Use and perceptions of e-books in Derbyshire Libraries

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Abstract

**Background.** E-books are an accepted element of public library services in England. E-books offer advantages to users such as convenience and accessibility, but also present users and library staff with a range of new challenges. Little research has been carried out on how users perceive e-books in public libraries. Derbyshire libraries (DL), which has run an e-lending scheme since 2011, made its users and staff available for research.

**Aims.** The study’s principal aim was to investigate what impact DL’s e-book service has on users, what value, if any, it offers them, and the kinds of problems patrons encountered using it.

**Methods.** Three questionnaires were developed, based on themes that had come out of literature research and previous studies. They were designed to examine three separate groups; library staff, patrons who do not use e-books, and those who do. The staff and non-user questionnaires were delivered face-to-face, garnering 33 and 59 responses respectively; the third, a web-based survey, was emailed to a list of 1250 registered e-book users and also embedded in the e-book site. This survey received 452 responses.

**Results.** 276 respondents indicated that the e-book service was valuable to them with 162 specifying that this value lay in its convenience and 194 saying that more material should be available and the selection improved. 139 respondents have abandoned the process of downloading e-books once at least. ‘I do not have time to
visit a library’ received stronger agreement than alternatives specifying remoteness or accessibility issues. Most non-users are unaware of the e-book service. The majority of staff feel they need more training, but believe remote support for users is good.

Conclusions. It is concluded that overall e-books are a valuable part of DL’s services. It is recommended that research is undertaken of a library with larger stock and different support systems.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the maturing of e-book\(^1\) and e-reader\(^2\) technology since roughly 2009, the e-book market has become commercially viable: UK consumer e-book sales increased 134% in 2012 to a value of £216 million, while in 2013 for the first time a novel originally published as an e-book has been included in the Man Booker Prize longlist (Marshall, 2010; Palmer, 2011; Publishers Association, 2013). E-books have also become an established part of UK public libraries’ services; figures from CILIP (2013) show that 79% of English libraries, 95% of Public Library Authorities in Wales, and 57% of those in Scotland, currently provide e-books.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

Palmer (2011) identified two justifications for e-books in public libraries; savings predicated on technology, and potential benefits for users, specifically the house-bound, those with reading difficulties caused by visual impairment or dyslexia, and the ‘time-poor.’ These benefits are consistent with those reported anecdotally by users of Derbyshire County Council Libraries\(^3\) e-lending scheme, which has been running since July 2011, and which, according to figures gathered by Derbyshire Cultural and Community Service (DCCS), has approximately 6500 users, of whom roughly a quarter are either new or not regular borrowers (Gent, 2013).

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\(^1\) The hyphenated form ‘e-book’ is used throughout, except in direct quotations.
\(^2\) See appendix 1 for definitions of key terms.
\(^3\) Hereafter DL.
1.2.1 Aim:

The aim of this research is to investigate in greater detail the impact that DL e-book service has had and is having on its users, in order to see if it benefits them, in what ways, and to what extent.

1.2.2 Objectives:

1) To carry out a review of the literature of the provision of e-books in public libraries, the benefits that e-books offer, and surveys carried out to investigate user perception of e-books.

2) To design and test questionnaires to investigate: 1) how DCCS staff perceive the e-book service and library users’ reactions to it; 2) what DL patrons who do not make use of the e-book service know about it and their reactions to it (if any); 3) in what ways current and former users of the e-book service make/made use of it and how they perceive it.

3) To carry out surveys of the three groups, staff, e-book users, and non-users, using the questionnaires as described above.

4) To analyse the results obtained with an emphasis on: a) using the staff and the non-user surveys to inform the user survey, and; b) using the quantitative data gathered from all three surveys to inform the qualitative data.

5) To compare the results obtained with previous studies and to make suggestions for further research.
1.3 Scope

E-books have generally become established more easily in the HE sector than in the PL sector, for several reasons, not least of which is staff and student familiarity with e-journals and other e-resources (Porter, Weaver and Newman, 2012). The HE experience of e-books is outside of the scope of this research, though research from this field will be drawn on where relevant.

E-lending in public libraries in the US is generally more established than in the UK, and issues similar to those being encountered here have already been met with on the other side of the Atlantic (Green, 2013). Again related and relevant research will be used in this project though US libraries are not a focus. (Duncan, 2010)

1.4 Dissertation Overview

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter two, the literature review, is further subdivided into three sections, which aim to:

1) describe briefly the development of e-books to their current stage and locate the PL provision of e-books in the current political and regulatory framework
2) describe what advantages and disadvantages the e-book format has
3) provide an overview of surveys of library users’ perceptions of e-books.

Chapter three describes the specific research methodology used. Chapter four contains a description and discussion of the data collected. Finally, chapter five presents the conclusions and recommendations.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Background

2.1.1 Background and Development

The e-book age is generally taken to have begun in 1971 when Michael S. Hart’s brainchild, Project Gutenberg, manually digitized the US Declaration of Independence (EBLIDA, 2012, p. 1; Galbraith, 2011). While developments continued with the spread of the internet and a rise in materials available in CD-ROM format, it was not until the introduction of lightweight e-reading devices with good screen resolution and long battery life (both due to the ‘key technology’ of e-ink), and good wi-fi or 3G connectivity, that the e-book revolution began (Armstrong and Lonsdale, 2011; Galbraith, 2011; Marshall, 2010). Key dates are the introduction of the Sony Reader (2006), and Amazon’s Kindle (2007) (Clay, 2011).

While over two dozen e-book file (i.e. software) formats exist, the open source format EPUB, introduced in 2007, is widely seen as offering, at least in the UK, US and Europe, a de facto standard. The use of this format would allow materials provided in libraries to be interoperable on a wide variety of platforms without the necessity of complex file conversion procedures (Palmer, 2011; Pawlowski, 2011; IDPF, 2013; Wikipedia, 2013a). While most mainstream e-readers can decode (or ‘read’) EPUB files, one important exception is Amazon’s Kindle, which retains a proprietary non-interoperable file format (AZW), which is why, significantly, DL’s e-books cannot be borrowed by Kindle users. (Derbyshire County, 2013; Harris, 2011; Thomas, 2012; Lovett, 2012)

Restrictions on the use of digital files are also carried out through digital rights management (DRM) systems built into the software, which place limitations on the
use of the file. While all stakeholders acknowledge the importance of DRM to protect publishers’ and authors’ rights, it attracts criticism for two reasons. Firstly, ‘vendor lock-in’ and a lack of interoperability between devices and formats is seen from a library perspective as being contrary to the free and open provision of information. Secondly, DRM is seen as a means of creating ‘friction’ - restrictions on e-book availability and use through ‘configurations…of software that make certain uses…difficult – but not impossible – to achieve.’ (Eschenfelder, 2008, p. 208; Kirchhoff, 2012; Lynch, 2013)

2.1.2 Regulatory and Political Framework

The most important documents regarding the current status of e-books in the UK’s libraries are Sieghart’s (2013) review of e-lending and the government’s response to it. Three of CILIP’s key recommendations to the review were reflected in Sieghart’s conclusions:

1) e-book lending in England’s public libraries should be free to library users,
2) remote e-lending should be an option in addition to on-site lending,
3) models of e-lending should be set up to evaluate business models.

In addition, Sieghart recommended that provisions in the Digital Economy Act (2010) extending PLR to cover e-books should be enacted, thus establishing a mechanism for remunerating content creators. The review’s final recommendation was for ‘friction’ to protect publishers and booksellers to ‘set 21st-century versions of the limits to supply which are inherent in the physical loans market’. The government’s response welcomed the recommendations, and undertook to carry out research through the

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4 See the Glossary for a fuller explanation.
Taking Part survey. It further stated that a ‘fit for purpose PLR’ to reflect current e-lending habits would require primary legislation, which would be sought ‘subject to considering whether that would be compatible with the Copyright Directive’ (CILIP, 2012; Sieghart, 2013; DCMS, 2013).

2.1.3 Legal Status

The Copyright Directive (specifically section 182CA of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988) provides authors ‘with the exclusive right to authorise or prohibit any communication to the public of their works’ (DCMS, 2013). This is significant because the legal basis of e-books differs from that of print books; library book lending (or ‘distribution’) is permitted under UK copyright law and EU copyright directives on the legal basis of the doctrine of ‘exhaustion’ or ‘first sale,’ which states that the creator’s copyright is exhausted with the first sale, hence its name. However, as this copyright only inheres in the tangible, physical book format, it does not then apply when the digital object is not actually physically embodied, but instead distributed – or ‘communicated’ – electronically. (Hielmcrone, Maiello, Bainton, and Bonnet, 2012; Müller, 2012)

The significance of this lies in the fact it deprives libraries of the rights they typically enjoy in regard to materials purchased for lending to their patrons. Moreover, it enables publishers to drive very hard bargains which eventually have an impact on the ability of libraries to provide e-books to their users (Lynch, 2013; Green, 2013).


2.1.4 Responses to Friction

There have been a number of responses to ‘friction’, i.e. controls over access to and availability of e-books for lending, on the part of libraries. One is to find ways to co-operate with publishers and other content providers to attempt to resolve issues while emphasising potential benefits for both parties. In the US, the NY Public Library’s work with publishers demonstrates this approach with, for example, links to purchase options for patrons whose chosen e-book is unavailable to borrow (Green, 2013; Platt, 2011).

A second response has been to seek alternative channels to obtain e-content; Douglas County libraries in the US have used both ‘self-e-publishing’ for patrons and have set up their own delivery platform to allow them to go directly to authors, thus by-passing traditional content providers (La Rue, 2013; La Rue, 2012).

Additionally, in both the UK and the US, library organisations have sought to use their collective influence to persuade e-providers to relax their policies (CILIP, 2012; Digital Content, 2012; SCL, 2009a; SCL, 2009b). E-aggregator’s Overdrive’s (2010) claim that library borrowing drives up e-book sales must be understood in this context.
2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of E-books.

2.2.1 Advantages

E-books offer a wide range of benefits to users. Responses to the JISC National Observatory on eBooks (NeBO) addressing e-books’ advantages were summed up as ‘easy to access…you can use them at any time anywhere, and…searchability (another form of access)’ (Jamali, Nicholas and Rowlands, 2009; p. 47). Differently worded, these findings are widely repeated: just-in-time access, full-text searching, portability, remote access and convenience (Brunskill, 2012; Martin and Quan-Haase, 2013; Armstrong and Lonsdale, 2011; Polanka, 2011; Muir, Veale and Nichol, 2009). Walters (2013) gives a list of 14 advantages and 20 disadvantages of e-books ‘from the perspective of the individual user;’ at least three of these disadvantages do not apply to leisure or entertainment oriented use (p.3).

2.2.2 Disadvantages

The major drawbacks of e-books include complex download procedures, poor e-reader ergonomics, DRM limitations, small e-reader screens and their ‘irritating’ flicker (Palmer, 2011, p. 203, Joint, 2010). Reading e-books on PC screens causes eye-strain; interfaces have poor ‘learnability’ and poor signposting within content (Muir, Veale and Nichol, 2009). The possibility of serendipitous discovery is mostly absent; some commercial/public library e-book portals offer variations on (physical) browsing – e.g, Amazon’s ‘look inside’ features; Overdrive’s sample sections of library books – but others require the entire e-book to be downloaded (Martin and Quan-Haase, 2013).
2.2.3 Accessibility

E-books have been held out as offering great potential for improving accessibility for library users and readers in general who have print disabilities, taken to include visual impairments, text comprehension difficulties such as dyspraxia and dyslexia, and other disabilities such as motor control issues or nerve damage that make using print books difficult (Peacock, 2013; Petri, 2012; Polanka, 2012). As Petri points out, various accessibility options such as text-to-speech, user-controlled font size and screen contrast, and subtitles are not only also beneficial to subcategories of users such as second language learners, but are important in that we are all ‘just temporarily able-bodied’ (2012, p. 58).

In practice relatively few dedicated e-readers or tablets offer built-in accessibility beyond basic functions, and fewer are compatible with assistive technologies, though there is more compatibility with desktop pcs and macs (RNIB, 2011; Burt, 2012). The version of EPUB currently under development, EPUB 3, will be designed to offer accessibility functions equivalent to Digital Accessible Information SYstem (DAISY) ‘talking book’ specifications; interoperability is also designed in, to increase the range of e-readers it can be decoded by (King, 2013; Petri, 2012; IDPF, 2013).

Additionally, even where Visually Impaired People (VIP) can use their own technology to access library e-books, the interfaces of log-in pages and catalogues are frequently less negotiable; DRM also prevents assistive technology such as screen readers from operating correctly (RNIB, 2011).
2.3 Surveys

In 2011, Moyer and Thiele wrote that, ‘unfortunately, not many studies have been carried out as to how people are using e-books at the libraries at this stage;’ the JISC NeBO of 2008 found only six previous studies, one of which had only 27 potential respondents; Duncan’s ambitious survey of Australian libraries’ e-book use had a disappointingly low response rate (Moyer and Thiele, 2011; Nicholas, Rowlands, Clark, and Huntingdon, 2008; Duncan, 2010). While the rise in e-content in libraries has produced an increase in the number of surveys, the focus tends to be on the US and HE sectors, and from librarians’ perspectives; user surveys are rare.

2.3.1 HE surveys

In 2010 the COSLA e-book feasibility study, driven by concerns that the need to purchase e-readers would be a ‘barrier to access among the core constituency that public libraries serve,’ sought responses from library professionals; complex downloads and DRM, as well as cost, were perceived as problems for users (COSLA, 2010).

In 2010, Eduserv conducted a survey of the UK’s HE sector; question 10, ‘what are the drivers towards the purchase of e-books at your organisation?’ is probably most revealing about how e-books are seen to affect users. Quantitative data indicates that most respondents chose ‘distance learners’ as a driver, which is consistent with the idea of ‘anytime, anywhere’ access; qualitative data highlighted accessibility and convenience, as well as benefits from library perspectives such as simultaneous multiple access and ‘no need to rebind’ (Eduserv, 2010).

HighWire Press’s 2009 survey was again of the HE sector librarians rather than public libraries’ users; question 11. ‘What hinders your patrons the most in their
use of ebook content?’ mentions points similar to those raised thus far: production lags behind print; poor support for visually impaired readers; and - the most numerous complaint - DRM creates problems (for offline viewing and printing) (Newman, 2009, p. 13).

2.3.2 US Public Library Surveys

A very recent and comprehensive survey of e-book usage in US public libraries is the Pew Research Center’s *Libraries, patrons and e-books* (2012), which found that, while 12% of e-book users borrow e-books from their public libraries, 58% of library card holders and 48% of dedicated e-book reader owners do not know if their libraries lend e-books. (According to the ALA, in 2012 three-quarters of US public libraries offered such a service (ALA, n.d.b). The survey found that ‘the most common complaint among those who checked out e-books from their public library was lack of availability;’ complex ‘check-out procedures are also problematic (Zickuhr, Rainie, Purcell, Madden, and Brenner, 2012).

Changes in US e-book reading habits are shown by two contrasted surveys by the Pew Research Center from 2011 and 2012; e-book reading has grown for all ages, most of all for the 30-49 years-of-age segment. Overall, print-book reading has fallen in percentage terms compared with e-book reading; only for 16-17 year-olds have print books grown in popularity (Pew Research, 2013).

In 2012 the US Library Journal and School Library Journal released their ‘Survey of E-book usage in US Public Libraries’ (other surveys dealt with the school library and HE sectors) which reported 2011’s figures; adopting a longitudinal approach the survey presented responses from 2009 through to 2011 as context.
Library users’ perspectives on e-books can only be derived from this survey as the
respondents were professional librarians; however ‘barriers to ebook consumption’ – notwithstanding that circulation figures for e-books increased fourfold from 2011 – included:

- Limited titles available (cited by 71% of respondents)
- Complex downloading issues (55%)
- DRM issues (49% - ‘an all time high’ for this ‘perennial bugaboo’)
- E-book titles not available concurrent with print release (27%)

As the authors point out, ‘users prefer print’ dropped in 2012 to 22% - ‘an all time low for this item’ (Library Journal, 2012, p. 71).

