

Cambridge University Libraries Policy on the purchase of Electronic Legal Deposit books

Background

Electronic Legal Deposit (ELD, or Non-Print Legal Deposit (NPLD)) was introduced by a change to Legal Deposit legislation in 2013. The change permits publishers to deposit their output electronically, sometimes including their full or partial back catalogues. This material is available through dedicated terminals in the main University Library and most affiliated libraries. Where a publisher has moved to ELD, Cambridge no longer receives a physical copy of each book produced by that publisher.

More about ELD in Cambridge can be found in the [ELD LibGuide](#). The LibGuide includes guidance about citing ELD content which lacks pagination. A lack of page numbers is commonplace in ELD material (some purchased ebooks might have different pagination to the print version, but a complete lack of numbers is rare). It is a source of frustration for readers and is an issue which the Legal Deposit Libraries continue to raise with publishers.

Purchase of supplementary copies

The main University Library remains a single-copy library, including ELD copies. At the request of readers **who are current University staff or students**, however, and where funds permit, the UL will consider buying an alternative ebook copy (fully paginated and normally available on- and off-site through Raven authentication) or a hard copy version of an ELD title.

Requests for the purchase of ELD titles can be placed through the [online recommendation form](#). We ask that readers use the ELD copy prior to putting in a request in order to establish the quality and worth of the book. On receiving a request, UL staff will liaise with subject specialists in faculty and departmental libraries. If the relevant librarians confirm that the title would be a well-used addition to Cambridge University Libraries' collections, the UL will seek to buy a copy, subject to available funding.

Faculty and departmental librarians sometimes choose to buy a copy of an ELD title for their library (whether in addition to a copy bought by the main UL or not), if they consider it core for their staff and students. They are always welcome to approach the UL staff about ELD titles they feel are important but would like the main UL to buy.

This policy was updated in 2023 (to specify that requests for additional copies can only be considered when coming from current University staff and students) following a review of expenditure since the policy was launched. The Libraries will continue to monitor expenditure against purchasing alternative versions of ELD titles to inform subsequent reviews of the policy.

Version		Updated by	Date
0.1		MB	15.11.2019
2.0		MB	08.09.2023

