

# Comparative Analysis of eBook Platforms

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## Introduction

Health sciences libraries are faced with ever-tightening budgets due to high inflationary costs, the introduction of new resources, and budget cuts. They inevitably will be challenged by difficult decisions regarding the cancellation or continuation of subscriptions to increasingly expensive products. The purpose of this project was to compile data about selected eBook platforms of interest to health libraries to facilitate comparison and analysis, and to inform future collections decisions.

## Methods













A list of attributes relevant to eBook platform assessment was developed. Data was collected from vendor websites, from relevant literature, and by contacting sales representatives directly. The data was then entered into a comparative chart.

## Discussion

- The eBook landscape is fluid and changing quickly. Some vendors continue to experiment with new pricing models to try to accommodate increasingly constrictive library budgets.
- There is a need for an ongoing method of platform comparison.
- New features that are of benefit to the user and that attract sales will likely be adopted by competing vendors.
- Librarians and vendors should collaborate to ensure development of products that meet the needs and increasing expectations of users.

## Conclusions

eBook platform comparisons can illuminate potentially superior products, which can influence collection development decisions in a climate of shrinking budgets. These snapshots can be used to speculate about the future. Going forward, this type of comparison could be undertaken by a community of librarians to spread workload and ensure comprehensive representation of products.

Platform	Publisher/ Content	Payment Model	User Options	Mobile Access	Functionality	For Librarians	
<b>PUBLISHER PACKAGES</b>							
 ACCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medicine</li> <li>Anesthesiology</li> <li>Emergency Medicine</li> <li>Pediatrics</li> <li>Pharmacy</li> <li>Physiotherapy</li> <li>Surgery</li> </ul>	McGraw-Hill Range from 20 (Anesthesiology, Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics and Physiotherapy) to 76 (medicine) titles per collection	Subscription - No perpetual access	Unlimited	Mobile-optimized, for Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, and Pharmacy. AccessSurgery optimized for iPad only.	Also includes videos, images, patient handouts, calculators, drug monographs, and self-assessment tools. Print sections, but not entire chapters. Lecture notes embedded where available. Personalized bookmarks to sections. Generate citations in APA and AMA styles.	MARC records available. Usage stats reports available upon request.
 CLINICAL KEY	Elsevier 1000+ eBook titles plus articles, guidelines, point of care info, videos, etc.	Elsevier 1000+ eBook titles plus articles, guidelines, point of care info, videos, etc.	Subscription - No perpetual access	Unlimited	Mobile-optimized iPad only App for FirstConsult	Cross search full text. Personal account required to access PDFs of book chapters. Videos embedded where available. Export images to PowerPoint.	Free MARC records. Usage stats reports available in monthly email.
 MedicinesComplete	Pharmaceutical Press. Must subscribe to Merck Index, choice of 17 other drug titles.	Pharmaceutical Press. Must subscribe to Merck Index, choice of 17 other drug titles.	Subscription - No perpetual access	Unlimited	None	Print sections from chapters. Can search across titles in database.	No MARC records provided by publisher.
 OXFORD MEDICINE ONLINE	Oxford University Press ~400 titles available. License as complete collection, subject libraries, or individual titles.	Oxford University Press ~400 titles available. License as complete collection, subject libraries, or individual titles.	Subscription - No perpetual access	Unlimited or Single-user options	Mobile-optimized, platforms unknown	Cross search full text. Save links with personalization area. Filter search results with a subject specialization. At-a-glance keywords and abstracts at book and chapter level.	Free MARC records. COUNTER compliant usage stats available.
 SciVerse	Elsevier - Frontlist for science, technology and medicine includes ~700 titles per year.	Elsevier - Frontlist for science, technology and medicine includes ~700 titles per year.	Purchase - Perpetual Access	Unlimited	Apps for	Print full chapters. With each chapter is a link to related articles and related reference work articles.	Free MARC records. Member of CLOCKSS.
