Introducing electronic books at Göteborg University

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Göteborg University Library has signed a contract with netLibrary providing users on the University's network access to 500 copyrighted electronic books. These electronic books represent "the third wave" at our Digital Library- the earlier "waves" of resource networking were bibliographic databases and electronic journals. The project is funded by the university board and was started in 2001 after testing and preparations during the fall of 2000. The only realistic alternative for the library was found to be netLibrary. The process started with a collection evaluation resulting in the creation of a list of titles appropriate for acquisition. Negotiations with netlibrary followed and a contract was signed in February 2001. The service was launched over the University's network in March 2001. After the local introduction of the netLibrary electronic books at the library the project work will continue with forming a eBook consortium. A study of other e-book alternatives will also be carried through. The current project will be evaluated on the basis of end-user experience.

Introduction

In February 2001 Göteborg University Library signed a contract with netLibrary providing access to 500 copyrighted electronic books for users on the University's network. Göteborg University Library has 7 libraries with a total of about 3 million volumes and serves Göteborg University, which is located in the southwestern part of Sweden, with a student population of some 36,000 and almost 3,000 teaching staff and researchers.

The eBook project, which is being funded by the University Board, was started in January 2001 after testing and preparation during the autumn of 2000. The project is run by the Digital Library[1], which is a part of the University Library. The project has three main goals; to acquire netLibrary titles as appropriate; to study the effects of eBooks on library work and user acceptance; to consider other library suppliers of eBooks; and to test various forms for future library consortia.

The process of introducing copyrighted electronic books beyond the freely available texts is complicated and very educative for a library. Being one of the first libraries in Europe to accomplish this doesn't make it easier. In this paper we want to present our work on establishing an eBook service at Göteborg University Library. Our presentation will not

focus on the grand theories but is just a simple account of what it was like and how we acted. To this will be added some general thoughts on the nature of a collection of eBooks and on all the rethinking and adjustments that have to accompany the transition from the world of print to the digital world.

Our experience as a netLibrary customer is not very extensive. After periods of testing in 2000 the Library started the eBook selection process in December 2000, negotiated in January 2001, got access later in the same month, carried out staff training in February – March, imported eBook records into our OPAC in March and launched the service on 20th March.

Private eBooks or library net collections?

The first decision to make was if we should consider supplying eBooks through different kinds of reader devices and hand-held computers. Since we were looking for a general library solution, the supply of eBooks through specialized eBook reader hardware would not be an acceptable method for our users. The only realistic infrastructure is the web and ordinary PC's. These two tools are the most frequent ones at hand (with no library intervention) for students as well as researchers.

Negotiation process

Viewed in this perspective choosing netLibrary as our first supplier was one of the easiest parts in purchasing eBooks, since there were no other library alternatives available. Contract negotiations were begun in January 2001, and the contract was signed in February.

All negotiation was conducted with the head office of netLibrary. During this process a European office in London and recently also an agency for the Scandinavian market were established. Testing and negotiating with a company which until recently had only Mountain Time office and support hours did have some disadvantages for a customer in Europe.

Conditions

In order to distribute eBooks to libraries there must of course be systems for the protection of copyright and the commercial interests involved. An eBook may be used by only one person at a time. If there are too few copies available, further copies will have to be bought. The texts are encrypted. There are technical obstacles against copying or downloading more than a few pages.

Services

NetLibrary has developed standard solutions for eBooks concerning a wide range of service offers. This is a pioneer work that has shown that there are ways of distributing modern academic literature from well-known publishers breaking the distrust of publishers against electronic publishing in libraries.

The main services are listed below:
- Pricing: A standard price list based on list prices and options for two models of payment.
- Lending: An eBook may only be used by one person at a time.
- Access: Accessing is IP-filtered, and when you are in a netLibrary accessible address you will be directed to the netLibrary collections your library has acquired.
- Collections: About 30,000 modern titles in English only and 4,000 copyright-free titles.
- Searching: Conventional searches can be carried out on author, title, subject etc., but also in full text.
- Catalogue: MARC records can be delivered and easily transferred to a local OPAC.
- On-line reading: May be done through an ordinary web browser.
- Offline reading: Can be done through a client (PC's only). The client has added some services (notes, underlining etc.) that are not implemented in the web browser reader.
- Administration: The lending system server is situated in USA. Library administrators can set parameters on loan periods, rights of staff and users etc.
- Backup: The system has backup facilities for the customers in cooperation with OCLC in case the company should cease to operate.

Choosing titles

To be a netLibrary customer you have to buy 500 titles to start up. A group of experienced acquisition librarians made their choices among the 30,000 titles available. We were a bit disappointed that we were not allowed to use the total netLibrary book database for that purpose. The librarians had to work with different types of lists, which were distributed by netLibrary or downloaded from their site.

The process of rethinking and readjusting the acquisition criteria normally applied for printed books to adequate ones for eBooks was certainly a very educative experience. Should we buy books we already own? Which books should be hired for an annual fee, and which should be permanently acquired?

