INTRODUCTION

We conducted an online eBooks[1] survey in Winter 2010 to gather responses from students and members of Exact Sciences and Engineering faculties on questions related to accessibility of e-books, features desired in e-books and the best avenues for purchasing of e-books for the library collection.

The online eBooks survey was administered using the eSurveysPro the free tool available from http://www.esurveyspro.com/

The survey was kept open for 2,5 months from January 14 to March 28 in 2010. The survey questions for students and faculties members differed slightly (Appendix 1 & Appendix 2). The information about the survey was sent by mailing lists to students and faculties members (2 separate mailing lists).

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[1] Electronic book (E-book/eBook) refers to a book title that has been digitized. It can either be read on personal electronic devices such as Amazon's Kindle and Sony Reader or on normal computers that access the network copies purchased by the library.
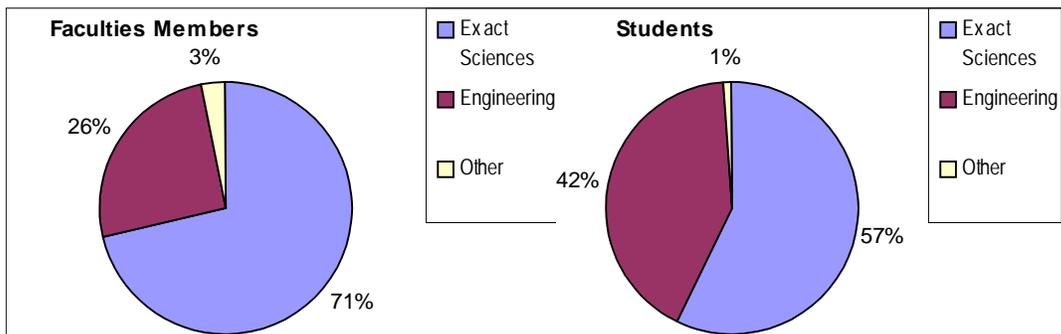
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Population Distribution

We had a total of 542 completed responses: 455 from students and 87 from faculty members from different departments in Exact Sciences and Engineering.
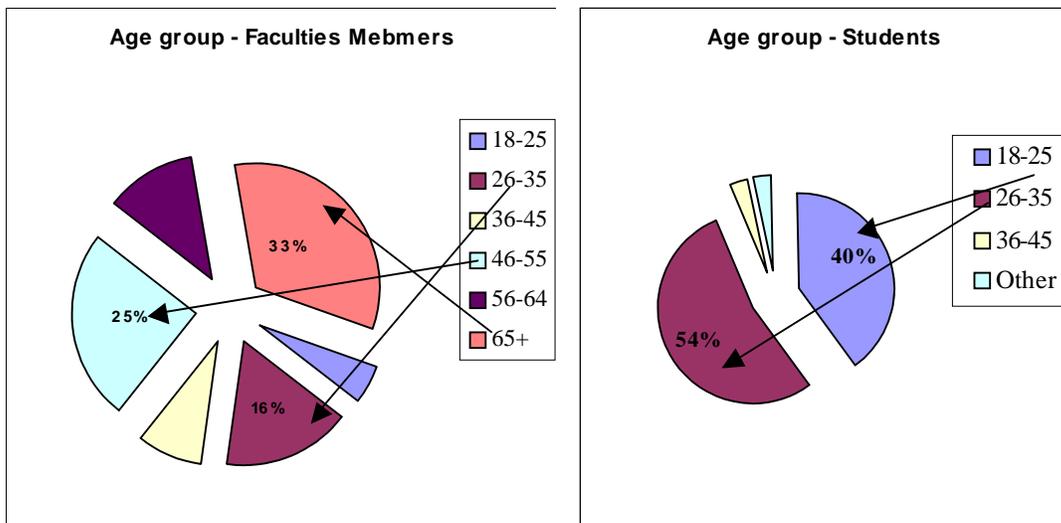
Out of the 87 faculty members, 71% are from Exact Sciences Faculty, 26% - from Engineering Faculty, 3% - from another one. Regarding age group majority is 46-55 years old (28%) and 65+ years old (24%). A majority of the participant faculty members' have worked at TAU over 25 years.

Out of the 455 students 57% are from Exact Sciences Faculty, 42% - from Engineering Faculty, 1% - from another one. A majority of the participant students are between 26-35 years, out of which 50% are the BA students, 28% - MA, 16% - PhD and 7% - other.

