A Report on E-book Readers: A Pilot Project at the CSU Stanislaus University Library

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E-book Readers: A Pilot Project at CSU Stanislaus University Library

During the spring semester of the 2010/2011 academic year, Interim Library Dean Annie Hor asked librarians Andre Garza and Maryann Hight to initiate a pilot project to lend e-book readers to CSU Stanislaus students, faculty and staff. The goals of the project included the determination of what role such devices might have for acquisitions and user services in the University Library, to help advance the transformation of library services, and to advance outreach to the user community.

A task force including librarians Andre Garza, Maryann Hight, Senior Monographic Cataloger Olga Camarillo, and Circulation Supervisor Dwayne Machado met to develop a plan to implement the purchase of the readers, draft policies for use, circulation and purchase of e-books. The following project rational and plan was established:

Rational:

- Availability of e-book readers will facilitate teaching and learning
- Availability of e-books and e-readers increase awareness of these resources in the user community
- Library can actively participate in the evolution of resource accessibility
- Students will gain exposure to tools they will encounter in their lives outside of the university
- Availability of information in all formats remains at the core of librarianship

Project plan:

- Research consumer and technical reviews for available devices
- Establish procedures and policies for the acquisition of material for the readers
- Establish procedures and policies for cataloging of materials
- Establish procedures and policies for circulation and terms of use
- Conduct a survey of patron response to the use of the readers
- Gather information about the circulation of the devices and content purchased for the readers
- Evaluate the project and make recommendations

Researching e-readers

Prior to the initiation of the project, A. Garza had reviewed literature about various readers. One Kindle reader was purchased so that the team members would have experience using the readers, in order to make more informed decisions. In addition, systems assistant Guillermo Meraz was asked to download books from free websites and review usage of the device in anticipation of potential technical problems. After a review period of a few weeks, the

decision was made to purchase and circulate two Kindle e-book readers, one Sony, and one Nook reader.

Procedures and policies for the acquisition, cataloging and circulation

D. Machado and M. Hight researched and reported on various models of purchase and circulation employed by other libraries experimenting with lending models for e-book readers. Some of the options discussed were to pre-load the readers with selected material, such as a Shakespeare collection, or a selected popular novels. Another model would require circulation staff to download a book from the e-book reader store upon request from the patron checking out the device. It was decided however, to adopt a purely patron driven acquisition (PDA) model in which the borrower would be allowed to download one book of their choice priced under $30 for each checkout. Any additional purchases would be recorded as fines, and charged to the patron. A procedure for cataloging the books was established as follows:

- Accounts are established with the e-book reader stores and monitored by a staff person assigned to the account.
- When titles are added, staff receives notification via email.
- Staff monitoring the e-book accounts will give the title information to the assigned cataloger
- Each title will be cataloged using the name of the e-book reader to denote location instead of LC call numbers. (see example for The World is Blue)
- If newspapers, sample chapters, journals, etc, are downloaded by patrons, librarians may delete that material
- If a title is added which is not in line with our collection development guidelines, catalogers will check with the librarian in that subject area about whether to keep it or erase it.
- The downloads will be matched to the patron record, and if that patron exceeds the limit their account will be charged as a fine for the full amount of the additional books. The e-book account could be temporarily disabled if necessary.

E-Book Reader Terms of Use

Terms of Use for e-book readers were established, and this information was posted on the library website as follows:

- Electronic device loans (e-book readers, laptops) are restricted to current CSUS students, staff, and faculty.
- On borrowing the e-book reader in this package, you have agreed to assume legal liability for the cost of repair or replacement of the device in the event of loss due to theft, damage, negligence or misuse that occur while the device is in your possession.
- The borrower must report any device malfunctions and/or problems to the Library upon returning of the e-book reader. The following charges for late fine, loss or irreparable damages will apply.

- The e-book reader must be returned in person at the Library Circulation counter; the borrower will be required to wait for library staff to verify all equipment has been returned and is in working order.
- Loan Period and Fines:
    - Loan period of 14 days, non-renewable
    - Late fine of five dollars per day
    - Full replacement cost applied for any device overdue more than ten days will be $350 plus a ten dollar service charge

In addition to the policies and procedures for usage and circulation of the readers, the project team also created a list of frequently asked questions, listed below to be posted on the library website.

E-Book Readers: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the e-book reader project?

The e-Book Reader Project is a pilot program designed to explore how these devices may contribute to study and scholarship on the CSU Stanislaus campus.

Who can check out an e-book reader?

CSU Stanislaus faculty members, currently enrolled students, and staff may check out the readers.

