

1 **ABSTRACT**

2 In 2012 the VDOT Research Library conducted a trial of the EBSCO eBook database. Goals of
3 the trial were to: 1. Determine the level of interest by VDOT employees in accessing eBooks.
4 Usage patterns and preferences of users in accessing content (EBSCO offered three access
5 options for viewing on screen or downloading to a personal device). 2. Observe and gather usage
6 statistics during the trial. 3. Survey users on their experience and preferences for eBook devices.
7 4. Learn if users had exposure to the library's subscriptions to the Books24x7 or Knovel
8 databases, both of which contain "on-screen only" eBooks. Usage statistics revealed a surprising
9 amount of curiosity in the eBook database. During the trial there were: 959 user sessions, 2,702
10 searches, 694 eBooks were read onscreen, and 130 eBooks were "checked out" and downloaded
11 to Adobe Digital Editions. Of the 32 respondents to a user-satisfaction survey, 93.75% indicated
12 they would like to use eBooks for their work or professional development at VDOT, 39% found
13 it to be "somewhat easy" or "very easy," 63% read eBooks onscreen, while 37% read from a
14 portable eBook reader. 90% of respondents had used other library full-text databases, 69% had
15 purchased or received an eBook as a gift, and 40% had checked out an eBook from another
16 library. The research indicates the EBSCO eBooks database is a viable resource for VDOT
17 employees, provided the proper content can be licensed and adequate user instruction is
18 provided.

19 **INTRODUCTION**

20 Without a doubt the eBook revolution is changing the face of publishing, however, it is not clear
21 how eBooks are impacting the world of transportation research or the libraries that serve
22 transportation professionals. To date there has been almost no adoption of eBooks by
23 transportation libraries in the United States. It is plausible that transportation professionals
24 would embrace access to library-loaned eBooks if the patron's user experience of finding and
25 borrowing library eBooks approached the ease and speed of commercial systems like
26 Amazon.com.

27
28
29 In the absence of research on the topic, reports of eBook fiction sales, best practices in eBook
30 acquisition and lending by academic and public libraries, and user-satisfaction surveys of library
31 eBook lending programs are instructive to transportation libraries struggling to provide 21st
32 century services to their patrons.

33
34 What eBooks can be loaned by libraries, and how? How many eBooks are libraries acquiring?
35 Do they purchase perpetual access rights, or lease access to eBooks? Is patron demand for
36 eBooks increasing? What eBook vendors and platforms are most highly regarded, and why?
37 How easy do library patrons feel the eBook borrowing experience is compared to eBook buying?
38 Most importantly, are libraries publishers and vendors finally reaching consensus on pricing and
39 multiple-user access barriers that have undermined eBook lending in the past?

40
41 The VDOT Research Library set out to answer those and other questions through a study
42 conducted in the Spring of 2012.

43 **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

44 Establishing eBook lending programs has proven difficult even for well-funded and high-
45 functioning libraries. Rapid changes in eBook reading technology, formats used by device
46

1 manufacturers and the publishing and distribution communities, combined with growing use of
2 eBooks by library customers has placed increased pressure on libraries to evolve in ways that
3 integrate eBooks access into collections. Library lending of eBooks is an overwhelming subject
4 for most library professionals, and the typical library patron has a combination of increased
5 expectations, low comprehension of the hurdles libraries face in providing an eBook “checkout”
6 experience that is comparable to the eBook purchasing, and low patience for poorly integrated
7 library borrowing systems.

8
9 To be relevant tomorrow, libraries of the future must explore the pros and cons of eBook lending
10 programs and products today, and they must justify to their patrons why they do or do not have
11 eBook lending programs and explain to their stakeholders what resources or developments would
12 be required for them to initiate eBook lending programs.

13
14 Transportation libraries sometimes fail to look past the world of transportation to standards in
15 information science or best practices in academic and public libraries as they have unique
16 challenges, collections and patron needs and since they have greater resource constraints than
17 peers in the public and academic sectors. Research on eBook adoption and use by libraries is
18 generally segmented by the following library types: Academic, Public and School (K-12). Some
19 U.S. transportation libraries are more aptly classified as University libraries, and while all
20 transportation libraries reside within the transportation segment, few if any focus solely on
21 supporting transportation research.

22
23 In the spring of 2012 the library decided to select a leading eBook vendor, conduct an agency-
24 wide eBook trial, and follow that with a user-satisfaction survey to better understand
25 opportunities for the acquisition, promotion and distribution of eBooks.

26 **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

27
28 The goal of this study was to assess the potential for implementing access to the EBSCO eBooks
29 database for VDOT employees. EBSCO is one of the largest aggregators of full-text content and
30 markets a variety of full-text online databases to libraries. EBSCO Publishing's core business is
31 providing libraries online databases via the EBSCOhost interface. In 2012 EBSCO began
32 expanded its holdings through a resource called the eBook Collection, a distribution platform
33 offering access to customized collections drawn from more than 250,000 titles.

34
35 This study sought to evaluate EBSCO’s eBook pricing and selection, to evaluate the user
36 experience of the EBSCO database as a distribution platform, to evaluate and licensing and
37 usage restriction, to document IT considerations associated with users attempting to download
38 eBooks to their personal reading devices, to explore “back-end” library activities (cataloging,
39 collection development and policy), and to reconcile those factors against the eBook usage
40 preferences of VDOT employees.

41
42 The scope of this study was limited to the use of personal eBook reading devices (i.e. those
43 owned by VDOT personnel), which could include dedicated eBook readers, tablet computers,
44 smartphones, or other devices.

45

1 This study only considers patron-initiated “checkouts” of licensed eBooks (paid content, not free
2 content) in portable eBook formats (most notably the EPUB format), as opposed to the practice
3 of downloading electronic versions of books made accessible by the publisher as PDF files,
4 which can often be downloaded freely from the Internet without any “distribution platform” to
5 control Digital Rights Management (DRM).

6
7 Finally, the study did not seek to evaluate use of subscription eBook content already provided by
8 the VDOT Research Library, such as VDOT’s current subscription eBooks in PDF format
9 (licensed through ASCE via the ASCE Library database), eBooks in html format (licensed
10 through Skillssoft via the Books247 database), or other eBooks in PDF or HTML format (licensed
11 through vendor Knovel).

12
13 Laypersons sometimes mistakenly associate other forms of library-provided electronic content
14 (periodicals, technical papers, standards, etc.) with eBooks. This study does not address those
15 types of electronic content, focusing only on the lending of downloadable eBooks distributed
16 using the metaphor of a “traditional book check out,” but otherwise similar to the act of
17 purchasing a book from Amazon.com.

18
19 Lessons learned from the VDOT Research Library’s eBook trial and follow up survey could
20 benefit other state DOT-funded libraries and transportation libraries of all types as they consider
21 eBook lending programs.

