

E-books use by Pharmacy students: overcoming barriers

Project proposal: 3 August 2012

Overall aims

The School of Pharmacy was established in 2004 and has grown steadily each year, with student numbers approximating 400 in 2011-2012. Due to the recent nature and the rapid expansion of the MPharm degree course, the library has been largely unable to meet the concurring demand for undergraduate textbooks. To meet student needs, the library acquired a large number of e-books over the last three years, including many core texts. However, usage statistics show that these are not heavily used, and student dissatisfaction with library resources has remained high. This project aims to investigate the barriers to e-books usage, and to discuss the ways in which these may be overcome. Its overall aim is the formulation of a strategy for the promotion of e-books to Pharmacy students, and the development of an information literacy programme that will equip them with the skills they need to make effective use of electronic books.

Expected benefits

- More targeted spending of library budgets
- Better use of library resources by Pharmacy students
- Higher student satisfaction with library resources, which will contribute to overall student satisfaction as measured by the National Student Survey
- The development of students' digital literacy, which is transferable and will benefit students throughout their academic and professional career
- The findings of this project will inform the overarching e-book strategy that the Library is currently looking to develop

Staff

- Erika Delbecque, the Liaison Librarian for Pharmacy, will be responsible for overseeing and carrying out this project in consultation with Helen Hathaway, the Sciences Liaison Team Manager and Christopher Cipkin, the Course Support Co-ordinator
- Funding from the JISC Digitally Ready project would enable the library to employ a student assistant, which would ensure that the aforementioned ambitions can be fully realised
- Stakeholders:
 - Pharmacy students

- Library acquisitions department
- Liaison Librarians
- The e-book strategy working group
- Director of Teaching and Learning for Pharmacy
- The library representative for Pharmacy

Scope

Includes

- An investigation into the barriers that prevent students from using e-books
- The suggestion of solutions for each barrier that is discovered, informed by current research in the field
- The formulation and implementation of a strategy for the promotion of e-books
- The integration of skills that are necessary to access and use e-books effectively into the digital literacy programme
- Revisions to the spending of library resources for Pharmacy in accordance with the findings of the project

Excludes

- An investigation into the use of other electronic resources, such as e-journals and databases

Main tasks

- Devising and carrying out a survey on e-book usage amongst Pharmacy students. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected. The usage of print books of which the library holds an electronic copy as well will serve as a bench mark.
- Setting up focus groups and carrying out interviews for the collection of more in-depth qualitative data
- Analysis and discussion of the results
- Rebalancing of the spending of the library budget as necessary, depending on the findings
- Development and delivery of a promotional strategy
- Development of students' digital literacy skills in the use of e-books
- Impact evaluation through the comparative analysis of usage statistics and qualitative feedback from students through focus groups

Deliverables

- The integration of training on accessing and using e-books into the digital literacy programme for Pharmacy students
- A targeted promotional strategy for e-books, which will include advice on the Library web pages
- The increased usage of Pharmacy e-books
- The revision of the library budgets for Pharmacy as necessary

- Collection development that is more tailored towards student needs
- A project report
- The resulting article will be entered for the Sheila Corrall Publication Award, with an eye to publication in an academic or professional Library Studies journal

Dates

- **Start:** October 2012
- **Finish:** June 2013
- **Milestones:**
 - student survey October 2012
 - focus groups December 2012
 - Implementation of suggestions by May 2013

Costs

- **Financial cost:** This project will mostly make use of available staff time. The student assistant would be expected to work around 3 hours a week on the project over a period of two months. Refreshments will be offered to students who attend the focus groups.

	Cost per hour	Number of hours	Total cost
Project management	n/a (makes use of available staff time)	Appr. 100	–
Student assistant	£13.21	25	£330.25
Focus groups	£10	4	£40
			£370.25

Documentation

Berg, S. A., Hoffmann, K., & Dawson, D. (2010). 'Not on the same page: Undergraduates' information retrieval in electronic and print books'. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 36(6), 518-525.

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