Where can I check out the e-book reader?

You can check out the reader at the University Library Circulation Desk.

Where do I return the reader when I am done?

The reader **must be returned to the University Library circulation desk**. It **cannot** be returned at the Stockton center or placed in the book drop boxes on campus.

How long can I keep the reader?

The loan period is 14 days (two weeks), and it **may not be renewed**.

What are the fines, if I do not return the e-book reader on or before the due date?

Fines are $5 a day, beginning on the day after the reader is due; after 10 days, you will be charged the full replacement cost of $350 plus $10 service charge.

What happens if I damage the reader?

If the reader is damaged, the University Library will determine the extent of the damage and the cost of repair or replacement. You will be charged a replacement cost of up to $350 if the reader is damaged extensively.

What happens if I lose the reader?

Replacement costs are $350 for one e-book reader.

May I reserve an e-book reader?

If all the e-book readers are checked out, you may place a hold at the circulation desk for the reader and you will be placed in a queue. You will be notified when the device is available.

How do I know what e-books are available on the reader?

All books available on the e-book readers are cataloged in the University Library Catalog, http://millennium.csustan.edu/. Searching for a book title will bring up a record for that title if it is available on an e-reader. You may also search the catalog using the name of the device, such as “Kindle E-book”. This will bring up a catalog

record listing the Kindle readers and also all the titles available on those readers. Talk to the reference librarian for additional help.

May I check out more than one e-book reader at a time?

No, patrons are limited to having one e-book reader at a time so that the devices are available to other patrons.

May I add an item from the e-book store or from a free site on the web?

The library will pay for **one e-book below $30** that you select and download during the 14-day period the e-book reader is on loan to you. You will be charged for any costs resulting from more than one download, or cost for one item exceeding $30.

What if I download a book that the library would not usually buy, such as cookbooks or comic books?

Books downloaded on an e-book reader which are not aligned with the collection development policy of the University Library of CSU Stanislaus may be removed when the reader is returned.

Can I download music, newspapers and magazines to the e-book readers?

The e-book readers are intended to provide access to books. **We ask that you do not download such materials to the library e-book readers** as the University Library provides access to hundreds of magazines, newspapers and journals through our library databases. If such materials are downloaded to the readers and do not meet collection development criteria, those materials will be deleted when the readers are returned.

Survey of Users

During a short test period from February 2010 to June 2010, and for the first few months after the official launch of the circulation of the readers, each check-out of the e-readers included a short survey designed to provide information about usage of the devices. Since many patrons did not fill out the survey, it was discontinued in February 2011. However, the effort did result in 20 completed surveys. The questions and the results of which are shown below. It should be noted that not all the questions were answered in all the surveys, so the totals do not always add up to twenty!

1. What type of e-book reader did you use?
   Nook: 5 Kindle: 9 Sony: 6

2. Did you (check all that apply):
   10 Read a book already loaded on the reader
   7 Read a book that was already there because I saw it in the list and thought it was interesting
   12 Select a book from the online store
   2 Download a book from a free website

3. If you downloaded a book while you had the reader, please check all that apply:
   11 I was easily able to find and download the book I wanted

1 I downloaded a book I needed for a class project or paper
8 I downloaded a book for leisure reading

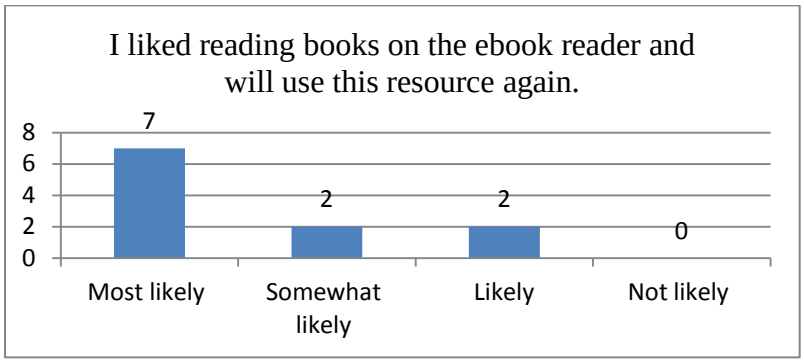
4. Do you use the Link+ service offered by the Library?
   11 Yes 5 No 5 I don't know what Link+ is

