A Report on the Survey of the eBooks and eLending in African Countries

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Background

The rise of eBooks and eLending in some regions such as north America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand libraries are facing a number of significant challenges in accessing eBook content and eLending to their users. Lack of access to content, varied pricing models, subscription licensing and privacy concerns are examples of the challenges faced by libraries. Whilst the situation in many parts of the world are well understood, the extent of eBooks, and eLending and the particular challenges for African libraries is less clear, particularly outside of academic libraries.

Africa is the world's second largest and second most populous continent. It is about 30.2 million km² (11.7 million sq mi) including adjacent islands. It covers six percent of the Earth's total surface area and 20.4 percent of the total land area. With 1.1 billion people as of 2013, it accounts for about 15% of the world's human population. The continent is surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, both the Suez Canal and the Red Sea along the Sinai Peninsula to the northeast, the Indian Ocean to the southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The continent includes Madagascar and various archipelagoes. It has 54 fully recognized sovereign states (UN Report, 2010).

Despite the fact that most countries in Africa are still developing, the adoption and use of information technologies are astoundingly on the increase in Africa. However, the question that comes to mind is, "does the growing interest in information technologies imply a growing interest in eBooks and eLending?" In continents like America, Australia and Europe where many countries are developed, the interest in eBooks and their relative use are higher than Africa and impressive. This is evident in several ways, but especially on production and proliferation of eBooks, sales, and eLending. It can also be argued that the sales of eBooks favourably compete with the sales of their print cousins in these continents. However, the amazing growth in interest and use of contemporary mobile technologies, social media and blogs notwithstanding, suffice it to say that eBooks and eLending are relatively in their nascent stage in Africa. Though, their future may be perceived to be bright, but may not be certain, as many Africans still find a comfort zone in prints, including those who have eReading devices.

Aim

In the light of the above, this survey aimed at establishing the status of eBooks and eLending in Africa – their availability and usage in particular. The focus was on public libraries and Library Associations' involvement in public libraries, in the context of development of eBooks and eLending.

Objectives

The survey was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish the position of public libraries in the provision of eBooks and eLending in Africa
2. To establish whether eBooks in public libraries are available and used on commonly available eReading devices
3. To establish whether libraries and library users are able to control the use of a user's personal information
4. To establish whether publishers and/or authors and/or resellers would need national legislation for the access of eBooks and eLending in Africa
5. To establish the challenges of eBooks and eLending in Africa
6. To propose strategies to IFLA for improving provision of eBooks and eLending in Africa

Methodology

The survey was administered to twenty five countries where contacts of either public libraries or library Associations or any other formal library organisation or group would be established. These included: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Republic of the Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Out of which only eleven fully participated in the online self administered survey. Ten did not participate but responded to the request and said they had no idea about eBooks and that they were not even aware they existed in their public libraries. A few (3) countries indicated that they were not comfortable with English language, the language for the survey.

The online self administered survey design was adopted and administered to the National Library Associations, public libraries, academic libraries and community libraries of the selected countries within Africa. Before the main research, the self administered questionnaire was piloted among five countries- Uganda, South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Kenya and Nigeria. Rigorousness and objectivity in gathering and analysis of data was adhered to. Results from the pilot assisted in confirming the reliability and validity of the responses from the main survey.

The Paton Data Analysis Model was applied. Findings are presented as per themes related to the survey.

Presentation of findings

The presentations of the findings were as per the themes of the survey.

