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**RMG e-BOOK STRATEGIC PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES**  
*Challenging Libraries to think about e-Books & e-Readers as Inflection Points*

Prepared for  
Town Hall e-Book Discussions at RMG's Annual ALA Midwinter Conference Seminar:  
The View from the Top  
Friday January 25, 2013, 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Washington State Convention Center (WSCC) Room 606-607

*Libraries are invited to download and use this questionnaire*

In his 2009 Business @ the Speed of Thought, Bill Gates defined inflection points -- significant shifts in customer behavior that are related to digital technology -- that he believed would fundamentally alter all industries. He asked whether you believe they're ever going to occur, and wrote: "If you don't believe they will, then you shouldn't change what you're doing with technology. But if you believe they're going to happen, and it's only a matter of time, then you should start to prepare for that change today." RMG believes the onslaught of e-books and commodity-priced e-readers (e-reading devices) are the latest digital waves re-shaping libraries. The following questions are patterned on inflection points that Bill Gates identified.

- (1) **Do you believe that digital textbooks are coming to your local schools, colleges, and universities?**  
Yes or No?  
Do you know when?
- (2) **Do you believe they will provide e-readers (e-reading devices) to students?**  
Yes or No?
- (3) **Do you believe digital textbooks in your local schools will impact the expectations of public library users?**  
Yes or No?  
How, do you think?
- (4) **Do you know how many of your registered library users have smartphones, e-readers, tablets, or laptops?**  
Yes or No?  
Do you know how many of your users bring these devices to the library?
- (5) **Do you know how many households in your area of service have smartphones, e-readers, tablets, or laptops?**  
Yes or No?  
How many?
- (6) **Do you believe that smartphones, e-readers, tablets, or other portable devices that can read e-books will be as common in homes as PCs or TVs?**  
Yes or No?

- (7) **Do you believe that most of your registered users – or households in your area of service -- someday will have portable devices that can read e-books?**

Yes or No?

When, do you guess? Now? Within 2 years? Within 3 years? Within 5 years? Never?

- (8) **Do you believe that the e-reading of e-books, e-newspapers, and e-magazines will become as common as today's reading of printed books, newspapers, and magazines?**

Yes or No?

- (9) **Do you believe that people who use their smartphones, e-readers, tablets, or laptops every day will want to read e-books and other publications in digital form?**

Yes or No?

In the library?

- (10) **Does your library have enough WiFi capacity (bandwidth) for users to connect their portable devices (smartphones, laptops, tablets, e-readers) to the Internet, to browse the web and download e-books?**

Yes or No?

- (11) **Does each of your library buildings have enough WiFi access points and bandwidth to accommodate the connection of at least one portable device per occupant?**

Yes or No?

- (12) **Do you know how many occupants with portable devices the WiFi service in each library facility can accommodate?**

Yes or No?

Is there enough WiFi capacity?

- (13) **Do you know how many of your users' interlibrary loan borrowing requests could be filled by downloading e-books?**

Yes or No?

How many?

- (14) **Do you believe your customers might like the option of downloading e-books to fill their interlibrary loan requests -- to their smartphones, e-readers, tablets, and laptops, or to e-readers loaned to them by the library?**

Yes or No?

What are some Pros and Cons?

- (15) **Do you believe the arrival of digital textbooks will present opportunities for strategic partnerships among schools and libraries that would benefit library patrons and students, and the community at large?**

Yes or No?

How?

- (16) Do you believe the library should be concerned about the “e-Reader Have-Nots” who don’t have e-readers, tablets, or laptops?

Yes or No?

Why?

- (17) Do you believe the library should lend e-readers, tablets, or laptops to users – for library use or check-out?

Yes or No?

Why?

- (18) How much would it cost to provide an e-reader for every seat in your library, and for enough WiFi and Internet bandwidth to connect users for downloading e-books and searching the Web?

Any estimate?

How does this compare to the costs of providing desktop PCs?