Cataloguing eBooks

NetLibrary provides full-level MARC records for every eBook in the netLibrary collection. The company uses the paper-book MARC record to create an eBook MARC record in MARC21 format.[2] When netLibrary began cataloguing eBooks, they identified issues that had not been addressed by bibliographic standards and formats such as Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd ed Rev and MARC Bibliographic Standards. NetLibrary and OCLC therefore petitioned the Library of Congress to make changes in the rules for cataloguing eBooks, resulting in LCRI1.11A (Library of Congress Rule Interpretations 1.11A) [3] The problems of defining electronic reproduction and eBooks as reproductions of printed books is a very controversial subject. [4]

Silipigne Connaway, Vice President of Research and Library Systems at netLibrary, describes the eBook cataloguing challenges and presents netLibrary solutions in a very informative conference paper "Librarians, Producers, and Vendors: The netLibrary Experience". Her paper ends with a promising future for the enhanced bibliographic record. A

bibliographic record will include table of contents, links to book reviews etc. If publishers, technology providers and eBook providers work together they could map standards and schemes and, above all, integrate these into the MARC format. [5]

Göteborg University Library uses the Virtua library systems from VTLS, Inc. The process of integrating electronic book in our OPAC was surprisingly easy. We obtained records for our 500 electronic book titles directly from netLibrary's FTP site. There were no problems in the distribution via FTP to the Library, and the records were loaded correctly! Göteborg University OPAC currently uses the SweMARC format. Next year LIBRIS, the Swedish union catalogue of academic and special libraries, will convert to MARC21. Göteborg University Library and all other Swedish libraries will have to move to this format as well. The imported MARC 21 records for eBooks will need only minor changes, whereas the SweMARC records will have to undergo a more complex conversion.

In order to load eBook MARC21 records into our SweMARC OPAC, we shall have to modify the field for printed ISBN manually. The ISBN for the printed version comes in 020 $z. In order to make this ISBN searchable, we shall have to change the subfield to $a. We shall also have to add fields for the Swedish classification code (SAB) and for subject headings.

Since our OPAC already holds about 60 % of the records for the printed counterparts of our eBooks, the eBook record can be easily updated by copying and pasting tags for classification and subject headings in Virtua MARC editor.

Ellen Cannon and Beth Watson describe their experience of netLibrary project problems occurring in the cataloguing process.[6] They decided to remove the ISBN for the print version in order to avoid bad matches. We do not have this problem, because field 035 is the matching tag for record overwriting. Most important for the user is that the eBook MARC record has a tag (the 856) with the eBook´s URL. The user can go directly to the eBook at netLibrary by clicking the hyperlink. Cannon and Watson had to remove subfields in the 856 for the link to work. We had no problem with that.

For the moment VTLS has no cooperation with NetLibrary. Other library systems from Innovative, EPIXtech etc. have integrated the cataloguing module with netLibrary. The Millennium library system from Innovative will in the future also integrate the circulation modules. The possibility of queuing for a book is a service, which we should have been glad to offer to our users. Let us hope that this function will eventually become available to our library system as well.

Consortium

In USA, where most of the experience of netLibrary has been gained, there has been a trend to form large regional consortia.[7] When Göteborg University Library opted for netLibrary, we were planning to do the same. Göteborg University Library is now leading a consortium project funded by BIBSAM at the Royal Library in Stockholm. The consortium consists of 8 libraries and is focused on social sciences.

If you look at e-journal collections in libraries, you will find almost exactly the same journals in any well-equipped library around the world. This is of course a result of what is on the market, of the fact that no more than 20 % of all journal titles are needed to cover 80 % of the demand, and of various types of consortia.

When forming a consortium for monographs other rules than those for journals will have to be followed. The eBook in a consortium is an extremely swift inter-library loan where the cost of buying a book is spread out over all the consortium members. The main point is to bring about as much diversity as possible for the consortium titles. A very popular book could easily be purchased with several copies by the consortium or by a single member of it.

Evaluation

At this moment (April 2001) we really do not have a clue as to how our users will behave with our netLibrary books less than a month after the launching. Will they ignore them, or will their use sink the netLibrary server in Boulder?

There are already several studies concerning reading on the web[8], but they are mostly more concerned with the web as such and not with commercially available net libraries with amounts of books like netLibrary, Questia or eBrary.

In our project we will further on pose some very simple questions to our users on the basis of end-user experience. A master student from the Library School at Borås is to undertake the first evaluation. The study will contain a small interview study, later on to be followed up by a larger questionnaire. The most important questions are: *Will our users read a lot of text on the screen? What kind of texts do they want to read (ordinary monographs, reference material, textbooks)? How will they want to read/browse the literature?*

User statistics

The ordinary statistics to be had from an OPAC provides facts about the books and the users. netLibrary gives you facts about the books but not about your users. Invisibility increases when the supplier of the texts is on the Internet and not controlled by you. The same problems occur with user statistics of our e-journals. If the library does not run the server with the e-journals or eBooks those figures will just not be available.