Country name

Countries that participated in the survey included: Burundi, Botswana, Egypt, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania Uganda and Zimbabwe.
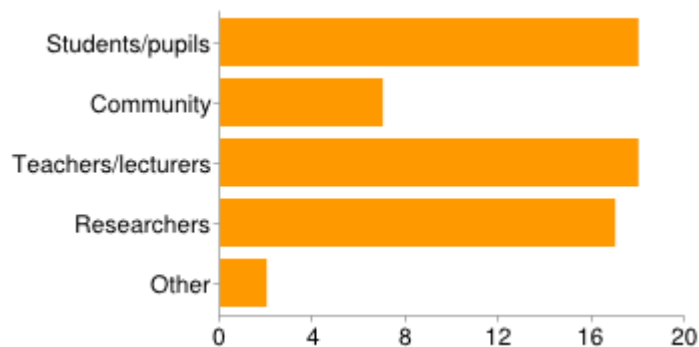
Kind of library

Both public and school libraries did not respond the questionnaires because they had no eBooks and consequently there was no eLending. The response from national libraries and research libraries was 1 (5%) each, we received sixteen responses (73%) from academic libraries, and two responses (9%). In the category of Others (9%) these include library associations and business people.

Over all observation is that eBooks and eLending are commonly found in institutions which have eBooks and eLending infrastructure.

When was your library established?

The establishment of the libraries that responded to the questionnaire ranged from 1922 to 2004. This implies that eBooks and eLending did not start at the same time in those institutions because the period of getting required facilities varied.

Who are the users of your library?

The users of the respective libraries included: students, community, teachers/lecturers, researchers and others. In the category of others there are business men, authors and publishers.
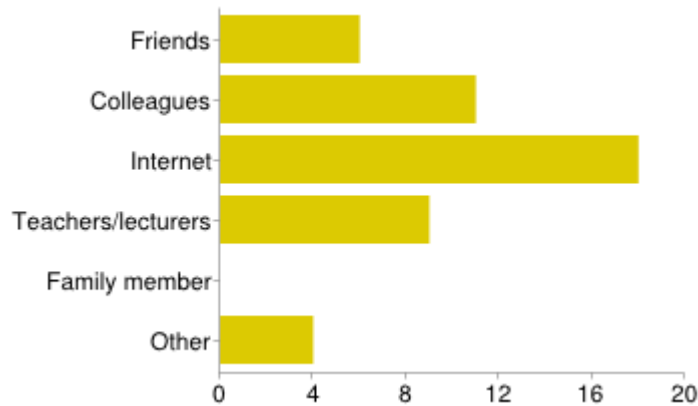
Are you aware of eBooks?

Yes 22 100%
No 0 0%

The response to this question showed that all users of all categories are aware of the concept eBooks. This implies that probably if the enabling environment is in place, the facility could be embraced.

How did you get to know about eBooks?

The response to this question shows that information related to eBooks and eLending originated from: friends, colleagues, the Internet, teachers/lecturers, and others people.
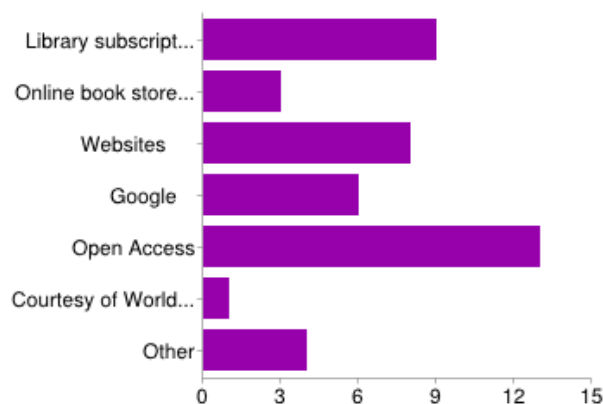
Are there eBooks in your library?

Yes 14 67%
No 7   33%

It was established that eBooks existed in 14 libraries (67%). And, it was also established that eBooks did not exist in seven libraries (33%) of those that responded. It could be concluded that eBooks and eLending are not yet available to all library institutions in Africa. The nil response rates from public libraries provide no data from which the extent of eBooks in African public libraries could be established.

What are the sources of eBooks in your library?

The responses above reveal that the sources of eBooks include: open access, library subscriptions, websites, Google, online book stores such as Amazon, itunes, and courtesy of world readers as illustrated below:

Are you accessing free eBooks or paid for eBooks?

The majority to this question (52%) indicated that they were accessing both paid for and free eBooks, those who access paid for eBooks only were 1 (5%), and those who access free eBooks were 9 (43%).

