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## Using "Choice" to Measure the Availability and Use of E-Books

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# Using *Choice* to Measure the Availability and Use of E-Books

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As e-books have come to hold a major impact on library collection building activities, the influence of reviews of titles and the on-going conversion of titles to a digital format have significant potential impacts for libraries. Reviewing tools such as *Choice* and the lag-time between publication notice of the print edition of a work and its corresponding e-version asks the questions, “How many of the print titles that are reviewed in *Choice* have a corresponding e-version ready for purchase?” and “How used are those e-versions in comparison with print?”

To determine the importance of e-books within the selection process, the Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM) Library conducted an assessment of *Choice* Outstanding Academic Titles (OAT) reviews for the period from 2010 through 2015 to determine the proportion of titles listed in the various review categories that were also available electronically. We also determined which titles were held by the AUM Library, in both print and electronic format, and what the circulation impact of those titles was.

Auburn University at Montgomery is a regional, Masters I level institution located in Montgomery, Alabama. The campus consists of 5 academic colleges (Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, Nursing and Allied Health Sciences, and Public Policy and Justice). Enrollment in the fall semester of 2015 was 4,919 (Auburn University at Montgomery, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2015). The library contains a collection of more than 250,000 monographic volumes, and more than 2 million government documents (United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, [ca. 2012]). The library has never actively marketed electronic books to our user population. Information about e-books and how to access them are routinely mentioned in the library’s instructional sessions.

In this study, the AUM Library staff examined the 56 subject categories identified in the *Choice* OAT lists. The categories are detailed in Table 1. *Choice*’s three major categories, Humanities, Science & Technology, and Social & Behavioral Sciences, are indicated by bold print. In addition to functioning as broad categories to enable sorting the more specific subject areas, some titles, such as reference books and interdisciplinary books, are sorted into the three major categories themselves. When discussing the broad categories used as subject areas in this manner, the authors add the qualifier [not further specified] to the category for clarity.

Table 1

*Choice Subject Categories*

<b>Subjects</b>	
<b>Humanities</b>	- Engineering
- Art & Architecture	- Health Sciences
-- Fine Arts	- Information & Computer Science
-- Architecture	- Mathematics
-- Photography	- Physics
- Communication	- Sports & Recreation
- Languages & Literature	<b>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</b>
-- African & Middle Eastern Literature	- Anthropology
-- Asian & Oceanian Literature	- Business, Management & Labor
-- Classical Literature	- Economics
-- English & American Literature	- Education
-- Germanic Literature	- History, Geography & Area Studies
-- Romance Literature	-- Africa History
-- Slavic Literature	-- Ancient History
- Performing Arts	-- Asia & Oceania History
-- Film	-- Central & Eastern Europe History
-- Music	-- Latin America & the Caribbean History
-- Theater & Dance	-- Middle East & North Africa History
- Philosophy	-- North America History
- Religion	-- United Kingdom History
<b>Science &amp; Technology</b>	-- Western Europe History
- History of Science & Technology	- Political Science
- Astronautics & Astronomy	-- Comparative Politics
- Biology	-- International Relations
-- Botany	-- Political Theory
-- Zoology	- U.S. Politics
- Chemistry	- Psychology
- Earth Science	- Sociology

Our investigation sought to discover the growth in availability of titles in an e format over the period of time from 2010 through 2015. We also sought to measure changes in our collecting focus to address the addition of e-books to the library’s collections. Finally, we were looking to determine whether changing user experience with e-

books on our campus has translated into a greater preference for e-books over their print counterparts.

The library has focused extensively upon the addition of aggregated collections such as the NetLibrary / Ebsco e-book collections (70,877), the American Council of Learned Societies (2,375) collection, and the Springerlink (2,432) collection of e-books. In addition to these collections, the library also has a group of titles from Ebrary as a part of a demand driven acquisition (DDA) program. This group covers the areas of Biology, Computer Science, Education, English & American literature, Justice and Public Safety, and Nursing. A total of 14,232 individual titles are included in the collection as of July, 2016. Altogether, the library's purchased e-book collections total 75,684 titles; combined with the DDA titles, AUM students have access to 89,916 e-book titles as of July, 2016. Individual titles in the e-book collections are accessible via bibliographic records in the library's OPAC and discovery service.

