E-book acquisition features: 
attitude of Iranian information professionals

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Abstract
Purpose – This paper aims to consider the most important criteria of e-book acquisition in academic libraries. The survey seeks these reasons on the basis of two aspects: e-book features for users and for information professionals or libraries. Moreover, restrictions on e-books acquisition are surveyed with regard to information professionals’ attitude.

Design/methodology/approach – The survey research method is used in this study with questionnaire and interview used for data gathering. The statistical population consisted of 60 information professionals working at state universities of metropolitan Tehran.

Findings – The results show that high storage capacity and multimedia capability are the most important features in acquiring e-books on the basis of academic user needs. Also, the main criteria of acquiring e-books from the professionals’ point of view of fostering their interests are: occupying little space, ease of selection and simultaneous circulation. Moreover, this study shows that the main restrictions of e-book acquisition are: hardware and software restrictions, the lack of a union catalog for Iranian e-books, low level of user familiarity, hackers and even eye-fatigue when reading.

Originality/value – This study takes the form of unique research that surveys the e-book acquisition criteria in Iran on the basis of two aspects (user and library) with focus on information professionals’ attitude, simultaneously. In addition, there has not been any research on e-books in Iran, and this study is the first.

Keywords Electronic books, Academic Libraries, Information professionals, Librarians, Acquisition, Iran

Paper type Research paper

Introduction
A number of Iranian academic libraries are already in the process of electronic book collection development and running e-book pilot projects. Moreover, some academic libraries, such as Iran University of Science and Technology, are using methods of transforming paper-based books especially out-of-print or rare books into digital counterparts. While all information professionals have a professional commitment to disseminate up-to-date information, they should also place priority on offering the content their users require. Moreover, they are faced under significant additional pressure to seek optimal methods for acquiring all resources. So, academic information professionals as information mediators should select e-books basically according to two aspects; academic users as end-users and libraries specially information professionals as a server.

This paper starts with a review of e-book definitions. Then we discuss e-book categorizations based on different approaches such as presented information, content etc. finally the attitude or opinions of information professionals on e-book acquisition is evaluated on the basis of e-book functionalities.
E-book definition

Although the idea of e-books is not new, there is still much confusion about e-books, even at the level of basic definition of what an e-book is (Tedd, 2005). The term e-book is used ambiguously to refer to either an individual work in a digital format, or a hardware device used to read books in digital format (Lynch, 2001). Currently, there are a lot of different definitions on e-books and each of them is not complete. The reason for this state of affairs is the rapidly increasing speed of development of information and communication technologies (ICT) and subsequently the needs of changing e-book definition.

Vassiliou and Rowley (2008) in their paper carried out research on a content analysis of existing definitions of e-book in an attempt to achieve consensus. The results of their research shows that the definition of e-book should include reference to: the digital nature of e-books, analogy to printed book, some indication of the content of e-book, and some allusion to e-book technologies. Then, they proposed a two-part definition based on the persistent and dynamic nature of e-books. These parts of definition are as follows:

1. “An e-book is a digital object with textual and/or other content, which arises as a result of integrating the familiar concept of a book with features that can be provided in an electronic environment”.

2. “E-books, typically have in-use features such search and cross reference functions, hypertext links, bookmarks, annotations, highlights, multimedia objects and interactive tools”.

This definition can support our intention of e-book in this paper because it does not introduce only unique e-book publishing model such as only web e-book, but it also includes all publishing models of e-books. Moreover, added features of e-books over hardcopy books is stated in this definition and that is focus point in this paper because the attitudes and opinions of academic information professionals on e-book acquisition is evaluated on the basis of these features.

E-book categorization

With continuing progress in ICT nowadays, e-book publishers are producing various kinds of e-books. These e-books can be categorized basically according to content, style of presented information, different access models, functionalities, etc.