What has been your experience with eBooks?

The responses to this question reveal that the experience varied between different categories of users and the different information institution.

The respondents to the survey gave various experiences on eBooks and eLending. These included:

Cost:

1. They are expensive so they are still a few in public libraries
2. We do not have them as the library but individuals access free E-books from the Internet
3. Economically affordable as they allow multi access
4. Getting access to the paid for eBooks also limits access as it is a bit on the high side for institutions in developing countries.

User Experience:

1. Good because they allow multiple access
2. Very useful as they can be easily shared at same time, easy for travelling with.
3. Good for distance learners
4. Very convenient especially on mobile devices.

Content:

1. They are an alternative source of information.
2. Their content is also current.
3. Answers requests which are of "urgent status".

Infrastructure

1. Bandwidth limitations most of the time is an hindrance to access
2. it's ok with us since we have enough computers connected to the Internet and most of our students and lecturers own laptops, so accessing e-Books is not a problem
3. In the developing world, the speed of the Internet limits how much one can use e-books.
4. If not downloaded, access can be a challenge where Internet and other technical infrastructures are limited

Other:

There is limited multiple access to NetLibrary books

1. Purchase and delivery is very easy
2. The resources are very useful.
3. Exciting, Less space with surplus information sources
4. The internet world is changing rapidly, libraries have to adapt these changes in order to support & help the community they serve.

In what form would you like the library materials to be?

Electronic form such as eBooks	1	5%
Print form such as soft and hard cover books	1	5%
Both	20	91%

The majority of respondents (91%) suggest that library resources should be both in e-resource format as well as print format. Minority would prefer eBooks only or print form only.

Are your clients asking you to supply eBooks?

Yes	15	68%
No	7	32%

It was revealed that the majority (68%) of libraries have users that are requesting books in eBook format. This implies that there is already a demand for eBooks. However, a sizeable minority (32%) still do not as yet access eBooks.

If your answer to the question above is yes, please provide some information

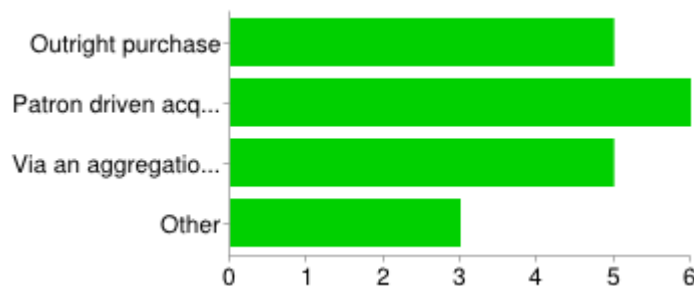Evidence of the interest in the use of eBooks is indicated in the statements below:

1. With eBooks, users can access them from anywhere, even their homes.
2. They want to access titles without having to be physically present in the library.
3. Students and staff have computers and tablets and they would be better served using eBooks
4. Clients have realised the abundance of information provided by eBooks and the tendency has been to demand both print and eBooks.
5. The young generation prefers eBooks

What models are used by your library for eLending?

Linear lending model - one loan at a time 3 17%

More than one loan at a time   7 39%

Other   8 44%

The survey revealed that multi faceted approach was used. Consequently, some institutions used linear lending model (17%), more than one loan at a time (39%) and majority 44% indicated unspecified models of eLending

How do you purchase/acquire eBooks?

The survey revealed the following purchasing methods: Outright purchase, via an aggregation services , patron driven acquisition and unspecified methods as indicated above.

Who provides eBooks for your library?

The responses from the survey indicate that eBooks are provided through the Internet, Subscribed Databases (HINARI, EBSCOHOST, etc). It also reveals that some download

free eBooks by publishers. Others indicated that they get eBooks through the Kenya Library Consortium and others indicated that they get them through the NetLibrary, the National University Commission, EBHOST, and Open Access Publishers.

Are the purchase terms friendly?

