

2016

Making a "dent" in the textbook problem: Library e-books for course readings: A collaboration between department faculty and the EMU Library

Kate Pittsley-Sousa
Eastern Michigan University, kpittsle@emich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.emich.edu/lib_sch



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Pittsley-Sousa, Kate, "Making a "dent" in the textbook problem: Library e-books for course readings: A collaboration between department faculty and the EMU Library" (2016). *University Library Faculty Scholarship*. 21.

https://commons.emich.edu/lib_sch/21

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the University Library at DigitalCommons@EMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Library Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@EMU. For more information, please contact lib-ir@emich.edu.

Making a 'Dent' in the Textbook Problem: Library E-Books for Course Readings: A Collaboration Between Department Faculty and the EMU Library

Kate Pittsley-Sousa, Associate Professor, EMU Library

A. Project Overview

EMU's Women in Philanthropy granted \$5,000 to purchase library e-book versions of titles requested by EMU faculty and lecturers for use with upcoming classes. The library used an online form to solicit requests and purchased those titles that were available in library e-book format. The WIP Grant provided options for students in many Summer and Fall 2015 classes. Usage statistics showed heavy use of the e-books, including more than 1853 user sessions and 173 book or chapter downloads. Surveys of faculty and student participants showed overall enthusiasm for use of library e-books in classes and only minor technical problems in using the e-books. The project also allowed library faculty to evaluate e-book platforms and format options and to refine support for library e-books used in courses.

B. Project Activities

Initial e-book Requests

During January 2015, EMU Library systems staff created an online form that EMU faculty and lecturers could use to request e-book titles (<http://www.emich.edu/library/services/forms/e-bookrequest.php>). In late January/early February 2015 availability of the request system was announced via a flyer (Appendix i) which was distributed via department library liaisons, the Faculty Development Center, and by an email to faculty sent by the Faculty Senate. Since library e-books aren't the only answer to textbook issues, the flyer also promoted the Textbook Alternatives guide and use of print reserves.

The library set an initial request deadline of March 1, 2015. As requests were received, the Principal Investigator (PI) checked the availability of titles in library e-book format. Where requested titles were not available in Library e-book format, faculty were notified and offered librarian assistance if they wished to explore alternative titles that are available in either library e-book or open access format. A number of faculty did ask for help in identifying possible alternatives. In a few cases, EMU subject librarians found open access resources that faculty decided to use with students.

Initial Purchases

At the deadline, there were enough funds to purchase all requested titles that were available in library e-book format. Although the grant specified that titles would be used in Summer and Fall 2015 courses, some faculty had made requests for titles to be used in Winter 2016. Since there were still extra funds after purchasing all the titles requested for Summer and Fall 2015 by the first deadline, some titles were purchased for use in Winter 2016. There were more funds available so the request form was kept open.

Plan B – Additional Requests

To solicit more requests, the PI implemented a "plan B." Using textbook information in the electronic course schedule, the PI identified titles that were available in the most advantageous e-book formats which allowed multiple users to access a book simultaneously. The PI then emailed instructors and invited them to request a library e-book version of the title for their classes. Some of these invitations inspired professors to submit requests for additional titles. By soliciting requests, the library expended all grant funds.

E-books purchased

In total, the library received requests from 55 faculty for 75 titles. Of the requested titles, 56 were available in library e-book format and all were purchased with grant funds. In some cases, none of the

titles requested by a faculty member were available in library e-book format; while in other cases we were able to purchase more than one title requested by a faculty member.

Of the 56 e-book titles purchased, 14 titles supported 100-200 level courses, 36 titles supported 300-400 level courses, and 12 titles supported graduate level courses (some titles assigned in more than one course). Requests came from across the university, although both requests and availability were higher in the social sciences, history, humanities, and education. All colleges received titles: Arts & Sciences (42), Business (2), Education (7), Health & Human Services (3), and Technology (4). The most active departments were History & Philosophy (10 e-books purchased), African American Studies (7), Sociology/Anthropology/Criminology (5), and Political Science (4).