Content

As with a paper-based book (p-book), there is a great variety of type of content that can be published in e-book format. On the basis of content, e-books are as same as p-books and can be grouped similarly into novels, textbooks, reference materials such as dictionaries; scholarly monographs; directories; grey literature, including technical reports, working papers, standards, conference papers and proceedings, official publications, trade literature, privately published material, theses, and translations; and out of print and free e-books (Armstrong and Lonsdale, 2003; Tedd, 2005). However, the basic content of most existing e-books in the academic libraries studied in this survey are textbooks and reference material such as encyclopedias, dictionaries and manuals.

Presented information

The kind of presented information on e-books is various, e.g. some e-books are only an exact electronic or digitized copy of a p-book, while others include, in addition to text,
sound, moving pictures, video, animation. On this basis, e-books can be divided into: electronic textbooks, electronic static picture books, electronic moving pictures books, electronic talking books, electronic multimedia books, electronic intelligent books and finally, electronic space books (Mazinani, 2005). Of these models, the most significant e-books in Iranian academic libraries are electronic textbooks and electronic multimedia books. Among the studied academic libraries, Iran University of Science and Technology does provide various kinds of e-books. In addition, this library has been trying to convert some p-book to e-books format, so that by using OCR software, academic users can search the full text of these e-books.

Publishing
E-books have been published on different access models and forms and each library tries to provide e-books based on these various modes. These modes include; online access model via the web, offline access model, downloading e-book on generic PDA or handheld computers, downloading e-book on dedicated e-book readers and finally the physical object model of e-books such as CD ROMs or DVDs.

In the online mode, the reading of these books needs a standard web browser plus internet connection (Rao, 2001). The web interface allows the user not only to read the text, but also opens up possibilities of linking to other resources, utilization of dictionaries and so on such as Netlibrary. In offline mode, users can download and store e-books from an internet e-book service. Google has made many older books available online through its Google Books program. The reading of these books needs e-book reader software such as Microsoft reader in LIT format or Adobe Acrobat reader in PDF format for example. Some e-books can be read, on a handheld, battery-powered computer, such as palm pilots (Lin and Hubbard, 2000). And more recently various companies have unveiled their dedicated book readers such as Amazon with its Kindle device. Moreover, nowadays we observe various models of dedicated e-book readers with various advantages. The companies producing them are competing in order to make more user-friendly e-books readers. Screen size, functionalities and weight of device are the most important competitive factors.

Lots of Iranian e-books have been published on physical objects especially in theological subjects. Most of them include some added features of e-books over p-books such as multimedia capability, note taking, searching, searching in content, manipulating of appearance, e.g. font size or style or background. In the Iranian academic libraries studied here, access models of e-books are basically online, offline and physical object models. Many free Iranian e-books in the public or academic domains are downloadable from various web site, such as on SRCN[1] or Ire-book[2]. Moreover, some of the academic libraries surveyed have made dedicated databases of their e-books and academic users can study them, in both offline, or online modes. Academic users of Iran University of Science and Technology and Shahid Beheshti University can access e-book out of the university (24/7 hours). All e-books provided at Alzahra University are basically physical object models.

Functionality
In order to acquire e-books, academic information professionals try to focus on some of the most important e-book features. In academic library campuses, e-book functionalities can be considered on the basis of two aspects, namely the advantages
for academic users and the advantages for information professionals. Although e-books should include the book metaphor and most features of p-books, we have tried to evaluate the extra features that e-books have over p-books. Although most Iranian published e-books are published in PDF and Html format and there are not too many features on them, awareness of e-book evaluation criteria can indicate customer needs for e-books (i.e. the needs of academic users and information professionals). In addition, the main criteria for the selection of foreign e-books (i.e. non-Iranian) are also noted.

Initially, we describe these features for users and information professionals, then the attitude of information professionals in relation to these features is evaluated. The e-book features for users include:

- **Hyperlink** between structural elements of a book that can easily guide user needs, e.g. hyperlinked tables of contents for chapters can help users decide on the relevance of each chapter at a glance. Moreover, inserting links between the main text and table of contents, index, glossary or references can improve reviewing of the e-books[3].

