



# **The Buck Stops Here: Assessing Ebook Subscriptions at Columbia University Libraries**

**Melissa Goertzen, Ebook Program Development Librarian  
Krystie Klahn, Collection Assessment and Analysis Librarian**

# Introduction

- ▶ Since 2007 there has been marked growth in Columbia University Libraries' ebook collections

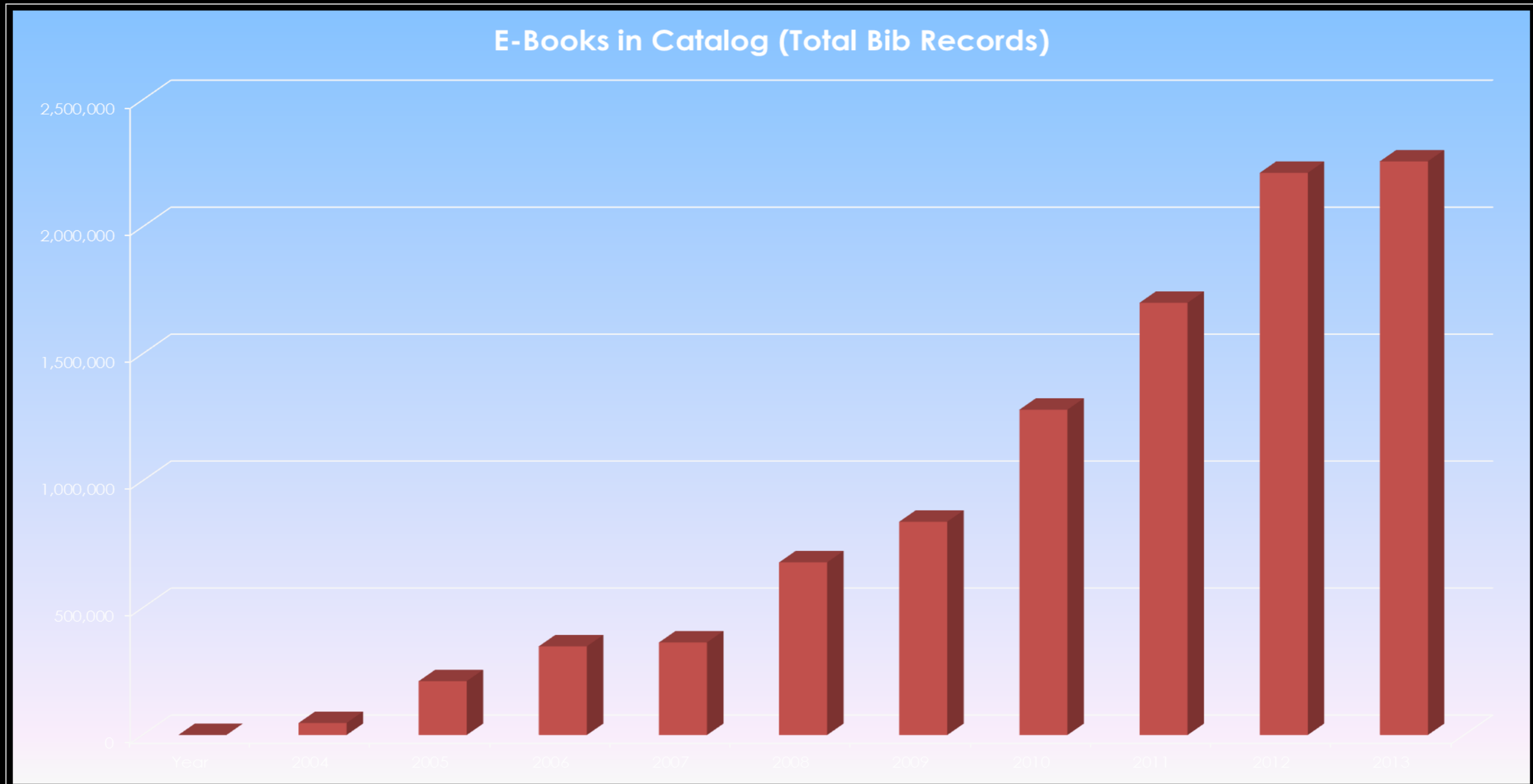


Table 1. ebook acquisition at Columbia University Libraries

# Introduction

- ▶ Since 2007 there has been marked growth in Columbia University Libraries' ebook collections
- ▶ The collection now contains more than two million ebooks

