E-Book use by healthcare staff

HSLG VIRTUAL JOURNAL CLUB 23/05/2024

NICOLA O'SHEA

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN, CHI AT CRUMLIN

The Article

Gorring, H., Duffy, D., Forde, A., Irving, D., Morgan, K., & Nicholas, K. (2023).

How research into healthcare staff use and non-use of e-books led to planning a joint approach to e-book policy and practice across UK and Ireland healthcare libraries

Health information and libraries journal, 40(1), 114–119. https://doi.org/10.1111/hir.12469

Context

This research was conducted after the pandemic had brought issues around the provision of e-books to the fore.

There was an increased need for remote access amid restrictive licences and dramatic price increases.

Since 2020 the librarian-led #ebooksos campaign has been ongoing to make e-book access equitable and sustainable.

Research on the use of e-books in healthcare settings is limited.

Context

"The Five Nations group, (library leads in England, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Scotland and Wales) commissioned research into healthcare staff use and non-use of e-books to understand the behaviours, needs and expectations of healthcare staff and to identify shared challenges around e-books to inform policy and practice."

The user research agency **Lagom Strategy** conducted the research between April and June 2022.

Research Goals

To understand:

1. who the users of e-books are
2. what they are using e-books for
3. when and how they use them
   I. Platforms, tools, systems
   II. User needs and barriers

Participants

Both e-book users and non-e-book users in a variety of roles were recruited

Staff in training (e.g. students in university courses)

Clinical and non-clinical roles

Staff doing CPD / university courses

Staff delivering teaching

Research Activities

Qualitative Research

- 14 interviews across the 5 nations
- User needs workshop
- Used to generate 5 user personas and 24 user journey maps

Quantitative Research

- Validation survey with 321 responses (212 e-book users, 109 non-users)

Teaching

|						
What is the prompt or trigger?	Putting together a reading list for a HE module	Asked for help on a specific topic by a student	Teaching other staff members how to use e-books	Designing a short programme of learning for staff	Mentoring a member of staff	Giving a one-off upskilling session to staff
Your task or action	Compile a list of appropriate e-books to support teaching and learning	Find peer-reviewed info to answer student query	Support colleagues in utilising e-books	Download texts which support the programme of learning	Provide appropriate reading to further their knowledge	Find texts to read to support the development of the session
Your interaction with e-Books	Locate relevant texts to link to in the module guide	Locate answer to the query then copy and paste the relevant section of the book over to the student	Access Knowledge Network and make a short video showing how to navigate, search and get into an e-book	Save e-book chapters as a PDF so they can be easily shared with staff	Share link to relevant e-book with colleague	Knowledge Network search for appropriate texts to read an annotate
External factors e.g. other people or tools involved	Access the university e-book library alongside healthcare library services provision	Dependent on the time available to go through the log in system and locate the e-book	Staff may have a preference for paper texts	Ability to scan in chapters from a hardcopy	Ability to access the same information on a hardcopy	Location may impact access
Pain points	Desired texts may not be available on both platforms	Can't copy and paste from all e-books	Some staff may be resistant to moving away from hardcopies	Unable to download e-book desired	Unable to download e-book desired	Poor internet connection on train could make it problematic logging into Knowledge Network
Frequency e.g. how often?	Twice a year	Every few months	Occasionally	Every few months	Every few weeks	Occasionally

Findings

- Majority of e-book users access them for multiple purposes
- Only 20% choose e-books over print, 80% out of necessity
- Assumption that e-books are more up to date
- Increased need and reliance on e-books since the pandemic

