E-Book Survey 2014 Summary

About The Survey

A campus wide online survey was conducted in October 2014 for about 3 weeks (7th to 31st October). This is the third e-book survey done with the purpose of understanding users' preference and use of e-books, and whether some of these preferences have changed over time. Results from the survey will help the Library further develop the e-book collection.

Who Responded to the Survey

1,223 users answered to all questions in the survey of which 89.45% are students and 10.55% staff. Based on the ratio of undergraduate students to postgraduate students, more postgraduate students are represented in this survey compared to undergraduate students.

Nearly half the respondents are from the College of Engineering. The number of participants from Nanyang Business School is lower than the expected average while a large number of research staff from institutes and centres are represented in this survey.
Information on users’ preference and use of e-books, and their reading behaviour is gathered in this survey. Users who do not use or read e-books were filtered out. This group of 99 users was taken off the total 1,322 respondents.

Highlights of Survey Findings

Distinction is made between ‘read’ and ‘use’. The former refers to sequential and uninterrupted reading of text from a chapter while the latter refers to browsing, skimming of pages and reading of short passages.

E-book reading habits

Offline reading is preferred. Over half the users read e-book offline by downloading text to their personal notebook or devices. Majority of them do so because reading downloaded text from their personal notebook or devices is most convenient.

Very few users will actually read e-book from cover to cover. Most users (~50%) read at least 1 to 2 chapters from a title.

On the average, 51% of users spend 20 minutes to an hour reading e-books. Only 1.55% of users do not read from an e-copy but this percentage is smaller compared to earlier surveys.

Use of NTU libraries’ e-book collection

Over a third (38%) of users rarely or never read/use the library’s e-book collection. Roughly another third (35%) read/use the collection on a weekly or monthly basis.

60% of users use/read a title from the library’s e-book collection 2 months ago, and 19% 2 to 6 months ago.

The use of e-book collection for working on assignment or paper ranked highest. This is followed by using the collection to do a literature review for research, and to find specific and authoritative
information quickly. In general, NTU e-books are not used for general reading (58%) and many (41%) hardly tap on the collection to supplement their textbook reading.

**Print and electronic Book**

A higher number of users use/read NTU e-book collection compared to the print collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Use NTU Collection</th>
<th>Never Use NTU Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>77.92%</td>
<td>22.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Book</td>
<td>87.57%</td>
<td>12.43%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Given a choice where both print and e-copy of a book is available, close to one-third make do with either and another one-third browse the e-copy but read the print. A number of users (50%) chose to read the print although the e-copy is used for browsing. In contrast, 19.62% chose to read only e-copy.

Although a large number of users are using and reading e-books than before, these users do not necessarily read more e-books compared to print.
Changes over the past 2 to 5 years

Compared to 2012, the increase in users browsing and reading e-books during the past 12 months has accelerated. The rest of the results from 2014 do not vary drastically from 2012. Variation falls within the range of 5% while the general reading habits remain the same.

Over the past 5 years, reading from downloaded text of e-book is generally preferred. Users tend to spend 20 minutes to 1 hour reading an average of 2 chapters of an e-book.

Ownership of tablets saw the fastest growth during the last 2 years. Although every other user has a tablet, nearly 9 in every 10 users own a notebook or laptop, and 82% carry a smartphone.

Implications for NTU e-book collection development

Collection

Users have access to other print and e-book sources but rely on NTU e-book collection for their study and research work in the University. Providing a collection based on the curriculum and research areas remain a priority. More business, science and social science titles will be considered when building up the e-book collection.

The print collection will not be replaced by e-copy. A significant portion of users read the print as well as the e-book collection.

Accessing e-book

Since majority of users own a notebook, enabling the download of e-book is of priority when conveying to e-book providers of our users’ needs. Providers of e-books need to provide ease of reading, an easy and seamless process for users to read text from their mobile devices.