

Digital Textbooks & Non-Linear Access

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Digital Textbooks Sell

- All of the higher education publishers have branded, digital text platforms.
- All are offered direct to students via ecommerce through the publisher's website.
- Some offerings include bookstore affiliate programs.
- Pricing for digital texts averages $\frac{1}{2}$ list price for the hard copy.
- Getting the word out to students has been difficult.
- When students are aware of the option, they will often take it.
- Texts sold in this manner usually have:
 - Bookmarking
 - Highlighting
 - Annotation
 - Notetaking
 - Sharing of notes

Non-Linear Access

- Textbooks are also used/accessed in a non-linear fashion, often as remediation following self-study or homework assignments.
- Most higher education publishers' major learning platforms offer text-based feedback/referencing.
- This can be an abstraction of the core text, often it is a reference back to a section or page in the core text.
- Text purchase is not stand-alone, but a component of the purchase cost of the online learning solution.
- Typically, texts offered in this manner usually do not have enhanced features.

Digital Texts

- **Help academic success:** approx 10% of customers would have **not** purchased course materials at all if ebook option did not exist.
- **Price** (86%), **convenience** (60%), and alternative option to bookstore (33%) are top reasons why students purchase online.
- **Low price/savings** is #1 reason students purchase; availability of **individual chapters** rank very high too.
- **High customer satisfaction:** Vast majority of students are likely to purchase again and recommend the site to other students.
- **98%** of site visitors who did not purchase indicated they would consider purchasing in the future; with **92%** considering buying an eBook in the future.

Issues

- Most of the publisher models offer the full book.
- Most purchases of digital texts are made after the start of the course.
- Offering just in time purchase is a helpful option for students who avoid purchasing the text and suddenly realize they need to cram. They often forget they have this option.
- Digital chapters are often used/read in a linear form.
- Portability is important.

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Customer Feedback

“I think it is a great option for students who want to save money, paper, and room on their bookshelf.”

- Professor, Kansas State University

“I was very satisfied purchasing chapters...”

- Student

Textbook as Website or Web Service

Textbook publishers are becoming a software (courseware) companies.

Software is becoming a service.

"Embracing advertising and subscription-based models and Internet-based delivery across our product line is an important part of what we will do."

Steve Ballmer, CEO Microsoft, 7/06