Digital Rights Management and Libraries:
An Annotated Bibliography

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**Introduction and Scope**

The following bibliography covers digital rights management (DRM) and its effect on libraries during the 10 years since implementation of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. The law, which made the circumvention of DRM technology illegal, took effect in October 2000. Articles touch upon the origins of DRM, the benefits it offers copyright holders and assorted concerns it raises among librarians. Articles also discuss privacy worries and access issues pertaining to users with disabilities. Several authors suggest that librarians be actively involved in DRM negotiations and advocate for library users. The articles were published from 2001 to 2009, the majority since 2005. An emphasis was placed on current articles because of the rapidly changing nature of the digital world. Nearly all of the articles were published in the United States and found in library science databases. The bibliography focuses on the United States. Authors also offer perspectives from the United Kingdom, Germany and South Africa.

**Description**

The term digital rights management refers to “a collection of systems used to protect the copyrights of electronic media. These include digital music and movies, as well as other data that is stored and transferred digitally,” according to The Tech Terms Dictionary (Nicholson, 2009). Eschenfelder (2008) said that technological protection measures can range from “soft restrictions” (which discourage certain uses such as saving, printing multiple pages and e-mailing) and “hard restrictions” (which prevent those and potentially other uses). As the pace of technology quickened in the 1990s, Congress gave teeth to DRM with passage in 1998 of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). The law was enacted in response to industry concerns about the vulnerability of DRM technologies to hacking. It outlawed “certain acts of circumvention and technologies designed to circumvent technical measures used to protect copyrighted works; other countries have followed suit” (Samuelson, 2003). Exemptions are few.

**Summary of Findings**

Scholarly research on digital rights management in the context of libraries took off in the first two years after the DMCA took effect, then slowed for four years before picking up again.
beginning in 2006. Five of the 18 scholarly articles I found were published in 2001-02, five in 2006 and five in 2007-09. It is unclear why the pace has accelerated; in all likelihood, it reflects growth of the DRM industry and the resulting increase in interactions -- and issues -- with DRM technology among scholars, librarians, students and the public.

Digital rights management has an important, legitimate role to play in libraries, Bohner (2008) and Davis & Lafferty (2002) asserted. Davis & Lafferty called it “a logical mechanism for ensuring intellectual property rights are upheld and that payment as required is made.” Bohner said that while DRM is “most often discussed by librarians as a necessary evil or as an absolute deterrent,” it is a “fundamental requirement for the use of digital works” in libraries. Brown (2001) praised the DRM model in place for journals, and Buczynski (2006) called for greater use of the technology in library audio holdings.

There is general agreement on the problems that led to the creation of DRM. Researchers predicted that online piracy would cost the publishing industry up to $1.5 billion by 2005, reported Foroughi, Albin, and Gillard (2002). Peters (2001) wrote that in the emerging systems of e-book distribution, the library model of “freely” distributing texts to the reading public represented “a real monetary threat to the e-publishing industry.”

Foroughi et al. (2002) urged the DRM industry to provide a balance between “fair compensation” for the creators of digital content and “the rights of end users” to gain access to and use information. Anderson (2006) expressed concern about overreach, quoting an expert who said, “Unfortunately, DRM does not distinguish among uses. Fair use and piracy are viewed the same.” Samuelson (2003) noted that DRM systems can as easily prevent the copying and distribution of public-domain works as copyrighted works.

Librarians are concerned that DRM solutions could limit the traditional public access that libraries provide (Coyle, 2006); decrease computer reliability and security, raise user privacy issues (Bailey, 2006); and create user dissatisfaction, block archival and preservation activities, and require increased staffing to handle support and training requirements (Eschenfelder, 2008). “What may be every publisher/vendor’s dream could be every library’s nightmare,” said Bailey (2006).
Nicholson (2009) noted that some DRM mechanisms are more restrictive than others. Solutions that can have an impact on access to information or “affect librarians and archivists from carrying out their daily functions” include limiting a document to one PC or one user, specifying the number of times a document can be opened, enabling or disabling printing, enabling or disabling copy/pasting facilities and protection against file copying. In a survey, librarians called DRM “annoying” and “a big hassle” (Blummer, 2006).

