

## Let Me See That eBook: Managing Cataloguing and Access through Collaboration

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### *Abstract:*

Electronic resources have become a vital part of research collections. Online journals and databases are solidly planted in academic library collections and in the research habits of faculty and students.

Over the past several years, academic libraries have seen this increasing demand for electronic resources expand into electronic books. Collection budgets have shifted to meet this demand through the increased acquisition of electronic books and electronic book packages. However, the sheer number of titles involved has made providing digital access to electronic books through traditional cataloguing extremely challenging.

It has become clear that traditional in-house cataloguing of electronic books is neither feasible nor sustainable, even with cooperative cataloguing tools such as Z39.50 and WorldCat. And as cataloguing departments see decreases in staff resources but increases in the number of titles requiring access for users, they are forced to consider new ways of managing catalogue records.

Like many other institutions, the University of Calgary has chosen to use external sources of catalogue records for electronic books. It has become evident from doing so that publishers, academic libraries, vendors, and library service providers need to collaborate on an expanded scale in order to ensure sustainable workflows for academic institutions and the best possible digital access for users.

This paper covers the challenges that the University of Calgary has faced with electronic book cataloguing and digital access and its new-found success in managing these activities by partnering with Serials Solutions, Yankee Book Peddler (YBP), and ebrary. The focus is on the collaborative efforts made by all of these parties to make electronic resources available on a mass scale through the library catalogue and beyond.

*Background:*

The University of Calgary has pursued various solutions to managing ebook cataloguing and access. The paths taken by the University to provide digital access to ebook content developed out of trial and error and were largely driven by the problematic environment surrounding ebook publishing and distribution.

The management of ebook cataloguing and digital access has been complicated for various reasons:

- (1) The sheer volume of records involved poses huge problems for cataloguing and IT departments. For example, where in the print world, a mid-size academic institution might place upwards of 30,000 monograph orders annually, a single ebook package purchase can exceed 40,000 titles. The severity of this particular complication is most evident when the number of subscriptions and purchases with ebook content of any given institution are considered. As an example, the University of Calgary subscribes to or has purchased over 130 individual packages with ebook content.
- (2) One solution to the problem of record volume has been to have vendors supply MARC records for the packages they offer. However, that too has proved problematic because of the varying cataloguing standards applied to records by vendors and even by academic institutions themselves.
- (3) Once it is decided to use records provided by vendors, institutions then have to devise ways to make these vendor-supplied records compliant with their own local practices, through customization with package-specific programming scripts and the use of canned loading programs in integrated library systems, both of which often need to be set up uniquely for each ebook package in the library's collection. The end result is that the greater the number of ebook packages held by an institution, the greater the amount of programming has to be developed and the greater the number of hours have to be spent to provide digital access to the ebook content. Again the University of Calgary's example of having more than 130 packages with ebook content should be recalled.

- (4) Regular reviews of vendor record sets are also necessary in order to check for anomalies and inconsistencies resulting from the shifting needs of libraries and vendors' ability to keep up with those shifts while ensuring that all libraries' needs are met.
- (5) Perhaps the most exasperating complication with providing catalogue access for ebooks is maintenance. Unfortunately, the loading of a record set to the catalogue does not signal an end to work, as constant maintenance to ebook records is often required due to the volatile nature of ebook packages, with titles constantly being pulled or added to a subscription or with the url structure in the records changing unexpectedly for entire products. And often times there is no clear mechanism for an institution to be notified of such adjustments, with staff having to check individual ftp and websites for relevant information (Blummer, 6) or users themselves reporting problems with access. The latter is of course what any provider of a service hopes to avoid.
- (6) Underlying all other complications with ebook records, there is the lack of a unique identifier specific to a title or work, and not to the electronic reproduction or manifestation of a title or work. In some cases, only the print ISBNs are applied in ebook records; in others, only the eISBN is applied, but that eISBN is specific to the platform on which the ebook is displayed, and not to the ebook itself (what may be seen as analogous to each print distribution centre supplying a different ISBN to the same print item); and in yet other cases, one can encounter every possible combination of print and electronic ISBNs being applied to a record. This lack of a common identifier makes it next to impossible for the library to avoid, or at least identify, the loading of duplicate titles into the catalogue (the equivalent of cross coverage in the eserials world).

*Direction through Collaboration:*

The six complications explained above likely echo the sentiments of many a cataloguing department across the library spectrum.