- (19) Imagine how your library would look with happy readers in comfortable chairs and sofas, enjoying e- and p- books, newspapers, and journals – more library-like than a Starbucks or Barnes and Noble, with staff roaming to help them with e-devices.

Would your library be more inviting if those crowded tables and desktop PCs were replaced with really comfortable and private reading spaces – with handy power sources for readers using personal and library-loaned e-readers, tablets, and laptops?

Yes or No?

Is it time to replace those open shelves in prime locations, packed with reference books and telephone directories, with inviting reading spaces?

Yes or No?

How many desktop PCs with word processing and spreadsheet software would you still need for users to author documents like resumes and job applications?

Do you believe that your borrowers might enjoy using library-loaned laptops and tablets with office software to write documents?

- (20) The ALA Washington Office on November 15, 2012, reported the results from 75,000 respondents to a survey of U.S. public library OverDrive websites sponsored by e-book distributor OverDrive with the American Library Association’s Office for Information Technology Policy.

<http://www.districtdispatch.org/2012/11/overdrive-survey-finds-library-patrons-buy-ebooks/>

The online poll, which focused on library e-book readers, found that patrons surveyed purchased an average of 3.2 print and e-books per month, and that the majority of respondents would consider purchasing books discovered on a library website.

57 percent of respondents say the public library is their primary source of book discovery

35 percent of patrons purchased a book (both print and e-book) after borrowing that title

53 percent would consider purchasing books discovered on library website

44 percent say digital book purchases have increased in past six months

#### Questions

**Do you believe your library website should link users to vendors' websites for e-book purchase or rental?**

Yes or No?

**Do you believe your users would like the opportunity to purchase/rent personal copies of e-books for themselves or others through links from the library's web site to e-book suppliers?:**

What are some Pros and Cons?

**How would this compare to your library's gift shop and discarded book sales?**

**Do you believe that offering your users options to purchase/rent e-books through the library's website – particularly best selling e-book titles not available through the library's e-book plans -- would damage the tradition of free public libraries?**

Yes or No?

**Do you believe this might jeopardize public library funding?**

Yes or No?

**(21) Do you believe there might be advantages to users for your library to buy/rent p- and e-books on demand to fulfill readers' interests?**

Yes or No?

- **For example, the purchase of best-seller e-books through arrangements for PDA ("Patron Driven Acquisitions" or "Demand Driven Acquisitions" – DDA)?**
- **A way this might work would be for your e-book suppliers to provide metadata for your online public access catalog, so that users could discover and request e-book titles in addition to those available through the library's e-book plans. Users could search the OPAC and request e-books that would be downloaded to them – so seamlessly that users might not even be aware of the behind-the-scene PDA/DDA arrangements for the library to purchase/rent requested items on demand -- of course with budget controls.**
- **Perhaps there could be a similar arrangement for p-books not owned by the library, that could be shipped overnight for users to pick-up at the library?**

What are some Pros and Cons?

**Do you feel strongly enough about this to ask your content providers to develop these kinds of PDA/DDA capabilities and arrangements with you?**

Yes or No?

**(22) Do you believe these changes are ever going to happen?**

Yes or No:

When? Sooner than 2 years? Within 3 years? Within 5 years? Never?

**(23) How best can your library prepare to offer these kinds of services? How can you acquire the needed skills, capabilities, and infrastructure?**

- Partnerships with content suppliers and other libraries?
- Other alliances?
- Staff Development?
- New Hires?
- Grow internally?
- Really good planning?
- ?

- (24) What should public libraries do, in an “Age of e-Reading,” to attract citizens to the library, its e- and p- resources, and its web sites?
- (25) Has your library joined the ReadersFirst initiative (<http://readersfirst.org>) to improve e-book access and services for public library users?

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***RMG Consultants, Inc. is an information technology consulting firm specializing in team-based enterprise learning processes for IT planning and procurement projects and IT Strategic Planning for libraries and Higher Education institutions. RMG helps libraries identify and take advantage of digital opportunities to re-engineer processes, workflows, and practices.***

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