReady should be designed. For instance, they confirmed what we already suspected—that every librarian and teacher had unique needs and ways of teaching. This is why every course on the platform is customizable. Educators and librarians can tailor the courses to fit their needs and edit the content with simple tools, or they can request to have it be done for them. They may also choose to add their own courses and lessons.

Now that our two in-house librarians have completed the first iteration of ResearchReady, they will begin to scaffold the tool for younger students who are in the beginning stages of learning to do research projects. They will also continue to monitor the links and resources used in ResearchReady, making sure they are up-to-date and relevant.

Lifelong Skills, Long-Term Goals

Some educators have expressed that one of the advantages of ResearchReady is that it allows them to "flip" the library or classroom. This means that students can learn information literacy skills at home first and then come to the library to practice what they've learned remotely, such as, for example, how to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. Others have shared that the real value of ResearchReady is its ability to accurately measure how information literacy skills are taught in schools and libraries.

Yet others see ResearchReady as the tool that will help define librarians' evolving roles. It is an outlet for them to collaborate with university or school staff in order to cultivate research skills in their communities. The built-in assessment, for example, shows how students are learning and progressing on concepts, and it also shows the impact librarians can have on research and critical-thinking skills. For high school librarians, these are the skills implicit in the Common Core State Standards. With all the discussion in recent years about how librarians can prove their importance by leveraging the Common Core, our long-term vision for ResearchReady is to highlight the value of librarians' assistance in the process.

While there are some freely available tools already used for student assessment, such as, for example, those from Kent State University, TRAILS and SAILS, ResearchReady is different in that it focuses on delivering multimedia learning content. Moreover, interactive exercises and assessment, along with easy customization, make it an instructional platform that librarians can take ownership of and that students will enjoy using because of the "fun factor."

Our mission is to make sure that all students develop critical-thinking skills, which will help create a more informed society. In the near future, we hope to look at our EasyBib data for schools using ResearchReady and find that their library's digital resources are being used more than *Wikipedia*. That will be one sure sign that information literacy skills are taking root. ⊜

Darshan Somashekar, Emily Gover, and Caitlyn Selleck contributed to this article.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neal Taparia is the cofounder and co-CEO of Imagine Easy Solutions, LLC. The company's flagship product is EasyBib.com, a research, citation, and note-taking tool used by forty million students yearly. After graduating from Northwestern University in 2006 with a degree in economics and a minor in religion, Neal joined Lehman Brothers as an investment banking analyst. Neal left Lehman Brothers in early 2008 before its collapse to grow EasyBib and Imagine Easy full time.

ResearchReady: A Community College Perspective Ari Sigal

IMAGINE EASY SOLUTIONS LAUNCHED ITS second product, a web-based tutorial of bibliographic instruction (BI) and information literacy (IL) topics called ResearchReady earlier this year. My review considers ResearchReady from the vantage point of a community college reference librarian who does IL instruction for both the college and an early college high school.

Distance education (DE), due to its varieties of platforms and delivery modes, is becoming more difficult to navigate than the Banzai Pipeline. The number of students who take some or all their courses via a course management system such as Blackboard, WebCT, or Angel is growing dramatically. The Babson Survey Research Group's report "Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States," 2011, found that 6.1 million college students were taking at least one of their courses via DE in fall 2010, with the large majority of those enrolled

in associate's degree programs (Allen and Seaman 2011, 4). With so many students having little or no occasion to be on a campus, let alone in a brick-and-mortar library, the question arises: "How will they receive BI/IL training?" Since community colleges are generally understaffed and underfunded, having a librarian with adequate time and software to create a comprehensive tutorial is especially problematic.

Enter ResearchReady. This self-contained series of instructional modules covers topics that we (the library director and I) have done—and continue to do—at our school since 2004. They are entitled Sources, Sources, Sources; Internet 101; Website Evaluation; Conquer the Research Process; Cite It before You Write It; and Inquiring Minds Want to Know. Each unit is further divided into six parts, with several additional "real-world scenarios" and a concluding quiz. The units are interactive, requiring students to periodically answer a question that applies concepts just presented in order to proceed. Together, these topics create a seamless presentation designed to give students an entrée into the world of online research and apply critical-thinking skills to preparing their papers.