In general it can be seen that while e-book popularity among library users is increasing, the problems facing both library patrons and librarians remain broadly the same; principally poor choice because of high pricing on the part of publishers, and technical constraints caused by DRM and complex interfaces. Visibility of e-book services is also a problem.
2.4 Key Points

The key points from this brief review of the literature are that, while e-books offer potential benefits in terms of convenience and accessibility, the choice of e-books for libraries is limited, accessing them complex, and formats not always interoperable with devices. Given e-books success commercially, it would appear that some of these limitations are artificially imposed to protect publishers’ and distributors’ revenues. Political and legal moves are underway to regulate the market, while libraries are also trying to find solutions.
3. Methods

3.1 Approach and Data Collection Instruments

The starting point for the project was the perception that e-books in libraries are a fast-moving area, and one where research is currently lacking; hence the dissertation topic option of a project based around exploring DL’s e-book lending service was chosen. After receiving approval for the general topic, meetings with DL staff began, with a list of areas for possible research being provided (see Appendix 4). As the project was being conducted with the support and through the good offices of DL as external partner, it was felt strongly that the research should answer their information needs, and the research questions and methodologies were constructed with this in mind.

The initial research proposal was for a qualitative study of the perceptions of e-book service users regarding what value the service added, if any, for them, to the other services provided by DL. This would allow DL to evaluate the service beyond data on numbers of users, loans etc. provided by the library management system (LMS), and constitute a qualitative balance to the quantitative data the LMS generates, a combination recommended ‘to fill some gaps in…knowledge’ by producing a general picture (Bryman, 1988. p.137).

Through further discussions conducted at the iSchool and at DL’s main offices in Matlock it was decided the there would be two separate data collection instruments, for two separate populations: e-book users, and library patrons who do not make use of the e-book service (‘non-users’). By this point a number of practicalities had begun to affect the original concept. Given the presupposed potential characteristics of the e-book user population - geographically dispersed, time-poor – it was felt that physical, e-mail or telephone interviews would be overly time-consuming, and complex to
arrange, hence a web-based survey distributed as a link in an email was decided upon as the data collection method. It can be seen that not only pragmatism but also a hypothesis about the likely added-value of the e-book service was at least partially dictating the nature of the data collection instruments. Meanwhile, it was discovered that the implementation in April of live authentication had deprived DL of access to most recent usage data. Thus it was decided to add questions regarding the frequency of use of the service, number of e-books borrowed, etc. – data which would originally have come from the LMS - to the questionnaire.

In summary, the instruments and the nature of the data collection program became more of a mixed methods approach, with a mixture of closed dichotomous and tick-box (i.e. radio button) questions and five- and four-point Likert scales comprising the quantitative element, and open-ended questions inviting responses regarding value, benefit and possible service changes constituting the more qualitative element.

The circularity of using a web-delivered survey to investigate the success of a web-delivered service, along with the related issue of self-selection, is the major methodological weakness of this research project; the original, more qualitative conception to use data gained from surveys to drive data collection through interviews would have gone some way to address this weakness. As has been shown, however, within the scale and timeframe of this project such an approach would have been unfeasible.

During discussions it was suggested that, based on anecdotal evidence and reading (see especially Felkner, 2012, p.43) it might be valuable to survey staff

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5 A system which allowed users to log in through DL’s website straight to that of the e-book provider, simplifying the procedure for users.
regarding their experience of the e-book service; DCCS staff eagerly agreed that feedback from front-line staff would be worth obtaining.

At the same time as the questionnaires were being formulated, and once the target populations had been identified, ethical approval was requested. As the surveys involved adults of at least eighteen years of age or more, the project was given a ‘low risk’ status; ethical approval was granted on the basis of informed consent on the part of the respondents. This consent was to be obtained by a covering letter outlining that the responses would be anonymous and confidential, with data being randomized, signed by the researcher; consent would be indicated by a countersignature on the part of the respondent. For the web based survey, a radio button after the consent and information section would both allow the respondent to continue to the survey and indicate consent. In the interests of brevity, the consent and information page was shortened for the web-based survey; extraordinary permission to do this was granted by the iSchool’s research ethics committee on the grounds that it was an explicit request by the external partner, and as long as it was indicated that the data would eventually become public on the University of Sheffield’s website, as a completed dissertation.

The final data collection instruments comprised three separate self-completion questionnaires. The first, for e-book users, comprised two separate versions, one for active users and one for inactive users. The second for non-users, and the third for DL staff, each had one version. At this point all questionnaires were still in ‘hard-copy’ paper format.

The principal issues being investigated in the staff survey were:

- If users looked for assistance with the e-book service, and if so what kinds of problems they had;
• Staff familiarity and comfort with the technology, i.e. whether they felt they could adequately assist users.

The principal issues being investigated in the non-user survey were:

• Users’ knowledge about and use of other services, e.g. did they only use print books, or did they also use services such as the online catalogue?
• Knowledge about the DL e-book service;
• Why, if they knew about the service, they had elected not to use it.

The principal issues being investigated in the user survey were:

• Current use made of the service;
• Difficulties in using the service – i.e. whether persistent or once-off; to what degree these hampered use;
• Why, if non-active, use in the service had been abandoned, and if it would be taken up again (this latter question was introduced by DCCS during piloting);
• What influence, if any, does library borrowing have on their book buying habits;
• General feedback on the service, what value it added and how it might be evolved.

All instruments, which were initially designed by the researchers, were evaluated and reworked during extensive discussions with DCCS staff at Matlock, before finally being re-edited for piloting. Piloting was conducted by DCCS staff; the
various questionnaires were emailed to separate office staff and feedback was invited. This lasted for approximately two weeks in July, and involved a number of changes to the phrasing, and expressions. The web-based user survey underwent further changes when it was reformatted for the Survey Monkey software used at DCCS. None of these changes altered the substantive content of the questionnaires to any great degree.

Copies of the survey instruments and the informed consent documentation are contained in Appendix 2; Appendix 3 contains the ethical approval document for the project.

3.2 Administration:

The surveys were administered to the three discrete target groups in three ways. A brief précis is provided below; comprehensive details regarding locations and times are given in Chapter 4 below:

1) The web-based user survey, designed using Survey Monkey, was emailed out as a link to a group of 1250 registered users; additionally a link to the survey was embedded on the e-book service log-in page hosted by the e-book provider, Askews.

2) The non-user survey was carried out by random convenience sampling, which is defined as being contradictory to probability sampling, inasmuch as using convenience to facilitate collecting the sample means that it is not truly random (Bryman, 2012). The survey was conducted face-to-face in three Derbyshire libraries.

3) The staff survey was conducted through distributing the questionnaire to staff at meetings and in the workplace, at five separate locations.

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6 Askews and Holts Library Services Ltd., DL’s supplier of adult and children’s books, launched an e-book service in 2010 (Askews and Holts, n.d.).
3.3 Data Analysis

Analysis of the quantitative part of the survey was carried out using Excel. Qualitative data for all three questionnaires were coded using Nvivo 10; Appendix 5 contains a summary of the coding scheme.

3.4 Rationale

Mixed-method approaches have become increasingly popular in attempting to capture the value of public library impact, with arguments that the hard data of, for example, footfall and book usage fails to adequately reflect intangible but significant social and personal benefits (Usherwood, 2002). The virtues of the qualitative side of the JISC NeBO study of e-books, for example, were expressed as the fact that respondents were ‘not constrained or shoehorned by the questioner’ (Jamali, Nicholas, and Rowlands, 2009; p. 36). The lack of richness in quantitative data is recognized; in order to address declining book issues, or to attract non-users, librarians ‘need to know why people have stopped visiting…and never visited [libraries]’ (italics added) (Goulding, 2006; p. 112). Hence the combination of statistically robust data with the nuance of the individual user’s perspective offers the possibility of useful insight into trends of usage or decline of a service and what drives them.
4. Findings and Discussion

The following section presents the findings from the three surveys and where appropriate discusses their significance. The approach of combining findings and discussion has been taken to avoid repeating in a separate discussion section the extensive comments from respondents, especially from the users’ survey. The various points raised will then be combined in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapter below.

Double quotes have been used to indicate direct quotations throughout; errors of grammar and spelling have been silently corrected.

The findings from the staff survey are presented first, followed by those from the non-user survey, and finally those from the user survey; the latter constitute the greatest part of the material.

4.1 The Staff Survey

The self-completion questionnaire designed to survey DL staff was distributed to 36 respondents in five locations over nine separate days. It was distributed by the researcher as follows:

1) to eight managers, identified by DCCS, from the Chesterfield cluster who were attending a meeting at Chesterfield library;
2) to all staff, including managers, at Dronfield library over two days;
3) to staff manning the mobile library at Hathersage during one half-day.

The questionnaire was further distributed by managers to their staff:
4) at Chesterfield library over five days;
5) at Clay Cross over two days.
6) at Alfreton library over three days

While constituting a random convenience sample, the spread of locations and times was intended to capture a wide range of DCCS staff experience from various levels of the organisation.

As one respondent completed only the demographics section, this questionnaire was not included in the overall figures; all other respondents completed all questions as appropriate\(^7\), giving a total of 35 responses. As DL has 454 staff, the sample constituted roughly 8% of the population (R. Jones, personal communication, August 30, 2013). A sample of 50% is recommended for a population of this size, but as the purpose of staff survey was to provide background, this was not felt to be that major a concern (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

Demographics showed that the overwhelming majority of respondents (83%) (29) were females and that 83% were in the 40-64 years of age group with the remaining 17% (6) in the 18-39 age group.

26% (9) of the respondents answered yes to the question ‘do you read e-books?’ Regarding where they obtain e-books from (options: DL, a free source, a commercial source, other; multiple answers allowed) 67% have obtained e-books from DL (one specified ‘only once’), and 89% from a commercial source. 78% of those who read e-books do so on dedicated e-readers: one uses a tablet, one a mobile phone, while one uses a laptop and a mobile phone.

\(^7\) As instructions stated questions were not mandatory, respondents could omit questions.
74% of the respondents do not read e-books: 61% do not have a suitable device, and 54% do not like reading from a screen. 10% said that the material available does not interest them.

In response to question 6 'In your experience, do library users ever ask for technical assistance, advice or help regarding the e-book service?' 6% of respondents said that they do not; 94% said that they do.

One respondent said that it happened rarely and five that it happened 3 – 5 times a year; five that it happened from once to several times a month; three that it is a daily occurrence, and two respondents said users ask for assistance “several times a day.” Two people made the point that requests for help are more common after Christmas and before holidays.

Two respondents added that assistance seems to be most needed when starting with the system, saying that users are “usually fine once they’ve started downloading books.”

Question 7 listed five different kinds of problems that users might seek help with. Multiple answers were possible; the results are shown in chart 1.
Additional comments were invited for question 7: One was that joining the service had initially been a problem for users but this was less common now. Another was that DL’s service was “not as easy as buying from Amazon and users seem to find it complicated.” Another respondent said the list of FAQs was ‘very good’ but “not always seen” as it is “a long way down on the website.” One respondent added that “some users have a very low knowledge of how their devices work.”

One respondent stated that users “usually…find our web page and join up on their own;” most enquiries “are to do with setting up…device[s] with the appropriate software” to download ebooks. They added that technical issues relating to a particular user’s device or a given e-book are referred to “the eBook supplier/publisher.”

Question 8 asked ‘How confident do you feel that you can competently give users advice and assistance on how to use the e-book service?’ 11% of the respondents claimed to be ‘Very confident’; 43% said they were ‘Fairly confident’ while 46% were ‘Not very confident.’
Of those who felt ‘Fairly confident,’ four mentioned that this was as regards promoting the service or helping users find the relevant information on the DCCS website. One added that their “assistance is based on the instructions given on the website.”

Question 9 asked for ‘comments, suggestions, feedback or ideas regarding Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book service, and its level of promotion, training and support for staff or library users regarding the e-book service.’ The framing of the question arose from the experiences, as noted in the literature, of the perceived need for staff and ‘patron training.’ The responses broke down into four separate themes: staff training; that frontline staff could direct customers to Derbyshire’s dedicated support team if necessary; customer support; and publicising the service.

56% of the respondents (n = 25) said that more staff training would be beneficial; one person specified “how-to” sessions, two mentioned “refresher training,” while some simply stated “more training.” Five respondents said that staff having access to e-readers would be helpful as “we only have the minimum of knowledge” and “not all staff have [e-readers].” Three responses were that staff are adequately trained; one of the latter added that as the service is “self-help” the training provided was adequate “for staff and customers.” Six respondents said that there were dedicated staff to deal with user enquiries about e-books; three mentioned the User Enquiry Service/Library Information Service at Chesterfield, one specified the “Ask a librarian” service, one said enquiries “are dealt with online,” and one said “if users have queries that frontline staff [are] unable to answer we ring ‘Ask Derbyshire.’”

This latter respondent echoed the point that the site is “fairly self explanatory.” One of
the respondents said that the Library Information Service has a Derbyshire-wide role in supporting staff and users, and that its contact details are displayed on the webpage.

Three people suggested that step-by-step guides or leaflets would be useful for users.

In the ‘any other comments’ section, two respondents noted that “many” library users have Kindles, and that “an arrangement with Amazon” would increase uptake of the e-book service.

Three respondents said that the choice of materials available from the DCCS e-book service was poor, with one specifying the lack of children’s e-books.

Five respondents said that further promotion or a “relaunch” would be good, one adding that “didn’t know you had e-books is a repeated line,” while another said:

“I feel this is a service that a lot of staff have not seen in action so are slow to promote it.”

One respondent said that they believed the DCCS e-book service was “a ‘success;’” another said it was “very good and customers that use it seem to agree.”

While there is then obviously a perception amongst staff that they would benefit from further training, it is also understood that as a remote service, the e-book service is designed to be “self-explanatory,” with extensive ‘FAQs’ on the DCCS website, and that there is a dedicated support team available to handle further enquiries. The perception of a need for training may equally be a response to the natural feeling on the part of library staff that they would like to be able to support their users as well as possible; notwithstanding the service being remote, a frontline
library staff member will obviously want to be informed enough to answer user enquiries, especially if they are being made on an almost daily basis. In tandem with this is the role of public libraries in bridging the digital divide, with a balance required between supporting staff sufficiently through provision of training and experience of the gamut of e-devices, and the demands of budgets and workloads, especially in the current economic climate. However as will be seen below, the level of support provided by DCCS is generally perceived positively by e-book service users; the issue of staff training may be a matter of managing staff expectations. As one respondent wrote in answer to question 9: “I thought it was being dealt with on-line...[w]e have plenty of other work to do.”

Another point raised by staff members is that interest in and knowledge about the e-book service has declined since the original launch, and that it possibly requires more promotion; as one respondent says, a “relaunch” would “spark more/continued interest” and could be tied to “a refresher” for staff “about how [the] Library Information Service can deal with queries in depth.”

Finally worth noting are the observations that the choice of e-books is poor, and also the perception, on the part of staff and users, that the e-book service is both good and valued; both these points will be revisited below.
4.2 The Non-user Survey

The self-completion questionnaire designed to survey DCCS library users who do not use the e-book service was distributed to 66 respondents in three locations over five separate days. It was distributed by the researcher as follows:

1) At Chesterfield library on a midweek afternoon and a Saturday morning
2) At Dronfield library on a midweek morning and a Saturday afternoon
3) At the mobile library in Hathersage on a midweek morning

Chesterfield library has three floors, with a children’s library on the ground floor, the main fiction library on the first floor along with the DVD section, and local studies, maps, music and reference on the second floor. Computers are located on both the first and second floors. Potential respondents were approached on all three floors and invited to complete the questionnaire on a random basis, with two caveats: an attempt was made to seek respondents from as wide a range of ages as possible, and people using the computer/internet service were not asked, as such sessions are time-bound and interrupting users would hence be inappropriate.

Dronfield library has two floors, with DVDs and the children’s section downstairs and local studies and fiction on the first floor. The same random approach was taken and the same caveats apply.

As the mobile library is a relatively confined space and gets busy easily, the deciding factor in inviting users at Hathersage to take part was if they were present during periods when the library was less busy and crowded.

The three locations were chosen partly out of convenience, all being relatively close to Sheffield, and also with the intention of conducting the survey within areas with different demographics; i.e. a busy urban centre (Chesterfield is England’s fifth
busiest library), a smaller urban centre, and a village too small to warrant its own library.

Of the 66 questionnaires completed, 5 were discarded as the respondents failed to correctly fill out the informed consent form, while two others were discarded as they contained no substantive information (i.e. only the demographics section was completed); the total sample, then, constituted 59 questionnaires. This is not of course an appreciable sample size for such a large population; DL has roughly 190,000 registered users, of whom 145,000 are active. However as the purpose of the non-user survey was to provide an alternative perspective on data from the user survey, this was not taken to be a major methodological limitation.

Demographics showed that 15% of respondents were in the 18-39 age category, 37% in the 40-64 category, and 48% were 65 or over. 53% of respondents were women; 8% considered themselves to have a disability.

