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<b>Authors(s)</b>	Tynan, Mark, McCarney, Eoin
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**“Click here to order this book”: A Case Study of Print and Electronic  
Patron-Driven Acquisition in University College Dublin**

Mark Tynan (Corresponding Author)

University College Dublin, Collection Services, James Joyce Library, UCD, Belfield, Dublin,  
Dublin 4 Ireland

Email: mark.tynan@ucd.ie

Eoin McCarney

University College Dublin, Collection Services, James Joyce Library, UCD, Belfield, Dublin,  
Dublin 4 Ireland

Abstract

University College Dublin became the first library in the Republic of Ireland to trial patron-driven acquisition (PDA) as a collection development tool in 2013. 42% of UCD Library's book budget was allocated to the project, which included both electronic and print books.

This paper describes the twelve month project from the tender stage, through evaluation and selection of supplier, to the final money being spent. We analyse which disciplines spent most money, and how usage of PDA titles compared to non-PDA orders placed in the same time period. Finally, we assess the impact of PDA on the library's workflow.

Keywords: Collection management, Library catalogue, E books, Academic staff, Users

## Introduction

Curiosity, open-mindedness, and an old fashioned “give it a go” mentality were the principal feelings we had when UCD Library first launched patron-driven acquisition in May 2013. It had been nearly nine months between deciding to try it out, and its actual launch. PDA was a new departure for UCD Library in collection development. Indeed, we were the pioneers of PDA in the Republic of Ireland, being the first library to use it as a collection development tool.

UCD librarians had traditionally been the ones that chose what books were purchased. In the early 2000s, that model had started to change and academic staff were largely responsible for what was bought. Academics submitted their reading lists and advised of research interests and the library purchased materials to support them. This shift from driver to facilitator was gradual and not entirely popular with either professional librarians or with academic staff. Some academics saw it as the library’s job to purchase books. Some librarians worried about the future of their role if responsibility for collection development was taken from them.

Patron-driven acquisition puts responsibility for the collection in the hands of the *user of the library*. Therefore, the emphasis is not on what librarians or academics *think* users *might* or *should* want, but on what users *actually* want. The largest group of users, or “patrons”, using the library are the students, and PDA puts collection development primarily in their hands. In theory, PDA should provide greater value for money, in increasing usage of library material and eliminating the need to delete unused items. Library staff had a lot of doubts regarding PDA, and at the time of its launch we did not yet know the answers to some of the questions that were being put to us. There were queries relating to the integrity of the

library's collection. Might PDA result in non-academic books being ordered, and a "dumbing down" of the collection? Might we miss out on niche books, published by smaller, local publishers? There were queries regarding our internal workflow. Would PDA take more time than it was worth? Would delivering PDA books to the users that ordered them take precedence over other books we were ordering, such as reading list material and research monographs? Would the catalogue be contaminated by bad PDA MARC records? Then there were the marketing and communication queries. How would we publicise PDA? How would students know what to do?

Our PDA experience would go some way towards answering these questions.

### **Literature review**

In his seminal article from 1969, Trueswell identified that on average only twenty per cent of a major academic library's collection was regularly borrowed and that this relatively small percentage made up eighty per cent of total borrowing (Trueswell). At this time most of the material purchased was largely librarian-selected. The level of inter-library lending among Association of Research Libraries at this time was further evidence that the material being selected by librarians was not satisfying their user's needs. This situation led to a number of new approaches to collection development which were based on analysis and were much more patron focused, changing from a "just in case" model to a "just in time" one (Nixon, Freeman and Ward). Some libraries analysed inter-library loan transactions in an attempt to predict which subjects areas they should collect in (Anderson et al.). Others began to purchase material requested on inter-library loan once they met pre-defined criteria (Alder).

While these methods were quite rudimentary in terms of both the analysis performed, and the technologies used, they were the beginnings of what we now know as patron-driven

acquisition. These initiatives, and most current iterations of patron-driven acquisition, have a common theme: an awareness of the low levels of usage for the majority of academic library book stock and a desire to address this in a systematic way. Obviously, over time technology has become far more sophisticated and the PDA processes we speak of today bear little resemblance to those of the 1970s but the guiding principles remain the same.

In the last ten years many university libraries have published case studies of their implementations of patron-driven acquisition (Schroeder, Wright and Murdoch), (Fischer et al.), (Fisher, Kurt and Gardner). Interestingly, the preponderance of the research conducted is on North American libraries, and there are relatively few European studies (Brinkman Dzwig). Walter H. Williams provides an overview of some of the American studies in his 2012 article (Walters). The majority of PDA studies fall into one of three thematic strands. The largest, and most zealous strand, consists of usage studies where PDA titles are found to be more heavily used than those selected by librarians or academic staff. The second, more agnostic strand acknowledges the benefits of PDA in terms of information delivery but expresses concerns about its long term effect on collection development. Finally, there is a small but increasing amount of literature which addresses some of the operational issues raised by PDA and its intervention into the traditional technical services workflow. The challenges of managing a PDA budget and maintaining a consistently high standard of catalogue records while multiple order models are in place are the specific focus of much of this strand of research (Draper).

### **UCD Library in context**

University College Dublin is the largest university in Ireland, home to over 25,000 students. The majority of UCD students are either undergraduate or postgraduate but there are also part-time evening students, distance and online learners, adult education, and

researchers. There are over 5,000 international students from 121 different countries. UCD consists of seven colleges and thirty-eight schools, as well as associated institutes and centres. Like the student base, the disciplines taught across UCD are varied and diverse, ranging from the humanities and the sciences to architecture and engineering. Our PDA project sought to support all students and all university disciplines, and our statistics below show that the results varied. Most colleges and schools benefitted in some way from PDA, but some were more suited than others.

UCD Library has five branches across the two university campuses: four on the main campus in Belfield, Dublin, and one on the Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School campus in Blackrock, Dublin. Internally, UCD Library is divided into five departments: Client Services, Collection Services, Research Services, Planning and Administration and Special Collections. The PDA project was developed and managed by the Collection Services department, which, as the name implies, manages all aspects of the library's physical and electronic collections. The PDA project required considerable input from most of the twenty-three staff of Collection Services, in particular the Head and Deputy Head of the department, four Cataloguing and Collection Development librarians (CDDLs, responsible for all aspects of the collection, including ordering, weeding, cataloguing, accepting and declining donations, and responding to collection related queries), an Acquisitions librarian (responsible for all databases and all e-books), two senior library assistants, and three library assistants. In addition to these, there was extensive support from the Client Services department (the "front of house" department in UCD Library, dealing directly with library users on a day-to-day basis), in particular six College Liaison Librarians (CLLs), who are responsible for teaching and learning support and are the first and main point of contact with academics and students.