- **Search tools** provide benefits beyond the table of contents and indexes. In some of the advanced e-books, not only can we search in the main text of e-books (such as searching in the whole book, specified page or chapter), but also searching in the user’s notes or highlighted portions are possible.

- **Multimedia capability** is one of the most attractive e-book features. Learning and reminding educational material can improve on the basis of these features. Multimedia is more useful in some of the majors in which students face with complex concepts such as engineering, medical, or need three-dimensional pictures or painting works such as architect, painting or graphic arts.

- **Accessibility** includes widespread and remotely accessibility through the internet. Moreover, Accessibility to one page or chapter and in different formats is related with this feature. Specially, in academic environment, the textbooks are not suitable enough. In order to cover the topics for a particular course, instructors often prefer to select different syllabus from different textbooks. So this advantage of e-books can improve the problem of existing textbooks (McFall, 2005).

- **High storage volume and easy portability** is the feature of most Iranian produced e-books because lots of e-books have been produced on CD ROM or DVD. Lack of e-book readers in Iran can increase the use of these types of e-books because the need for an internet connection, unlike web book, is eliminated in this mode and users can carry many of such e-books about with themselves (Alidusti and Sheykh Shoa’aei, 2006).

In addition, e-books include certain functionalities for information professionals such as; occupying little space, ease of selection and ordering in an electronic environment, simultaneous circulation and decreased loss and damage, low expenditure, reporting on daily statistics and so on (Alidusti and Sheykh Shoa’aei, 2006).

The focus point of the present research relies on such functionalities. Some of the most important criteria that are affected on the acquisition of e-books were considered. The value of this research is to investigate the most important evaluation criteria of e-book actually existing in the marketing models for Iranian academic e-books.
Certainly, presenting these criteria not only helps novice information professionals, but also it draws future perspective for business publishing models in Iran. In addition to functionalities, the number of main restrictions of e-books was also surveyed.

**Related studies**

The existing research literature on e-books include papers analyzing the use and usability of e-books, level of satisfaction and awareness of e-books, how and why user use them, usage and attitude towards e-books, pattern of use of e-books and finally e-book projects such as Virtual book, Hyper-Textbook projects or EBONI project. Gregory (2008) in his paper investigated the college’s undergraduates’ usage and attitude toward e-books. This study advanced with the college librarian informal observations of students’ reactions. The study found that overall students have mixed feelings about using e-books. In addition, they will use e-books but prefer using traditional print books. Rowlands et al.’ (2007) study assessed academic users’ awareness, perceptions and existing levels of use of e-books. The survey findings point to various ways in which user uptake and acceptance of e-books may be encouraged. Book discovery behavior, a key issue for publishers and librarians in both print and electronic environments, emerges as a critical focus for service delivery and enhancement.

The study by Clark (2007) showed level of awareness and patterns of usage of electronic books by scholars in the humanities. His research indicated different patterns of use, with humanity academics using less e-books than do other groups. In addition, Clark found that humanities still prefer printed books and could care less about the added features of e-books. Christianson and Aucoin (2005) in her paper analyzed the patterns of use of electronic books for one year for five academic institutions. In order to assess statistics usage, the Netlibrary web site was used. The results of this study showed that e-books in subject such as computers, technology and specific science seem to be more popular than traditional social science and humanities.

The results of two projects (the Visual book and the Hyper-Text book) were presented by Crestani and colleagues in their study. The evaluation of the visual book concentrated on various aspects of the books metaphor, while the Hyper-Text book considered the design, implementation, and evaluation of a full automatic tool for the creation of hypertext books from textbooks (Crestani et al., 2006). Their study presented the guidelines for the appearance and functionalities of e-books. In their paper Wilson et al. (2002) considered the Electronic Book ON-screen Interface (EBONI) Project’s research. They surveyed aspects of paper books such as table of contents, indexes; features of new medium such as hypertext, search engines and related factors with hardware such as weight and size. A variety of styles and techniques was used in this project.

