Project Name

The E-Textbook Opportunity: The Time is Now for SUNY

Principal Investigator Dean Hendrix

Campus Buffalo, University at

Year of Project 2012

Tier Tier Two

Overview Summary

Pilot exploration of e-textbook adoption to assess the impact of price on e-textbook adoption and investigating the feasibility of a student-centered e-textbook model.

Outcomes Summary

443 student pilot over 6 courses and 3 LMS indicated that e-Textbooks from publishers held promise but lacked flexibility and accessibility. 63% of students accessed via laptops, 16% on desktops, 11% during test phase on mobile devices. Complete data available.

Project Abstract

Introduction

This IITG proposal requests funding for the licensing of electronic versions of textbooks, or e-textbooks, that are used in common courses across three SUNY schools: SUNY Brockport, SUNY Buffalo and SUNY Delhi. Administered by libraries, this pilot project seizes the opportunity that the recent emergence of e-textbooks represents to serve SUNY students more efficiently both academically and financially. With a diversity of institutional participants, our pilot will investigate the opportunities and challenges of implementing etextbooks across multiple SUNY campuses.

According to the NY State Comptroller's Office in 2008, freshman at SUNY and CUNY schools paid between $400-$800 per semester for textbooks1, and those costs have historically risen at a rate twice that of inflation2. As a result, seven out of ten students have decided against purchasing necessary textbooks for

their classes due to high prices3 and up to 40% of students buy no textbooks at all4. Without proper access to required resources, students are at an increased risk of performing poorly in their classes, or worse, dropping out.

The libraries on these campuses are uniquely positioned to provide access to e-textbooks. The participating libraries have a wealth of experience managing transitions from print to electronic formats, providing access to thousands of non-textbook e-books, and licensing content. Currently, University at Buffalo and SUNY Brockport Libraries manage local e-textbook pilots, and understand the nascent e-textbook landscape including platforms, experimental business models, and barriers to implementation. Through our combined experiences with providing access to course materials, the participating libraries recognize this moment as a singular opportunity to shape the features, licenses and future of e-textbooks.

Project Goals

We believe the time is now to exploit our "systemness" and develop processes and business plans for coordinated e-textbook initiatives across SUNY. By funding the licensing of e-textbooks, we will investigate and assess:
• the effect of e-textbooks and their technological features on student learning, success, and satisfaction
• faculty issues related to instructor satisfaction, pedagogy, customization and academic choice
• our collective purchasing power and its potential to remove financial barriers that negatively affect retention, persistence, and graduation rates
• the infrastructure needed to administer multi-campus e-textbook initiatives
• terms of sustainable business models for students, publishers and SUNY campuses
Due to substantially lower marginal costs for e-textbooks, SUNY students can save 40% on average by purchasing e-textbooks in the open market. With a SUNY plan in place that leverages our large student population, we estimate achieving savings of 50-70% off the list prices for new print textbooks. We believe that we will be able to reach at least 250 students by identifying core courses offered across the three participating campuses. Target areas include:
• SUNY General Education Requirements (SUNY-GER) and commonly offered courses
• the increasing number of online courses offered by SUNY campuses
• specific programs offered by all three of the participating campuses, including nursing

The Potential of E-Textbooks: Student Learning and Faculty Teaching

In recent years, e-textbooks have become more than simply an online representation of a print book – they have the potential to transform and enhance learning experiences for students and teaching experiences for faculty. Rapidly changing student behaviors and expectations coupled with recent technological developments within e-textbook platforms portend this increase. These developments include:
• faculty customization of materials
• LMS integration
• increased availability of titles in digital format
• improved accessibility
• search functionality
• annotation and highlighting features
• hyperlinks
• multimedia
• social networking
• interactive learning modules

Sustainable infrastructure and business models

A primary objective of this project is to increase student access to innovative learning materials by reducing the burden of egregious textbook costs. Informed by our collective experiences in this pilot and others, the

participating libraries will investigate novel business models, economies of scale, internal infrastructure and processes with the goal of contributing to a SUNY-wide e-textbook strategy. We will examine the following business models and their feasibility for SUNY:
• negotiating discounted individual licenses on behalf of our students
• implementing course based fees
• implementing a universal flat rate e-textbook fee
• leveraging bookstore partnerships to distribute content
• providing e-textbooks as part of financial aid packages
• the role of open educational resources

Summary

In closing, this project embodies many of values and ideas within The Power of SUNY:
• delivering high quality and innovative education to students
• broadening educational accessibility, especially among low and middle income students
• a commitment to expanding our global reach through Open SUNY and distance learning programs
• implementation of SUNY Shared Services and SUNY Campus Alliance Networks, created to expand educational opportunities for SUNY students while increasing operational and administrative efficiencies

We feel strongly that the confluence of several internal and external drivers positions SUNY to make a difference in students' education through coordinated e-textbook adoption. We hope SUNY finds this project worthy of a Tier II ($20,000) grant. Thank you for your consideration.

Reports and Resources

- [Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) presentation](#)
- [SUNY Library Association (SUNYLA) presentation](#)
- [NASIG Conference presentation](#)
- [Student survey – Raw data exported from online survey tool](#)
- Article in [UB News](#)

Assessment, Understanding, Monitoring Student Progress

- Outcomes Assessment

Instructional Design

- Student Learning Support

Instructional Technologies

- Open Educational Resources (OER)