Yes 8 57%
No 6 43%

Majority (57%) indicated that the purchase terms are friendly where as 43% indicate that the purchase terms are not friendly. This implies that there is a need to improve the purchase terms of eBooks.

If your answer to the question above is "Yes", please provide some information. If "No", please explain what you think could be the practice

The responses below reveal that, there are still a lot of issues in Africa un resolved that rotate around eBook access, availability for multiple access, formats, purchase, and restrictions.
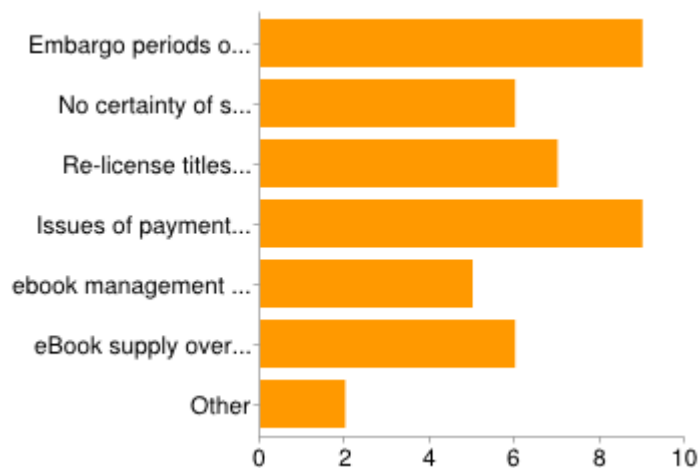1. Because subscriptions payment was timely, so was the agreement between us-friendly.
2. Combining resources reduces costs for individual institutions.
3. I would like to acquire all books such as eBooks and printed books we are looking from suppliers of eBooks. I do not expect the eBooks to be very expensive. I expect many alternative modes of payments that are friendly. There should not be any stringent measures attached, delivery of eBooks should prompt on payment.
4. I expect that when I have purchased an eBook title, I should own it without being under the limitations of credits. I also wish to have archival service for the eBooks.
5. The terms of purchase are not always clear. When is simultaneous access allowed for example? If we subscribe to a particular item is it outright purchase or otherwise?
6. Various methods of eBook access should be available and afforded. For example, using CD-ROM that contains eBook for children and only for use inside the public library.

How do the prices of eBooks compare to the price of printed books?

eBooks are less expensive   6   38%
Both prices are same   2   13%
eBooks are more expensive 6   38%
Other   2   13%

What could be the challenges of accessing eBooks in African libraries?

The responses to this question indicated that the major challenges of accessing eBooks in African libraries are mainly: the embargo periods on the availability of new release materials and the issues of payment per loan basis; other challenges included relicense titles after a certain period of loans for example 16 or 52 loans, un certainty of supply or withdrawal of publishers from supply of eBooks with no notice, eBook supply override exception and limitations rights provided to libraries such as copyright and fair use provisions and eBook management services by aggregators. There were other challenges that were un specified. These challenges could imply that access to eBooks in Africa is affected by numerous challenges as illustrated below:.

What could be the opportunities for accessing eBooks? e.g using self publishing aggregators such as Smashwords

On the question above, the responses are reproduced below:

- Self publishing is not the best. There is need for standard.
- Reducing the cost to serve many users at a time. The accessibility of books will be easier may be if we could acquire free eBooks.
- No idea we would be happy to work with such publishers provided they have reasonable pricing for African libraries where we have limited funding to promote eBook culture in the African countries and to focus on increasing the percentage of electronic publishing with the help of the sectors concerned with the book industry, especially with the emergence of many standards and open sources for e-book and perhaps the most important is EPUB (is a free and open e-book standard by the International Digital Publishing Forum).
- We need free websites that offer eBooks for free such as Nil Self publishing.

What reading devices are your clients using to read eBooks?

Read the eBook on their computer or laptop	17	57%
A specific e-reading device such as Kindle	3	10%
iPad	8	27%
Other	2	7%

This probably implies that computers and laptops are the commonly reading devices for eBooks in Africa and that that eBook reading devices such as kindle are yet to be popular in Africa.