In conducting our analysis, we looked for agreement on terms. Book circulation for print items is readily accepted as being a physical loan of a book. We also chose to include renewals and browses in our analysis. In terms of electronic books, we faced similar definition problems as identified by Lamothe (2013), who identified e-book publishers and aggregators counting accesses, downloads, or viewings as usages. As noted in the article, accesses calculated by counting each page that is viewed could artificially inflate usage, while reporting accesses per book regardless of the number of pages viewed could artificially suppress real usage. Consistency between different vendors' and publishers' reports has been facilitated by Project COUNTER's Code of Practice (Project COUNTER, 2016), which provides guidelines or standards for reporting usage statistics for electronic items. The current version of the Code of Practice is version 4, released in 2012. For the purposes of this article, an access has been determined to be the access of a book as reported by vendors using Project COUNTER's Book Report 1 format, which documents the number of successful requests per title (Project COUNTER, 2016). This is the closest equivalent to print circulations among the Project COUNTER reports for e-books.

## Literature Review

### *E-book Availability Compared to Print*

Though industry-wide data for the availability of academic titles in e-book format is not easily available, several authors have conducted local studies looking for e-book equivalents to their print collections. Link (2012) determined that 17 % of the print books that circulated most often in 2009 and 2010 at The College of New Jersey were available through one or more major e-book providers. Comparing the print monograph collection at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, with e-books available through GOBI, Amazon, or found via internet searches, Anderson and Pham (2013) found that there were e-book equivalents for approximately 33% of RMIT

University's print monograph collection at the time of their study. This percentage would be dependent on the library using Yankee Book Peddler for acquisitions as well as using Overdrive to provide access to Amazon Kindle titles.

### *Usage by Format and Patron Preferences*

Much of the literature relating to e-books and their use focuses specifically upon format preference. Many studies, such as those by Dillon (2001), Ramirez and Gyeszly (2001), and Langston (2003) noted the preference users have expressed for print over e-formats. However, Littman and Connaway (2004) discovered a preference for e-book usage at Duke University, noting an 11% greater use of e-books than of equivalent print titles. Some authors found that comparing usage can be a complex matter. For example, Christianson and Aucoin (2005) found that more print titles were accessed than e-titles at Louisiana State University, but that the e-books were used at a higher rate than print. Although Goodwin (2014) initially found more uses for e-books in the e-Duke Scholarly Collection than for their print counterparts at Coastal Carolina University, once she examined what she termed "substantive use" (eleven or more page views for e-books and two separate circulations, excluding renewals or ILL check-outs, for print) (pp. 103-104), she determined that print use was equal to or exceeded e-book use. She also noted that high print use and high e-book use tended to be positively correlated.

In addition to examining usage, researchers have also surveyed patrons to determine which book format they prefer. Levine-Clark's (2006) survey results revealed that "16.6 percent of the 2,049 respondents would always use print; 44.1 percent that they would usually choose print, but sometimes electronic..." but only 2.1 percent of the users would "always use electronic" (p. 292). Mizrachi (2015) found that 67.7% of undergraduates at the University of California, Los Angeles, agreed or strongly agreed with a statement demonstrating a preference for reading course materials in print, while approximately 18% agreed or strongly agreed with a statement demonstrating a preference for them on an electronic device. (Mizrachi's survey examined usage of all kinds of written course materials, not just e-books.)

