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A Textbook Solution

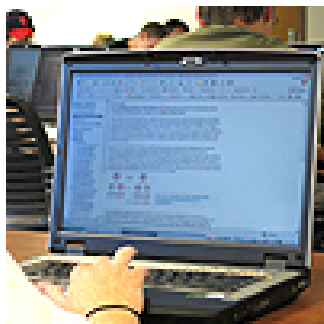
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A Textbook Solution

12.03.2007 | Students, Campus and Community UD student Ashley Dancy's bank account — and her back — are benefiting from the University of Dayton's new use of e-textbooks in her biology class.

An OhioLINK pilot program tapped Bro. Dan Klco's UD biology class and one at Miami University to gauge student and faculty satisfaction with electronic versions of textbooks.

Dancy's first thought: "Great, I don't have to buy another textbook."

"It is convenient. I am on the Internet all the time," she added. "When I need to look up something in the book, it is always there. It's much easier than lugging around an overpriced textbook."

Viewing e-textbooks, or electronic versions of textbooks, from OhioLINK saves UD students about half the cost of a new textbook.

E-textbooks also are an option in 20 other UD classes not in the OhioLINK pilot program. Students in those classes save \$28 to \$67 per book. The regular price for a new hard copy of Intro to Flight for UD mechanical engineering students runs \$170. The e-book version is \$103. Communication students pay \$41 rather than \$69 for Making Sense of Movies. Students buy passcodes from the UD bookstore to access their e-textbooks.

E-textbooks can offer more than text or PDF files by adding movies, Flash animation and interactive tools, according to David Wright, UD's director of curriculum innovation and e-learning. He added that e-textbooks can reflect current discoveries; authors can make changes and additions on the publisher's secure Web site. The updated information is immediately available to students.

"The interactive functions, thanks to the Internet, as well as the ease of accessing and finding different sections and topics within the book, are the best things about using an e-book. It only takes the single click of a mouse," said UD student Emily Topp. "I do enjoy the animation and special effects. They really enhance the learning and enjoyment."

Topp's only concerns are that she can't highlight text or take notes in the margin. OhioLINK Executive Director Tom Sanville said more publishers' e-textbook sites are providing these functions.

"The pilots help us learn how to meet our economic and learning objectives," Sanville said. "Then we can share these best practices to foster adoption across our campuses. In the end, our objectives are for students to be more satisfied with their investment, and for both the students and faculty members to be happier with the educational result."

Although UD and Miami are the only schools currently in the pilot program, other schools scattered throughout the state are using e-textbooks, he said. Sanville expects more institutions will join after OhioLINK receives more feedback and evaluations from student surveys on the pilot.

OhioLINK has had e-versions of regular books available since 2002. This is the first year OhioLINK has worked with colleges to offer e-textbooks to students.

OhioLINK is an association of the libraries of 86 Ohio colleges and universities, and the State Library of Ohio.