



THE SWEDISH SCHOOL OF LIBRARY  
AND INFORMATION SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF BORÅS

# Is a balance necessary? E-books lending and sales in Sweden

Copenhagen, 2016  
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# Outline

- The e-book debate in Sweden
- Changing relationships or old controversies brought back?
- E-book lending through public libraries: effect on the Swedish book market
- Threats and opportunities

# E-book issues in Swedish media 2013-2015

Topic	Number of items
Future of the book and the e-book	8
Technology and design of e-books	10
General policy issues (freedom of press, general copyright, other laws)	7
Market issues (market reviews, publishers' strategy, pricing, VAT)	8
Digital reading (including e-books for children)	13
E-books and digital learning material	6
Authors and e-books	5
Booksellers (Amazon and subscription services)	11
E-books in academic libraries	2
E-books in public libraries	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93</b>

# Media about e-books in public libraries

Who?

Librarians, policy makers, authors, a party leader

Says what?

Collaboration between libraries and publishers, Publit and Ordfront (6), conditions of e-book usage in public libraries (5), solutions for libraries (5) library policy (4), Scandinavia (3)

Which channel?

Biblioteksbladet (10), SQL (2), Nya Argus (2), DN (2), Ordfront magazin, Dagens samhälle, BIS, Expressen, SvD, Avista, Svensk Bokhandel (one in each)

To whom?

Librarians, library leaders, policy makers, wider society

Can history help? (1849 debate prior to the 1850 public library act) – a question from the Chairman

- Do you not think that that course subjects publishers to great injustice: The members... have the privilege of using the author's book without any compensation for it, either to the author or to the publisher? If you were an author yourself, should not you think that injustice was done to you by having your books circulated gratuitously?

## Response by J.J. Smith formerly librarian of Caius College, Cambridge

- That is one of the great uses of a public library, that you may be able to read books without the expense of buying. Many of those who use them could not buy... It cuts both ways: it brings a book into notice; it is a sort of advertisement, which the book would not otherwise have. I imagine that if public libraries were increased in number, authors and publishers would derive great benefit, because the numbers of copies sold would be much greater and the number of readers generally much increased.

# E-book lending in Sweden public libraries (2014)

- Total loans: 77 426 570
- Physical book loans: 53 581 885
- E-book loans: 1 600 910

That is: e-book loans consist 2.06% of total loans and 3% of physical book loans.

# Proportion of borrowed to sold

In 2015, e-books were 33% of the published titles and 2% of sales (in SEK)

- Sold number of physical books: 16 476 000  
3,5 borrowed books to 1 sold
- Sold number of e-books: 235 000  
6,8 borrowed e-books to 1 sold