I originally entertained the naïve thought that younger students would have little or no difficulty with these aspects and would be able to use search engines effectively. However, over the past nine years, I have been continually surprised by the number of "digital natives" who cannot evaluate a website or distinguish appropriate versus inappropriate sources. The logical approach to these topics given in ResearchReady is therefore all the more welcome. Instructors, of course, cannot spare more than one class meeting—if they have a seated class—for BI/IL, and we can present only a sliver of the pie that is the research process. If students do not contact us on their own, they are likely to have an inadequate understanding of how to use virtual sources and to be at a distinct disadvantage should they transfer to a baccalaureate program, which will assume they have these skills well in hand. Using ResearchReady allows students to proceed at their own pace and gain a more thorough knowledge of research than we can present "live," or even than what could be gained by using tutorials produced by college and university libraries and routinely posted to YouTube.

Any number of subtopics are worth noting. For example, within Internet 101, the structure of URLs is taught, as is the "Invisible Web," which is a usually neglected—but terrific—source of suitable material. Also, as Sue Polanka enthusiastically noted in her blog post on ResearchReady (Polanka 2013), attention is given to the issues of plagiarism and copyright. Ensuring that students do honest work is a major concern now, and exposure to this area will doubtless go a long way toward keeping students out of hot water later.

I was particularly pleased to see that the final unit (Inquiring Minds . . .) is devoted to "inquiry-based" research and introduces learners to concepts such as organizing ideas, creating a thesis statement, and constructing arguments. This novel incorporation of an area normally consigned to the campus writing center is most welcome because it serves as a "capstone" to the product, integrating the various tips and techniques presented along the way.

Each unit includes objectives, which dovetails well into the current emphasis by regional accrediting bodies on quality enhancement plans and a concomitant

focus on developing critical-thinking and writing skills. Further, the quizzes and challenge questions form a solid basis for assessing student progress, facilitating incorporation of the product into a syllabus. I found navigating ResearchReady to be simple; the units are presented in a straightforward way.

Overall, then, Imagine Easy Solutions' sophomore project truly meets the expectations generated by its marketing copy and should provide campuses a durable solution to the challenges of teaching library-based skills in an innovative way. ⓔ

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ari Sigal, formerly Library Director at Catawba Valley Community College, Hickory, NC, is currently director of CVCC's Accessing Scholarly Knowledge Program and curator of the Gilde-Marx Collection on Holocaust and Genocide Studies. He is also the editor of a 2013 volume on distance education and technology in librarian training, *Advancing Librarian Education: Technological Innovation and Instructional Design.*

ResearchReady: A K-12 Perspective

Shannon McClintock Miller

I HAVE BEEN A FAN of EasyBib for a long time; so have my students at Van Meter School District, IA. When I heard that Imagine Easy Solutions, the company that created EasyBib, was about to unveil a second product called ResearchReady, I was excited to check it out. The timing was perfect as I was in the midst of helping a senior student (also the library cadet) with a research paper for College Prep. She had been struggling to understand the research process and wanted to learn how to create citations properly. Curious about what her own reaction would be to this new product, I decided to have her take it for a spin, too.

As stated on the product's website, "Research Ready teaches the entire research process, from developing a topic to avoiding plagiarism. It gives . . . students a foundation in research and critical thinking skills." These factors are an essential part of the K–12 curriculum and the standards such as Common Core, AASL (American Association of School Librarians), and ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) that educators are responsible for bringing to their school communities. Teacher-librarians, in particular, need innovative tools such as this to help them assist with bringing knowledge and information-literacy skills to the students they serve.

From the onset, I was impressed with what ResearchReady had to offer. The site is broken up into six courses (e.g., Sources, Sources, Sources; Internet 101; and Website Evaluation) that students may take to test their knowledge of the research process. Each course consists of several lessons designed to teach them essential research concepts. There is a quiz located at the end of each course that tells students how they are doing and if they need more help mastering the content.

As students work their way through each course, ResearchReady keeps track of the progress at the bottom of the screen, and little tips are given along the way for additional support. The storyline between the owl and young person will keep the attention of readers as they work through the courses. Further, students can test their knowledge of the concepts at their own pace and revisit the topics they have questions about as often as needed.

In addition to being a tool for K–12 students, ResearchReady is also the librarian's tool. Librarians and other educators may use it to monitor students' activities in order to better assess their information-literacy skills. They can accomplish this by taking a glance at their students' progress as the students work through the courses and by keeping track of their scores. This type of educator monitoring may be done by multiple teachers or librarians in any location, from any device, and at any time.

Further, students may take the information learned within the courses and apply it in a multitude of ways. For example, they can create an Animoto video to share with their classmates and school community what they learned about primary sources. Or they can use a Padlet, an application that works like an online sheet of paper and allows students to add content to it. There are so many possibilities for transferring the information supplied by ResearchReady to the curriculum and making it more meaningful. Students, in particular, will appreciate the ability to interact with other online tools they are already accustomed to using.