The purpose behind questions 5 – 7 was to ascertain what kind of use non-e-book readers make of DL services in order to compare them with responses from the user survey, and to find out how knowledgeable the non-users are about remote/online library resources in general. Responses to question 4, ‘What kinds of materials do you borrow from Derbyshire Libraries or use on Derbyshire Libraries’ premises?’ showed that print books were overwhelmingly the most popular resources with 88% responses. Detailed responses are shown in chart 2. In the category ‘other,’ the most popular materials mentioned were DVDs (12% of responses), and CDs (8%).
Chart 2: Q4. What kinds of materials do you borrow from Derbyshire Libraries or use on Derbyshire Libraries’ premises?

Responses to question 5, ‘What would you describe as your major reasons for using Derbyshire Libraries?’ showed that leisure/entertainment was by far the most popular reason, with 93% of respondents mentioning it. See chart 3 for detailed results. In the ‘other’ category were listed research, technical books, information about local events and courses, teaching resources, and ‘internet access’; each being mentioned by one respondent.

20% of respondents said they used Derbyshire libraries online resources (question 6), more than half of whom use the OPAC to search for, reserve, and renew books. Of those respondents who do not use online resources, 43% said they had no need of them, while 43% preferred ‘traditional’ resources; 21% did not know about them (multiple answers were allowed, n = 47).
Chart 3: Q5. What would you describe as your major reasons for using Derbyshire Libraries?

Question 7, ‘What do you know about Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book lending service?’ showed that 66% of the sample did not know that DL has an e-book lending service, while 25% knew about it but had not investigated using it. Detailed responses to question 7 are shown in chart 4.

Chart 4: Q7. What do you know about Derbyshire Libraries' e-book lending service?
The most common reason among those who had heard of the service but not investigated it (question 8A, n = 15) was not having an e-reader (5 responses; one other respondent uses a Kindle). Reasons such as “Not interested in IT,” and “technophobia” were given by 4 people. Two cited “no access to the internet at home/no pc” while four had not “got around to it” or simply were not interested.

Of the three respondents who had looked at the service but decided not to use it, two gave preferring traditional books as their reasons (question 8B); the other cited the “size of catalogue” as a reason.

The conclusion to be drawn from these results is that they seem to confirm comments made by staff that the e-book service is underused due to lack of promotion; 93% of the non-users say that their main reason for using DL is ‘leisure and entertainment,’ while 66% have not heard about the service. As nearly half (48%) of the 5022 individual titles stocked in the e-book collection are in the ‘fiction and related items’ category with another 17% in the categories ‘lifestyle, sport and leisure,’ and ‘biography and true stories,’ the collection would appear to suit a reader whose purpose in using the library is for entertainment.

There are however two points against this conclusion; one is that of the 47 respondents who do not use online resources, only 20% of them claimed to be ignorant of these; similarly, 66% of those who had heard of the e-book service had failed to take it up because of lack of interest or motivation to explore it further, or a preference for print books. These two points suggest that it is not just lack of knowledge preventing more take-up of the service, but also a combination of other factors, ranging from inertia to an adherence to ‘traditional’ reading. In addition, a
digital divide is visible; 5 respondents do not have e-readers, while 2 do not have
home access to the internet. Due to the caveat noted above, there is no data available
regarding users of the library PCs who might be expected to also be on the ‘wrong’
side of the digital divide.
4.3 The User survey

The self-completion questionnaire designed to survey DL e-book service users was distributed as a web-based survey, produced in Survey Monkey (Professional Version) by DCCS staff according to the paper version drawn up by the researcher together with DCCS staff and piloted by the latter.

It was distributed in two ways:

1) Prior to the implementation of live authentication, whereby users clicking on the e-book link on DCCS’s website are taken directly to the e-book site homepage hosted by the e-book provider Askews, users had been required to register to the e-book service, and as part of registration many had provided email addresses. DCCS staff obtained 1250 email addresses from a database of such formerly registered users, and an email inviting users to take part was sent to these addresses on Monday 5th August, with the link to the survey embedded.

2) Additionally, in order to maximise the number of respondents, a link to the survey was also placed on the e-book site homepage, by Askews, with a copy of the same invitation letter. This took place on Tuesday 13th August.

The survey was live until Friday 16th, i.e. for a total of 12 days. In this time it received 460 responses, the bulk of which were from the email list; 397 responses had already been received by 13th August, when the link on Askews’ site went live. This latter figure constitutes a return rate of over 31%, even before the number of emails that ‘bounced’ is taken into account (as a percentage of the total number of active users as of July 2013, the overall return rate was 12.7%).

The fact that respondents were so eager to respond would tend to suggest that they had something either very positive or something very negative to express. The level of engagement in the comments made, not to mention the simple quantity of
feedback given, is consistent with this. As will be seen, the overwhelming response to the e-book service is positive, though with both caveats and some marked exceptions. The importance of a degree of self selection, and its significance when it comes to treating the data as representative, is worth bearing in mind throughout the analysis and discussion below.

The sample was thus selected randomly, with the caveat made above that respondents were self-selecting.

A total of 8 responses out of the 460 were discarded; 4 as they contained no substantive information (i.e. respondents had not filled in anything beyond the demographic information), and a further 4 as the respondents were below the age to give informed consent, i.e. eighteen years of age.8

As the survey instructions stated that none of the questions were mandatory and any could be skipped, responses which included an answer to any substantive items – and sometimes just a single item - have been included, with the result that the sample size n varies from question to question. In addition, it was possible to indicate discrete responses such as ‘other; please specify:’ through radio buttons while omitting any further comment, hence in breakdowns of ‘other’ categories, the number of comments being looked at is often less than the responses within that category. In the following section discrete answers (i.e. where the respondent simply has to make a choice) have been represented by bar-charts, whether the choice is dichotomous or multiple. Where respondents’ comments have been coded into sub-categories they have been represented as pie-charts. A précis of the coding schemes used for the major substantive questions has been given in Appendix 5.

8 The ‘under 18’ option radio button was included at the request of DCCS.
Questions 1 – 3:

Demographics indicated that 64% of respondents were in the 40 – 64 age group, with 28% in the 65+ group, and 8% in the 18 – 39 group. Well over half of the respondents (263, or 59%) were female, while 11% (47 responses) considered themselves to have a disability.

Questions 4 – 6:

11% of respondents have not visited a Derbyshire library building at all in the last year (question 4, ‘In the last year, how often have you visited a Derbyshire library building?’) of the remainder, 36% have visited at least monthly, 25% have visited every few months, and 28% once or twice.

In response to question 5, ‘Do you currently use any other libraries apart from those provided by Derbyshire Council?’ 15% of respondents said that they do; the majority (85% or 373 responses) do not.

The most popular service used, according to responses to question 6, ‘Which of the following Derbyshire library services do you currently use?’ (multiple answers allowed) was, unsurprisingly, borrowing e-books (91%), followed by borrowing print books (59%). Detailed responses are shown in chart 5.
Chart 5: Q6. Which of the following Derbyshire library services do you currently use?

Taken together, the responses to questions 4 and 6 suggest that the e-book service is not being used as a replacement for borrowing books from the physical library but rather to supplement such borrowing; comparisons between printed book and e-book borrowing according to frequency of visiting library buildings is given in chart 6 below. An exception to the trend is the group of users who have not visited a library at all in the past year. This group’s responses were cross-referenced against responses to question 25, to try to identify deciding factors in the choice to use the e-book service.
Chart 6: Comparison between printed book and e-book borrowing according to frequency of library visits.

However, no very strong correlation was found; of these 46 respondents who rely exclusively on the e-book service to obtain material from DL, 34% indicated that they used the e-book service because of lack of time to visit a library, 15% that it was due to remoteness from a library, and 11% that it was because of lack of access due to disability (aggregating ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ for all three statements listed under question 25). In other words only a relatively small number of users are driven by necessity as opposed to convenience, as will be seen below in discussing question 28.

There is also no obvious correlation between frequency of visiting a library building and use of the other ‘remote’ services, i.e. the home library service, and online resources accessed from home, as over half of the users of the latter service and both users of the former have visited a library at least monthly in the past year. Of the four respondents who said they use mobile libraries (under ‘any other services’), only one, who visited a library only ‘once or twice’, said they strongly agree with part one
of question 25: ‘I use Derbyshire libraries e-book service because I don’t have time to visit a library.’

Questions 7 – 10:

The bulk of respondents (37%) first heard about the service (question 7) through the DCCS website; in the ‘other’ category, 10 respondents learned of it through web searches with three specifying that they had been looking for e-blending services; two others heard of the service while researching e-readers. Detailed responses are shown in chart 7.

![Chart 7: Q7. Where did you first hear about Derbyshire libraries’ e-book lending service?](image)

Of the 435 responses to question 8, ‘When did you first start using Derbyshire libraries’ e-book lending service?’ 60% (261) of respondents began using it over a year ago, while 29% (127) have used it for between a year and 6 months. The remaining 11% have used it for less than 6 months.

In response to question 9, 39% of respondents use the service at least monthly. Details are indicated in chart 8.
Chart 8: Q9. How frequently do you borrow e-books from Derbyshire libraries?

Question 10, ‘In the last six months have you borrowed an item from Derbyshire libraries’ e-book service?’ divided the responses into ‘active’ and ‘inactive’ users. The minimum criterion of being an active library user for DCCS is for a library card to be used at least once in 12 months; for this research, at DCCS’s request, this was reduced to a minimum of one e-book borrowing in 6 months. Responses indicate that 76% of users (332) are active; 105 people are ‘inactive’ users.

These ‘inactive’ users then followed a branch in the survey to answer three questions (questions 11 – 13) relating to former frequency of borrowing, reasons for discontinuing borrowing and if they were likely to use the service again. Although the branching was hidden in the online survey, the numeration used here follows that of the version of the survey appended.
Questions 11 – 13; the ‘inactive’ users branch

Responses to question 11, ‘Although you have not recently borrowed e-books from Derbyshire libraries, how often did you borrow them in the past?’ are shown in chart 9.

![Chart 9: Q11. Although you have not recently borrowed e-books from Derbyshire libraries, how often did you borrow them in the past?](chart9.png)

Question 12 asked respondents to explain why they had not borrowed books in the previous 6 months. Details are shown in chart 10.

![Chart 10: Q12. Please tell us why you have not borrowed e-books recently.](chart10.png)
Four respondents mentioned issues getting their devices to work with the e-book service; the devices included an Android Smartphone, a Blackberry ‘reader’ and a Nexus 7 tablet. In addition, 25 other respondents use the incompatible Kindle. Some respondents are aware of this:

“I have changed my KOBO for a KINDLE so am now unable to borrow books.”

“Too long a lead time. Moved to a Kindle device.”

Others appear to see the lack of compatibility as a policy:

“Tedious to use an app to read on a phone when I have a Kindle - which is not supported by the service.”

“I would like to have e-books on my Kindle. Last time I looked, you were not providing the service for Kindles.”

The most significant reason for not borrowing e-books recently in terms of numbers of comments was that the selection of material was poor:

“I am finding the fiction section limited on scope of authors. Also most books, because of shortage, are out on loan…”

“I originally stopped looking for books…because I was disappointed with the range…from my favourite authors or alternatives and…the ones I wanted were so often out on loan.”

“Titles are very limited.”

Problems with downloading and the site’s functionality were collected under the heading ‘technical issues’. Comments frequently mention poor stock and issues accessing the e-books:
“[T]he books I wanted to read were not there, there wasn’t much... Also found it hard to understand what to do on the e-book site.”

“Found it all too complicated, and couldn't actually see any of the up to date titles I was looking for.”

“The system of downloading an e-book from DCC is not as straightforward as downloading to a Kindle.”

“A little bit tricky to use the Bluefire app on iOS.”

“Best selling authors are not available. Poor availability of books… - most seem to be out on loan.”

Finally, the category ‘other’ was used for a wide range of reasons; examples are given below:

“Just haven’t got round to it.”

“Too busy and unwilling to take devices on holiday.”

“Only borrow when I go on holiday and I have not been on holiday recently.”

“Reading Anthony Trollope novels from project Guttenberg.”

Question 13 asked if respondents thought they might start borrowing e-books again in the future. Responses are shown in chart 11.
The question further asked respondents to specify why or why not. Of the twelve negative answers, 5 were that the system was too difficult and ‘frustrating’ to use:

“I had great difficulty installing the E-reader that worked with DCC’s book format…[h]aving installed it I failed to use it with a book…from the library…Really I was having a test run when I asked for a book, and I suppose the test failed.”

“The variety of material was limited … I found the whole process of the book being "out on loan" …and my having to wait for it to be "returned" and then "due back" on a certain date to be bonkers and very frustrating.”

A further six negative answers related to the respondents using Kindles; the final negative response was based on poor stock.

Similarly, eight comments from the ‘don’t know’ group were that using the service in future depended on it offering compatibility with other devices, including Kindles; one response was “[d]epends if I can access them on my iPad,” another, “if there is an app for my Kindle HD I would use the service again.” There were also
three comments about the site’s “cumbersome” processes, and three about the need for “more choice” of reading material.

The 68% of respondents who answered ‘yes’ to question 13 raised similar issues. 14 respondents wanted a better selection of material, six compatibility with Kindles (two others cited as their reasons for newfound interest having bought new devices), and 13 referred to difficulties using the site.

It should be pointed out that some of the ‘yes’ responses were very conditional; one respondent said they would use the service, “if there is a better range and titles are more current;” another said “if the format changes for kindle.”

One respondent noted;

“it would be useful to me to have a talk or be shown how easy it is to access this service -it is so long since I last attempted (and been disappointed) that I am wary of beginning the process again.”

Others commented that they had more time or were planning holiday reading, and would look at the service again in this light.

Additionally, within the large group of respondents with disparate, often personal, reasons for not making more use of e-books, such as lack of time or due to a recent illness, the same themes arise;

“I borrow e-books primarily to have something to read on my phone should I find myself without a printed book... However, I find the reading experience difficult and feel a pressure to read them first…because ebooks expire and I'd have to go through a longer process to download again cf renewing a print book. The selection is also more limited…”
Three separate themes emerge from this data; one is the problem of incompatible devices – principally Kindles; next, the number of users or potential users who have devices which should be compatible with the service but who have found the complexity of the interface and the necessity of downloading additional software too much for them, and have either failed or lost interest. Finally, and connected to the previous point, is the apparent lack of stock; users might be more motivated to persist in accessing the e-books if they felt that they would be able to find material of interest or use to them. All of these points will be raised again below.

Questions 14 – 28: all users

At question 14 the ‘inactive’ branch ended and once again all respondents were presented with all questions. From this question on to the open-ended questions at the end of the survey, the focus was on how users access e-books, what kinds of e-books are preferred, and what difficulties are encountered; both active and inactive users were invited to answer these questions.

Question 14:

Question 14 asked about which devices were used to read e-books (multiple answers allowed): 55% of respondents use dedicated e-readers, while 49% use tablet devices. Details of the 20% of responses in the category ‘other’ are shown below in chart 12.
Chart 12: Q14. What kind of device(s) do you use to read e-books? Other devices. Note multiple answers allowed.

Within the original set of answers three respondents put tablet devices into the ‘other’ category, while eight more did so with various e-readers; these have been corrected into the appropriate categories. While trivial, this does underline users’ lack of knowledge about the technology.

Questions 15 – 17:

Question 15 asked ‘How easy or difficult was it to start using Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book service for the first time? 50% (217) of the 435 responses were that it was fairly easy, 28% (121) that it was very easy, 16% (70) that it was quite difficult and 6% (27) said it had been very difficult.

Question 16 asked about how easy or difficult it was subsequently to download e-books; results are shown in chart 13 below. 45% as can be seen said it was ‘fairly easy.’
Chart 13: Q16. How easy or difficult did you find it subsequently to download e-books?

Question 17 asked ‘Have technical difficulties ever made you abandon the process of downloading an e-book?’ 292 people (68%, n = 431) responded that it had not, while 5% (21) said it happened ‘often’ and 27% (118) said it happened ‘sometimes’. The question went on to ask for specific reasons, details of which are shown below in charts 14 and 15.

Chart 15: Q17. Have technical difficulties ever made you abandon the process of downloading an e-book? Yes, often: please specify.

Generally comments made in relation to having problems ‘often’ are, as is to be expected, more negative: one respondent said, “it just doesn’t work or is not intuitive – and I worked in IT,” while another said, “‘often’ is wrong, because I failed so thoroughly the first time I gave up.” ‘Incompatibility’ covers a range of problems: downloading Adobe digital editions, applications such as the Bluefire and Aldiko reading apps, downloading to a laptop and thence to a reader, and, of course, issues with Kindles. Comments include:

“[I]t seems that sometimes iTunes doesn't like Bluefire. I had to turn iTunes off. This is inconvenient.”