Altogether, the previous short review indicates that researches on e-books are more popular in some subjects and less in others. However, there is not it seems any research on the evaluation criteria of e-books on the basis of information attitudes. Besides examining that, in addition, this study has tried to rank the evaluation criteria with focus on two aspects: academic users and information professionals. Also some of the most important restrictions hindering e-book acquisition were surveyed.

**Research design and method**

With the ever-increasing growth of presented information on e-book formats, Iranian academic information professionals are trying to collect, organize and disseminate them
from different publishers. Certainly, the needs of academic users and information professionals can affect e-book acquisition so that their views over e-book functionalities can provide an indicator for the developing e-book marketing in Iran. Until now, there has not been any research paper on e-books in Iran and most articles are either literature reviews or translated articles, and since the e-book market is improving more than ever then knowing the attitude of customers towards e-books is necessary.

The basic questions of the survey were:

1. What are the most important criteria of e-book acquisition based on academic user needs?
2. What are the most important criteria of e-book acquisition based on information professional needs?
3. What are the most important restrictions of e-books from Information Professional attitude in academic libraries?

Survey research method was used in this study and the data were gathered by means of a paper-based questionnaire that included 20 questions in five parts: demographic information, awareness level of e-books, evaluation criteria of e-books for academic users, evaluation criteria of e-books for information professionals, restrictions of e-books in academic libraries and preferences on e-books. The attitudes of information professionals were collected through a five point Likert scale. In order to complete the results interviews were also carried out. The results of this study is described and summarized with use of Excel software.

The total research population consisted of 300 academic information professionals working at central libraries of Tehran state universities. A sample was selected of ten academic information professionals at six universities, namely Iran University of Science and Technology[4], Amirkabir University of Technology[5], University of Tehran[6], Shahid Beheshti University[7], Sharif University of Technology[8], and Alzahra University[9].

Participants of this study should have been educated in library and information science or have worked more than five years in a library and information environment if educated in other subjects. Both of these groups had to be graduates and possess a degree. A total of 60 questionnaires were completed by academic information professionals.

Findings

Demographic information
At the first, we tried to select randomly information professionals from different departments of libraries such as circulation, acquisition, information and audiovisual, reference, and organization. Of the 60 information professionals, 52 had bachelor degrees, while the rest had master’s degrees. Just over half (32) knew suitable information about e-books; consequently the remainder were eliminated as participants in this research.

Awareness level of information professionals
Information professionals of the information and audio-visual departments knew the most information on e-books with about one third responding positively. Somewhat surprisingly less than 10 per cent of those in the reference departments knew much about e-books (see Figure 1).
On the basis of information professional’s attitude, the tendency of users over e-books is fairly high with 38 per cent responding high, 28 per cent average, 16 per cent saying they were neutral and almost one fifth (19 per cent) giving low as a tendency.

Many of the respondents mentioned things like: “If e-books only include features of p-books, they can’t attract their users. Sometimes, the use of Iranian e-books is more difficult than p-books, because some of them are only text-based without any functionality such as search ability or multimedia capability. These books are very tiring to read and use. In addition, if the searching tools become uninstalled on these e-books, then finding the specific subject will be more difficult. In order to support users and keep them as real users of e-books, publishers should focus on user-friendliness and usefulness of e-books”.

Evaluation criteria of e-books for academic users
E-books include lots of functionalities and we can categorize them in two categories, e.g. criteria and indicators. For instance, multimedia capability is known as a criterion and oral reading, moving pictures, static pictures, video and etc. are its indicators. In this study, we surveyed criteria that distinguish e-books over p-books. Among these criteria, we looked at the main criteria that should be applied by e-book publishers.