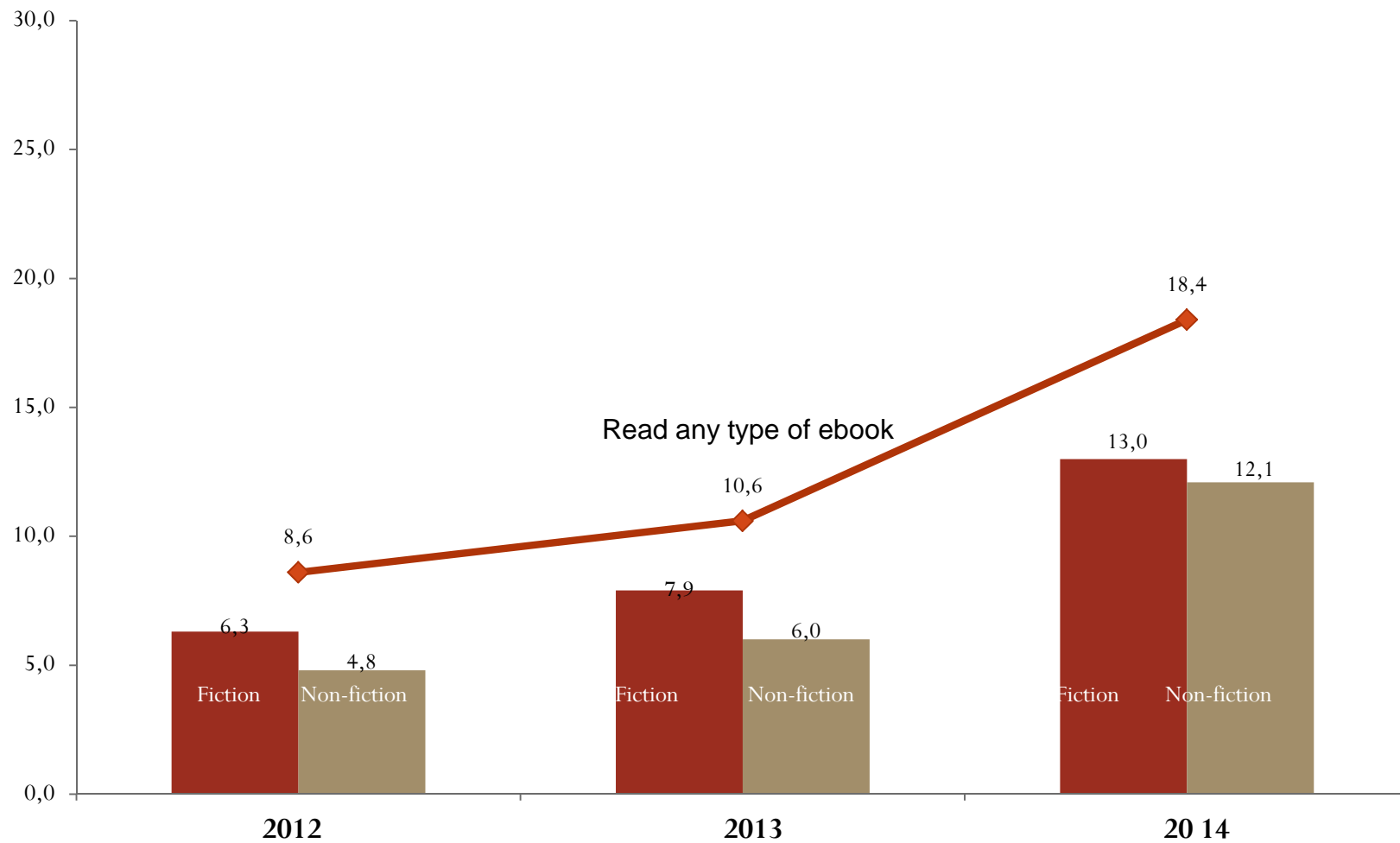


# Relations between e-book sales and prices

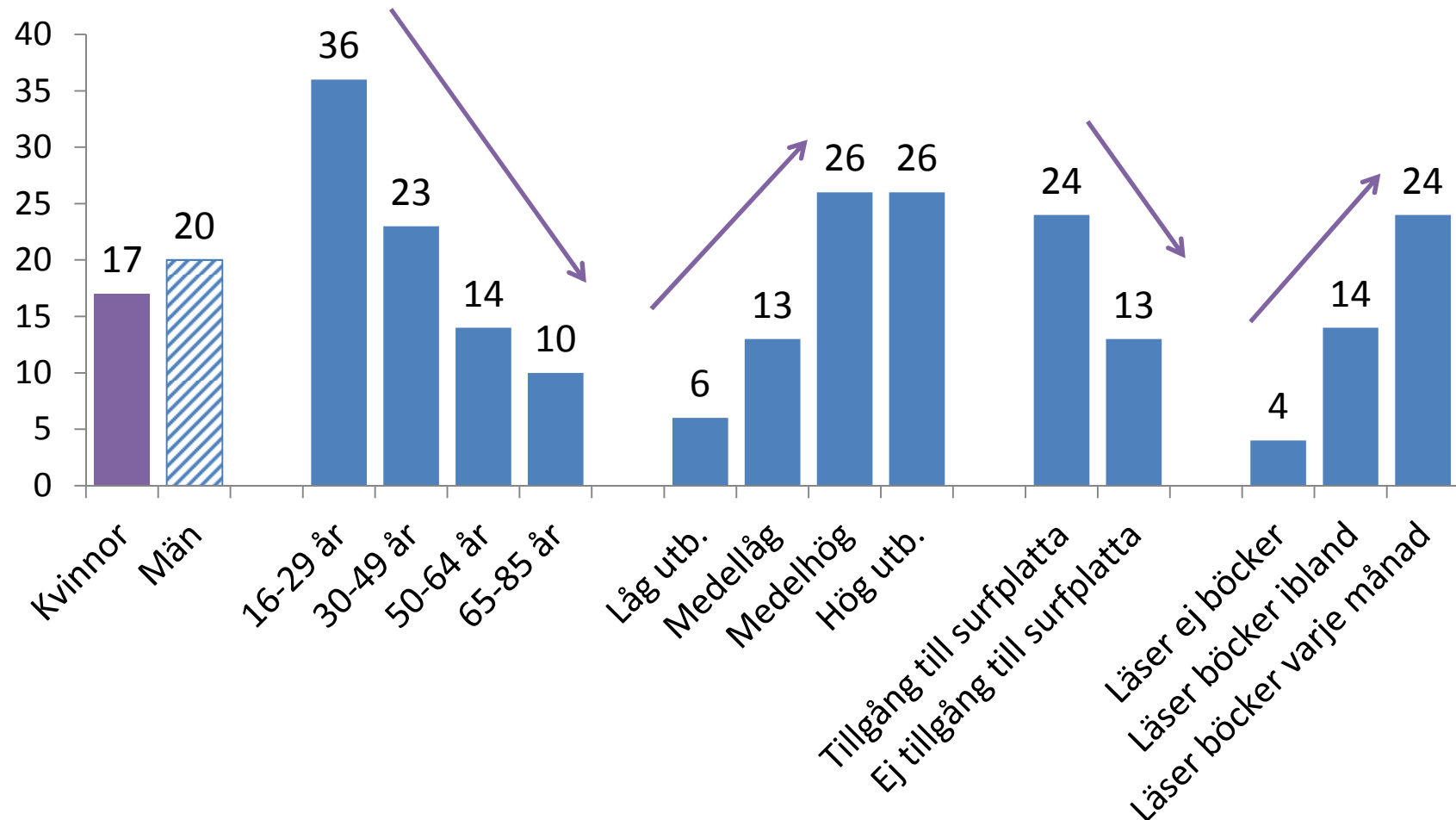
	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Change</b>
E-book sales (TSEK)	7764	11917	+53,5%
E-book item sales	90	201	+123,3%
E-book price (SEK)	86*	59*	-31,3%
	<b>2013.01.01-09.31</b>	<b>2014.01.01-09.31</b>	<b>Change</b>
E-book sales (TSEK)	7963	6437	-19,2%
E-book item sales	150	98	-34,6%
E-book price (SEK)	53*	66*	+23,6%