The e-books were added to the EMU Library catalog. Each catalog record includes a note acknowledging the WIP grant.

A linked list of all 56 titles can be found here:

<http://guides.emich.edu/alt-texts/wip>

Library Support for E-Book Usage

Professors were sent emails to notify them when an e-book was ready for use. The emails included a stable link to the library catalog record for the title, suggested best practices for using a library e-book as course reading, and information to send students on technical use of the e-book, which was tailored to address the specific e-book formats. (For examples see Appendix ii)

The emails included the phone number of the reference desk for technical help. An online guide for troubleshooting e-book problems was created and all staff and students who work the Information Desk were trained in supporting e-book access.

Best practices and technical notes were improved based on experience from a previous eFellows grant related to library e-books.

Lessons Learned

Although use of library e-books doesn't fully solve the problem with expensive textbooks, library e-books can provide a way for some students to save money on reading materials. Additionally some percentage of students, who would not have otherwise obtained the text, will read the free library e-book version. A growing number of EMU faculty are willing to request library e-book versions of texts and share access information with students.

Potential users of e-books exist in all colleges at EMU. Although students/faculty in technical fields and business were early adopters of e-books at EMU, this project saw strong e-book use by students in the humanities, social sciences, and other fields. Some students will use e-books, even when print copies are relatively inexpensive.

Known technical problems were minor. Turn-aways (essentially a "busy-signal") from limited user e-books were few—and they happened only in a case where a 3-user e-book was used in multiple sections of a course. The EBL non-linear books model, which limits the number of "uses" in a calendar year, didn't even come close to running out of "uses"—so it may be feasible to purchase library e-books in that format.

Getting the word out and communicating with very busy faculty was a challenging aspect of the project. Although we used multiple communication methods, many faculty were not aware that they could request e-books. Of those that requested e-books, we know that some missed reading our emails on e-book availability and did not provide e-book information to students. However, even when faculty don't communicate about e-book availability, students often find e-books in the library catalog or hear about them from other students.

Follow-on efforts:

Library e-books remain only a small part of the answer to the problem of expensive textbooks. Other promising solutions include open access electronic textbooks and use of links to other electronic materials from the library, such as links to articles in library subscriptions. The quality and availability of open access textbooks is rapidly improving, and adoption of open texts at EMU appears to be increasing. The successful use of library e-books demonstrated by this WIP project may encourage more instructors to consider a variety of digital alternatives to traditional print textbooks, such as those suggested on this online guide: <http://guides.emich.edu/alt-texts>

If stable funds could be found to regularly purchase course assigned titles in library e-book format, the library could support ongoing requests from faculty and lecturers. If the EMU Library continued to accept requests, the cost to purchase library e-book versions of course books is projected at \$7,000 to \$10,000 a year if all requested titles (that are available as library e-books) were purchased.

Regular funding for library e-books used in courses remains the biggest problem. The bookkeeping required by administration to purchase titles with grant funds is too time-consuming to consider grants or gifts as a regular way to fund e-books in courses. If funds can be found, it might be reasonable to set aside part of the regular library collection budget to acquire e-books requested by faculty to support courses. However, faced with the university's tight budget reality and many competing information needs to support student and faculty research, reallocation of existing collection funds in the library budget may not be feasible.

C. Project Evaluation

Usage of e-Books

Over 1853 user sessions

Over 173 known downloads of either the full book or specific chapters

Only 4 instances where a limited user book was "busy" so a student would have to try again later

Over 208 unique users identified*

*Only one vendor provides unique user statistics and this vendor represented 46% of the purchased titles. If we assume similar numbers of unique users on the other platforms, there would be over 450 unique users.

See *Detailed Usage by Format* section below for more statistics and case study examples.

