How e-book vendors attract publishers and academic libraries to their platforms: A critical discourse analysis of vendors' websites

Mei Zhang[a] , Darshai Hollie[b]

[a] School of Library and Information Science, Simmons University, USA
mei.zhang@simmons.edu

[b] School of Library and Information Science, Simmons University, USA hollie@simmons.edu

ABSTRACT

Academic libraries primarily obtain access to e-books through vendors, rather than individual publishers. These vendors work as intermediary by connecting publishers as the content providers with academic libraries as consumers. Many LIS studies examine how libraries select e-book vendors, and a few research explore how publishers choose vendors to disseminate their e-resources; however, much less is known about vendors' strategies used to attract both publishers and academic libraries.

We have collected over 150 webpages related to e-book products from six major e-book vendors in humanities and social sciences—EBSCO, ProQuest, ProjectMUSE, JSTOR, ACLS, and De Gruyter, and grouped them based on three categories: 1) webpages without targeting a particular group of audience; 2) webpages designed for academic libraries/ librarians; 3) webpages designed for publishers. We then adopt Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis, by moving beyond the examination of the literal meanings of the text, to explore how meaning is constructed at local, institutional, and societal levels. Specifically, we will examine three dimensions of the text: micro (description of the text), meso (interpretation of the meaning of the text), and macro (explanation of the relations between discourse and social context). This discourse analysis will systematically focus on these vendors' self-identifications and how they market and communicate their missions and distinctions from other vendors to both publishers and libraries. We will present preliminary findings from the critical discourse analysis.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Publishing; Scholarly communications; Academic libraries.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

e-book vendors, critical discourse analysis, platform studies.