

The #ebookSOS campaign in Ireland

The empty library: The urgency of solutions to unsustainable eBook markets
Knowledge Rights 21 Webinar, 19th May 2022

#EmptyLibrary #ebookSOS

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Ebooks are great...

eBook Loans
(Monthly comparison 2019 - 2021)



.....but there are some serious problems with how they are currently provided (or not)...

- Availability: 10% of academic titles are available to universities in electronic format (2018 study from UK) . Public libraries face similar challenges. Serious implications for collection development!
- Price: If an ebook is available, it is almost always more expensive up to 20 times more! Often little to justify this price differential.
- Financial sustainability: Price rises are common, sudden and appear arbitrary. e.g. in late 2021 Pearson announced increases of up to 400/500%.
- Licencing: Licences confusing, restrictive and volatile
- New business models: Growth of the etextbook model— expensive, exclusionary, restricts interdisciplinary research, cross team use and is unsustainable.



The #ebookSOS campaign 1 of 2

- Inspired by colleagues in the UK and we continue to work closely with them
- Oct 2020 – cross-sectoral electronic content crisis statement
- Crowd-sourced examples – ebooks cost up to 20 times more and generally 3- 10 times more. Large international publishers charge the biggest differential.
- Briefed key personnel in our libraries, institutions, relevant government departments and the The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC)
- Online events and awareness raising

Some ebooks cost 20 times more than the print book equivalent with many ebooks costing between 3 and 10 times more.



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The #ebookSOS campaign 2 of 2

- July 2021 the campaign was central element of the launch of Knowledge Rights 21 (<https://www.knowledgerights21.org/>)
- August 2021 IFLA formally endorsed the campaign
- January 2022 Irish webinar with speakers from US, UK and Germany
- Developing international links with the UK, US, Germany and others
- Working with a broader coalition of senior library colleagues from across the sectors (public, academic and health) ahead of IFLA WLIC 2022 and beyond

Some ebooks move platforms and libraries can then lose access in a way that can't happen with print books. Libraries can also own books but not have access to them if platforms disappear.



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What is next?

- Broader more structured campaign – beyond start-up phase
- Work plan with key areas to include awareness raising, advocating for government/state action, EU action, support for alternatives including Controlled Digital Lending and Open Educational Resources, research
- Funding required to sustain and develop the campaign and maintain momentum - its not a sprint!



What can you do?

- Sign the UK campaign's letter at <https://academicebookinvestigation.org/>
- Gather data/examples to support your concerns
- Raise awareness locally, nationally and within appropriate organisations (library and non-library)
- Promote on social media using #ebooksos
- Get involved with colleagues internationally – today can be the start!
- Ní neart go cur le chéile - There is no strength without unity!





87th World Library and Information Congress
26-29 July 2022, Dublin, Ireland



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Useful links

- [Irish librarians call for action on the electronic content crisis facing libraries and library users](#)
- [UK crowd-sourced examples of ebook pricing](#)
- [Other UK #ebooksos resources including further reading logos, videos and a guide to publisher contracts](#)
- [The #ebooksos campaign in Ireland](#)
- [IFLA and Controlled Digital Lending](#)
- [Create and publish your own OER](#)



Thank You!/ Go raibh maith agaibh!

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