DRM is skewed in favor of rights holders, to the detriment of users of copyrighted information, some authors contend. DRM technology, they say, cannot distinguish between infringing use or legitimate use, and therefore creates a barrier for all users. Nicholson (2009) said that through DRM controls, “rights owners have the power to unilaterally eliminate fair use/fair dealing rights, stifle research and block text-to-speech software for blind people or text sub-titles for deaf people.” Anderson (2006) noted that opponents of the DMCA worry that DRMs will be used to stifle new technology, threaten access to information and move the United States toward a pay-per-use society. “Clearly, there is a sense of urgency on the part of librarians to be vigilant and fight against those sections of the DMCA or features of DRM that threaten the mission of libraries,” he said.

Samuelson (2003) argued that the moniker “DRM” is actually a misnomer. “These technologies are not really about the management of digital ‘rights’ but rather about management of certain ‘permissions’ to do X, Y, or Z with digital information,” she wrote.

Concerns about privacy and access for the disabled are raised by some authors. Rosenblatt (2007) and Nicholson (2009) found that technologies that establish personal identities can be put into place, and Kramer (2007) reported that in a study of DRM at the Library of Congress in 2003, more than half of all book titles authorized for digital sale had locked content and thus were not available for use with a screen reader used by blind people. Since then, Kramer noted, publishers have made growing efforts to accommodate conversion of their works to accessible formats.

Experiences with DRM in the United Kingdom have been mixed. In a study on the range of electronic rights management solutions available to libraries in the UK, Magnussen (2002) found no single solution. More than 100 different projects related to aspects of electronic copyright, the
majority based in the European Union, were identified. Most initiatives were based in higher education institutions, where the issues of costs and charging were problematic, and system security created very high overheads in administration and maintenance by library staff. Braid (2004) found that users reacted favorably to a system of electronic document delivery created for the British Library but that several problems remained to be resolved, including reluctance by some corporations to upgrade to the latest version of Adobe Reader, which permitted encryption of PDF files and other security measures.

DRM could potentially be legislatively mandated in the United States, said Samuelson (2002) and Bailey (2006). Some copyright industries have expressed interest in such a step (Samuelson, 2002), but Congress has taken no steps in that direction.

Librarians need to educate themselves about DRM and take an active role in the development of digital rights standards and discussions with rights owners, authors agree. A significant number of articles -- by Myers (2005), Nicholson (2009), Bohner (2008), Eschenfelder (2008) and Magnussen (2002) -- put forth this argument.

“Libraries can take a proactive stance by reviewing licensing contracts and negotiating for the inclusion of wording that makes it clear that the library is not giving up the right to make use of copyright exemptions,” wrote Myers (2005). “Make sure materials that are licensed through vendors can be used for interlibrary loan, electronic reserves, courseware systems, and in virtual reference.”

Said Magnussen (2002): “Successful rights management demands collaboration: collaboration between libraries and their clients, content producers, system developers, and others involved in the rights management game. Only then can the best rights management outcomes be reached.”

The amount of information about digital rights management as it pertains to libraries has accelerated in recent years. The trend seems likely to continue as more information is digitized; libraries embrace more digital technology, including e-book readers; and more universities expand distance learning programs, which often heavily involve libraries. There is much that can be explored. Much of the research up to this point is based on anecdotes, opinions and compilations of various forms of impact from DRMS. Research in the field would benefit from more statistics on both sides of the issue. Researchers may wish to attempt large, scientifically
designed surveys of librarians to attempt to gain a greater understanding of how DRM has impacted their work. They could also attempt to measure such aspects as user satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with digital materials containing DRM restrictions, public access to digital resources, computer security and library staffing to determine whether researchers’ concerns about potential negative impacts of DRM have come to fruition.