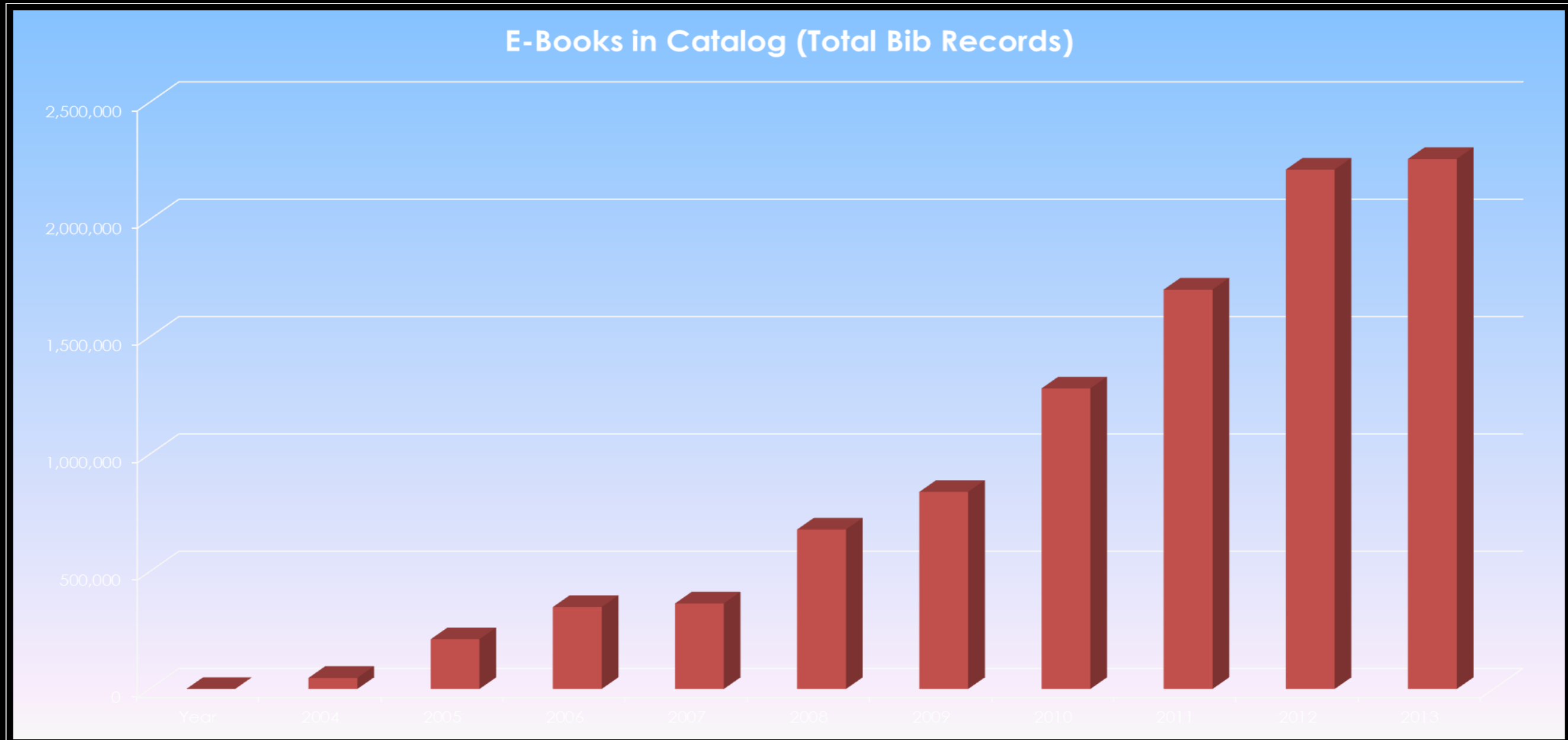


Table 1. ebook acquisition at Columbia University Libraries

# Introduction

- ▶ Since 2007 there has been marked growth in Columbia University Libraries' (CUL) ebook collections
- ▶ The collection contains more than two million ebooks
- ▶ Annual expenditures total more than \$1.7 mil