The student who took ResearchReady for a spin had positive things to say about the product: "I found this website extremely helpful. One thing I enjoyed was that it was very easy to use and not complicated to figure out. I like how characters were simple and that there was a storyline to follow . . . this kept it interesting. I also found the website shows you great research and presentation tools that you can use and it helps with citing your information correctly."

When I asked the student to elaborate on how she thought ResearchReady would help prepare her for college and the workplace, she said, "If I worked

through all of these courses that ResearchReady has set up, I would definitely feel like I was ready for college and the real world. I want to be a teacher, so this tool would help me teach, too."

Librarians are always on the lookout for innovative ways to educate students and teachers about accessing, evaluating, and using information successfully. With the information included within ResearchReady, we are able to put a comprehensive research curriculum into the hands of the young people and teachers that we work with every day. This accessible and innovative tool can truly transform the way we make a difference in our communities. The folks at Imagine Easy Solutions have done us a great service. ⊜

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shannon McClintock Miller is the district teacher-librarian at Van Meter School District, IA. She encourages her students to have a voice while learning, creating, collaborating, and connecting to others within their school and around the world. She blogs at Van Meter Library Voice and can be found on Twitter @shannonmmiller.

E-books and E-readers for Homebound Patrons

Rachel A. Gut

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH INFORMATION HAS always been the basic goal of libraries, though the means of delivery has changed dramatically over the last couple of decades. Providing access used to mean keeping the doors of the local branches open, especially at peak hours. With emerging technologies, however, access has become more widespread but also more complicated to provide in the communities where maintaining daily life is a greater trial.

Outreach is the library service that addresses those with exceptional challenges to access, including both ends of the age spectrum: the newest citizens and the most fragile ones. It is an elastic service in a constant state of flux, actively seeking those who need it most. In the process of that search, Dayton Metro Library's outreach department saw an opportunity to be a liaison between new technologies and patrons with needs. This is the story of how our library implemented a successful e-reader and e-book lending program for homebound individuals.

Identifying the Problem

Dayton Metro Library's (DML) long outreach history began in the 1920s with a bookwagon that served areas of the city with no branch library. In 1977, an LSTA

grant helped the library start a program to deliver materials to homebound patrons. At the time, the goal was to provide library access to an underserved population and to connect the large-type collection with the patrons who needed it most. Over the years, the program evolved to include all of DML's circulating collections and anyone with a permanent or temporary condition that made it difficult to reach a stationary library.

Large-type materials are still heavily used in our library, comprising 15 percent of the Outreach Services department circulation, mostly to patrons enrolled in the Homebound Delivery program. All DML collections float, but 26 percent of the system's large-type collection is currently housed in Outreach Services. The format has always had its imperfections: it uses more paper and creates heavier books, it is available only in limited genres, and it is more expensive to produce and purchase. Nevertheless, it had been the best option for patrons with low vision, especially those who do not like to be read to.

In 2009, one of our homebound patrons requested John R. Marler's *Strokes for Dummies*. DML owned the regular book, but as this patron had suffered a stroke, she needed it in large type. The staff discovered that this book had not been printed in large type but had been published as an e-book. DML did not loan e-books at the time, but one of the nearby libraries did, and it owned that title. The patron was called in the hopes that she had access to a computer or e-book reader, but unfortunately she did not. This incident left me and my colleagues more aware of the lack of material in large type, particularly nonfiction. We had, however, long been dealing with this problem, having previously sent annual requests to the Office of Collection Development to provide outreach with more nonfiction in large type.

As we assessed our patron base, we found there were a number of patrons for whom it was increasingly difficult to find items. They were often forced to read things that were on the fringe of their tastes or needs, or they were leaving the service because they couldn't get what they wanted. E-books and e-readers seemed the obvious answer to helping those patrons. E-readers were generally lightweight, the number of items available in e-format for library lending had been steadily increasing, and the e-book font size could be increased to accommodate patrons with low vision.

Establishing a Homebound E-reader Service

When we decided to establish a homebound e-reader service, DML was just starting an e-book collection. A survey of our patrons indicated that most would not be able to afford an e-reader and didn't have a helper who could work with them to pick one out and physically get it to them. About 95 percent did not have Wi-Fi access or a computer available to them to search for titles or download items on their own.