The University of Calgary wanted to come up with ways to address all of these issues as effectively as possible. There was no desire, however, to design a relational database system for tracking ebook packages, to retrain and reassign cataloguing and library IT staff, and effectively to shift all cataloguing and access priority to one format, the ebook. Instead, it was decided to turn to the tenets of good business practice:

“Since staff comprises the largest component of operating budgets, good business practices suggest that designing workflow processes, which allocate minimal staff and time... is to be desired provided that there is no negative impact on identification and access for users.” (Busby, 32)

“Cost and complexity need to be driven out of library activity. This drives an interest in standardization and consolidation.” (Ibid.)

Standardization is of course the great torch borne by many a cataloguer or metadata specialist and its importance seems to shine through all adversity, but the keyword in considering how to create sustainable workflows at the University of Calgary was that of ‘consolidation.’ As a result, it was decided to develop an ebook cataloguing policy at the University of Calgary (see *Bibliography* for

electronic document) with input from the Library's public services unit, collections unit, cataloguing unit, and IT unit primarily to increase awareness of obstacles to providing access to ebooks but also to inform staff of possible solutions and to elicit ideas and feedback. The ultimate goal was to enable the most ebook records possible to be loaded to the catalogue and made accessible to users through a sustainable workflow.

The basic idea behind the policy was to consolidate the record sources the University of Calgary uses for ebook packages and, as a result, to consolidate the actual loading of these records to the catalogue, in other words, to take the number 130 and reduce it as much as possible.

Through meetings and discussions with vendor representatives, at both the University and library conferences and gatherings, it became evident that the best way for the University of Calgary to minimize cataloguing and IT work while maximizing access to content was to implement and prioritize Serials Solutions MARC services for ebooks and to continue to leverage ebrary's record delivery and platform options, as both of these services act as a single source of quality records for multiple ebook products and normalize titles between multiple ebook products.

It is at this point that collaborative aspects come into play. Where real collaboration occurs is when the various services offered by vendors are aligned to improve the library's workflows and ultimately user access.

For example, it was around the time that this policy was developed that licensing, purchasing, and technical specifications for "shelf-ready" ordering of ebooks in YBP's Gobi system were finalized. In this case, the alignment was between the library's needs and YBP and ebrary's systems.

Because ebrary is the preferred ebook platform at the University of Calgary, ebook orders placed in Gobi were set to be for the ebrary version only. It was decided to obtain MARC records through YBP, and not through ebrary, because YBP's processes were seen to align better with the Library's workflow for material receipt and invoicing. The technical specifications for record customization and delivery by YBP were then written to identify duplicate titles by generating the 001 MARC field (the control number assigned by the organization creating, using, or distributing the record) from ebrary's unique identifiers, which are contained in the url and are necessary for linking, and then using that number for record matching in the loading process. Since ebrary does not assign multiple identifiers to the same title, regardless of the title being multiple- vs. single-user or having perpetual access vs. subscription status, this ensures the library's ability to identify and address instances of title duplication.

As is illustrated in the following figure, the use of YBP's shelf-ready services alongside ebrary's system has been a success for firm ordered ebooks at the University of Calgary. The first sixteen months of these services have seen constant additions of ebook titles to the library's collection and catalogue.