**Note:** price does not include the VAT, which for e-books is 25% (6% for printed books).

## Reading of fiction and non-fiction as ebooks 2012-2014 (percent)



## Reading of e-books in different groups during the last 12 months (percent)



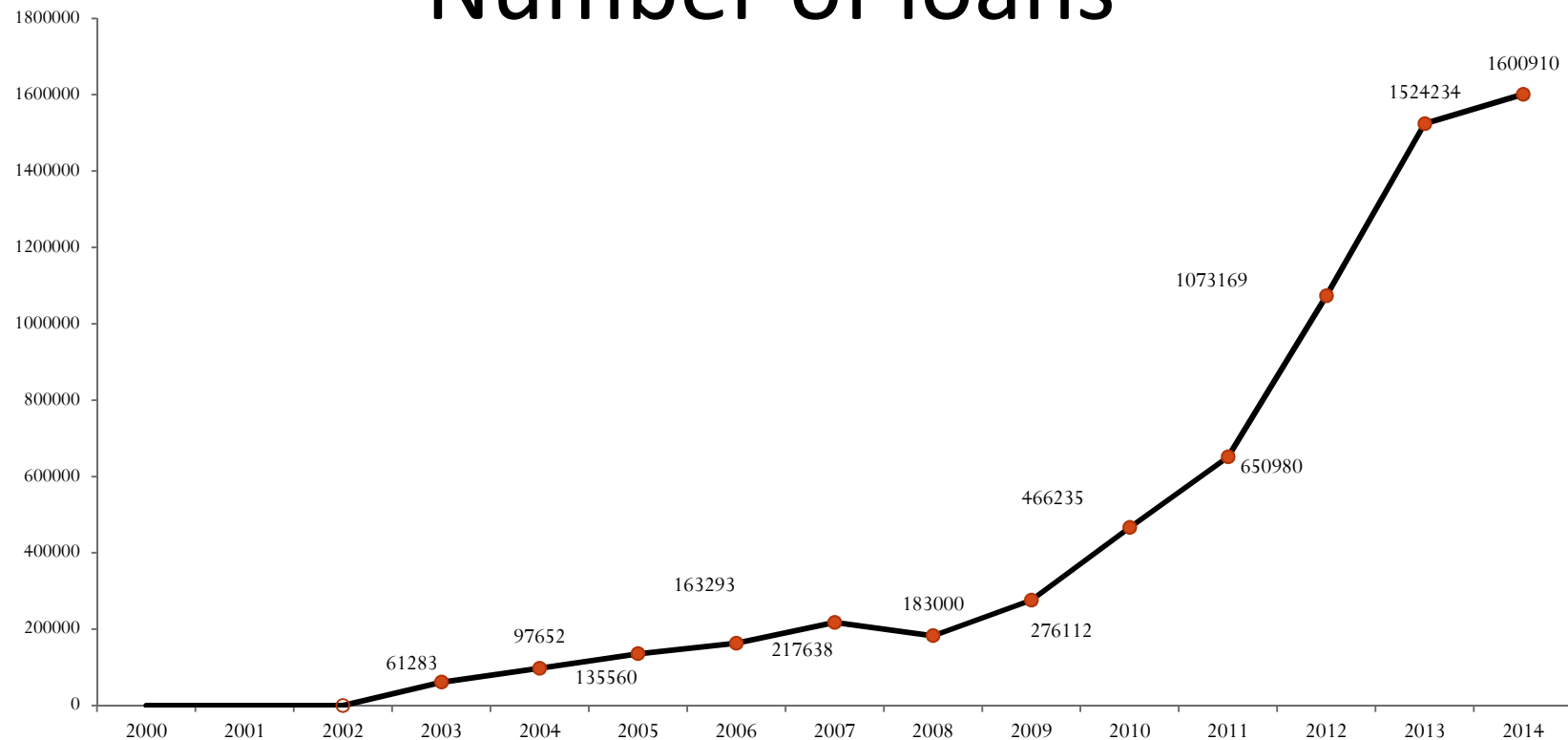
# Relationships between reading of printed books and e-books, 2014