## **Method**

Dr John B. Howard was appointed university librarian at UCD in 2009. Dr Howard came to UCD from the United States, having previously worked at Harvard University and Arizona State University, where he had successfully implemented a patron-driven acquisition project. The library's book budget had been very limited since 2007, when the economic downturn had taken hold in Ireland. The academic year of 2012/2013 was the first since that time that a substantial amount of funds were made available to the library to build up its book collection. When the increase in the library's book budget was confirmed, Dr Howard was keen to allocate some of those funds to PDA. Following discussions, it was decided to dedicate over forty per cent of the book budget to PDA. We knew that PDA would not satisfy all our user needs. Reading list items were essential and so orders sent in by academics in this way were ordered separately. We also needed to order some audio-visual material such as CDs and DVDs, and various other books that were useful to the library's collection, but not on reading lists and not available through PDA. This allayed some of the library staff's fears that PDA would affect our ability to order niche titles, or titles of a local interest, published by local or special interest publishers. We wanted to satisfy all our user needs but at the same time, we were anxious to allocate a significant amount of the budget to PDA, so that students would have their say on the collection. The significance of allocating such a high percentage of the budget, however, meant that a national tender for a supplier was legally required. The tender process proved to be long and arduous and would not have been necessary had we chosen to allocate less money to the PDA project. However, it would then have been much less extensive.

The tender process began in October 2012, when the library's Head of Collection Services began working with the university procurement office on preparations for the tender process. Under the advice of the procurement team, the library decided to proceed by way of a framework agreement. This meant that the supplier who fulfilled pre-determined criteria

specified in the tender would be selected as the PDA supplier for an agreed period of time. However, if more than one supplier fulfilled all the criteria, a “mini-competition” between them would be required, the “winner” of which would supply the full content for the project.

The initial tender notice was published on the Irish government’s public sector procurement website on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012. A number of minimum requirements were stipulated. The supplier had to have the technical capacity to integrate with UCD’s library management system (Millennium), facilitate both print and electronic PDA, generate and supply MARC records for all PDA material and comply with granular, flexible subject profiles which could be changed easily and at short notice. Once the suppliers matched this technical capacity, their responses were measured against the following criteria:

- Ultimate cost, i.e. the price of the books (50%)
- Product range, i.e. the range and variety of the books available (25%)
- Account management, i.e. how the supplier managed PDA, staffing, invoicing, etc. (25%).

To assist with the evaluation process a list of approximately fifty titles, (a mix of both electronic and print books), was supplied along with the tender documentation. Each supplier was to quote for as many of the titles as they could supply.

There were three responses to the tender, all of which were from suppliers based in the United Kingdom. One of these suppliers was eliminated immediately, as they could not supply any of the print books from the list of titles. The remaining two suppliers were judged to have met the criteria and were appointed to the framework agreement. A mini-competition now had to be held between these two suppliers to decide which would be awarded the PDA contract. At this point, more detailed work began in preparation for the mini-competition. In order to best assess the product range of the two suppliers, it was decided that subject profiles

would be developed for two schools from each of UCD's seven colleges. These profiles were drawn up by the four Collection Development and Description Librarians (CDDLs), with some input from the six College Liaison Librarians (CLLs). All the PDA literature stressed the importance of subject profiles and so we were determined to get them right. Profiling was an extremely detailed and time consuming process, requiring minute attention to detail in narrowing down each subject profile so that it best matched the requirements and needs of that school. The main criteria we used for the profiles was Dewey decimal classification, but we were also able to stipulate preferred options such as publishers, place and language of publication, and the type of binding.

The completed subject profiles were sent to both suppliers who were asked to respond with fully priced lists of material that they could supply in accordance with each profile. These lists were then evaluated against the same criteria outlined above, comparing price, range and accounting. While the quality of both responses was good, the ultimate winner of the tender (Ingram Coutts) achieved a higher score in terms of product range and had a more detailed proposal in relation to account management. Ingram Coutts were appointed to the PDA project on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013. This was nearly six months after the tender process began, a delay which meant that the academic year in UCD would have ended before PDA could be launched. This was not ideal but was unfortunately necessary in order to fulfil the obligations of the tender process.

We now had to submit subject profiles for all the remaining schools, not included in the mini-competition, for Ingram Coutts to begin loading PDA records in our catalogue. For the mini-competition, the four CDDLs had worked individually on their respective subject profiles, each having to complete a certain number, depending on what schools they were responsible for. To speed the process up, and eliminate the considerable overlapping of disciplines, it was decided to have one "master" subject profile for all of the thirty-eight

schools, which would then be sent to Ingram Couatts. The CDDLs held a number of meetings, minutely going down through Dewey numbers from 000 to 999. Reflecting the range of disciplines taught in UCD, and in order to make the widest possible range of books available to students, only a small number of Dewey numbers were excluded. The master subject profile was sent to Ingram Couatts, who responded with a range of proposed titles. The CDDLs assessed these titles and, after some small amendments, the profiles were deemed completed. While the profiles were time-consuming and the PDA project had to be delayed in order to get them right, the time taken was essential and proved to be worthwhile.