Bibliography


Abstract: Presents the basics of modern copyright law and ways in which the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) changed the law. Focuses on the DMCA’s prohibition of circumvention and file sharing and how this has impacted libraries. Discusses efforts to re-establish a copyright balance between creators, publishers and consumers, especially through proposed legislation and the open access movement. The impact of the DMCA on libraries is weighed, and the author calls for librarians to be more vigilant in opposing efforts to legalize digital rights management software.

Annotation: This article examines copyright laws and the impact of DRM, especially on libraries. It concludes that there is an imbalance weighted in favor of copyright publishers and that libraries and others must work to establish a level playing field. The author offers a well-informed, insightful look at copyright basics and digital challenges facing libraries.

Search Strategy: I selected Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA)

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: digital rights management and librar*


Abstract: Three critical issues -- a dramatic expansion of the scope, duration, and punitive nature of copyright laws; the ability of Digital Rights Management (DRM) systems to lock-down
digital content in an unprecedented fashion; and the erosion of Net neutrality, which ensures that all Internet traffic is treated equally -- are examined in detail and their potential impact on libraries is assessed. How legislatures, the courts, and the commercial marketplace treat these issues will strongly influence the future of digital information for good or ill.

Annotation: This article examines trends in digital technology, including the growing use of DRM technologies. DRM creates many potential problems for librarians and should bear “careful scrutiny” (126) in the years ahead. DRM might serve a useful purpose if it is possible to fix certain critical deficiencies and if it is properly employed. The article is provocative and written with authority. It is cited often, and is even the source for the first three words in the title of Kristin R. Eschenfelder’s article, “Every library’s nightmare? Digital rights management, use restrictions, and licensed scholarly digital resources.”

Search Strategy: I selected Web of Science, which offers a breadth of coverage of key journals, including those pertaining to library science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

Database: Web of Science

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: DRM (topic) and libraries (topic), refined by Information Science & Library Science (subject areas)


Abstract: Improvements in e-book technology, national and international digitalization projects, and a renewed interest by readers and libraries refueled attention on electronic books. To gauge the degree of their popularity among special, academic, and public libraries, the author posted a questionnaire to various library-related listservs querying respondents on their experiences with e-books, including: collection size, titles, popularity, maintenance, digital rights management problems, technology needs, promotional efforts, viability concerns, acquisition and cataloging issues. Today, special, academic, and public libraries are utilizing e-book technology to facilitate information finding as well as to expand collections while reducing costs. To maximize the use of e-books, librarians must adopt an active role in shaping the development of the technology as well as negotiate licenses and pricing models that are advantageous to all libraries.

Annotation: This article examines the popularity of e-books among special, academic and public libraries. The author based the article on the results of a questionnaire she posted to various library-related listservs. Only 16 people completed the questionnaire. The author collected some interesting anecdotal comments, but the survey suffers from a tiny sample size
and lack of scientific methodology. For example, the single question pertaining to DRM -- “Are there problems with digital rights management?” (13) -- is biased against it.

Search Strategy: I selected Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA)

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: digital rights management and librar*


Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to answer the question of whether digital rights management (DRM) can be useful to libraries. The paper provides a legal and technical description of DRM and its current and future opportunities. The paper finds that digital rights management has possibilities that can be useful for libraries. But it is important that librarians become more active in the standardization and development of new ideas. Some examples are given. The paper offers a realistic approach to DRM for libraries.

Annotation: This well-reasoned article examines the pros and cons of the growing role of DRMs in libraries and is one of the few articles on the topic that looks at rights expression language. REL documents, which lay out the rights of both the rights holder and its customer (i.e., a library), help libraries manage the large number of rights associated with journals and serve patrons in other ways, the author says. The article adds that libraries should make a serious commitment to participating in the development of RELs and standards.

Search Strategy: I selected Library Literature and Information Science because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

Database: Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String:
- s (digital()rights()management OR drm) AND librar?

