eTexts or Bust: Observations from the Internet2/EDUCAUSE eText Pilot

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February 5, 2013
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About the Pilot
Goal: Advance a new model for the purchase, distribution, and use of electronic textbooks and digital course materials.
eTextbooks Delivered via Campus LMS
Common Findings: Students
WHAT FEATURE DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT eTEXTBOOKS?

Student Findings
Students purchased a print copy.

Students prefer print when studying.

21%
Portability

Readability

Usability
Mixed feedback from students

“I highlighted using the eTextbook. Easy to go back to the page I last left off on.”

“The ebook is inconvenient because I want to be able to print and highlights things, and I couldn’t with it.”
Students read MORE with an eText.  

Students read LESS with an eText.
Trending Alert:
The “enhanced eTextbook”

1/3 students “studied differently”
Common Findings: Faculty
Faculty Perspectives

Most faculty did **NOT** use enhanced eText features

- Cited a need for additional training/support.
- Lack of time.
students were more likely to prefer eTexts when instructors actively made use of the technology

“If we are to use eTexts, our instructors need to make them a central focus of the course...”
–Cornell student
Faculty Perspectives

“*The technology has potential*”

“I think eTexts can support learning.”

“It’s a good direction to proceed”

“All pilot faculty plan on using eTexts for courses in the future.

Faculty Cited: convenience, flexibility and the technology’s potential

“the move to eTextbooks is INEVITABLE”
Student Survey Results

Questions about the Students perception of learning with eTextbooks:

Similar results & trends reported in both Spring and Fall 2012 pilots


Questions such as—

“Helped me to better understand the ideas and concepts taught in this course.”
“… learners who used eTexts a second time preferred eTexts more…”

– prior IU studies

Suggests that users may need to become more familiar with the technology, like all technology adoption trends.
Local Perspectives
Pilot benefits:
- Campus dialog
- Faculty (and even some student) engagement

Business process impact
- Bookstore cost recovery model
- HEOA compliance

Learning Impact is tougher to discuss when other noise is present
Virginia Tech

Teaching and Learning

- Real students = real usage
- Social reading: a disruption in reading
- Faculty development: Engagement is key
The idea of metastasis almost reminds me of Darwinian evolution. Not only because tumor cells have the ability to localize in other tissues where nutrient supply is more abundant, but the aspect by which tumor cells are competing for survival. The fact that malignant cells have enhanced proliferation mechanics and are capable of infecting surrounding tissues implies that they are the fittest cells in the human body when generated.
• Measuring success
  IRB approved research

  • Sam Van Horne, PhD, Assessment Coordinator, ITS
    Instructional Services
  • Kathy Schuh, PhD, Associate Professor, College of Education
  • Jane Russell, PhD Candidate, College of Education

• Are etext users better learners?
  • 287 etext users vs 276 traditional textbook users
  • Is etext use a significant predictor of final grade?
  • Does etext use impact reading behavior?
Keys to success

- Assessment plan created better pilot
- Faculty community and engagement
- Students needed more intentional training
- Preliminary findings
  - On average, students in both groups expressed a preference for using a paper textbook.
  - Students’ satisfaction with access was, on average, higher for students in textbook group.
  - Positive random effect for instructor who promoted tool use in e-textbook
“As exciting as it was, I still think I was barely using the eText to its potential.”

What needs to happen to realize the potential of eTexts?
Realizing the promise of eTexts

We need to move from “Read Chapter 2 before class” …

… to true pedagogical change that has textbook content as an integral part of the teaching and learning process.
Project Collaboration

- Greater impact
- Leverage expertise
- Generate more support

University / institutional level

National level research consortium
Collaboration Features - Spring 2012

Student-to-student
- Highlighting
- Annotations

*Students did not judge peer sharing helpful, regardless of the level of faculty engagement*

Faculty-to-student
- Highlighting
- Annotations
- Linking
- Tracking
- Student questions

*Students judged faculty annotations to be very helpful when faculty used the feature*

Faculty did not use the tracking feature

“I’m here to help students not to see if they’re doing work”
Tepid Student Response – Spring 2012

• Only 14.4% said they would purchase an eText over traditional
• Compared to print, students did not:
  – Read more of their assigned material using eText compared to paper (84%)
  – Highlight/annotate more (76%)
  – Learn more by using eText with highlighting/annotations vs. paper (79%).
QUESTIONS?

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