(base: all answers 1551 =100 percent)

		Read printed book	
		At least some time during the last 12 months	Not during the last 12 months
Read e-book	At least some time during the last 12 months	18	1
	Not during the last 12 months	66	15

# E-book lending in Swedish public libraries 2000-2014.

## Number of loans



Source: Royal library, public library statistics, June 2015. [www.kb.se](http://www.kb.se)



## Case study library

### Change as a result of removing cost limits on library loans

Month	Total loans of titles	% increase	Total cost SEK	% increase
December 2014	512	-	13,093	-
January 2015	1 574	207%	40,303	208%
February 2015	1 670	6%	48,109	19%
March 2015	2 102	26%	55,799	16%

# The impact of e-book lending on sales

- 893 front-list titles,
- 4 library authorities (urban, rural)
- Attracted 4% of active borrowers
- Less than 5% of fiction borrowing
- E-book borrowers were wealthier than other users
- 95% wanted more titles
- E-book borrowers bought more e-books than other library readers
- Few used to click buy button
- 39% were less likely to visit bookshop and 37% less likely to buy paper books in the future

# Effect of piracy on book sales

- Group of Research in Applied Economics, University of Warsaw
- Project iPiracy in Poland
- A year-long controlled large-scale field experiment
- Half of the book titles received experimental treatment, in which a specialized agency would immediately remove any unauthorized copy appearing on the Internet
- Removal of unauthorized copies was an effective method of curbing piracy, but this had no bearing on legal sales.



# Who likes and who dislikes library e-book lending as it is?

## **Like**

- Small and medium publishers
- Small but growing proportion of library users

## **Rather dislike**

- Big authors
- Big publishers
- Librarians
- Subscription services

# Biggest threats

Fear

Force of habit

Over-generalisation

Unrealistic expectations

# Irrationality

No demand, no marketing, no use

No experience, no will, no income

Low demand, big expenditure, persistence

Sacred but malleable and illogical

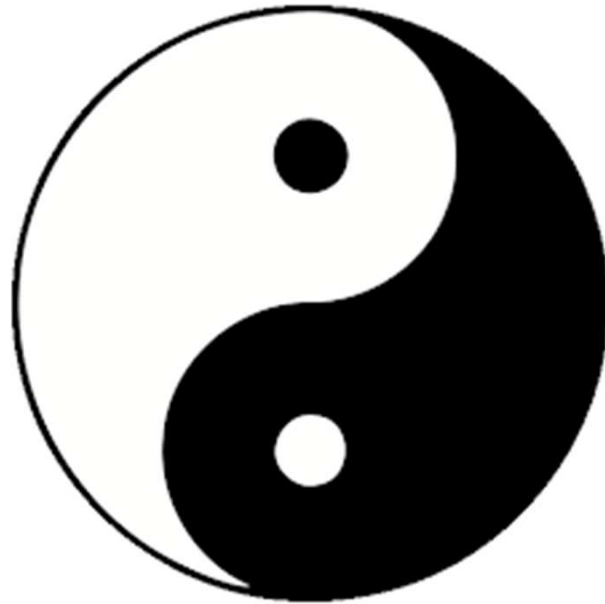
# Biggest opportunities

Ideological oppositions

Digital nature

Users

In balance



# Read more

- [Ebooksproject.wordpress.com](http://Ebooksproject.wordpress.com)
- Flipboard magazine "News on e-books"