**Abstract:** Digital rights management (DRM) has had a chequered history. It has been called “the saviour of intellectual property rights” and “completely useless” in protecting digital content. The truth probably lies somewhere in between. The paper describes the use of DRM in providing a secure document supply service, the reasons for implementation of a DRM system by the British Library, the system adopted, with reasons for the rejection of some systems and insight into how the chosen system has been received by users.

**Annotation:** This article examines electronic document delivery, generally involving the supply of an electronic copy of a document such as a journal article, via the Internet. It offers a rare look at the experience of a library -- in this case, the British Library -- as it evaluated DRM options, worked with copyright holders while keeping users’ interests in mind and implemented its system.

**Search Strategy:** I selected Library Literature and Information Science because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

**Database:** Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:**

s (digital()rights()management OR drm) AND librar?


**Abstract:** The development of reader devices and improvement of screen technology have made reading on screens less cumbersome. Our acts of reading are not univocal, as we read in many different ways with many different goals in mind. Reader software can provide different levels of navigation support for the manipulation of digital text, presenting capabilities for analytic reading not available in the print-on-paper reading experience and compensating for our lack of orientation and feeling of omnipotent dominance of text. The parameters of e-text reading and the issues of access remain central to readers and researchers, whether the electronic text is designed and packaged as an “e-book” for portable reading devices, or resides on a server for distribution to library terminals to be downloaded to desktop PCs, laptops or tablet PCs. The power and functionality of reading software – note-taking, highlighting and indexing capabilities, robust open searching across databases – are ultimately linked to open access issues: interoperability, text standards, and digital rights management. These remain key questions for libraries, publishers and researchers.
Annotation: This article examines the advantages and disadvantages of reading books in digital form, whether on reader devices, PDAs, PCs or laptops. The article is more about text navigation and typology than libraries and DRM, rendering it less relevant than most articles in this bibliography, but the author does note that many librarians regard DRM and encryption procedures as “overkill” (398).

Search Strategy: I selected Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA)

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: digital rights management and librar*


Abstract: Ray Bradbury’s 1950s imaginary view of society in the future, where everyone had audio devices in their ears all the time, listening to an “electronic ocean of sound, of music and talk,” is here today. Although libraries have significant media collections, their growth and accessibility does not meet consumer demand. The absence of powerful and ubiquitous “digital rights management systems” is the biggest chasm between audio content vendors and libraries. Audio content solutions are emerging, despite the DRMS environment, to help libraries bridge the gap between their audio holdings and patron expectations. Solutions include: NetLibrary, OverDrive, iTunes, Naxos Music Library, Naxos Spoken Word Library, Classical Music Library, and various music site licenses: Rukus, Rhapsody, Napster, Cdigix, and Yahoo Music.

Annotation: This article discusses the explosion in recent years of digital music and in the number of portable music devices, and it finds that libraries are behind the curve in satisfying users’ needs. The article is unique in looking at music rather than text and is unusual in arguing in favor of an expansion of digital rights management in libraries.

Search Strategy: I selected Library Literature and Information Science because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

Database: Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String:
s (digital()rights()management OR drm) AND librar*


**Abstract:** Digital rights are increasingly spoken of in three different contexts: the context of intellectual property law, the context of technological controls, and the context of licenses and contracts. Reports how current work in electronic rights management for serials subscriptions and for digital preservation is experimenting with a model of rights management that facilitates system interaction but does not require end-to-end control over content. Suggests that, like the move to create copyright and legal deposit laws that work well in the digital environment, these rights management solutions can help librarians to create efficient systems that deliver usable content with a balance between revenue and the freedom to read.

**Annotation:** This somewhat dry, technical article examines the term “digital rights” -- as law, in contractual form, in licensing and in terms of digital rights management. The author says those rights can be automated, or made “actionable” (327) electronically without the need for human assistance or intervention, but concludes that the level of automation involving digital contracts in libraries is not equal to that achieved by some e-commerce applications. It expresses optimism that DRM solutions satisfying to libraries can be found.

