e-Textbooks

1. What is an e-Textbook and what are its advantages over a traditional textbook?

e-Textbooks are electronic versions of textbooks. These books can range from simple digitization of traditional textbooks, which decreases their cost and increases their portability, to fully interactive textbooks with advanced features for multimedia inclusion, note-taking, highlighting, quizzes, etc. These more interactive versions create a more immersive and integrated learning experience for students.

2. Will students be accessing "quality" content?

In many cases the e-Textbook version of a printed textbook, has the same exact content. However, they differ in the way in which the content is presented. Many e-Textbooks now include multimedia, interactive diagrams, three dimensional models, study aids, and active hyperlinks to outside sources.

3. Are there e-Textbooks available for the K-12 curriculum areas?

The e-Textbook market is primarily geared towards higher education; however, there are many books out there that can be used for AP classes. There are also several titles that some MORIC districts are currently using in traditional format that are now available as e-Textbooks. As this is a fairly new medium, many more titles are expected to be released over the coming months.

4. How does the e-Textbook pricing compare to purchasing a physical textbook?

The pricing of e-Textbooks is considerably less than the cost of a physical textbook. Per-book-savings can range from 25% to 75% off the price of their printed counterparts. Pricing ranges from $14.99 and up (depending upon the vendor). However, many of these books will need to be purchased for individual students each year.

5. Does my district need to purchase one e-Textbook per student, or can they be shared among classes?

Retailers are suggesting that you purchase an e-Textbook for each individual student and treat it as a "Workbook". This is so students may take advantage of the features of e-Textbooks such as: note taking, highlighting, flashcard creation and quizzes. As there are no efficient methods for clearing such features once a student is finished with with an e-Textbook, redistribution is currently impractical.

6. What hardware is needed for e-Textbooks?

Hardware is dependent on the e-Textbook vendor. In general however, most e-Textbooks are accessible on most types of tablets, any desktop or laptop with internet access, through most eReaders, or in some cases, Smartphones. The most notable exception to this platform diversity is iBooks from Apple, which are available exclusively on the iPad.