Figure 1. Distribution of survey participants by status

Figure 2.Distribution of survey participants by age

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Usage of the library and its resources

A majority of the participated students indicated that they physically visit the library 1-3 times a month (31%), while 46 % of faculty members attend the library less than once a month. (Table 1)

Table 1 How often do you physically visit the library? Select the option which most closely resembles your activity during this semester

	Daily	1-3 times a week	1-3 times a month	Less than one a month	*Never*
Faculty members	2%	13%	31%	46%	*8%*
Students	5%	27%	31%	28%	*9%*

Both categories of patrons use almost similar electronic resources available at the library (Table 2)

Table 2 What types of electronic resources do you currently use for your research, class courses, or instruction? Select one or more answers.

Electronic resources	Faculty Members	Students
Electronic journals	22%	13%
Online reference databases	17%	12%
Electronic books	13%	17%
Personal websites	15%	11%
Professional websites	16%	15%
Educational websites	9%	15%
Blogs/wikis	5%	13%
Other	3%	4%

eBooks usage and books reading habits

Printed books are easier to read, but they are not portable. E-book is often preferable, since one can take his full collection with him everywhere. For example, some books I want to keep both at home and in my office. But I cannot buy them twice. (Faculty Member)

Searching for specific topics in printed books is not efficient. Even when I'm using printed books from the library it is based on searching inside the book (Google books or Amazon). (Student)

Think of the guys with poor eyesight. Electronic books can be automatically read aloud, and ebook readers and computers allow for changes in contrast and font size. Also, it allows for more books to be read by more people, and that's always a noble cause ;) (Student)

A majority of the surveyed students responded that during the last year they used 1-2 titles of any electronic book; a majority of the surveyed faculty members used none.

44% of faculty members and 60% of students are NOT aware that there are packages of electronic books subscribed by the library.
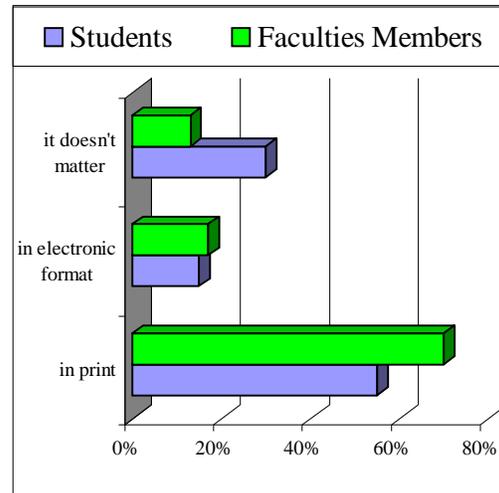
A majority of the surveyed faculty members (69%) and students (73%) consider that electronic books are easy to use.

A majority of the surveyed faculty members (87%) use electronic books for research and teaching purposes, while a majority of students (67%) – for research and learning. 56% students prefer to read books in print, and for 31% of students it is convenient to read boobs both in electronic and in print format. A majority of the surveyed faculty members (70%) prefer print format, rather than electronic.

Table 3 How do you usually read electronic book content?

Specific Audience	Students	Faculties members
From the screen	56%	49%
Printed on paper	5%	4%
A bit of both	30%	43%
Other	8%	4%

Figure 3 Do you prefer to read books:

76% of surveyed faculty members and 77% of surveyed students consider that the library should acquire more books in electronic format.
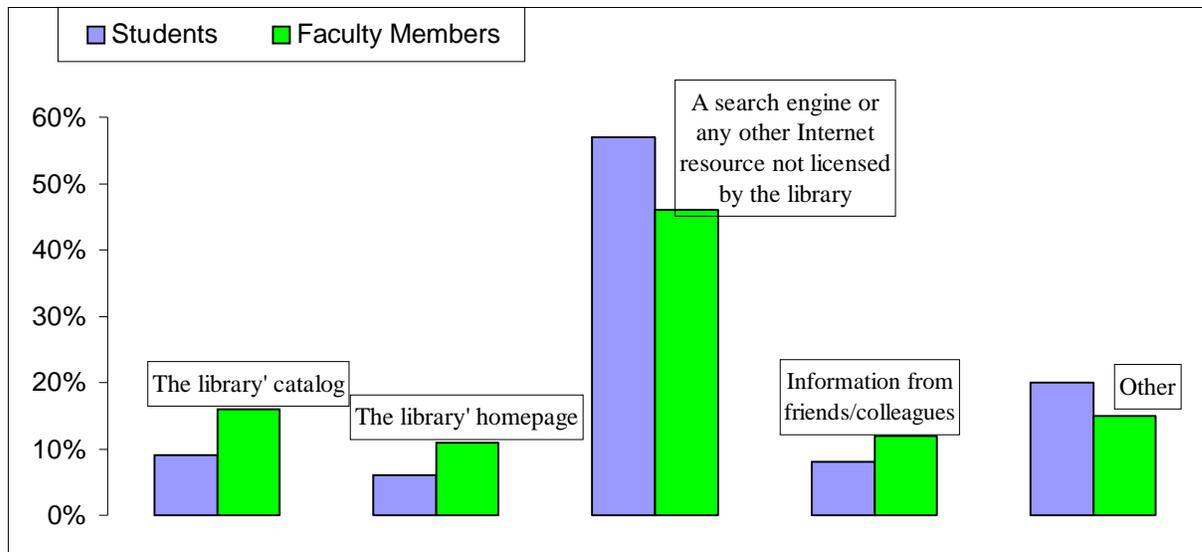
eBooks discovery process

