

## The Ten Commandments for the e-book publisher: suggestions for an *ideal offer*

Witnessing the abundance and variety of commercial offers, the French academic consortium Couperin wishes to put forward a series of guidelines destined for e-book publishers. These guidelines are based on the consortium's own recommendations and the observation of the best current practices. The following ten proposals aim to put together an "ideal offer" model in cooperation with publishers and information service providers.

### 1. Provide easier access to content

- a. By providing **stable URL** links
- b. By allowing **citing and referencing**
- c. By providing records in MARC and Learning Object Metadata [LOM](#) / [LOM-FR](#) formats to enable integration into **library catalogs** and **educational resources management systems**.
- d. By developing interoperability to these systems by allowing all protocols that are most commonly used in the world of information science: Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting ([OAI-PMH](#)), the Search/Retrieve via URL ([SRU/SRW](#)) and Search Retrieve [Web Services](#) protocols.
- e. By promoting better content identification that will facilitate access to e-books by patrons.

### 2. Integrate educational applications

- a. By allowing citing and referencing of e-books **in courses**, as well as in **bibliographies** developed with commercial or open source bibliographic management software.
- b. By allowing material to be extracted and **reorganised** for use in online courses and educational course packs.

### 3. Ensure preservation and access

Publishers should provide **long term access** for both collections and individual titles whether they have been bought outright or acquired through subscription. Publishers must provide solutions for archiving and continuing access, which may consist in the possibility for purchasers or subscribers to obtain back-up copies, in having copies deposited with trustworthy third parties (e.g. [ABES](#), [CINES](#), [BNF](#), [PORTICO](#)) and participation in preservation projects such as [LOCKSS](#) or [CLOKSS](#).

### 4. Offer content at budget-friendly prices

Prices should take into account the reality of current library budgets. At present, the model usually adopted is subscription to whole collections as well as the purchase of individual titles. In the case of a subscription to one or more collections, libraries should have freedom of choice (a variable-granularity approach to purchasing or subscribing) and the possibility to adjust offers to fit the size of the institution and the scope of its e-book policy.

### 5. Develop user centered services

In terms of user services, here are some recommendations that would benefit **library patrons**:

- a. Simultaneous access to more than one title, possibility to take notes.
- b. A high-performance search engine, offering full-text search
- c. Enhanced indexation, available in French, offering cross-references between works in the same field or works by the same author, etc.

- d. Allowing the pre-viewing of a few pages of an item on a temporary basis.
- e. Simultaneous access to an item by an extended group of people for the duration of an exercise or exam preparation.
- f. Access to online help and free training for users or librarians.

In terms of professional services, **librarians** and **e-book buyers** would like to:

- a. Be able to find the latest editions, and buy previous editions at lower prices.
- b. Consult a title before adding it to the collection.
- c. Add titles to the collection on a temporary basis (rent).
- d. Tailor user interfaces and services to the needs of specific users or communities of users.
- e. Benefit from free trials for specific or relevant collections.
- f. Access a hotline when facing technical problems and have access to technical documents for administrators.
- g. Keep patrons up to date with new arrivals by being able to provide customised auto-alerts by e-mail or RSS feeds.

## **6. Offer widest possible access to content**

- a. By promoting secure **remote access** for users by providing authorization options ([Shibboleth](#), standard proxy and reverse proxy)
- b. By providing voice synthesis to convert text into spoken audio, facilitating access for the blind and the partially sighted to a maximum number of texts and providing audio-versions of literary texts.

## **7. Publish latest editions**

Up to date publications are an essential component of **good editorial practice**. Libraries must be able to offer their patrons the latest editions and provide new titles as they appear, and may even want to offer titles in the process of being published.

## **8. Provide usage statistics**

As **evaluation** plays a crucial role in library policy decisions, it is essential that libraries be able to access detailed **usage reports and reliable statistics** that are [Counter-compliant](#). These statistics will help libraries identify new ways in which the resources are used.

## **9. Free up usage regulations**

In terms of **rules and regulations** it is important that:

- a. Texts offered should be **free of [DRM](#) (Digital Rights Management) restrictions**.
- b. Failing this, publishers should clearly **indicate DRM restrictions** and notify users of material and software requirements necessary to consult the documents they provide.
- c. Publishers should offer different on-screen **reading possibilities** and also allow downloading of content onto readers.
- d. It should be possible to print extracts or a text in its entirety.
- e. **ILL (interlibrary loan), printing and exporting** conditions should be clearly indicated.
- f. Titles may be chosen individually.
- g. Possibility of modifying subscription titles lists at any time, or at least once a year.

## **10. Innovate and collaborate**

As these new documents and technologies are ever-evolving, it would be of interest to all parties to **experiment new types of offers** with the possibility of modifying these if usage shows that they are not adapted. Here are some examples of innovative practices:

- a. Offer new economic models: progressive acquisition title devices taking into account updates, reductions in relation to the quantity acquired.
- b. Replacing DRM elements on downloaded documents by branding components with user's name and home institution.
- c. Streamlining hosting platforms with institutional logos, colours or icons showing subscriber details and thus reminding patrons the name of the financing body.