Survey results

All 41 participating faculty for whose course a title was purchased were emailed a link to an anonymous online survey and asked to forward a different survey link to students in the course. 14 faculty (34%) answered the survey. At least 7 faculty forwarded a separate survey to an unknown number of students in courses where a library e-book was used and 27 students filled out an online survey. The PI sent the survey links out on the last day of Fall classes, so it's likely the timing reduced survey response numbers.

Most faculty didn't notice a difference in student performance, although 29% thought more students completed the readings. More than half of participating faculty noticed a reduction in student complaints related to the cost of materials. Most faculty thought the library e-books were useful, most planned to explore using library e-books again for future course readings, and more than half would also consider using open access texts.

Half the responding students said that they used the library e-book to save money, three students indicated that if the free e-book hadn't been available they would not have read the book, and two found the e-books more convenient. Most indicated they would be willing to use a library e-book again in a future class.

Surveys showed few technical problems using the e-books. Neither faculty nor students reported major problems. One student described problems with pages loading slowly on the eBrary platform. One student

expressed frustration with getting a “busy signal” on a limited user book. However, both of these students indicated that they would be willing to use a library e-book again in future courses.

See *Detailed Survey Results* section below for more survey results

Did the Project meet Stated Objectives?

Four objectives were stated in the grant proposal:

1. At least *15 instructors* work with Library Faculty to identify alternative reading materials.
Yes: *55 instructors* submitted requests for e-books. *41 instructors* received at least one requested title and some received multiple titles to support courses. In at least three cases where titles were not available, librarians helped identify alternatives—including open access sources that were used by faculty.
2. The library purchases *25 to 100 e-books* requested by faculty and makes these available ...
Yes: *56 e-book titles* were provided using WIP grant funds.
3. The e-books support *at least 20 courses*, and offer potential benefit to *at least 800* students during two semesters: Summer and Fall 2015
Yes: Titles were purchased to support *51 courses*, some of the courses were offered in multiple sections, and some were offered during both Summer and Winter 2015. If we conservatively estimate 20 students enrolled in each course, the e-books would have been available to *over 1000 students*—even before considering multiple sections and courses offered over more than one semester.
4. Project is evaluated and lessons learned.
Yes: The Evaluation Plan was completed as specified in the grant application. Both usage statistics from vendors and user surveys were analyzed.

Did the Project have Desired Impact?

Four impact statements were included in the grant proposal:

1. Of the 800+ students given the option, an estimated *175 students (or more)* take advantage of the library e-book option.
Yes: Only one of the five e-book platforms used for the e-books provides statistics by unique user. That vendor’s statistics showed *208 unique users*. This vendor provided 46% of the titles purchased. If books from other vendors experienced similar usage, there would have been over *450 students* who used the e-books.
2. For any e-books reassigned in subsequent semesters, benefits are multiplied at no additional cost.
Yes: Some titles have already been used in both Summer and Fall semesters. Library faculty received emails from at least three instructors who state that they plan to assign the same titles again in 2016 and there are likely many more who have not communicated with the library about future use.
3. Course reading selections improve through active collaboration between participating instructors and library faculty. These instructors consider future collaborations and inform colleagues of the benefits.
Marginally: Librarians did work with at least three instructors to help find free or low cost course materials. Although the EMU Librarians are willing to consult on finding course materials, faculty are generally unaware that they can call on the librarians for advice in finding course materials (and likely unaware of the value librarians can provide in this area.) Since this has not been a common library service, use of librarians to help find course materials will grow slowly.
4. Demonstrated successes in using library e-books encourage future use of alternative course materials by EMU faculty/lecturers.

Yes: Library faculty have already received inquiries from participating faculty asking about additional e-book titles for future classes. Faculty who participated in the survey indicated a willingness to use both library e-books and open access materials in future courses.