Findings
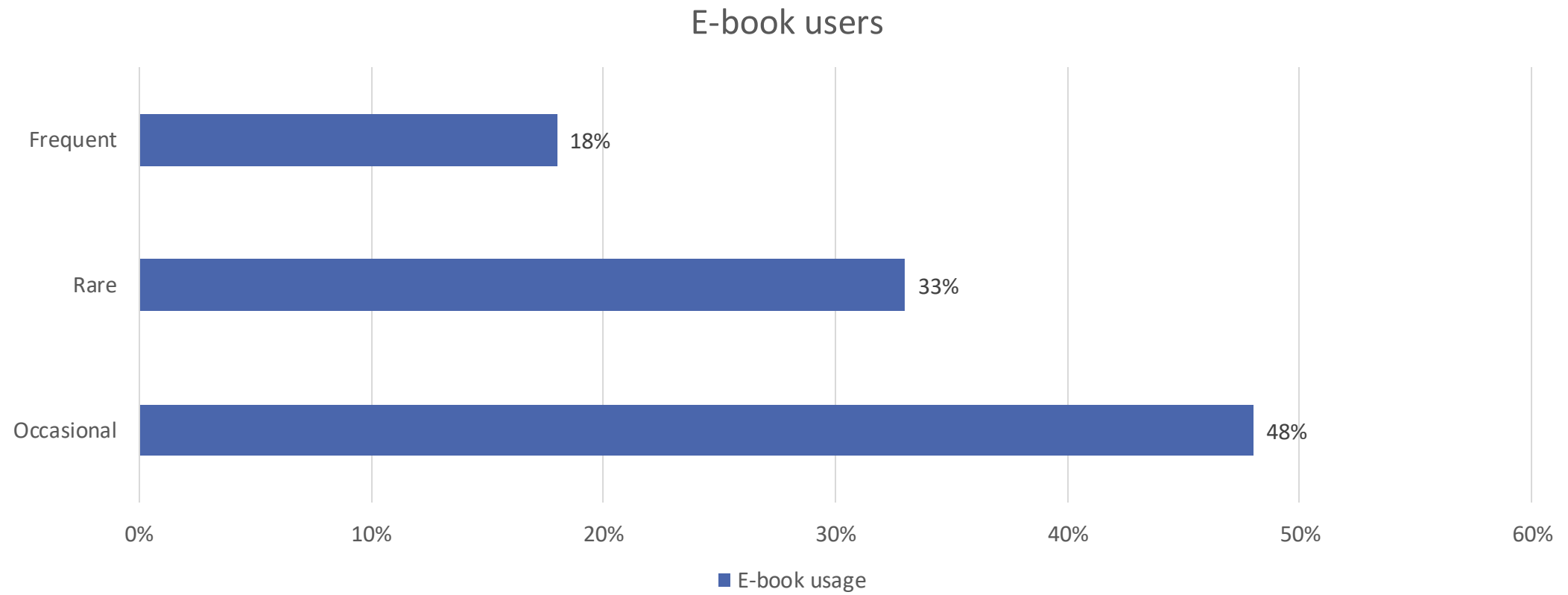
E-book users

Findings

- Low awareness / visibility of e-books impacts usage
- High level of user need for support from librarians
- No strong link between e-book use and access to physical library
- Limited interest in interactive content, pros and cons to the format

Actions

- Steps taken to increase visibility of e-books in collections
- Library staff events/workshops on promotion
- Creation of promotional materials
- Social media campaign
- Creation of information/training materials
- Integrating access routes into physical displays
- Future plans to share resources for promotion, training, guidance and user research

Implications for wider practice

Awareness and user confidence is key to maximising value and benefit

Library staff have a key role in promoting awareness and benefits

E-collections should be kept current and weeded as with print

Ease of access and simplicity is valued above elaborate features

My Library's (anecdotal) experience

- Some departments prefer e-books and are active in collection development
- Some cohorts (e.g. overseas nurses) are more comfortable using print books
- Our e-books are on several different platforms, can be confusing for users
- As well as purchasing e-books we also use a pay per view model to access a wider subject range
- Some e-books are no longer available to libraries so we rely on print (GOSH & Royal Marsden manuals)
- We have not done user research locally yet, but plan to!

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of e-book provision is in place in your institution, and has it changed in any way since 2020 as a result of pandemic/cyber attack/increasing costs?

2. The article found that users value support from librarians. Do you provide support or training materials specific to e-books?

3. Do you collect feedback from your users re e-books? Format preferences, barriers to access, purchase recommendations etc. Would this article encourage you to investigate your own users' experiences with e-books?

4. A number of actions resulted from the research to improve visibility, promotion, and training around e-books. Do you think they could be implemented to improve usage in your institution? Are you doing similar initiatives already?

5. Are e-books worth it?

Further Reading

Anderson Y, & McCauley C (2022) How the covid-19 pandemic accelerated an e-book crisis and the #ebooksos campaign for reform. *Insight*, 35, 13. https://doi.org/10.1629/uksg.586

Lagom Strategy (2022) *E-Books User Research: Health Education England*. https://library.hee.nhs.uk/binaries/content/assets/lks/resources/non-accessible/hee-library-and-knowledge-services-e-books--report-v3.0.pdf

Watson, E. M. (2021). A comparative study of medical eBook and print book prices. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, 38(1), 39–48. https://doi.org/10.1111/hir.12310 *

*Research conducted pre-pandemic, would be interesting to see current price ratios!