E-books and a public lending right: is it time for an update?

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The current lending debate in Europe is not set in libraries. They see legally available with the limited number of licenses that publishers make available for lending to public libraries, irrespective of mass processes in some cases and varied and restrictive lending conditions set by publishers. As part of the '� buluş' campaign, libraries are requesting the right to lend any e-book they like, at a fair price and without any restrictions. It is however questionable whether the extension of the PLR scheme to e-books could have such an effect. The traditional PLR exception gave libraries a 'right' to lend books using the payment of a fee to right holders. It does not extend to a 'right' to buy these books or, in other words, an obligation for publishers to sell these books. It is however questionable whether the extension of the PLR exception to e-books could and should extend this far and how it could affect the emerging e-publishing markets in Europe. Alternatively, the accessibility and pricing issues could be addressed in negotiations among publishers and e-book downloaders. The current PLR decision could however be extended to e-books, should the scheme only affect the compensation for those books that are available in e-book format only.

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