Daniel Gunnarsson (Jönköping University Library, Sweden) describes the major changes that technology has made possible in business school libraries. And speculates about other changes that are still to come.

As far as I am aware there has not been much discussion about business school libraries in the Global Focus magazine. This is rather remarkable since technological change has had a major impact on library resources and services.

This change has significantly influenced how business schools researchers manage their access to scholarly publications and has also had an impact on how teachers select reading materials for their students. This article hopes to share some of the major changes in business school libraries that have already been implemented and also provide my views on what the future might bring.

It will focus on four different themes: collections; technology; services; and the librarian.

Collections – from printed books to e-resources: For many people the library is still a place filled with printed books. That is in fact still true though it is not the whole truth. Behind the shelves of printed books there is a world filled with e-books available from the cloud. E-books create lots of advantages for the library and readers – simultaneous usage, no shelving, no weeding, deep searching within the whole text of the book, and 24/7 availability from all over the world– and no need to carry them around.

So, is the printed book on the road to extinction? If you ask me, no, not yet. Here are some reasons why not:
- The most popular textbooks still have a business model that makes it impossible for business school libraries to promote access (some of the most used are not even available as e-books).
- Students and researchers still prefer a printed source for longer reading (at least in my experience).
- Among many people the printed book is still the most familiar source of academic information and it is hard to change that perception.
- Finally, a printed book is very easy to browse and skip between different pages when you are reading.

However, in the future I expect the e-book to grow even more in importance over the printed book. Especially, books with a more focused content such as handbooks, anthologies and encyclopaedias are excellent as e-books since one only reads parts of them. In addition, books for complementary or supplementary reading will be sought out as e-books.

However, many questions will have to be solved regarding textbooks before a breakthrough can occur. Probably this will be managed outside the library, directly between the student and the publisher. As a concluding remark the shift from printed books to e-books has not, and will not, be as dramatic as the earlier change from printed journals to e-journals. Regarding the development of collections (whatever the format), this is a delicate relationship between me (a subject librarian) and students and staff (in this case at Jönköping International Business School in Sweden – JIBS). Please click to read more.