

## 57 – eTextbooks

### Action Item Template Response

#### General Action Item Information

Lead Division/Office: Learning Technologies

Action Item Number: 57

Action Item Short Name: eTextbooks

Dependencies with other EP Action Items: 35

Implementation leader (name & email): David Lewis (dlewis@iupui.edu)

#### I. DESCRIBE YOUR PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS ACTION.

Dean David Lewis (assistant vice president for digital scholarly communications in the Indiana University Office of the Vice President for Information Technology, in addition to his campus responsibilities as dean of University Library at IUPUI) is leading the effort and collaborating with Learning Technologies.

The following is a strategy for IU to pursue between now and the end of the 2010/11 academic year. The focus during this period should be on exploring alternatives and testing what the market provides and in developing small-scale, local open textbook alternatives.

The projects undertaken should achieve the following:

1. Reduce the cost to students.
2. Provide the materials that faculty wish to use.
3. Focus on rewards for sustainable materials.

Item 1: *Encourage the Deposit of Materials into Connexions.* Provide a series of small incentives for faculty to deposit open educational resources into Connexions. Criteria and process for making the awards need to be determined. UITS funded.

Item 2: *Install the Connexions Rhaptos Software.* This would provide a platform for IU faculty to develop electronic versions of textbooks and other monographs with more flexible licensing and pricing structures than can currently be done with the Connexions site.

Cost: *Staff and Hardware.* The Rhaptos software is due to be released in early 2010 and detailed costs can be established at that time. The software is open source and will have no cost. This should not be a high-volume application, so hardware requirements should initially be a modest-sized server. Staffing requirements for deploying and maintaining the software and in supporting faculty in their use of the application will also need to be established. UITS funded.

Item 3: Large-scale textbook Development Projects. In several cases funding to support the development of textbooks on a larger scale should be considered. These efforts should be targeted at

large-enrollment courses and should expect both campus and school or department financial support. These projects should result in a text for a course where the payback in terms of savings to students would be substantial. The resulting textbooks should be deposited on Connexions or on the IU iteration of the Rhaptos software.

Additional activities included integration of CourseLoad-served content into Oncourse and an NSF-funded project to evaluate etext use through the CourseLoad system in spring of 2010, whose results were encouraging. The project report is available at: <http://www.etexts.iu.edu/resources/index.php>

In fall of 2010 the university made a policy decision that course fees could be used for etexts. This is a critical and significant development as it allows funding mechanisms for acquiring digital versions of textbooks at good prices and with good conditions, and for funding the internal development of content. Several courses are using etext fees in spring 2011.

In spring 2011 RFPs will be issued to establish contacts with a variety of content and systems providers, with the expectation of having a few options available to faculty in fall 2011. Two taskforces are at work. One will review IU policies to see what policies may need to be revised or established. A second group is reviewing procedures.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Refer to [etexts.iu.edu](http://etexts.iu.edu) for progress on new agreements with 5 textbook content providers and Courseload (eText software delivery platform).

## **II. WHAT ARE THE POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS OF YOUR PLANS?**

Students and many stakeholders in higher education are concerned with the costs of textbooks. Empowering People, <<http://ep.iu.edu>|<http://ep.iu.edu/>>, IU's Strategic Plan for IT, asserts that "IU should be at the forefront of enabling its faculty to creatively experiment with and adopt new models for providing educational resources to students."

All indications point to rapid change in digital reader devices (e.g., iPad, Droids, Kindles, PC/Macs, laptops, etc.), digital textbooks, and print-on-demand. But at the present time we do not believe device-based solutions are the answer.

The ability to use etext fees should provide a mechanism to direct funds at this textbook problem. For traditional textbooks delivered electronically this should reduce costs to 35% of list now, with the expectation of greater savings in the near future. It should also enable the local development of content.

## **III. IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS.**

Students, faculty and staff