22 **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

23
24 Research questions for this study focused on three key stakeholders that would need to be
25 satisfied during the testing phase to consider the trial a success: Library patrons and their
26 perception of the user experience, VDOT’s computer support group, known at the Virginia
27 Information Technologies Agency (VITA), and finally the VDOT Research Library staff and
28 management, and their perceived ability to purchase, implement and support eBook lending.
29 Specific research questions:

- 30
- 31 1. Do VDOT employees believe they would benefit from on-the-job access to eBooks?
 - 32 2. Is the EBSCO eBooks platform compatible with patrons using VDOT computers in tandem
33 with their personal reading devices?
 - 34 3. Are VDOT employees persistent enough to follow the complex steps required by the EBSCO
35 eBooks platform to “check out” an eBook to their personal reading device?
 - 36 4. Do VDOT employees express a clear preference for a specific reading device?
 - 37 5. Is EBSCO’s incompatibility with Kindle an insurmountable hurdle to implementation?
- 38

39 **METHODS**

40 The purpose of this study was to gauge employee interest in eBooks, to test the ability of the
41 average VDOT employee to use the EBSCO eBooks database, and gain insight into the user’s
42 perceptions of EBSCO’s eBook viewing options. The research assesses back-end library
43 activities related to eBook acquisitions as well, including: pricing, licensing, IT considerations,
44 library technical considerations, and user support needed at an agency like VDOT. Data on
45 device and content preferences was also gathered. By promoting the trial agency-wide the
46 library hoped to be inclusive of all employees, and demonstrate the library’s efforts to provide

1 progressive services. Neither the distribution platform nor the content tested was specific to
2 transportation or to research.

3
4 The library had realistic expectations as the trial started and staff knew the eBook database
5 would not be as simple to use as purchasing through Amazon.com for the Kindle. It was not
6 clear if the average user would want to read the EBSCO eBooks on their desktop or what
7 difficulties they might have doing so. A key question was how many eBooks would be “checked
8 out” and moved to eBook readers for true portability.

9 10 **EBSCO eBooks Database Trial**

11 In January 2012 the VDOT Research Library initiated a trial to the EBSCO eBooks database.
12 On January 20 the library began promotion. The trial ended April 30, 2012 after approximately
13 90 days. While EBSCO offers over 250,000 eBooks, the trial was less about content than about
14 the interface, user behavior and preferences, and library support issues. A small sample of 249
15 titles called “Government Trial” was made accessible on the database for users on the VDOT
16 network. Titles dealt with topics such as: leadership, management, project management, and
17 communication and included publishers like Springer, American Management Association and
18 Government Training Inc. The trial provided free, unlimited access to eBooks that could be
19 accessed and read three ways:

20
21 1. Read Onscreen (PDF) with one click using an on-screen PDF viewer.

22 Note: This was the fastest and simplest way to read eBooks, but tethered the patron to their
23 VDOT computer, which would need to have an active Internet connection during use.

24
25 2. Read Onscreen (Adobe Digital Editions) by moving a digital copy to their computer.

26 Note: This action required the patron to first install Adobe Digital Editions eBook software.
27 Since most VDOT employees do not have administrative rights to their computer, they would
28 need to log an IT help desk ticket to install the software. For users who did not have an
29 EBSCO personal account, that would need to be set up as well.

30
31 3. Read from an eBook Reader after moving the eBook from Adobe Digital Edition to the
32 user’s reading device.

33 Note: At this point, a copy of the eBook is transferred to the portable device with DRM that
34 both tracks what patron is using the device and the length of use. For this trial the default
35 checkout period (which could not be increased by the library) was only 7 days.

36 37 **Database Trial Statistics**

38 The VDOT Research Library routinely conducts database trials and user-satisfaction surveys as a
39 part of the evaluation process. Over 90 days the eBooks database received higher levels of
40 testing and usage than most of the database trials the VDOT Research Library has initiated since
41 it began acquitting full-text databases in 2007. Anecdotal evidence (including the quantity of
42 questions and comments received during and after the trial) suggest this was one of the library’s
43 most successful trials to date.

44
45 During the trial there were a total of 959 unique user sessions (since unique user sessions last for
46 a 24 hour period there may have been uncounted sessions) to the database. Users conducted a

total of 2,702 searches and viewed 1,187 book abstracts. A total of 824 full text requests occurred during this period. In 694 instances the eBook content was viewed on the user's VDOT computer screen and in 130 instances Offline/Downloads occurred, indicating the number of times eBooks were "checked out" and loaded into Adobe Digital Editions—for a total of 824 full-text views. No statistics exist to indicate how many times patrons were able to successfully transfer eBooks from Adobe Digital Editions to a mobile reading device.

TABLE 1: Total EBSCO eBook Database Usage

Month	Sessions	Turnaways	Searches	All F/T	Downloads	Abstracts
April	658	14	1,680	524	71	808
March	4	0	8	10	5	7
February	31	0	99	13	5	31
January	266	5	915	277	49	341
Total	959	19	2,720	824	130	1,187

TABLE 2: Top Titles by Total Full-Text Views and By Download

Titles by Total Full-Text Views	All F/T	Downloads	Turnaways
How to be a brilliant thinker: Exercise your	66	0	5
Delivering exceptional project results: a practical guide to...	20	6	0
How people tick: a guide to over 50 types of difficult people...	18	0	1
Effective project management	18	0	0
Introverted Leader: Building on Your Quiet Strength	18	7	0
International Trade: An Essential Guide to the Principles and...	17	0	0
Test your EQ: assess your emotional intelligence with 22...	13	0	0
Confidence at work: get it, feel it, keep it	12	0	0
How to make it big as a consultant	12	4	0
The elements of power: lessons on leadership and influence	12	2	0
Titles by Total Downloads			
Introverted Leader: Building on Your Quiet Strength	18	7	0
The image of success: make a great impression and land the job...	11	7	0
Delivering exceptional project results : a practical guide to project...	20	6	0
How the best leaders lead : proven secrets to getting the most out...	10	6	0
How to make it big as a consultant	12	4	0
Pmp/Pmbok 100 Success Secrets : Project Management...	11	4	0
American entrepreneur : the fascinating stories of the people who...	10	4	0
How to write fast under pressure	7	4	0
Make your own rules : a renegade guide to unconventional success...	12	3	0
The little black book of project management	11	3	2

Promotion of the Trial

Part of the success of the trial may have been effective promotion with support from VDOT's Public Affairs department. Public Affairs manages the main screen of VDOT's internal SharePoint site, and placed a prominent feature article on the trial there and helped develop a simple two-page guide with instructions on eBook viewing and downloading options. In addition a description of the trial appeared in the January 19, 2012 VDOT Weekly Report (sent to all every VDOT email address) and the library created an instructional video. (Appendix 1)

Survey Administration

After the trial the library promoted a 20-question user satisfaction survey using a Web-based survey instrument from Kwik surveys. See Appendix 2 for the complete survey instrument. To

1 target the appropriate sample the library embedded a link to the survey on the eBooks platform
2 and ran an article on InsideVDOT with help from VDOT Public Affairs. The library also sent
3 out targeted emails to 46 EBSCO account holders, and to 55 employees who contacted the
4 library with questions or comments during the trial.