**Search Strategy:** I selected Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

**Database:** Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:** digital rights management and librar*


**Abstract:** Since digital content can be perfectly replicated and distributed infinitely, publishers and other content originators are employing digital rights management (DRM) and persistent protection to prevent the abuse of their intellectual property. However, locking the content and controlling operations on the content have presented interesting challenges in supporting fair use in the digital world. Not only are libraries purchasing intellectual property, but they are also producing and maintaining it. Libraries are publishers. The core components of DRM and the value the technology presents for libraries, and also scenarios to demonstrate where DRM may
have improved content delivery to libraries, where library operations may be improved by the use of DRM are presented, and critical information against which to ask publishers and content aggregators about their use of DRM with the content they sell to libraries is offered.

**Annotation:** This article outlines key aspects of DRM technology and suggests ways for libraries to support DRM as a necessary part of content access and redistribution. It is unusual in suggesting that libraries not just work with DRM, but support it enthusiastically.

**Search Strategy:** I selected Library Literature and Information Science because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

**Database:** Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:**

s (digital()rights()management OR drm) AND librar?


**Abstract:** This study explored use restrictions found in licensed scholarly resources from the fields of history/art history, engineering, and health sciences. The analysis developed a framework of use restrictions that distinguishes between soft restrictions -- which discourage use -- and hard restrictions -- which strictly prevent use. Soft restrictions include: extent of use, obfuscation, omission, amalgamation, frustration, and warning. The study concludes that these soft restrictions are relatively common in licensed scholarly resources. Further, while hard restrictions are less common, they are not unknown. The study questions whether librarians should be doing more to challenge use restrictions.

**Annotation:** This authoritative article examines academic librarians’ concerns that vendors of licensed scholarly resources will add technological protection measures to digital resources used by academic libraries. It explores “soft restrictions” (206), which discourage certain uses such as saving, printing multiple pages and e-mailing; and “hard restrictions” (206), which prevent those and potentially other uses. The author says soft use restrictions deserve more attention from the library community, and that librarians should not accept these restrictions as the natural order of things.
**Search Strategy:** I selected Library Literature and Information Science because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

**Database:** Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:** 
\[ \text{s (digital()rights()management OR drm) AND librar?} \]


**Abstract:** In the wake of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, Digital Rights Management (DRM) systems are beginning to provide copyright protection for digital content placed online by magazine and book publishers, music companies, software and game producers and business-to-business companies. Creators and providers of digital content are increasingly able to control end users’ use of, and accessibility to, their products, and stand to gain huge profits from this capability. However, as DRM technologies evolve and develop, so does end user concern about restrictions to their access to, and use of, information. The DRM industry must provide a balance between fair compensation for the creators of digital content and the rights of end users to access and use information.

**Annotation:** This article examines explores views of people rarely heard from in DRM-related articles on library databases -- business people. Like most librarians, most of them seek a fair balance between customer considerations and business’ security concerns and profit interests.

Abstract: This paper argues that electronic barriers intended to protect intellectual property can prevent equal access to digital materials by readers with visual or hearing disabilities, and thus deny those readers their fair-use rights. It provides a basic overview of copyright law, summarizes publishers’ concerns about intellectual property, and discusses information access by users with special needs to explain why digital rights management (DRM) is used, how it can interfere with access and fair use, and some ways those problems are being addressed.

Annotation: The author offers an overview of DRM technology’s ability to reduce access by users with visual, hearing or motor disabilities. The article also looks at initiatives to work with and around DRM, such as the DAISY Consortium and Bookshare.org. The article is weakened by a lack of statistics and the inclusion of few concrete examples of negative impacts.

Search Strategy: I selected Google Scholar because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

Database: Google Scholar

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: libraries AND “digital rights management”


Abstract: In recent years, there have been considerable developments in both international and national laws relating to copyright, as governments struggle to come to terms with developments in technology. Libraries, too, are attempting to find appropriate ways of managing the rights in electronic materials. Based on a research trip made to the UK in 2001, explores some of the electronic rights management systems and solutions being developed in UK libraries and information organisations. Study participants were interviewed about the various technologies that have been developed in this area, the types of materials covered by each, and their costs, availability and intended future developments, with a view to gaining an understanding of the electronic rights management tools that might be available to libraries.

