

## New library e-catalogs offer expanded selection

January 25 2012, By HILLEL ITALIE , AP National Writer

---

(AP) -- Library users searching for e-books will soon get to look through a much bigger catalog and help decide what their local branch might carry.

OverDrive Inc., a major e-distributor for libraries, announced Wednesday the launch of a vastly expanded list for patrons, featuring not just [e-books](#) available for lending, but hundreds of thousands of those which include a collected of Edgar Allan Poe stories edited by Michael Connelly to foreign-language titles. Viewers can look at excerpts, purchase books from a retailer or request that their library add an e-book that wasn't being offered.

"We're allowing libraries to be better connected with their communities," OverDrive CEO Steve Potash said during a recent interview. "Right now, we have librarians who are trying to add books to the e-catalog but don't always know what to add. Now, by exposing a publisher's entire list, it becomes like crowdsourcing, where patrons can offer their suggestions."

Potash said he expects the program to begin within a couple of weeks, in a handful of library systems, including New York City, Boston and Cuyahoga County in Ohio.

In the Boston library system, Rick Warren's million-selling "The Purpose Driven Life" is currently unavailable as an e-book, but will appear in the new catalog. A patron might also ask about "In the Shadow of the

Master," a collection of Poe stories and essays about him that Connelly edited; or Heather Graham's historical romance "Runaway."

"If we had an unlimited budget we'd just buy everything ahead of time, so we have to purchase more wisely," said Michael Colford, director of library services for the Boston Public Library. "There are books which we obviously need, like current best-sellers, but there are a lot more books which aren't surefire hits. And we would have a much better idea of what to get if our customers were able to tell us."

The catalog will include offerings from hundreds of publishers, from Random House Inc. and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt to Lonely Planet and the children's publisher Nickelodeon. OverDrive also will feature thousands of foreign-language titles, in Russian, Spanish, Swedish and dozens of other languages

Potash noted that while Random House has digitized over 18,000 books, even larger public libraries offer a fraction of those titles.

"Now every new title, midlist title and early works will be included in a reader's search," Potash said.

The library e-market, like the commercial market, has grown rapidly and Potash said that in the past year OverDrive added dozens of publishers, including Lonely Planet and the religious publisher Thomas Nelson. He sees the new catalog as a "reward" for those "who are strong supporters of lending" and "very enlightened" about exposing their authors to libraries.

HarperCollins, which has restricted lending of its e-books, is participating, but not Simon & Schuster, Macmillan and other publishers who don't offer downloads to libraries, citing concerns about lost sales. Potash said he did not intend any criticism, but added that he was a

"little bit discouraged that publishers who have built some of their biggest successes around book clubs and word of mouth were underappreciating the value" of the library market.

Macmillan CEO John Sargent said that the publisher "continued to talk to the library community. We continue to be hopeful that our ongoing dialogue will solve the thorny problems this market presents."

©2012 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: New library e-catalogs offer expanded selection (2012, January 25) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-01-library-e-catalogs.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.