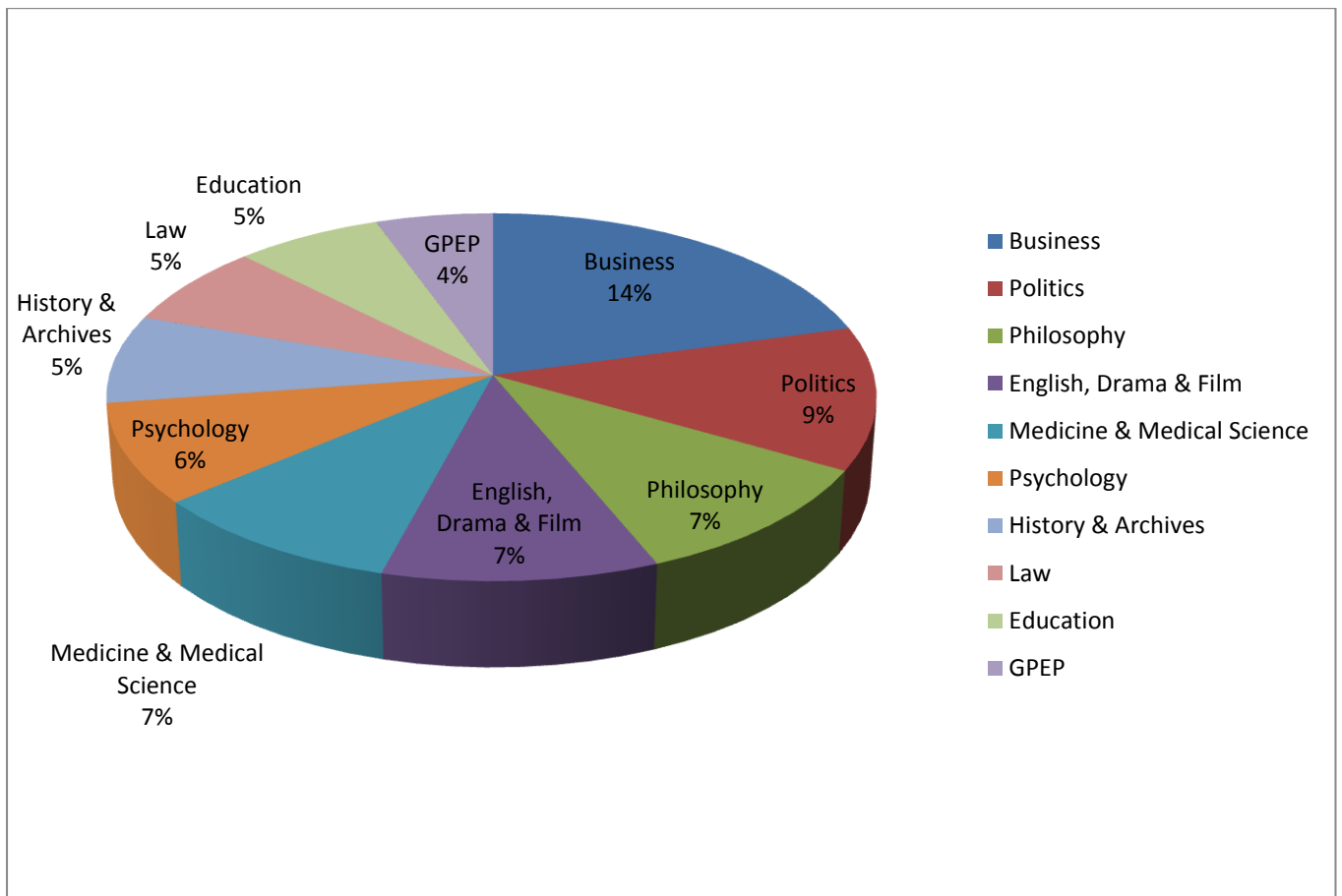
## **Results**

The first e-PDA MARC records were loaded into the library catalogue on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2013. Thirty-one e-PDA books were purchased in the first week, an impressive total considering we were out of term. Some development work was required to enable the Ingram Couatts print PDA application programming interface to work with our library management system, so print MARC records were not added for another seven weeks, on 27<sup>th</sup> June. Even with this delay, almost as many print books ended up being purchased as electronic ones, the final breakdown being **1,128** e-PDA books purchased, compared to **1,044** print PDA.

We know from feedback received during the project that some UCD schools did not think that PDA suited their needs. The School of Agriculture and Food Science and the School of Veterinary Medicine, for example, felt that important publishers in their field were excluded from the Ingram Couatts profiles. Nevertheless, 25 e-PDA and 14 print PDA books were purchased by the students of these schools. The School of Languages and Literatures felt that the books featured in the PDA project were too recent for their needs. We had limited PDA books to those published in 2012 and 2013, and Languages and Literatures primarily need older publications. The School of Art History did not feel that e-books best suited their

needs due to restrictions on the printing of images and so the e-book side of the project did not suit them.

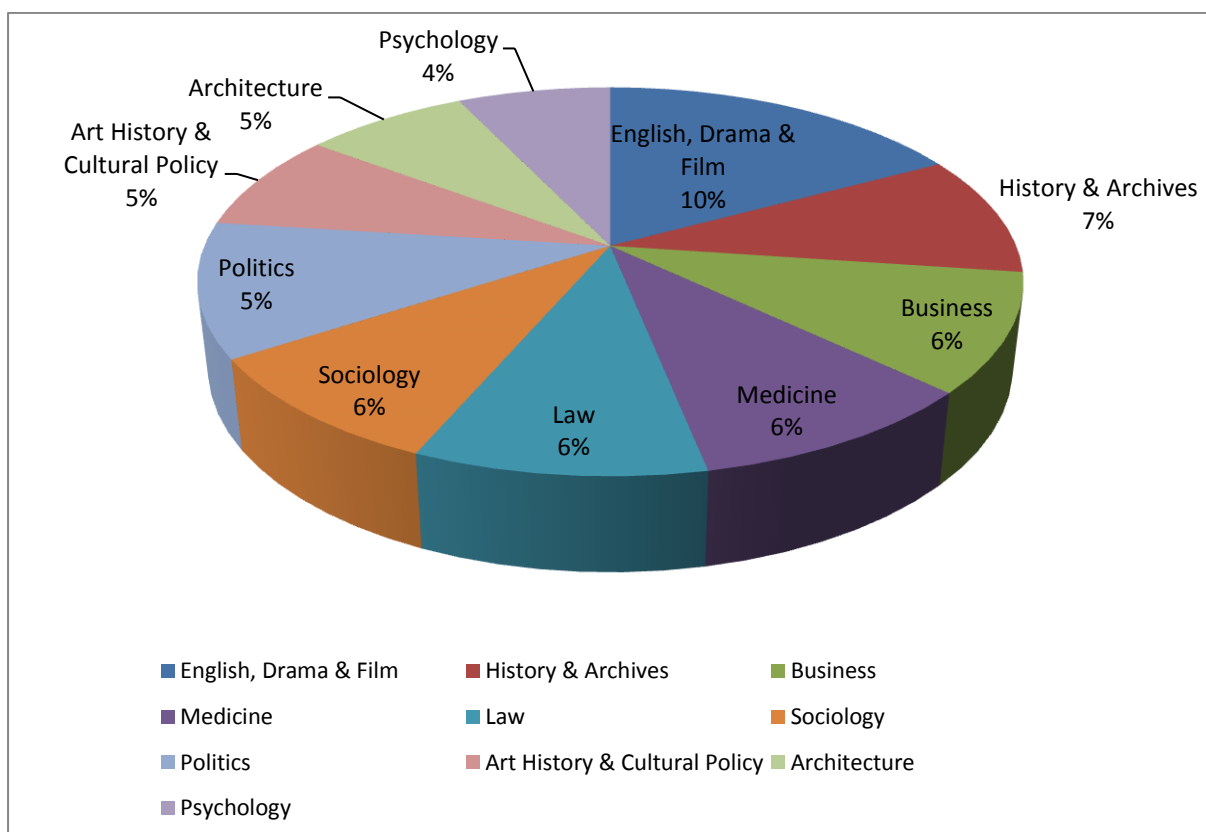
The ten most popular subjects in terms of e-PDA orders are illustrated in the table below (See Figure 1). These findings are consistent with subject breakdowns in other case studies (Fischer et al.), (Macicak and Schell), which consistently find a high level of take up for PDA among Business students.