5 6 **Population and Sampling**

7 For a user to test the eBook trial, they would need two things: 1. Access to a VDOT computer
8 (laptop or desktop, the agency did not support tablet computers at the time) and; 2. A VDOT
9 email address. The approximate number of VDOT employees who met those criteria at the time
10 was 4,000. Those who wanted to move eBooks to personal reading devices would need to own a
11 device capable of displaying an eBook. It was not known how many employees owned devices
12 capable of reading an eBook. “The Rise of e-Reading” a study of adult eBook use in the United
13 States by the Pew Research Center published in 2012 helps estimate a more precise sample.
14 That study reported that 29% of Americans age 18 and older owned at least one device capable
15 of eBook reading. Extrapolating from that study, it is estimated that 1,100 VDOT employees
16 owned a device capable of reading an eBook when the VDOT Library initiated the EBSCO trial.

17 18 **Limitations of the Survey**

19 Survey limitations included the reliance on self-reported data and volunteer respondents, and as
20 such did not constitute a random sample of users. Finally, there was no mechanism to prevent
21 people from taking the survey multiple times.

22 23 **RESULTS**

24 Of the 4,000 potential respondents sampled, only 32 completed the survey, however, responses
25 were received from 18 of the agency’s 30 divisions. That equates to a broad sample of technical
26 and administrative business units within the agency, but a very shallow sample overall. In fact,
27 the sample is so small, at just .008% that it is of questionable validity from a methodological
28 standpoint.

29
30 When asked if they would like to be able to use eBooks for their work or professional
31 development at VDOT, 94% of respondents (N=30) said yes.

32
33 When asked if they would generally prefer printed books or eBooks the majority, 44% (N=13),
34 indicated it depended on the situation. Features of printed books that received high marks
35 included: Ease of manipulation (highlighting, notes), ease of navigation, and use when online
36 access is not available. Features of eBooks that received high marks included: speed of delivery
37 and searchability.

38
39 When asked which of the three reading methods users used, 36.8 % (N=14) read onscreen as
40 PDF, 26.3 % read on-screen by “checking out” the book to Adobe Digital Editions (N=10) and
41 36.8 % (N=14) read a book from a personal reading device.

42
43 When asked if they used the system for “onscreen reading” but did not download eBooks to a
44 portable device, users cited many reasons for doing so. Most often cited was lack of a personal
45 reading device. Other reasons cited were difficulty installing Adobe Digital Editions and general
46 difficulties using the system.

1
2 When asked what kind of device they used (if they used one) 33% reported they used a Nook
3 (N=6). Other devices mentioned by make/model as owned by respondents included Apple iPad
4 and iPhone, Toshiba, Sony, and HP tablet.

5
6 When asked how they had accessed eBooks outside of VDOT, 69% of respondents said they had
7 purchased or received as a gift an eBook from an online bookstore. When asked what
8 bookseller, 66.67% (N=16) cited Amazon.com, and 33.3% (N=8) named Barnes & Noble.

9
10 In open-response comment areas of the survey users were enthusiastic about the potential for
11 eBook use at VDOT, encouraging the library to continue its testing and find ways to expand
12 eBook availability. However, users also expressed the desire for a broader range of eBook
13 content, better interoperability with a wider range of eBook readers (especially Kindle) and a
14 greater overall ease of use than the EBSCO system offered at that time.

15 16 **LITERATURE REVIEW**

17 A literature review was conducted to help assess and articulate the challenges, opportunities and
18 best practices involved in implementing an eBook lending program at a modern technical library.

19
20 The review examined research into the general barriers and specific technical and licensing
21 challenges library professionals face when considering preferences for eBook use, striving to
22 stay within organizational guidelines for collection development and scope, and supporting the
23 easy and efficient use of eBooks on a various devices. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the
24 topic, legal landscape, and hardware technology, the review was focused on the most recent and
25 the most relevant research.

26 27 **The Library/eBook Landscape**

28 According to the 2012 Pew Internet and American Life Project report, 29% of Americans now
29 own at least one tablet device capable of reading eBooks. (1.) The population of eBook users in
30 the United States is growing and a shift toward eBook reading coincides with dramatic increases
31 in ownership of reading devices. Such devices include dedicated eBook readers, tablet
32 computers, smartphones and a variety of other mobile devices, in addition to laptop and desktop
33 computers.

34
35 Surveys of public library eBook use indicate that dedicated eBook reading devices are becoming
36 the most popular devices used to read public library eBooks, followed closely tablet computers,
37 then smartphones, and finally laptops. Interestingly, the laptop and netbook (not the eBook
38 reader or the tablet) remains the preminent device on which the academic set reads eBooks,
39 followed by tablet computers, with dedicated eBook readers and smartphones trailing far behind.
40 According to Pew, the number of adults in the United States who own either a tablet computer or
41 an eBook reading device such as the Kindle or Nook grew from 18% in late 2011 to 33% in late
42 2012. (2.)

43
44 As hardware costs go down and functionality goes up, many predict the tablet computer will
45 become the dominant eBook reading device. Parks Associates' industry report *Tablets:*
46 *Disrupting Mobile Computing and the Digital Home* notes the tablet's success continues to

1 threaten categories such as e-readers and conventional PCs. Tablet purchases surpassed desktop
2 purchases for the first time in 2012 and experts believe they will match or exceed laptop
3 purchases in 2013. (3.)

4
5 Hardware has evolved rapidly blurring the lines of distinction between eBook readers and
6 tablets. Even today's base models of the aforementioned devices are no longer simple "readers"
7 that allow users to shop for, download, and read eBooks. The Kindle Fire (and Kindle Fire HD),
8 and Nook Color (and Nook Tablet, Nook HD and HD+) are touch-screen computers capable of
9 wireless networking, with access to mobile applications, Web browsing, and many features that
10 make them more robust than the most expensive eBook reader of yesteryear.

11
12 As of March 2012, 31% of U.S. Internet users were reported to have a tablet computer, used
13 mainly for viewing video and news content. Among tablet computers available in 2012, the top-
14 selling line of devices was Apple's iPad with 100 million sold by mid October 2012 since its
15 release on April 3, 2010 followed by Amazon's Kindle Fire with 7 million users, and Barnes &
16 Noble's Nook with 5 million users. (4.)

17
18 At the end of 2012 iPads were generating 87 percent of North American Web traffic for all
19 tablets, while in terms of manufacturer, the next highest-ranked 13 competitors only showed
20 slight gains against Apple. Of all competitors the Kindle Fire family of devices posted the
21 biggest gains relative to the iPads during the period studied. Kindles registered 4.99 impressions
22 per 100 iPad impressions on the company's ad network, equating to a 4.25 % share of "all tablet
23 Web traffic as a whole." Impressions generated by Kindle Fire increased 20 % from the 3.57
24 percent share observed just a month earlier in Chitika's November study. (4.)