### Ebooks ordered through Yankee Book Peddler added to the catalogue over time

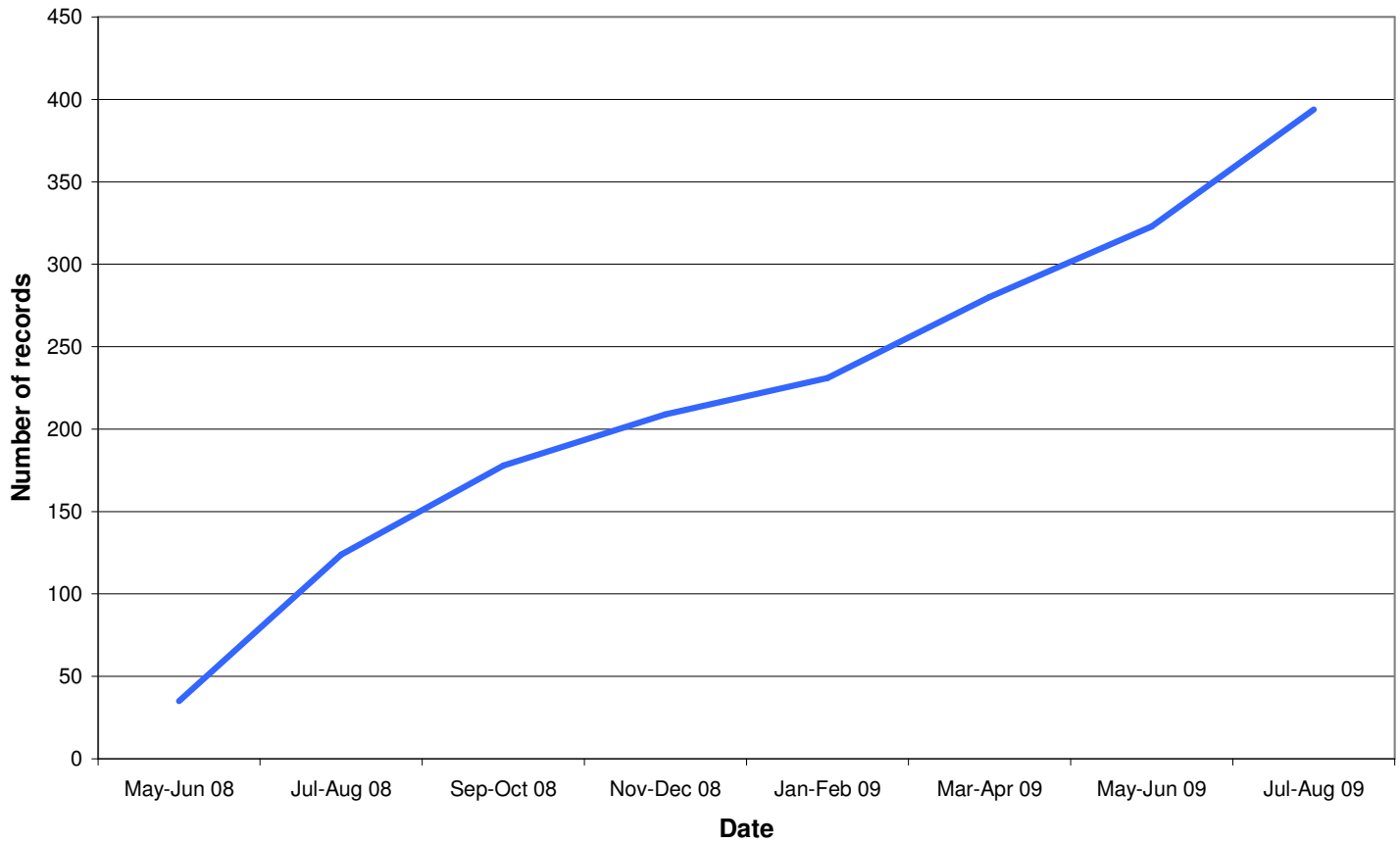


Figure 1: Number of ebook titles ordered through Yankee Book Peddler (YBP) for the ebrary platform and added to the University of Calgary's library catalogue over a sixteen-month period using YBP's shelf-ready services.

The use of ebrary's record delivery options for such subscription and perpetual access packages as Academic Complete and the Canadian Electronic Library have also been successful.

### Number of records added to the catalogue to August 2009 for ebrary's Academic Complete and Canadian Electronic Library ebook packages