**Fig 1: Breakdown of e-PDA orders by subject (Subjects assigned are equivalent to UCD schools)**

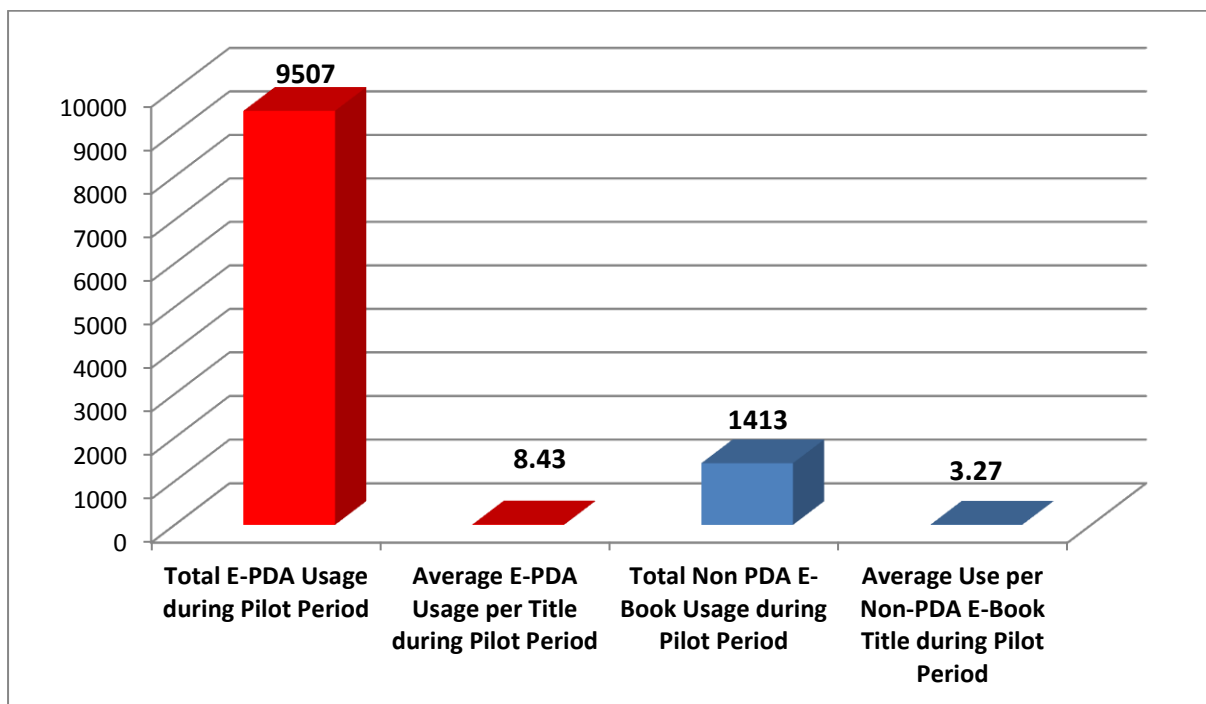
There was not a vast difference in subject spread between print and e-PDA orders. Seven of the ten most popular subjects in terms of e-PDA orders (Business, Politics, English, Drama & Film, Medicine & Medical Science, Psychology, History & Archives and Law) also featured

in the print top ten, albeit in slightly different order (See Figure 2). Most of these schools would be considered as “book-heavy” and consistently among the heaviest book purchasers and users in UCD. The School of English, Drama & Film, for example, also ordered the most reading list items. Interestingly, of the other three subjects represented in the top ten print PDA orders but not in the equivalent top ten e-PDA , two were those with a significant reliance on images, photographs and technical drawings (Art History & Cultural Policy, and Architecture). We found during the course of the PDA project that many of the top titles in these subjects were either unavailable electronically or were only available in part as important images were omitted due to third party copyright restrictions. This has led to an understandable preference among the academic community in these areas for print material, and is reflected in the PDA project.