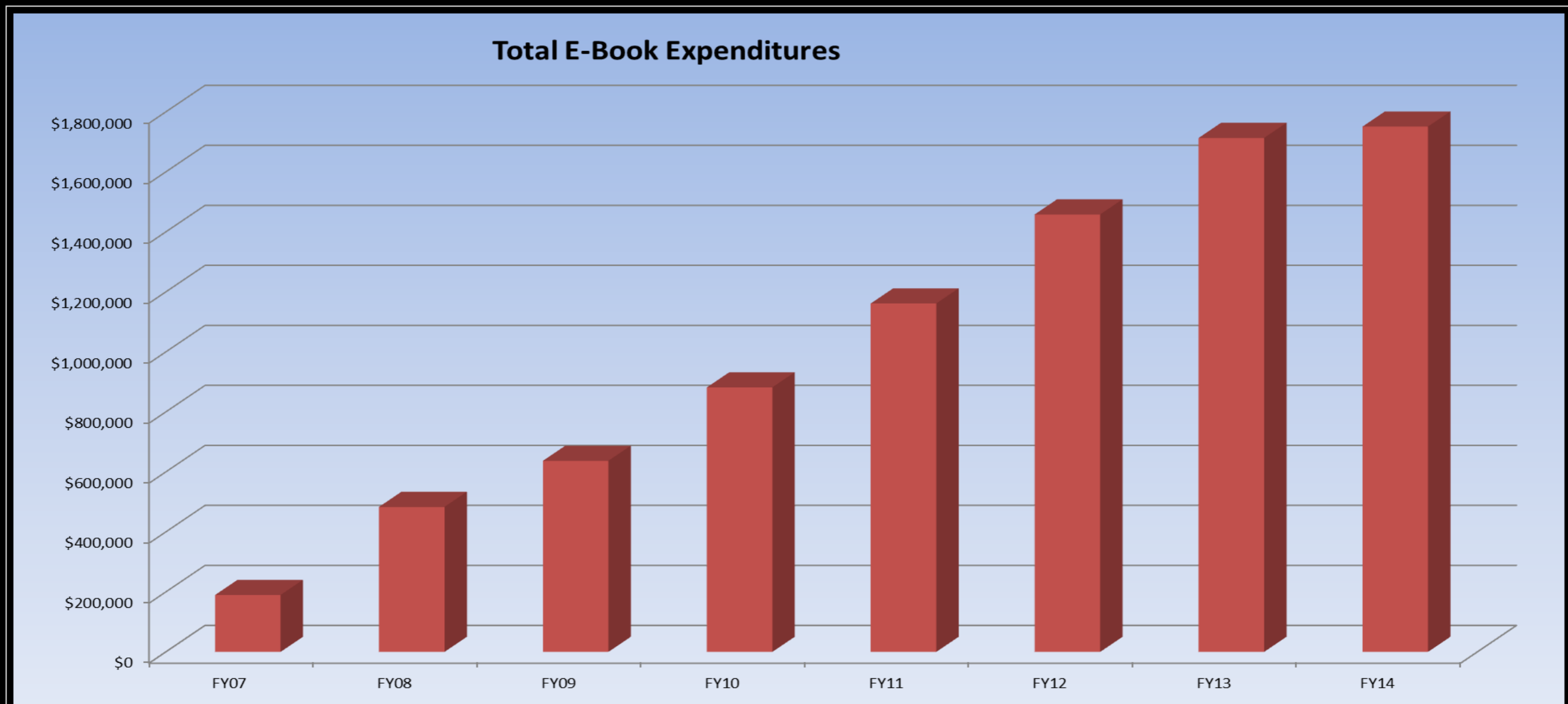


Table 1. ebook acquisition at Columbia University Libraries

# Introduction

- ▶ Since 2007 there has been marked growth in Columbia University Libraries' (CUL) ebook collections
- ▶ The collection contains more than two million ebooks
- ▶ Expenditures comprise 25% of the book budget

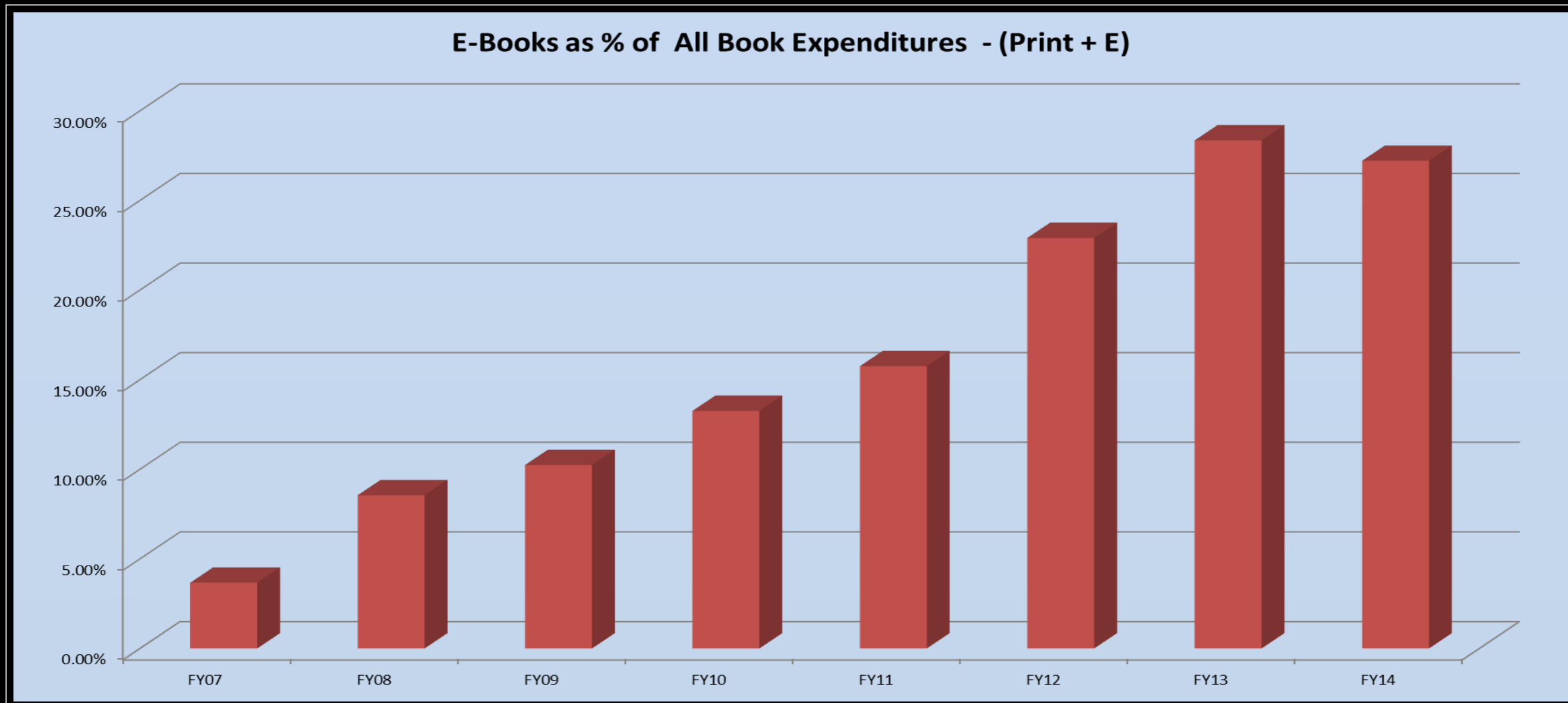


Table 1. ebook acquisition at Columbia University Libraries

## Cost Analysis Goal:

To collect quantitative data that will inform ebook collection development decisions in regards to fund allocation and preferred business models.

# Cost Analysis Objectives

1. To document **how funds are allocated** to build ebook collections at CUL
2. To document **usage rates** of ebook purchases and subscriptions
3. To develop a **standardized data collection model** that can be replicated on an annual basis
4. To develop a body of quantitative data that will serve as a **baseline for future evaluation**

# Overview of Project Outcomes



**Savings of \$60,000 for the 2015 fiscal year**

**Allocated resources to support the needs of the user community**

**Found opportunities for price negotiation and discussion of platform performance**



# Ebook Program Development Study

devices file formats 2CUL back-files BorrowDirect

standardization publishers usage trends technology

vendors **What are the issues?** discovery

Subscription bundles collection PDA/DDA purchases download

electronic **Where are we going?** Access

copyright DRM ebook management copyright MARC

delivery methods interlibrary loans reserves

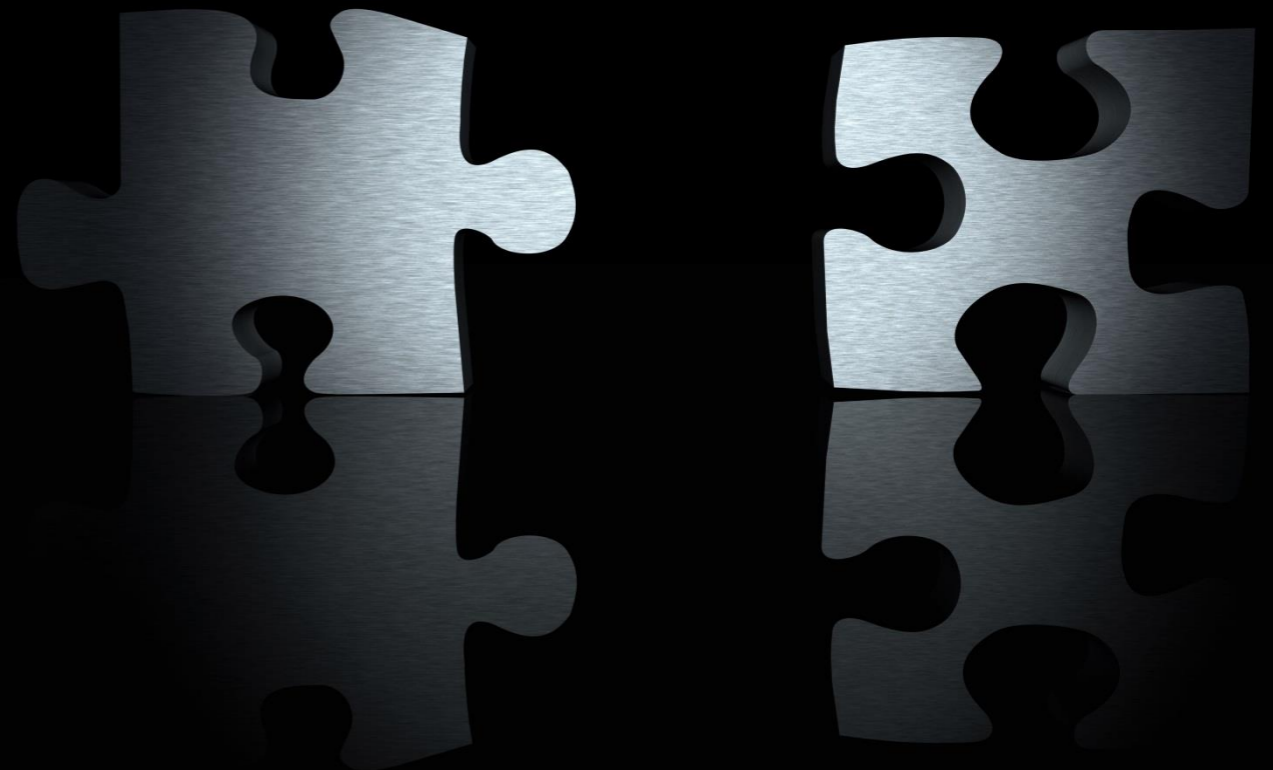


# Assessment Strategy

## Key Consideration:

**The ebook landscape is evolving at a rapid pace**

- Use low-overhead data collection techniques that allow for the systematic collection of information over time
- Reliance on readily available, continuous, and accurate data
- Sustainability



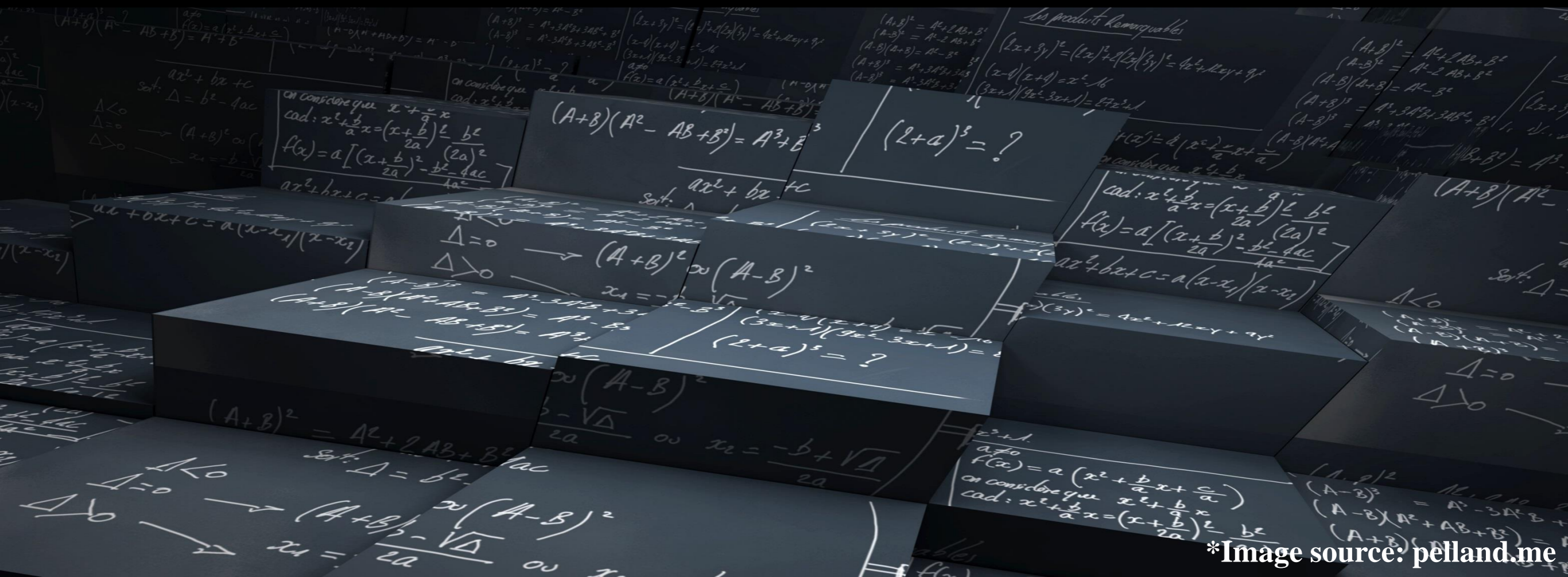
# Identify a Data Sample

- Determined that ebook subscriptions are most often purchased on the EO fund code.
- Created a base list of ebook subscriptions based on cost data harvested from Voyager
- Data collection was limited in scope to subscriptions that had fund activity during the 2013 fiscal year.



# Data Collection: Part 1

- Spending for each of the three categories was totaled, and calculations were made to identify the top 70% (bulk) and bottom 30% (tail) of purchases within each budget.
- Statistical analysis was conducted to determine the total, average, median, high, and low costs of each category.



# Data Collection: Part 2

We discovered that multiple collections from the same vendor are purchased as separate items on the EO fund.

## Unexpected challenge

It is not possible to filter COUNTER reports by collections. How do we work with the reports to examine collection use?



## Data Collection: Part 2



- Considered analyzing data by vendor instead of by collection
- Filtered data for a second time to match the 2013 titles lists with COUNTER reports

# ebook Subscriptions Ranked by Cost

	Subscription A	Subscription B	Subscription C	Subscription D
2013 Cost	\$50,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$60,000.00
No. of titles	80,000	6,000	125	11,000
No. of titles loaned	34,000	2,100	90	1,600
No. of loans	2,500,00	11,900	22,000	6,500
% of titles without use after purchase	62%	65%	25%	85%
Average cost of e-book	\$0.60	\$3.00	\$140.00	\$5.00
Cost per use	\$0.20	\$0.20	\$0.75	\$9.00

**\* This analysis was conducted using confidential cost data. The numbers above were recalculated to reflect our findings.**



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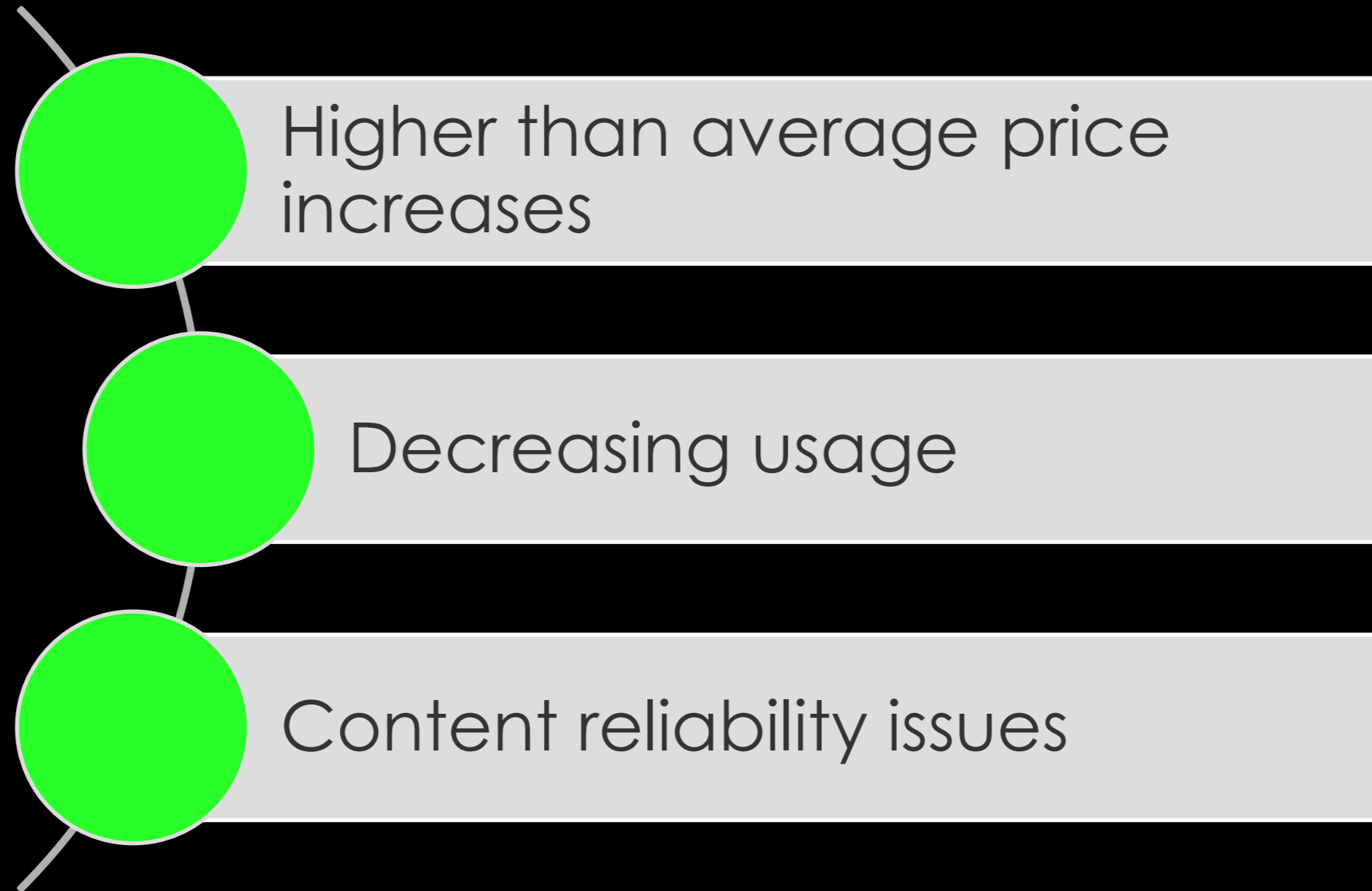
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# Ebooks in the Science and Engineering Library

