

E-Books Through Intranet: A Case Study of the Tamilnadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University Library

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Abstract

'Electronic book', a term coined by Van Dam of Brown University during the 1960s, is very popular today across the globe. The e-publishing phenomenon that began in the 1960s paved the way for the development of electronic versions of printed books which is known as e-Books. E-Book is nothing but a book in electronic form. We can download thousands of free e-Books from the Internet and nowadays, most of the world renowned Science, Technology and Medicine (STM) publishers provide perpetual access to the e-Books published by them under one time subscription basis.

Keywords: e-Books, HTML, e-Gateway, OPAC, Intranet

1. Introduction

'Electronic book', a term coined by Van Dam of Brown University during the 1960s, is very popular today. The e-publishing phenomenon that began in the 1960s paved the way for the development of electronic versions of printed books which is known as e-Books. E-Book is nothing but a book in electronic form. But, e-Book differs from a book in print as it requires some kind of electronic device to read. We can download thousands of free e-Books from the Internet. Nowadays, most of the world renowned Science, Technology and Medicine (STM) publishers provide perpetual access to the e-Books published by them under one time subscription basis.

2. E-Books

Though e-Books are now becoming very popular in developing countries, the development of e-Books began in the 1960s. Ardito (2000) recorded that the phrase 'electronic book' was coined by van

Dam at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island during the 1960s when working on early hypertext systems. According to whatis.techtarget.com, an eBook is an *electronic* version of a traditional print book that can be read by using a personal computer or by using an e-Book reader. A project to generate e-Books for printed works that were out of any copyright law restrictions within the US was started in 1971. Following this, a number of e-Book projects become popular.

Ever since publishers started to use early versions of design programs such as Quark Xpress in the early '90's, the potential has been there for "books" to be published as files rather than as physical objects which paved the way for mass production of e-Books across the globe.

Project Gutenberg, one of the renowned e-Book projects now provides free access to about 16,000 e-Books. More recently, Project Gutenberg of Australia (<http://gutenberg.net.au>) has been developed to provide access to e-Books which are in the public domain in Australia and/or of specific Australian interest. In the UK the Oxford Text



Archive was founded in 1976 to provide electronic texts for the research and teaching needs of the scholarly community (<http://ota.ahds.ac.uk/>).

2.1 Types of e-Books

Though e-Books are known as an electronic version of books, basically there are three types of e-Books available in the market. To understand ebooks better, it's useful to understand three important ways in which they differ one from another and from other computer media:

2.1.1 Simple e-Books (e-Texts) and Multimedia (Complex) e-Books

Those e-Books which have only e-text that too is not formatted, without illustrations and look like a manuscript, are known as simple e-Books. It is known as e-Texts by the Project Gutenberg people. They don't really consider these kinds of e-texts under the definition of e-Books. A real e-Book book should be interactive with added sounds, animations, a read-aloud capability and more. Most of these kinds of e-Books are coming in the form of CD-ROM and DVD. Some technocrats don't accept these kinds of e-Books as they call it as a form of software and not e-Books. But, actual e-Books should have text with illustrations and perhaps with features such as internal hyperlinks from the table of contents to chapters and to a particular page.

2.1.2 Open e-Books and closed e-Books

Those e-Books require a special device to read is known as closed e-Books. An e-Book which can be opened on personal computers, handhelds, and maybe even the latest cell phones are known as open e-Books. Closed e-Books are monopoly in nature

as they depend on the goals of the company that created the format. For example, Microsoft Reader does not work on Macintosh computers because Microsoft wants their Reader to work only on their software. But, Acrobat Reader works on Windows and Macintosh computers, because Adobe wants their software, which creates the e-Books, to be as widely used as possible. Nowadays, most of the e-Books are coming in PDF format which is very easy to open, read, download and store.

2.1.3 Secured e-Books and unsecured e-Books

An e-Book in a word-processing program which can be copied from one computer to another easily without any protection is known as an unsecured e-Book. The contents of unsecured e-Books can even be modified as per will and requirements. On the other hand, a secure e-Book file can be copied from one computer to another, but once it leaves the computer authorized to use it, it can not be opened and read successfully. Modification of the contents is also not possible in this case. So it is more secure and it is difficult to even copy a few lines of text out of the e-Book. So, a secure e-Book is less prone to copying than a print book, which can, after all, be photocopied easily. Though some publishers started publishing the texts in colours which will not help for photocopying, most of the books are coming in black and white which are prone for easy photocopying.

2.2 e-Book formats

Another important feature of e-Books is the format in which the e-Books are published. The Adobe e-Book Reader and Acrobat Reader which are now being combined into one is a widely e-Book format

across the globe. However, Microsoft Reader, Palm and Mobipocket are also playing considerable role in the e-Book industry.

3. E-Books In Tanuvas

Keeping in view the importance and benefits of e-Books, the Tamilnadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS), Chennai, started subscription of e-Books in the fields of veterinary and animal sciences during 2004. During the period, funding was given by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) under National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) for the modernisation and automation of libraries of State Agricultural Universities and ICAR Institutes across the country. Limited funding was also allotted for the procurement of e-Books. Using the grant of ICAR under NATP, we have initially

purchased 15 e-Books (Table-1) in the form of CD-ROM.

Since the books and e-Books in the field of veterinary and animal sciences are costly and the available titles were also very much limited, we have purchased only very important e-Books suggested by the subject matter specialists. But, the e-Books were widely used by the research scholars, faculty members and scientists of the University and it motivated the Library to procure more number of e-Books. In the meantime, due to the technological advancements, e-Books started coming online via web. So, during 2007, about 80 e-Books were subscribed from Wiley-InterScience at an estimated cost of Rs.3.00 lakhs by the Madras Veterinary College Library, the central library of TANUVAS. The budget was provided by the ICAR under its development grant for the library.