25
26 What about eBook formats as a publishing standard? A comprehensive annual survey of U.S.
27 trade eBook sales (spanning the gamut of adult fiction and non-fiction, in addition to children's
28 books, young adult and niche publishing) called "BookStats" shows that eBooks are now fully
29 embedded in the infrastructure of Trade book industry, with a sales increase of 44% in 2012 and
30 an increase of 4,660% since the format first began to gain traction in 2008. (5.)

31
32 That dramatic rise of eBooks is leveling, however, while the world of transportation research and
33 information publishing adopted a wait-and-see approach when it comes to eBooks in the sense
34 that the "fiction reading public" knows it. While some eBook publications (mainly in PDF
35 format) enter the transportation research world, key publishers like the Transportation Research
36 Board (TRB), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
37 (AASHTO), the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and technical associations and
38 societies such as the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and American Concrete Institute
39 (ACI) have yet to initiate much in the way of eBook publishing, licensing and distribution. It is
40 not clear if government agencies like the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) plan to
41 publish in eBook formats beyond PDF or HTML in the near future. There is, however, a large
42 amount of electronic publishing by these groups, often tied to formats such as CD-ROM and
43 there are some licensing agreements to third-party distributors (like Knovel) or distribution
44 through publisher-hosted licensed databases (like ASCE).

45

1 BookStats notes: “As with any new product category, e-books enjoyed their strongest gains, at
2 least in terms of percentage increase, in the first few years following their introduction. In 2008
3 and 2009, driven by the launch of the Kindle and later the Nook, e-book sales rose 354% and
4 198%, respectively. As publishers began to make more print books available in digital formats,
5 e-book sales surged from under \$900 million in 2010 to over \$2 billion the following year,
6 adding \$1.24 billion in sales in 2011.” (5.)

7
8 It seems likely that technical, scientific and research content, especially content specific to
9 transportation, engineering or state government, is too small a segment of the publishing market
10 to appear on the radar screen, especially when translated from traditional to eBook formats.

11
12 A 2013 press release from the Association of American Publishers and the Book Industry Study
13 Group (which co-publish BookStats), notes: “The increases were fueled by a year of strong new
14 releases, particularly in the romance genre, and even more widespread popularity of eBooks than
15 in past years. This growth occurred despite the loss of numerous brick-and-mortar stores in 2012
16 and a lower cost for eBooks than print books, which translated to higher quantities of eBooks
17 sold.” It goes on to state: “The consistent growth of eBooks demonstrates that publishers have
18 successfully evolved the technology environment for their content – more so than other
19 historically print-based content industries” and concludes with the observation that “The most
20 pivotal driver of eBooks remains Adult Fiction, with Children’s/Young Adult also showing
21 strong numbers.” (6.)

22
23 But transportation libraries do not collect fiction, and even if discussion is focused solely on the
24 popularity of commercial eBooks, eBook readers and tablet computers, solely focused on titles
25 purchases for mass market consumption by institutions like public libraries, most casual
26 observers of the eBook revolution miss an important reality: Relationships between eBook
27 publishers, libraries and their customers remain murky at best, with a host of technical and
28 practical barriers to eBook lending that are constantly changing, yet still largely unresolved.

29
30 When translated from the large, robust and adequately-funded worlds of academic and public
31 libraries to the small, underdeveloped and inadequately funded world of transportation libraries
32 one finds few best practices or experimentation with eBook lending.

33 34 **Transportation Libraries Are ‘Special’**

35 Research on eBook uptake in U.S. libraries focuses on libraries by “type,” and the most common
36 categories are: Public Libraries (nonprofit support with public funds) , Academic Libraries
37 (tuition supported for teaching and research), and School Libraries (K-12 learning). Despite
38 their subject matter, transportation libraries that are located at Universities are best characterized
39 as academic libraries. No transportation libraries in the U.S. are “public libraries” or “school
40 libraries.” The closest peer group to the VDOT Research Library is state-DOT funded libraries,
41 most of which are members of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) transportation division,
42 and characterize themselves as “Special Libraries.” Most transportation library personnel in the
43 United States are members of that SLA Division, which helps them focus their limited resources
44 on meeting challenges specific to their sector.

45

1 Because most transportation libraries in the United States are chronically under-funded and
2 under-staffed few have explored eBooks in depth, instead facing more immediate challenges
3 such the conventional collection, preservation and access to print materials in traditional ways.
4 Further, many transportation libraries do not have adequately degreed staff, or employ “solo
5 librarians.” Some of those libraries do not have a library automation system (or run a non-
6 standardized system) and some do not provide access to a single licensed database, so they seem
7 unlikely to implement eBook lending programs any time soon. Ironically, those libraries (with
8 their lack of physical space, budgets, personnel to process print books, and lack of automation)
9 may be most likely to benefit from eBook collections. The closest research available is academic
10 and public library practices regarding eBooks.

11 12 **The Academic Library/eBook Landscape**

13 Academic libraries were the earliest adopters when eBooks hit the marketplace, due largely to
14 their larger staffs, budgets, better IT support and high tolerance for ambiguity. In 2012, 95% of
15 academic libraries surveyed by Library Journal offered eBooks to patrons—roughly the same as
16 the previous year, indicating a possible leveling of eBooks at those institutions. At the 339
17 academic libraries surveyed, eBooks had been available for 5.2 years on average, with 19%
18 indicating they had carried eBooks for more than 8 years. Quantity of eBooks offered at those
19 libraries did not plateau, however, but increased at a progressively slower annual rate from 2010-
20 2012. Their annual eBook additions slowed from 62% increases in '10/11 to 30% increases in
21 '11/'12. The average number of eBooks offered by Graduate libraries surveyed in '12 was
22 13,880 titles. For Undergraduate libraries it was 80,700 titles. For 2-year Colleges it was
23 32,400 titles. Drivers for eBook acquisition at academic libraries were “projected usage” with a
24 focus on “24/7 access,” followed by “supports distance learners” and “[Allows] multiple users at
25 one time.” (8.)

26
27 Core publishers and key book titles have been easier for academic libraries to locate and acquire
28 in eBook form than for most other types of libraries.

29 30 **The Public Library/eBook Landscape**

31 Public libraries, more than any other type of U.S. library are on the front lines of the unresolved
32 tug of war between book publishers, eBook vendors and libraries, according to the 2012 Survey
33 of Ebook Usage in U.S. Public Libraries. The biggest complicating factor for public libraries is
34 the desire of their patrons to access to popular fiction, the majority of which is controlled by the
35 “Big Six” publishing companies. These are the 6 multinational corporations that control most of
36 the Western world’s publishing—Simon and Schuster, HarperCollins, Random House,
37 Macmillan, The Penguin Group and Hachette. The majority of the popular fiction for sale in
38 retail stores and on sites like Amazon.com comes from the Big Six, which collectively control
39 hundreds of smaller imprints.

