The New NetLibrary

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Repository Citation

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At nearly 10 years old, NetLibrary remains the largest e-content provider. Since being acquired by OCLC in 2002, it has made some major changes.

NetLibrary provides content to more than 16,000 libraries worldwide, with e-books and now e-audiobooks and databases. The catalog contains over 170,000 titles from over 450 publishers. More than 2,500 mostly front-list titles are added each month, in more than 20 languages. Michelle Harper, global product manager, says, “We are making a concentrated effort to target and acquire non-English-language materials to meet the needs of our academic customers and those overseas.” In addition to providing multiple languages, NetLibrary e-books cover a variety of subjects including reference, literature, computer science/technology, medicine and nursing, history, and more. There are more than 5,000 titles from reference publishers such as ABC-CLIO, Cambridge, Facts On File, McGraw-Hill, and Oxford.

NetLibrary’s interface is available in more than 10 different languages and includes basic and advanced searches, translation features, dictionary services, and individual customer accounts. In these optional accounts, users can take notes, bookmark pages, add favorites, and view their search history. Additionally, both the table of contents and index portions of e-books are hyperlinked.

The Collection Development Team

The NetLibrary in-house collection development team of librarians provides collection-analysis services, which include analyzing partial or entire library collections and recommending content areas for update. Custom-created profiles allow new titles to be added automatically. The collection development team also selects appropriate titles for the various collections NetLibrary offers.

E-books

Libraries that want to supplement print collections or outsource collection development should check out the subject sets, which are generally offered each quarter. This year 27 subject sets are available, including front-list titles on a wide range of topics like engineering, travel resources, world religions, and U.S. immigrant resources. A Reference and Research set has 32 titles from Routledge, Britannica, Greenwood, Wiley, and others. Purchase includes OCLC MARC records and additional support from NetLibrary. There is no duplication of titles from set to set, nor from the previous year. For more information on the subject sets, visit http://library.netlibrary.com/SubjectSets.aspx. Subject centers are similar but much larger in scope, containing more than 1,500 titles with an additional 15–20 titles added each month. Two centers—Reference, with titles from leading reference publishers, and IT, providing IT content—are currently available, and more will follow.

E-audiobooks

NetLibrary introduced its e-audiobook service in early 2005. According to Harper, “NetLibrary has added over 8,000 e-audiobooks since it first introduced them in 2005. Recent publishers include Phoenix Audio, CoolBeat, and Writers Audioshop. To meet the growing demand for e-audiobooks, this year we have released five e-audiobook subject sets, created by our collection development staff.” The current sets include biographies and memoirs, children’s and young adult titles, fiction, nonfiction, and self-help and personal growth. The sets, which contain current titles, are a one-time purchase, and titles are not duplicated between sets. Individual e-audiobook titles are also available for purchase, and some collections allow simultaneous user access based on a subscription price.

The new NetLibrary Media Center, a downloadable application that allows librarians and patrons to manage and access their content, offers personalization features as well as advanced search and browse capabilities. NetLibrary hopes to add e-books to this platform.

Purchasing Materials

When ordering, libraries can choose from two services, TitleSelect or TitleDirect. TitleSelect is the online catalog of all NetLibrary titles and is used to order individual e-book titles or to build a custom title list. TitleDirect profiles a library’s collection development requirements and automatically informs it of new content that matches the profile.

If you’ve used NetLibrary, then you’re familiar with the one-book, one-user model. It’s still available, but so are many others, like purchasing subject sets and centers, purchasing based on analysis of your collection and the development of a title profile to match your needs, and group purchasing, which allows simultaneous access to titles. A new FTE model was recently introduced, and in 2009, a subscription offer with simultaneous access will be available. Another exciting new business model is Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA). PDA gets patrons involved in content selection, guaranteeing 100 percent circulation! With PDA libraries establish a profile of titles and a budget. When patrons view a title in the profile, the item is purchased.

Future Plans for NetLibrary

In 2009 NetLibrary e-books and e-audiobooks will move to a version of the WorldCat Local platform. This move will allow users to cross-search journals, e-books, e-audiobooks, and databases on the same platform. It also offers some of the social-networking features that WorldCat Local users enjoy.

For more information on NetLibrary, visit http://library.netlibrary.com/Company.asp.

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