

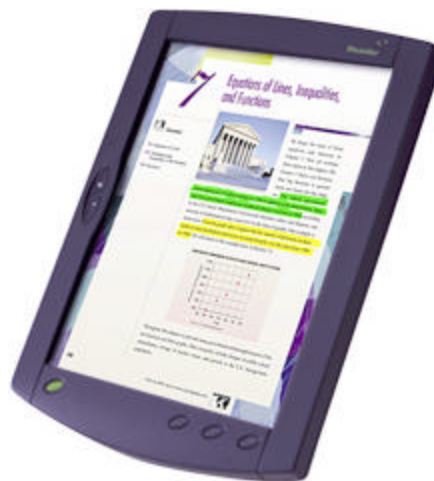
e-Textbooks

Two recent reports by consulting firms IDC and Forrester Research project major growth for the sales of both print-on-demand books and digital textbooks. [Information Today, 18.2 (Feb. 2001): 29; 18.3 (Mar. 2001):43].

Advantages to consumers include bulk and weight reduction (e.g. goReader, pictured at right, weighs up to 3 pounds and holds 300+ textbooks) and, potentially, increased interactivity, lower prices, and easy downloading of updates.

goReader

Perhaps the most publicized e-textbook product is the goReader [<http://www.GoReader.com>]. A recent press release describes the product: “Specifically designed for students, the goReader offers features not available with current e-book readers. The device features a 7.3" X 9.7" color high-resolution screen that performs navigation and feature operations such as multi-color highlighting, note taking, and book marking. The goReader holds more than 350 textbooks and displays complex color content that includes images, graphs, tables and formulas.” GoReader is equipped with a calculator, calendar and dictionary, as well as a speaker and microphone. A plug-in keyboard can be purchased separately.



According to the company website, “The GoReader is now available to schools and districts for proof-of-concept programs.” In other words, the product is being tested in a variety of school settings including the University of Chicago, Wake Forest University, and Highland Park High School. As of mid-April, goReader has cemented partnerships with the following textbook publishers:

Harcourt College Publishers
Addison Wesley

West Group
Key College Publishing

An April 9 press release announces an agreement between The Douglas Stewart Company, which, with its network of over 3,000 college bookstores, is the largest distributor of computer products, electronics and school supplies to the education market: “This agreement provides goReader with a direct distribution channel to university bookstores. The goReader electronic e-book device and electronic textbooks will be available for students to purchase beginning in Fall 2001 at select schools across the country.”

The e-textbooks will be purchased from the goReader website and downloaded onto the goReader device via PC computer and USB cable. In addition to textbook materials, local, national, and international newspapers and periodicals will also be available. The goReader device, which supports HTML, XML, PDF and Java formats, will be available for purchase with a possible price range of \$400-\$600.

MetaText

In March 2000, [netLibrary](http://www.netlibrary.com) [http://www.netlibrary.com] entered into the e-textbook market with its purchase of MetaText, a company which creates web-based digital textbooks. MetaText editions, like netLibrary's other offerings are viewed on a computer screen, rather than through a separate device.



According to a December 2000 press release, MetaText editions contain all of the traditional textbook elements such as words, maps, photographs, charts, other graphics, and a whole lot more. "The MetaText platform features a variety of tools to benefit both instructors and students. With MetaText, instructors can build online course syllabi, manage class rosters, annotate text, and make class announcements that are instantly viewable by students. Students using MetaText can take advantage of a host of features to search, navigate, annotate, highlight, and bookmark their online texts. Students have their own unique home pages that serve as a portal to all of their MetaText resources associated with the course, including the syllabus, text, announcements, and additional reading materials. Communication tools built into the MetaText platform facilitate instructor-student and instructor-class feedback. Each e-textbook comes bundled with a set of tools for the instructor (i.e. online syllabi and class rosters) and student (i.e. personal annotations, bookmarking and highlighting). Moreover, communication tools allow for instructor-student and instructor-class feedback."

In other words, each time the student or instructor wishes to read the textbook, a login is required. After login, the student is taken to his or her personal website where there is not only a link to the textbook but announcements from the instructor and other material that the instructor wishes to distribute.

It should be no surprise that the next step was integration of the MetaText platform with established distance education course management platforms, including Blackboard [http://www.blackboard.com]. A January 2001 press release states: "In addition to digital textbook integration efforts already underway, netLibrary and Blackboard have agreed to develop a secure gateway from the Blackboard Resource Center [http://resources.blackboard.com] to netLibrary eBook collections owned by participating educational institutions. Through this additional integration work, users are able search their institution's eBook collections without leaving the Blackboard e-Learning environment."