Detailed Usage by Platform and Format

The e-books were purchased on five different platforms with additional variation in e-book format. The section below provides usage statistics by platform, with discussion of the advantages/disadvantages of each platform/format and case examples of specific title use.

eBrary e-books

eBrary is a platform used by many publishers. The grant purchased eBrary titles in 2 formats: multiple user and 3-user. All of these formats can be read online using only a browser. Most of the eBrary titles allow printing or copying of a limited number of pages.

WIP grant funds purchased 14 eBrary Multiple User e-books. Multiple User eBrary titles can be used by any number of students simultaneously. Students can opt to read the book online via a browser or to download the entire book for a two week period.

WIP grant funds purchased 11 eBrary 3-User e-books. These allow up to three readers to use the book simultaneously—a fourth reader would receive a notice that all copies were in use and could try again later. However, vendor statistics show that there were only 4 instances where a 4th reader was denied access (a turn-away).

For unknown technical reasons, vendor statistics could not be pulled for three of the titles. Total usage for 22 eBrary titles (multiple-user and 3-user) show:

- 452 user sessions
- 18 full book downloads
- 4 turn-aways
- 8, 164 pages viewed
- 1,961 pages printed
- 81 pages copied

eBrary Case Examples:

1. The most heavily used title was a 3-user e-book that was assigned in four sections of LEAD 201 in the College of Education with an estimated enrollment of 88 students. Statistics show 112 user sessions and 2123 pages viewed. This is the only book to experience “turn-aways,” where all 3 copies were in use and a fourth user was denied access--this only happened 4 times (3 of those in December, presumably during high use before a final).
2. The single class with the most use was one section of HIST 202 with an estimated enrollment of 35 students who generated 93 user sessions and 1,187 page views. Although this was a 3-user e-book there were no instances where more than 3 students attempted to use the book at the same time (no turn-aways.)
3. Statistics also show significant use and multiple full book downloads for books used in history, information technology, biology, and social work. Usage was high for the fairly expensive biology text, but also high for an inexpensive classic used in a history class.

EBL e-books

EBL is a platform used by many publishers. EMU librarians consider it a “second choice” platform because it presents potential technical hurdles for users, but it is the only option for some titles. Although students can read a certain number of pages online, it isn’t possible to read an entire EBL book online without downloading the title. To download an EBL book, students must add free Adobe software to their browsers. This is at best inconvenient and for some students may prevent use. WIP funds purchased 26 EBL titles (5

unlimited versions, 3 EBL 3-user versions, and 18 non-linear lending versions). The non-linear lending model allows multiple students to access the book simultaneously, but places a limit on how many user sessions can occur in a calendar year—however, in all cases there were large numbers of user sessions still available at the end of Fall term. Statistics from this vendor show numbers of unique users, so one can identify how many students used each title.

208 unique users
45 full book downloads
1915 pages printed
52 pages copied
1335 user sessions (888 sessions small # of pages viewed, 447 sessions larger # of pages viewed)
0 turn-aways

Note: Some of these books were purchased for use in Winter 2016 classes, so there won't be significant use on some titles till next year.

EBL Case Examples:

1. A book used in a criminology class was used by 19 students, the full book was downloaded 8 times and portions were read online 119 times. Average online reading session was 13 minutes—some would be brief sessions where students printed pages to read offline (165 pages were printed). This professor plans to use the book again in Summer and Fall 2016. This is a non-linear model e-book which limits the number of user sessions, but only 12% of the sessions have been used so far. This publisher charges more for e-books than most: the book cost the grant \$143. List price of the paperback version is \$45 and some used copies can be found for \$15 on Amazon.

2. One grant purchased e-book is a title by an EMU faculty author that has been assigned many times over the years. The library's lone circulating print copy is in high demand. Fourteen students used a 3-user e-book version of the title this Fall with 113 reader sessions, 6 full book downloads, and 341 pages printed. In this case, availability of a free library e-book option may help the professor avoid ethical issues in assigning a self-authored text.