Annotation: This article examines offers a compelling look at the early days of digital rights management in the United Kingdom. Worldwide, libraries at the time were trying to find the best way to manage the multitude of electronic resources available to them.

Search Strategy: I selected Library Literature and Information Science because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords. I did
not include the search term “librar?” (which I used in other Dialog searches) because articles in this database largely apply to libraries by definition.

**Database:** Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:** s (digital()rights()management OR drm)


**Abstract:** Copyright is a hot topic right now, and libraries and librarians have the knowledge, the tools, and the opportunity to help. Librarians need to take the lead and help their institutions move forward through the maze of copyright.

**Annotation:** This article proposes that librarians take the lead in guiding their institutions through the maze of copyright laws and digital rights management rules. It offers an interesting, grass-roots look at what ordinary librarians can do, from making an individual or small group responsible for copyright issues to sharing information about copyright with others through workshops, seminars and pamphlets.

**Search Strategy:** I selected Library Literature and Information Science because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords. I did not include the search term “librar?” (which I used in other Dialog searches) because articles in this database largely apply to libraries by definition.

**Database:** Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:** s (digital()rights()management OR drm)


**Abstract:** Digital rights management systems (DRMs) together with technological protection measures (TPMs) have become a controversial topic of discussion around copyrighted works, particularly since the controversial Sony BMG case. This paper addresses some of the concerns around TPM-enabled digital rights management systems as they apply to and impact on
developing countries. It highlights issues such as digital censorship, international support for digital rights management and the current legislation in South Africa relating to digital rights management. It also discusses types of digital rights management systems and how they affect access to information and knowledge, as well as their impact on the public domain and privacy. The paper provides some recommendations and challenges to librarians and educators in South Africa and for librarians in other developing countries, on how to address digital rights management issues in relation to their obligations and mandates to provide users and learners with unrestricted access to information.

Annotation: This article contends that DRM is arranged to favor copyright holders at the expense of libraries and individual users of copyrighted information. DRM creates barriers for all users, give rights owners the power to block text software enhancing access for blind and deaf people, and have the potential to render works inaccessible long after the copyright has expired, harming legitimate archival and library functions, the author says. The article, although one-sided, offers an incisive look at the negative aspects of DRMs.

Search Strategy: I selected Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA) because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords because this was an initial search in this database.

Database: Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA)

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: digital rights management or drm AND libraries


Abstract: Several aspects of the e-book revolution are reviewed, as well as some related issues confronting libraries. Regardless of format, texts and text-bearing devices have relationships of mutual dependence, and readers simultaneously experience both. The dominant relationship between texts and text-bearing devices is shifting from static to dynamic. The e-book revolution is more about new distribution systems for content, new digital rights management systems, and perhaps an unwitting or inchoate power struggle among the principal interested parties, than it is about the design and diffusion of dedicated reading devices. The e-book revolution opens up possibilities for new and improved post-retrieval processing of texts, defined as anything a person can do with a text after it has been retrieved. Librarians need to reassert -- especially to the fledgling e-book industry -- the enduring principle of libraries as a social good. The two biggest challenges facing libraries are how to make the transition to an era dominated by dynamic relationships between texts and text-bearing devices, and how to foster and facilitate robust and complex post-retrieval processing of texts.
Annotation: This article, written near the dawn of e-books, examines the prospect that e-books might become “a significant, enduring part of culture, society and the life of the mind.” (50) The author insightfully foresees many of the issues to come -- conflicts between publishers and libraries, threats to fair use, the need for librarians to learn about DRM and advocate for readers -- but he offers few insights into what form DRM might take as it pertains to e-books.

Search Strategy: I chose INFOSCI in Dialog because the OneSearch subject category covers files of interest in the field of Library and Information Science. I searched using title search because I thought it might catch some articles I had missed using keyword searching.