Table – 1: List of e-Books (CD-ROM Format) procured by TANUVAS

S.No.	Title	Author/Publisher	Year
1.	Canine Pyoderma: Diagnosis and Treatment	Halliwell & Lloyd	1998
2.	The Urinary System	Brown(P)	1998
3.	Animal Health and Production Compendium	CABI	2002
4.	Veterinary Board Review	Prat(P)	2001
5.	Investigation of Gluconeogenesis	Bradshaw (J)	1997
6.	The Individual Infertile Cow	Noakes (David)	1998
7.	Ageing of Horses	Knottenbelt (D)	1997
8.	Normal Canine Retina	Bedford (P)	1998
9.	Otitis in Dogs & Cats	Griffin (C.E) et al	1998
10.	Lameness in Dairy Cattle	Murray & Woldehiwet	1998
11.	Interactive Learning in Dermatology	Halliwell & Loyd	1998
12.	Veterinary Drug Handbook	Plumb	2002
13.	Organic Farming	CABI	2002
14.	New Zealand Veterinary Journal	Sci-Vet	2002
15.	Leishmaniasis	CABI	2000

Initially, the list of e-Books was made available on the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) (Fig. 1) of the Library which connects all the teaching campuses of the University. The list was provided with the web link to the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of the e-Book.



Figure. 1 Screen shot of OPAC of TANUVAS

But, the usage of the e-Books was very much limited and most of the library users were not well aware of the e-Book collection. The feedback received from the library users revealed that the list of e-Book available on the OPAC of the library was not user-friendly. So, it has been decided to design an electronic gateway to ensure easy access to the library users.

3.1 Design and Development of an e-Books Gateway

The e-Gateway had been designed using HTML to ensure easy access to the e-Books. For this, the Vendor of the e-books was requested to supply the URLs of all the e-Books. Then, all the e-Books subscribed by the Library had been alphabetically arranged title-wise and hyperlinks were established in the e-Book Gateway. After negotiations, WileyInterscience agreed to provide IP (Internet Protocol) based access to the Library which is consisting of two IPs *i.e.* one IP for the TANUVAS Intranet which is governed by ERNET

(202.141.29.83) and another IP for the Library Network with broadband access (61.11.74.176).

This facility provide access to all the computer terminals available in the Library as well as the department computers connected to the Local Area Network (LAN) of Madras Veterinary College, Chennai; Veterinary College and Research Institute, Namakkal; and Fisheries College and Research Institute, Thoothukudi; and the Research Units at University headquarters, Madhavaram, Chennai. The screen shot of the e-Books Gateway is depicted in Fig.2.

This e-Books Gateway of the Library enables the students, research scholars, faculty members and scientists of the TANUVAS to access, download and store the e-Books available at MVC Library.

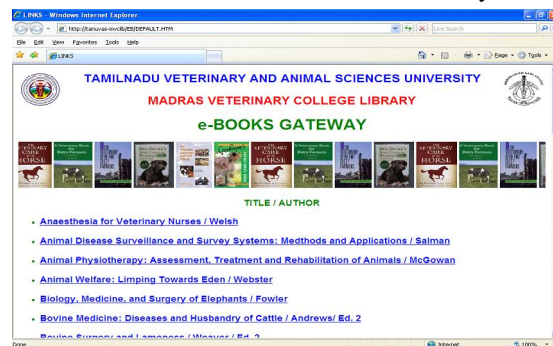


Figure. 2 Screen shot of e-Books Gateway

The user has just to click the title of his/her choice so that the e-Book will be opened on the screen. A sample screen shot is depicted in Fig.3.

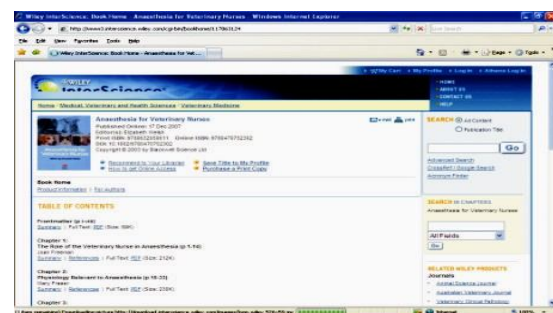


Figure. 3 Screen shot of a sample e-Book

4. Advantages of E-books

We at TANUVAS, the library users are showing much interest to use e-books because of the following advantages they offer over its print counterparts.

- ◆ 24/7/365 access ensures enhanced availability
- ◆ Multimedia resources (picture, video, audio)
- ◆ Availability via Intranet (all campuses)
- ◆ Real-time use and consultation (*e.g.* in classroom)
- ◆ Enhanced use by distant or disabled students, faculty and researchers
- ◆ Wider and faster distribution of contents
- ◆ Saving shelf space in the libraries
- ◆ Keyword searching
- ◆ Lightweight devices hold many texts *i.e.* hundred of e-Books and millions of pages of contents

5. Conclusion

Though e-Books were introduced in 2004 in TANUVAS, it motivated the students, research scholars, faculty members and scientists to optimum use of the resources. This boosts the library to procure more and more e-Books to cater to the information requirements of the library users. Now, we are in the process of establishing hyperlinks to free e-Books available in the discipline of veterinary and animal sciences across the Internet. To conclude, we can say without any hesitation that e-Books made available at TANUVAS are well received by the library users.

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