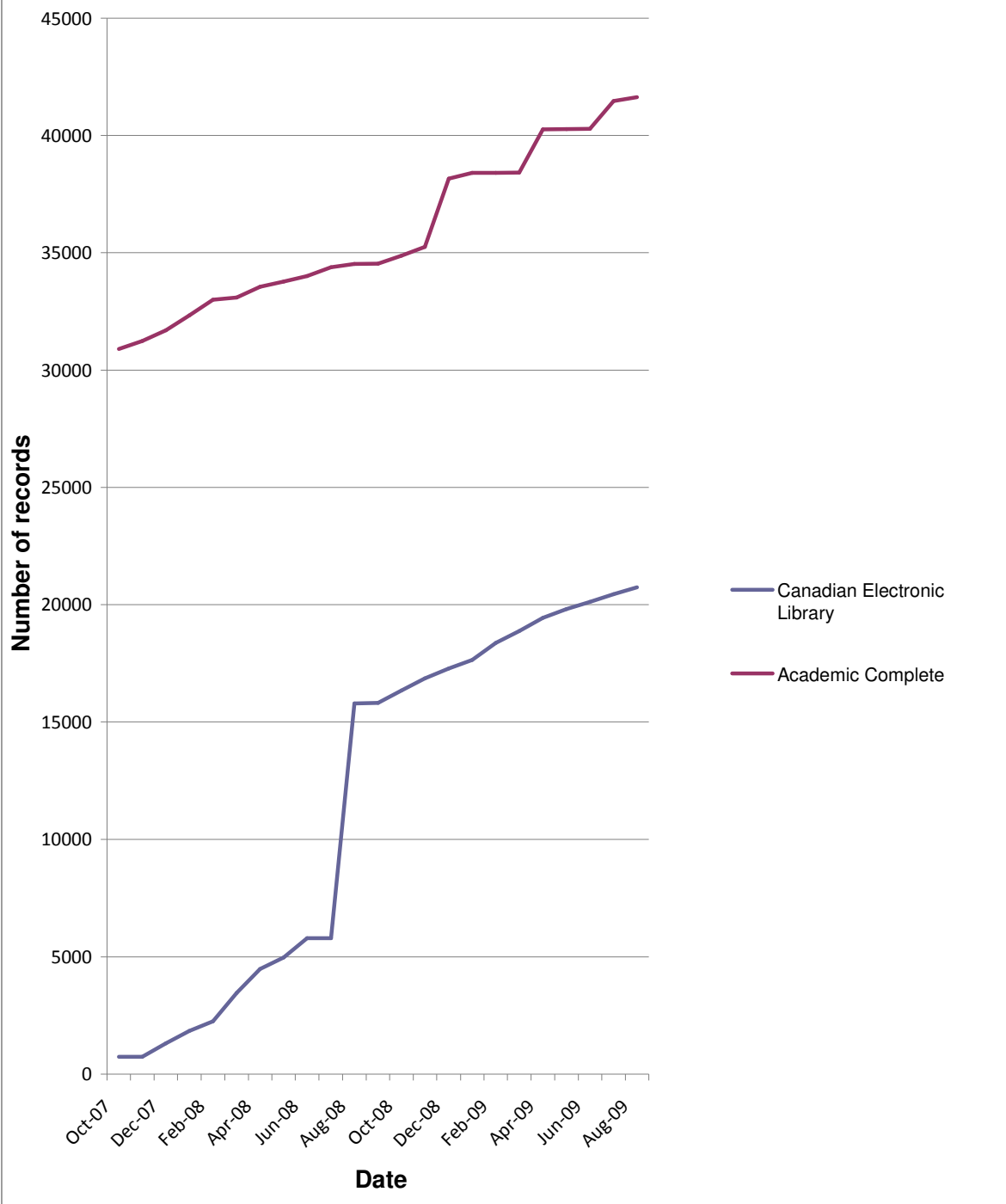


Figure 2: Number of ebook records added to the University of Calgary's library catalogue over a two-year period using ebrary's MARC services. The ebook packages loaded to the catalogue are Academic Complete and Canadian Electronic

Library, the latter of which comprises the Canadian Health Research, Canadian Publishers, and Canadian Public Policy collections

However, there are some limitations to the title normalization and provision of records offered in ebrary. Ebrary, of course, cannot provide records for titles that are not hosted on its platform, nor can it normalize titles across platforms, and it shouldn't be expected to do either of these things.

At the University of Calgary, it was decided that, in cases where it is known that cross coverage between platforms is possible, and given that title normalization is desired in order to prevent the loading of duplicate records to the catalogue, the best available option would be a MARC record service that manages a knowledge base, since this type of service acts as both a single source of quality records for multiple ebook products and normalizes titles across multiple ebook platforms. An example of such a service is Serials Solutions' MARC record service for ebooks.

A good example of the complications involved with identifying duplication across platforms is provided by the various options available for obtaining Springer ebooks. Complete Springer ebook packages are available on the SpringerLink, ebrary, MyiLibrary, etc. platforms, while individual titles are available for purchase on multiple platforms through book vendors such as YBP and Blackwell and select titles are also provided through subscription packages such as Safari Technical Books and Knovel Library.

The example of Springer clearly shows that there is no possible way to ensure that all Springer titles available to a library are on a single platform. This situation is not unique to Springer, nor is it wrong for Springer to have made its content available through so many avenues. In fact, it could be argued that it is excellent that Springer has done this, as it allows all types of libraries to gain access to its ebook titles, not just those that have with large collections budgets. However, managing the digital access and discoverability of this content is highly complex, which, as stated previously, is exactly what libraries need to avoid.

A specific example of how cross-platform duplication can be dealt with is provided by the University of Calgary's purchase of the Wiley InterScience Online Books - Veterinary collection. As one collections measure to support the new faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Calgary, just over 100 veterinary-medicine related ebooks were selected for purchase from Wiley with dual access on the InterScience and ebrary platforms. Ebrary offered a set of records for this package, and the InterScience platform package was available in Serials Solutions for activation in its MARC record services. Loading both sets of records would result in duplicate records being added to the catalogue, and the time required to customize and load the records would be at least double what it should be for cataloguing and IT staff. A solution to this problem was seen in enhancing collaboration between ebrary, Serials Solutions, and the University Library.

