Media Takes Note of E-Book Lending Issue in 2012

Over the past year, as the American Library Association’s (ALA) Digital Content & Libraries Working Group (DCWG) has made strides to advocate for equitable access to e-books and digital content for libraries, media outlets have profiled the ever-evolving subject in newspapers, magazines, blogs and trade papers nationwide.

As the face of ALA, President Maureen Sullivan was quoted on the e-book issue in a wide range of media outlets, including Digital Book World and Forbes magazine. Additionally, DCWG members Bob Wolven and Sari Feldman served as public advocates for fair library lending practices in national outlets, including the Philadelphia Inquirer.

DCWG activities—which include the development of a number of resources about e-books, including the report “Ebook Business Models for Public Libraries,” a digital rights management “Tip Sheet,” and two American Libraries digital supplements—have received media coverage by a number of major media outlets, including MSN, PC World, the New York Daily News and Education Week. The DCWG received a considerable amount of public attention after Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries at Oregon’s Multnomah County Library and Carrie Russell (director of the ALA Office of Information Technology’s (OITP) Program for Public Access to Information), appeared on The Diane Rehm Show in August. The e-book issue was later covered in a story on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” program.

Much of the DCWG’s efforts to advocate for fair library access to e-books has been profiled in publishing and library trade publications. Publishers Weekly, the leading publication for publishing industry news, has covered nearly all ALA news regarding e-books and library lending practices, including the ALA denouncement of the Hachette e-book price increase and the release of the ALA E-book Media and Communications Toolkit. In one article, Publishers Weekly spoke directly with ALA Executive Director Keith Fiels about e-books. Additionally, American Libraries and Library Journal have published articles about the issue. ALA OITP and the DCWG recently were invited and have begun blogging for Digital Book World.

Local outlets also are increasingly paying attention to the affect that publisher e-book lending practices are having on local libraries in their coverage areas. In April, the Ventura County Star quoted Russell in the article “Volume Rising in E-Books Dispute: Libraries and Publishers Clash Over Purchasing Publications.” The Atlanta Journal-Constitution also highlighted the e-book issue in the article “Grasping the e-book Era.”

OITP and the DCWG expect that local coverage of the e-book issue will increase in the form of news articles, op-eds, editorials and radio public service announcements in the next coming months, thanks to the release of the ALA E-book Media & Communications Toolkit. The toolkit is made up of a set of materials that will support librarians in taking action in their communities.

View the full media report here.