e-lending in Europe
policies, models, experiences

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e-lending in the Netherlands

One-copy-multiple-users

• national portal public libraries (PLs) start Jan 2014
• PLs: 2.3 mio youth members, 1.5 mio adults
• portal: 285k registered accounts
• 300-400k monthly visits
• 2015: 130k users out of 235k borrowed 1+ e-books
• monthly borrowers: ~20% of total
• currently >11.5k titles (~25% of digitally available titles)
• + Holiday Library app (open during holidays for everyone)
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# of new accounts created
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black: # of accounts checking out 1+ books
orange: % of active borrowers
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# of visits with at least 1 (page on) e-book(s) consulted
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# of e-books checked out per month since start portal

**physical books:**
- 2013 77.7 mio
- 2014 72.4 mio
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device/app on which checked-out e-books are read
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Aantal uitleningen per categorie (maart 2016)

- Romans: 182,736
- Informatief: 16,959
- Spanning: 58,490
- Jeugd & Jongeren: 27,467
- Poesie: 381
- Overig: 726

Graph showing the distribution of categories:
- Romans: 60%
- Informatief: 30%
- Spanning: 10%
- Jeugd & Jongeren: 5%
- Poesie: 2%
- Overig: 1%

Additional notes:
- literary novels
- informative
- thrillers
- youth
- poetry
- other
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the development of e-books in the Dutch language area (Q1 2016)

sales

sales\(^1\)

quarterly

sales

 loans
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Loans have little or no negative influence on sales

A top-25 loaned book is on average 3 years old, a top-25 sold book more than 1 year

In numbers, the top-100 sales is twice as big as the top-100 loans

For both sales and loans the large numbers come from the long tail

‘months’: # of months since 1st publication
graph: Top-25 loans & Top-25 sales
e-lending models in public libraries

Civic Agenda report Dec 2014

• commissioned by Bibliotheek.nl and Bibnet Flanders, with support from Dutch Language Union
• conducted by Dan Mount | Civic Agenda, March-October 2014 with advice and additional analysis by myself
• download pdf
Method

- identification of key respondents in the various countries
- construction of web survey asking respondents details about the models
- follow-up contacts to complement and refine responses from web survey
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- **policy** factors (govt policy, legislation, subsidies)
- **cultural** factors (language minorities; acceptance of membership payment)
- **scope** (national, regional, local; target groups)
- **collection** characteristics (size, scope & composition)
- **financial** characteristics (budget; revenue streams)
- **friction** strategies (1 copy 1 user, windowing, etc.)
- **technical** specifications (infrastructure; delivery/discovery mechanisms)
- **user** experience
e-lending models in public libraries

Key results

• survey of 19 models in 16 countries (2 in NL, NO, US)
• heterogeneous landscape: almost every model is unique in its composition;
• # of titles available for e-lending varies widely – from a few hundreds to 160k
• policy framework is key in ‘understanding’ models (e.g. whether or not end users have to pay at all)
e-lending models in public libraries

% of commercially available titles for e-lending

- DE (divibib): 160,000 titles, 80% availability
- SI: 500 titles, 80% availability
- EE: 922 titles, 46% availability
- DK: 4,500 titles, 35% availability
- NL: 7,000 titles, 23% availability
- SE (Stockholm Public Library): 11,000 titles, 16% availability
- CZ: 1,200 titles, 13% availability
- NO (Arts Council Pilot): 400 titles, 11% availability
- FR (PNB): 9,000 titles, 7% availability
- ES (eBiblio): 1,400 titles, 3% availability
- UK (Wales): 12,000 titles, 1% availability
e-lending models in public libraries
e-lending models in public libraries

Observations

• E-book lending models developed in a complex interplay of actors and their respective interests
• Varying economic, policy, socio-cultural and technological contexts make it not very likely that eventually a one-size-fits-all model will emerge
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Policy differences: example France/Netherlands

• France:
  – govt wants all stakeholders on board: authors, publishers, booksellers, libraries, readers
  – compromise between all parties in order to protect cultural production

• Netherlands:
  – national govt has legal duty to maintain a national e-lending platform (national library carries out this task)
  – subsidizes purchasing of licences
  – is more on the side of libraries in this respect
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Four types of models
1. Unlimited use, one-copy-multiple-users
2. Title-by-title-licensing, streaming models
3. Download models
4. Abundance models
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Cross-border/diaspora: Estonia

• Public Library of Tallinn purchases licenses for Estonians living abroad
• These expats can access Estonian e-books through streaming over the Tallinn library’s platform
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Cross-border/language community: Slovenia-Croatia-Italy

• Italian speaking community in Istrian peninsula (Slovenia & Croatia)
• cross-border co-operation project between libraries in the region
• Italian-speaking Istrians can borrow Italian e-books
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Multiple formats: Prague municipal library

• policy: offer all titles (End 2015: 586) in ePub, pdf, html, PRC, other formats

• maximum accessibility of mostly classical Czech literature
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Future e-lending policies

• artificial friction strategies (like one-copy-one-user) at odds with library principles, but may have their benefits from a public service point of view: greater share of titles available

• multi-track, multi-stage strategy: accept that transition to true digital models might take longer than necessary
thank you!

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