eText Task Force 2012

The ETLG eText Taskforce is led by Ben Hubbard (UCB).

The primary deliverables are to:

- Identify existing eText efforts
- Summarize existing tools / products
- Identify potential partnership opportunities
- Identify best practices
  - Interoperability
  - Intellectual Property Issues

The eText task force is also looking at partnering with similar task forces being run across the nation, including an active task force within SUNY.

Educause Pilot

UCB is also involved in a pilot being run by Educause. This pilot seeks to end the need for students to buy their own books and leverages volume purchasing discounts of eTexts via a course-materials fee. The universities involved in this pilot are:

- Cornell
- UC Berkeley (currently in for the fall 2012 but will drop out for spring 2013; UCD has decided not to pursue either)
- University of Minnesota
- University of Virginia
- University of Wisconsin
- McGraw Hill is also one publisher involved

IMS Global Efforts

IMS Global continues its work on interoperability. Their interest in eTexts focuses on K-12 but also higher ed. (to a lesser extent). Rob Abel describes that eTexts are evolving into a toolkit of content: high-end, media rich e-Textbooks with adaptive learning modules, access to real-time tutoring / academic support and, in some instances, inclusion of assessment modules with automatic homework grading built in. Concurrent to this, many textbook vendors continue to offer course cartridges that have increasingly interactive features.

As is widely held, interoperability can save time and money. By pursuing standards-based solutions, we also establish the foundation to extract and aggregate analytics on usage patterns. IMS Global is also helping to connect users to accessible content in alternative formats via use of their standards. Here are some of the objectives of work of IMS Global:

- Plug in e-Textbooks into any LMS
- Easily mix sections of different e-Textbooks together
- Enable re-use of Open Educational Resource (OER) e-Textbooks

Selection of IMS Compliant Vendors

- CourseSmart
- VitalSource Nook Study
- Cafe Scribe
- CourseLoad
- Add also most major textbook publishers
- Select UC Bookstores are also partnering with Coursesmart

Resources

Waggener, Shel "E-Content: Opportunity and Risk" *EDUCAUSE Review,* vol. 47, no. 5 (September/October 2012). http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/e-content-opportunity-and-risk#.UGXQW7XxybU.gmail

Govenor Brown signs e-Textbook law for California on September 28, 2012: https://creativecommons.org/weblog/entry/34288

Below are the links to the specific language of the bills signed:

- **SB-1052:** http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120SB1052&search_keywords=
- **SB-1053:** http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120SB1053&search_keywords=

The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released a report** in 2012 (conducted in 2011) that is quite comprehensive on the topic of e-Books:

- OECD (2012), "E-books: Developments and Policy Considerations", OECD Digital Economy Papers, No. 208, OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k912zxg5svh-en

Summary Thoughts

It feels like we are at a crucible moment with this topic. eTexts can certainly save $$ and their use will certainly lighten the physical weight load for students who carry around textbooks; but several questions remain, not least of which is: are interactive e-Texts pedagogically beneficial and will those functionalities actually be used in practice … Here are a few tangential topics that need to be considered as the task force completes its work:

- Faculty training is key to adoption - how will eTexts be used within instruction by faculty?
- Accessibility – Consideration needs to be given to recent eReader case, but also need to focus on how eTexts can help connect users to accessible content in alternative formats
- Recent Anti-Trust Case – price fixing / agency model

- Integration with LMS
- Building a bridge between Library efforts and "eBooks" subscriptions and the evolving state of "eTextbooks" / course cartridges
- Digital Objects Management
- "Students Find e-Textbooks Clumsy and Don' t Use Their Interactive Features"

More analysis is needed, and this site will serve as a place interested parties can come to for updates.