“Limited ebook reading software for tablet computers. i.e. Blackberry Playbook”

“E-book borrowed did not download when requested. Instructions/procedure for downloading not very clear using Aldiko software.”
Respondents who have had problems only ‘sometimes’ are generally more positive:

“Downloading e-books to the Adobe Digital Library on my laptop used to be a bit hit and miss but it never stopped me from getting books when I wanted them. However, your download process has recently changed and it's now no problem at all.”

“System problems in the beginning which were sorted out after contacting the helpline.”

“Unable to download Adobe on my iPad but now use Bluefire.”

“Have had problems downloading two e-books. One was fixed by the library after an e-mail from me, in the other case, the library could not find a problem, so I had to give up. I bought it instead! Have successfully borrowed lots of books, though.”

Other respondents have obviously found the experience more difficult:

“The library web site is messy, the books are not easy to find and the search engine is useless, plus adobe does not always load.”

“I sometimes get confused when using adobe reader... but I usually figure it out... although the service would be better if more detailed (screen shots etc) instructions were made available.”

Not all support has been successful:

“Unable to download even though I contacted DCC who said they would resolve the problem but didn't.”
Such comments indicate that the interface and download procedures could be made more user-friendly and straightforward, and that additional support could be given. At the same time, these comments need to be kept in perspective; over two thirds of respondents have always been successful in using the site, and the 27% who have abandoned it ‘sometimes’ includes a substantial number who have given up because of slow connections, incompatible devices, and the site being offline, i.e. issues that DL has no influence over.

Question 18:

Question 18 asked, ‘Do you ever alter the way your device displays text (e.g. by enlarging font size, changing the font, changing the screen brightness, etc.) in order to make it easier to read?’ and asked respondents who replied ‘yes’ to specify how and why. This question was designed to capture information about the use of e-books with the potential accessibility features of various e-reading devices. After open coding of the 257 separate positive answers, 182 (71%) referred to altering the font or font size and 52 (20%) to altering the screen brightness. 24 respondents mentioned having poor eyesight and that adapting the display was a help; of these 5 referred to specific visual impairments. One respondent mentioned an illness which affected their eyesight, another mentioned dyslexia and a further four specified age-related eyesight problems. 19 comments were made about having to adapt the font and/or layout to screen size, for example when reading on a Smartphone or reading picture books for children which display better in landscape mood.

Based on these responses, only 12% of the respondents using the accessibility features of the various devices do so because of some degree of visual impairment, poor eyesight or a reading disorder. Although the question asked respondents to
specify why they used such features, many simply responded that they do use them, or answered very literally: “Enlarging font size & changing brightness to make it easier to read (strange question!)”

Given the age range of the sample, age-related deterioration of eyesight would seem a likely reason behind the use of such features; this, however, is only a surmise. That e-books do enhance accessibility for some, however, is quite clear:

“I have type 2 diabetes and my sight varies from day to day, even with spectacles. This for a long time had stopped me from reading any books which I had been borrowing from Eckington Library since 1975. Then I got a Kobo Touch and I can now read every day (and night). I would be totally lost without my e-reader and your wonderful e-book lending service. I am re-discovering the wonderful world of books and it's changed my life.”

Questions 19 – 20:

Questions 19 and 20 sought to discover user e-book borrowing habits. Responses to question 19, ‘how many e-books do you usually borrow at one time?’ are shown below in chart 16; the mean number of e-books borrowed per session is 2.17.

35% of responses to the ‘it varies’ option (coded to allow multiple responses) were that it depended on availability, while 15% were that it depended on how much free time users had to read; another 15% of responses indicated that users borrow more when travelling and going on holiday. Six responses showed that users were aware of the user-defined loan periods and would stagger their loans periods to maximise borrowing ‘credits;’ as one said:
“I often download 3 at a time but one for 1 week, one for 2 weeks & 1 for 3 weeks so that they expire at different times and I don’t have to log on and download too frequently.”

However, most other users seem less aware of this option:

“Because the books cannot be returned early there is little point in borrowing more than a couple at a time. Also not a huge range…available and often they are already booked out.”

Comments about the lack of choice and most e-books being out on loan were common; the issue of poor stock has already been raised in discussing questions 12 and 13 from the inactive users’ branch above.

Availability – or more accurately, lack of it - seems to be the main driver of how many e-books are borrowed. As of July 2013, the e-book lending service had 3,542 active members⁹; at the same time it offered 5400 separate items, of which 5022 were unique titles; just under half were fiction, the most popular category (A. Bains, personal communication, August 16, 2013). While users can borrow 5 e-books at a time, for a maximum of 21 days, the stock would need to be increased threefold to allow everyone to borrow the maximum number, even before a breakdown of borrowing by most popular categories is considered.

DCCS’s dedicated e-book budget for the year 2013/14 stands at 0.86% of the overall new materials’ budget (an increase of 0.16% over 2012/13); although ‘additional funding’ sometimes becomes available during the financial year, that figure still constitutes a shortfall, given that the e-books service’s 3542 active users make up approximately 2.4% of Derbyshire libraries’ overall active membership

⁹ Using the standard criterion of having borrowed at least one e-book in the previous year.
(approximately 145,000 according to July 2013 figures) (A. Bains, personal communication, August 16, 2013). This is not of course comparing like with like, as different resources have different costs, and in addition, the e-book users ‘credit’ of 5 books is extra to membership of the physical lending library, which well over half the sample also make use of. According to Gent (2013), the decision to partner with Askews as e-provider was motivated partly by low cost.

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Chart 16: Q19. How many e-books do you/did you usually borrow at one time from Derbyshire libraries?

Responses to question 20, ‘What kinds of e-books do you/did you most often borrow from Derbyshire libraries?’ showed that fiction is overwhelmingly the most popular choice of most users, with 354 responses (84% of total separate respondents; multiple answers allowed). Details are given in chart 17. The most popular choices in the ‘other’ category (see chart 18) were ‘technical’ books (9% of responses), instructional manuals and ‘how-to’ books (21%), history (14%), and travel books and guides (14%).
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Chart 17: Q20. What kinds of e-books do you most often borrow from Derbyshire libraries?

Kinds of e-books specified under ‘other’ are listed in chart 18.

Chart 18: Q20. Other e-books.

The ‘fiction’ category is heavily oversubscribed, despite constituting nearly half of the stock; the same is true of the next two most popular categories, ‘biography and true stories,’ and ‘lifestyle sport and leisure’ which collectively make up 17% of stock but 36% of borrowing choices.
Question 21:  

Question 21 asked ‘How would you describe the selection of e-books available from Derbyshire libraries?’ Details are shown in chart 19. While 172 respondents (41%) said it was satisfactory, 30% of responses described the selection as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor.’ When these responses were correlated with questions 26 and 27 (about possible improvements to, and the overall value of, the e-book service), general comments were positive; with only 5 completely negative – e.g. “as it stands, I don’t think it has any value” – and three others ambivalent – e.g. “increase the range and I’ll use it more.” However, 194 responses to question 26 were about the need for more stock and a better selection.

![Chart 19: Q21. How would you describe the selection of e-books available from Derbyshire libraries?](image)

Regarding stock selection for the e-book service, DCCS tries to buy “good quality adult and children’s fiction and non-fiction that fulfils a number of criteria e.g. popular, meets local interest, reflects equality and diversity,” and covers “high profile authors, priority subject areas…challenging and innovative subject area and topical
issues.” However, the library admits to being “limited by the selection of eBooks available from publishers, so it is difficult to apply…standard stock purchasing guidelines and ensure good coverage.” As one of DCCS’s stock service managers says, “it depends on what is available.” (A. Bains, personal communication, August 16, 2013)

Questions 22 – 23:

Questions 22 and 23 related to whether or not e-book library users ever buy their own books or e-books. While the highest percentage in response to question 22, ‘Do you ever buy books or e-books because having borrowed them from the library you want to keep your own copy?’ was in the ‘no, never’ response (71% of respondents as regards print books; 78% as regards e-books), there was a significant number of positive responses to question 23, ‘Do you ever buy books or e-books because you've wanted to borrow them but they've been unavailable from your library?’ as regards print books (57%) and e-books (53%), aggregating ‘yes, often’ and ‘yes, sometimes’ responses. Details are given in charts 20 and 21.

This confirms that library users do indeed buy books and are not totally reliant on ‘free books’ from the library for their reading.

It also suggests that publishers’ policies – e.g. not providing e-books of bestsellers at the start of the holiday period - are effective in influencing sales (see Jones, 2013 on how e-book and print book sales patterns differ).
Chart 20: Q22 Do you ever buy books or e-books because having borrowed them from the library you want to keep your own copy?

Chart 21: Q23. Do you ever buy books or e-books because you've wanted to borrow them but they've been unavailable from your library?

Question 24:

Question 24 asked if e-book library users ever obtain books from other sources than DL, such as free sites or commercial sites like Amazon.com. The latter was by far and away the most popular alternative source, at 70% (244 responses, where n =
347, multiple answers allowed). Free sources received 184 responses (53%), while ‘others’ received 71 responses (20%). Note that some responses that mentioned Amazon, the Sony store, or iBooks, could potentially belong to other categories, as these commercial outlets also provide free books. Details are shown in chart 22. This re-emphasises the point made above that the majority of library users are also book buyers.

Incidentally, 17 of the 21 respondents who ‘often’ abandon borrowing e-books from DL (question 17) use alternative sources to obtain books, as do 104 of the 118 respondents who abandoned borrowing ‘sometimes.’ This suggests problems with the DL site are not due to a lack of experience or knowledge of other e-book channels.

Question 25:

Question 25 comprised three separate statements to which respondents were to rank their level of agreement according to a five-step Likert scale. The three questions were: I use Derbyshire libraries’ e-book service because I don’t have time to visit a library; I use Derbyshire libraries’ e-book service because there isn’t a library close to where I live, and; I use Derbyshire libraries’ e-book service because I have a disability.
which makes it difficult to get access to my local library. Detailed answers are shown in the following three charts, 23 – 25. It is noticeable that, while only 47% of the responses to the first statement are ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree,’ that rises to 79% for the second statement, and to 86% for the third.

Chart 23: Q25 (1). I use Derbyshire libraries’ e-book service because I don’t have time to visit a library.

In order to try to obtain more understanding of this data, responses to question 25 were cross-referenced with those to questions 27 and 28 (regarding value and any other comments). What emerged from this is that respondents equate the e-book service with convenience – see the discussion of question 27 below for more on this – and appear to equate convenience with saving time. Thus respondents who made comments about borrowing “from the comfort of my own home,” of being housebound, of the e-book service saving “petrol, parking and CO2 emissions,” and of saving a “12-mile journey” all emphasised the time factor rather than remoteness. Only two respondents specified, both in question 25 and in comments in response to question 26, that the e-book service was valuable because they live in rural areas.
Unexpectedly, only 7 of the ‘strongly agree’ responses to part 3 of question 25 (‘I use the e-book service because I have a disability which makes it difficult to get access to my local library’) were from respondents who in question 3 had said they consider themselves to have a disability. Cross referencing again with question 27 found that none of these respondents had made any mention of a relationship between the value of the e-book service and their disability.

Chart 24: Q25 (2). I use Derbyshire libraries’ e-book service because there isn’t a library close to where I live.

Chart 25: Q25 (3). I use Derbyshire libraries’ e-book service because I have a disability which makes it difficult to get access to my local library.
Questions 26 – 28:

The final questions in the user survey were three direct questions which gave the respondents the opportunity to respond in varying levels of detail and depth. Question 26 was ‘if you think that there are any changes or improvements that could be made to Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book service, please provide details below.’ Comments were subjected to open coding producing a total of 342 separate references; detailed results are shown in chart 26 below.

![Chart 26: Q26. What changes or improvements could be made to Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book service?](chart.png)

The single most frequent comment (57% of total number after coding) was for the amount of material available to be increased and brought up to date. The next biggest group of responses, the ‘other’ category, included suggestions to “streamline the system at the…account level,” to increase the back lists, add classic authors and “convert retired print books to e-books.” There were 18 references to the system not working with Kindles, and one suggestion that the e-provider Overdrive be used; a further comment was that “ebooks can be read on Kindle if you use the OverDrive app.”
In addition there were 39 separate comments about improving the search facility, and 4 about improving the website or making it “more intuitive”. One described the site as “dire.” These comments presumably refer to the e-book site rather than DCC’s main site. 32 comments were made about the need for a returns option and 11 about a renewals option; further responses were made on these topics below: see question 28.

As was mentioned above in reference to questions 19, 20 and 21, the main issues that emerge are users’ frustration over the lack of available material, due either to limited stock or because e-books are out on loan or reserved. This frustration is heightened by the difficulty of using the search interface\(^1\), and by the inflexibility of not being able to return e-books early, or renew unfinished e-books. As noted earlier, few respondents explicitly mention the user-defined loan period, suggesting that many users may use the maximum 21-day loan period as a default. Predictably, users also expect a level of functionality at least equivalent to comparable sites, notwithstanding the fact that these may be market leaders such as Amazon and Overdrive:

“I would like to see more detailed information about e-books…similar to the 'Look inside this book' facility…on the Amazon website. The summaries currently available are a little too limited.”

“I would like to be able to read a few pages of the book to ascertain the author's style. It would be good to have the reviews or links to book reviews for each book too.”

“It would be good to be able to return books once I have finished them…as

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\(^1\) See Appendix 6 for screenshots of how the two search options display.
Some users perceive the illogicality of e-books being artificially circumscribed to limit access:

“Why are e-books shown as ‘unavailable’ when out on loan? Surely there can be as many copies as necessary as users are only borrowing a ‘virtual’ book not a hard copy.”

“Unclear why ebooks are not available given that they don't physically exist - surely all books in the ebook library should always be available?”

Still others recognise that libraries do not have a free hand:

“The major weakness is not of the libraries making but the decision by authors and their agents not to make their books available for loan.”

Given the questions implicit in these comments, it would seem that more extensive communication back to users to explain some of the limitations inherent in the service would go some way to aligning expectations with what can actually be achieved. As will be seen next, however, users’ expectations are realistic.

Question 27 was ‘What value, if any, do you think the e-book service brings to the broader range of Derbyshire libraries’ services?’ Responses were coded initially into the two broad categories ‘negative’ and ‘positive.’ Overwhelmingly - 276 of the separate 298 references - the responses were positive, with responses like “huge value,” “great asset,” and “absolutely fantastic.” Within this, responses were coded as
to specific value added; flexibility, convenience and accessibility were mentioned 162 times, with comments such as “You don't have to plan to borrow in the same way which with a busy life and children/work commitments makes the library service far more accessible,” “it's a valuable service, especially for older people like myself in the winter time” and “INVALUABLE for Rural communities, especially with bad winter weather limiting travel/access to library buildings.”

Such responses must be considered against the data from question 25, which suggested that physical remoteness from a library was not as important a factor for users as saving time. It may be that, for someone used to travelling to avail of services anyway - Derbyshire is a big county with, in northern parts especially, a relatively low population density\(^{11}\) - the convenience is interpreted more as a saving of time than as having to do with remoteness or distance.

In addition, within the 276 positive comments, there were 20 comments relating to the importance of DCCS using modern technology, 7 about avoiding late returns fees, 7 which specifically mentioned value for housebound users and 3 which described the service as environmentally friendly.

11 comments were made suggesting that the service is valuable but has not yet reached full potential or making other caveats, such as “[t]here is value but more commitment needs to be given. If you consider that you buy one printed book for each library surely they should be more that one ebook available for the whole of Derbyshire?” Others recognised limitations; “I suppose it's the future, but publishers

\(^{11}\) Average population density in England is 4.1 persons per hectare according to the 2011 census; for Derbyshire the average is 3.0. In High Peak and Derby Dales it falls to 1.7 and 0.9 respectively (Office for National Statistics, n.d.).
will need to stop having ridiculous rules like re-buying books after a certain number of loans or not permitting multiple loans of the same 'book'."

Of the 9 outright negative comments, six correlated with the poor or very poor choice option regarding the selection of material available (question 21), while one respondent had never been able to obtain access using an Apple Mac, and said they were “bitterly disappointed.” Three other respondents, all Kindle users, have also never borrowed e-books. One respondent was unwilling to download extra software for their iPad, and said that they would be interested if the service became compatible with EPUB. Another abandoned e-books because “[t]he Aldiko reader on the nexus gives very small print so I have given up trying to read ebooks.”

Based on desk research and the DCCS FAQs, at least three of these respondents’ devices should be compatible, suggesting their problems could have been resolved with support.