It seemed obvious that DML would have to provide e-readers to homebound patrons if they were to use e-books, so the administration gave the outreach

department two Nooks to start a pilot project. DML had previously purchased first-generation Nooks for each location so that patrons could experiment in the library; these Nooks required the ADE software and a computer for direct download.

Since staff would be learning and implementing the service at the same time, we decided to use the two Nooks for one patron. One loaded Nook would be at the patron's home for him or her to enjoy, while the other would be at the library, being prepared for the patron's next delivery. The idea was to have one Nook in the office to load and practice on, while the patron was enjoying the other. The support of both DML's IT department, which helped us get the lending program started, and OverDrive, DML's e-book supplier, proved to be essential to the success of this project.

Homebound patrons' items were to be checked out for six weeks, rather than the standard twenty-one days, to account for times when the patron was inaccessible owing to hospital stays and doctor appointments. OverDrive first allowed three checkout periods for the patron to choose from, the longest being twenty-one days. Since deliveries were made every twenty-one days to keep homebound services somewhat in line with DML's loan period, that policy would not allow any time for searching and selecting e-books or downloading them to the Nooks. There was also the problem of item limits. A standard patron could have only ten e-books checked out at one time—that meant only five would be allowed for a homebound patron, so that there would be something to load onto the in-office Nook. OverDrive eventually agreed to amend this policy and give each individual a fifty-nine-day checkout and a twenty-item limit.

Circulating the Nooks became the next hurdle. DML's acquisitions and cataloging departments got involved at this point to discuss materials of particular interest to homebound patrons and to create item records as well as barcodes and labels for the e-readers. Barcodes were attached to the Nooks, and we decided to send them out in their original boxes. All cords and adaptors could be contained neatly with the device and were not labeled separately. The cataloging department created a bibliographic record to describe the Nooks and then attached the item records. All we needed at that point was a patron willing to try out the new service.

We were looking for someone who was eager to try e-reading but also would be patient through the process. It needed to be someone whose health was good enough that long periods in the hospital were unlikely and who was familiar enough with the technology to understand that e-readers needed to be recharged. One of our regular patrons called in the midst of our search to inform us that she would be quitting homebound service as she could no longer see well enough to read the small type. As one of the younger patrons on the service, she had at least limited exposure to computers and was willing to try anything that would allow her to keep reading. After I described to her the library's new e-book program, she agreed to come on board and give it a try.

The patron wanted two or three history and politics titles and two or three fiction classics. As agreed, OverDrive granted her access for fifty-nine days. I

reserved the items for her using my e-mail address so that when the reserves arrived, I would be notified and could then check the items out for her before the seventy-two-hour window of availability closed. When the first reserve came in, I noticed that OverDrive did not have the name of the reserving patron in the e-mail. Since DML staff members were loading the e-readers, reserve notices would have to come to staff e-mail accounts. We would have to devise some list of what had been reserved for whom once we had more than one patron, or we would have to look at each patron's OverDrive reserve list to find the one who requested that item.

Getting the items loaded onto the Nook proved harder than expected. ADE was slow, and if I tried to hurry it, it froze, forcing me to shut it down. Downloading those first few books took most of the afternoon and caused a strong sense of panic as I realized we didn't have the staff time to do this for more than one patron. At least all of the books did download to the Nook on that first try, although some that were checked out to her account could not be transferred onto the Nook; they could be read only on the PC used to download them.

The process was frustrating and required one of our office PCs to be tied up as the Nook had to be physically connected to it during the download. There was also the concern that a limited number of devices could share the same ADE ID, and that if we continued with the Nooks, we would be able to support only four or five Nooks per office PC, severely limiting the number of patrons who could participate.

A DML staff member who delivered the Nook to the patron spent about half an hour training her to use it. The patron enjoyed reading again and found the Nook easy to use. At her request, we put a large-type instruction sheet in the Nook's original packaging box for her reference. The patron at first struggled with the concept that she could not renew the book on the device. Instead, we could download it to the other Nook and bring it back to her, or we could leave the Nook she had until the next delivery. If she got to the fifty-nine-day point and the book was not finished, it could no longer be opened on the Nook.

At this time, we continued to look for funding options for the project, considering both grants and gifts. I applied to a local service group with an interest in helping people with low vision and received a donation of $500, with which we could purchase three to five e-readers. And right around that same time, one of our homebound patrons began donating $40 to the department every three weeks when we delivered materials to her. She wanted to support a service that she felt she got a lot out of. We added her donations to the e-reader fund as well. It wasn't long before we had about $700 and could purchase more e-readers.

