

E-book Terminology & Definitions

Adobe Digital Editions: Software used for viewing and managing downloaded e-books and other digital publications.

Adobe Reader: Software that reads and displays PDF files.

Aggregator: Aggregators license content from a range of information sources and then, in turn, supply that content to the library market. Examples: EBSCO, ProQuest, and Overdrive.

Application (or app): Programs or software, designed to perform a specific function that run in your browser or on your smartphone.

Authentication: Process used to determine a user or computer's identity. Providing your barcode and PIN when you log into a library database is a form of authentication. Remote authentication allows users to access your subscription databases, e-books, etc. from locations outside the library.

Born digital: Materials that originate in digital form (in contrast to digitized versions of print material).

Calibre: Resource for converting e-books from one format to another.

Cloud: Broadly, the servers that make up the Internet. Files or documents (such as your Gmail messages) stored in "the cloud" are on an external server, instead of "locally" on your smartphone or computer hard drive.

Competency: The knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes needed to perform a job.

Download: Transferring files from a remote computer to your computer.

DRM (digital rights management): System designed to prevent the unauthorized use or duplication of digital material that is covered by copyright.

E-ink (electronic ink): Technology in an e-reader display that mimics the appearance of ink on a printed page. E-ink screens are easy to read outdoors in the bright sunlight, cause less eye strain, and use less power than LCD displays.

E-reader (electronic reader): Handheld device designed specifically for storing and reading digital books, magazines, newspapers, etc. Smartphones and PDAs (personal digital assistants) can also serve as e-readers. Examples of dedicated e-readers: the Nook, Kindle, and Sony Reader.

E-book (electronic books): A digital version of a book that can be downloaded to and/or read on your computer, smartphone, or e-reader. Can include text, images, and interactive multimedia.

Epub (electronic publication file format): An open file/e-book format standard developed by the International Digital Publishing Forum.

License: "A right that gives a person or entity permission to do something which would be illegal if the person or entity did not have such permission. Usually the scope of the permission excludes ownership rights or privileges.: —Liblicense, Yale University Library

MARC record (MACHine Readable Cataloging record): The MARC record "...provides the mechanism by which computers exchange, use, and interpret bibliographic information, and its data elements make up the foundation of most library catalogs used today." —Library of Congress.

OPAC: Acronym for Online Public Access Catalog.

Open standard: Format, protocol, programming language, etc., that is publicly available and (usually) may be used by the public without paying royalties or licensing fees. Example: EPUB format.

Patron driven acquisition: A collection of titles is made available for discovery or access in the library catalog, but titles are purchased only when an agreed upon threshold has been crossed (i.e., title downloaded x times, x pages are viewed, etc.).

PDA (personal digital assistant): A mobile device with basic computing and organizing function. PDAs have been largely replaced by smartphones.

PDF (portable document format): A PDF displays and prints the same way for each user, regardless of the operating system, computer, or the software package used to create the document.

Perpetual access: Once the e-book is purchased, the library is given unlimited access to the title.

POD (print on demand): New copies of a book are not printed and bound until they have been ordered by the customer.

Proprietary: Specifications for hardware or software that are typically controlled by the creating company and are unavailable to third parties unless a license fee or royalties are paid. Example: Kindle's AZW format.

Reflow: Term used to describe the way the content of a page adjusts or resizes to fit different screens sizes.

Smartphone: Mobile device "with built-in applications and Internet access. Smartphones provide digital voice service as well as text messaging, e-mail, Web browsing, still and video cameras, MP3 player, video viewing and often video calling." --PCMag.com

Tablet: "A wireless, portable personal computer built around a touch screen interface. The shape and size of a tablet is usually smaller than a note-book or laptop PC but significantly larger than a smartphone." --Staples Advantage Glossary