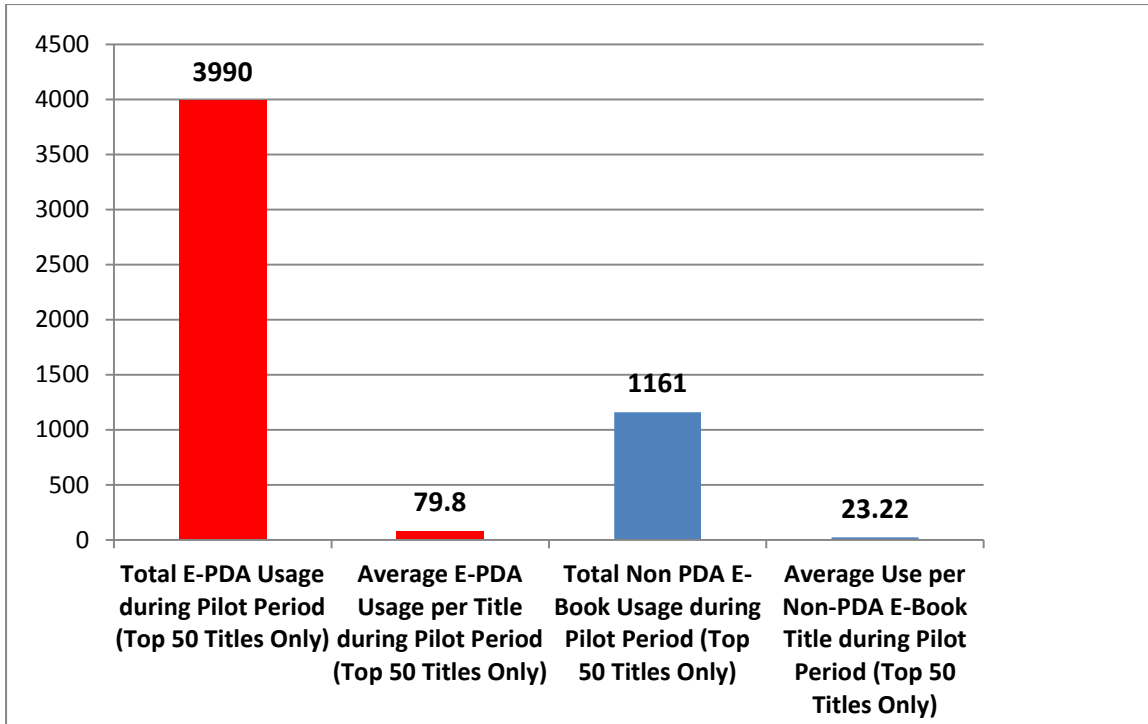


**Fig 2: Breakdown of print PDA orders by subject (Subjects assigned are equivalent to UCD schools)**

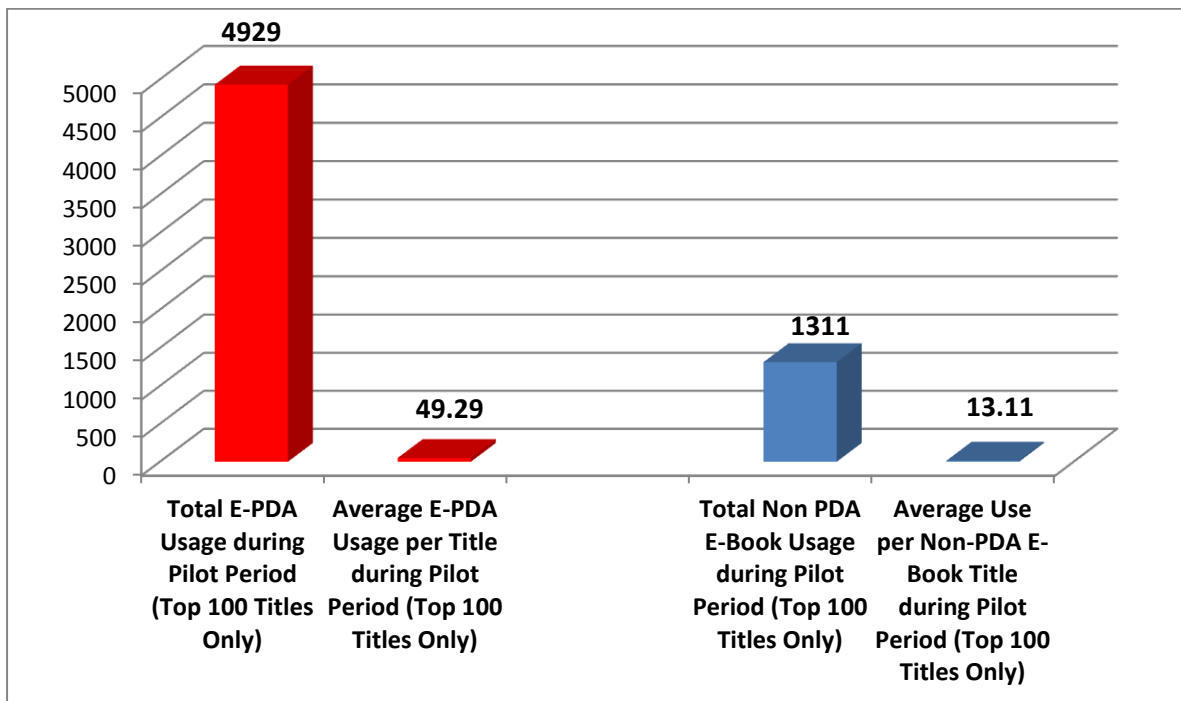
As we have discussed in the literature review above, the most consistent argument made in support of PDA is that PDA material is borrowed much more often than material selected by librarians or academic staff. We wanted to test this assertion with our data and the findings proved to be interesting. The graphs below illustrate that the average usage levels of e-PDA titles ordered during the period of the project (**8.45 uses per e-book ordered**) were significantly higher than those of non-PDA e-books ordered during the same time period (**3.27 uses per e-book ordered**) (See Figure 3). This disparity becomes even greater when we look at the top fifty and top one hundred titles (See Figures 4 and 5).