How do you monitor and evaluate usage of eBooks in your library?

Monitoring and evaluation of eBooks usage in libraries leaves a lot to be desired.
Responses reveal that librarians ask patrons individually of their impression with eBooks usage. To others, statistics is provided from vendors of some databases and to others, monitoring is done by user authentication access. As per evaluation, this is normally by the number of titles, number of library users and how often titles are accessed. It was also observed by some libraries that usage statistics are very effective through library users evaluation forms and interactions with users/patrons.
While others indicated that, there is no monitoring in their library because the eBooks are still very few and the library depends mainly on free eBooks on the web which seem be under utilized as well.

Any other comments or information that you would like to share?

1. This term "eBooks" is not developed in our African Libraries because of the problem of access to the Internet.
2. I am sorry, I am not working in a library but I feel important to share my ideas about this subject. I am working in a Business Intelligence Department and I did studies in a Information Sciences School in Morocco. So you can use my answers for the questions I replied but I apologies for the other questions because I don't have any idea as I am not working in a library. This questionnaire is a good research work keep it up
3. E-Books have not been fully taken up because of complications in usage such as Bandwidth which is limited and so reading just a chapter takes ages
4. Prices should be very minimal to allow more institutions purchase eBooks.
5. Collaboration using WebPAC base Library Software
6. Most libraries in Egypt lack funding so we can't purchase eBooks and printed books at the same time, so we search for free opportunities, also the lack of Arabic eBooks is a problem because not all the Egyptian communities know how to read in English and most eBooks provided in English language!

Conclusions:

It could be concluded that eBooks in Africa are mainly in academic and research libraries. ICT Infrastructure is a barrier to eBooks acquisition and making them available to users. The cost of eBooks and lack of budget are also still challenges that are affecting their availability and use.

Way forward for IFLA:

❖ IFLA should continue to work with national associations and libraries in Africa to develop information literacy for public libraries in Africa to create a greater awareness of eBooks as an important element of library collections. IFLA should continue to work with national associations and libraries to lobby governments to:
  o Improve universal access to and use of computers and ICT infrastructure in public libraries to enable client access to eBooks and eLending.
  o vouchsafe public libraries authorities to develop ICT infrastructure so that access to eBooks and eLending is made easy

❖ Through the IFLA section on Education and Training, encourage a focus on eBook skills, capabilities and knowledge (based around the IFLA elending principles) for librarians to support e-learning techniques among the users thus ensuring an educated crop of professionals with the confidence in eBooks and related services to the users

❖ As part of IFLA's lobbying with publishers to highlight the importance of access to affordable eBooks in Africa

❖ IFLA should continue to support national library associations and national libraries in their advocacy to national governments to develop legislative frameworks which support local production of, and access to affordable eBooks and eLending for libraries across all sectors.

❖ IFLA should continue to support national library associations to sensitize the public and the community at large about the relevance and importance of using eBooks

❖ IFLA should continue to support national library associations, sections and libraries in their understanding of and implementation of eBooks and eLending principles in libraries in Africa with a particular emphasis on public libraries.

It is recognized that IFLA is already actively pursuing many of these strategies worldwide and in Africa.

Appendix: eBooks and eLending in African Countries - Questionnaire

Introduction
We are IFLA Associates working on e-books and e-lending initiatives in Africa.

eBooks and eLending may not be popular in Africa, even though millions of people have been using email over the years and are now engaging in daily conversations on popular social network sites like Facebook and Twitter. Many of these trends challenge our traditional philosophies and require us to rethink and balance our wish to meet the needs of our clients against the limited options available to us and those of our clients. We however understand that, some efforts have been made in some academic institutions to improve the state of eBooks and eLending in Africa. In many countries across the world, public libraries are beginning to provide eBooks to their clients.