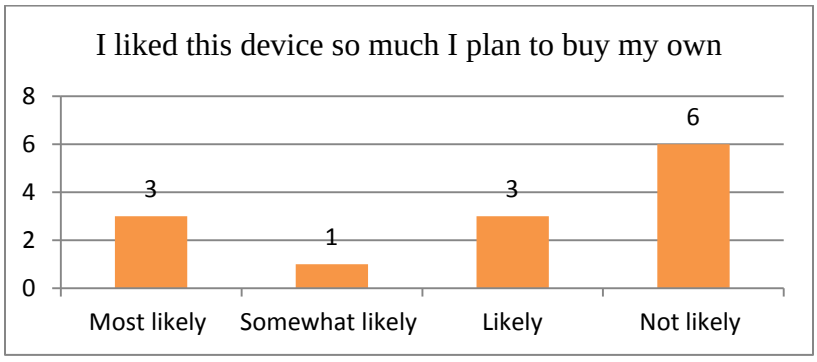
5. Do you use Interlibrary Loan to request books not owned by the University Library?
   12 Yes 8 No 0 I don't know what Interlibrary loan is

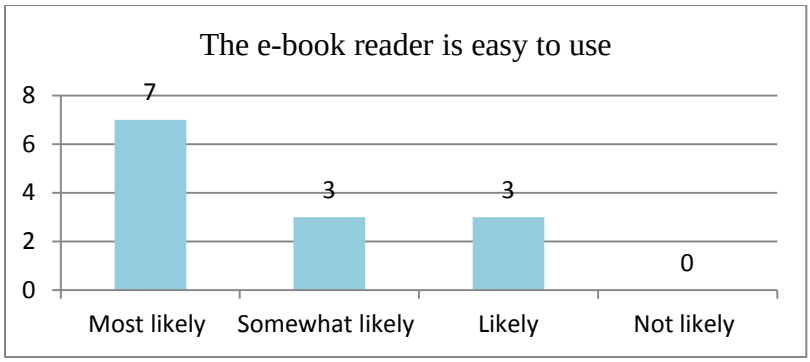
6. Do you download books, newspapers and/or journals to a device you already own, such as a cell phone or a computer?
   13 Yes 7 No

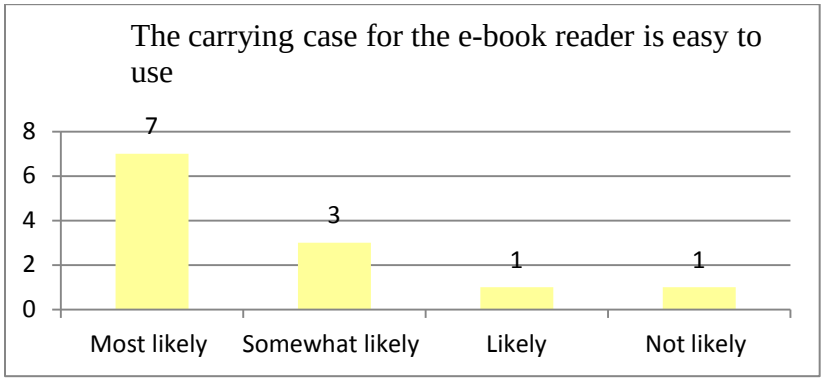
7. Using a scale in which 4 is the most likely and 1 is the least likely, please rate the following statements as they apply to your experience with the e-book reader

Questions and results for question 7 are shown in chart format:









8. Including this time, how many times have you borrowed an e-book reader from the University Library?
   20 1-4 times 0 5-10 times 0 ten or more times.

9. Please comment on your experience of using the e-book reader as part of the services offered by the University Library.
   - I prefer the Nook to the Kindle
   - Wireless a bit sporadic. Otherwise a good piece of technology
   - Thank you for providing this service!
   - The e-reader was interesting but I'd just as well read an actual book. Plus it complicates the act of loaning out books to friends
   - Nice reader, color touch screen interface a little slow. Easy to browse and read books. Interface is clunky
   - Great experience. Thanks for having these available for us to try.
   - Really liked having this opportunity to try the reader and be able to download a book. Thanks!
   - Out of the three devices, I liked the Sony the least. Found their store limited and not easy to use. I am getting one for my mother; it is the easiest to download books I already have in this format.
   - I would buy one of my own if library books were available at low/no cost.
   - The network connection did not work at home.

- I found I read much faster due to the larger font.
- The Nook is slow and freezes often. Very limited e-book resources available.
- I liked it a lot. I'm glad it's available.
- I loved this e-reader. I was debating whether or not I wanted to purchase one, and now I think I will. I am in the English graduate program for literature and I think I could easily utilize this to access all of the works I need to study.
- When connected to the Kindle store am unable to navigate back to a previous screen. Don't like the skin.

