Integration of ebooks into CERN Library
: The Ebook Library product in a practical setting

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CERN[1] is a particle physics research institution employing experimental physicists, theoretical physicists, computer scientists, engineers and administrative support staff. It is funded by its member states[2] and receives at any one time around 6500 visiting academic scientists and students in addition to the 3000 staff who are employed on site. The Library serves not only those scientists physically present at CERN but also those particle physicists around the world who might never visit CERN itself. Day-to-day the main library users are academic staff (many of which are visiting scientists) and postgraduate students. During the summer there is a CERN programme for several hundred undergraduate students who work on short projects and also make heavy use of the Library service.

The CERN Library therefore has many similarities to a university library but with core subjects of physics, mathematics, engineering and computing. Books, journals and bibliographic databases are purchased and presented to users through the Library catalogue interface which is called CDS – the CERN Document Server[3]. But CDS is more than just a traditional library catalogue: it also contains about 500,000 full-text items (articles, preprints, press cuttings, theses, etc), links to online conference proceedings, photographs and other multimedia items, minutes of CERN meetings, and many more types of materials held in different databases and integrated through the single interface of CDS. It is the central storage location for a wide variety of CERN material and other items that are expected to be of interest to the particle physics community. For this reason, the catalogue is very frequently accessed, receiving around 20,000 unique visitors each month.

There are a number of reasons why the Ebook Library (EBL)[4] platform works for CERN:

- There is a large collection of up-to-date books from different publishers;
- We can choose only those books we want: high level, specialised books on physics, mathematics, engineering and computing;
- Selected individual titles can be added to the catalogue, and treated and searched across in the same way as our other full-text resources;
- We only pay for what we use;
- Access is simple for users off-site;

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[1] CERN – the European Organization for Nuclear Research, http://cern.ch/
[2] Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.
[3] http://cdsweb.cern.ch/
[4] http://www.eblib.com/

- Multiple simultaneous access is possible which helps to satisfy irregular high demand for the same titles (for example during the summer student programme);
- The EBL company is flexible and sensitive to our requests.

In particular the system of multiple concurrent use, ease of off-site access, and pricing system suit CERN's needs.

The way books are chosen and bought starts with an automatic retrieval of items from the EBL catalogue based on quite broad Dewey classification codes set up by CERN Librarians with the help of EBL staff. The metadata for books which match these classification codes are sent to CERN and uploaded into the catalogue as MARC records with the link to the EBL ebook entered as a URL into the 8564 MARC field (see example of a MARC record below).

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•   000899021 003__ $$_SzGeCERN
•   000899021 005__ $$_20051025180707.0
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•   000899021 245__ $$aQuantum versus chaos$$bquestions emerging from mesoscopic cosmos
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•   000899021 595__ $$aSIS EBL2005
•   000899021 65017 $$2SzGeCERN$$aNonlinear Systems
•   000899021 6531_ $$9EBL$$aMesoscopic phenomena (Physics)
•   000899021 6531_ $$9EBL$$aQuantum theory
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•   000899021 916__ $$sn$$w200542
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•   000899021 970__ $$a002569446CER
•   000899021 980__ $$aBOOK
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Example of a MARC record for an EBL ebook in the CERN Library catalogue.

All the basic metadata is included: title, author, publication details, classification, keywords, ISBNs. When the upload is performed, some CERN-specific fields are automatically added to the records and in this way hundreds of records can easily be added to the catalogue in one go. At this point the ebooks themselves have not been purchased. The first user who wishes to use one of these ebooks follows the URL link and enters his CERN login ID after which he can browse the book for five minutes. After this free five-minute period, the user is asked if he wants to use the book for longer at

which point a positive response creates a loan and a charge to the Library of between 5-25% of the cost of the book. The cost of the ebook is the same as the cost of buying a printed copy so this charge is still very low and fairly comparable to the cost of an Inter Library Loan (ILL). The Library staff can decide in advance when and how an ebook is fully purchased.