Question 28 was ‘Is there anything else you would like to add that hasn’t been covered in this survey or any other feedback you would like to give about Derbyshire libraries' e-book services?’ Responses to this were consistent with those thus far: after opening coding there were 116 separate comments, of which 54 were positive expressions of thanks, good wishes, and comments on recent improvements:

“I have only used technical support once for a stuck download. This was sorted speedily and cheerfully by a human. Congratulations”

“This is an amazing service. Thank you for providing it”

“just keep up the good work.”

“I think the software interface is much better in recent months, thank you :)”

“I should like to thank everyone involved in making the service available.”
There were 20 comments referring again to the need for more and better choice of material, 6 about issues with DRM and reading apps, and three direct suggestions that more support could be provided, either online or in libraries. 13 comments were made about how it would be convenient to be able to return e-books once read, and to extend loan periods or renew loans if wished. 6 comments were made about Kindle incompatibility. 4 comments were that e-books would never replace a physical library service; “[i]t is important that the ebook service is not allowed to be seen - intentionally or otherwise - as a replacement for traditional lending,” and “[t]here is value in visiting a library, meeting people, finding out what's happening in the community, lectures, etc.”

Another 4 people said that more marketing would be good:

“Reading using an e-reader is on the increase. Consequently, the e-book service should be a service that is ripe for development, broadening both its offer and its readership-base…DCC should be shouting about it - but it's probably Derbyshire CC's best kept secret.”

“It needs more advertisement. Lot of friends did not know about the service as they are not regular uses of the library.”

“More adverts in libraries to encourage use of ebooks. Posters etc showing selections of books which can be borrowed as ebooks.”

One comment blamed the lack of choice on there being so many users, describing the e-book service as “a victim of its own success,” two respondents asked for an option to suggest further books, and one commented on incompatibility with Kindles, Kobos and Android devices. Finally two respondents queried whether there
was a lack of support and/or funding for the service due to a perception that “the
ebook service…may impact on the usage of physical libraries.” Both concluded that if
so, this is a pity as e-books provide “a useful service” and “e-books are the way to
go.”

The e-book service, then, is very highly regarded by its users and appreciated
greatly for the convenience it offers; the major complaint is that there is not enough
material, and the second that that the site and the functionality it offers is poor; as
suggested above, frustration with lack of choice is compounded by a poor search
facility and inflexibility regarding returns and renewals. The bulk of respondents, it
must be noted, have used the service successfully and their positive responses reflect
this; although 123 respondents describe the e-book selection (q. 21) as ‘poor’ or ‘very
poor,’ as noted above only six of these went on to make negative comments. A sense
of users moderating their expectations comes across frequently:

“Overall I think it's a great service and the above whinges are trivial really. I
suppose I expected too much too soon in range of fiction books.”

“Despite my earlier comments, I feel that the ebook service is a valuable
service and Derbyshire County Council should be commended for introducing it to
the people of Derbyshire…I count myself lucky to live in a county where libraries are
valued by the local authority.”
5 Conclusions and recommendations

The purpose of the following section is, by drawing together issues arising from the findings of the research and discussion above, to offer conclusions and make recommendations regarding DCCS e-book service, and future directions for research. The conclusions will be related back to the original objectives of the research to show that they have been achieved.

5.1 Conclusions

The most obvious conclusion is that DCCS’s e-book service is very highly valued by its users, and that they want to see it continued and if possible extended and improved.

Two further conclusions can be drawn from the data. The first is that the principal motivating factors for DL e-books users are convenience and the saving of time, as opposed to physical remoteness from a library, or accessibility issues. Based on comments rather than numerical data (see questions 25 and 27), and as suggested above, the interpretations that respondents are implicitly making must be considered. However, this finding – the value of ‘anytime, anywhere’ access - is consistent with results from other surveys, both of the HE and PL field, as outlined in the literature review above.

The second (see questions 22 and 23) is that, as other commentators and surveys indicate, e-book readers do buy both printed books and e-books – but apparently not if they are available from the library.
5.2 Recommendations regarding DCCS’s e-book service

The major issue is the lack of availability of e-books; this could be addressed in three ways:

1) by making the user-defined loan period option clear, and adding user-friendly information about book length – i.e. how many pages long a print equivalent would be – in order to allow users to estimate how long a loan period to choose;

2) by implementing a returns options;

3) by purchasing more stock.

Users’ experience of e-lending from DCCS could be further enhanced in two ways: 1) the search facility and interface of the e-books site could be improved, most obviously by an option to filter out unavailable titles; 2) more support could be provided through screenshots, leaflets, screencasts, and making the contact details of the helpline more prominent. Adequate support is currently provided – user-friendly instructions dedicated to different devices and apps are available on the FAQs – but multiple channels and repetition would be beneficial. As one member of staff said, the FAQs are ‘not always seen.’

These issues are consistent with those found in other surveys; see the comments above on the US Library Journal report’s conclusions.

Other recommendations for DCCS are:

1) to manage users’ expectations more: comments above suggest that some users are aware of the context within which DCCS provides its services. Further clarification of the external factors would offer the chance of addressing more users’ frustrations.
2) to promote the service more or relaunch it. This is based on comments from users and staff, and survey results from non-users.

3) to consider training or ‘refresher’ sessions for staff. Results of the staff survey suggest a perceived need for some retraining, though few comments from the user survey mention issues with in-library support.

5.3 Recommendations for further research:

There are many areas within the field of e-books for research which the current research’s findings touch upon: the impact of publishers’ policies on e-book availability; longitudinal study of borrowers’ print- and e-book purchasing habits and how it shifts as the market develops; public libraries’ ‘ROI’ on e-books and print books in terms of items borrowed; support log analysis and support-issue resolution, and so on. Within the narrower context of user perception of e-books in UK public libraries, one direction for further research is comparative study of other public libraries’ e-resource services; Overdrive, to which DL’s service has been compared above by users, is an obvious candidate for study. Gathering comparative data on other UK public library e-book services would allow cross-comparison with the data generated by the current research, and inform the degree to which conclusions drawn here may be generalized. The findings of the current research also provide a background for research along the lines of other proposals suggested by DCCS at the beginning of this project (see Appendix 4).
5.4 Research Aims and Objectives

Given the response rate to the user survey, the conclusions drawn regarding DL’s e-book service’s value to users may be seen to be robust; the primary aim of investigating the impact and value of the e-book service has been achieved. The objectives have also broadly been successfully met; observations from the staff and non-user surveys correlate with and thus inform the user survey (though the quantity and richness of the data from the latter may make the opposite seem more true). Quantitative data has been cross-referenced with commentary to allow each to inform the other.

Results and conclusions have been found to be consistent with other surveys, and suggestions for further research made.

(Words: 14,859)


Appendix 1

Glossary and definitions

**Apps:** an abbreviation for ‘mobile applications,’ the term refers to third-party software designed to add functionality to mobile devices (smartphones, tablets, etc.). In the context of e-books, apps enable users to download e-books onto and read e-books on their devices (as well as add other functionality such as the option to annotate, comment, and so forth). Examples include Bluefire, Aldiko, Sony’s Reader, Barnes and Noble’s Nook app, Apple’s iBooks, Amazon’s Kindle app and the Kobo app; apps for specialised formats exist such as MeeGenius Children’s Books, Zinio for magazines, Comics for comics, and Wattpad for ‘user-submitted’ content.

Overdrive offers a special app for Kindle tablets. Apps frequently come in versions offering compatibility to different operating systems. Thus a reader might have multiple apps on multiple devices, maximising the number of free, commercial, and mixed channels they obtain their e-reading from while synchronising their collection across laptops, desktops, and mobile devices. Note that once proprietary names are used, confusion can easily occur between hardware and software; e.g. ‘Kindle e-reader’ may mean Amazon’s Kindle app, or a dedicated physical Kindle e-reader.


**AZW:** a proprietary document format used by Amazon. Kindle e-readers can ‘read’ AZW, as well as a variety of non-DRM protected formats; other formats require conversion. The effect of this is to ‘lock-in’ consumers, to one extent or
another, to e-books digitized using the software that their readers can decode, in a fashion similar to the lack of interoperability between Microsoft and Apple products. In practice the situation is arguably somewhat less limiting, as alternatives are available; file conversion software allows e-readers to read material (e.g. free, out-of-copyright, e-books) digitized in formats other than the e-reader’s native format. In addition, the DRM of a particular e-reader or tablet can be ‘jail-broken’ to enable it to read other formats, though this workaround will usually contravene the licence agreement under which the e-reader is purchased.

**DCC:** Derbyshire County Council.

**DCCS:** Derbyshire Cultural and Community Services (responsible for libraries, museums, archives and galleries).

**DL:** Derbyshire libraries.

**DRM:** Digital Rights Management. DRM involves restrictions on printing and copying digital files, as well as time-stamps that cause the file to expire after a certain number of views or after a certain period, which are ‘built-in’ to the software. The aim of DRM is to ‘prevent piracy of literary works and infringement on author and publishers’ copyrights’ (Kumbhar, 2012). However, technically inexperienced users may struggle somewhat with the various downloads and installations DRM requires to enable a digital resource to work; Armstrong and Lonsdale (2011) note that it ‘often inhibits legitimate use’ (xxvii). As Polanka says, ‘just how many plug-ins and systems and steps should a casual reader be expected to navigate just to get an e-book?’
Furthermore, DRM limitations may even run contrary to what is legally permitted (Clay, 2011). See Walters (2013) for an overview.

**E-book:** “Any content that is recognizably ‘book-like’, regardless of size, origin or composition, but excluding serial publications, made available electronically for reference or reading on any device (handheld or desk-bound) that includes a screen.” (Armstrong, 2008)

Notwithstanding the fact that originally the word ‘book’ was used for the physical hardware, the current understanding of the term does seem to have settled down to the content as opposed to the device in question. Some ambiguity persists though inasmuch as the appearance of content is determined by software – hence for example Great Expectations can be downloaded from www.gutenberg.org as a plain text UTF-8 file, an html file, as well as in more feature-rich formats such as AZW (i.e. for Kindle) and EPUB, with obvious implications for accessibility and ease of use. See Armstrong (2008) for a thorough, though slightly dated, discussion.

**E-lending:** in the context of public libraries, a system, generally analogous to a library’s physical-object (i.e. print book, CD, etc) lending service, which allows library users to download electronic files, where each file is the equivalent of one e-book, onto their own reading devices/desktop computers etc. DL users can borrow 5 e-books (described as five ‘credits’ on the e-book site) for a period of up to 3 weeks, though they can select a shorter loan period (the minimum is five days). E-book loans are completely separate from regular loans, as the latter are registered onto DL’s LMS, Sirsidynix Symphony, while the former are registered at the e-provider Askews’ and Holts’. For the user, major differences with a physical loan are that at
the end of the e-loan period the e-book is removed from their device by the DRM software, so there is no returns procedure, nor is there the possibility of fees for late returns; similarly there is no renewals option. By the same token, if a user finishes an e-book before the loan period expires, there is no option to return it early. Another significant difference is that typical DRM software (for example the Adobe system used by DL) requires the first-time user to register – i.e. by setting up an account - in order to borrow an e-book; this registration is separate from the library website’s/library e-book provider’s log-in, though it may not be perceived as such by library users. Once the user has registered, downloading e-books from DCCS is not dramatically more complex than downloading from Amazon or Project Gutenberg. Registration has attracted criticism for being both difficult to negotiate and jeopardising users’ privacy. (CILIP, 2012; Derbyshire County, 2013; Hampshire County, 2013; Leicestershire County, 2013; Lynch, 2013; Porter, Weaver and Newman, 2012; Tonkin, 2010).

**EPUB:** an open source file format, introduced in 2007 and widely used for e-books in the UK/US/Europe, where, alongside Amazon’s proprietary format AZW, it is one of the two most popular formats. The latest version, EPUB 3, is designed to have as wide a range of accessibility features as possible. Unlike proprietary formats such as AZW, EPUB ‘offers consumers interoperability,’ which is one reason it is currently being adopted by the AAP (Association of American Publishers). (IDPF, 2013; Ragan, 2009; Tonkin, 2010; AAP, 2013).

**E-reader:** a device with one dedicated function; the downloading of e-books and their provision in a readable form to readers. The most commercially popular
examples in the UK include the Kindle, Kobo, Nook, and Sony Reader, though many others exist.

Unlike dedicated e-reading devices, tablet computers, being inherently multi-functional, offer users a greater degree of interoperability, hence, for example, an Apple iPad or Amazon Kindle Fire tablet device can, through the range of apps available provide e-books from a variety of commercial channels. However the iPad’s ‘iBooks’ adaptation of EPUB has been criticised, in some fairly arcane technical discussions in the blogosphere, for claiming to be an open format while actually introducing proprietary elements.

**Friction**: imposed equivalents of the ‘limits to supply’ of the physical book borrowing arena, frictions, which ‘include the lending of each digital copy to one reader at a time, that digital books could be securely removed after lending and that digital books would deteriorate after a number of loans,’ are meant to protect ‘the interests of publishers and booksellers’ (Sieghart, 2013). Publishers understandably are concerned that the possibilities inherent in e-books potentially ruin their business models; an e-book can offer simultaneous access to multiple readers in perpetuity (or at least until the file format becomes obsolescent). As Walters (2013) points out, ‘the technological advantages of e-books are likely to be realized only to the extent that publishers and distributors can profit from them.’ Hence friction is intended, through restricting such borrowing, to make e-lending more closely imitate physical book lending.
**Kindle:** a family of e-readers, tablets, and e-reading apps developed by Amazon, starting with the purchase of Mobipocket.com in 2005 and Lexcycle Inc. in 2007, as well as other e-book software companies. The ‘Kindle’ line is said to have done for e-readers what iPods did for MP3 players – that is, made them desirable and publicised them among the population at large. The line’s dedicated e-readers were followed in 2011 by a line of tablet devices which run on the Android OS (Murph, 2011). Desk research suggests that Kindle tablets run apps designed for the Android OS, and hence should be compatible with a number of e-reader apps that allow users to borrow from DL (indeed, Amazon have been criticised for not making third party apps more visible in the ‘Kindle app marketplace’) (Tim). However, UK library authorities (e.g. Derby City and Edinburgh city) that use Overdrive offer contradictory information on Kindle compatibility on their websites. This confusion may stem from conflating e-readers with tablets, Kindle apps with others, and so forth. Overdrive themselves say there is no compatibility: see below. (Amazon.com, 2013; Edinburgh City, n.d.; Overdrive, n.d.a; Reid and Milliot, 2012)

**Mac:** a desktop or laptop running an Apple Macintosh OS.

**PC:** literally a personal computer, pc technically can mean a desktop, laptop or handheld computer running a Microsoft OS. The normal usage of the abbreviation as referring to a desktop has been followed in this research.

**Overdrive:** an aggregator and distributor of digital content – e-books, audio books and audio visual material – Overdrive began a download service for libraries in 2003. It currently offers ‘more than 1 million premium digital titles from more than
2,000 publishers,’ and ‘works with more than 22,000 libraries, schools, retailers, OEMs, and publishers’ worldwide, and claims to be a world leader in the field (Overdrive, n.d.b). They claim to partner in the UK with ‘[a]proximately 100 library authorities (50-55% of the country’s public libraries)’ (D. Burleigh, personal communication, August 26, 2013). According to CILIP (2013), ‘approximately 119’ English library authorities were lending e-books as of July 2013; research of Overdrive’s website found approximately 59 separate English County Councils listed among their ‘Digital Library Reserve Member Libraries in England, Great Britain.’ Overdrive can provide access to ‘approximately 350,000’ e-books (D. Burleigh, personal communication, August 26, 2013).

Significantly, in the e-book library world, Overdrive successfully negotiated with Amazon to allow public and school libraries, in the US exclusively, to lend e-books to users with Kindles, assuming that the e-books were already Kindle-compatible; this agreement came into being in September 2011 (Overdrive, n.d.c). Since then the agreement has been the target for various complaints by librarians, chief among them that the system takes library users out of the library site and into Amazon’s, and that Amazon is potentially collecting library patron data for marketing purposes (ALA, n.d.a). It remains Amazon’s only concession to public libraries; in Overdrive’s words:

‘At this time, library eBook compatibility with Kindle is approved only for the U.S. We don’t have any further information or news about this for other countries.’ (D. Burleigh, personal communication, August 26, 2013)

**Remote access:** being able to download e-books from somewhere other than the library premises. The idea that users should be physically present in the library in
order to download is a form of friction. Sieghart's review (2013) recommended that remote access should be implemented as part of e-books provision.
Appendix 2

This appendix contains the staff and non-user surveys, along with the informed consent documents for respondents.

Staff Survey

The University of Sheffield. Information School

A study of e-book lending at Derbyshire libraries.