3. In one instance, a professor told us that he had forgotten about the e-book and had not provided his class with e-book information. Nonetheless, statistics show that several students discovered and accessed the e-book. Some would have found it in the library catalog and they may have told other students about it.

JSTOR & Project MUSE e-books

JSTOR and Project MUSE are non-profit entities that offer library e-books in a very easy format. The book chapters are provided as PDFs that can be downloaded and saved. Since this works just like articles in the library's electronic journal subscriptions, students find these very easy. Unfortunately, since they work with a small number of publishers, the project included only two e-books from these vendors.

Case example:

1. A Project MUSE e-book was used in a Summer writing course with a projected enrollment of 20 students. Statistics show that 110 chapters were used by students. Since there are only 10 chapters in the book, it is likely that at least 10 students used the e-book version (more, if not all chapters were assigned). The Return on Investment (ROI) was high: cost of the library e-book was \$76 and the cheapest used paperback of the title on Amazon is \$33. Thus, the benefit to students was at least \$300. – And, the book remains in the library collection for further use.

EBSCO e-books

EBSCO is a “least favorite” vendor of e-books. Although many publishers work with EBSCO, librarians choose the platform as a last resort because EBSCO doesn't offer permanent ownership of titles. A purchase allows access to the title for 5 years. The EBSCO e-book interface is also very cluttered and unpleasant for

users. Two titles were purchased from EBSCO since they weren't available elsewhere. One was an unlimited user e-book and the other was a single user e-book.

61 uses of the unlimited e-book & 5 uses of the single user e-book

Detailed Survey Results

Faculty survey – 14 responses (respondents could skip any question)

1. How did you share information on the availability of the library e-book with your students?

9 Provided info on syllabus	64%
5 Provided link from course shell	36%
10 Emailed info to students	71%
9 Announced in class	64%
0 Other	0

2. Did you or your students experience any technical problems using the e-book?

0 Yes, big problems	0%
0 Yes, minor difficulties	0%
14 No problems that I know of	100%

3. Were the tips from the library helpful in solving/avoiding technical problems?

4 Yes, very helpful	29%
0 Yes, slightly helpful	0%
0 No, could not resolve problems	0%
10 No opinion	71%

4. If you experienced technical problems with the e-book(s), please describe the problem:

no responses

5. Overall do you think providing free library e-book versions of titles used in courses is useful?

12 Very useful	86%
1 Somewhat useful	7%
0 Not useful	0%
1 No opinion	7%

6. Would you be interested in using a library e-book as part of course readings again in a future course?

12 Yes, I plan to explore this in the future.	86%
2 Maybe	14%
0 No, would not want to use library e-books again	0%

7. Would you be interested in using an open access textbook for course readings?

- 2 Yes, I already use an open access textbook for a course 14%
- 7 Yes, I plan to explore this in the future 50%
- 5 Maybe 36%
- 0 No, would never consider an open access textbook 0%

8. Did you notice any difference in student performance related to the availability of the free library e-book?

- 4 It seemed like more students completed the reading 29%
- 0 It seemed like fewer students completed the reading 0%
- 10 I saw no noticeable difference from previous courses 71%

9. Did students complain less about the cost or availability of the textbook?

- 3 No students complained about cost or availability and they usually do 23%
- 2 I've never had students complain about cost or availability of texts 15%
- 5 Some students complained, but it seemed like fewer complaints 39%
- 3 Complaints were at similar levels to previous semesters 23%

10. I know that at least ____ students in my Fall 2015 classes used a library e-book provided by the WIP grant program.

- 10
- 14
- 2
- 3
- 5

11. Did you forward an email to your students with a link to the student survey on this project?

- 7 Yes, I already forwarded it 50%
- 3 I intend to forward it 21%
- 4 No 29%

12. Is there anything else you'd like to share about this project?

- a. Not a single student told me that he/she used the e-format. Nobody had any questions, nobody seemed very interested when I announced it, and I must assume that nobody used it. I would use it again because I consider anything that saves students money a benefit. But no idea.
- b. Thanks for making this e-book available. It was a big help to my students!
- c. Other than this e-book, I am using other e-books from the library in my classes. This is a great option. Students benefit from it and I as well.
- d. Regardless of the number of students that may have been able to take advantage of this pioneering project free library e-book versions should be a consistent resource for our students in the future.