\*Image Source: Columbia University Libraries

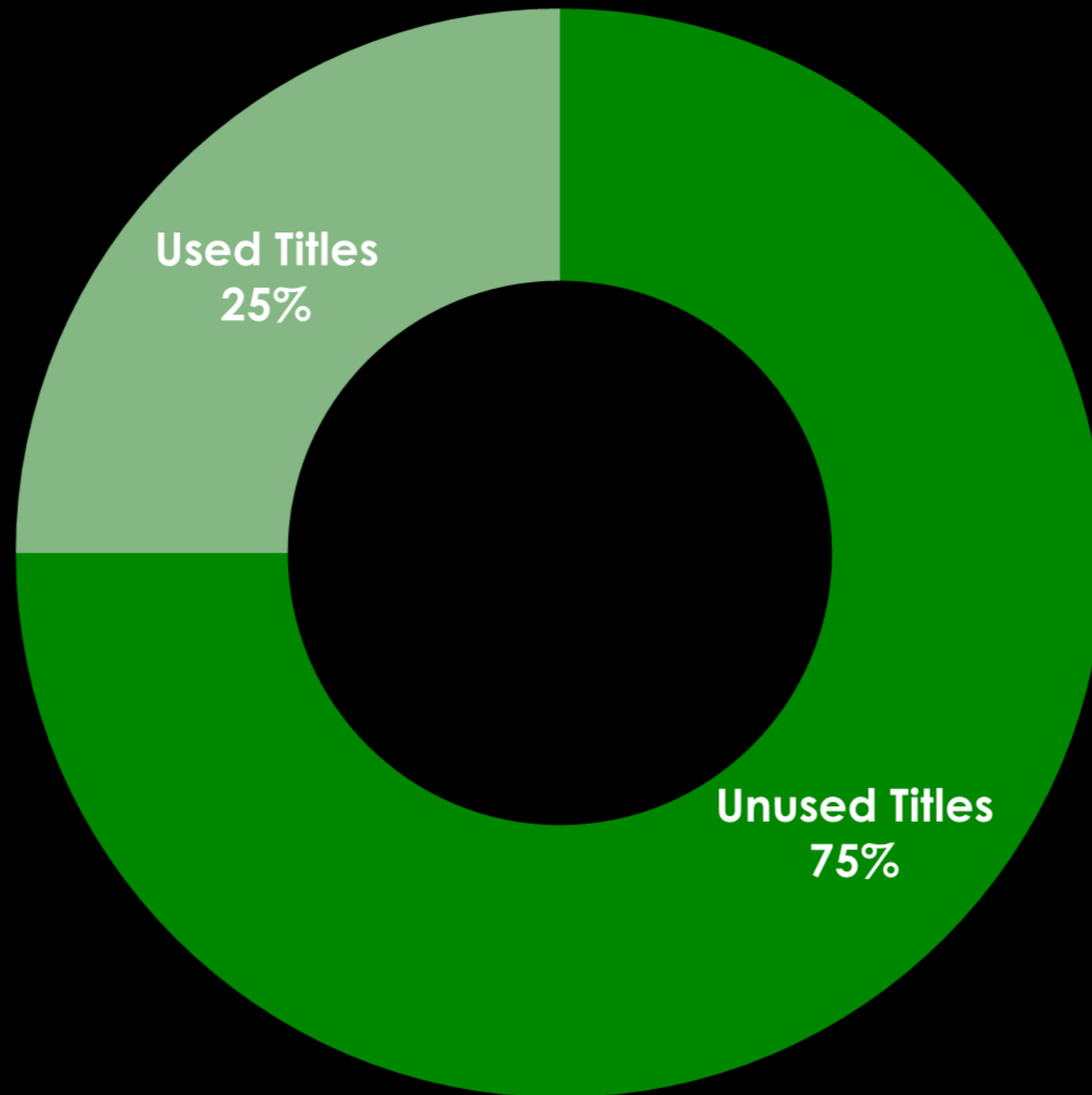
# First Assessment Project: Red Flags



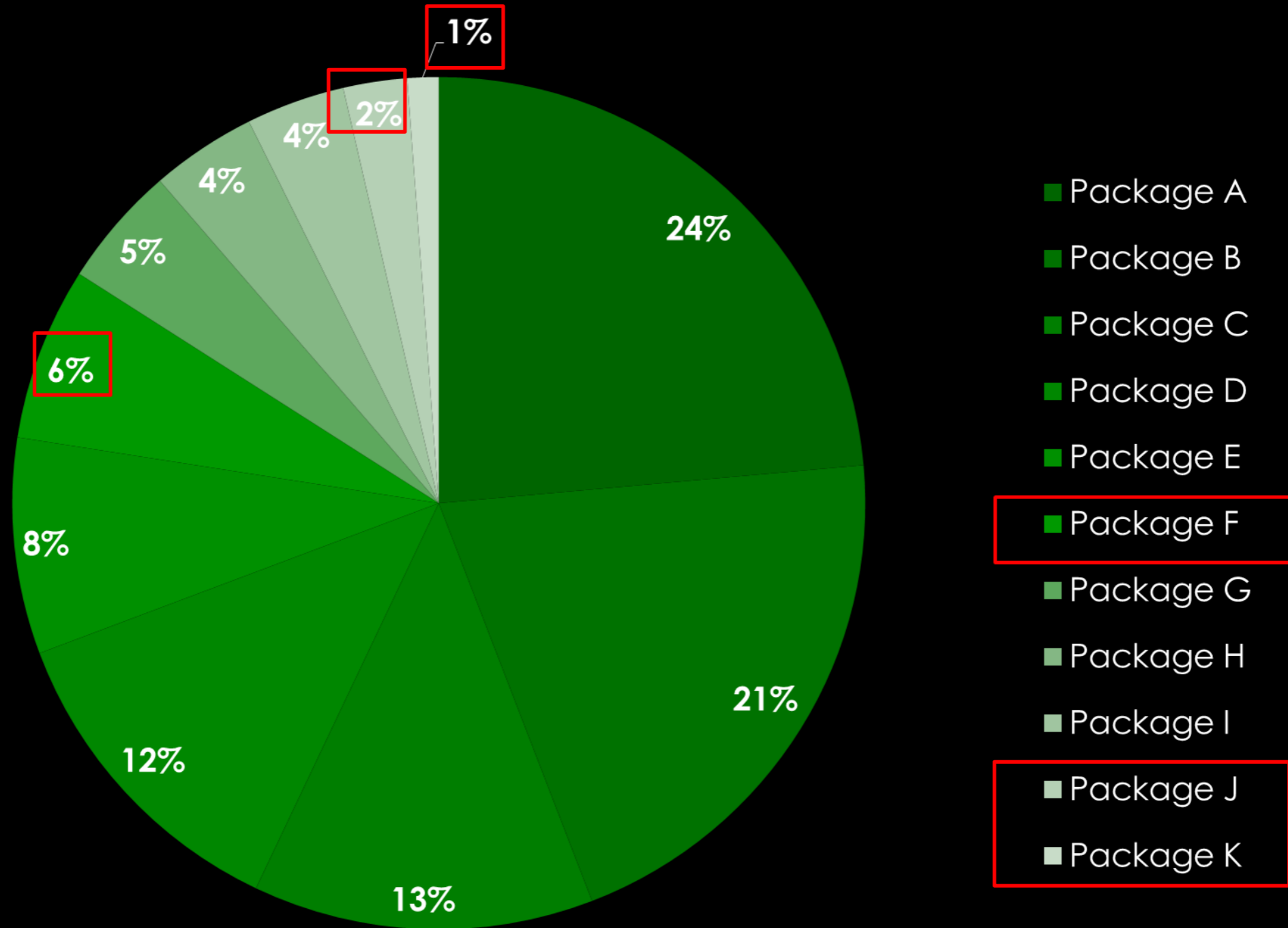
# 2011-2013 Vendor A Usage



# Titles Used Analysis (2013)



# % of Total Usage by Subject Package (2013)



# 2013 Overlap Analysis of Vendor A

		Questionable Packages		
	Vendor A Subscription	Package F	Package J	Package K
<b># of Titles in Database</b>	9161	717	713	238
<b># of Titles Overlapped</b>	2444	471	241	121
<b>% of Overlap</b>	27%	66%	34%	51%

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# 2013 Cost Analysis of Vendor A

		Questionable Packages		
	Vendor A Subscription	Package F	Package J	Package K
<b>Cost</b>	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,500.00
<b>Unique Usage</b>	22324	841	351	223
<b>% Used</b>	25%	27%	11%	21%
<b>Cost Per Use</b>	\$ 2.24	\$ 7.13	\$ 8.55	\$ 11.21

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# Concluding Ideas:

1. **Advocating** for standards in usage reports.
2. **Communicating** assessment findings to library division, committees, working groups, etc.
3. **Negotiating** for pricing that is consistent with use and value.
4. **Developing** a systematic assessment program.

# Thank You



**Melissa Goertzen**

ebook Program Development

Librarian

[mjg2227@columbia.edu](mailto:mjg2227@columbia.edu)

**Krystie Klahn**

Collection Assessment and Analysis

Librarian

[kk2926@columbia.edu](mailto:kk2926@columbia.edu)

\*Image source: Harry S Truman Library & Museum