Circulation of the Readers

Circulation of the readers was tracked from June 2010 through June of 2012. While the initial circulation figures were very high (possibly due to library staff checking them out quite frequently), circulation of the readers has dropped slightly during the second academic year, but remains significant. It should be noted that the Kindle 1 was one of the very first models and was first purchased so faculty and staff could become familiar with the device. By the time the library was ready to circulate the readers; this model was obsolete and so was never circulated. The Nook 2 was reported lost or stolen. A patron was charged for the loss, but the device was replaced with a Kindle reader.

Circulation Statistics for eBook readers

July 2010-June 2011

	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
Kindle 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Kindle 2	4	7	1	3	3	2	2	0	2	1	2	0	
Kindle 3	8	1	4	3	2	2	1	3	0	3	1	0	
Kindle 4	-	-	-	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	3	0	
Kindle 5	-	-	-	2	2	3	1	3	1	6	3	0	
Nook 1	3	6	5	2	2	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	
Nook 2	0	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Sony 2	0	10	4	3	2	3	1	2	3	0	2	0	
Total	15	36	22	17	14	14	11	12	8	14	13	1	

September 2011-June 2012

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Kindle 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kindle 2	1	2	2	2	1	0	3	1	2	0
Kindle 3	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
Kindle 4	2	3	2	2	0	2	1	1	2	0
Kindle 5	1	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	0
Nook 1	1	2	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	0
Sony 2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Total	10	16	10	8	5	7	12	10	11	1

Content

In February of 2011 the content of all the eBook readers was analyzed and titles were placed into categories drawn from collection development guidelines. Materials matching library collection criteria were categorized as Literary Fiction, Literary Non-fiction, Literary Biography, U.S. History and World History. Categories not matching collection policies were designated as Popular Fiction, Popular Non-fiction and Popular Biography. The results are shown in the table below.

Content of All Devices

Description	# of titles	Print available CSU Stan	Available on two devices	Available other e-book
Literary Fiction	62	35		
Literary Non-fiction	24	11		
Popular Fiction	36			
Popular Non-fiction	18	2		
Literary Biography	4	2		
Popular Biography	1			
U.S. History	2			
World History	1			
Total	148	50	7	2

Books purchased on e-Readers which fit our collection development policy and support the curriculum

- Literary Fiction 62
- Literary Non-fiction 24
- Literary biography 4
- U.S. History 2
- World History 1

Total **93** (62% of the books purchased)

Books purchased on e-Readers which support leisure reading

- Popular Fiction 36
- Popular Non-fiction 18
- Popular Biography 1

Total **55** (37% of books purchased)

Conclusions

The most frequent type of material downloaded to the e-readers by patrons of the CSU Stanislaus library is fiction, fully two thirds of the total titles. Over half of the fiction titles do meet collection development criteria. The majority of all titles purchased through this PDA model meet collection development criteria as well.

The library attempts to meet the needs of all users of library materials, but for practical budgetary reasons, does not emphasize the purchase of a wide range of fiction and focuses on material related to the courses of study. The ability of patrons to select this material via the e-readers provides an additional dimension to our collections.

It is interesting that almost one third of the titles downloaded to the e-readers match print titles owned by the library. Further study may be needed to determine the reasons patrons choose to download a book which is available in print. It may be that the title was not available in the library, or that it was more convenient for the reader to read the book in digital format.

This suggests a few scenarios for the use of e-book readers, such as:

- Reducing the amount of literary and popular fiction that is purchased in print format, allowing patrons to drive the purchase of this material via e-book readers
- Shifting current budget for purchase of literary and popular fiction to the purchase of more e-readers and allocate an increased dollar amount for the purchase of books through this service

- Purchase more e-book readers and load some of them with selections of popular fiction and non-fiction and do not allow additional downloads by patrons. The titles would be selected by the collection development librarian or by subject liaisons
- Use the e-readers to provide a Just-in-Time service to patrons who need a title right away, and cannot wait to acquire the title via Link+ or conventional Interlibrary Loan.

The market for e-books is still evolving. While the library has added hundreds of e-books to its collection, the technology is not mature for use with all digital devices. Publishers and libraries continue to work on lending models that benefit all parties.

The use of e-readers and other digital devices for use to access books expected to increase in the years to come. Individual ownership of such devices is also expected to increase. But the mission of the academic library, to provide access to information, will stay the same regardless of how our users access the material. Providing e-reading devices to students, faculty and staff allows the University Library at CSU Stanislaus to increase the scope of services in keeping with the growth of the use of digital materials.

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