

eBooks: Affordable?

Glenn McEowen

How can we afford ebooks*?

Here is where we librarians need to be really creative. First, consider Overdrive's pricing for churches in the article ["eBooks: A Good Value? Part 2"](#). The pricing is based on church membership. Don't you wish we hadn't "stretched" the numbers? Now we have a known cost to consider.

With the cost in mind, consider the following ideas for dealing with the cost of providing ebooks through your library.

- The addition of eBooks to your library is a major change in ministry. This addition needs appropriate funding. Your church staff and budget committee need to catch the vision of what the library ministry is attempting to do. It's not your grandma's library...anyhow, grandma is already reading a Kindle!**
- One way to fund this ministry expansion is through a partial budget (½ of the funds come from the church budget; the other ½ to come from other sources such as grants or designated giving.)
- As you meet with the budget committee, present the numbers as two items, for example, a \$3,000 cost could be described as, "We need \$1,000 for the service and want to purchase \$2,000 worth of eBooks."
- Think outside the box. The traditional church library has always been free. While we expect it to remain so, it is okay to consider other support options. No one thinks twice about charging for a marriage seminar or Upward Basketball.
 - ✓ Fee-based service: charge an annual fee to use eBooks
 - ✓ Fund-raising projects: Books sale, bake sale, car-wash
- Donations: Sunday school classes and other groups in your church families or individuals might want to attach their names to this progressive ministry.

So, are eBooks affordable? The question is not easily answered. Each church library will have to face this challenge in its own way. But what an investment! ...one that ministers in ways we may not quite realize and have yet to discover.

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

**Grandma is already reading a Kindle...and why wouldn't she?

- Font size is adjustable allowing her to increase the size for her limited eyesight.
- Lighter weight than a book, especially a large-print book.
- Much cheaper than a large-print book
- Lighting is better (especially on the back-lit models) so she can see to read even in a poorly lit room.
- The page turns are much easier for her arthritic hands.
- She doesn't have to get out in the cold or heat and drive to the library to get another book. She can download it at home.

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