Student Survey – 27 responses (respondents could skip any question)

Did you use the free e-book title(s) provided by the EMU Library?

9 Yes, I used only the free library e-book version	33.3%
1 Yes, I used the free library e-book version until I was able to obtain a print version	3.7 %
4 Yes, I used both the free library e-book version and a print copy of the book	14.8%
6 No, I did not want to use the free library e-book.	22.2 %
7 No, I did not know that there was a free library e-book option for a title used in this course.	25.9%
0 No, I tried to use the free library e-book, but had difficulty accessing the book	0%
0 No, I successfully accessed the free library e-book, but then chose not to use it	0%

How did you find out about the library e-book?

1 It was linked from my course shell	3.8%
2 It was in the syllabus	7.7%
9 My prof told us in class	34.6%
5 My prof sent a link in an email	19.2%
2 Another student told me about it	7.7%
2 I found the book by searching on the library web site	7.7%
5 Other	19.2%

If you used the e-book, which best describes your situation:

3 If there was no free library e-book version, I would not have read the book.	17%
9 I used the free library e-book version, because it saved me money.	50%
2 I used the free library e-book version, because it was more convenient.	11.%
0 I used the free library e-book version, because the bookstore was out of copies.	0%
0 I used the free library e-book version, because my print book which I ordered online had not yet arrived.	0%
4 Other	22.2%

Did you experience any technical problems using the free library e-book?

0 Yes, big problems	0%
2 Yes, minor difficulties	11.1%
16 No problems	88.9%

Which library e-book titles did you have problems with? Can you describe the problems?

- a. No problems, keep doing library e books!
- b. I used [an eBrary 3-user e-book] and sometimes pages would not load even if I let it load for a very long time - I do not know if this is a problem, or it just meant I wasn't able to use it. However when it said pages were loading it did not say that it was unavailable.

If one was available, would you consider using a free library e-book in a future course?

21 Yes 80.8%
1 No 3.8%
4 Maybe 15.4%

Did you know that you can search for library e-books in the EMU Library's online catalog? <http://portal.emich.edu>

12 Yes 46.2%
3 No 11.5%
11 No, but now I'll look for e-books in the catalog 42.3%

Is there anything else you'd like to share about this project?

I really appreciate online textbooks.

Free E books are important for poor graduate students like myself!

I didn't know there was an e-book available.

Allowing the free E-book is a nice option for those who don't want to carry multiple books around all day.

Makes having texts and source for class much simpler

I believe this was an e-copy of the *****? The paperback was only a few dollars. I believe the EMU Women in Philanthropy grant could be better spent on other projects in the future. [Researcher note: book mentioned was NOT one purchased with WIP grant.]

I wish more copies were available. It was frustrating to not be able to view the textbook when someone else was. [Researcher note: statistics show only one book had turn-aways, and this happened 4 times.]

Advantages and disadvantages of using Library e-Books for Course Readings

Advantages of library e-books:

- Library e-books can provide access for students unable to obtain the course book, whether due to price or other difficulties obtaining a copy.
- Library e-books can be accessed from home, usually with just a web browser and emich login (occasionally requiring a download of free Adobe software).
- In cases where the library can purchase a title with an unlimited user license, it is possible for an entire class to use the e-book for free.
- In cases where the vendor sells only a 1 or 3 simultaneous user e-book for a title, an e-book can make for a more effective reserves copy than a traditional print reserves book, since the book is then available to students from home and when the library is closed.
- Library e-books can't be stolen or misplaced—unfortunately, print texts in library collections tend to go missing.
- Library e-book versions of course assigned titles can provide great return on investment. In most cases, the library makes a one-time purchase of the e-book and it becomes a permanent part of the library collection. When a title is used in subsequent semesters, students continue to benefit with no added cost to the university.
- Successful use of library e-books may encourage faculty to also consider open access texts and other alternatives.