The most popular ways to find e-books both for students (35%) and for faculty members (33%) remains Internet search engines (Google and other) or information from friends/colleagues – 21% of the students and 21% of the faculty members.

According to the responses, the library as the physical location or as virtual space (the library's homepage and the library's catalog) are NOT the main sources of finding information about electronic books.

Table 4. eBooks discovery channels

E-book discovery channels	Students	Faculty members
Retrieve from library's homepage	6%	11%
Retrieve from library's catalog	9%	16%
Obtain from friends/colleagues	8%	21%
Obtain from publishers sites/catalogs	21%	7%
Obtain from Google or other search engines	32%	33%
Obtain from Amazon or other online bookshops	4%	6%
Other	22%	6%

Table 5. How do you source for electronic books?

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CONSCLUSIONS

It would be nice if books that are recommended by the proffesors for basic courses (such as data structures, Computer structures) will be avilable since many people need them, and they are sometimes hard/expensive to buy. (For example - Introduction to Algorithms by Cormen which is a must-have book for the data structures course) (Student)

…If at all possible, I suggest you concentrate on acquiring e-books of those textbooks which have the largest circulation and those which have the most requests and least

…I couldn't find a single E-Book offered by the library that might help physicians… (Student)

…need e-books in more disciplines(Student)

There are almost none in mathematics which is my field.(Faculty Members)

It is expensive to require that each student uses a printed book for each course. The faster we switch to electronic books, the faster you can mandate that courses are run according to specific books, making courses more organized and more similar in terms of the material covered each year (making matters more academic and more fair) (Student)

…There are two reasons to acquire electronic books: 1. Acquired books are reference books in their essence, ie handbooks. Usually they are used to brief material retrieval, and are not being read from start to end. Those books should be only in electronic format. 2. Other books should be acquired in electronic format only if it saves considerable amounts of money to the library. (Student)

- ❑ Electronic books are an important part of academic activities: 87% of faculty members and 67% of students use them for research,teaching and learning purposes. Students want more course books to be available in electronic format.

- ❑ Additional resources are necessary for the library's budget in order to develop the special program of acquisition of a larger number of electronic libraries covering all research subjects of the library's faculties.

- Users want easy and reliable remote access
- Users want the ability to download eBooks.
- Users want to personalize eBooks interface and manipulate it to meet their needs.

- Although users value the flexibilty and convenienes of eBooks, the existing eBook platforms include limitations on printing, downloading or have slow speed. The library should thoroughly check the technical abilities of eBook platforms when signing the agreement with providers.

- The library's catalog and links from the library's homepage should be the major channels by which students and faculties members discover electronic books

- There must be a standardised channel for discovery of eBooks: the variety of routs and platforms confuse users . Search through Google or any other search engine will not retrieve the specific provider whose license the library holds. Therefore, the cataloging of electronic books is a must in order to enable the retrieval of electronic books, available in the library.

- The use of eBooks is based of on convenience and the advantages they offer, such as enabling faculty members and students to access them 24/7.

- These surveys confirm, that the library should develop a strategy for promotion of the acquired electronic books, and use as many as possible various methods, including social channels, available through Web 2 technology, as well as the regular library means, namely delivery of information to users by mailing lists or the library's news about new e-book packages purchased by the library, use the special indication on the hard copy whenever this book is available in electronic format as well, including the link of the e-version to the catalog of its print copy, addition of dummy electronic book to the shelf so the users would be aware that this format is available, if all exising hard copies are loaned, putting information in the library's homepage about the most downloadable electronic book of the month, etc.

APPENDIX 1

eBooks Survey - for Faculties Members

We would like to invite you to participate in this survey to help us understand how electronic books are used within the University. The survey is entirely voluntary and anonymous so that no one can be identified. It should take 7-10 minutes to complete.
We sincerely thank you in advance for your kind participation.

1. Please indicate the Faculty in which you are working

Engineering
Exact Sciences
Other

2. Please indicate your age group

18-25
26-35
36-45
46-55
56-64
65+

3. Please indicate number of years as a faculty member in TAU

Less than 1
1-5
6-10
11-15
16-20
21-25
More than 25

4. How often do you physically visit the library? Select the option which most closely resembles your activity during this semester

Daily
1-3 times a week
1-3 times a month
Less than one a month
Never

5. What types of electronic resources do you currently use for your research, class courses, or instruction? Select one or more answers.

Electronic journals
Online reference databases
Electronic books
Personal websites
Professional websites
Educational websites

Blogs/wikis
Other
None

6. How many electronic books have you used in the past year?

None
1-2 titles
3-5 titles
5-7 titles
7-9 titles
More than 9 titles

7. How do you source for electronic books?

Select one or more answers.
Retrieve from library's homepage
Retrieve from library's catalog
Obtain from friends/colleagues
Obtain from publishers sites/catalogs
Obtain from Google or other search engines
Obtain from Amazon or other online bookshops
Other

8. Are you aware of any of the following electronic books collections offered by the library?

CRC Engineering Handbooks collection (EngNetBase)
Synthesis Digital Library
Safari Books Online
I'm not aware of any of the above

9. How do you usually read electronic book content?

From the screen
Printed on paper
A bit of both
Other

10. What is your purpose of reading electronic books?

For research
For teaching
Leisure
Other

11. In using e-books do you find generally that they are:

Very easy to use
Easy to use
Difficult to use
Very difficult to use
No comment

12. Do you prefer to read books:

in print
in electronic format
it doesn't matter

13. What is your satisfaction with current provision of printed library books?

Excellent
Good
Poor
Very poor
Prefer not to say
    14. Do you think the library should acquire more books in electronic format?
Definitely yes
Probably yes
Only if it saves money for print version
Don't think so
No
    15. Any other comments on using electronic books?

APPENDIX 2

eBooks Survey - for Students

We would like to invite you to participate in this survey to help us understand how electronic books are used within the University. The survey is entirely voluntary and anonymous so that no one can be identified. It should take 7-10 minutes to complete.
We sincerely thank you in advance for your kind participation.

    1. Please indicate the Faculty in which you are studying
Engineering
Exact Sciences
Other
    2. Please indicate your age group
18-25
26-35
36-45
Other
    3. Please indicate your academic status in TAU
B.A
M.A
PhD
Other
    4. How often do you physically visit the library? Select the option which most closely resembles your activity during this semester
Daily
1-3 times a week
1-3 times a month
Less than one a month
Never

5. What types of electronic resources do you currently use for your research, class courses, or instruction? Select one or more answers.

Electronic journals
Online reference databases
Electronic books
Personal websites
Professional websites
Educational websites
Blogs/wikis
Other
None

6. How many electronic books have you used in the past year?

None
1-2 titles
3-5 titles
5-7 titles
7-9 titles
More than 9 titles

7. How do you source for electronic books? Select one or more answers.

Retrieve from library's homepage
Retrieve from library's catalog
Obtain from publishers sites/catalogs
Obtain from friends/colleagues
Obtain from Google or other search engines
Obtain from Amazon or other online bookshops
Obtain from recommendations/reading lists
Other

8. Are you aware of any of the following electronic books collections offered by the library?

CRC Engineering Handbooks collection (EngNetBase)
Synthesis Digital Library
Safari Books Online
I'm not aware of any of the above

9. How do you usually read electronic book content?

From the screen
Printed on paper
A bit of both
Other

10. What is your purpose of reading electronic books?

For research
For teaching
Leisure
Other

11. In using electronic books do you find generally that they are:

Very easy to use
Easy to use

Difficult to use
Very difficult to use
No comment
    12. Do you prefer to read books:
in print
in electronic format
doesn't matter
    13. What is your satisfaction with current provision of printed library books?
Excellent
Good
Poor
Very poor
Prefer not to say
    14. Do you think the library should acquire more books in electronic format?
Definitely yes
Probably yes
Only if it saves money for print version
Don't think so
No
    15. Any other comments on using electronic books?