

Controlled Digital Lending, Equitable Access to Knowledge and Future Library Services

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Abstract : Libraries across the world have been an innovation engine of creativity and opportunity in many decades. The ongoing global epidemiology outbreak and health crisis experience illuminates potential reforms, rethinking beyond traditional library operations and services. Controlled Digital Lending (CDL) is one of the emerging technologies libraries used to deliver information digitally in support of online learning and teaching and make educational materials more affordable and more accessible. CDL became a popular term in the United States of America (USA) as a result of a white paper authored by Kyle K. Courtney (Harvard University) and David Hansen (Duke University). The paper gave the legal groundwork to explore CDL: Fair Use, First Sale Doctrine, and Supreme Court rulings. Library professionals implemented this new technology to fulfill their users' needs. Three libraries in the state of Florida (University of Florida, Florida Gulf Coast University, and Florida A&M University) started a conversation about how to develop strategies to make CDL work possible at each institution. This paper shares the stories of piloting and initiating a CDL program to ensure students have reliable, affordable access to course materials they need to be successful. Additionally, this paper offers an overview of the emerging trends of Controlled Digital Lending in the USA and demonstrates the development of the CDL platforms, policies, and implementation plans. The paper further discusses challenges and lessons learned and how each institution plans to sustain the program into future library services. The fundamental mission of the library is providing users unrestricted access to library resources regardless of their physical location, disability, health status, or other circumstances. The professional due diligence of librarians, as information professionals, is to make educational resources more affordable and accessible. CDL opens a new frontier of library services as a mechanism for library practice to enhance user's experience of using libraries' services. Libraries should consider exploring this tool to distribute library resources in an effective and equitable way. This new methodology has potential benefits to libraries and end users.

Keywords : controlled digital lending, emerging technologies, equitable access, collaborations

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