Some studies suggest that format usage and preference can vary between patron groups common to academic libraries. For example, differences can appear in preferences between undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty. Students generally appear to be accepting of the electronic format, commenting that print and electronic format were acceptable options, depending upon the activity (Hernon, Hopper, Leach, Saunders, & Zhang, 2007). In a survey conducted by Cassidy, Martinez, and Shen (2012), 40% of the graduate student respondents had used e-books, compared to 37% of the faculty. Of those who had not used e-books, 68% of the graduate students indicated that they would use e-books in the future, compared to 47% of the faculty. A study completed by the University of California Libraries (2011) focusing on Springer e-books found that in no patron status group did a majority prefer e-

books to print, with just 49% of postdoctoral researchers preferring electronic, with graduate students (35%), faculty (including lecturers) (33%), and undergraduate students (27%) preferring e-books even less often. However, even though only 49% of postdoctoral researchers preferred e-books, that was still a higher percentage than those who preferred print—only 32% of postdoctoral researchers preferred print books (with 19% reporting no preference), the only patron group in this study to show a stronger preference for e-books than for print.

Authors have also examined the patron preferences or usage patterns in different fields or disciplines. Articles by Bailey (2006), Christianson (2004), and Christianson and Aucoin (2005) all focus upon the influence of books' subject areas on format selection by patrons. Bailey (2006) noted that the five subject areas with the highest total number of netLibrary accesses between 2000 and 2004 at AUM were (a) business, economics, and management; (b) computers; (c) literature; (d) social sciences: general; and (e) medicine. Christianson (2004) found that the BISAC (Book Industry Standards Advisory Committee) subjects computers, library science, chemistry, and mathematics had the highest average uses per title in a study examining several libraries' netLibrary usage between September 2002 and August 2003. Each of these subjects had an average of over three uses per title. Christianson and Aucoin (2005) examined use of print/e-book duplicates at Louisiana State University over the course of thirteen months in 2002 and 2003. They found that in the LC classes B, C, D, E, F, G, L, and R, print books were used more than their electronic equivalents, while in the H, J, K, N, P, Q, S, T, U, and Z classes, e-books were used more than print. The University of California Libraries study (2011) also included broad discipline areas: more users in (a) physical sciences and engineering, (b) arts and humanities, and (c) social sciences preferred print books than e-books, though more respondents in two discipline areas, (a) business and law and (b) life and health sciences, displayed a greater preference for e-books than print. In contrast to these studies, Mizrachi (2015) did not find a correlation between undergraduates' field of study and their preferences for print or electronic reading.

Researchers have identified a number of issues which influence users' format preferences. Several authors have identified convenience as a major factor in using e-books (Levine-Clark, 2006; Shelburne, 2009; Walton, 2014). In addition to convenience, Levine-Clark (2006) found that patrons at the University of Denver used e-books if no print version was available and for easier searching of the text. At the University of Illinois, survey respondents cited time efficiency, portability (compared to carrying multiple physical volumes), the assurance of availability, and copy-paste capabilities as reasons to use e-books (Shelburne, 2009). Walton (2014) reported that undergraduates used e-books for leisure reading and conducting research. Users have cited preferences for print based upon ease of use, and researchers have noted that students were willing to read e-books "when the amount of text to be read was limited (Letchumanan and Tarmizi, 2011; Levine-Clark, 2006; Nicholas et al., 2008)" (Walton, 2014, p. 264). Some users

who would ordinarily prefer print have been led to "forced adoption" of e-books when the only way to access needed titles has been electronically. (Walton, 2014, pp. 266-268). Mizrachi (2015) linked Zipf's Principle of Least Effort to students' format choice: although a number of students in her survey indicated that they believe they learn best using print materials, they chose various types of electronic texts for reasons related to ease-of-use, speed, and convenience.

### **Purchase and Usage of Titles Reviewed in *Choice***

In two separate articles, Jobe and Levine-Clark (Levine-Clark & Jobe, 2007; Jobe & Levine-Clark, 2008) compared purchasing patterns and use rates of *Choice*-reviewed titles and OAT titles to titles in libraries' general collections. By examining Colorado research libraries and undergraduate liberal arts colleges from around the U.S. as groups, Jobe and Levine-Clark found that both groups tended to purchase more copies of *Choice*-reviewed books than books that were not reviewed in the periodical, and more copies of OAT books were purchased than of *Choice* titles without the OAT designation. They also found that books reviewed in *Choice* had a greater chance of circulating at least once than books not reviewed in *Choice* in both groups. In the research libraries, they noted a slight increase in the annualized usage rate for *Choice* titles compared to the entire collection, and there was a significant increase for the OAT titles (Levine-Clark & Jobe, 2007). They did not find this increase in the annualized usage rate in the undergraduate libraries: instead, the usage rate for *Choice* titles was the same as that for the general collection, and the usage rate for OAT titles only showed a slight increase (Jobe & Levine-Clark, 2008). Schmitt and Saunders (1983) studied whether highly positive reviews in *Choice* correlated to circulation. Their determination for the Purdue library holdings was that while the reviewed titles had a "quite typical" circulation rate, highly recommended titles for undergraduates experienced higher circulation rates than those titles recommended for more specialized audiences (p. 377). Presumably, the print circulation patterns would hold true for e-books as well. Williams and Best (2006) examined a subset of *Choice* reviews for Political Science and Public Administration that were available in both print and electronic formats. Their analysis determined that the average circulations for print titles in *Choice* were almost twice the average circulation of electronic *Choice* titles.

### **Methodology**

In conducting the analysis, we compared library holdings with the *Choice* OAT lists for 2010-2015. We identified those titles which were in print only, e-only, and both in print and e-formats. Using the Baker & Taylor's GOBI software, the OAT titles were examined to determine which titles had e-versions available.

The library's circulation records were examined to determine print circulations for the OAT titles available in that format, and vendor supplied records from ACLS, Ebsco, Springer, and the DDA collection to determine accesses of e-book OAT titles in specific subject areas.

Encyclopedic titles, dictionaries, and other similar works which would qualify as reference items along with titles in the main collections are included in the data, as the library maintains a circulation count of titles used in-house. Circulation counts for the print versions of the OAT titles include checkouts, known browses that did not result in a checkout, and renewals. Circulations while on reserve would have been excluded; however, none of the titles in question had been placed on reserve. E-book access was determined using vendor reports in Project COUNTER's Book Report 1 format, which provides the number of successful requests (or accesses) per title. Project COUNTER provides guidelines for vendors in determining how to count multiple clicks on a single link by a single user, and for potentially thorny issues such as retrievals generated through federated searching and automated search tools (Project COUNTER, 2016). As noted by Williams and Best (2006), it is recognized that access does not equate to actual use of an e-resource.

We then mapped circulation patterns for the OAT titles in each format, and checked GOBI to determine which titles were available in e-format.

### Analysis

For the period 2010-2015, a total of 3,467 titles were listed in OAT. Of this figure, 2,680 (77.3%) were available in an electronic format. (See Figure 1.)

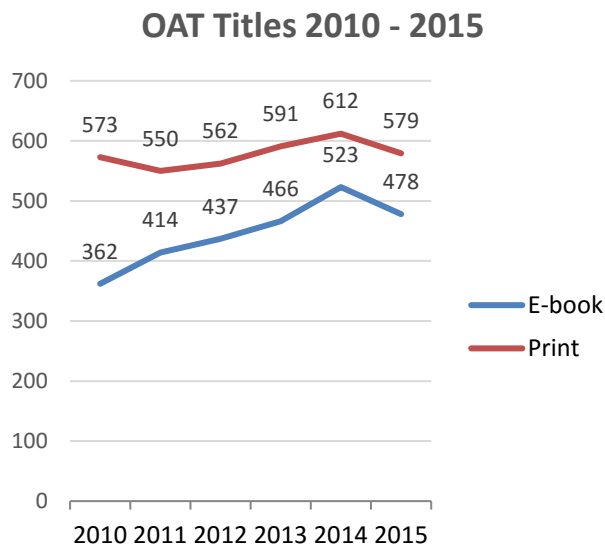


Figure 1. OAT titles by format.

As can be seen by the figure, the ratio of e-book versions of the print titles has increased each year during this period, with the exception of 2015. Figure 2 shows the increase in percentage of e-books from a low of 63.18% of the print titles in 2010 to a high of 85.46% in 2014, before dropping slightly to 82.56% in 2015.

### OAT E-titles as Percentage of Print

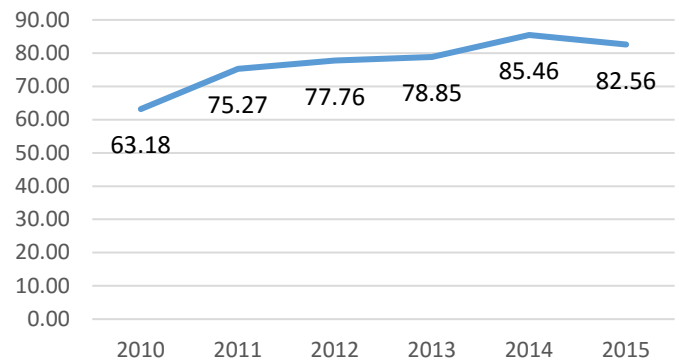


Figure 2. OAT titles available as percentage of print.

While these figures represent e-book versions available at the time the search was conducted (summer 2016), it does not represent the number of titles which had e-book availability at the time the reviews for *Choice* were conducted. For example, in 2010, there were no reviews which indicated an e-version was available. In 2011, 35 reviews indicated e-availability, while 2012 indicated 89 were e-ready, and 118 in 2013. In 2014, 112 titles had an e-version available at the time of review, and in 2015 the number increased to 147. While a lag-time exists between when most titles are reviewed for *Choice* and when the publisher issues the title in e-format, that time appears to be growing shorter.

The AUM Library holds 319 print versions of the OAT titles, which have circulated 483 times, or 1.51 circulations per title, while the 281 e-book versions of the OAT titles held by the library circulated 99 times, or 0.35 times per title. The library holds 31 in both print and electronic format. Altogether, OAT titles in the AUM Library circulated 0.97 times per title. Table 2 shows the circulations by format and by year.

Table 2

#### AUM Library OAT Holdings Circulation by Format and Year

Year	Print #	Print Circs per Title	E-books #	E-book Circs per Title	E-book to Print Accesses per Title	Print to E-book Usage Ratio
2010	81	1.71	60	0.37	0.62	3.42
2011	55	1.35	61	0.37	0.61	2.22
2012	48	1.25	20	0.17	0.85	1.47
2013	51	0.84	4	0.04	0.00	N/A
2014	34	1.50	77	0.03	0.04	38.50
2015	50	1.68	59	0.05	0.08	19.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>1.51</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>4.30</b>

Consistent with the findings of Bailey (2006) the users of the AUM Library favor print access over e-access by a more than four to one margin. Specifically, the number of

print circulations per title (1.51) is 4.3 times larger than that of the e-book accesses per title (0.35) (calculated by dividing the print circulations per title by the e-book accesses per title). It is important to recognize the small proportion of *Choice* titles held by the library. Given this small a percentage, it is important for us to recognize just how many of the titles are not used. Of the 319 print titles, 117 are not used. By eliminating the not used titles, the circulation pattern for the titles that are used increases to 2.41; for the e-books, 140 of the 281 titles show no circulations during the period of study. In examining the electronic usage patterns to correct for those e-books that did circulate resulted in a circulation rate of 0.70. In other words, the overall print circulation rate for OAT titles is greater than the e-book access rate. Even if the unused titles in both formats are eliminated, the print usage remains greater than the e-book usage. Two e-book titles in this study (*Encyclopedia of African American Women Writers* and *Encyclopedia of Themes in Literature*) between them had approximately one-third of the e-accesses with 36 between them.

As a percentage, the AUM Library holds for this period only 16.41% of the possible total of all OAT titles. As we looked at the data, we examined the usage statistics by subject area in order to determine whether subject area influenced circulation rates. Christianson and Aucoin (2005) and Bailey (2006) have noted the influence of subject upon access patterns for electronic resources. Jobe and Levine-Clark (Levine-Clark & Jobe, 2007; Jobe & Levine-Clark, 2008), using LC classification, provided a similar assessment of influence. In determining the subject areas, we chose to go with those established by *Choice* and not to provide an LC breakdown, though this would have been feasible. It was not felt that the LC data would provide any more clarity to the subject influence than that established by *Choice*.

