The e-Book Experience

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Abstract

The inevitable transition in the information age is the movement from a printed to a digital format. The recent development of specialized e-readers such as Kindle, the Nook and more than 23 others, as well as e-reader capable devices like smart phones, tablet computers, PCs and other e-book devices is leading to the rapid replacement of printed books with their electronic equivalents.

This paper reports on the experience of using an e-book in a very intensive business applications course. This course taught students to use all Microsoft Office products. Students completed 70 assignments. There were 14 sections of the course, 9 instructors and more than 240 students. The course relied completely on an e-book.

Neither the students nor instructors enthusiastically embraced the use of the e-book.

Introduction

When Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 1400s, it revolutionized the act of sharing human knowledge. Instead of being hand copied, books could be printed relatively quickly and easily.

The information or computer age began with the development of the first electronic computer, the ENIAC, in the 1940s. Following Moore's Law, the power of computers has grown exponentially from these humble beginnings. The development of the personal computer, the Internet, cellular communication and cloud storage have reduced the cost of creating, sharing and storing large amounts of information.

Just as the printing press caused a paradigm shift in its age, the Internet and the myriad of devices that create store and share data today have created a new paradigm. In the next few years, the typical college student will stop carrying an 80 pound backpack full of textbooks, notebooks, paper and pencils. Instead, students will rely on a multipurpose device such as a tablet computer.

In 2011, more than 25 new such devices were introduced at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. These new devices are capable of storing in electronic form, more than an entire library at a mid-size university could hold in 1990. This includes all the books, video/audio recordings and images.

What does this change mean to the college professor? How will students use the capabilities of these new devices? As with the adoption of any new technology, there will be growing pains. New technologies often fail. How will student cope when they cannot access course materials? There a comic on my office door clipped from the newspaper some 15 years ago it says: "the dog ate the PalmPilot that had the URL of the website where I stored my homework."

Literature Review

Research on e-books is just beginning. A search of the online EBSCO Academic Search Premier database using the subject term electronic books and publication type academic journal resulted in only 50 articles. The earliest of these articles was published in 1999.

This section will be expanded in the full paper. See reference section for articles that will be reviewed.

Research Methodology

A survey instrument measuring attitudes toward e-books and satisfaction levels with e-books was developed and administered to the nine faculty members teaching a course using an e-book for the first time. A modified version of this survey instrument was administered to more than 200 students enrolled in this course.

A complete discussion of the survey instrument will be presented in a completed version of this paper.

Research Questions

What is faculty's attitude toward e-books?
Are faculty members satisfied with the books?

What are student attitudes toward e-books?
Are students satisfied with e-books?

Results Analysis

A complete discussion of the results will be discussed in the completed article.

Discussion and conclusions

Yet to be written.

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