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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)

"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."

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

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.