However, library e-books provide only a partial solution to the textbook expense problem.

Limitations of library e-books:

- Many titles assigned in courses are not available in library e-book format. Some publishers do not offer library e-books, including some large textbook publishers (Cengage, McGraw Hill, Norton, Pearson). Even when publishers participate, availability as a library e-book often varies by title.
- Not all titles are available in unlimited user versions.
- Library e-books come from different vendors, so the platforms vary. Some platforms are very easy to use, some are less convenient but usable, and some include technical hurdles that may inhibit use.
- Librarians have heard from some faculty and lecturers who oppose use of library e-books, although they appear to be a small percentage of EMU instructors.

Acknowledgements:

A large number of EMU faculty and staff contributed to the success of this experiment. Thanks are due to:

Joe Badics, Acquisitions Librarian, EMU Library
Mike Barnes, Cataloging Librarian & Cataloging Staff, EMU Library
Rita, Bullard, Access Services Librarian, EMU Library
Sara Memmott, Emerging Technologies Librarian, EMU Library
Eric Owen, Information Systems Librarian, EMU Library
Julia Nims, Scholarly Communications Librarian, EMU Library
Chris Puzzuoli, Library Applications Development Specialist, EMU Library
Carol Smallwood, Acquisitions Staff, EMU Library
Jackie Wrosch, Systems Librarian, EMU Library

EMU Subject Librarians for communicating with department faculty about e-book titles and helping to find alternatives when titles weren't available as e-books

Karen Busch and Prof Linda Pritchard for grant writing advice at WIP Grant Workshops

EMU professors and lecturers who requested titles, notified students about the e-books, and responded to the survey

EMU Students who responded to the survey

Susann DeVries, EMU Library Department Head & Interim University Librarian, for administrator support

Grant Report submitted on January 15 2016, by Principal Investigator:

Kate Pittsley-Sousa
Associate Professor, EMU Library
kate.pittsley@emich.edu
734-487-2508

Appendices:

- i. Textbook Alternatives flyer
- ii. Sample emails to faculty with best practices and technical advice



Are textbooks a thorn in your side?

Do students complain about the price of your text?

Has the bookstore run out of copies?

Are students falling behind while waiting for books ordered online?

Would you prefer to assign chapters from more than one book, but don't want to ask students to buy multiple books?

You may have options:

A. Textbook Alternatives guide

The Textbook Alternatives online guide provides advice, links, and Google Custom Searches that make it easier to look for alternatives, such as open access texts, alternative text publishers, or linking to electronic resources. Recently there have been vast improvements in alternatives.

<http://guides.emich.edu/alt-texts>

B. Request Library E-Books for Courses

In some cases, the EMU Library may be able to purchase library electronic versions of books that can be read online by students using an emich NetID. If a multiple user e-book version is available, it can allow students a free option in place of purchasing a book. Where only single-user versions are available, these can make useful “reserves” copies than can be accessed by students even when the library is closed.

The **Women in Philanthropy at EMU provided a \$5000 grant** to fund requests for e-books used in courses. If you are interested in a title for use in your course, request it with this online form:

<http://guides.emich.edu/alt-texts/wip>

As of April 2015, remaining funds are being used to purchase titles as they are requested. Make your requests soon to ensure funds are available.

C. Print Reserves

An extra copy of your traditional text placed on 2-hour reserve at the EMU Library can provide options for low income students or students waiting for a text to arrive. Find info and links to online forms here:

<http://www.emich.edu/library/services/reservesprocedures.php>

Questions? Consult your EMU Library Faculty subject specialist.