The end result was the creation of an ebrary-hosted package in the Serials Solutions knowledgebase alongside the Wiley InterScience package. The MARC records loaded to the catalogue are provider-neutral and contain urls for each platform on which the content is available; in other words, the problem of identifying and dealing with duplication has been rectified. What more, now that these packages are active in Serials Solutions' knowledgebase and the records have been loaded to the catalogue, the University can relax its access and maintenance efforts, as these processes will be taken care of by the sharing of up-to-date metadata between Serials

Solutions and the publishers and vendors providing/hosting the content. The collaboration required to make this possible involved the publisher (Wiley), the platform provider (ebrary), the record service provider (Serials Solutions), and the library (University of Calgary).

The benefits of an externally managed e-resource knowledgebase to the library are clear in circumstances such as these. Third party vendors can afford to invest in more specialization, since their value as a service rests on their expertise in such knowledge. Due to the proliferation of a bewildering variety of ebook publishers and packages, it can be difficult for anyone other than a full time expert to follow. If a library cannot afford to maintain a full time librarian or a paraprofessional technician whose job it is to specialize in maintenance of their ebook packages, this puts them in the difficult position of asking an already overburdened staff member to take on yet another Sisyphean task. The value of the electronic resource specialists employed by these third party vendors lies in the fact that they are ready-made substitutes for such library staff. The vendor's familiarity with the sales models utilized by the various publishers with whom they deal offers invaluable insight into how existing metadata sources can be manipulated and repurposed.

In addition to the actual mechanics of the processing of metadata, vendors who specialize in such products can afford to take the time to develop relationships with the content providers with whom they work. Serials Solutions' Knowledgeworks Certification Program is an example of the social values of such networking. It acts to cultivate the kinds of communication that facilitated the interaction described in this paper. As standards and best practices develop across the library metadata field, such invaluable exchanges of data will come to mimic more and more the business-to-business relationships seen in other portions of the publishing industry.

The consolidation and vertical integration of services facilitated by such third party middleware vendors creates a cooperative business climate for all parties involved and thereby allows all levels of the metadata supply chain to benefit from this interaction, and from the increased transparency into the exchange of data. Publishers' content becomes more easily findable, librarians are freed to spend time on more patron facing services, and ultimately the patrons' information needs are served more efficiently and completely. The vendors themselves benefit as well, gaining the power of the so called "network effect," by which they gain an assortment of users who are able to check the metadata within their knowledgebase for errors.

As testimony to the effectiveness of using a consolidated MARC record service for managing catalogue records, Figures 3-4 and Table 1 provide a summary of the number and percentage of titles made accessible in multiple packages over the first eight months of using Serials Solutions MARC services.



### Number of titles in select ebook packages compared with number of records in the catalogue over the first eight months of ebook MARC services with Serials Solutions

