A QUICK GUIDE TO
PURCHASING
EBOOKS FOR K-12 SCHOOLS

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SEVEN WAYS SCHOOLS CAN LEVERAGE EBOOKS

Classroom technology integration is a priority for Mississippi districts and schools. Having digital books to provide easily accessible content to students is an essential component. Here are seven ways ebooks can be used by **ALL** students.

Emerging Readers

Students who read at a lower level than their classmates tend to shy away from reading all together. Digital books let them read at the level they are comfortable with while maintaining privacy.

Class-Assigned Readings

Teachers can use ebooks for various class assignments, enabling them to access the titles on any device, so they will always have their books whether the students are at school, home, or on the go.

Read-Alouds for EL Students

English Language Learners can better understand sentence structure and language flow by listening to digital books with read-aloud features. Studies show that listening to ebooks helps with knowledge retention and well as comprehension.

School Libraries

School librarians can help provide book recommendations that support the current MSCCR standards as well as encourage students to read. All ebooks would be a part of the library's collection.

Test Prep

Students want to study when it is convenient for them. Test prep in digital format can be accessed from anywhere. Unlike physical test-prep materials, students can highlight text and take notes on their device.

Language Learning

Students studying a new language can borrow digital titles in that language to better understand format and structure. Students can listen to the foreign language for context clues and flow.

Supplemental Readings

Teachers can assign supplemental digital reading materials to align with any subject or topic. Additional reading provides more in-depth insight into the curriculum, and students can access the content on their own time.

RESOURCE: www.iste.org/.explore/innovator-solutions/7-ways-schools-are-leveraging-ebooks-and-audiobooks

FUNDING

The purchase of library media supports (e.g., ebooks and digital resources) are allowable under Title I, Part and therefore allowable under the CARES Act. If an LEA identifies the need in the comprehensive needs assessment and includes it in their schoolwide plan, the funds can be spent as noted.

Digital resources such as ebooks and audiobooks can be purchased using funds for library books (print). Ebooks and audiobooks are considered library books even though they are not in a print format.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

It is crucial for your school librarian to create a collection development plan that ensures that ebooks and other digital resources fill the needs within the library's collection as well as student and teacher needs. To ensure the library's digital collection reflects the school curricula, librarians should collaborate with faculty and staff. Independent student reading is an essential goal of education, and it is necessary to align digital resources to student interests and reading levels.

Aligning Digital Resources to the Curriculum

1. Use an evaluation tool or quick surveys to identify areas that need to be strengthened by the implementation of ebooks and digital resources. Most ebook vendors can provide a collection analysis to help in this endeavor. **4.4 Collection Evaluation Forms** https://mdek12.org/LC

2. Identify the diverse needs and interests of the student population. Schools should not purchase the virtual form of the current library's collection but should purchase digital resources that enhance the current collection.

3. Prepare a collection development plan for needed digital resources. Include the acquisition information for the ebooks that are required (e.g., license and user information). **See page 8 for more information.**

4. Use the alignment to create a budget that will help build your digital collection over the next three years. This information can be used in your schoolwide plan when purchasing ebooks and digital resources using federal funds. **6.2 Budget Justification Form** https://mdek12.org/ASL

5. Present the digital resource collection development plan to the School Library Advocacy Committee for final review. **6.8 Library Program SMART Goal** https://mdek12.org/ASL

UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL BOOKS

As Mississippi schools are transitioning to a more digital learning platform, there are different elements to understand when purchasing ebooks from vendors. The same school library collection development policy that is used for print resources should apply to ebooks as well.

Publisher Licensing Models

Does the publisher offer an unlimited multi-use license, that could let every reader in your school access a title at the same time?

- **Concurrent Readers** - Purchasing a multi-use license may be more cost-effective than purchasing a single copy or a small number of copies of a title regarding class-assigned reading or popular fiction titles.

- **Number of Loans** - Publishers may set a limit on the number of times your library can lend a title. This is usually about 25 times. When you reach the maximum number of loans, your license expires, and you will have to decide whether to repurchase a license.

- **License Terms** - Publishers may set a period that your license is valid. This is usually up to 2 years. Some titles may be available with a 'perpetual' term.

Formats and Devices

Digital books are generally ePub or PDF format. ePub files offer readability benefits, including hypertext linking and reader tools such as built-in dictionaries, and the ability to change page and font settings. An additional readability benefit of ePub files is that they are responsive to the device used to view them, so the text flow adjusts automatically to fit the device size. By contrast, PDF files are displayed as the book would appear in print, regardless of the device.

- **Single- or Multi-Purpose Devices** - Many people use dedicated eReaders devices for digital books; however, students and teachers will benefit more from ebooks that can be read on multi-purpose devices such as smartphones, tablets, desktops, and laptops.

- **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)** - Many schools have BYOD policies that allow students to connect their own devices to the school's network. Any student-owned device can be used to read ebooks that located in the school library's automated system.

Adding Digital Books to the Collection

Making decisions about adding ebooks to the school library's collection should be part of the school library's collection development policy. Students' literacy and learning needs should be central to the collection development decisions. The School Library Advocacy Committee should be a part of the decision on what titles and types of digital books are added to the school library's collection.

- **Suppliers** - Most print library book vendors provide individually purchased ebooks or grade-leveled ebook subscriptions (e.g., EPIC! or OPEN eBooks). Some digital learning resource companies offer ebooks that are embedded into the program.

- **Digital Book Consortium** - Developments in ebook supply have made consortia options available in schools. It is possible to develop consortia between groups of schools. You will need to ask ebook vendors what the possibilities are regarding sharing licenses.

- **Providing Access** - School librarians should catalog ebooks using the same standards outlined in **Section 4.7** in the current **Mississippi Public and Nonpublic School Library Guide**. This will help students and teachers find and access ebooks through the school library's automated system. Book vendors can provide records to download into the automated system.

- **Open Access Digital Books** - High-quality open access ebooks can be cataloged using the item's URL. For example, you can link from your catalog to an item from Storyline Online.

- **Promoting Collection** - It is crucial to make it easy for students and teachers to access the school's ebook collection. This can include displaying posters or creating bulletin boards to promote the collection or by merely adding icons and verbiage to the school's website and social media platforms.

Digital Rights Management (DRM)

To prevent illegal lending and copyright, publishers apply digital rights software to ebooks. Schools cannot purchase ebooks similar to personal use ebooks from Amazon, Apple, or Google. Schools must buy them through book vendors that have negotiated DRM with publishers and can pass the rights to schools.

Some ebooks are available without DRM. These include titles that are available in the public domain. This means they are freely available for lending, with no permission required (e.g., Project Gutenberg).

RESOURCE: https://natlib.govt.nz/schools/school-libraries/collections-and-resources/selecting-resources-for-your-collection/ebooks-in-the-school-library

Acquisition Models

According to a recent survey, more than 70% of school libraries rely on multiple models to develop their ebook collections. The following table explains the different elements that need to be considered when purchasing ebooks to enable schools to optimize budgets, improve outcomes, and see a higher return on investment.

	Price	License Types	User Types	Features	Devices
Interactive eBooks	$40 each	No checkout limits No public posting of school's login and password	Unlimited simultaneous access	**Interactive Features:** Audio, annotation tools, innovative navigation, smart search options **Other Features:** Work with most library OPACs (circulation data), interactive lesson plans and student activities, correlates with AR and Lexile	Computer – Windows, MAC Tablet – MAC, Android Interactive Whiteboard Digital content app or hub with single sign-on capability Offline reading capability
Single Purchase eBooks	$15-$50 each	24 checkouts 12 – 36-month period One-time purchase	Single-User Access Unlimited simultaneous access Subscription Access	**Interactive Features:** Annotation tools, full-text search, dictionary support **Other Features:** Correlates with AR and Lexile, works with most library OPACs (circulation data)	Computer – Windows, MAC Tablet – MAC, Android, Amazon Digital content app or hub with single sign-on capability Offline reading capability
Subscription	Monthly or yearly subscription	Annual subscription license	Unlimited simultaneous access	**Interactive Features:** Text accessibility features, audio, quizzes **Other Features:** Broad range of topics and titles, reading tracker, bilingual, class rosters	Computer – Windows, MAC Tablet – MAC, Android Offline reading capability Digital content app or hub with single sign-on capability

CURRENT RESEARCH

Even with increased numbers of student devices, schools' purchases and use of ebooks have not followed the same path. A big reason for this is the restrictions book publishers have imposed on ebook lending. The following articles explain how to navigate publishers' policies and student usage.

Dawkins, A. M., & Gavigan, K. W. (2019). E-Book Collections in High School Libraries: Factors Influencing Circulation and Usage. *School Library Research, 22.*

Although a sizeable body of research is available examining the circulation and usage of ebooks in academic and public libraries, there has yet to be a scientific study examining these variables in high school libraries. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of high school ebook collections through the analysis of circulation data and interviews with school librarians. Quantitative results revealed that ebook circulation represented a significantly low total circulation for most of the high school libraries examined. Findings suggested that purchasing practices and marketing strategies can have a considerable impact on the circulation and use of ebooks in high school libraries.

McVicker, C. (2017). Last Child in the Library?: A Survey of Use of Ebooks versus Traditional Books. *Children & Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children, 15*(4), 4–7. **https://doi.org/10.5860/cal.15.4.4**

The article discusses research that surveyed fourth-grade students in a school district on the west side of Kansas City, Kansas, on their use of electronic books (ebooks) and traditional books. Topics covered include reasons for students' preference for ebooks, students' complaints on reading electronically, and the need for teachers, parents, and librarians to teach and inspire literacy with digital devices.

Rothman, A. (2017). Ebooks in Public School Libraries: Are We There Yet? *Knowledge Quest, 45*(5), 30–37.

Demands for school technology innovations, implementation of 1:1 device model, and increased interest in digital media highlight complicated issues such as funding, equity, and decision making for ebook collection development and programming in schools. This article addresses the author's experience with an ebook action research study designed to illuminate her school library's ebook decisions within a manageable and affordable pilot program.

Mississippi Department of Education
SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAM