

Media Relations

UNH E-Textbook Program Saves Business Students \$70K

Business School Class Is First To Go All Digital

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DURHAM, N.H. -- A new digital textbook program launched this semester at the University of New Hampshire Whittemore School of Business and Economics has saved students more than \$70,000 in textbook costs.

While UNH has been expanding its digital textbook offerings, this is the first time an entire class has used only a digital textbook. Instead of purchasing hard copies of their textbook, the more than 600 students enrolled in Prof. Ross Gittell's "Introduction to Business" course at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics paid just \$33.25 for unlimited online access for the term.

Textbook prices represent a large out-of-pocket expense for students; conventional hard-cover textbooks average \$150 each. Textbook prices have increased 22 percent over the last four years, quadruple inflation, according to the Student Public Interest Research Groups. The College Board estimates that students spend an average of \$1,137 for textbooks and supplies each year.

"Students are benefiting from substantially lower textbook costs, as well as from having immediate access to their course materials from the first day of class," said Ross Gittell, the James R. Carter Professor at the Whittemore School. "A textbook licensing model of this kind has the potential for significant university-wide savings, while increasing educational opportunities for more people that can help grow our economy."

The e-textbook initiative is the result of a textbook licensing agreement between the Whittemore School, the UNH Bookstore and open textbook publisher Flat World Knowledge. The formats available include an online web book; print-it-yourself PDF; e-book for an iPad, Kindle or other tablet; and audiobook for an iPod or MP3 player. A low-cost print-on-demand option also is available for students who prefer a physical book.

Digital delivery of the e-text package is managed by the UNH Bookstore, which assigns a unique authorization code to each student for access to the course content that doesn't expire and can be transferred from device to device.

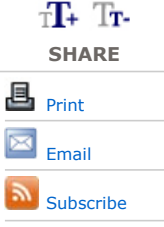



"We are committed to providing the widest range of options to help students lower their education costs," said Sarah Hutz, manager at the UNH Bookstore. "The e-text program is a new way to expand our services that is more economical, convenient, and environmentally friendly."

UNH has been increasingly offering digital versions of textbooks; approximately half of the textbooks sold at the UNH Bookstore have the digital option, which saves students an average of 60 percent off the price of the printed book, Hutz said. This fall, students saved \$88,500 by opting for the digital version of textbooks at the UNH Bookstore, which includes Gittell's students.

"It is very convenient to find the information you're looking for right on your computer where students do most of their work anyway. The online textbook was so much cheaper than the rest of my books and, in some cases, it is better than my hard copies. I would definitely recommend a similar type of text to other UNH courses because I find it so much easier to read and get information," said first-year student Chris McPhee of Marshfield, Mass., who is taking Gittell's class.

The majority of UNH's digital books are offered on the free NookStudy platform, which allows students to highlight materials, link to websites and course notes, and create study guides for exams straight from the textbook.

In addition to its digital textbooks, Flat World Knowledge offers an open licensing model that allows instructors to revise, remix, and incorporate their own contributions so their textbooks more directly relate to the focus and learning objectives of a specific course.


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Gittell and two colleagues have written new chapters on sustainability and business and public policy that weren't in the original version of "Exploring Business" by Karen Collins, one of the two digital books used in the "Introduction to Business" course.

"The partnership with UNH creates a framework to make college more affordable, increase learning and teaching opportunities, and help ensure the success of students during these challenging times," said Eric Frank, president of Flat World Knowledge.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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