Expanding the Project

Now that there was some money to spend on e-readers, it was time to discuss the next phase. A few of us in Outreach began to consult on which e-reader would be the best option for our patrons. The Nooks had their drawbacks: they were

difficult to use for downloading, often a checked-out book could not be transferred to the device, and ADE was difficult to manage. Kindle was out of the question at first, since Kindle/Amazon did not interface with OverDrive and would not allow libraries to purchase books for checkout. However, in the midst of our deciding on an e-reader model, Kindle and OverDrive announced their partnership.

The DML e-reader committee brought several e-readers to staff meetings and patron programs to allow both staff and patrons to explore all viable options. The Sony eReader seemed like the best fit for most homebound patrons: the keys were large and easy to interpret, the touchscreen was easy to manipulate with or without a stylus, the books were easy to find and open, and it was intuitive to figure out how to change the font size within a minute or so of using it. They were also Wi-Fi-compatible.

While we were exploring options, DML's Office of Collection Development found out about an incentive from OverDrive, which was at the time offering a Sony eReader for every $3,500 spent on e-books. The library decided to take advantage of the offer and began ordering e-books through OverDrive to maximize the number of free e-readers it would receive. In January 2012, the first ten Sony eReaders were delivered. The $700 received from the local group and our patron afforded six additional devices.

Once all sixteen e-readers were in our possession, we realized we could not circulate them in their original boxes since it was almost impossible to get all the pieces back in the box. We would need a different container to circulate them. After looking at various products, we ordered twenty-five JanWay e-pouches. We opted for those because they were large enough to fit all e-reader accessories, had a handle to which to attach the patron's name and separate pockets for the cable and adaptor, could be imprinted with the DML logo, and carried an acceptable price tag (less than $10 per pouch). There was also plenty of room for an instruction sheet.

Each reader required an ADE ID, including an e-mail account and password, after which items could be searched, reserved, checked out, and downloaded using; no cable or PC was needed. E-readers could be loaded in any location with Wi-Fi access. This freed up the office PCs for other work, negated the issue of limited ADE IDs, and significantly sped up the downloading. With sixteen available Sony eReaders and the original two Nooks, we were ready to add additional patrons to the service.

Because very few DML homebound patrons live in facilities with Wi-Fi or have Wi-Fi at home, all e-readers had to be loaded at the library. The focus of DML Homebound Service has been to provide patrons with service as close to what they would receive in a stationary location as possible. Any item that checks out can be obtained by homebound patrons, and they may be as specific or general in their requests as they like. Using profile cards that record format, genre, and author preferences, staff select items for the patron that match his or her requests. Patrons who prefer to select their own items may do so by sending back a prepared feedback sheet, by e-mailing or calling staff who will make

immediate reserves, or by entering reserves themselves if they have a PC with Internet access at home.

With patrons accustomed to this made-to-order service, we felt it was best to continue loading each e-reader individually for each patron, meaning that each patron would have to have two e-readers assigned to him or her: one currently being used in the patron's home and one in our offices being loaded for the next delivery. Having one reader per patron would allow us to serve more patrons, but the cost in staff time shuttling the e-readers back and forth between scheduled deliveries was too high.

Selecting and Training Participants

With sixteen additional e-readers, eight patrons could be added. Since large type was considered the basic need, we decided to include only patrons who could not read small print. As at least a third of our patrons fit that requirement, we looked at additional criteria to contract the pool of potential recipients. Some of the profile cards requested large-type materials that were not too heavy or asked us to select books with a limited number of pages because of arm strength or arthritis issues. We decided this would be a second criterion for selecting patrons.

We compiled a list of the most eligible patrons and began calling them to make them aware of the new service. About half of those called were interested in trying it, about a quarter were interested but wanted to think about it, and another quarter said they did not think it was right for them. E-readers were added to the interested patrons' profile cards so that items would be selected and loaded for each three-week delivery.

The problem of creating a database for their reserve and checkout list now became a greater issue; DML has Polaris for its ILS, and each time an item is selected for a homebound patron that the patron has already checked out, a message alerting staff pops up. OverDrive has no mechanism for saving a patron's reading history, which meant it would have to be done manually. There was also the problem of reserves; when a reserve is made, an e-mail address must be entered. Since a staff member checks out the items to patrons, a staff-accessible e-mail address must be used for alerts that a reserve is ready. However, the e-mail gives only the title of the item and does not identify the patron name the reserve is under. A system for remembering who had what reserves also needed to be created. With only one patron, I was able to manage her account exclusively; with six, other staff members would have to help, further adding to the challenge of keeping track of all requests.