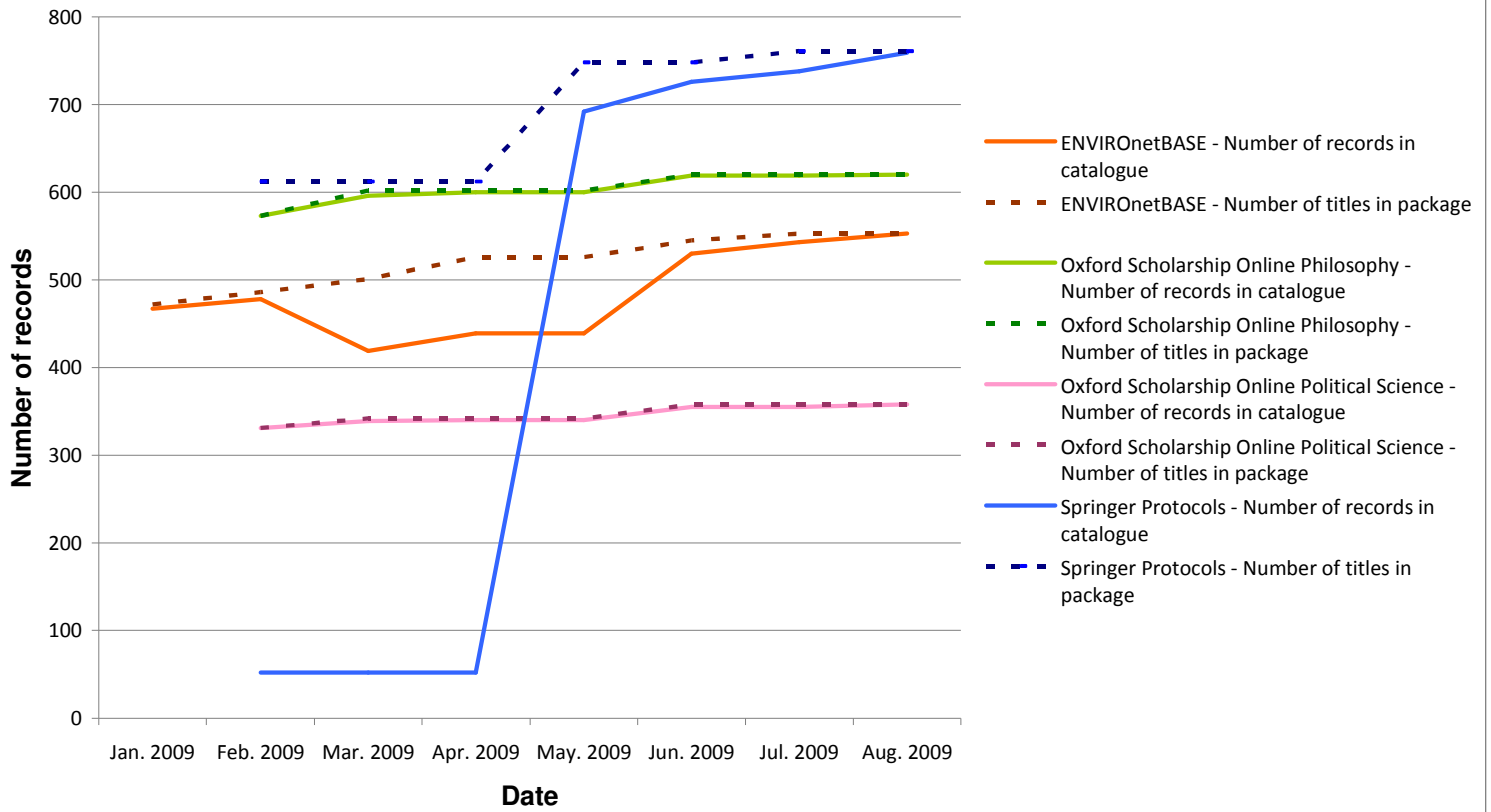


Figure 3: Comparison of the number of titles in select ebook packages with the number of records added to the catalogue for those packages over time. Multiple subscriptions and platforms are involved with a single record source, Serials Solutions.

### Comparison of coverage in catalogue for select ebook packages added to the catalogue as of Sept. 2009 using Serials Solutions MARC services

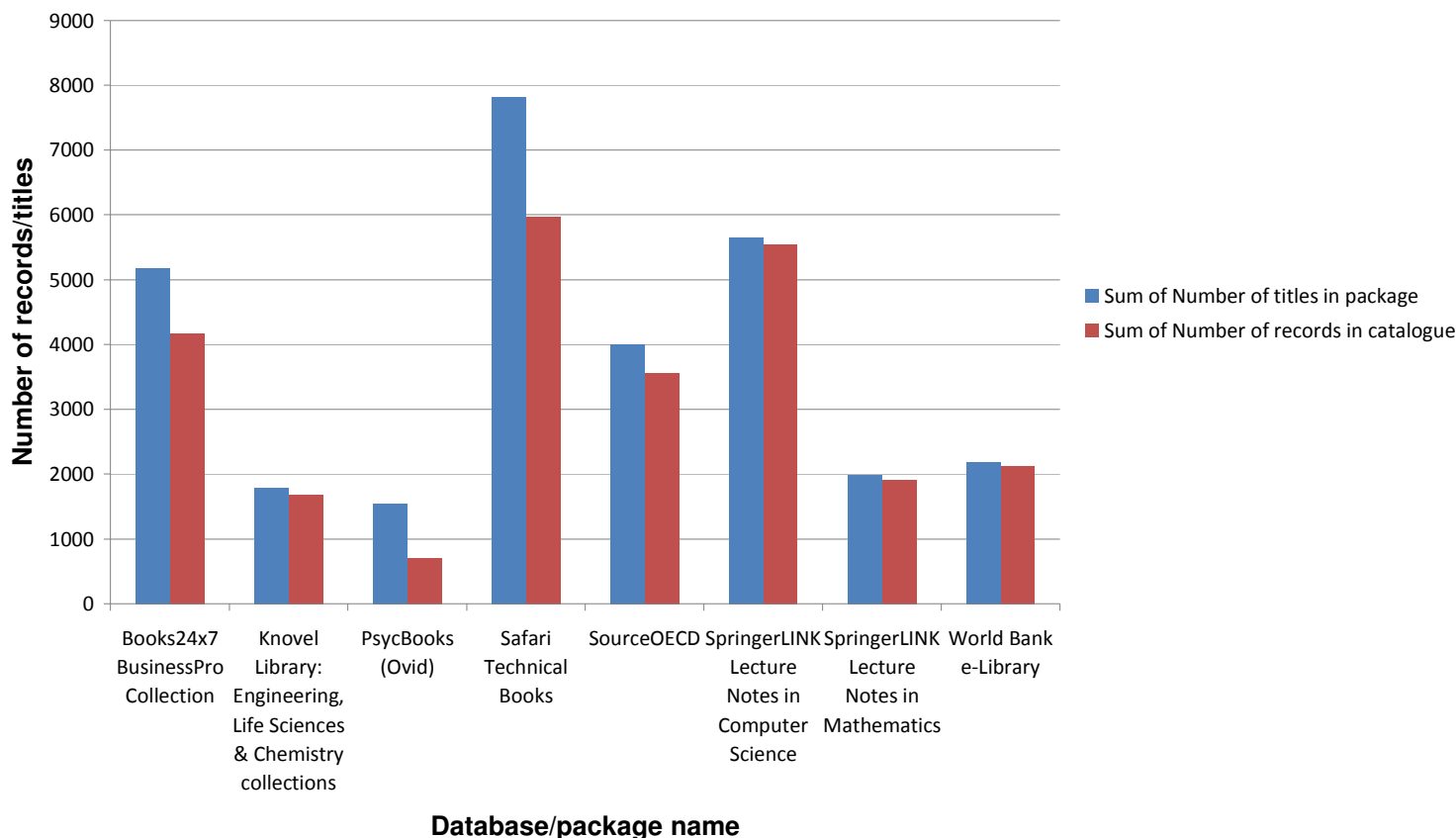


Figure 4: Total number of records added to the catalogue for select ebook packages as of September 2009 shown alongside the total number of titles available in those packages as of the same date.

### Percent coverage of ebook packages in the Library catalogue activated in Serials Solutions MARC service as of August 2009

Database/Package Name	Coverage in Catalogue (%)
AccessPharmacy	96
AccessScience	100
Books24x7 BusinessPro Collection	73
Cambridge Histories Online	98
Ebrary-hosted Wiley InterScience Online Books - Medical, Veterinary and Health Sciences collection	98
ENVIROnetBASE	100
Health Source: Consumer Edition	1
HeinOnline U.S. Supreme Court Library	100
Knovel Library: Engineering, Life Sciences & Chemistry collections	94
MD Consult Core Collection	100

MIT CogNet	100
Oxford Reference Online: Premium	93
Oxford Reference Online: Western Civilization	83
Oxford Scholarship Online Biology	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Business and Management	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Classical Studies	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Economics and Finance	100
Oxford Scholarship Online History	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Linguistics	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Literature	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Mathematics	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Music	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Philosophy	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Physics	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Political Science	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Psychology	100
Oxford Scholarship Online Religion	100
POIESIS: Philosophy Online Serials	100
PsycBooks (Ovid)	46
Safari Technical Books	79
SourceOECD	78
SPORTDiscus with Full Text	14
SpringerLINK Advances in Biochemical Engineering/Biotechnology	83
SpringerLINK eBooks - English/International Collection	59
SpringerLINK IFIP International Federation for Information Processing	99
SpringerLINK Lecture Notes in Computer Science	98
SpringerLINK Lecture Notes in Control and Information Sciences	93
SpringerLINK Lecture Notes in Earth Sciences	100
SpringerLINK Lecture Notes in Mathematics	96
SpringerLINK Lecture Notes in Physics	86
SpringerLINK Progress in Colloid and Polymer Science	86
SpringerLINK Structure & Bonding	66
SpringerLINK Studies in Computational Intelligence	98
SpringerLINK Studies in Fuzziness and Soft Computing	99
SpringerLINK Topics in Organometallic Chemistry	100
SpringerLINK Tracts in Advanced Robotics	96
SpringerLINK Tracts in Modern Physics	63
SpringerLINK Understanding Complex Systems	100
Springer Protocols	100
Springer Series in Optical Sciences	96
Synthesis Collection One	21
Synthesis Collection Two	7
Wiley InterScience Online Books - Medical, Veterinary and Health Sciences collection	99

Table 1: Complete list of ebook packages for which the University of Calgary loaded MARC records provided by Serials Solutions along with the percent record coverage for each package. Figures are accurate to August 20009, encompassing the first eight months of services.

*Driving Alternative Access:*

This method of managing ebook cataloguing can also be used to help drive alternative access models, such as open url resolution, federated search, unified discovery services, and the landing of users from the Web search environment onto library systems (primarily from WorldCat).