**Fig 3: Comparative usage of PDA and non-PDA e-book titles during the pilot period**

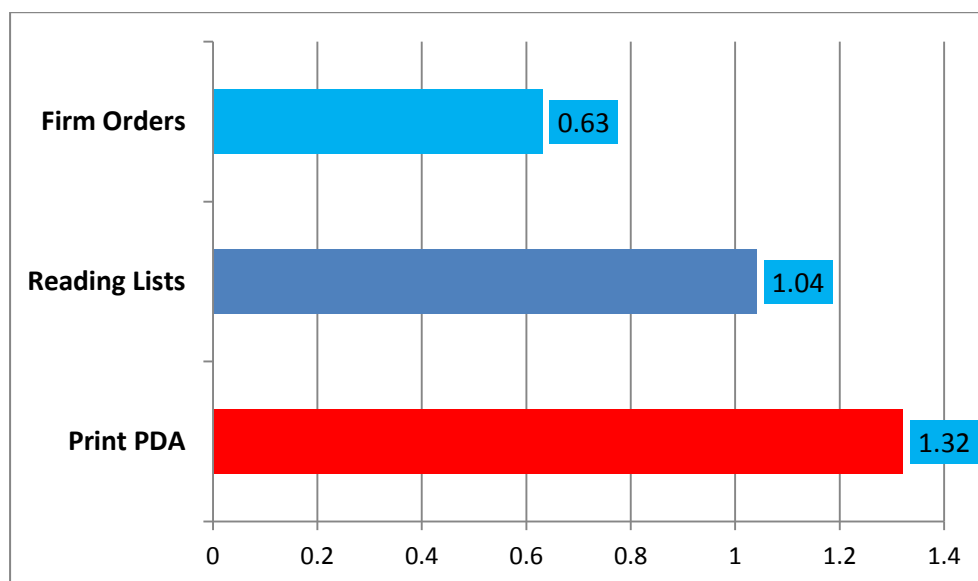


**Fig 4: Comparative usage of PDA and non-PDA e-book titles during the pilot period (Top 50 titles)**



**Fig 5: Comparative usage of PDA and non-PDA e-book titles during the pilot period (Top 100 titles)**

Usage of print PDA titles also proved higher than our other, more traditional, types of print orders, but the gulf in usage is considerably reduced. As the graphs below illustrate, print PDA titles were used on average **1.32** times compared to reading list orders which were used on average **1.04** times, while other orders (internally referred to as firm orders, these are research oriented material not on reading lists or available through PDA) were used on average **0.63** times (*See Figure 6*). While it can be expected that these latter orders would be borrowed less frequently due to the special interest nature of the content, it is perhaps surprising that material which academic staff have placed on reading lists and asked their students to consult is used less frequently than PDA material. It is, nevertheless, encouraging information for those libraries who are interested in pursuing print PDA as a collection development tool. We intend to monitor usage of these items over time so can see if these patterns continue in the longer term.

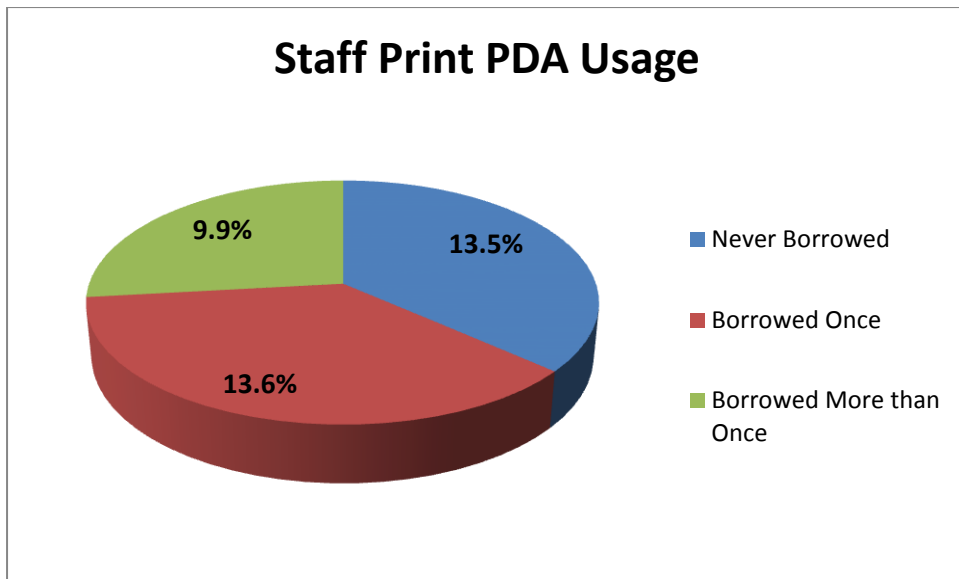


**Fig 6: Comparative usage of the different types of print orders by users**

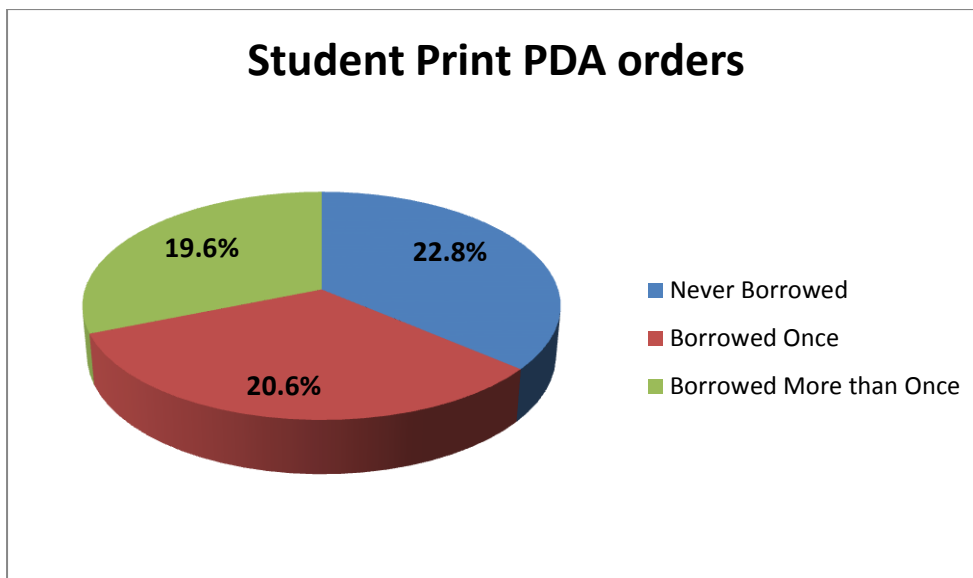
As users had to enter their UCD student or staff number when ordering print PDA titles, we were able to gather some interesting information on usage by type of user, which was not possible with e-PDA. 63% of print PDA orders were placed by students, with the

remaining 37% placed by academic staff. The graphs below demonstrate the difference in rates of usage between the two user groups (*See Figures 7 and 8*). Usage among students is higher, but they are the larger cohort and always the greatest users of library books. The percentage of print PDA material not yet borrowed is, however, a cause of concern. Over 300 print PDA orders were never collected. There are some reasons for this. For example, we know some academics used print PDA for collection development purposes, and ordered multiple titles that they did not necessarily want to borrow when received. One academic, for example, ordered over thirty print PDA books within a one hour time frame. Other academics, from different schools, ordered over twenty titles over the course of the project. These academics ordered these books because they felt the collection needed them, and the opportunity was there, but they did not necessarily want them for themselves. Some orders received were from postgraduate students whose library cards had expired by the time the books they had ordered were received. A lot of the uncollected books were from orders placed in the first month of the new term by students who were new to the university and the library catalogue. They may not have understood how PDA worked, and may have been confused by the PDA MARC records in the catalogue, which is something we will elaborate on in the next section.

Again, time will reveal a lot more information about the levels of usage of this material.



