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The Challenges of eBook Purchasing and Public Libraries

We want to get you that popular title you want, when you want it. We want to provide our customers better service ? which means making the process as easy as possible. But libraries everywhere are facing huge challenges when it comes to ebooks and the publishing industry.

Here?s the current model:

- Pricing: Some publishers charge libraries up to five times more for an ebook than the print edition. For example, Justin Cronin?s bestseller The Twelvecosts $15.51 for the print edition, $9.99 for the ebook on Amazon and $84 for a library ebook.[1] This makes it hard for libraries with limited funds to purchase these bestsellers. It?s a huge strain on library budgets and frustrating for organizations trying to meet community needs.
- Availability*: There are some publishers who won?t even sell ebooks to libraries. This is changing little by little, but it makes even getting access to some of the biggest bestsellers very difficult. This is not an issue among all publishers. It?s the ?big 6? who will not sell to libraries under the same conditions they sell to the public. These publishers control 90 percent of the bestsellers.
- Non-ownership: When the library does buy an ebook, this does not mean that they own the content. It?s basically ?leased? to the library for a certain number of checkouts. This also means that we can?t move these ebooks to a different server, change the terms of checkout, or make them available on certain devices ? as much as we?d like to.
- Accessibility: Because of these restrictions, it?s not always easy to check out ebooks and audiobooks. There?s no one-click solution like there is with companies like Amazon. It?s why we have different platforms that each require different software and different apps.

We?re working with publishers, vendors and the library community to help find solutions. But what can you do?

- Contact leaders ? Find contact information for your elected officials and tell them you?re concerned about this issue.
- Read ebooks ? No matter where the book comes from or the format, one thing is for sure ? we love reading! Whether you checkout ebooks from Anythink or buy them from your favorite bookseller, reading ebooks is a great way to show that libraries and their customers can be great partners with publishers.
- Contact publishers ? Below is a list of publishers and their contact information. If you feel as

strongly as we do about this, let them know that their inequitable practices hurt our communities and constituents who depend on their public libraries for unrestricted access to information. [1]

SIMON & SCHUSTER
http://www.facebook.com/Simonandschuster
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Simon & Schuster
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
http://simonandschuster.com/about/contact_us

MACMILLAN
175 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010
646-307-5151
customerservice@mpsvirginia.com

HACHETTE BOOK GROUP
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Hachette Book Group
466 Lexington Ave., #131
New York, NY 10017

RANDOM HOUSE
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Random House, Inc. (Headquarters)
1745 Broadway
New York, NY 10019

HARPERCOLLINS
http://www.facebook.com/HarperCollins
@HarperCollins on Twitter

HarperCollins Publishers
10 East 53rd Street
New York, NY 10022

[1] From Urban Libraries Council one-page summary ?Libraries, Publishers and Public Access to Ebooks,?http://www.urbanlibraries.org/filebin/pdfs/EBooks_Summary.pdf

*Since this blog post was originally published, Penguin changed their practices and now offers titles available to library customers through OverDrive

. Macmillianrecently announced they will also be expanding their library offerings, and they now offer backlisted titles via OverDrive.

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