The single eBook and the social net Book

The single eBook (The sequential text)

Ever since the invention of the codex the book has had its own status and ontology in the world of science. The book is a closed piece of content with a beginning and an end. In the Eighties, when the PC:s arrived and the texts began to be digitized in a larger scale, the book market foresaw huge amounts of floppy-disk and CD books to be sold, but such predictions turned out to be false. Most of the expected users found reading on a computer uncomfortable despite the new opportunities to search through the texts. Publishers saw the CD-ROM as a good way of selling a "thing". With the technical breakthrough around the year 2000 of various specially adapted readers there have been tremendous hopes and plans for a new eBook era. This time they are based on new and refined cryptographic techniques, such as linking an eBook to a single computer. Nevertheless this is nothing but a typical

old-fashioned ASQ (Automating Status Quo) – merely copying the advantages of a single printed book with the added value of a search facility covering the full text of the book.

The social net book (recognizing the non-sequential text)

For the moment we can't predict that the modern eBook on a single device will be a commercial failure but we can say that large searchable amounts of relevant texts will offer new opportunities for a user. That was clearly understood by the early fathers of hypertext theory V. Bush[9], T. Nelson[10] and J.C.R. Licklider[11]. They all saw the scientific book giving references to other sources and literature as a kind of hypertext in print.

The problems were the physical limitations and searchability of the book. Nelson called a printed book a sequential reading meaning that there is just one way to read a book from start to ending. Licklider saw the future for a research information system as a fusion of computer networks and the libraries. Most of the predictions that were made in earlier decades have come through. Perhaps they underestimated the role of the future commercial actors expecting the scientific literature to be freely distributed without commercial bonds. A wish, that hasn't hitherto been fulfilled.

Studies of the use of large e-journal collections[12] give somewhat amazing results about the relationship between the use of journal titles already owned in print by a library and titles not owned in print. The titles not owned in print and therefore not earlier chosen by the library are being used just as much as or even more than the printed/chosen ones. Have we librarians got it all wrong? Over the last few years we have heard the complaints of our colleagues: "We must have the opportunity to choose the titles." Perhaps it is now the user's choice in an environment with large collections of titles and books.

Conclusions

What will our library be doing in the next few months? A lot of marketing has to be undertaken within the University. Plenty of work has to be devoted to classifying and adjusting our imported netLibrary catalogue records. The problem of how to handle free e-journals and e-texts in the OPAC will have to be considered. The evaluation project is to be continued during the autumn. The consortium process will go on and hopefully be up in September 2001. The library has applied for another project this year. If this will be granted we will focus on library solutions concerning price models and technology with suppliers of academic literature from Sweden.

What will happen in the future with eBooks? As mentioned above, there are some trends o consider – the single or social eBook. Will the eBook suppliers accept the security levels and price models for library use? What will the relations be like between libraries and suppliers that make hundreds of thousands of titles searchable? Will libraries put all the titles in their OPAC's or leave it all to the supplier? We already have a number of problems with a few thousands of journal titles, but how do we act with these masses of eBook titles that will arrive? Will the Z39.50 protocol be our saver? Will library eBook solutions prevail, or will it all boil down to individual micro payments in the end?

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Available at http://www.ub.gu.se/Gdig/ebok/index_eng.html [April 17, 2001]

2 netLibrary eBook MARC records Available at http://www.netlibrary.com/eBook_News/marc.asp [April 17, 2001]

3 Draft LCRI 1.11A Non-Microfilm and Electronic Reproduction. Background to the Revision of LCRI 1.
Available at http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/1_11A_cover.html [April 17, 2001]

4 The problems defining what an electronic reproduction is have been discussed in many cataloging groups. The concept of "reproduction" is also one of 12 changes in cataloging rules which according to Matthew Beacom are necessary to adapt to a digital networked communications environment. His paper at the Bicentennial Conference on Bibliographic Control for the New Millenium (Beacom, Matthew. Crossing a Digital Divede: AACR and Unadressed Problems of Networked Resources. Bicentennial Conference of Bibliographic Control for the Next Millenium. Available at http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/bibcontrol/beacom.html [April 17, 2001]) ends with the list of changes he wants AACR2 to adapt. In number 4 on the list he points out that concepts such as "original" or "copy" may continue to be highly useful for analog materials but not for electronic resources.
    His suggestion, "Re-define the concept of a "reproduction" in an age of digital networked materials", was accepted by the postconference Topical Discussion Group 4B "How can AACR become more responsive to Cataloging Networked Resources on the Web?" Available at http://www.loc.gov/catdir/bibcontrol/ [April 17, 2001]
    The discussion group decided to develop a package of rule revisions. These revisions are now put on the agenda for the Joint Steering Committee meeting in april 2001. (Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Angle-American Cataloguing Rules. Draft Agenda. Washington, DC, USA, 2-4 april 2001.
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