Researchers

Graham Martindale
Information School
University of Sheffield
gmartindale1@sheffield.ac.uk

Professor Peter Willett
Information School
University of Sheffield
p.willett@sheffield.ac.uk

Purpose of the research

We are investigating what library patrons know about Derbyshire libraries’ e-book lending service, how they use it and what they think of it.

Who will be participating?

We are inviting members of staff of Derbyshire Library aged 18 and over to participate in the study.

Derbyshire County Council has granted us permission to carry out the research.

What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to respond to a number of questions regarding your experience of library users’ comments, observations or suggestions about the e-book lending service and what they think of it.

What are the potential risks of participating?

The risks of participating are the same as those experienced in everyday life.

What data will we collect?

We will collect your responses to the questions. If you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study then you will have the opportunity to indicate this and to provide an email address that the results can be sent to.

What will we do with the data?

The data will be analysed and included in my Master’s dissertation. The data will be stored in a password-protected file on my personal laptop to which I have sole access. On completion of the dissertation, the data will be destroyed.

If you provide an email address this will be stored separately and the file containing this will also be deleted when the dissertation is complete.
Will my participation be confidential?
The data will be anonymised and the computer files which contain the data will be coded with a random number. No identifying information will be retained. If you provide an email address in order to receive a summary of the results, this address will not be associated with any data provided.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The results of this study will be included in my master’s dissertation which will be publicly available. Please contact the Information School at the University of Sheffield in six months.

I confirm that I have read and understand the description of the research project, and that I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the project.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

I understand that I may decline to answer any particular question or questions, or to do any of the activities. If I stop participating at all time, all of my data will be purged.

I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential, that my name or identity will not be linked to any research materials, and that I will not be identified or identifiable in any report or reports that result from the research.

I give permission for the research team members to have access to my anonymised responses.

I agree to take part in the research project as described above.

Participant Name (Please print) ___________________________ Participant Signature ___________________________

Researcher Name (Please print) ___________________________ Researcher Signature ___________________________

Graham Martindale

Date ___________________________

Note: If you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Angela Lin, Research Ethics Coordinator, Information School, The University of Sheffield (ischool_ethics@sheffield.ac.uk), or to the University Registrar and Secretary.
Survey Questionnaire – Derbyshire County Council Library staff

Please answer all questions as directed, but if you cannot or would prefer not to answer a question then you can skip it.

There is space at the end of the questionnaire to add extra comments.

1. What is your age group?
   ☐ 18 - 39
   ☐ 40 - 64
   ☐ 65+

2. What is your gender?
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female

3. Do you read e-books?
   ☐ Yes.
   ☐ No.

   If you ticked yes, please go straight to question 4 below. If you ticked no, please say why you don’t read them. Tick as many boxes as apply, and add further comments as you wish. Then go to question 6.

   ☐ I don’t have a suitable device.
   ☐ I don’t like reading on a screen/device.
   ☐ The kinds of material available as e-books don’t interest me.

   Further comments:
4. Where do you obtain e-books from? Please tick all that apply.

☐ Derbyshire Libraries e-book service
☐ Free source, e.g. Project Gutenberg
☐ Commercial source, e.g. Amazon
☐ Other; please specify:

5. What kind of device do you use to read e-books?

☐ Dedicated e-reader
☐ Tablet
☐ Other; please specify:

6. In your experience, do library users ever ask for technical assistance, advice or help regarding the e-book service?

☐ Yes.
☐ No.
If yes, can you please indicate how many times this has happened, how often it happens?

7. Regarding the e-book service, what kinds of problems do library users need help with? Please tick all that apply.

☐ Finding the service on the website
☐ Joining the service
☐ Downloading e-books
☐ Operating their devices
☐ Downloading/installing software
8. How confident do you feel that you can competently give users advice and assistance on how to use the e-book service? (Please add further comments as you wish).

☐ Very confident.
☐ Fairly confident.
☐ Not very confident.
☐ I don’t know.

Further comments:

9. Do you have any comments, suggestions, feedback or ideas regarding Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book service, and its level of promotion, training and support for staff or library users regarding the e-book service?

Any other issues/comments:
Thank you very much for taking part in this survey. If you have any suggestions or comments you would like to add, or if you think anything has not been covered, please feel free to add them below:

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of the study, please add an email address to which this can be sent below (note that the full study will be available on the University of Sheffield Information School website in 6 months):
Non-user Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The University of Sheffield. Information School</th>
<th>A study of e-book lending at Derbyshire libraries.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Researchers

Graham Martindale  
Information School  
University of Sheffield  
gmartindale1@sheffield.ac.uk

Professor Peter Willett  
Information School  
University of Sheffield  
p.willett@sheffield.ac.uk

Purpose of the research

We are investigating whether library patrons know about Derbyshire libraries’ e-book lending service, and what they think of that service.

Who will be participating?

We are inviting Derbyshire Library members aged 18 and over to participate in the study. Derbyshire County Council has granted us permission to carry out the research.

What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about what you know about e-books, and if you know about the libraries’ e-book lending service and what you think of it.

What are the potential risks of participating?

The risks of participating are the same as those experienced in everyday life.

What data will we collect?

We will collect your responses to the questionnaire. If you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study then you will have the opportunity to indicate this and to provide an email address that the results can be sent to.

What will we do with the data?

The data will be analysed and included in my Master’s dissertation. The data will be stored in a password-protected file on my personal laptop to which I have sole access. On completion of the dissertation, the data will be destroyed. If you provide an email address this will be stored separately and the file containing this will also be deleted when the dissertation is complete.
Will my participation be confidential?
The data will be anonymised and the computer files which contain the data will be coded with a random number. No identifying information will be retained. If you provide an email address in order to receive a summary of the results, this address will not be associated with any data provided.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The results of this study will be included in my master’s dissertation which will be publicly available. Please contact the Information School at the University of Sheffield in six months.

I confirm that I have read and understand the description of the research project, and that I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the project.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

I understand that I may decline to answer any particular question or questions, or to do any of the activities. If I stop participating at all time, all of my data will be purged.

I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential, that my name or identity will not be linked to any research materials, and that I will not be identified or identifiable in any report or reports that result from the research.

I give permission for the research team members to have access to my anonymised responses.

I agree to take part in the research project as described above.

Participant Name (Please print)                  Participant Signature

Researcher Name (Please print)                  Researcher Signature

Date

Note: If you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Angela Lin, Research Ethics Coordinator, Information School, The University of Sheffield (ischool_ethics@sheffield.ac.uk), or to the University Registrar and Secretary.
Demographics:

1. What is your age group?
   - □ 18 - 39
   - □ 40 - 64
   - □ 65+

2. What is your gender?
   - □ Male
   - □ Female

3. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?
   - □ Yes
   - □ No

4. What kinds of materials do you borrow from Derbyshire Libraries or use on Derbyshire Libraries’ premises? Please tick all that apply:
   - □ Print books
   - □ Audio books
   - □ Reference materials
   - □ Computers/internet access
   - □ Other: please specify:

5. What would you describe as your major reasons for using Derbyshire Libraries? Please tick all that apply:
   - □ Leisure/entertainment
   - □ Formal study (e.g. to supplement college resources)
   - □ Informal study (e.g. learning a language in your own time)
   - □ Work (e.g. access to British Standards/reference materials, etc)
   - □ Other: please specify:
6. Do you use Derbyshire Libraries’ online resources?
☐ Yes.
☐ No.

If yes, please specify which:

If no, please say why; tick all that apply:

☐ I didn’t know about the online resources.
☐ I have no need for the online resources.
☐ I prefer to use ‘traditional’ (i.e. paper-based) resources
☐ Other reason: please specify:

7. What do you know about Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book lending service?

a. ☐ I didn’t know about the e-book lending service.
b. ☐ I’ve heard that there is an e-book lending service but I haven’t investigated using it. (If you ticked this option, please go on to question 8A).
c. ☐ I’ve looked at the e-book lending service website but haven’t used it. (If you ticked this option, please go on to question 8B).

8A. You indicated that you know about the service but have never investigated it. Please say why, using the box below:
8B. You indicated that you have looked at the service but not used it. Please say why, using the box below:

Thank you very much for taking part in this survey. If you have any suggestions or comments you would like to add, or if you think anything has not been covered, please feel free to add them below:

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of the study, please add an email address to which this can be sent below (note that the full study will be available on the University of Sheffield Information School website in 6 months):
Appendix 3

This appendix contains the word version of the user survey, amended to reflect changes that took place when the word version was redesigned for uploading to Survey Monkey.

The consent form was abbreviated at DCCS request (see methodology above). Survey Monkey is a member of the US ‘Safe Harbour’ data protection scheme, which is recognised by the EU as giving sufficient protection to personal data, hence the confidentiality clause below still holds good. See http://export.gov/safeharbor/
In the online version, questions 11 – 13 appeared only to respondents who answered no to question 10.

Derbyshire Libraries’ E-book users’ questionnaire

Dear Derbyshire e-book user,

We are contacting you because you have shown an interest in Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book service, which has been offering free e-book loans to library members for the past two years. You may be a regular user or perhaps you last borrowed one of our e-books some time ago. No matter, we want to find out more about your use of the service and to hear your views.

We are working with the University of Sheffield to research and understand our users’ experiences of borrowing e-books and to inform the future development of the service.

Please would you take a few minutes to answer our questionnaire? The link below takes you to the survey which we would ask you to complete.

[LINK]

Yours sincerely,

[Scanned signature]

Martin Molloy OBE
Strategic Director
Cultural and Community Services
County Hall
Derbyshire County Council
MATLOCK
DE4 3AG
E-book Survey v2

E-book lending at Derbyshire libraries

The University of Sheffield in partnership with Derbyshire Council is investigating how library members use Derbyshire libraries’ e-book lending service, and find out what they think of that service.

Who will be participating?
We are inviting Derbyshire Library members aged 18 and over who have used the e-book lending service to participate in the study. Derbyshire County Council has granted us permission to carry out the research.

What will you be asked to do?
We are asking you to complete this brief on-line questionnaire about how you use the e-book lending service and what you think of it.

Will my participation be confidential?
The data will be anonymised and no identifying information will be retained. If you provide an email address in order to receive a summary of the results, this address will not be associated with any data provided.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
The results of this study will be included in the master’s dissertation of a student at the University of Sheffield which will be publicly available.

About you

1. What is your age group?
   - [ ] Under 18
   - [ ] 18 - 39
   - [ ] 40 - 64
   - [ ] 65+

2. What is your gender?
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female

3. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

4. In the last year, how often have you visited a Derbyshire building?
   - [ ] At least monthly
   - [ ] Every few months
   - [ ] Once or twice
   - [ ] Never
5. Do you currently use any other libraries apart from Derbyshire Libraries, e.g. public libraries outside Derbyshire, university or college libraries?
☐ Yes
☐ No

6. Which of the following Derbyshire Library services do you currently use?
(Please select all that apply)
☐ Borrowing e-books
☐ Borrowing printed books
☐ Borrowing audio books
☐ Using printed reference materials in the library
☐ Using computers/internet in the library
☐ Using your library card number to access online reference resources from home
☐ Home library service (books delivered to your home)
☐ Attend events/talks
☐ Any other services: please specify:

7. Where did you first hear about Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book lending service?
☐ Derbyshire County Council website
☐ Information in the Library
☐ Local media
☐ Someone told me about it
☐ Other: please specify:

8. When did you first use Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book lending service?
☐ Less than six months ago
☐ Six months to a year ago
☐ Over a year ago

9. How frequently do you borrow e-books from Derbyshire libraries?
☐ At least monthly
☐ Every few months
☐ Once or twice a year
☐ Less than once or twice a year

10. In the last six months have you borrowed an item from Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book service?
☐ Yes
☐ No
11. Although you have not recently borrowed e-books from Derbyshire Libraries, how often did you borrow them in the past?
☐ At least monthly
☐ Every few months
☐ Once or twice a year
☐ I never borrowed e-books.

12. Please tell us why have you not borrowed e-books recently?\(^\text{12}\)

13. Do you think you might start borrowing e-books again?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don’t know
Please specify why/why not:

14. What kind of device(s) do you use to read e-books? (Please select all that apply)
☐ Dedicated e-reader e.g. Kindle, Kobo
☐ Tablet e.g. iPad, Samsung
☐ Other (please specify):

15. How easy or difficult was it to start using Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book service for the first time?
☐ Very easy
☐ Fairly easy
☐ Quite difficult
☐ Very difficult

16. How easy or difficult did you find it subsequently to download e-books?
☐ Very easy
☐ Fairly easy
☐ Quite difficult
☐ Very difficult

\(^{12}\) (Sic).
17. Have technical difficulties ever made you abandon the process of borrowing an e-book?
☐ Yes, often
☐ Yes, sometimes
☐ No, never

If yes, please describe what the difficulties were:

18. Do you ever alter the way your device displays text (e.g. by enlarging font size, changing the font, changing the screen brightness, etc.) in order to make it easier to read?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ My device does not have this function

If you ticked yes, please explain what features you use and why:

19. How many Derbyshire e-books do you/did you usually borrow at one time?
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ It varies – please explain:

20. What kinds of e-books do you most often borrow from Derbyshire Libraries?
Tick all that apply:
☐ Fiction
☐ Children’s, young adult and educational
☐ Biography and true stories
☐ Lifestyle, sport and leisure
☐ Other: please specify:

21. How would you describe the selection of e-books available?
☐ Very good
☐ Good
☐ Satisfactory
☐ Poor
☐ Very poor
22. Do you ever buy books or e-books because having borrowed them from the library you want to keep your own copy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, often</th>
<th>Yes, sometimes</th>
<th>No, never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. Do you ever buy books or e-books because you’ve wanted to borrow them but they’ve been unavailable from your library?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, often</th>
<th>Yes, sometimes</th>
<th>No, never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. Do you ever obtain e-books from (please select all that apply):

- [ ] Other free source, e.g. Project Gutenberg
- [ ] Commercial source, e.g. Amazon
- [ ] Other:

25. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. I use Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book lending service because I don’t have time to visit a library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. I use Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book lending service because there isn’t a library close to where I live</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. I use Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book lending service because I have a disability which makes it difficult to get access to or to use the library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. If you think that there are any changes or improvements that could be made to Derbyshire Libraries’ e-book service, please provide details below:
27. What value, if any, do you think the e-book service brings to the broader range of Derbyshire libraries’ services?


28. Is there anything else you would like to add that hasn’t been covered in this survey or any other feedback you would like to give?


Thank you very much for taking part in our survey. If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of the study, please add an email address to which this can be sent below (note that the full study will be available on the University of Sheffield Information School website in 6 months):


Appendix 4

This appendix contains the original email from DCCS suggesting a range of possible areas for the research project to focus upon. (R. Jones, personal communication, April 20, 2013)

- A brief contextual review of Derbyshire’s e-book service, in the light of the developing technology, the different formats, library suppliers and the services provided by other library authorities in the UK and abroad. Most of this can be assembled by talking to relevant staff in Derbyshire and from desk research.

- Evaluate stock quality and availability. Obviously, the range and choice of eBooks is limited in various ways and some of those limitations are to do with what is available from publishers and what they will allow to be borrowed by library users.

- Collect data on Derbyshire’s operations since inception in July 2011, including budget, stock, usage, etc. Again, much of this is easily accessible. I attach some usage figures to provide an idea of what is available. We can also provide a demographic analysis of eBook users. It might be useful to determine as part of the project what sorts of socio-economic data are most informative in helping us to understand public library eBook usage.

- How does the demographic profile of eBook users differ from that of traditional library users?

- Evaluate service user dynamics – e.g. ratio of existing/new members, returning members, frequency and recency of use, churn, etc.

- Look at sustainability of the service. Do the data suggest the growth of a sustained, committed customer base, or is the interest more transitory?

- Conduct user case studies to provide qualitative evidence in support of the data and to evaluate outcomes for users. What sorts of people are they? Is the library’s e-book offer a critical/significant factor for them or not? Are there lasting benefits? Are e-book users reading more e-books and fewer printed books, or has e-book availability stimulated overall reading activity? Do they see e-books as an integral part of the public library, or as something more separate? Do they see themselves as continuing users of the service in, say, five years? Is the choice of e-books likely to continue to meet their needs?

- Establish the relative importance attributed by users to the e-book service compared with physical book lending, book buying etc. And what about the Kindle – a format unavailable though public libraries in the UK – is this a threat to the health of the public library offer (and its suppliers)?
• Investigate non-users and the extent of their knowledge of and interest in e-books (or lack of it) and the likelihood of their using it in the future. Non-users may or may not use traditional public library services, so is the e-book offer an incentive to engage with traditional library services, or to use them more?

• Look at prospects for growth of the service – is growth sustainable or does it have a low operational ceiling? Does growth add to or replace conventional library usage?