As noted above, *Choice* provides reviews for 56 subject areas. The data from the comparisons were sorted by *Choice* subject area, and the number of accesses for the analysis period and overall access per title were recorded. Table 3 includes this data.

Table 3  
*Print & E-Book Circulations / Accesses by Subject Area 2010-2015*

Subject Area	# Print Titles	# Print Circulations	Print Circulations per Title	# E-books	# E-book Accesses	E-book Accesses per Title
<b>Humanities</b>	4	11	2.75	2	13	6.50
- Art & Architecture	7	24	3.43	2	0	0.00
-- Fine Arts	7	6	0.86	0	0	N/A
-- Architecture	0	0	N/A	1	0	0.00
-- Photography	2	1	0.50	0	0	N/A
- Communication	6	9	1.50	9	0	0.00
- Language & Literature	3	5	1.67	5	0	0.00
-- African & Middle Eastern Literature	1	0	0.00	1	0	0.00
-- Asian & Oceanian Literature	0	0	N/A	1	0	0.00
-- Classical Literature	2	2	1.00	2	3	1.50
-- English & American Literature	41	80	1.95	35	8	0.23
-- Germanic Literature	1	1	1.00	0	0	N/A
-- Romance Literature	1	1	1.00	7	0	0.00
-- Slavic Literature	2	4	2.00	1	0	0.00
- Performing Arts	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
-- Film	7	14	2.00	7	1	0.14
-- Music	1	0	0.00	2	1	0.50
-- Theater & Dance	3	1	0.33	1	0	0.00
- Philosophy	5	10	2.00	4	1	0.25
- Religion	5	17	3.40	9	2	0.22

<b>Humanities Sub-Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0.33</b>
<b>Science &amp; Technology</b>	2	3	1.50	2	0	0.00
- History of Science & Technology	1	0	0.00	4	0	0.00
- Astronautics & Astronomy	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
- Biology	7	17	2.43	5	0	0.00
-- Botany	2	1	0.50	5	0	0.00
-- Zoology	3	3	1.00	1	0	0.00
- Chemistry	3	3	1.00	2	0	0.00
- Earth Science	3	3	1.00	5	0	0.00
- Engineering	0	0	N/A	4	0	0.00
- Health Sciences	1	10	10.00	14	4	0.29
- Information & Computer Science	1	3	3.00	4	0	0.00
- Mathematics	2	7	3.50	3	0	0.00
- Physics	0	0	N/A	2	0	0.00
- Sports & Recreation	1	1	1.00	1	0	0.00
<b>Science &amp; Technology Sub-Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1.96</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.08</b>
<b>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</b>	2	3	1.50	9	0	0.00
- Anthropology	5	5	1.00	6	1	0.17
- Business, Management & Labor	6	6	1.00	7	0	0.00
- Economics	9	7	0.78	10	2	0.20
- Education	6	3	0.50	5	12	2.40
- History, Geography & Area Studies	8	5	0.63	7	6	0.86
-- Africa History	6	11	1.83	1	0	0.00
-- Ancient History	1	1	1.00	1	0	0.00
-- Asia & Oceania History	16	19	1.19	2	0	0.00
-- Central & Eastern Europe History	9	16	1.78	4	0	0.00
-- Latin America & the Caribbean History	2	5	2.50	0	0	N/A
-- Middle East & North Africa History	4	4	1.00	2	0	0.00
-- North America History	31	45	1.45	29	3	0.10

-- United Kingdom History	2	2	1.00	2	0	0.00
-- Western Europe History	11	11	1.00	3	2	0.67
- Political Science	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
-- Comparative Politics	11	11	1.00	9	0	0.00
-- International Relations	11	13	1.18	6	0	0.00
-- Political Theory	5	16	3.20	3	0	0.00
-- U.S. Politics	27	39	1.44	11	6	0.55
- Psychology	11	19	1.73	4	2	0.50
- Sociology	12	5	0.42	19	32	1.68
<b>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences Sub-Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>1.26</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>0.47</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>1.51</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>0.35</b>

