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See Spot Run: eBooks and law firms

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Amazon reported that eBooks outsold hard copy in 2010. Developments in technologies of mobile and other reading devices and apps will ensure that eBooks continue to be a contender for the publication of printed material.

Discussion around lending rights, digital rights management, copyright, market share, platforms and piracy rages in eBook forums, blogs, papers, conferences, publishing houses, libraries and governments across the world. In Australia, the Book Industry Strategy Group (BISG) Final Report makes a recommendation around lending rights for eBooks, pointing out that only 29 governments have a lending rights scheme in place, and none cover eBooks.





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Corporate law firm libraries face unique information usage issues and the advent of eBooks has added an additional layer of complexity. Users of legal eBooks require navigation functionality, bookmarking, indexes, versioning and have unique copyright and citation requirements. Law firm libraries need to take into account lending rights, confidentiality, ownership, text malleability, quality of indexing and archiving to plan for historical research into the future. They also face unique space constraints and need to accommodate requirements of the courts.

eBooks have been launched in the legal industry in Australia by CCH, LexisNexis and Thomson but none have come up with a workable distribution model.





Drawing on examples of how a law firm uses information, lessons from our eBook trials and a current Collection Development Project to envision what a collection will need to consist of into the future, this paper will explore what a corporate law firm library needs to consider to be able to purchase eBooks for their firm, and present a possible distribution model.