• Will e-books help to combat long-term decline in public library lending? Will they save public libraries?

• Are there any ‘market segments’ with a particular tendency to engage with the service and also with the traditional library offer?

As we said, most of these lines of enquiry may be categorised either as ‘data mining’ or more qualitative work around users and their experiences of the service (plus a few ‘big picture’ issues thrown in). Of course, you can’t do user evaluation without supporting data, but since we already have some numbers, I feel there would be more sense in concentrating on the customer focus.
Appendix 5

Coding: categories used and examples of comments

Questions where coding of commentary was significant inasmuch as commentary reflected in a substantive way on DL’s e-book service were: Questions 12 and 13 (the ‘inactive’ users’ branch); 17 on technical difficulties; 19 (as respondents commented on stock and selection); and the open questions at the end of the questionnaire; 26 on changes, 27 on value, and 28 on any other comments. There were also some significant comments made in response to question 18 on use of accessibility features. Comments were coded in vivo (i.e. verbatim codes based on comments) or using constructed codes based on categories suggested either by the in vivo codes or by themes arising from the commentary. Below a brief description of the codes/coding categories used is appended, with examples of commentary which gave rise to them. Where codes are constructed and/or are made up of multiple references, further examples are provided.

Given the richness of the data provided and the relatively brief period available to analyse it, ‘saturation’ of the data was not achieved. It is hoped, however, that major themes and points have been extracted. Extracts here are presented in the hope that, as well as allowing the reader to see the logic behind the categorisation, they will offer a sense of the data in addition to the findings and discussion above.

Note that the staff survey and non-user survey were coded manually.

Questions 12 and 13 were coded into 15 separate categories, mostly created in vivo, but with some significant exceptions. As the Nvivo software would not distinguish between the text strings no and don’t know, it was not possible to filter the two questions separately hence dividing the categories between the two questions was done ‘by hand;’ here a collective overview is presented. Examples are given where categories were constructed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All too often have to wait weeks for the book to become available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bought e-books instead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 broken book reader

4 Concern that changing to eBooks, rather than borrowing print books will impinge on future library services, i.e. they would close the local library.

5 I forgot about the service

6 I was needing help with downloading them and the staff at Eckington library couldn’t help. I have macular degeneration and was bought a kobo for Christmas as the number of large print books at the library is diminishing.

7 ipad too heavy

8 Kindle reasons

Because I have a kindle and the format the library uses is not compatible. I would really like to borrow online if I could!

I am registered partially sighted and find a Kindle the most effective way of accessing eBooks. The last time I enquired, I could not access Derbyshire County Council books on a Kindle. Being able to use a Kindle has made a
great difference to me.

Kindle so it’s easier to download free ones from Amazon. Last time I borrowed a book I couldn't read it on the kindle

The laptop gets heavy to hold and I read before I go to sleep.

I do not use my e-reader all the time as I still like to read 'real' books and have quite a few at home which I still have to read. I tend to download e-books prior to going on holiday for at least one to two weeks

Initially there were not many books available. I couldn't find one that interested me so got out of the habit

Several times I tried but the books were never available because you only had a few copies for the whole county

Reading Anthony Trollope novels from project Guttenberg
Sometimes have to wait to borrow an item and then read within the set time period before the item is wiped.

Technical problems

[S]truggling with downloading a book from the library on to a platform that was not much fun to read put me off.

I simply can't get it to work on my iPad

Too busy to read within the 3 wk period

Unfortunately the format is not compatible with my e-reader

Responses to question 17 were divided into two groups for the options yes sometimes and yes often, and within them coded into 8 and 4 categories respectively, with a total of 96 and 15 references respectively.

Yes sometimes
1 Improved now 4

[Had problems] only when they renewed my bus pass and changed my gold card number.

2 Unable to log on 1
3 Corrupt link 1
Sometimes the book downloads to my laptop but then when I transfer it to my reader it just doesn’t appear on the reader - possibly fault with my reader - not sure though.

I download to my computer and sometimes it's difficult to transfer to my Kobo.

Sometimes (today) the download button just loads a new page with code rather than completing the download.

Just would not download error message occurred but only one book on one occasion

The books didn't always download fully and there was no way of cancelling them. On one occasion when I was going abroad this meant I was restricted to taking two books only.

You have been off line

E-book service was being updated and/ or service was unavailable
Last time I tried the website was going really slowly and I decided not to try any longer.

Sometimes the site is very slow to load.

8 Too complex

Initial problem setting up account and following instructions

When downloading more than one book not clear how to go back and download the second.

I am 74 yrs old and found trying to download from computer to e reader very frustrating it is not an easy process

Yes often

1 incompatible device

Impossible to open file.

Compatibility.

2 just does not work

Have tried to borrow a couple of books and failed completely both times.
The e-book wouldn't download onto my device.

3 Offline 1

4 Too complex 3

My problem has been transferring the books to my e-reader.

**Question 19:** ‘How many e-books do you/did you usually borrow at one time?’ was answered by 420 respondents, of whom 117 chose the ‘it varies (please explain why)’ option. Coding of these responses found 128 separate references, divided into 8 categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Depends on availability</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It depends what I'm looking for - I like the classics and I often get redirected to Guttenberg press. I can't always find more than 2 - 3 books which I want to read.

Often the books I want are already out. There seems to be a surfeit of Barbara Cartland which are always available so this must say something about your e reader members.
It depends what is available and how long they are - and also how much I want to read them e.g. I would not borrow up to the limit of books that I very much want to read as I wouldn't want to risk having started a book and not be able to finish due to not being able to download again. Whereas I might add 2-3 books as a 'backup' that I wouldn't mind disappearing in case I finish others.

2 Other 23

Sometimes only borrow one, when it’s a reference book and can only find one relating to relevant subject matter. When fiction I download several to save having to go back on website and use the ebook system, in between books.

Sometimes only borrow one, when its a reference book and can only find one relating to relevant subject matter. When fiction I download several to save having to go back on website and use the ebook system, in between books.

3 Get more or less as required 20

Depends on what is available and if I will have time to read more I'll download more.

Depends on how many books I physically borrow from library I still like to read from proper books.
4  Depends on my time

Depends on what is available and if I will have time to read more I'll download more.

Depends on how many books I physically borrow from library I still like to read from proper books.

5  Get more or less when travelling

I borrow maximum when I am travelling abroad (5) but when in the UK I tend to borrow on average 2.

If I'm away from home then I usually take out the maximum number. If at home, I tend to borrow a book for about a week at a time and that way I don't reach my limit and have to wait until I can borrow another book.

6  None no access

None, because I couldn't get any.

7  Reserve when on loan

I often reserve titles - the ones I want are usually out on loan.
I try to borrow the books for the number of days I think I will need to read them, plus a few days but sometimes. If I read them quicker I will use up my remaining options which might be 1, 2 or 3.

**Question 26**, asking if any changes or improvements could be made, was divided into eight categories, two with sub-categories; a total of 342 references were noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24/7 service</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better search facility</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- It would be nice if it were a 24/7 service. If I'm suffering from insomnia and need a new book I find the service is down late at night. - Search could be a little more forgiving, ie sometimes putting in a title doesn't bring up that title. Then while scrolling through I find the title that search didn't bring up. - Being able to return a book once I'm finished with it only seems fair, not only to the current reader but also to the next reader in line for the book.

- It would be useful if the titles could be listed according to author name. I do like the availability icon. so much easier than
opening the book only to discover it is not available.

Allow books to be returned before the expiry date. Indication of number of pages in a book would make it easier to decide how long to borrow for.

Accurate page number. Opening a book in Adobe Digital Editions always shows a different number of pages to the Libraries service estimated number. Since ADE is the library's recommended reader, why not use it? Show the order if the book is part of a series. This is often printed on the displayed front cover, but it is too small to read. Consequently, the option to enlarge front covers when the mouse is moved over them would be a great help. Cookies to save your preferences of search criteria.

Allow search to exclude books out on loan - fed up wading through pages where majority have red x against them as out on loan (particularly thrillers/fiction) More authors/more up to date books

Interface could adapt to tablet or phone More options for viewing book lists, sorting

More choice of fiction. More copies of popular books so that you don't get 'out on loan' so often. Books grouped by author within the genres, rather than by title. Often people want to read/browse through everything that one author has
I think it is a good and convenient service. However I think books are oddly split in to the different genres which makes it difficult to find similar books to what I normally read. For instance there are books that are labelled fantasy which aren't fantasy and others that are fantasy which are just in normal fiction. This makes the ordinary fiction genre very large and hard to browse, and I end up noticing the A authors much more than authors later on in the alphabet just because they happen to be in the first few pages. Many websites have a function that can recommend books that other people have liked based on a book they are looking at, which would be useful in this case.

More in library support and help with downloading books would be helpful. I'm 80 yrs old and not about to acquire a computer.

The process of downloading and adding a book to my reader is convoluted, and somewhat prone to errors (I am very competent with computers - for many people it would be simply too difficult). Perhaps a dedicated PC application would allow a simpler interface. Buying a book using the Kobo Desktop application is very simple, by comparison, as the application connects to the online bookshop, and also to the e-
I had to find out for myself that it was necessary to log onto the PC under a different user, in order to authorise another e-reader for borrowing (we all have readers, now, 4 in total). A bit more information about the books would be useful to help choose. There is less info than available on the covers of real books, and no opportunity to read the first page or two, to see if you like the style. In some cases I have downloaded a book that is part of a series without knowing, so have been unable to read it, as the first book was not available. I now resort to looking on other websites for information or reviews of books, to get a better idea before borrowing.

Compatibility and easier use of software to be able to download the ebooks

Include instructions on how to download books. Allow you to return books early

I've really enjoyed the ebooks I've borrowed. However, the stock is limited, as are authors. I enjoy both crime fiction and novels. The choice in crime fiction seems to me to be limited to popular authors - Lee Childs, Karan Slaughter, for example. Also, while there are authors I love, Ann Tyler, for example, the fiction selection seems to me not to offer enough by contemporary authors, such as Maggie O'Farrell and Salley Vickers, and I was surprised that the e-library doesn't stock any e-books by someone as popular as Joanna Trollope.
I understand that this, in part, is a financial issue, and that the e-library has to meet a broad range of reading tastes. I'm not sure that it does that at the minute. Finally, the DCC website doesn't make accessing the e-library particularly easy, especially in the beginning.

Make it easier to find the ebook page.

The web site needs to be more intuitive, can we have a country wide e library why are they only restricted to zones.

5 More books

Please give us some upto date fiction.

It would be good to have a much bigger selection of books to choose from. At the moment there is a relatively small choice and obviously only one license per book. Why so many MC Beaton & then a very limited choice of other authors?

More books on the system please!

Bigger range of books!
More choice of the subjects I like to read

More up to date if possible. e.g. I wanted to look for a book by popular authors such as Phillipa Gregory/Rosie Thomas but searching brings up no books by these authors which is frustrating.

In an ideal world there would be more books available in the ebook service but I accept financial restraints may be the limit.

Only to repeat what I have mentioned before - more books needed in this service

Too long wait for popular books.

Latest books not available.

just get more books please

Improved range of titles BUT aware this is in the hands of the publishers making them available for library loan.

When book prize longlists are announced it would be a good idea to
make these books available via the service

Ebooks can be read on kindle if you use the OverDrive app. Dorset libraries system is integrated with this app and it is a much better system than Derbyshire. It also integrates with 15000 free books which makes for a much better user experience.

Need to use overdrive media console

It could be extended to cover daily newspapers (there is always a complimentary copy in the library) and perhaps county magazines etc., which could be available for a small charge.

The DRM control on library books should be removed making library books available to read on ALL ereaders instead of only Kindle. After all if anyone is savvy enough they can download a piece of software that can
undo this anyway. But why should they have to?

It would be better if we could renew books after 3 weeks, but appreciate that this isn’t possible. Also if the whole series of a certain author or book was available on ebooks, this would improve the service.

Providing the facility to extend a books borrowing period—providing someone hasn’t reserved it

Would like the option to borrow more books at any one time. It would be helpful if you could "return" e-books once you have read them to free up more borrowing capacity.

It would be helpful if books could be returned before the expiry date.
When I delete them, I would like my credit returned.

The inability to return a book and hence free up the borrowing limit is a nuisance. The selection is quite limited, even very limited compared to the likes of ibooks, kindle etc. It would also help to have a reminder if you have previously downloaded a book, as I don’t always remember if I’ve read it before. Why can I borrow 16 books on paper and only 5 ebooks?

**Question 27**, asking what value the e-book service adds, was divided into six categories, one with sub-categories; a total of 298 references were noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Negative</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None as I can't use it

None at present

2 Other

The library service has made me more
aware of other services offered by the council. I've registered for the broadband improvement program and switch my energy to the service promoted by the council. It puts people in contact with the council web site, and email newsletters. The library home page could be used more to promote other services and offer news letters signup to help this further.

3 Positive (see below)  276
4 Positive but with caveats  7

A step in the right direction

There is value but more commitment needs to be given.

5 Undecided  2

Not sure yet

6 Unrealised potential  2

Could be very good but needs the same selection of e-books as physical books

Sub-categorised under Positive  No. of References
environmentally friendly

Great added value. It means I can get a book to read at any time of day or night. It reduces travel by car to library in rural area like mine so is "ecofriendly."

flexibility accessibility convenience etc. (see below)

new range of writing

Libraries are good for trying out new authors & titles at no cost. E-books are even better at this as they can be accessed 'out of hours' and you don't have to trail to take them back if they aren't to your liking. I have read many e-books which I wouldn't have borrowed from the shelves in print form

self selected borrowing periods

INVALUABLE for Rural communities, especially with bad winter weather limiting travel/access to library buildings. Although there are Mobile Libraries, they are a very good service but too infrequent and by nature limited in range / speed of reservations etc. for an avid reader. The e-library is available 24/7, instant, flexible (self-selected borrowing periods is a boon).
Providing an E Reader service is keeping up with the current technology trend. I worry that it will affect local libraries and would be upset if my local one closed down. I much prefer to read an actual book than use my E reader.

I believe it brings a lot of value to the service as it provides more convenient ways to access books. I believe it is important for libraries to keep up with technology where possible.

It is innovative and more forward thinking than other library that is not already doing it. It definitely is a great idea and attract younger readers. Lastly, one do not need to worry about overdue charge when not have time to visit the library.

I think it brings huge value to Derbyshire libraries service. In terms of equality issues E-books are brilliant for people with visual limitations, for people with other physical issues the e-books service makes make accessing a the library relatively easily. It's easy to browse and try work by authors one hasn't read before and look at other genres, and because they are borrowed a mistake isn't costly. Subconsciously, it says to residents that Derbyshire Libraries are technologically up to date and understands that an increasing number of its residents want to read e-
books.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-categorised under flexibility etc. above</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Housebound</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This open up the library to the housebound. A company called calibre loan books to the blind free of charge. These are delivered on memory sticks. This could be another service which Derbyshire might consider. East Cheshire also send their newspaper on memory sticks. They supply a docking station also free.

This is a great idea for people like myself and housebound people who can't get to their local library.

| 2 No problems with returns or late fines | 7                |

Makes me much more likely to borrow books for me, as I tend to be quite rubbish at returning them in time, so rack up fines.
I plan to encourage my children (teenage boys) to sign up as they may perceive it as 'cooler' to read on devices.

Automated service reduces the need for more staff.

**Question 28** asked for ‘any other comments.’ Responses were divided into 12 categories, giving a total of 116 references.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 added value of physical library</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I feel that libraries are a highly valuable resource which are often overlooked, personally I appreciate the service and having recently moved to Derbyshire have found my visits to the libraries to be excellent sources of local information, both in the leaflets/magazines available and via the staff.
The e-book library is a useful addition but will never be able to fulfil what the physical library offers, including for some a place of peace and quiet to read and think. Also a place to be with people even if you are not talking to them.

I suspect there isn't great support within Derbyshire Libraries for the ebook service as it may impact on the usage of physical libraries. If this is true then it is a pity as I think it can provide a useful service to people who may not currently use the physical libraries (like me). As it is digital, there seems no reason that each county has to set up and maintain their own ebook service - surely this could be nationwide? There seems to be some confusion between the Derby City and Derbyshire provision of ebooks as, whilst I was a member of the Allestree library, I had to visit Duffield in order to set up the ebook service (I live just outside Derby City). This problem seems to be purely political / budgetary and should be overcome.

