

Survey: Students Still Hesitant to Embrace E-books

Two recent studies indicate that electronic books have yet to be fully embraced on college campuses, though college technology officers predict that the technology will grow in usage.

According to the Electronic Book and e-Reader Device Survey, e-book purchases were made by just 13 percent of college students during a recent three-month period. The survey of over 600 students, conducted by the OnCampus Research Division of the National Association of College Stores (NACS), took place during fall 2010. Of the respondents, 56 percent stated that their main reason for buying an e-book was that it was required course material for class.

The poll shows that print textbooks remain the preferred option among college students. Nearly three-quarters of participants indicated that if the choice were entirely up to them, print textbooks would be their top option when taking a class. This response concurs with the results of a similar NACS Student Watch survey conducted in 2009. Only about a quarter of students in the new survey stated they would prefer a digital/electronic textbook over the traditional print version.

Of the students who preferred print, more than half indicated that they did not favor digital textbooks because they simply preferred print to digital. Around 14 percent said their primary reason for not preferring digital is the loss of access to content after the end of the semester. Among students who opted for digital books, 83 percent stated that they favored that format

because it reduced the weight of textbooks in their back pack; 78 percent of them also liked the digital option because all their required course materials were in one place at all times.

In contrast to the NACS study, a survey of senior campus information technology officers found that more than 86 percent of them agreed or strongly agreed that “e-book content will be an important source for instructional resources in five years,” roughly a 10 percent jump from a similar survey conducted in 2009. Additionally, more than three-quarters of IT officers agreed or strongly agreed that “e-book readers (hardware) will be important platforms for instructional content in five years.”

Kenneth C. Green, founding director of the Campus Computing Project, which conducted the 2010 Campus Computing Survey, noted, “E-books remain a much wished for, ‘ever-arriving’ technology in academe. The platform options, market opportunities, and enabling technologies for e-books continue to improve.” But Green acknowledged that for most students, e-books and e-textbooks do not yet offer competitive alternatives to used textbooks. “E-textbook development and pricing strategies are still evolving. Publishers still develop titles primarily for print, and then [import] content into electronic formats. Consequently, e-books and e-textbooks do not—yet—provide a compelling value proposition for most college students.”

Tech Trends on Campus

In addition to exploring the future of e-books within academia, the 2010 Campus Computing Survey also found that budget strains on college and university information technology services may be abating.

New data from institutions participating in the annual survey reveal that just over 40 percent of colleges and universities reported a budget cut in central IT services for the current academic year. Though this is significant, it represents a drop from the 50 percent of campuses that reported cuts in fall 2009.

Private nonprofit institutions fared better than their public counterparts: The proportion of private univer-

sities reporting IT budget cuts fell by more than half, from 56.9 percent in 2009 to 24.4 percent in 2010. Among private four-year colleges, the percentage reporting budget cuts fell from 41.9 percent last year to 31.9 percent in 2010.

Although the percentage of public four-year colleges and universities reporting budget cuts also declined compared with 2009, the number went up for community colleges. Almost half (46.2 percent) of the community colleges participating in the 2010 survey reported budget reductions affecting central IT services, compared with 38 percent in 2009.

A utilização deste artigo é exclusiva para fins educacionais.

Copyright of Presidency is the property of American Council on Education and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.

Fonte: Presidency, v. 14, n. 1, p. 8, 2011. [Base de Dados]. Disponível em: <<http://web.ebscohost.com>>. Acesso em: 23 mar. 2011.