The specific subject areas with the greatest use were somewhat different depending on format. For print titles, the rankings were Health Sciences (10.00 per title), Mathematics (3.50), Art & Architecture (3.43), Religion (3.40), and Political Theory (3.20). For electronic titles, Humanities [not further specified] was the most used area per title (6.50 uses per title), followed by Education (2.40), Sociology (1.68), Classical Literature (1.50), and History, Geography & Area Studies (0.86). Looking at the raw number of accesses alone, the most heavily used subject areas for electronic titles were Sociology with 32 uses, followed by Humanities [not further specified] with 13 uses, Education with 12, and English and American Literature with 8.

Examining print usage for the general categories (Humanities, Science & Technology, and Social & Behavioral Sciences), Science & Technology is first with 1.96 uses per print title, followed by Humanities with 1.90 uses per title and Social & Behavioral Sciences with 1.26. When the electronic usage is measured, Social & Behavioral Sciences is first with 0.47 uses per title, Humanities is second with 0.33 uses per title, and Science & Technology is third with 0.08 uses. These findings concur with those of Bailey (2006), Christianson (2004), Christianson and Aucoin (2005), and University of

California Libraries (2011) that e-book usage follows different patterns in different subject areas. In addition, Social & Behavioral Sciences had the highest number of e-book accesses with 66, followed by Humanities with 29, and then the Science & Technology category with 4 accesses. The low number of e-book accesses for Science & Technology is of some concern; however, the collections the library has subscribed to are neither deep nor current in this category. The subject area most likely to use e-books in this category is Health Sciences.

Expressing the usage of the general categories as a ratio of print circulations per title to e-book accesses per title, the

Science & Technology area has the greatest difference between print and e-access with 25.50 times as many print circulations per title as e-book accesses per title. Humanities was second in difference between the two formats, with 5.82 print circulations per title for every e-book access per title. The smallest difference was found in Social & Behavioral Sciences, with 2.68 times as many print circulations per title as e-book access per title. See Table 4. As noted above, the rate of print circulations per title was 4.30 times greater than that of e-book accesses per title.

Table 4  
*Print & E-Book Circulations / Accesses by General Category Subtotals 2010-2015*

<b>General Categories</b>	# Print Titles	# Print Circs	Print Circs per Title	# E- books	# E- book Accesses	E-book Accesses per Title	Print to E- book Usage Ratio
<b>Humanities</b>	98	186	1.90	89	29	0.33	5.82
<b>Science &amp; Technology</b>	26	51	1.96	52	4	0.08	25.50



<b>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</b>	195	246	1.26	140	66	0.47	2.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>1.51</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>4.30</b>

## Conclusion

In examining the data, to answer the first question asked, “How many of the print titles that are reviewed in *Choice* have a corresponding e-version ready for purchase?” it was determined that 77.3% of the titles had a corresponding e-version available (2,680 out of 3,467 *Choice* OAT titles). This figure, however, represents e-availability at the time the titles were searched, and not which had e-book versions ready for release with the print version.

Our second question, “How used are those e-versions in comparison with print?” we determined that first, usage is influenced by subject area. Sociology, at AUM, is the most likely subject area for students and faculty to utilize e-books in, followed by humanities [not further specified] and education. It is also clear that print remains the preferred format for our users to access materials. Possible reasons for this include those identified in the literature: student learning styles, preference over format for ease of use, and general convenience (Walton, 2014; Hernon et al., 2007).

