



Summary of ALIA's position on ebooks and elending

As an Association, our values are:

- Promotion of the free flow of information and ideas through open access to recorded knowledge, information, and creative works
- Connection of people to ideas
- Commitment to literacy, information literacy and learning
- Respect for the diversity and individuality of all people
- Preservation of the human record
- Excellence in professional service to our communities
- Partnerships to advance these values.

In support of these values, public, school, academic and special library users must continue to have Freedom of Access to Information and Resources (FAIR) in a digital environment – and that means access to ebooks and other eresources.

We believe the solution for ebook lending by libraries lies in a whole-of-sector approach. We call on everyone involved in the book supply chain to adopt a consultative approach, working with library leaders to achieve the optimal solution for all parties.

Goal and objectives

ALIA's overall goal is to help our members make ebooks readily available to library users, while ensuring there is a generally accepted, fair balance between the commercial and ethical interests of libraries, creators, publishers and aggregators. To achieve this goal, our objectives are:

- To assist library and information professionals to understand the complex issues around ebooks and elending, and share this understanding with colleagues, funding bodies, policy-makers and library users.
- To exert our influence nationally and internationally to persuade all publishers to make ebooks available for elending on reasonable terms and within a framework that is appropriate to the library sector.
- To work collaboratively with other stakeholders to help develop standards and compatible formats and platforms.

ALIA's guiding principles for ebooks and elending

Through continuing consultation with ALIA members and key stakeholders across Australia, ALIA has developed a set of guiding principles for our advocacy approach to ebooks and elending.

These principles will inform our discussions with federal, state, territory and local governments and agencies; with authors, agents and publishers; with library vendors; with library leaders in our own region and internationally, and with library users.

In the rapidly changing landscape for ebooks and elending, it is not possible to provide hard and fast answers, instead, these guiding principles will provide a constant reference point.

ALIA's overarching principles

- The best interests of library users are at the centre of our response to ebooks and lending issues.
- Our primary concern is to find lending models that are FAIR – providing our communities with Freedom of Access to Information and Resources.
- Creators (writers and illustrators) and those who add value (agents, publishers, library aggregators, booksellers) must receive appropriate financial reward for their contribution.
- The full extent of the role of libraries in the book industry ecosystem needs to be understood and recognised by other stakeholders.
- We are advocates for the Australian book industry in its entirety, supporting our cultural heritage. In an increasingly global ebook market, libraries play a critical role in providing access to Australian content for Australian readers.
- Australian libraries cannot *control* what is happening in the global ebooks market, but we can have a *strong influence* on the outcomes, through our relationships with local stakeholders, and by working with the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and colleagues in library associations around the world.
- We will leverage established channels and relationships, and our involvement in book industry bodies. We will not create unnecessary duplication.

ALIA's operational principles

- Collection policies set by libraries must not be undermined by other stakeholders.
- Libraries must be able to purchase ebooks at the same time as the public.
- Libraries must be assured of access to purchased content regardless of changes in the business relationships between publishers and other suppliers in the chain.
- Pricing of ebooks for libraries must not be artificially inflated, must be transparent, and there should be a range of purchasing models to suit the differing needs of libraries.
- Systems and processes must make it easy for library users to find and download ebooks.
- Ebooks should be able to be read on any type of device (smartphone, PC, tablet, etc).
- Library users are the customers of the library and that relationship and their rights to privacy must be respected by publishers and aggregators.

Document produced by the ALIA ebooks and lending reference group.

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