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# e-Books at the University of the Witwatersrand

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# e-Books at the University of the Witwatersrand

## Wits at a Glance

- Residential university
- Multidisciplinary
- Strong STM focus
- 27 934 students (2010)
  - 69% undergraduate
  - 32% postgraduate



<http://www.wits.ac.za/files/res4bbc614b78144623a77ee44bb0243156.pdf>

# e-Books at the University of the Witwatersrand

## Background

- Pre-2007: ad hoc purchases of e-books
- 2008: surplus funds available
- Decision to purchase
  - Space saving
  - 24/7 availability; remote access
  - No physical processing
  - Once off expenditure; access in perpetuity
- Opportunity to establish multidisciplinary core collection
  - Unlimited user license
  - Total >7 000 titles
- Subsequent purchases - reference and literary collections
- Scope to explore textbook opportunities

# e-Books at the University of the Witwatersrand

## Technological Readiness

- Good bandwidth on campus
- Wireless hotspots
- Libraries
- Computer labs
- Computer access in residences
- Users with own devices
- Wits Business School iPads in 2012

# e-Books at the University of the Witwatersrand

## User experience

- Seamless access
  - Library catalogue
  - Publishers' platforms
  - Research portal
- Remote authentication
- Integration with other research resources
- Cross-searching
- Challenges for disabled users – particularly the blind
  - Online searching and navigation
  - Limitations of text-to-voice software

# e-Books at the University of the Witwatersrand

## Access Management

- Not 'plug-'n-play'
- Technological and bibliographic skill
- Population and maintenance of multiple systems - silos
  - Library catalogues; MARC record
  - Administrator modules of publisher platforms
  - Resource discovery tools
    - Central knowledge bases
    - Resource linking - open URL resolvers
    - A-Z Lists
- Hidden costs
  - Human Resources
  - Investment in technology
  - Time

# e-Books at the University of the Witwatersrand

## New developments to consider

- Web-scale management services
  - OCLC
  - ProQuest SUMMON
- Cloud computing
- Movement away from multiple silos
- Focus on datasets with peripheral applications
- Integration of services

## Implications for the future

- Renaissance of the catalogue?
- Re-engineering of technical services departments
- Development of staff with good bibliographic skills
- Caveat: putting all your eggs in one basket

Thank you