Digital rights management: Perspectives from a research library

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Marston Science Library

244th American Chemical Society Meeting
CINF-145
• University of Florida
  AAU & ARL member
  One of the largest universities in the US – almost 50,000 students and over 4,000 faculty

• Marston Science Library
  One of 7 libraries on campus
  Consolidation of 6 smaller department libraries on campus in 1987
  Serves all science & engineering disciplines
  The ‘French Fries’ are actually a sculpture called ‘Alachua’, created by John Henry

http://www.ufl.edu/about-uf/facts-and-rankings/
http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/about/history.html
Digital Rights Management

Essentially, restrictions on access and reproduction of electronic formats of media

Traditional Library Services Impacted by DRM:
Course reserves – concurrent user limits
InterLibrary Loan – copyright restrictions
Consortial lending programs – same issue
Discovery services – inconsistent metadata
Electronic Books at UF

Number of platforms: 31... and counting

Negative Effects of DRM Policies

Too many different policies make use confusing for patrons
Librarians are now “tech support” troubleshoot DRM-related access issues, including checkout, concurrent usage, and printing/downloading restriction policies.

Too many steps to get to what we are looking for
There is no unified user interface/experience, as opposed to journal article databases. Vendors that provide downloading of an entire work usually also require a user account and an Adobe Digital Editions account. These are often too many erroneous steps for the impatient researcher.

End result: people don’t use them & instead turn to less reliable sources.
In most cases, access directly through publisher has less DRM than access through aggregator. (Exception: McGraw Hill Access platform)

Despite COUNTER standards, usage stats are incredibly varied across platforms. Number of user accounts is also not often provided.

*It is hard to justify the cost of these packages without the usage statistics as backup.*
Electronic Books at UF

Contrarily, turnaway statistics are usually easily provided as bait to purchase more content:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Printing</th>
<th>Downloading</th>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>Turnaways</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Art of Writing</td>
<td>EBSCO</td>
<td>60 pages</td>
<td>60 pages</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>191</td>
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<td>Reasonable Organic</td>
<td>Springer</td>
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<td>Reaction Mechanisms</td>
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Beginning Solutions
Next Steps

• Publishers need to provide DRM terms of ebook packages terms up front, and provide an easy method for obtaining usage and turnaway statistics

• Librarians should incorporate ebooks into instruction and subject guides, and try to ease findability and usage (i.e. direct links on guides, instructions at point-of-access).

• Mobile market applications are too new in academia to assess usability, but we are seeing increased interest in providing content on multiple platforms - this is a situation to monitor.
Acknowledgements

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  – Interested in studying how patrons interact with ebooks and will be doing further research

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