IFLA has released the Principles for the Licensing/Purchase and Use of eBooks in Libraries to guide library professionals as they grapple with the complicated process of negotiating eBook licenses with publishers and resellers. The principles are reproduced below:

1. Libraries should be able to license and/or purchase all commercially available eBooks under a variety of terms and conditions dependent upon the nature of the work and the rights provided to libraries and their users such as:

- Number of simultaneous users
- The period of time the library has the right to make the eBook available.
- The option of outright purchase with permanent availability
- A limit on the total number of loans permitted
- Publication date and retail sales.

2. Given a mutual respect for copyright on the part of libraries and rights holders, any eBook licensing/purchase options offered to libraries must respect copyright limitations and exceptions available to libraries and their users in legislation including if applicable:

- The right to copy a portion of the work
- Reformat the work for preservation purposes if it is licensed or purchased for permanent access
- Provide an interlibrary loan copy
- Re-format a work to enable print disabled access

Libraries should have the right to bypass a technological protection measure for the purpose of exercising any non-infringing purposes.

3. eBooks available from libraries should be usable on all commonly available eReading devices.

4.   Libraries and library users must be able to control the use of a user's personal information including their library digital reading choices.

5.   When publishers and/or authors and/or resellers withhold library access to eBooks, national legislation should require such access under reasonable terms and conditions.

We would be glad if you provided us with your views on the state of the above subject in Africa. Your views will be used by IFLA- a global voice for librarians to inform the world about what is happening in Africa and also assist in advocating for eBook use and lobbying from publishers.

Yours truly,

Margaret Allen and Sarah Kaddu
 (IFLA Associates)

I. Background information

1. Country name ……………………………………………………………………

2. Kind   of   library   e.g.   public,   academic ……………………………………………..

3. When was it established……………………………………………………………

4. Who are the users of your library?..

II. eBook/e-Lending awareness

5. Are you aware of eBooks ? a) Yes   b) No   (Tick one)
6. How   did   you   get   to   know   about   eBooks?
    ……………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………………………………………………………………………
7. Are there eBooks in your library a) Yes   b) No

8. What are the sources of eBooks in your library a) library subscription   b) Online bookstores such as Amazon, iTunes c) Websites   d) Google   e) Open Access f) Courtesy of Worldreaders (an NGO that gives people in the developing world access to digital books. Using e-readers and mobile phones, they provide children and their families access to e-books, so they can improve their lives)

III. Content and Access
9. Are   you   accessing   free   eBooks   or   paid   for   eBooks?
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10. What has been your experience with eBooks?
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11. In what form would you like the library materials to be? E.g a) in electronic form such as eBooks   b) Print form such as soft and hard cover books   c) both a) and b)

12. Are your clients asking you to supply eBooks? If yes please provide some information on what they are requesting
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IV) e-lending issues

13. What models are used by your library for eLending? E.g linear lending model - one loan at a time
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V) Purchase issues

14. How do you purchase/acquire eBooks? (for example subscriptions, out right purchase, patron driven acquisition, via an aggregation service)
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15. Who provides eBooks for your library
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16. Are the purchase terms friendly? If yes, please explain
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17. If your response in 16 is No, what do you think could be the practice……………………………………………………………………………………

18. How do the prices of eBooks compare to the price of printed books (Are they the same, more expensive?)
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

VI) Challenges of access to eBooks

19. What could be the challenges of accessing eBooks in African libraries (Tick whichever applies)

    a. Embargo periods on the availability of new release material

    b. No certainty of supply/withdrawal of publishers from supply of eBooks with no notice

c. Re-license titles after a certain period of loans (For example 16 or 52 loans) Give an example a loan period for a relicense title)

d. Issues of payment per loan basis

e. Ebook management services by aggregators

f. e-book supply override exception and limitations rights provided to libraries e.g copyright and fair use provisions

g. Other-   please   explain
………………………………………………………………………….

20. What could be the opportunities for accessing eBooks? e.g using self publishing aggregators such as Smashwords
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21. What reading devices are your clients using to read eBooks? a) read the ebook on their computer or laptop b)a specific e reading device such as Kindle, c)ipad d) other
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22. Any other comments or information that you would like to share?
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23. How do you monitor and evaluate usage of eBooks in your library?
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