I deliberately purchased a make of e-book that would allow me to borrow books from Derbyshire's library service i.e. Kobo and NOT a Kindle! Luckily
someone at the local library happened to mention in passing that you could not borrow library e-books on a Kindle. Amazon, it transpires, wanted a fat fee from the library service to allow their e-reader to be used. Thank goodness I was told about it before I purchased one because I would have been really upset to find out I couldn't borrow library books on it. I feel that the library service should make this information more clear to keep people informed, and purchase the correct e-reader. Do some publishers not allow their e-books to be borrowed? Is that why there is gaps in the range available from some author’s/publishers?

My comments from 23 re not being able to 'return' ebooks when you have read them. also you some people might not have finished their book when 21 days are up and book is wiped off your reader. if book has not been reserved would be good to be able to continue to extend time with it.

5 more e-reader compatibility 1

6 more marketing 4
Brilliant service compared to other library services e.g. Sheffield. Could do with more advertising.

7 More stock

Again, the general comment of making more e-books available generally, as demand increases so availability decreases. This already seems to be being addressed, as I note the total number of books available per category/genre is creeping upwards regularly, good. I appreciate there are on-going copyright issues being addressed in the UK re Libraries, and find this frustratingly slow in resolution - as I am sure the Library services staff do themselves. Shame that this excellent service be restricted, and not given a higher priority for resolution.

8 negative

A great service but limited choices of books, the more people that join the longer the wait for books to become available for loan. A victim of its own success

9 Positive

Nothing to add except please don't
withdraw the service. Overall it makes life so much easier for me.

Please continue to develop the e-service!

It challenges the near monopoly of Amazon and the Kindle. Library services in general should explain the weaknesses of the Amazon offering in that it does not support the EPUB range!

I'm grateful the service exists - of course I would like a greater range of choice but I accept there may be limitations as to what can be provided.

10 query re selecting stock

Who chooses which books get ordered for the ebook service? How can I suggest titles to be added.
It maybe easier if someone at the local library could help with the downloading, for us less clever using a computer.

Some courses available at the library for people to begin the service.

Occasionally some of the content is missing from ebooks. I borrowed a photography book recently and some of the photographs were not able to be displayed.

I have used the reservation system and that worked very well. I find some people (not me, but people who have asked me about it) confused about trying to read books on a Kindle and other similar readers, and about systems where it is necessary to download to a PC first. To read eBooks on my iPad I had to download a special reader BlueFire. This worked OK once I'd realised what I needed to
do. But the instructions were confusing because they said that BlueFire was not supported, even though it is needed.
Appendix 6

This appendix contains screenshots of the e-book site’s homepage. As can be seen the default page shows ‘new eBooks arrivals,’ three of which are unavailable.

Screenshots of DCCS e-book service windows:

Log-in page (the cover letter for the survey is temporary).

Latest arrivals/main page. Note how much of the window continues below the fold.
E-books listed by genre/sub-genre.
Help/FAQs. Again, a lot is below the fold.
Appendix 7

This appendix contains copies of the consent approval application form and the Certificate of Approval.

Information School Research Ethics Panel

Letter of Approval

Date: 2\textsuperscript{nd} July 2013

TO: Graham Martindale

The Information School Research Ethics Panel has examined the following application:

Title: Use of e-books in Derbyshire Public Libraries

Submitted by: Graham Martindale

And found the proposed research involving human participants to be in accordance with the University of Sheffield’s policies and procedures, which include the University’s ‘Financial Regulations’, ‘Good Research Practice Standards’ and the ‘Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue’ (Ethics Policy).

This letter is the official record of ethics approval by the School, and should accompany any formal requests for evidence of research ethics approval.

Effective Date: 2\textsuperscript{nd} July 2013

Dr Angela Lin
Research Ethics Coordinator
Appendix 8

Research Ethics Approval Application Documentation.

The University of Sheffield.
Information School

Proposal for
Research Ethics Review

Students
This proposal submitted by:
Undergraduate
Postgraduate (Taught) – PGT
Postgraduate (Research) – PGR

Staff
This proposal is for:
Specific research project
Generic research project
This project is funded by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This proposal is for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific research project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic research project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This project is funded by:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project Title: A study of e-book lending at Derbyshire libraries.

Start Date: 1/7/2013   End Date: 02/9/2013

Principal Investigator (PI): Graham Martindale
(UG/PGT/PGR research)

Email: gmartindale1@sheffield.ac.uk

Supervisor: Professor Peter Willett
(if PI is a student)
**Email:** p.willett@sheffield.ac.uk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicate if the research:</th>
<th>(put an X in front of all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involves adults with mental incapacity or mental illness, or those unable to make a personal decision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involves prisoners or others in custodial care (e.g. young offenders)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involves children or young people aged under 18 years of age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involves highly sensitive topics such as ‘race’ or ethnicity; political opinion; religious, spiritual or other beliefs; physical or mental health conditions; sexuality; abuse (child, adult); nudity and the body; criminal activities; political asylum; conflict situations; and personal violence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate by inserting an “X” in the left hand box that you are conversant with the University’s policy on the handling of human participants and their data.

| x | We confirm that we have read the current version of the University of Sheffield Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue, as shown on the University’s research ethics website at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/ethicspolicy |
Part B. Summary of the Research

B1. Briefly summarise the project’s aims and objectives:
(This must be in language comprehensible to a layperson and should take no more than one-half page. Provide enough information so that the reviewer can understand the intent of the research)

Summary:
E-lending, or the lending of e-books, from the UK’s public libraries is still in its infancy, with government policy on the issues concerned still developing; a recent review identifies the lack of research in the area as a problem. Of all the various stakeholders concerned – the government, publishers, libraries, authors, retailers and readers – it is the latter who seem most ill-served by current research; a review of current academic research found no studies which explicitly focussed on the general public as e-book users in public libraries in the UK. The purpose of the present study is to conduct research which addresses this gap by surveying how Derbyshire County Council’s e-lending service is used, and what users’ opinions of it are. It is hoped that this additional perspective will be of use in informing the ongoing debate.

B2. Methodology:
Provide a broad overview of the methodology in no more than one-half page.

Overview of Methods:

The methodology will consist, essentially, of the administration of questionnaire-based surveys; distinctions between the surveys inasmuch as they will be administered differently and to different participant cohorts.
Cohort one, consisting of e-book users, will be invited to complete a web-based survey. It is envisaged that this will be the largest cohort.
Cohort two, consisting of ‘non-users’ of e-books, will be invited to complete a paper-based survey.
Cohort three, consisting of library staff, will also be invited to complete a paper-based survey concluding with a brief semi-structured interview. It is envisaged that this will be the smallest cohort.

If more than one method, e.g., survey, interview, etc. is used, please respond to the questions in Section C for each method. That is, if you are using both a survey and interviews, duplicate the page and answer the questions for each method; you need not duplicate the information, and may simply indicate, “see previous section.”
C1. Briefly describe how each method will be applied

(cohort one – users of the e-book service)

Method (e.g., survey, interview, observation, experiment):

Online (i.e. web-based) survey

Description – how will you apply the method?

The survey will be created and mounted through Survey Monkey (Derbyshire County Council has a professional Survey Monkey account, which they have kindly offered use of). It will consist of three sections: a brief set of basic demographic questions, a section on use of e-books (i.e. currency, frequency, number borrowed), and a section of open questions inviting respondents to contribute comments on how e-books add values to Derbyshire CC’s services for them.

About your Participants

C2. Who will be potential participants?

The potential participants will be current or former remote users of the e-lending service aged 18 and over.

C3. How will the potential participants be identified and recruited?

There will be two methods of identifying and recruiting participants: firstly, an email inviting users (and former users) to take the survey will be distributed to library patrons identified through Derbyshire’s LMS as users of the service; secondly, the online survey will be available through a link embedded in the ‘front page’ of the e-book portal where users access the e-book site, inviting users to take the survey.

C4. What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm / distress to participants?

The potential for harm or distress is no greater than what might be experienced in everyday life.

C5. Will informed consent be obtained from the participants?

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If Yes, please explain how informed consent will be obtained?

The information sheet/consent form will be the first and second pages of the survey form. An email address will be provided to answer any questions that are not answered on the information sheet. A radio-button tick-box will be provided at the
beginning of the survey for participants to indicate that they have read and understood the information sheet and that they give their consent.

**If No, please explain why you need to do this, and how the participants will be de-briefed?**

**C6. Will financial / in kind payments (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?** (Indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided)

No compensation will be provided.

### About the Data

**C7. What data will be collected? (Tick all that apply)**

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**C8. What measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data, where appropriate?**

Each survey response will be associated with an arbitrary number: all responses will be anonymous and no personal data will be collected. Any email addresses collected in order to provide participants with survey results will be disassociated from survey responses and saved separately. Any IP addresses collected will be deleted.

**C9. How/Where will the data be stored?**

The data will be exported from the server used to host the survey. The data will then be stored on my personal laptop with back-up copies stored on my personal external hard-drive. The data will be password protected. The servers used by Survey Monkey are located externally to the UK/EU. However the absence of any personal information in the data collected means that the survey is compliant with the UK’s DPA.

**C10. Will the data be stored for future re-use? If so, please explain**

The data will only be used for the PI’s postgraduate dissertation, on completion of which the data will be destroyed.
C11. Does your research raise any issues of personal safety for you or other researchers involved in the project (especially if taking place outside working hours or off University premises)? If so, please explain how it will be managed.

There are no personal safety issues involved with this study; there will be no contact between the researchers and the participants.
C1. Briefly describe how each method will be applied

(cohort two – library users in a physical library)

Method (e.g., survey, interview, observation, experiment):

Survey

Description – how will you apply the method?

The survey will be a paper-based questionnaire and will be distributed to participants in two Derbyshire libraries. It will consist of three sections: a brief set of basic demographic questions, a section on knowledge and use of e-books (privately and through Derbyshire library), and a section on use of other library resources.

About your Participants

C2. Who will be potential participants?

The potential participants will be current users of Derbyshire library’s service aged 18 and over.

C3. How will the potential participants be identified and recruited?

Potential participants will be approached in two Derbyshire public libraries (which ones to be confirmed with library staff/admin) and invited to respond to a brief questionnaire.

C4. What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm / distress to participants?

The potential for harm or distress is no greater than what might be experienced in everyday life.

C5. Will informed consent be obtained from the participants?

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If Yes, please explain how informed consent will be obtained?

The information sheet/consent form will constitute the first pages of the survey form. The PI will be on hand to answer any further questions. When all questions have been answered, the participants will be invited to sign the consent form.

If No, please explain why you need to do this, and how the participants will be de-briefed?
C6. Will financial / in kind payments (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? (Indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided)

No compensation will be provided.

### About the Data

C7. What data will be collected? (Tick all that apply)

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C9. How/Where will the data be stored?

See previous section.

C10. Will the data be stored for future re-use? If so, please explain

The data will only be used for the PI’s postgraduate dissertation, on completion of which the data will be destroyed.

### About the Procedure

C11. Does your research raise any issues of personal safety for you or other researchers involved in the project (especially if taking place outside working hours or off University premises)? If so, please explain how it will be managed.

The administration of the survey questionnaire will take place solely on the premises of Derbyshire Public libraries in order to ensure the safety of both the PI and participants.
C1. Briefly describe how each method will be applied

(cohort three – library/admin staff)

Method (e.g., survey, interview, observation, experiment):

Questionnaire-based Survey

Description – how will you apply the method?

The survey will be paper-based and distributed to participants by hand. It will consist of two sections: questions on users’ feedback and comments about the e-book service; and open-ended questions offering participants the opportunity to add ‘any other comments;’ it is envisaged that this may take the form of a semi-structured interview, and hence be recorded.

About your Participants

C2. Who will be potential participants?

The potential participants will be current library staff at Derbyshire libraries aged 18 and over.

C3. How will the potential participants be identified and recruited?

Potential participants will be approached in two Derbyshire public libraries/administration offices (which ones to be confirmed with library staff/admin) and invited to respond to a brief questionnaire/take part in a brief interview.

C4. What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm / distress to participants?

The potential for harm or distress is no greater than what might be experienced in everyday life.

C5. Will informed consent be obtained from the participants?

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C6. Will financial / in kind payments (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? (Indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided)

No compensation will be provided.

About the Data

C7. What data will be collected? (Tick all that apply)

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C8. What measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data, where appropriate?

Each survey response will be associated with an arbitrary number: all responses will be anonymous and no personal data will be collected. Any email addresses collected in order to provide participants with survey results will be disassociated from survey responses and saved separately. Audio files will be associated with the same number, and used for transcription purposes only.

C9. How/Where will the data be stored?

See previous section.

C10. Will the data be stored for future re-use? If so, please explain

The data will only be used for the PI's postgraduate dissertation, on completion of which the data will be destroyed.

About the Procedure

C11. Does your research raise any issues of personal safety for you or other researchers involved in the project (especially if taking place outside working hours or off University premises)? If so, please explain how it will be managed.

The administration of the survey questionnaire will take place solely on the premises of Derbyshire Public libraries/administration offices in order to ensure the safety of both the PI and participants.
Title of Research Project: A study of e-book lending at Derbyshire libraries.

We confirm our responsibility to deliver the research project in accordance with the University of Sheffield’s policies and procedures, which include the University’s ‘Financial Regulations’, ‘Good Research Practice Standards’ and the ‘Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue’ (Ethics Policy) and, where externally funded, with the terms and conditions of the research funder.

In submitting this research ethics application form I am also confirming that:

- The form is accurate to the best of our knowledge and belief.
- The project will abide by the University’s Ethics Policy.
- There is no potential material interest that may, or may appear to, impair the independence and objectivity of researchers conducting this project.
- Subject to the research being approved, we undertake to adhere to the project protocol without unagreed deviation and to comply with any conditions set out in the letter from the University ethics reviewers notifying me of this.
- We undertake to inform the ethics reviewers of significant changes to the protocol (by contacting our academic department’s Ethics Coordinator in the first instance).
- We are aware of our responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the appropriate Data Protection Officer (within the University the Data Protection Officer is based in CiCS).
- We understand that the project, including research records and data, may be subject to inspection for audit purposes, if required in future.
- We understand that personal data about us as researchers in this form will be held by those involved in the ethics review procedure (e.g. the Ethics Administrator and/or ethics reviewers) and that this will be managed according to Data Protection Act principles.
- If this is an application for a ‘generic’ project all the individual projects that fit under the generic project are compatible with this application.
• We understand that this project cannot be submitted for ethics approval in more than one department, and that if I wish to appeal against the decision made, this must be done through the original department.

Name of the Student (if applicable):
Graham Martindale

Name of Principal Investigator (or the Supervisor):
Professor Peter Willett

Date: 25/6/13
Access to Dissertation

A Dissertation submitted to the University may be held by the School within which the Dissertation was undertaken and made available for borrowing or consultation in accordance with University Regulations.

Requests for the loan of dissertations may be received from libraries in the UK and overseas. The School may also receive requests from other organisations, as well as individuals. The conservation of the original dissertation is better assured if the School and/or Library can fulfill such requests by sending a copy. The School may also make your dissertation available via its web pages.

In certain cases where confidentiality of information is concerned, if either the author or the supervisor so requests, the School will withhold the dissertation from loan or consultation for the period specified below. Where no such restriction is in force, the School may also deposit the Dissertation in the University of Sheffield Library.

To be completed by the Author – Select (a) or (b) by placing a tick in the appropriate box

If you are willing to give permission for the School to make your dissertation available in these ways, please complete the following:

(a) Subject to the General Regulation on Intellectual Property, I, the author, agree to this dissertation being made immediately available through the School and/or University Library for consultation, and for the School and/or Library to reproduce this dissertation in whole or part in order to supply single copies for the purpose of research or private study.

(b) Subject to the General Regulation on Intellectual Property, I, the author, request that this dissertation be withheld from loan, consultation or reproduction for a period of [ ] years from the date of its submission. Subsequent to this period, I agree to this dissertation being made available through the School and/or University Library for consultation, and for the School and/or Library to reproduce this dissertation in whole or part in order to supply single copies for the purpose of research or private study.

Name: Graham Mastinadle
Department: Information School
Signed: [Signature]
Date: 29/8/13

To be completed by the Supervisor – Select (a) or (b) by placing a tick in the appropriate box

(a) I, the supervisor, agree to this dissertation being made immediately available through the School and/or University Library for loan or consultation, subject to any special restrictions (*) agreed with external organisations as part of a collaborative project.

Special restrictions:

(b) I, the supervisor, request that this dissertation be withheld from loan, consultation or reproduction for a period of [ ] years from the date of its submission. Subsequent to this period, I agree to this dissertation being made available through the School and/or University Library for loan or consultation, subject to any special restrictions (*) agreed with external organisations as part of a collaborative project.

Name:
Department:
Signed:
Date:

THIS SHEET MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH DISSERTATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS.