



Navigating the Digital Publishing Landscape

A guide to the evolving availability of digital content

A New Landscape

The rise of metered one copy/one user licensing has emerged in the digital publishing industry. The Big Five book publishers have moved eBook and digital audiobook availability almost exclusively to metered licensing. Perpetual licensing remains available but is often cost-ineffective and is slowly phasing out for high-demand titles.

One copy/one user licensing better serves popular titles likely to result in high utilization. And with the Big Five only offering most new and trending titles via metered licenses, libraries rely on this model to deliver highly sought-after content.

Transactional licensing, however, offers a 100% return on investment and delivers more catalog permanency. Whereas 99% of the Hoopla Instant catalog is maintained over time, metered content is temporary—with many licenses expiring long before the library has been able to realize the full value of the purchase.

When To License and When To Pay Per Use

Below is a comparison of true costs per circ for an audiobook available from a major publisher and authored by a *New York Times* bestselling author. Older, backlist, or special interest titles offer better value as pay per use titles.



License list price

\$80

True cost per circ
(full utilization)

\$2.35

True cost per circ
(50% utilization)

\$4.71

True cost per circ
(25% utilization)

\$9.41

Pay per use price

\$2.51

True cost per circ

\$2.51

Assumes 21 day checkout period or 17 circs/year.

Digital Publishing Landscape

An Apples-to-Apples Comparison

When considering the purchase of a one copy/one user license, fully evaluate its true cost and consider that not all licenses will achieve full utilization. The numbers below are averages and will help define a better purchasing strategy for your library.

Licenses Types								
Publisher	Format	Perpetual	Metered				Pay Per Use	
			Meter Type w/List Price*	True Cost Per Circ (100% Util.)	True Cost Per Circ (50% Util.)	True Cost Per Circ (25% Util.)	List Price/ True Cost Per Circ	On Hoopla
Penguin Random House		No	Time: 24 Months <\$55	\$1.57	\$3.14	\$6.11	\$5.50	PPU Pricing Not Suitable
		No	Time: 12 Months <\$27.50	\$1.57	\$3.14	\$6.88	\$5.50	PPU Pricing Not Suitable
		Yes					\$9.50***	PPU Pricing Not Suitable
Hachette Limited Availability		No	Time: 24 Months <\$65	\$1.86	\$3.82	\$7.22	\$2.89	✓
		No	Time: 24 Months <\$80	\$2.29	\$4.71	\$8.89	\$2.99	✓
Simon & Schuster Limited Availability		No	Time: 24 Months \$53	\$1.51	\$3.12	\$5.89	\$1.07	✓
		No	Time: 24 Months \$80	\$2.29	\$4.71	\$8.89	\$3.15	✓
Macmillan Limited Availability		No	Time: 24 Months \$60	\$1.71	\$3.53	\$6.67	\$1.36**	✓
		Yes					\$3.80**	✓
HarperCollins		No	Usage: 26 Borrows \$24	\$0.92	\$1.85	\$3.43	\$2.92	✓
		Yes					\$2.96	✓
Blackstone Publishing		Yes					\$0.96	✓
		Yes					\$2.49	✓
Recorded Books		Yes					\$2.61	✓
Dreamscape		Yes					\$1.35	✓
		Yes					\$2.74	✓

Hoopla Instant (pay per use)
Average Cost Per Circulation

Audiobooks

\$2.52

eBooks

\$1.61

All Formats (Combined)

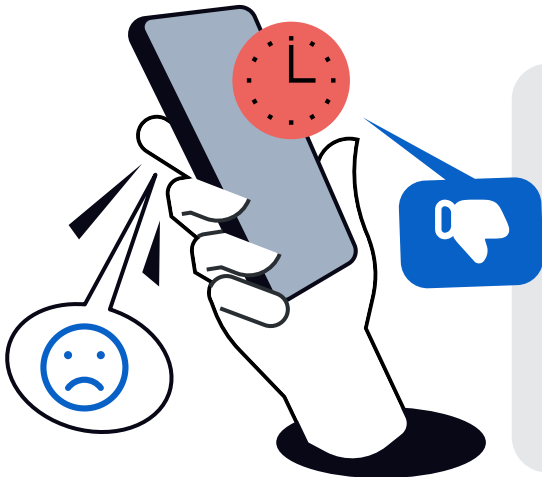
\$2.15

A New Strategy

The answer isn't one model or the other—it's both.

Libraries are developing stronger collection development policies that **strategically blend metered, perpetual, and transactional licenses**, optimizing budgets and allowing for a better patron experience.

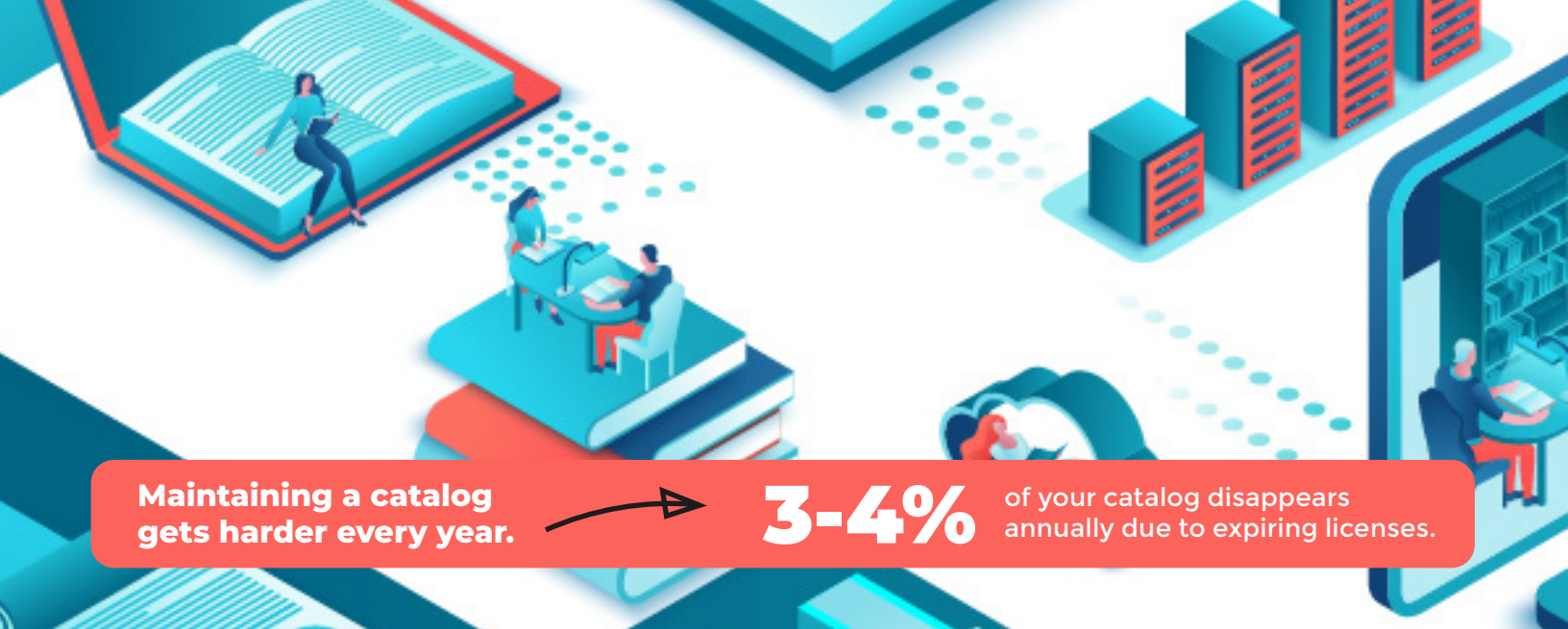
Metered licenses can bridge the gap to pay per use availability, while features such as Hoopla's hold relief functionality reduce the need for additional one copy/one user licenses.



Did you know?

73.5%

of usage-metered licences **expire** before 50% utilization.



Maintaining a catalog gets harder every year.



3-4%

of your catalog disappears annually due to expiring licenses.

Here are some best practices to help navigate the increasing shift to metered licenses:

Use only one platform for your digital collection.

Offering titles through different platforms is confusing for the patron and creates a headache for the library. Resulting abandoned holds create a false sense of need for the library, causing money to be spent on unnecessary one copy/one user licenses.

Use a platform that advocates for better pricing.

While some platforms offer a standard price, Hoopla negotiates on behalf of libraries for fair pricing. This is important, as some publishers price their pay per use titles in a way that is unsustainable to the library market.

Use data to understand true cost per circ.

Because many metered licenses expire before full utilization, the cost per circ of some materials may be higher than libraries realize. Before renewing an expiring license, use available tools and resources (such as Hoopla's side-by-side comparison tools) to evaluate past—and expected future—utilization and all licensing models available for the title.

Determine budgets based on patron usage patterns.

Catalog titles such as children's titles, indie books, and timeless favorites are best served via pay per use, while one copy/one user dollars are better spent on new and trending titles that circulate frequently or are only available through metered licensing.