The ebook cataloguing policy developed establishes an informal workflow between the library's Collections, Cataloguing, and IT units. Trialing, licensing, and purchasing are conducted in the Collections unit's electronic resource management system. Once it is decided to purchase or subscribe to a product, information is fed to the Cataloguing unit, who then decide how the ebook product is to be made accessible through the catalogue and take action to initiate the process. The methods of making ebook titles available through the catalogue are, in order of preference: activation through Serials Solutions MARC services, record delivery from ebrary, vendor-provided MARC record sets, OCLC collection sets, and manual cataloguing.

The workflow does not end at this step though; instead, information regarding the product is sent on to the unit responsible for maintaining the library's open link resolver and also to the units responsible for federated search platforms and unified discovery systems (such as Primo, Summon, Encore, EBSCO Discovery Service, and WorldCatLocal) and the product's digital access is tested and enabled in each, or at the very least the process of having the product established or fixed in the service provider's knowledgebase is initiated. In this way, electronic products, new and old/backlogged, are made digitally accessible through every means at the library's disposal.

However, there is considerable reliance in this work flow on the accuracy and clarity of the information being fed, both between library units and from publisher/vendor to vendor/library service provider and back again to the library. To avoid potential problems, libraries would be best served by publishers and vendors with ebook content establishing data feeds to external service providers (for MARC records services, the provision of A-Z lists, for open link resolvers, and for unified discovery services) that reflect how the content was purchased. For example, if a publisher is making available a complete package with 8,000 titles and also individual subject packages with 800-1,400 titles in each, then data specific to each of those packages should be fed. If a package is made available on several platforms, then there should be a data feed for each such platform, just as there is in the serials world. It is this clarity that informs libraries' processes for providing digital access in all forms, traditional or alternative.

*Possibilities for the Future:*

There are several ways in which ebook services could be improved. The most obvious is through increased communication between purchasing libraries, publishers, and library service providers

regarding the ebook content that libraries negotiate for access and also regarding metadata standards. This is the first step, and many vendors and publishers have been taking strides in the right direction.

More work, however, needs to be done to address the issue of multiple platforms. Ebrary, Serials Solutions, and the University of Calgary have been in contact about establishing hosted packages, but there are plenty more such packages to be set up, and not just for MARC record services, nor just for ebrary or Serials Solutions. EBL, myiLibrary, ExLibris, and TDNet are just some of the players that would greatly benefit from this type of communication and activity.

Much may be revealed about how well libraries, publishers, and vendors communicate and collaborate as front list titles are added with more regularity to the e-environment and e-approval plans start to gain momentum. Previous experience with electronic publications has demonstrated that print practices are not successful in the e-realm. A point in case is NetLibrary's checking out of an ebook, or the now rather odd notion of physically receiving an electronic issue of a weekly publication. Many of the principles employed in acquiring electronic material and making it accessible have and will remain the same as with print (eg., conveying coverage to the user) and many of the systems developed for selling and distributing print can likely be leveraged in the e-realm, but a willingness to break with tradition and experiment with more collaborative, less complicated, cost- and time-effective methods will be required.

Thankfully, there are some developments that could prove very useful. The issuance of a report on provider-neutral e-monograph records submitted to the Program for Cooperative Cataloging should lead to increased standardization in the ebook landscape. With provider-neutral records and a firm commitment from OCLC to the master record approach for e-monographs, the normalization of titles between platforms and providers should become less onerous. It should also eventually become possible to expand OCLC's current eSerials Holdings service (which allows institutions to report their electronic serials holdings directly to WorldCat from WorldCat Link Manager, EBSCO LinkSource, Serials Solutions 360 Link. and the TDNet e-Resource Manager) to an eMonograph Holdings service. This would increase user access to library resources and could even serve to seamlessly pull users out of the web search engine environment and into the library environment. The great advantage of this tool would be that it utilizes an already existing knowledgebase, instead of requiring that the library manage yet another; in other words, it would reduce cost and complexity, which is an immediate goal of libraries, vendors, publishers, and service providers alike.

#### *Conclusion:*

The end result of the collaborative efforts of the University of Calgary, Yankee Book Peddler, ebrary, and Serials Solutions has been increased digital access to electronic resources of key importance to students and researchers. In a period of just over one year, sustainable workflows and optimal efficiencies have been attained. All of this was made possible by the openness of the companies and institutions involved to explore partnerships and expand lines of communication.

Further cooperation and collaboration between vendors and publishers, with regular input from their library clients, can serve to reduce cost and complexity in the ebook market. As new

developments move the ebook environment forward, new avenues of joint effort need to be explored in order to ensure the best possible digital access and discoverability for library users.

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