Similarly, the e-textbooks will also be available to users of [CourseCompass](http://www.coursecompass.com) [http://www.coursecompass.com], Pearson Higher Education's customized version of Blackboard.

Publishers who have agreed to provide content to netLibrary/MetaText include Thomson Learning, Pearson Education, Houghton Mifflin, W.W. Norton, Jones and Bartlett, and McGraw Hill. MetaText e-textbooks, sold through their eBookstore [http://www.metatext.com], are expected to be available for purchase in Fall 2001.

WizeUp

WizeUp Digital Textbooks, a company specializing in the production of electronic educational materials, has signed agreements with such publishers as McGraw-Hill Higher Education, Harcourt College, Pearson Education, Houghton Mifflin, W.W. Norton, and John Wiley & Sons.



As with MetaText editions, WizeUp titles are designed to be integrated with distance learning course management applications, including WebCT and Blackboard.

Students access the WizeUp textbooks online via a password-protected website or can download them to their personal computers. Once downloaded, the books are viewed using WizeUp software. Although the reader software accommodates both Windows and MAC operating systems, it appears that many of the textbooks are available only in Windows format (see chart below). Students may also access online updates. The reader software allows for the creation of custom hyperlinks that connect the text to anything on the Web, as well as any materials on the student's computer hard drive.

Based on publisher agreements, printing may or may not be available. In many cases, portions of the e-textbooks can be printed, but only once. WizeUp editions come with a single user license and can only be downloaded onto one hard drive. Because of this copyright protection, it is not possible to resell a WizeUp e-textbook.

Most WizeUp e-textbooks cost significantly less than the printed editions, even with discounts from such vendors as Amazon.

Random Sampling

Title	WizeUp Price	Amazon (Hardback)	Version
<i>Contemporary Marketing</i> , 10th ed (Harcourt)	\$79.00	\$109.50	Windows only
<i>Critical Thinking</i> , 1 st ed. (Wadsworth)	\$34.00	\$47.95 (pb)	Windows only
<i>Data Structures and Problem Solving Using JAVA</i> , 1st ed. (Addison Wesley)	\$57.00	\$76.00	Windows only
<i>Principles of Economics</i> , 2nd ed. (Harcourt)	\$80.00	\$115.00	Windows only
<i>Psychology</i> , 6th ed. (Worth)	\$44.00	\$86.35	Windows only

Rovia

Rovia exemplifies another model for the delivery of electronic textbooks. An “MIT-bred startup,” Rovia has developed proprietary software to provide secure access to copyrighted information. The Rovia Reader plug-in allows professors and students to login to the Web-based system. Currently the plug-in is compatible only with Windows; the company is planning Macintosh and Unix compatibility. Contents, as of June 12, 2001, include 23 textbooks although the company hopes to make 250 textbooks available by the end of the year as well as articles, and brokerage research reports.



Unlike e-textbook platforms offered by competitors, Rovia’s content is never downloaded to the subscriber’s computer so that pages may not be printed without publisher permission. Users may subscribe to (rent) entire books or individual chapters. Professors may create course packs with chapters from several books.

Publishers send textbooks to Rovia as PDF files so Rovia textbooks look exactly like the print versions. The PDFs are modified to include external links may be made to movies, course materials like quizzes, websites, and other interactive features. The advantages over print versions are the ability to perform full-text searches, highlight and annotate text, and explore online links.

Other Companies/Information to Explore

Minkel, Walter. “The E-Textbooks Are Coming.” School Library Journal 46.9 (Sept. 2000): 18.

<http://www.digitalowl.com>



digitallearninginteractive
knowledge unbound

<http://www.digitlearn.com>

Chronicle of Higher Education, May 18, 2001, contains at least 2 articles about e-textbooks.

Hendrickson, Dyke. “Taking Teaching to the Next Level.” Mass High Tech: The Journal of New England Technology 7 Aug. 2000
<http://www.masshightech.com/displayarticledetail.asp?art_id=1526&search=teaching+next+level>.

Letts, Mike. “E-Textbooks Test Emerging Platforms.” Seybold Report 1.1 (2 Apr. 2001): 25+. 12 June 2001 <<http://www.seyboldreport.com/TSR/free/0101/ebooks.pdf>>.

Simon, Eric J. Electronic Textbooks: A Pilot Study of Student E-Reading Habits. Winter 2001.
Institute for Cyperinformation. 13 June 2001
<<http://www.futureprint.kent.edu/articles/simon01.htm>>.