I. Context
The following guidelines apply primarily in the context of decisions about individual monographs. The Library will continue to acquire or subscribe to large packages of content as an important strategy for building electronic collections. These guidelines are specific to the e-book format and should be considered alongside additional collection development criteria such as cost, relationship to the curriculum, and faculty interest.

II. General Guidelines
The following guidelines are provided to help subject specialists choose between print and electronic formats when both are available. It is recognized that the decision may vary by subject area, as determined by subject specialist expertise.

E-format should be considered:
- For publications which are likely to be used in discrete segments, such as reference works, collections of essays, etc.
- Where the electronic format provides added utility, e.g. additional materials, multi-media content, searching and citation linking.
- When users will need to access content remotely, as in distance education programs.
- When multiple simultaneous users will need to access content, as in course reserves.
- When users for the discipline clearly prefer the electronic format.
- For publications which frequently update their content, such as IT books and travel guides.

E-format should be avoided when:
- The electronic version cannot accurately present the content, such as art books and object books.
- The electronic version is incomplete or difficult to use.
- The electronic version does not provide perpetual access rights, or is not available in a qualified archive.

Other considerations:
- The user request specifies format preference.
- The print and electronic versions are, in most cases, not released simultaneously, and the release of the e-book edition may be unknown or unpredictable.
- For texts which are quickly outdated, a subscription or short-term loan model may be preferred over ownership.

III. Duplication
Duplication of content in print and electronic format is at the discretion of the subject specialist, guided by user needs, accessibility and usability. Short-term loans and patron-driven acquisitions are not intended to replace collection development. A work of lasting importance to its discipline should be purchased in print or electronic form.

IV. E-book platforms and access options:
The library must have an established relationship with a vendor before subject specialists may order content on its platform. For considerations regarding vendor choice, see the document E-Book Platform Selection Guidelines.

Last updated 8/11/2011
Approved September 2011