 SpringerLink	Springer - Frontlist for 2013 includes over 1000 titles in the areas of biomedicine, dentistry, life sciences, medicine, & pharmacy.	Springer - Frontlist for 2013 includes over 1000 titles in the areas of biomedicine, dentistry, life sciences, medicine, & pharmacy.	Purchase - Perpetual Access	Unlimited	Responsive design for any device and platform Downloadable app for	Easy access of PDF and HTML formats. Accurate reproductions. No DRM.	Free MARC records. Member of CLOCKSS.
 Thieme	Thieme Medical Publishers ~75 illustrated medical texts and atlases	Thieme Medical Publishers ~75 illustrated medical texts and atlases	Subscription - No perpetual access	Unlimited	App for iPad only	Downloadable. Field/full-text searches. Personalized bookshelves, bookmarks, notes. Print full chapters.	Free MARC records. Member of CLOCKSS.
 WILEY ONLINE LIBRARY	Wiley - Frontlist for 2013 includes over 200 titles in the areas of life sciences, medicine, nursing, and psychology.	Wiley - Frontlist for 2013 includes over 200 titles in the areas of life sciences, medicine, nursing, and psychology.	Purchase - Perpetual Access	Unlimited	None	Search functionality. No DRM restrictions on downloads and printing.	Free MARC records. Member of CLOCKSS.
<b>AGGREGATORS</b>							
 Ovid	Title-by-Title ~4500 books from 37 publishers. All health.	Title-by-Title ~4500 books from 37 publishers. All health.	Subscription or Purchase	Unlimited	None	Can search across titles in collection. Print sections in HTML. Save sections to My Projects area.	Free MARC records. Wolters Kluwer a member of CLOCKSS.
 ebrary	Academic Complete Package - 86,350 titles from 500+ publishers, interdisciplinary Subject Packages (Medical, Nursing & Allied Health)	Academic Complete Package - 86,350 titles from 500+ publishers, interdisciplinary Subject Packages (Medical, Nursing & Allied Health)	Subscription - No perpetual access	Unlimited	Apps for Ereaders (Tablet, Nook, Kindle Fire)	Log in to personal Ebrary bookshelf where can save links to favorite books, highlight text within, and use sticky notes. Can share highlighted text with others. Can search across titles in collection. Print maximum of 60 pages. Export citation information to RefWorks. Subscription and MUPO content can be downloaded.	Free MARC records. Usage stats reports available. Purchase individual titles online via eBOP or via GOBI. No hosting fee.
 eBooks on EBSCOhost	Academic Collection - 114,000 titles from 800+ publishers, interdisciplinary	Academic Collection - 114,000 titles from 800+ publishers, interdisciplinary	Subscription - No perpetual access	Unlimited	Apps for Ereaders (Nook, Kobo, Sony eReader, Kindle Fire)	Download pages or chapters in PDF, download entire book when enabled by institution but users must have Adobe Digital Editions. EBSCOhost integration so user platform familiarity. Permalink functionality. Bookmark and annotation functions. Embedded dictionary. Print maximum of 60 pages. Export citation information to RefWorks.	Free MARC records. COUNTER compliant usage stats available. Purchase individual titles online via EBSCOhost Collection Manager or via GOBI. 3 <sup>rd</sup> party dark archive preservation for purchased materials.
	Subject Collections (eg. Allied Health, Dentistry, Emergency Medicine Nursing, Pharmaceutical Science)	Subject Collections (eg. Allied Health, Dentistry, Emergency Medicine Nursing, Pharmaceutical Science)	Purchase - Perpetual Access	Unlimited	Mobile optimized website for other devices.		
	Title-by-title Over 350,000 titles from 800+ publishers representing multiple disciplines.	Title-by-title Over 350,000 titles from 800+ publishers representing multiple disciplines.	Purchase, short-term loan, Patron-Driven Acquisition.	SUPO, 3-user, unlimited options (varies by title)			
	Title-by-title. ~300 books from 39 publishers. All health.	Title-by-title. ~300 books from 39 publishers. All health.	Subscription - No perpetual access	Limited concurrent users (pay extra to increase)	Apps for	Can search across titles in collection. Embedded dictionary. Print sections in HTML. EvidenceAlerts. AnatomyTV option. MedCalc tools.	Free MARC records. Select from title list. Stats reports available.
 STATiRef	Title-by-title. ~30 references from 15 publishers. All health.	Title-by-title. ~30 references from 15 publishers. All health.	Subscription - No perpetual access	Unlimited downloads	Apps for	Focus is a good mobile experience for the user. Unbound Medline app for visual PubMed search.	Stats reports available.