

Electronic books

Libraries' physical footprints are getting smaller, but their collections are growing virtually. Books have made the transition to electronic formats much more slowly than journals, but e-books now account for a substantial portion of most libraries' collections. Regardless of the format, the value that books hold for clinical purposes must be judged by their currency, the authors' qualifications, attribution to valid evidence, peer review, and transparency of conflicts of interest. Each

This article is the opinion of the Library of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC and has not been peer reviewed by the BCMJ Editorial Board.

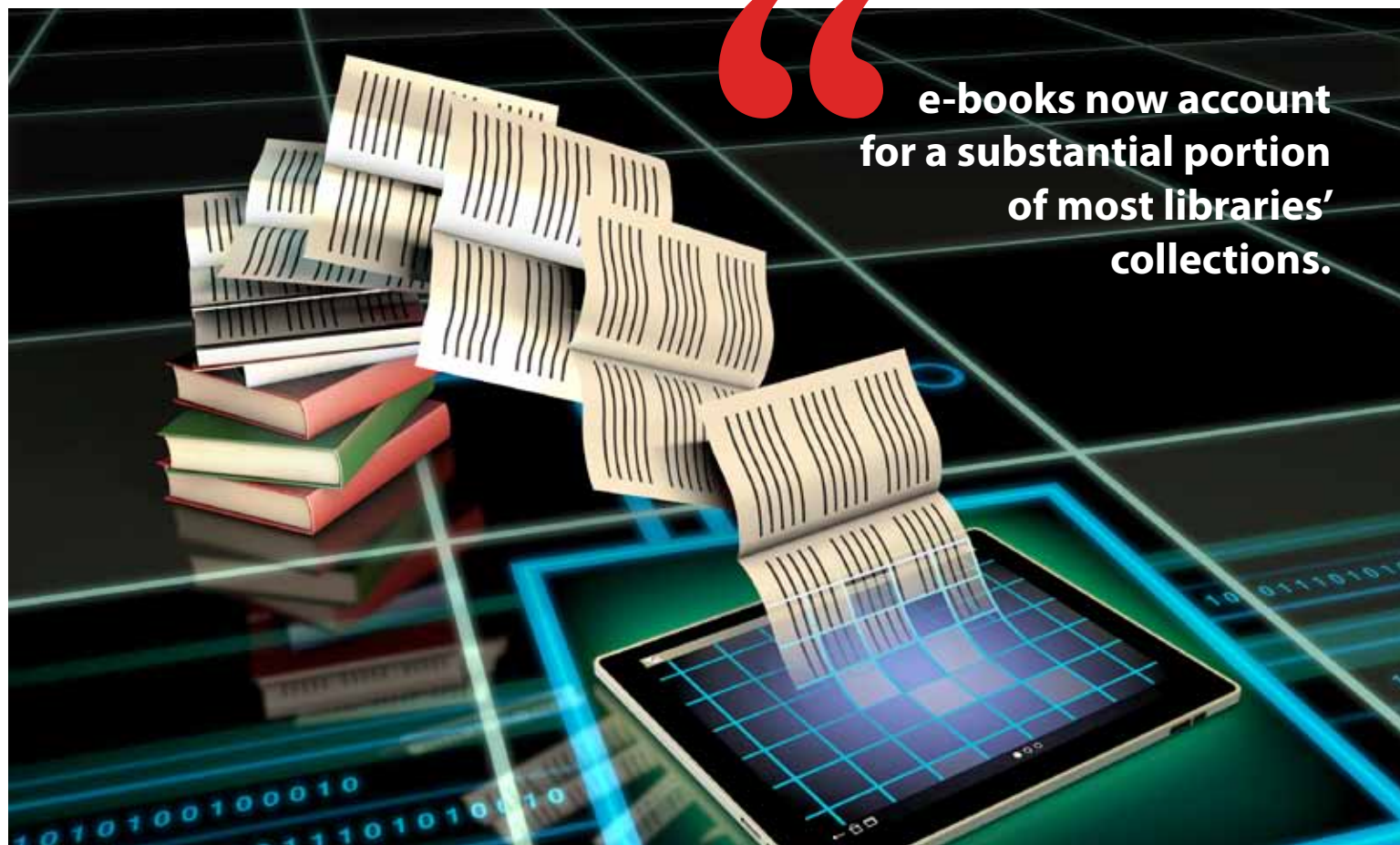
digital platform may be judged by a variety of criteria, including the utility of its search tools and hyperlinks within the resource, its downloading and printing options, and its updating capabilities.

One barrier to the use of e-books is lack of awareness of their availability. Every BC health authority library has an e-book collection accessible through the library's online catalogue, as does the UBC library for health care providers with faculty appointments, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC Library. College registrants have access to over 600 e-books through the Library's catalogue (<http://szasz.cpsbc.ca>). Topics cover the full range of medical specialties including anesthesia and analgesia, cardiology and cardiac surgery, dermatology, emergency medicine, surgery, immunology and

allergy, internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics, and gynecology. Notable for presentation of evidence, authority, and currency are e-books such as *Clinical Handbook of Psychotropic Drugs Online*, *Clinical Handbook of Psychotropic Drugs for Children and Adolescents Online*, *Color Atlas and Synopsis of Family Medicine* (2019), and *Roberts and Hedges' Clinical Procedures in Emergency Medicine and Acute Care* (2019).

When investigating complex and wide-reaching clinical concerns or highly focused topics, e-books can contextualize and distill information in a conveniently accessible format. Have a look at your local health authority's collections to support your clinical decision making and continuing education. ■

—Karen MacDonell
Director, Library Services



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