**Fig 7: Usage of print PDA material ordered by academic staff**



**Fig 8: Usage of print PDA material ordered by students**

## Discussion

One of our major concerns from the earliest planning stages of the PDA project was whether students and staff would know how to order a print book. E-PDA records merged

relatively seamlessly with non PDA e-books in the catalogue, requiring only one extra step for users. We launched the e-PDA records with little fanfare, reasoning that it should make no difference to the end user whether the e-book was a PDA one or not. If they wanted to access the e-book, they just clicked on it and had instant access to full text. Print PDA records, on the other hand, looked different in the catalogue, having a much poorer standard of cataloguing, and not having a call number. Access to the book was not instant and required a longer wait for the user. We marked print PDA books out in the catalogue by putting a “click here to order this book” annotation on the record. But would students automatically know what to do? It seemed easy to us. All they had to do was input their UCD student number and email address and the item was ordered. But a larger problem was not only our users not knowing what to do, but not knowing why they were doing it.

From the start, there was a fundamental lack of understanding among our user base as to what exactly PDA was. Books were ordered, and the money was spent, but the feeling persists that the exercise passed large portions of our user base by. We debated how to promote PDA, as we wanted awareness of the project but feared that this might lead to it being taken advantage of and a rush on the money being spent. We decided to alert the academic staff by sending emails to heads of school and some other academic contacts. We also placed notes on the library website and various social media presences, such as Twitter and Facebook. But these methods of communication only reached a small percentage of our user base. Months after PDA records were in the catalogue, we would speak to academics about PDA and they would have no idea what we were talking about. In hindsight, the marketing of PDA needed more clarity and more noise. But what is the best method of communication? Email communication did not work in all cases, with some academics not even opening emails about PDA from the library. Some of those that did open emails did not seem to do much with the information. On Twitter, at the time of writing, UCD Library has

just over 2,100 followers. On Facebook, we have over 3,000 “likes”. We did not promote PDA on our You Tube channel. Yet, the main feedback we received on social media was from staff members in other libraries.

PDA proved a difficult concept to explain in everyday language. We ran some internal PDA information sessions for library staff in advance of its launch. Desk staff faced numerous queries from students about it, and tried to explain it, but it was so new to UCD Library that even our own library staff lacked confidence explaining PDA, or what happened when a print order was processed. College Liaison Librarians, the main point of contact between the library and the academic staff, were also unsure and felt that they did not have enough information to go out to schools and “sell” PDA as a concept. They reported confusion among academic staff as to what PDA was, many failing to understand the distinction between PDA and our other methods of ordering, such as reading list items. Some academics mistakenly thought that ordering library books was now their responsibility. However, many other academics were very positive about the PDA project, taking advantage of the opportunity to order books for their own research interests or to plug gaps they perceived in the overall collection. It seemed to be that academic goodwill towards PDA was increased if they understood the concept of it.

When we launch PDA again, user education would need to be looked at: how we inform our users what PDA is, and how we explain it them. When giving information literacy sessions, or speaking to students at information desks, we always strive to avoid library jargon. We don’t use terms like MARC records, OPAC, acquisitions, serials, federated searching, or monograph when speaking to students, and so “patron-driven acquisition”, “demand-driven acquisition”, PDA, DDA, or any such terminology should be avoided too. Yet we were all guilty of this. PDA is a meaningless acronym to a student or academic staff member. To publicise or market it in future, we need to find a usable name for it.

Amazon was frequently used as an analogy when trying to explain PDA to users: “It’s like Amazon, only you don’t pay!”, “you click to order the book, and then it’s kept for you when it arrives”. Our problem was, of course, that it was nothing like Amazon. Our users’ experiences in dealing with Amazon might have raised their expectations when ordering books through PDA. With Amazon, you might order a book on a Monday and reasonably expect to receive your order on a Wednesday or Thursday. There is generally little time to wait. There is an expectation that Amazon will have what you want, and deliver it to you quickly. PDA provided no such guarantees. PDA might not necessarily have what they wanted, and orders would take a much longer time to get to them. We put a wait time of three weeks on the print PDA MARC record to try to give an idea of how long it would take. So, when they ordered, users were told that it may take three weeks for them to receive their order – not too long, to put them off ordering, but not too little time either, to give us a realistic time to receive the order, catalogue and process it.

Another strand identified in the literature and discussed in our literature review is the impact of PDA on the integrity of the library collection. The fear among experienced library professionals in UCD in advance of this PDA project was that the standard of PDA books would “dumb down” the collection. We argued that our work with the subject profiles in advance of the PDA project’s launch would negate this, and ensure the standard of books selected for purchase by students was of a high, academic standard. Overall, we were proved to be right and the books ordered through both electronic and print PDA were of a good, scholarly standard and added to the variety and depth of the library collection. There were, however, some issues as to quality. Early in the print PDA exercise, concerns were raised by a staff member as to the academic standard of one of the publishers included in the subject profiles. Some of the books that had been received through PDA by this publisher proved to be regurgitated material already available for free on the internet. This was easily addressed

by adjusting the subject profiles to exclude this publisher. Sometimes books tended to be generic and popular. For example, we had some basic, non-academic books on Higgs boson ordered around the time the original researchers won the Nobel Prize in 2013, and “rushed-out” books on Libya, Syria and the “Arab Spring” also tended to be popular. But these books were still useful to the collection and will continue to be a good starting point for undergraduate study in these areas.

The final strand identified in our literature review was the one that had the greatest impact on our PDA project: the effect of PDA on library operations and workflow. There is no doubt that PDA had a huge impact on the Collection Services department and required a large amount of staff time.

As stated, e-book PDA records launched first. When an e-book record was clicked into twice, 24 hours apart, the book was automatically purchased. PDA works best with e-books, and the vast majority of PDA exercises have been done with electronic books only. Ingram Cou tts had plenty of experience of working with e-PDA and so we expected this part of the PDA exercise to work seamlessly. While it was not without some problems, it was largely a matter of loading e-book MARC records into the catalogue and waiting to see what was clicked on. Less could go wrong with e-PDA than with print, and less did go wrong.

