

Electronic Information Working Group

Texas State Library and Archives Commission

April 25, 2016

Austin, TX

Meeting Minutes

- **Review of charge**

The group discussed the logistics of creating an eBooks-centered exceptional item request for the Texas State Library and Archives Commission agency Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR). The agency LAR will be discussed at the upcoming June Commission meeting, at which point summaries for proposed exceptional items will be presented. The full LAR proposal is due at the August Commission meeting.

- **Quick review of other state models**

Most states with eBook programs serve only the public libraries. Only a few states, including Michigan and Massachusetts, are similar to the TexShare program in that they serve multiple types of libraries (public, academic, etc).

- **Identify Key Issues**

- **Academic vs Public**

Some suggested it would likely be necessary to contract with a variety of vendors in order to provide content that would be applicable to all of the different types of libraries in the TexShare consortium. However, having the new content spread out amongst multiple vendors could make it much more difficult for staff and patrons to locate and access materials. Some states are developing platforms that allow users to go to one place to search content from multiple vendors.

In previous surveys, public libraries ranked fiction eBooks as a much higher priority than academic libraries. However, group members from academic libraries expressed interest in having fiction in their collection, stating that there was considerable demand for fiction from staff and students – both for academic and leisure purposes. Children’s fiction could be useful for students in child development fields.

Non-fiction eBooks were desired resources both for public and academics, though they differed in the specifics. Publics were interested in general reference materials, while the academics were more interested in specific, targeted resources such as IT manuals, fine arts, geology, and the like.

- **eBook Models**

The group discussed the differences between buying eBooks outright or pursuing a lease/subscription model. Purchasing books outright can be an issue, particularly for non-fiction, because books can get out of date.

The need for collection development and weeding, both very time consuming processes, were also raised as a concern. The importance of being able to delete out of date resources was also raised.

Another concern was having a limited number of users per book, especially in a state as populous as Texas. DRM restrictions are another concern, as well as which platforms might be allowed, such as some vendors not allowing for use on Kindle.

- **Discussion**

All group members agreed that ease of use should be a priority. If the resource is difficult to access or use, then library users won't use it and staff are less likely to promote it.

The group was also in agreement that new eBook resources should be part of the TexShare core and therefore available to all libraries in the consortium, rather than patterning it after the optional TexSelect resources that libraries must pay an extra fee to receive.

Once suggestion raised was to consider avoiding the biggest publishers altogether and focus on smaller publishers with more specialized content, who might be more open to giving unlimited access to titles.

Open access Textbooks were also raised as a possibility, although this brings up the problem of curating and vetting the collection to ensure quality.

- **Conclusion**

Before returning for the second eBook meeting in four days, group members were asked to consider the possibilities and narrow them down to specific areas to consider, as well as what the realistic cost would be. Also to consider what amount of cost-share increase members might be willing to accept.

- **Meeting Attendance**

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