In this section, the evaluation criteria applied to select e-books was surveyed. Although, we used five-point Likert scale, after gathering data we decided to summarize answers into a three-point scale consisting of: agreement, disagreement and neutral options. The reason for this is that there were no noteworthy differences between strong agreement and (general) agreement options or between strong disagreement and (general) disagreement options. Figures 2 and 3 show the extent of agreement, disagreement and neutral opinions on the various measures discussed in the following.

High storage capacity and easy portability
Information professionals believed that e-books have been hastening the decline of several types of multi-volume books for academic users. Especially e-books accessible on internet have eliminated the portability problem of such books. The most important evaluation criterion is high storage capacity and easy portability. Information professionals prefer to access and provide electronic reference books. Some Persian textbooks include lots of pages and subheadings. Academic professors often introduce course syllabus from different textbooks and the weight of these books is very high. So, information professionals mentioned “if e-book publishers allow academic users to
select different sections of various books, the needs of users and the problem of heavy books are solved”. Recently, a Digital Media Fair was held in Tehran from 10 September-10 October 2009 where some publishers exhibited and supplied e-books and the software used to produce them. With the use of these softwares, authors or any persons can easily add multimedia capabilities, searching tools; change the look and feel etc. With such features, information professionals can use them to create suitable e-books for different courses and syllabuses. No fewer than 88 per cent of information professionals agreed that this criterion was the most important one for users. Only 6 per cent of them were in disagreement.

Multimedia capability
In the perspective of information professionals, multimedia capability is the second most important criterion to evaluate e-books with 85 per cent in agreement. They stated, “If the e-books only consist of textual format without multimedia feature as similar to print books, they will make fatigue for users. Indicators such as sound, picture, motion picture, animation and, etc. can increase the user interest”. They believed that this feature improve the durability of important subjects and the speed of learning in student’s mind. None of them disagreed with the value of this criterion.
Searchability
Some Iranian e-books include search tools in their full text, but search ability does handle note taking, and highlighted or underlined parts are neglected. Some students do highlight various sections for later use and in order to find them, they need search tools. Fully 84 per cent of information professionals agreed with this criterion. Only 3 per cent of information professionals disagreed with this criterion as the most important one, while 13 per cent were neutral or had no opinion.

Accessibility
Information professionals stated that Iranian published e-books are often accessible through the internet or on CD ROM or DVD without the need of specific e-book readers. While accessibility to one page or chapter seems important, Iranian publishers have mostly supplied e-books without selection options of specific parts. Users, therefore, have to buy or subscribe to the whole full text of e-books. However, many Iranian e-books are now published freely on the web and users can easily access them without any charge and without the need of specific software. These e-books are often in PDF or html formats. In addition, some e-books do not allow user to print them out. Altogether, 81 per cent of information professionals agreed that the accessibility criterion was important, while only 6 per cent of them disagreed.

Hyperlink references
None of the information professionals actually disagreed with this criterion as one of the main factors, though 28 per cent were neutral or undecided about it. Some three quarters of respondents (72 per cent) believed that hyperlinks are very useful in electronic environments. Some of the published e-books compel the academic users to study in linear mode, while through the use of hyperlinks academic users can access the required sections through just a click. If a dictionary is attached to e-books, then users will retrieve the correct meaning of any unfamiliar words. In addition, hyperlinks between index and text body can guide the academic users to the exact location of required subjects. This criterion ranked fifth in importance overall.

Functionality of e-books for information professionals
In addition to added values of e-books for academic users, some evaluation criteria are relevant with libraries and particularly for information professionals. Some of the e-book functionalities for information professionals were surveyed and in this section, the most important criteria are arranged in descending order. Figures 4 and 5 show the

Figure 4. Agreement measurement on e-book functionalities for information professionals
extent of agreement, disagreement and neutral opinions on the various measures discussed in the following.

