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E-Textbooks for Engineering Courses

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Abstract
Considering the cost of textbooks, we try to make e-textbooks available to students whenever possible. In Fall 2011 we provided 41 e-textbooks to 2072 students in 36 engineering classes (~8% of all engineering classes). Our survey sought to learn about student use and perceptions of the e-textbooks.

Method
Qualtrics survey with 21 questions asked about:
• Demographics
• Awareness of e-textbook
• Students’ e-textbook experience
15% response rate (n=299)

Findings: Awareness Matters!
• 71% of students who were aware of the e-textbook used it.
• Students are more likely to use library copies of e-textbooks when they know there is a copy available.
• Students are about 51% more likely to use library electronic copies given the advanced notice.
• Providing students with information about the availability of electronic copies has the most significant impact on increasing student use of e-textbooks from the library.

Future Plans
• Publicize the e-textbooks more.
• Publicize them early.
• Work to provide links in course registration module and course management sites.
• Conduct focus groups to get more information.

"Great as a secondary source, but I still find it easier to flip through a book to identify my topic."

"Make sure electronic textbooks are reliable. As a student, I need to be able to trust that my textbook will be available whenever I need it."

"Please let us know that the electronic version of the textbook is available online at the beginning of the term, not at the end."

"For [my class], we have open-book exams. This means that we can take our book into the exam with us. We cannot have electronic devices, thus eliminating the possibility of using an electronic textbook during an exam."

Logit model for student usage of library e-textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exploratory Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Err</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of library e-textbooks</td>
<td>-3.665</td>
<td>2.048</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.203</td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student status (Graduate student)</td>
<td>1.043</td>
<td>0.376</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s cost-consciousness</td>
<td>0.650</td>
<td>0.349</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook format preference</td>
<td>0.457</td>
<td>0.220</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of courses</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook as optional reading</td>
<td>0.715</td>
<td>0.302</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-3.133</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All tests of significance are one-tailed with robust standard errors.
Number of observations: 299
Log Likelihood: -150.703
Pseudo R²: 0.364
Wilks’ lambda: 0.912

When did you learn about the library copy of an electronic textbook?

- Unaware of the copy
- More than 3 months before start of class
- Between 1-3 months before start of class
- Less than one month before start of class
- A week before start of class
- First day of class
- After class began

Usage based on Awareness

- No, didn’t use
- Yes, used

Usage

No, didn’t use | Yes, used
---|---
No, didn’t use | 29% | 71%
Yes, used | 82% | 18%

Did you use the electronic copy of your engineering textbook from the library this semester?

- No, didn’t use | 56%
- Yes, used | 44%

Unaware of the copy
- More than 3 months before start of class
- Between 1-3 months before start of class
- Less than one month before start of class
- A week before start of class
- First day of class
- After class began