Appendix ii – Sample emails with best practice advice and technical information
1st for a multiple user e-book, 2nd for a limited user e-book

Dear Prof XXX,

Below is a link to the library e-book purchased for your course using grant funds from the EMU Women in Philanthropy.

The version we purchased is multiple user -- meaning that the entire class can access and read the book at the same time. Students can read the book online by using their emich NetID.

Afrocentric Idea

<http://portal.emich.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1259001>

We recommend the following best practices:

- a. continue to stock copies at the bookstore for those students who would prefer a print copy
- b. include the link to the book in your syllabus
- c. send an early email to students providing the link. Then students can choose either to purchase the print book or to use the library e-book at no cost.
- d. if you use a course shell in Canvas, include a link to the e-book.

We hope that you and your students find the e-book helpful. Later in the year we will send a survey to assess the usefulness of providing library e-book versions of course readings.

Below is some text you are welcome to copy/paste/edit when communicating with students:

Afrocentric Idea

<http://portal.emich.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1259001>

The link above goes to a library catalog record for the book. Use the link in the record to access the e-book. From off campus, you will be asked for your emich NetID.

Tips:

1. If you want to save the e-book as a favorite in your browser, save the catalog page. If you try to save a web address that you see after logging in to the book, the link will not work later.
2. Library e-books often don't allow you to print or copy pages (some allow a limited amount of copying/printing).
3. Library e-books work well on computers, laptops, and some other devices that use a standard web browser. They might not work on some devices, such as phones.
4. If you have trouble logging in, the most common problems are:
 - a. You may need to set your browser to accept cookies.
 - b. If your emich NetID password has expired, you may need to change your password.

You may be able to get immediate help using the e-book from staff at the EMU Library Information Desk by calling [734-487-2445](tel:734-487-2445).

Example for a 3-user e-book:

Dear Prof XXX ,

Below is a link to the library e-book purchased for your course using grant funds from the EMU Women in Philanthropy.

The best version we could obtain is 3-user version -- meaning that up to 3 students can read the book at the same time. A 4th student will see that all copies are in use, and will have to try again later. When a student stops reading the book and closes the browser window, that copy becomes available to another student. Students access the book online by using their emich NetID.

Global **Tectonics** - 3rd ed. by Philip Kearey
<http://portal.emich.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1258365>

We recommend the following best practices:

- a. continue to stock copies at the bookstore for those students who would prefer a print copy
- b. include the link to the book in your syllabus
- c. send an early email to students providing the link.
- d. if you use a course shell in Canvas, include a link to the e-book.

We hope that you and your students find the e-book helpful. Later in the year we will send a survey to assess the usefulness of providing library e-book versions of course readings.

Below is some text you are welcome to copy/paste/edit when communicating with students:

Global **Tectonics** - 3rd ed. by Philip Kearey
<http://portal.emich.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1258365>

The link above goes to a library catalog record for the book. Use the link in the record to access the e-book. From off campus, you will be asked for your emich NetID.

This is a 3-reader e-book. If you are the 4th student trying to access the book, you will have to try again at a later time. You may not always be able to access the book. Thus, it will only be possible to rely solely on the e-book if you plan to read ahead and don't wait till just before class or the day before a test to do the readings.

When you are finished reading the book, close the browser window and the book will become available to another student. If you aren't actively using the book, the book will close automatically after no activity.

Tips:

1. If you want to save the e-book as a favorite in your browser, save the catalog page. If you try to save a web address that you see after logging in, the link will not work later.
2. Library e-books often don't allow you to print or copy pages (some allow a limited amount of copying/printing).
3. Library e-books work well on computers, laptops, and some other devices that use a standard web browser. They might not work on some devices, such as phones.
4. If you have trouble logging in, the most common problems are:
 - a. You may need to set your browser to accept cookies.
 - b. If your emich NetID password has expired, you may need to change your password.

You may be able to get immediate help using the e-book from staff at the EMU Library Information Desk by calling [734-487-2445](tel:734-487-2445).