40
41 Those publishing houses, with the exception of Random House, recently run afoul of the U.S.
42 Department of Justice due to their attempts to keep the price of eBooks artificially high. In April
43 2012 the Justice Department filed suit against 5 of the Big Six publishers and Apple. Since then,
44 all of the publishers have agreed to settlement terms. Apple, accused of playing the “central
45 role” in the price fixing scheme, has yet to settle. The Department of Justice alleges the price-
46 fixing conspiracy “was created to challenge Amazon's dominance in the ebook market. The

1 publishers and Apple sought to raise e-book prices above the \$9.99 price tag favored by
2 Amazon.” (9.)

3
4 Conversely, Amazon has been accused of artificially lowering prices for eBooks (a technique
5 called “loss leading” used to draw in customers and stimulate other Amazon-related sales,
6 including Kindle devices). Public libraries and their users have been caught in the middle as
7 pricing and lending models gradually emerge. When Apple entered the digital books market
8 with its iPad in January 2010, Amazon had nearly 90 percent of the e-book market. Amazon
9 now has about 65 percent of the e-book market, while Barnes & Noble has 20 percent and Apple
10 has 10 percent, according to Cowen & Co estimates. (10.)

11
12 As public library users acquire the hardware and realize they have access to eBooks, they are
13 borrowing more and more of them relative to all books loaned by public libraries. According to
14 the 2012 Survey of Ebook Usage in U.S. Public Libraries: “Ebook circulation in public libraries
15 doubled from 2009 to 2010 and quadrupled from 2010 to 2011. Three-quarters of respondents
16 remarked that they have seen “dramatic increases” in demand over the last year, the result of
17 more patrons acquiring ereading devices and libraries acquiring and marketing their ebook
18 collections. Their expectation is that circulation will increase another 67% this year.” (2.)

19 20 **The Transportation Library/eBook Landscape**

21 Considering this background it is no wonder that the majority of transportation libraries have
22 been sitting on the sidelines when it comes to eBooks. Only the most intrepid libraries with
23 robust programs, deep pockets and large staffs have had the resources to explore eBook lending.
24

25 **The Mn/Dot Library Kindle Pilot Project**

26 The lone transportation library (aside from University libraries) known to have experimented
27 with eBooks and eBook lending is the Minnesota DOT Library. The Mn/DOT Library is widely
28 considered the highest functioning state DOT library in the country, of about 35 DOT libraries in
29 existence at this time.
30

31 In August 2009, the Mn/DOT Library purchased four Amazon Kindle DX devices and in April
32 2011, the library purchased two more Kindles. The library reports to the agency’s Research
33 Services Section, tasked by the agency’s Commissioner with driving transportation innovation.
34 The library used the opportunity to explore eBook lending through what were then state-of-the-
35 art eBook readers. The library purchased eBooks for the Kindles from Amazon as a single
36 licensee, and loaded all titles in each of the readers (a move not prohibited at that time by
37 Amazon’s terms of use). The Mn/DOT Library cataloged each device and circulated the Kindles
38 as they circulate traditional books. The original intent was to preload PDF and technical content
39 on the devices, though these early generation Kindles were still not ideal at that time for reading
40 PDF documents. Instead, title selection for their pilot project was shaped by serendipity. During
41 this era the library was also implementing a program called the Commissioner’s Reading Corner
42 to support the Commissioner’s notions of servant leadership. Accordingly, the library supplied
43 copies of titles on the recommended reading list via the Kindles.
44

45 A subsequent user-satisfaction survey conducted by the library (N=35) indicated high levels of
46 satisfaction from patrons who used the devices, and library staff reported that, for many users at

1 this early stage of eBook readers, it was their first experience with such a device. Library staff
2 reported that using the Kindles to circulate titles had many advantages but some drawbacks.
3 Today the Kindles are still in use. Each device contains 32 Amazon-purchased eBooks (one
4 purchased copy placed on each of the 6 Kindles) and an additional 7 eBooks in PDF format, for a
5 total of 39 titles per device. Those devices have collectively been circulated 190 times, but
6 circulation has trailed off.

7
8 There is some disagreement as to the legality of libraries loaning Kindles loaded with e-book
9 content. The model of libraries circulating print materials under the auspices of the First Sale
10 Doctrine does not appropriately serve the circulation of e-readers. The fact that a Kindle book
11 purchased from Amazon may be legally distributed to up to six separate electronic devices
12 reflects a license tailored to an individual rather than an agency. When contacted by librarians
13 from different institutions, however, representatives from Amazon have given conflicting
14 answers on whether or not libraries may loan Kindles. To date, there has been no publicized
15 occurrence of Amazon or its contracting publishers asking a Kindle-loaning library to
16 discontinue its program. (11.)

17
18 Due to the legal ambiguity of Kindle lending, changes to Amazon's Kindle Store terms of use,
19 and a few high-profile incidents reported in the media, and few libraries today lend kindles or
20 other devices preloaded with eBooks. According to Amazon "Kindle content is licensed, not
21 sold," although few Kindle users realize that when they purchase eBooks they do not own the
22 books they are purchasing. Unlike physical books purchased from Amazon, which are owned by
23 the lawful holder and to which the first-sale doctrine applies.

24
25 The first-sale doctrine is a legal principle that limits a lawful owner's rights to control a book (or
26 other copyrighted content) after it has been sold for the first time, however it does grant the
27 owner the right to lend, resell, gift or even destroy the book. The doctrine enables the
28 distribution chain of copyrighted products, library lending, gifting, rentals and secondary markets
29 for copyrighted works. The first-sale doctrine as a legal principle can apply to physical items as
30 well as digital content downloaded over the Internet. In most cases eBooks are sold with terms
31 or conditions that limit or prohibit their resale or redistribution. This is why "used" eBooks can
32 not typically be or given to a library or gifted to a friend the way printed books can. Today the
33 Kindle Store Terms of Use, state: "Unless specifically indicated otherwise, you may not sell,
34 rent, lease, distribute, broadcast, sublicense, or otherwise assign any rights to the Kindle Content
35 or any portion of it to any third party." (12.)

36 37 **The VDOT's "Screen-Only" eBook Collections**

38 In recent years the Research Library at VDOT has increased the quantity of licensed electronic
39 collections providing full-text databases that allow employees "direct desktop access" to
40 electronic periodicals, standards, technical reports, and books from VDOT computers. Today the
41 library's electronic collections comprise over 920,000 digital objects, compared to the library's
42 48,000 volumes of physical holdings. Subscription databases now include 33 collections from
43 11 vendors, including: EBSCO, Knovel, ASCE, ASTM, MetaPress and Skillsoft, all of which are
44 accessible to every VDOT employees for unlimited 24/7 self-service access. Increasingly, those
45 and other databases provide access to electronic books, typically in PDF or HTML format.
46 While those resources are technically "eBooks" they are not portable, in that they are designed

(in most cases restricted) to “on-screen-only reading.” While this approach to providing eBook access has been a starting point at VDOT, it is not what most users think of when the term eBook is used. Most people conceptualize eBooks in terms of fiction “bestsellers” as opposed to the scientific or technical books required by transportation professionals at a state department of transportation, or business, management and leadership books that might be used by their administrators.

TABLE 3: VDOT Databases that Offer “Screen Only” eBook Access

Database/Year Acquired	Vendor	Titles Available	Patron Use FY13
ASCE Research Library (2010)	ASCE	300	n/a
ASTM DOT Web Portal (2012)	ASTM	325	n/a
Knovel (2011)	Knovel	1,029	1,713
Books24x7 (2008)	Skillsoft	35,500	1,386
Total	4	37,154	3,099

Note: ASCE eBook content was added late in FY13 and usage data is not yet available. ASTM usage reports are not granular enough to allow the library to differentiate eBook accesses from accesses of ASMT standards or journal articles. The VDOT fiscal year is July 1-June 30.

CONCLUSIONS

- The VDOT Research Library has a mandate for innovative practices and the library’s customers are heavy users of other electronic resources provided by the library. The library offers many “virtual” services and collections and EBSCO eBooks would fit well within models of patron direct access and self service.

- There is not yet perfect clarity in the eBook lending world in terms of: content, pricing, device preference, acquisitions and distribution. Further, eBook lending programs at libraries are not easily implemented. However, the timing is right for the VDOT Research Library to provide access to eBooks and the EBSCO eBooks platform offers a viable option for that implementation. It has a well-designed search and retrieval interface for patrons, links to user education materials user support through EBSCO, and back-end reporting, cataloging and acquisitions mechanisms adequate enough help professionally staffed modern libraries manage and facilitate eBook use gather usage statistics after the fact.

- From an Information Technology and support perspective, it was acceptable for eBook users to have to install Adobe Digital Editions in order to check out eBooks, and those who needed to log IT tickets for the installation were typically able to do so quickly and without incident. No other significant IT hurdles were gauged as insurmountable during the study.

- Users were enthusiastic about using their own personal eBook readers, however, the lack of support for Kindles reduced the number of “portable” eBook users by about 30%. That may be an acceptable loss until a time when Amazon eases access restrictions or produces an emulator that will allow EBSCO users to view eBooks on Kindle. It may take years for eBook lending at libraries to approach the ease and convenience of consumer eBook purchasing, but the eBook lending experience of the EBSCO eBooks database was tolerable for VDOT employees, who demonstrated a remarkable curiosity about eBooks and persistence in accessing them.

- EBSCO offers acceptable title/publisher lists for lease, and pricing is reasonable enough that the library should consider leasing options for content. Since there is little long-term

1 clarity about devices or standards, the library should not commit to purchasing “perpetual rights
2 options” for eBooks at this time. Further, research indicates that the best pricing comes from
3 large scale eBook leasing programs.

4
5 • Selection of an appropriate collection will be the single most critical element in the
6 success of an eBook program at VDOT if EBSCO is selected as the vendor. Like the library’s
7 print collection, which serves many diverse groups of the agency, eBooks need not serve only
8 Engineering or other “technical” information needs of the agency. Project management,
9 construction, leadership, management, wellness, business functions and many other “general”
10 topic areas may be the best initial place to start with eBooks.

11
12 • Key content related directly to transportation, engineering or research is not available
13 through EBSCO or other vendors today and may not be for some time. When depends upon the
14 whims of each publisher. The Big Six” transportation publishers held by the VDOT Research
15 Library (TRB, AASHTO, ASCE, ITE, ACI, and FHWA) do not appear to publish much, if any
16 material in EPUB format or other eBook formats beyond PDF and HTML. That may not be an
17 obstacle to reading those publications on portable devices (especially tablets), but the library will
18 need to formulate strategies to help patrons reconcile their options for accessing: traditional print
19 materials, eBooks and other forms of content from mobile devices.

20
21 • One weakness of the “Bring-Your-Own-Device” approach to eBook distribution is
22 that, unlike print access which requires no technology, not all VDOT employees own eBook
23 readers or the right readers for the system tested. This creates information haves and have-nots.

24
25 • One benefit of the EBSCO system is that it offers screen-only access to eBooks,
26 which is something VDOT employees are known users of. Screen only may not be ideal, but it
27 is better than no access at all, and for many types of information that is entirely appropriate. If
28 VDOT were ONLY testing the EBSCO system for mobile devices, it would be deficient.

29
30 • Should VDOT begin assigning employees tablet computers (there is currently a pilot
31 project with 25 iPads at the agency) it may be a moot point. The content will be on the mobile
32 device as long as the device is securely connected to the Internet and the user is authenticated, at
33 which point it is an “eBook reader” regardless of publication format.

34
35 • The dearth of content available in eBook formats from the “big 6” transportation
36 publishers (TRB, AASHTO, ACI, ITE, ASCE, ASTM, and FHWA) should not, by itself, be
37 considered an insurmountable impediment to transportation libraries interested in implementing
38 eBook lending programs

39 40 **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

41
42 • Modern transportation professionals need and want to be mobile and often do not
43 differentiate between eBooks and other types of electronic content, but class it all together as
44 content that they could gain instant online access to with the proper computing tools. The library
45 has been successful at acquiring full-text online collections for electronic papers, standards,
46 books and other content and should consider the development of a Mobile App that would help

1 VDOT employees turn “desktop access” to database content into “mobile access” to that content.

2
3 • If VDOT decides to implement the EBSCO or another eBook distribution platform,
4 the library should conduct an annual user-satisfaction survey to continually improve the eBook
5 lending experience for patrons.

6
7 • Additional research is recommended to clarify the position and future plans of
8 publishers in transportation research and information, specifically (TRB, AASHTO, ASCE, ITE,
9 ACI, and FHWA) to the transportation research community inclined to use eBook readers and
10 other portable reading devices.

11 12 13 **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

14
15 The author thanks the Virginia Center for Transportation Innovation and Research and the
16 Virginia Department of Transportation for their support of this research, particularly Dr. Jose
17 Gomez, Dr. Maureen Hammer, Gale Smith from the VDOT Research Library for sharing her
18 perspective on eBooks in relation to collection development, technical services and the current
19 composition of the VDOT Research Library’s print and electronic collections. The author also
20 wishes to thank Karen Neinstadt, Sheila Hatchell and the entire staff of the Mn/DOT Library.

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- 30
- 31
- 32

1 **APPENDIX 2: THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

2
3 **VDOT Research Library User Satisfaction Survey of EBSCOhost Ebook Collection**
4 **Database**

5
6
7 **1. Would you like to use e-books for your work and professional development at VDOT?**

- 8
9 a. Yes (proceed to question 2)
10 b. No (skip to question 14)
11 c. I'm not sure (skip to question 14)
12
13
14

15 **2. When doing work/professional development at VDOT, would you generally prefer**
16 **printed books or e-books?**

- 17
18 a. Prefer printed books
19 b. Prefer e-books
20 c. No preference
21

22 **3. Indicate your preference for reading EBSCOhost eBooks using each of these methods:**
23 (Frequency scale: I used this Often, I used this Sometimes, I Seldom used this, I Never used this)

- 24
25 a. Read onscreen “with one click” using EBSCO’s pdf viewer.
26 b. Read onscreen by downloading/installing Adobe Digital Editions Software and “checking
27 out” book.
28 c. Move book from your Adobe Digital Editions account to your personal eBook reading device.
29

30 **4. On a scale of 1 (difficult) to 5 (easy), how easy was searching for eBooks in the**
31 **EBSCOhost eBook Database Collection?**

32
33 **5. If you read EBSCOhost eBooks by downloading them on your personal eBook reader**
34 **(option 3 above) what kind of device did you use?**

- 35
36 a. Sony Reader
37 b. Apple iPad
38 c. Barnes & Noble Nook
39 d. Other: (Please indicate)
40

41 **6. If you used the EBSCOhost eBook Collection for onscreen reading but did not download**
42 **an eBook to a reading device (option c in question 3) explain why.**

43
44
45 **7. If you did not download an EBSCOhost eBook to your personal eBook reading device**
46 **but use such a device at home or elsewhere, specify the make/model here.**

1
2 **8. When conducting work/professional development at VDOT, what would you like to be**
3 **able to do if you had access to eBooks through the VDOT Research Library?**

4 (Frequency scale: Often, Sometimes, Seldom, Never)

- 5
6 a. Read it from a computer screen (desktop)
7 b. Print out relevant pages or chapters
8 c. Email it to myself
9 d. Bookmark or save the URL for future use
10 e. Save it or download it
11 f. Copy and paste the portions I want into a document I was working on
12 g. Purchase a printed copy of the book
13 h. Borrow a printed copy from the VDOT Research Library
14 i. Borrow a printed copy from another library though the VDOT Research Library's interlibrary
15 loan service.

16
17 **9. In performing your job/professional development at VDOT, how important are the**
18 **following e-book features to you?**

19 (Likert scale: Very Important, Somewhat Important, Neutral, Not Very Important, Not at All
20 Important)

- 21
22 a. Ability to find e-books in the VDOT Research Library's online catalog
23 b. Ability to find e-books in search engines (e.g., Google, Yahoo!)
24 c. Ability to download chapters or portions of the e-book to computer or laptop for later use
25 d. Ability to annotate, bookmark or make notes in a book
26 e. Ability to search within the full-text of a book
27 f. Ability to link to a particular chapter of a book
28 g. Ability to read on VDOT handheld device (e.g. Blackberry)
29 h. Ability to read on my personal e-book reading device, (e.g., Sony Reader, Kindle, Nook, iPad,
30 etc.)
31 i. Availability of a print copy of the same book for borrowing from the VDOT Research Library
32 j. Ability to purchase a "print-on-demand" printed copy of the book
33 k. Other: Please indicate

34
35 **10. Have you used an eBook offered through another library, such as your local public**
36 **library or a university library?**

- 37
38
39 a. Yes
40 b. No
41 c. I'm not sure

42
43 **11. Have you ever used an eBook purchased from a bookseller like Amazon.com or**
44 **received an eBook as a gift?**

- 45
46 a. Yes

1 b. No

2

3 **12. If you answered yes to question 11, what bookseller or service was used to acquire the**
4 **eBook?**

5

6

7 a. Amazon.com

8 b. Barnes & Noble

9 c. Apple iBooks/iBook Store

10 d. Other: Please indicate

11

12 **13. How did you discover that you had access to the EBSCOhost eBook Collection?**

13

14 a. InsideVDOT story

15 b. The Weekly Report

16 c. The Commissioner's Action Update

17 d. A colleague at VDOT told me

18 e. The VDOT Research Library website

19 f. Other

20 g. I don't remember

21

22 **14. When doing your work at VDOT, if a book you wanted were available in both paper**
23 **and e-book format, which would you choose? Why?**

24 (Open response)

25

26 **15. Have you ever accessed an eBook (not downloadable to eBook readers) through the**
27 **VDOT subscription for the database "Knovel" or the database "Books24x7."**

28 (Select all that apply)

29

30 a. Knovel (full-text pdfs of transportation and engineering information, including AASHTO
31 content)

32 b. Books24x7 (html eBooks for: IT, business, communications, and personal wellness
33 information)

34

35 **16. I have accessed other full-text subscription content available through the VDOT**
36 **Research Library.**

37 (Select all that apply)

38

39 a. ASCE Library (full-text pdfs of ASCE journals and papers)

40 b. NTIS Technical Reports Library (full-text pdfs of technical reports)

41 c. I H S (full-text pdfs of ASTM standards)

42 d. Business Book Summaries (full-text pdf summaries of business books)

43 e. Business Source Complete (full-text pdfs of articles from periodicals)

44 f. Transportation Research Record Online (full-text pdf articles from TRR)

45

1 **17. What topic area most closely matches your general professional duties or your general**
2 **areas of research interest?**

- 3
4 a. Civil Engineering
5 b. Management or Business
6 c. Law
7 d. Civil Rights
8 e. Life or Health Sciences
9 f. Economics
10 g. Environmental Sciences
11 h. Human Resources
12 i. Communications

13
14 **18. If none of the topic areas above closely match your work or professional duties at**
15 **VDOT, please specify your primary interest area here.**

16 (Open response)

17
18 **19. What Division of VDOT do you work at?**

19 (select one, drop down picklist)

20
21 **20. Do you have any further comments on the availability or use of e-books for your work**
22 **or professional development at VDOT?**

23 (Open response)