The patrons' divergent tastes made it somewhat easier; we had managed to select six people who had almost no reading preferences in common. With items checking out for fifty-nine days, we were able to see through OverDrive what was checked out for the prior e-reader and at least not duplicate in that time frame. We are still working on creating a database to manage these two issues as efficiently as possible. Unfortunately, whatever we create will have to be used in conjunction with OverDrive but will not be integrated into our searching.

The primary task of selecting and loading the e-readers was then passed to a reference assistant, with me acting as backup. One of four staff members was sent to deliver the first e-reader to the patron and provide a thirty-minute training session, including explanations of how to charge the e-reader, turn it on and off, enlarge type, and open and read e-books. A sheet with simple instructions written in large type was also provided in the bag, and staff made sure patrons had one to refer to for basic questions.

During this time, another grant project, a Mobile Laptop Lab, was approved at our library. It provided twelve laptops, four mobile Wi-Fi units, six large-type keyboards with trackballs, two carrying cases, and six additional Sony eReaders. The primary purpose of the lab was to provide computer classes to help older adults better use library resources. The classes were to take place at retirement communities and senior apartment complexes; they were also offered to various groups (e.g., new immigrants) who would find coming to the library for a computer class difficult or daunting.

E-readers were not originally part of the grant equipment, but between submitting the grant and receiving the award, the cost of the laptops dropped enough to allow for this purchase. It was clear that if we wanted patrons to be able to search for and download their own e-books, they would need to be trained to use the OverDrive website, with e-readers available to them to practice on. The two programs fit naturally together, and we acquired an additional six e-readers at that point, bringing the new total to twenty-two.

Lessons Learned

Overall, the program has been very successful, with 90 percent of patrons very happy with the e-reader. Positive comments included "delighted to be reading again" and "keep them coming!" Most of the feedback we received has been about the materials loaded onto the e-readers, rather than the e-readers themselves, and that in itself is a measure of success.

One challenge has been in helping staff and patrons understand the nature and limitations of e-books. With standard materials, items are checked out to homebound patrons for forty-two days, twice the loan time for a standard patron, to allow for illness, inclement weather, and other difficulties, and can be renewed if not reserved by another patron. The e-books check out for fifty-nine days to allow them this same six-week use of the e-book, but if a patron has one e-book out of five that was not completely read, that e-book cannot be downloaded to a second Sony eReader that has additional new selections on it. Even if the patron wants to renew all selections on the reader, he or she is able to keep it for only forty-two days, because the e-books cannot be renewed and will disappear.

Patrons struggle to understand why we cannot provide e-book renewals for them. Some of our staff also find the concept difficult; if another patron has not requested the item, why can't the first patron renew it? Staff and patrons have

also struggled to understand the difference between online content and e-books. If we have twelve computers, twelve people can view the same web content at the same time. Why, then, can't we download the same e-book to twelve e-readers for a book club? And why can't it be transferred to a patron's neighbor's Kindle in the same way the patron would let him or her read a regular library book? Helping both patrons and staff understand limitations of e-books continues to be a challenge.

There were also a few problems with recharging the e-readers; the twelve e-readers that were ordered did not come with AC adaptors—only a USB cable— so adapters needed to be purchased from an office-supply store. After the second call that an e-reader was not charging and repeated testing in our office, we discovered that the purchased AC adaptors did not work with the ten original e-readers given by OverDrive as part of their promotion. This has been a challenge, since the e-readers are nearly identical. Library staff need to check each bag that is returned to be sure the e-reader, cord, adaptor, and instruction sheet are returned; if any piece other than the instruction sheet is missing, the patron is called and asked to look for the item.

Another issue we faced were the attempts by patrons who were not part of the homebound program to reserve the e-readers. When we started the program, DML used Horizon as its ILS system, and the e-readers could not be completely hidden in the catalog, despite attempts to suppress them. On several occasions, both DML patrons and patrons from our consortium libraries found and reserved the e-readers. Staff contacted the home branch or library of these patrons to explain the program and let them know why the patron's hold was cancelled. Fortunately, when DML upgraded its ILS system to Polaris, cataloging department staff were able to create a bibliographic record but mark the items as unavailable so that it appears to the non-homebound patron that there are no items attached.

