

eBooks: A Good Value? Part 2

Glenn McEowen

What is the *economic* value of having eBook services?

Recent discussions with eBook service providers, most notably Overdrive (overdrive.com), have given us some actual working costs. Typically, libraries work together in "consortiums" (in our case, a group of church libraries) to share the costs. They also share the "collection," a limited set of eBook titles selected by the consortium members.

The following example of costs comes from Overdrive's (overdrive.com) initial proposal for a trial church library consortium in Dallas, Texas in 2011. These prices may not reflect new contracts and should be used only as a reference.

- The annual cost includes both the Service and the cost of eBooks. 2/3 of the cost will be used to purchase eBook titles.
- Annual costs are based on the church membership as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| ✓ 0 - 1,000 | \$ 750 |
| ✓ 1,001 - 3,000 | \$1,500 |
| ✓ 3,001 - 6,000 | \$3,000 |
| ✓ 6,001 - 10,000 | \$4,500 |
| ✓ 10,001 - 20,000 | \$6,000 |
| ✓ 20,000+ | \$9,000 |
- To create a consortium, a starting target of \$20,000 is required. The number of participating churches is not limited.

The annual cost must, of course, cover the eBooks service: web pages, encryption and authentication, download functions, publisher contracts...very real costs to making this service available. But the annual cost also includes two-thirds of the fee dedicated to purchasing eBook titles. Depending on the consortium size this fee will mean a first year collection of 700-800 titles. If your library is paying \$3,000 (annual cost for a 6,000 member church), this will come out to around \$2-\$4 per title. That price works out even better for smaller churches. Wow!

When the cost makes economic sense and the ministry is so enhanced, we can conclude that the eBooks will be a great value to our congregation.

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* The term *eBooks* includes not only electronic text but audio books.

This article is part of a series on ebooks on the [Church Librarians Network](#).