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Good afternoon everyone, thank you for being here. My colleague Frances Devlin could not be here today. We are finishing the manuscript draft for this project and we are hoping to submit it for publication later this summer. So please be on the lookout for it.

The title of this presentation is “no, no, we prefer print”: why do romance language librarians buy eBooks? While the literature on eBooks is extensive, there are only a handful of studies focused on the perspectives of librarians. So this study aims to close that gap.

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Literature review

Summary: useful in a general way. It covers the various myths about eBooks and why they are not true. It argues that while eBooks have “created a new learning and teaching opportunit[y] which were not possible with print-only library collection” they also “lack Standardization...which makes it difficult for libraries that deal with multiple vendors to learn about, keep up-to-date with and troubleshoot their subscriptions.”

Lack of awareness of eBooks makes them “invisible” (LaMagna, Hartman-Caverly, and Swenson Danowitz, 2015)

Summary: this article goes over a large body of scholarly materials to discuss the issues and challenges of eBooks in the academic library. It discusses the early history of eBooks. And it argues that there is a lack of awareness regarding eBooks which renders them “invisible” as they are dispersed over various platforms.

New teaching faculty DO NOT use e-books (Mulholland and Bates, 2014)

Summary: article used survey method to look at use/perceptions of eBooks much of the data matches current trends, but they did find that 40% of new teaching faculty (5 years or less) does not use eBooks.

PDA can increase usage of e-books (Dewland and See 2015)

Summary: while this article focuses on PDA, it does argue that at the University of Arizona the titles for Languages and Literatures were the highest used and where they spent the most amount of money for PDA.

E-books ≠ electronic journals - Purchase models, copyright, licensing and DRM (Kahn and Underwood, 2013)

Summary: While this article focuses on English-only materials, it does a good job of highlighting the main issues and concerns librarians have regarding eBooks. This also include information on the State of Kansas Librarian's lawsuit against Overdrive for the right to transfer eBooks to a new platform without having to pay for the titles again. The lawsuit was successful. This article is the first one to mention a focus groups with librarians. SEE: Blankfield, S. 2012 Towards a digital spine. Publishing research quarterly, 28: 79-92

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As I mentioned before, the purpose of the study is to describe the collection development practices of librarians with responsibilities for French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. We also looked to gather data on their attitudes regarding the proliferation of e-books and the shift in collection development policies.

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Methodology: The study collected data using a mixed method approach of a survey and focus groups.

We decided that for this study a mixed methods approach would be the most useful. With the help of a student assistant, we created a list of librarians at ARL member institutions with collection development responsibilities for French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. The list was further examined to delete duplicates. This produced a final list of 184 sample population of librarians, including the researchers. The survey was created and distributed using Qualtrics and individual invitations were sent via email to all 184 librarians in the sample. We received a total of 76 responses for a response rate of 41.3 %. At the end of the survey, participants had the opportunity to opt in to participate in a focus group. This approach allowed the authors to gather additional information from responses to follow-up questions (Carlock & Anali, 2008). From the list of volunteers willing to participate in focus groups, a selection was made to balance the various languages covered and similarities among institutions. Once IRB permission was secured, two focus groups with a total of seven participants were organized virtually via Skype for Business. This system allowed participants to join using either a computer or a phone. It also allowed the researchers to record the video and audio of the sessions for transcription afterwards. In addition to the recordings, the researchers took notes of the meetings.

The survey was made up of 21 questions including demographics. None of the questions were required which resulted in a variation in the response rate. We designed the survey with a mixture of closed and open-ended questions, multiple choice and Likert scale. The data from the focus groups is made up of two separate sessions. Each session had between three and four participants without counting us. Both sessions lasted approximately 40 minutes each.

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Research Limitations: eBooks are not always assigned a call number when added to the collection as individual titles. Large packages of eBooks do not necessarily get added as

individual titles to the collections making it very difficult to compare eBook collections between institutions.

Slide 6 *Survey and Focus Group Findings*

Because there were so many similarities between the responses in the survey and in the focus groups, unless otherwise noted, I am going to discuss the findings in both research instruments. The following is a description and discussion of the major themes.

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Selection Methods for E-books: When librarians were asked about how they acquire e-books, the majority indicated that the most common methods are firm orders and open access. This is important because while big packages of e-books continue to get bundled as part of databases, Romance librarians continue to hand select the titles that are added to their collections. While those librarians use a variety of vendors, the most common one was GOBI Library Solutions from Ebsco. Presumably, the reason for this predominance is that GOBI has a larger selection of e-books, they integrate easily into existing platforms and the licensing options are known to the acquisitions staff.

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Open access books added to catalog: The importance of subject expertise carries over to this question as well. Almost 75% of librarians report that their institution will add a freely available e-book title to the OPAC if they recommend it.

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Important factors when placing firm orders: I know this graph is hard to read but here are the most important findings. The first bar on the left indicates that user preference is the single most important aspect when selecting the format for a purchase request. This is closely followed by how the title is going to be used. In this case, the fourth bar from the right indicates that librarians are more likely to buy an e-book if the title is going to be used for a course. This is closely tied to the trend in higher education to reduce the cost of attendance by reducing or eliminating the cost of textbooks. The third bar from the left indicates availability. Is the title needed available in electronic format? This response is almost tied to how accessible if the option available. Some platforms are more user friendly than others so librarians seem to be paying close attention to how their users may interact with the materials.