Legal Issues

DML's program is one of many different types of e-reader lending programs implemented in libraries across the country. Stories about other libraries' e-reader policies and practices are followed with interest in library publications. In the November 19, 2012, issue of *OLC This Week,* an article entitled "Legal Opinion: E-Reader Compliance with ADA Requirements" stated:

> Questions have been posed from public libraries about [the e-readers'] potential legal exposure over an alleged lack of accessibility for blind and visually impaired customers to electronic text reading devices, such as a "Nook" and "Kindle" ("e-readers") which some libraries provide to the general public. The questions arose as a result of a lawsuit filed against the Free Library of Philadelphia by the National Federation of the Blind, and a settlement relative to agreed modifications of that program. There

was a similar lawsuit and subsequent settlement between the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Public Library of Sacramento, Calif. (OLC 2012)

This article brought up a lot of questions about our own program, as we have several homebound patrons who are blind. Although most of them use the DVD, CD, and Book on CD collections almost exclusively, there may be items that would not be available to them in those formats. Our Older Adult Specialist Librarian has begun researching various options for providing full access, including a voice recognition component. The iPad seems to be the best option for those patrons, and we are still considering whether to purchase the mini or full-sized version. The National Federation of the Blind recommends the Blio software, which is compatible with the iPad, and we plan to get its recommendation on whether to opt for the full-size or the mini iPad. Once we have a better understanding of the e-reader's full capabilities, we plan to offer it to a selected patron for experimentation and modify the program based on the feedback we receive.

Looking Ahead

As librarians know well, having e-books in library collections does not guarantee access for everyone; it provides access only for those with the ability to use them. Having e-readers in libraries brings us only one step closer to the basic goal of connecting all people to information. As public libraries do all over America, DML is stepping into the gap, continually looking for ways to connect information and patrons through the most suitable technologies available, especially those patrons who would otherwise have no access to information.

With products like Zinio, for example, libraries are already able to make magazines available to multiple patrons at the same time. Providing Zinio to homebound patrons via an iPad and using text-to-speech technologies to read electronic text content to patrons who are visually impaired are some of the other ways in which libraries can continue to provide both the content and technologies to their patrons.

Even though digital environments will continue to change at a fast pace, the librarian's role remains unchanged: to actively seek new ways to keep the public connected to information through content, technology, and training. Bringing e-books and e-readers to patrons with disabilities is a great start, but I look forward to many more opportunities on the horizon.

Acknowledgement of Staff
Who Participated in the Project

Thanks go to the Dayton Metro Library Board of Trustees and Administrative Council, which consistently support outreach services in all of its forms. Special thanks to Executive Director Tim Kambitsch, who encourages technological advance in all areas, and especially for patrons least likely to have it otherwise; to Assistant Director for Branch and Extension Services Mimi Morris, who is the most active and loudest champion of all disenfranchised patrons; to Assistant Director for Information and Technology Barb Kuhns, who helped sort through all the possible e-readers and negotiated with OverDrive to change loan periods and amounts to work best for our program; to Office of Collection Development Manager Jean Gaffney and her staff, who knew of the homebound e-reader project and tailored ordering of e-materials to provide both the first set of Sony Readers and the materials of special interest; to Catalog Division Manager Deborah Hathaway, who created item records and labels for the e-readers and found a way to hide them from the general public; and to Older Adult Specialist Librarian Julie Buchanan, who consulted on every aspect of this project and who has the vision, knowledge, and skill to bring both this project and its future versions to life. ⓔ

REFERENCE

OLC (Ohio Library Council). 2012. "Legal Opinion: E-reader Compliance with ADA Requirements." *OLC This Week* (electronic newsletter), November 19.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rachel A. Gut is the Outreach Services Manager at Dayton Metro Library (DML). Since graduating from the School of Library and Information Science at Indiana University in 1993, Gut has worked in outreach services in public libraries of various sizes and sorts. She started at Lane Public Library as a Young Adult Librarian and then became manager of the Bookmobile Department, where she worked for three and a half years. She became Assistant Director of the Mason Public Library in 1998 and helped to build small homebound and early lobby stop programs. She became a branch manager for the Dayton Metro Library in 2001, where she had an opportunity to reach out to the growing immigrant population in the community. In 2005, she became the Outreach Services Manager of DML, where she's participated in renovating and rebuilding the bookmobile program, instituting a lobby stop service, bringing new formats and technologies to the homebound program, and giving the library a presence at local events.