*Occupying little space*
Information professionals stated that with increasing the number of books in academic libraries, the expendability need of library space is felt more than ever. Multi-volume books such as reference books occupy a lot shelf space. This criterion can reduce concerns related to ever-increasing library space. So this criterion permits savings in library budgets and reduces a certain amount of head scratching over where to put new books. Fully 88 per cent of information professionals agreed it as the most important criterion. None of them disagreed, although slightly over 10 per cent were neutral or had no opinion to the idea.

*Ease of selection*
Altogether 85 per cent of information professionals agreed with the factor of ease of selection for e-books. In their opinion, when some of the publishers or aggregators allow accessing their e-book databases without any expenditure for a trial period, information professionals can get to know academic user needs and obtain relevant feedback, which they can use to select e-books in good conscience. In addition, they stated that e-books eliminate some evaluation criteria of p-book selection such as distinguishing between Gellingor books or paper books.

*Simultaneous circulation*
Information professionals believed that e-book acquisition through the web leads to simultaneous distribution of books among many users. Moreover, economizing on time for academic users is very important because such users do not wait to return books. This criterion can be most important for students especially in the final exam period. So this third main evaluation criterion is simultaneous circulation has 78 per cent of agreement, with 6 per cent in disagreement and 16 per cent not committing themselves.
Decreasing loss and damage
Information professionals believed that web books have reduced the problem of losing and damaging common books. But on the other hand some of the e-books on CD ROM or DVD have actually intensified this problem since they themselves can be lost or damaged especially when the original e-books on these media are circulated. All told 78 per cent of the respondents information believed loss and damage was alleviated with 16 per cent having no opinion and 6 per cent disagreeing.

Ease of ordering
Of information 72 per cent of professionals agreed that it was necessary to have an easy method of ordering e-books. The meant that over one quarter did not think it was so important. The reasons for the agreement are to save time and effort as well as financial savings.

Low expenditure
More half than of information professionals agreed with this criterion. In addition, they stated that some e-books impose extra expenditure for libraries since they required specific software or hardware expenditures and had associated maintenance costs. On the one hand, it was considered that the cost of the foreign e-books was very low, but on the other hand the academic library budgets were also limited.

Presentation of daily statistics
The usage of e-books by users can be monitored through daily statistics. Information professionals, by means of the daily statistics, can get to know the subject interests of their users, as well as the maximum or minimum number of times a specific e-book is perused. Moreover they can recognize whether there is a satisfactory level of users taking advantage of the e-book collections of the academic library. Most important of all is that library managers can analyze these statistics for future decision-making. Somewhat over half (60 per cent) of information professionals agreed that such statistics were useful, but just over one third (34 per cent) had no opinion on it (were neutral). This is possibly because they have not yet used this feature and thus do not understand its benefits.

Restrictions of e-book acquisition in libraries
Based on information professionals’ attitudes, restrictions of e-books are as follows: rapid speed of changing technologies, lack of the union catalog for e-books, paying extra for interlibrary loans and low level of user familiarity. In this section, we surveyed the most important restriction of e-books. Certainly, these e-book restrictions can be applied as the evaluation criteria of e-books. Figures 6 and 7 show the extent of agreement, disagreement and neutral opinions on the various measures discussed in the following.

Hardware and software restriction
Information professionals stated hardware and software restrictions as the most important problems faced by them. They commented that in order to study some e-books, they need specific softwares that should be run in a specific device. Sometimes, we cannot run some software on a single computer, because they are not
compatible with each other. Moreover, sometimes the library does not provide the specific software for reading e-books. Regarding hardware, some of the devices will become old and the necessary components for fixing equipment will not be in existence in the future. So the most important restriction will be hardware and software technologies in forthcoming years and over half gave this as their main concern.

788

Lack of the Union Catalog
Information professionals believed that a Union Catalog facilitates e-books sharing because this feature informs information professionals about published e-books. This is important because information professionals can only afford to purchase core e-books – but according to Bradford’s law more are needed for full relevancy and coverage. This problem and hardware and software problem obtained same rank from information professional’s attitude – again over 50 per cent responding it was a good idea to have a Union catalog.