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Cooperative Collection Development: Another surprise was the high number of cooperative collection development efforts between institutions to acquire e-books. Out of 48 responses, 23 librarians indicated that their institution is involved in a cooperative effort. An additional eight librarians indicated that they were not sure. While most of the cooperative efforts are for large packages or Demand Driven Acquisition (DDA) and include very little of the content relevant to Romance librarians, this finding is surprising because it was still higher than what we expected.

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Here is list of the various cooperative collection development efforts reported in the survey.

In Ontario, we are part of **OCUL (Ontario Council of University Libraries)**. We are also part of a larger consortium, **CRKN (Canadian Research Knowledge Network)**. Through these, we purchase the bulk of our e-books.

We have access to elibro content via **TexShare**

Limited and largely left up to individual selectors. Cooperation is with **CARLI**, consortium of academic libraries in Illinois.

Publisher lists through **OhioLINK or Big Ten**

The University System of Maryland has a cooperative DDA program, and a few US-published books (especially from University Presses) in my subject areas are available through that program.

All **UC libraries** work together for DDA eBook acquisitions

PALCI consortium had a DDA pilot

They participate with **BLC (Boston Library Consortium)** to acquire ebooks based on institutional profile, etc. with Project Muse and other vendors

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Implications for ILL E-books are not generally available to lend to libraries outside of cooperative arrangements and this has a negative effect on the ability to share items through interlibrary loans to other institutions. When asked if they considered the implications on interlibrary loan when purchasing an eBook, one person commented, “I confess that I don’t very often...I do feel badly when I buy eBooks and I can’t share them, but my first priority is to my constituents here at *** and what their needs are.”

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User Preferences Several focus group participants stated their decision to purchase e-books was guided primarily by user preference and intended audience/use. There was a clear consensus (or perception) in both groups that humanities faculty prefer print books to e-books for their research. However, if a book were required as required reading for an undergraduate course they were teaching, they would request an e-book to provide access for their students. Faculty also preferred e-books if they were a reference source (such as an encyclopedia or handbook) and more suited for a quick consultation. When reading an entire novel or literary work, print was considered their first choice.

When librarians were asked, cost issues aside, if they would consider purchasing more e-books, the majority answered that they would not purchase more e-books. The main reasons librarians cited was user preference for print books and issues with e-books platforms. Largely, the field of humanities is based on monographs, as print books are more conducive to in depth reading of novels and critical materials while e-books in-text search features allow users to scan quickly the material for brief consultations. Librarians indicated that students and faculty have strong preferences for print books and find printed sources more trustworthy (Qayyum and Williamson, 2014). Most of the text responses echoed the perception that print is viewed as a superior source as compared to print. This perception is rooted in traditional thinking and it is reminiscing of the arguments against Open Access journals being less reliable in contrast to those published under the traditional model of paid subscriptions. In a literature review about the differences between print and electronic formats, Walsh argues, “recent studies suggest that speed and recall differences between media are insignificant (p. 160). However, it is important to highlight that the tide is turning in favor of convenience. In his review, Walsh expands on this point when commenting, “students are excited by the potential of electronic documents to enhance learning” (p. 170). While users still prefer the print book, the main factor is access to material. One of the responders made the following comment: “scholars making deep use of a monograph report (still) a preference for print, if they are in town that is”. While scholars in the humanities prefer print materials, it is important to highlight some features of ebooks make them appealing to users.

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Remote access, platforms, and licensing. Most institutions had a designated electronic resources librarian responsible for managing negotiations and terms for licensing agreements. One person noted that it was her library’s policy to purchase only e-books with perpetual access and not as a subscription or package. Given the constantly changing and complex environment of eBook platforms, associated costs, and accessibility issues, most participants considered it essential to have someone in this position. All agreed that providing remote access to students and faculty was a strong advantage of eBooks, especially with the growth of online courses and study abroad.

For e-books acquired in the romance languages, price and platform were considered as important as the number of users permitted under the license agreement. Finding user-friendly platforms for e-books was also a concern. One participant commented, “I find the platforms in which one can read or engage with an e-book are really cumbersome to use, and typically I hate using them ...

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Physical Space: With the reality of space limitations and lack of off-site storage for growing collections, some institutions have implemented “e-preferred” acquisitions policies. Due to limited availability or licensing restrictions for publications in Romance languages, e-preferred is not always an option.

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Closing Thoughts: Further research into the idea of “perception”. Both for the survey and from the focus groups, we noticed a trend regarding the perception of print being better or more trustworthy. The key point is that this is a perception that requires further research.

Print and digital texts encourage different styles of reading and different ways of thinking and doing research. “Screen reading and print reading are infusing each other in complex ways that change how we organize, recognize, and assimilate text into our lives.” (Durant and Horava)

We think it would be interesting to explore if other disciplines tackle these questions.

As we become more adept at using electronic devices, how is this going to affect our relationship to print and/or e-books? What happens to younger users that have grown up using electronic devices to find and read information. Would they prefer e-books over print?

Currently, e-books imitate print which is linear. E-books could enhance the reading experience by being more interactive and dynamic? How? When?

[From “The Future of Reading and Academic Libraries”, David M. Durant, Tony Horava, portal: vol. 15, no. 1, January 2015, pp. 5-27.]

“...as the digital age unfolds, it is likely to transform both the nature of reading and the nature of the book itself, as deep, immersive reading fades in importance and functional, tabular reading becomes more widespread.”

“Print and digital should be seen as complementary media, serving different reading and research needs, and not simply as interchangeable.”

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We created a Padlet to learn from you how you are tackling these issues in your institutions.

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Bibliography

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Thank you!