The main issue with e-PDA was invoicing. The Acquisitions department in Collection Services has four staff, but only one of these, our Acquisitions librarian, is trained to process e-book invoices. E-book invoicing for PDA was more complicated than print, in requiring the addition of 23% VAT to the price, and some work with URL links on the MARC records. Invoices for e-PDA were received weekly, and tended to be about seven or eight pages long. One, final, “mopping up” invoice sent by Ingram Cou tts at the end of the project was nineteen pages long. The invoices carried the details of the e-books that were purchased, and

new URL links that then had to be manually matched against the original e-PDA record. One person dealing with all these invoices was extremely time-consuming. Electronic invoicing, and e-books themselves, are still seen as separate and distinct from print in UCD Library, and the PDA project emphasised the need to work on merging the two to work as one, so that more staff are capable of dealing with the electronic side of the collection.

At the end of the PDA project, all the e-book records that were not purchased were suppressed from the catalogue. This led to some confusion among our users, and we received some queries as to why an e-book that users had been able to access when they looked previously was no longer available. In some cases, we purchased the book they looked for. In others, we simply explained the process and the reasons why their book was gone from the catalogue. During the PDA project itself, some e-book MARC records had to be removed from the catalogue, which caused more confusion for users. This was usually a result of Ingram Coumts no longer having the publishing rights to the e-book in question. But users being able to access and use an e-book one day, and not be able to find it the next, was not good for their research needs and did not reflect well on the library.

It was print PDA that was to prove by far the most problematic aspect of the project. We anticipated this, as Ingram Coumts' UK office had little experience of print PDA and we had no experience of any kind of PDA. The fact that it took seven weeks longer to load print PDA records into the catalogue than it had the e-book ones meant that it was the middle of the summer by the time the print PDA records were ready, by which stage all undergraduate students had finished, and most postgraduates were basking in the finest summer Dublin had seen in years. We feared the introduction of print PDA books to the catalogue would go unnoticed. However, print PDA books were ordered from the very beginning. On the very first day that print PDA launched, **6** books were ordered. Within the first week, **29** print PDA books had been ordered, increasing to **107** within the first month.

The start of the new academic year in September 2013 was our PDA project's first real test. The delay in getting PDA launched proved most problematic when the print orders increased substantially during the first few weeks of term. A look at the figures illustrates this. On the first day of the new term, **36** print PDA books were ordered, increasing to **236** in the first week, and **673** within the first month. Even without these PDA orders, start of term is a busy time for the Collection Services department, with reading list orders needing to be on the shelves. Adding print PDA items to these reading list ones meant a lot of cataloguing for the four Collection Development and Description Librarians. 1,083 print PDA orders meant an average of 271 books each for the four cataloguers. The PDA books had to be prioritised for cataloguing but in order to not neglect all the other aspects of the workflow in the department, six print PDA books were given to the cataloguers every day. This meant they could do other things as well but also dragged the project out. The last PDA book was catalogued and processed in December, after the first semester had finished. The delay in getting PDA started was not entirely of our own making but starting PDA at a different time of year would have improved the workflow. The start of the second semester, after the Christmas break, is usually a quieter time of year and would have proved a more efficient time. We will take the time of year into consideration when doing our next PDA project.

Another frustrating problem with our print PDA project was the "flooding" of the catalogue with poor standard MARC records. Indexing proved a problem, so that a search in the library's main Encore catalogue seemed only to return PDA records. Everywhere, it seemed, was a "click here to order this book" prompt. Our users might have reasonably asked themselves whether the library had any actual holdings. At the start of term in September, this was especially unfortunate as new students being shown the catalogue by library staff could only see PDA records. One student asked for help in a basic search for Shakespeare

during Orientation Week and it was the thirteenth page of results before an item could be found that the library actually held.

While PDA records were practically the only thing a student could see in the catalogue, the standard of those print MARC records was very poor. The e-PDA records were usually of a very high standard, needing little, if any, amendment. The print PDA records, on the other hand, were basic and rudimentary. They generally carried only the standard MARC fields – 020 for ISBN, 100 for author, and 245 for title. They nearly always had to be either overlaid with better records from elsewhere, or rewritten entirely by the cataloguer. Print PDA demonstrated the need for an experienced cataloguer as the records were simply not good enough to have done a “shelf-ready” project. Ingram Couatts advised that improving the print MARC records would have increased the cost. However, with the extra work involved, would the extra cost have been worth it? In order to speed up the process and get the print PDA book to the user who had ordered it as quickly as possible, library assistants in Collection Services did not search for a better MARC record, as they would do for other books, and simply passed on the book to the cataloguer as it was. When doing the project again, we will train up more library assistants and have them search for better MARC records. However, as a lot of the print books were newly published, better MARC records are not guaranteed to be available.

There is no doubt that our PDA project would have worked a lot more seamlessly had we chosen not to include print. We do not believe, however, that this is reason enough to not include print in our next PDA project. Print is obviously still popular with our students, with almost as many print books being ordered as e-books, even with the increased trouble to the student, the wait, and the fact that e-books were loaded first. With such demand, we cannot take it away. Print also considerably increased the options and variety of books available to students. **54,504** MARC records were imported into the library catalogue for the PDA

project, and **35,167** of these were in print format only, the other **19,337** being in electronic format only. We only made books available in either print or electronic format and so if the project had been electronic only, the choice for students would have been a lot more limited. As stated, some schools, such as Art History & Cultural Policy, and Architecture, prefer print to electronic, and we need to facilitate these. Print books are also substantially cheaper – the average price for an e-PDA book was **€149.84**, over three times the average price for a print PDA book, which was **€45.51**.

## **Conclusion**

The patron-driven acquisition project ended on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2013, just over five months since e-book MARC records were first launched in the catalogue. Overall, there is little doubt that our PDA project was a success. We made mistakes, but will learn from them when we proceed with our next PDA project. We will market it with more clarity and more precision. We will explain it better and in understandable language to the non-library professional. We will start it at a more appropriate time for both our own convenience and that of our users. We will speed the print PDA process up by increasing the amount of staff assigned to the internal workflow.

Perhaps PDA in UCD simply needs a little bit of time and some perseverance. It was our first time doing it and it was new to everyone. No one really knew what to expect. Change in libraries tends to come about slowly and sometimes imperceptibly, and UCD is no exception. But change is embraced, nevertheless. E-books, databases, e-journals, mobile libraries, social media presences and self-issue machine were once seen as new and uncertain technologies but all are now taken for granted, and are seen as much a part of the library as the stacks and the staff. We hope to reach this point with PDA, where our users will not be wondering what it is, but waiting for it to launch.

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