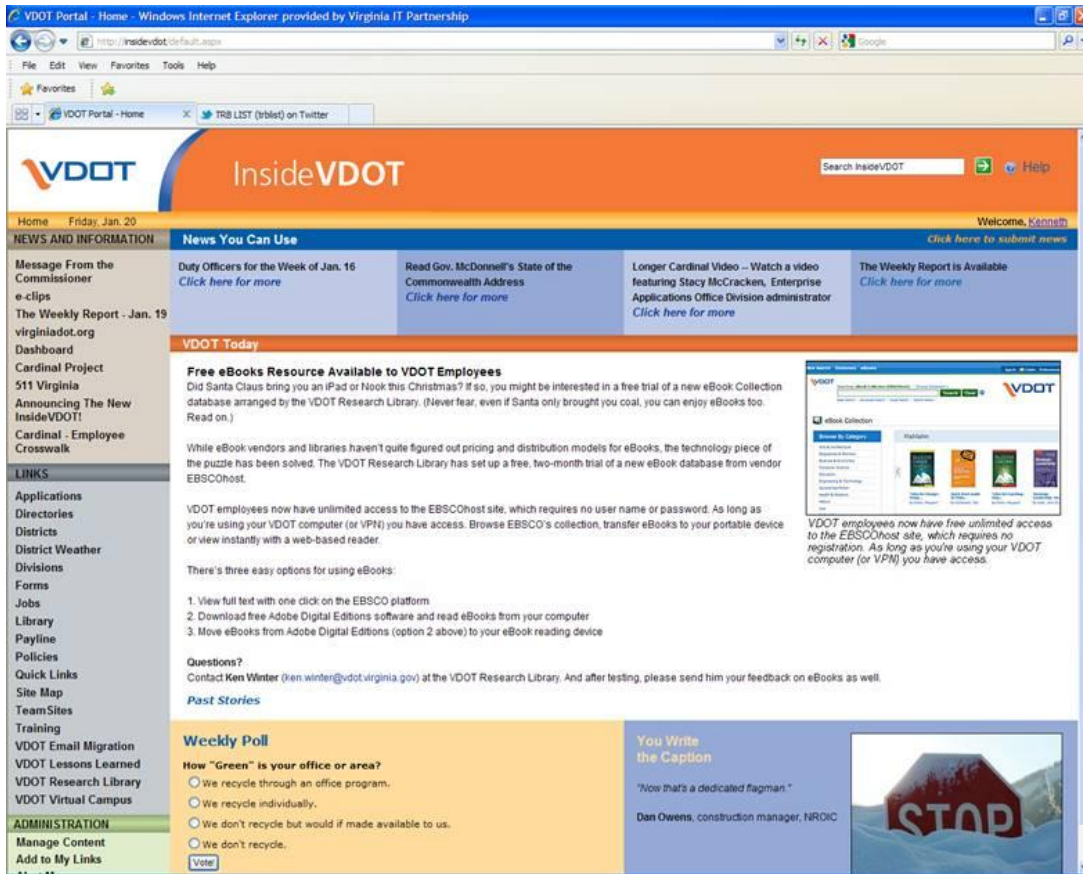
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1 APPENDIX 2: PROMOTING THE TRIAL

2

3 InsideVDOT News Story

4



5

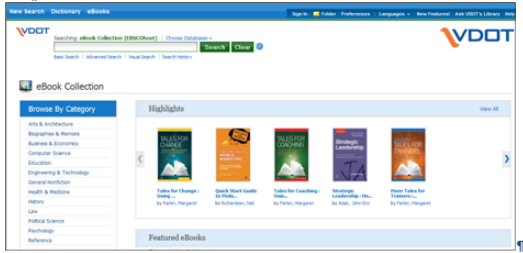
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7 User's Guide:

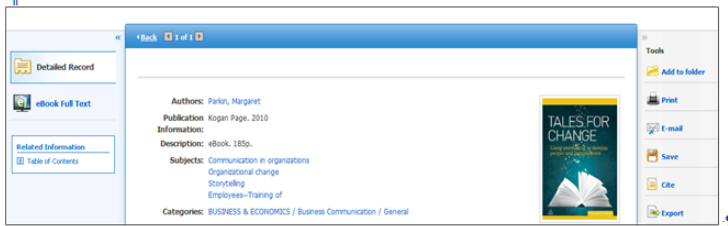
Here are the options on how to use the free eBook collection trial.

One (the simplest) uses an embedded "in-screen" pdf reader. So you really can read an online book with one click. In this case, there is no "checkout" so you can read it any time you want -- for as long as you want -- but you are stuck sitting in front of your computer.

Click on the link. You see something like this:



You click on the thumbnail and see something like this: See where it says "eBook Full-Text" on the left?



1
2
3

VDOT Weekly Report

Free eBooks

Two-Month Free Resource for VDOT Employees

Did Santa Claus bring you an iPad or Nook this Christmas? If so, you might be interested in a free trial of a new eBook Collection database arranged by the VDOT Research Library.

VDOT employees have unlimited access to the EBSCOhost site, which requires no user name or password. As long as you're using your VDOT computer (or VPN) you have access. Browse EBSCO's collection, transfer eBooks to your portable device or view instantly with a web-based reader. There's three easy options for using eBooks:

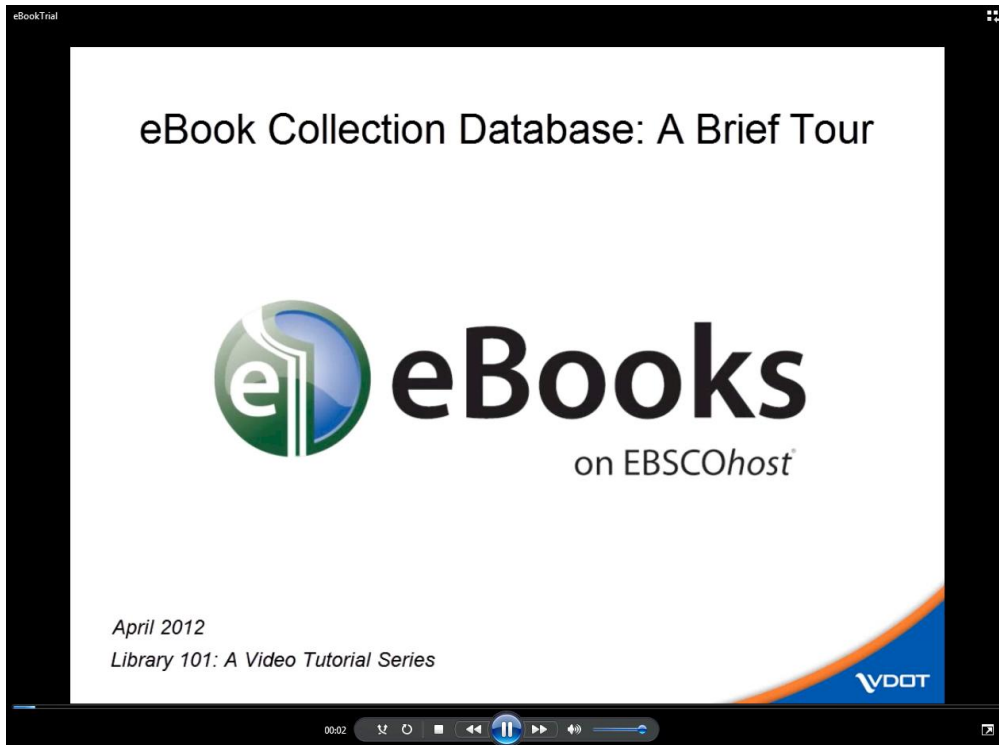
1. View full text with one click on the EBSCO platform
2. Download free Adobe Digital Editions software and read eBooks from your computer
3. Move eBooks from Adobe Digital Editions (option 2 above) to your eBook reading device

Questions? Contact **Ken Winter** at the VDOT Research Library. And after testing, please send him your feedback as well.

Print The Weekly Report and post in your work area for co-workers without online access.

4
5
6

Video Tutorial:



- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

###