At CERN we have chosen to buy books automatically on the second loan request when they are under a certain price limit. That means that as soon as the ebook is used for a second time (beyond the free 5 minute browse period), the Library is automatically charged the full price of the book and it becomes a title owned by CERN – thus the Non-linear™ Lending model applies meaning that the book can be used for the equivalent of 325 days in each year for ever with no further cost. If those 325 days are used before the year is over, then we have the option to purchase a second 'copy' (giving a further 325 days each year, or a total of 650 loan-day equivalents per year) or to wait for the next year when our access count returns to zero and we have 325 potential loan-days again without paying any more money for the book.
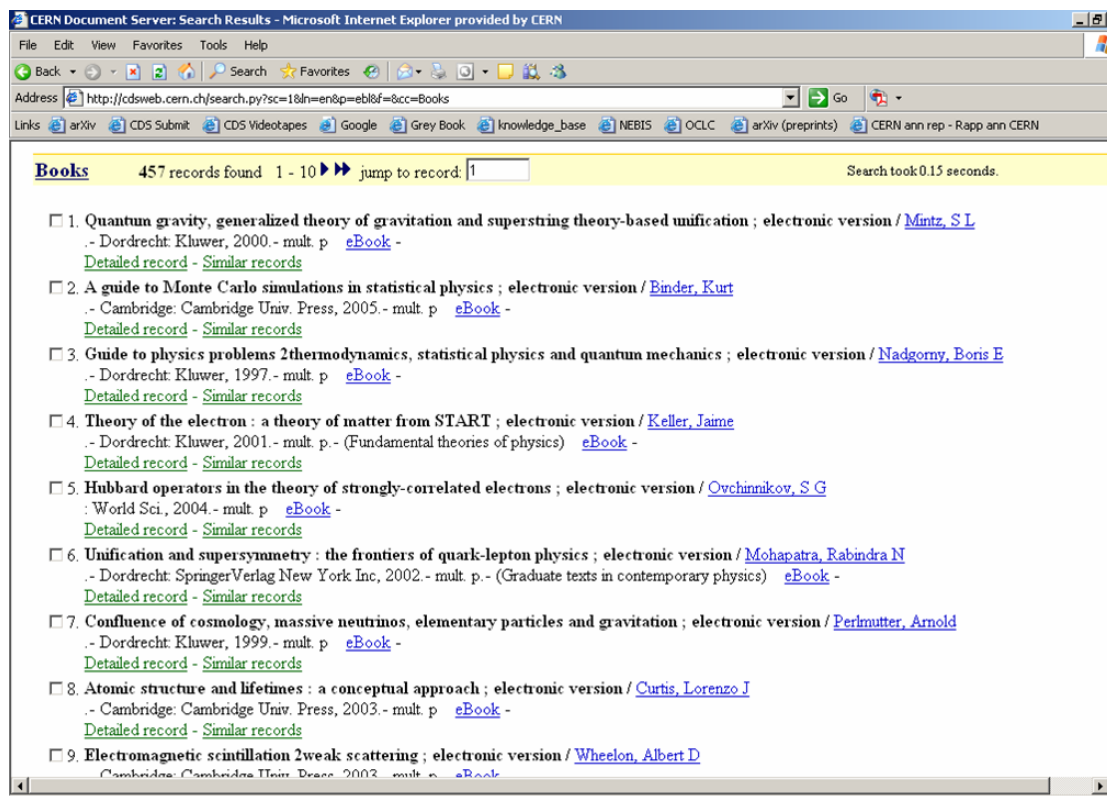
CERN Library catalogue search results with their links to EBL ebooks.

When we first started our trial of EBL we had to test demand and usage a little bit to see which settings would suit the users and the Library best. This meant day-to-day checking of the statistics in the management portal and the lists of ebooks being borrowed and bought and we also cautiously chose to receive email alerts at the exact moment any book

was used. However, after a short testing period we decided on the parameters we wanted and since that time there has been very little need to interact with the system at all. Invoices are received monthly from which we can get an indication of usage and which we can investigate in more detail, if we wish, at any time through the usage and invoice reports in the EBL management portal. Very occasionally we have tweaked the settings based on this information but as time goes by we are more and more confident that the settings are exactly right.

Such an arrangement for ebook provision has therefore fulfilled what might otherwise have been ILL requests but in a way that is quicker for the user and unmediated by Library staff. By studying the type of books which are being used, we have also gained information about areas where our print collections had not matched up to user requirements and so we have been able to realign our print acquisitions.

The level of use of the system has been higher than expected, especially as we have performed little publicity, leaving discovery of the service to serendipity for those users already looking for books in the Library catalogue. Not only has there been use of books on subjects we hadn't previously recognised as being of interest but we have had many users who enjoy the possibility of being able to use books without physically coming to obtain a copy from the Library. Students working on theses and needing to consult a relatively large number of books in a short time have commented on the ease with which they have been able to get access, especially whilst working at home. Certain travelling academics have also complimented the Library on offering a service they can use whilst on the move. We also hope that we will see a big difference in being able to satisfy the demands of our next group of summer students who often all want the same standard text-books at the same time during their stay at CERN. In order to anticipate this demand we have therefore prepared a list of our own heavily-used books to send to EBL so that they can approach the relevant publishers and investigate the possibility of obtaining electronic copies of these.

Because the books are well-integrated into the Library catalogue and on an individual title basis, many users have the awareness of a seamless link into the pdf of the book and find the system very simple to use. For the Library, the service complements our print collection and ILL service and at a cost that is easily absorbed by the book budget. As usage increases, we may make a gradual decrease in print acquisitions, or, should we wish it, we have the choice to set limitations on the ebook usage to reduce the cost. However, at the moment we – both users and Library staff – are very happy with the innovative service that Ebook Library provides.