E-Textbooks for Engineering Courses

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http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/91958
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Special thanks to: Susan Hollar & Kathleen Folger

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.

"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."

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