There are other factors besides user preference that might have influenced our results. For one thing, the print and electronic titles in any given subject area were not necessarily acquired simultaneously, and the titles acquired first would have had more time to accumulate use. Also, since the print and electronic titles were not identical in any given subject area, the titles in one format may have fit patrons’ needs better in certain subjects, resulting in that format acquiring more use. It is also possible that the bibliographic records for each version of any given title may not be identical: one version’s record may be more detailed than the other, increasing the likelihood that that particular record will be retrieved in searches (Harker & Sassen, 2015), or one or both catalog records may contain errors that hinder retrieval. Because the e-book records are imported in batches and tend to receive less individual attention than records for print materials, they may be more likely to contain errors. The quality of records is particularly important for discovery of e-books, as the records are the primary way the books are browsed. (Print books in open stacks, such as AUM’s circulating collection,

can still be found by patrons browsing the shelves even if the books’ records have errors.)

In comparison with the study conducted by Williams and Best (2006) it appears that no significant difference has occurred regarding user preference for e-book access of *Choice* titles. Users of the AUM Library remain committed to print resources at a more than 4 to 1 ratio, though there has been an increase in usage of e-books. Subject matter remains a priority for e-book selection – at AUM, Sociology clearly utilizes the e-resources.

The utility of *Choice* as a review for titles remains significant. As seen from the distribution growth pattern for e-books, more titles are available as e-books for each year in question. This increased ability to select e- over print versions of a title will likely lead to increased selection rates for e-versions. Furthermore, as funding pressures continue to affect libraries and their selection choices, users will be impacted more directly by the “forced adoption” concept as libraries will be unable to afford both print and electronic copies of a title. Space constraints, exacerbated when library space is reconfigured to accommodate uses other than the shelving of print materials, may drive libraries to select e-books when they are available, regardless of whether or not patrons prefer them or print books.

The increase of electronic and remote streaming materials in libraries may strengthen the expectation of instantaneous access in our users, especially when coupled with the near-omnipresence of online media in users’ lives. This increased pressure for “immediacy” of use, when applied to print materials, may have long-term impacts on the future of scholarship at smaller institutions. Without plans for storage of and access to the older materials whose currency of use has passed, the intellectual capital of institutions will be diminished by reducing the on-site collections in favor of off-site storage. Undergraduate users who do not find print materials physically available on-site and for which an electronic version does not exist or is not available are less likely to await retrieval of the print item, regardless of its relevancy to their research.

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## SELA/GENERAL NEWS:

### *New SELA Officers*

The SELA election results have been finalized. The officers for 2017-2018 will be:

*President* – Linda Harris, University of Alabama-Birmingham, Retired

*President – Elect* – Tim Dodge, Auburn University

*Secretary* – Melissa Dennis, University of Mississippi

*Treasurer* – Beverly James, Greenville County Public Library, SC

*Immediate Past President* – Camille McCutcheon, University of South Carolina Upstate

### *SELA/GA COMO Joint Conference*

In early October, SELA partnered with GA COMO for an outstanding joint conference in Athens, Georgia. Total conference registration, not including vendors, was 538, and 74 SELA members attended the conference.

The following SELA Awards were presented.

- **Charles E. Beard Award** - Kendrick B. Melrose
- **Outstanding Southeastern Library Program Award** -Program to Provide Health Information at Remote Area Clinics - Quillen College of

Medicine Library, East Tennessee State University

- **Outstanding Southeastern Author Fiction Award** - Greg Iles for *Natchez Burning*
- **Outstanding Southeastern Author Non-Fiction Award** - Rick Bragg for *My Southern Journey: True Stories from the Heart of the South*
- **Honorary SELA Membership Award**-Evelyn Merk and Hal Mendelsohn
- **SELA Special Award** - Sue Knoche
- **Hal Mendelsohn Award** - Gordon Baker

### **Southern Books Competition:**

- **2016 Overall Excellence**  
*Creole World: Photographs of New Orleans and the Latin Caribbean Sphere* by Richard Sexton with essays by Jay D. Edwards and John H. Lawrence. The Historic New Orleans Collection
- **2016 Award of Excellence: Photography**  
*Riot: Witness to Anger and Change* by Edwin E. Meek. Yoknapatawpha Press
- **2016 Award of Excellence: Dust Jacket and Cover**  
*Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County: A Family, a Virginia Town, a Civil Rights Battle* by Kristen Green. HarperCollins Publishers