

## Meeting Review: Getting to Grips with Developing and Managing ebook Collections

Reviewed by Susan Pilcher

UKeiG's course *Getting to Grips with Developing and Managing ebook Collections – an Introduction* was a highly informative and useful event. The course was presented by Ray Lonsdale and Chris Armstrong. I was hoping to find out some of the issues involved with eBooks, as I felt I had a limited knowledge and understanding. The day really did address my needs.

The day began with a discussion as to what an eBook is. After some discussion, it was concluded that an eBook is more than simply an electronic book. It can be a digitised version of a print book, available in different formats, or it can be digital born, that is, never having existed in print form. One thing we can say for sure about the eBook is that it is meant to be read on a screen, and we had a brief discussion about the types of devices used and the differences between them.

The course looked at different eBook providers and trends in publishing. eBook publishing began with commercial publishers, in particular university presses in North America in the mid-1980s. An interesting new development by some publishers is that users can create their own eBook. This involves bringing together several chapters from different textbooks. Some publishers are now

looking to license their eBooks directly to students. There are different types of eBook providers: they comprise publishers, aggregators and bookshops. We also looked at a range of free eBooks.

Following on from this discussion, we had a practical hands-on session where delegates were able to explore the different eBook providers and their eBooks. Particular attention was paid to the different interfaces and their ease of use. We then discussed how our users may find the different interfaces.

The course then focussed on licences and some of the types of access different suppliers provide. This was all very enlightening, as eBooks may be accessed by purchasing them, by subscription or through a form of ownership. The latter involves buying credits, which are used each time the book is accessed. It was interesting to consider the legal issues involved when obtaining eBooks in terms of the licences. Questions were raised as to what can go wrong, what happens when a publisher goes out of business, and what then happens to the library's eBook supply?

EBook accessibility was considered, and we looked at how they are displayed on the OPACS and whether there are links on the library website etc. It was stressed that eBooks need to stand out and be accessible to our users to ensure that they are being used. As well as ensuring the eBooks are accessible, we were told to remember the importance of marketing and promoting eBooks. Various methods were discussed for libraries, such as splitting up induction sessions so that students aren't told about everything in one go. In theory, by having separate sessions on different resources, the students will be more receptive,

posters, surrogate eBooks on the shelves, using QR codes, etc. Academic staff, publishers, aggregators and official bodies also have a role in this area.

This course was exactly what I was hoping for. Chris and Ray didn't assume we had a vast knowledge as the course was an introduction. They made sure they gave delegates the opportunity to ask for clarification on certain points before continuing. I now have a much better understanding of a variety of issues surrounding eBooks, and it was an enjoyable and informative day.