Database: INFOSCI (Dialog)

Method of Searching: Title search

Search String: s (digital()rights()management OR drm) AND librar?/ti


Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to provide a review of developments in the USA related to digital rights management (DRM) through legal, technological, and market developments in recent years. This article summarizes recent developments in DRM in two areas. First is the legal landscape, including copyright law developments that apply to digital content and attempts to impose DRM technology through legislation and litigation. Second are recent advances in DRM-related technology and developments in digital content markets that are based on DRM. In both cases, USA developments are compared with the situation in Europe.

Annotation: This article examines the concepts of Fair Use and First Sale and considers efforts by the movie and music industries to lobby Congress to make DRM technology mandatory in digital hardware and software. So far, such efforts have failed. The author also compares several types of DRM-based technologies and services, such as mobile content services and P2P networks on the Internet. The article is disappointing because it does not touch on libraries explicitly, but it explores laws, legislation and products that are likely to impact American libraries in the near future.

Search Strategy: I selected Library Literature and Information Science because of the large number of articles it contains pertaining to information science. I searched using keywords. I did not include the search term “librar?” (which I used in other Dialog searches) because articles in this database largely apply to libraries by definition.

Database: Library Literature and Information Science (Dialog)
Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: s (digital()rights()management OR drm)


Abstract: The main purpose of DRM is not to prevent copyright infringement but to change consumer expectations about what they are entitled to do with digital content.

Annotation: This article examines efforts by some copyright industries to mandate DRM in all digital media devices and warns that the threat should be taken seriously. The article does not touch specifically on libraries, but it forcefully captures a moment when the fear of legislatively enacted DRM mandates (which could still happen one day) seemed very real.

Search Strategy: Denise Rosemary Nicholson cited this article in her 2009 article “Digital rights management and access to information: a developing country's perspective.” I read Samuelson’s article and concluded it contained pertinent information.

Database: N/A

Method of Searching: Footnote chasing

Search String: Referenced in:

Conclusion and Personal Statement

This assignment was an eye-opener for me on several levels. First, most of what I knew about digital rights management beforehand pertained to the world of entertainment. Hollywood studios, record companies and musicians had expressed concerns about piracy; consumers were upset about limits on their ability to make copies of certain audio or video products, even for private use. Corporations had taken some consumers to court. I had personally encountered DRM limits, such as the inability to cut and paste from certain online documents, without really knowing what was behind the issue. I knew almost nothing about DRM issues in libraries. That changed as I found and researched articles on the topic.
Secondly, I learned a lot about searching. With this assignment we used many of the tools about which we were taught during the first nine weeks of the course. I gained a new appreciation for Dialog, which I had cursed at times earlier but now was thankful for as it helped me find most of my articles. I had some success with other databases and search engines (such as Google Scholar), but no source was as useful in locating scholarly articles as Dialog.

Third, I gained a better understanding of the difference between scholarly and nonscholarly journals. I was amazed at how many nonscholarly journals in Dialog and Ulrich’s periodicals directory included articles on digital rights management. I was dismayed at having to ignore pertinent-sounding articles with sexy titles because they appeared in nonscholarly journals. I finally had to create a list of all the scholarly and ordinary journals just to keep them straight.

Fourth, the assignment reminded me of the importance of using the proper search terms. It’s a good idea to search with flexibility and an inquiring mind, but the wrong terms can send one off on time-consuming wild goose chases.

Finally, I learned about annotated bibliographies. I may have encountered some as an undergraduate, but if so, I don’t recall them. Going into this assignment, I really wasn’t sure what they were or what their value was. I’m used to books and full-length articles, not surveys of research literature and mini-reviews of articles. However, now I understand the value that valuable annotated bibliographies have in exploring a topic, summarizing the state of research and knowledge in a field, and providing lines of inquiry for future research.

I certify that:
• This assignment is entirely my own work.
• I have not quoted the words of any other person from a printed source or website without indicating what has been quoted and providing an appropriate citation.
• I have not submitted this assignment to satisfy the requirements of any other course.

Signature: Kevin Barnard
Date: Dec. 4, 2010