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in the next issue

ISSUES

Supplying and Collecting Books: An Uneasy Metamorphosis

Michael Zeoli (YBP Library Services)

> Academic libraries use approval plan mechanisms to review more than 60,000 English-language books annually from more than 1,400 publishers. In recent years, e-books have begun their long anticipated arrival in the academic library world. And the addition of e-books to mainstream collecting has come in many models and flavors, all in a continuous state of development. Where once a library may have had a choice of a paperback or cloth book, today libraries may select an e-book, possibly on four or more aggregator or publisher platforms. And if only the choices stopped there. They may also choose from a growing variety of collecting methods including e-collections, demand-driven acquisitions, short-term loans, and e-series, in addition to approval plans and firm orders.

Not only does the complexity of the book content universe cause confusion among vendors and libraries, but the publishers themselves are desperately seeking information on the entire ecosystem. They commonly ask vendors for data and perspectives regarding making e-books available at all, the effects on their sales of simultaneous print and digital editions, whether demand-driven acquisitions will cannibalize print sales, and whether short-term loans threaten the value of their content entirely. Publishers and libraries alike study and compare the benefits and risks of e-book platforms—a field that continues to grow rapidly.

Currently, less than a quarter of the publishers participating in the English-language academic book world offer e-books. The number of publishers offering more than 50 percent of their content in digital format is just a third of those. Do librarians know this? How do they navigate acquisitions and collection development in light of this "dog's breakfast" of e-book availability? This article raises some of the practical issues facing academic libraries and provides information that may be helpful, in the near term at least, in building some solutions.

E-book Formats: An Overview for Libraries

John Burns (Dixie State University)

> No doubt, the world of e-books and e-readers is in a constant state of flux. The tech industry is well known for its sometimes aggravating and sometimes exhilarating propensity for change. But that state of flux gives us better devices and better tools to work and play with. It leads to greater portability, ease of access, and enhanced functionality, with the end user poised to act as the driving force for improvement.

Several file formats exist for e-reading, each with its own unique strengths and weaknesses. This article reviews the major file formats that dominate the market (e.g., plain text, HTML, Kindle Books, and Apple iBooks) and discusses the pros and cons of each from a librarian's perspective as well as patron perspective. Whether your library prefers to license e-content or purchase it outright, this article lays out the basics of e-book formats to help librarians in public, school, and academic libraries decide which ones best meet the needs of their users.

Evaluating Children's Apps

Cen Campbell (LittleeLit.com) **& Carisa Kluver** (Digital-Storytime.com)

> Children's librarians are now in the business of evaluating children's apps. Not only must we pay heed to the quality and appropriateness of text and illustration, we must consider functionality, user interface, and usability. While the children's digital publishing industry is moving at a lightning pace to push the boundaries of what the word *book* means in an electronic environment, many of the same skills and tools we use to evaluate paper books apply to the digital world. The established review sources (e.g., *School Library Journal*, the *Horn Book*, *Kirkus*) review digital media for children (usually iPad apps), but new review resources are now available that deal specifically with the idiosyncrasies of the digital realm, including digital-storytime.com, teacherswithapps.com, and dozens of individual blogs by professionals and parents.

The future is quickly "going digital" in the world of illustrated children's titles in particular. Research trends show that more parents are seeking digital books for their children to read, but they are struggling to navigate all of their choices. Families are still reading print, too. In fact, research shows that kids read more overall since beginning to read digitally. But the rates of children reading on screens has increased rapidly, nearly doubling in barely two years' time. Keeping up with the number of new book apps and e-books, however, is a herculean task. And we can't think of anyone more qualified than school librarians to point children in the direction of quality content.

Just as with traditional materials, digital tools need to be evaluated for use in libraries. LittleeLit.com focuses on using apps in early literacy programs, while

Digital-Storytime.com focuses on one-on-one use. This article explains how to evaluate children's apps from both perspectives. On the LittleeLit.com end, topics include intended use, customization, and early literacy skills, among others. On the Digital-Storytime.com end, topics include animation, audio, interactivity, and rereadability, among others.

The Importance of Metadata for E-content

Renee Register (Datacurate.com)

> Providing rich metadata that fully describes content and format is especially important for e-books and other digital content. Without a book to hold and examine, metadata found in an online environment is the only way to evaluate a book—the metadata *is* the user experience that leads to a decision on whether or not to select the book.

Librarians use publisher or e-book distributor metadata in selection and acquisition and then provide the metadata used by patrons to select books. This article discusses metadata elements essential to describing e-books and the current flow of metadata as it moves from publishers to distributors to libraries and its effect on library workflow and operations. The shorter time between book announcement and publication possible for digital content can also have an effect on library processes. The article will also propose ways for libraries and publishers to work together to present the best possible metadata to users in the shortest amount of time. ℮