Circulating issues
In some of the libraries, information professionals loaned out e-books on original CD ROMs or DVDs and sometimes these original versions got damaged. Equally some e-books borrowed on the basis of Bradford’s law were found to have limited user access. Although, web books or virtual books reduce these problems, it is evident that libraries should not lend the original e-books users (though this is, of course, done for print books – which can also be prone to damage). As a result, the solution is to provide
duplicate version of e-books for users to borrow. Around 40 per cent of the respondents agreed with this restriction and the means to solve it; however, almost the same number did not agree that it was an issue.

Interlibrary loan issues
The majority of respondents could not agree on whether interlibrary loan was a problem in the way e-books should develop in libraries. Over one third were in disagreement, and nearly 40 per cent had no opinion on the matter – leaving slightly under 30 per cent of information professionals accepting it was a problem. Their view was that “if we accept interlibrary loan, we have to pay extra costs”. This would mean that the number of sources in different libraries would be unbalanced and consequently there could be no economic justification.

In summary, hardware and software restrictions and lack of a Union catalog are the most important problems from the perspective of information professionals, while circulating restrictions and interlibrary loan restrictions obtained the lowest percentage of disagreement. The highest percentage of neutral option is apparent in interlibrary loans. Perhaps, the reason for their unawareness on the advantages of interlibrary loan is because they have not used it yet.

Preference of e-book content in academic libraries
E-books acquired by academic libraries in Iran generally fall into three types, namely: reference books, textbooks and rare manuscripts or expensive sources. Out of these categories, it turns out that information professionals prefer to acquire electronic reference books. The reasons given for this choice are that e-books usually are not read completely and that reference books, because of the large number of pages, are very heavy (and thus not so portable – and in any case not usually for loan), so e-books covering reference material can be the most consulted and as such represent a good use of funds. Most information professionals, though, do prefer to allocate the library budget in proportion among these three groups with 33 per cent tending to acquire all of them and nearly a quarter acquiring e-book versions of reference books and rare manuscripts (see Table I).

Conclusion
Publishing market of e-books is very newly established in Iran and the needs of users remain largely unknown. In order to succeed Iranian e-book publishers and aggregators should concentrate on their customer requirements. Since one of the main customers of e-books are library and information professionals working in an academic

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<th>E-book acquisition features</th>
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<td>Text books</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Reference books</td>
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<td>Rare manuscript or expensive sources</td>
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Table I. Preference between three kinds of e-book content
environment in particular, then this group plays a critical role in the evaluation and acquisition of e-books – not only for themselves but also for the library users they serve. The attitudes and opinions of information professionals on developing evaluation criteria of e-books should be highly useful for Iranian publishers. In general, some of the most important evaluation criteria for academic users as stated by information professionals include; high storage capacity and easy portability, multimedia capability, search ability, accessibility, hyperlink references. In addition, information professionals cited as important evaluation criteria for their own use aspects such as: not occupying much space, ease of selection, and simultaneous circulation. Several e-book restrictions that should be solved in the academic libraries in this study relate to hardware and software, lack of a Union Catalog and circulating issues. If Iranian e-book publishers take heed of these evaluation criteria, established by possibly their largest purchasing community, then this will auger well not only for the e-book industry as a whole, but also for the users of e-books.

Notes
1. Available at: www.bpdanesh.ir
2. Available at: www.ire-books.com
3. Available at: http://e-books.strath.ac.uk/eboni/guidelines/index.html
4. Available at: www.iust.ac.ir/home_en.php
5. Available at: www.aut.ac.ir
7. Available at: http://en.sbu.ac.ir
8. Available at: www.sharif.ir/en/
9. Available at: www.alzahra.ac.ir/index.asp

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Further reading


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