Adoption of e-book readers among college students: A survey
Adoption Of E-Book Readers Among College Students: A Survey
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Abstract

To learn whether e-book readers have become widely popular among college students, this study surveys students at one large, urban, four-year public college. The survey asked whether the students owned e-book readers and if so, how often they used them and for what purposes. Thus far, uptake is slow; a very small proportion of students use e-readers. These students use them primarily for leisure reading and continue to rely on print for much of their reading. Students reported that price is the greatest barrier to e-reader adoption and had little interest in borrowing e-reader compatible e-books from the library.

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Some college classes now require students to buy electronic textbooks as part of contract deals with publishers that bring students (somewhat) lower prices. Between the staggering costs of print textbooks, and the potential for enrichment through interactive media, e-reading will inevitably continue its march into the mainstream of college life. Pleasure reading is the largest segment of e-book reading, and the rise of recreational reading of e-books is almost entirely good news for educators. Research and anecdotal evidence have shown that e-reading leads to more reading (Haq). According to the survey report, "many undergraduate respondents commented on the difficulty they have learning, retaining, and concentrating while in front of a computer" (Kelley 15).
If colleges were to adopt e-books as a means to transfer knowledge to students, education would be forever changed. Instead of buying multiple highly priced textbooks each term, a student could purchase a single device and would be able to upload the necessary course content for a fraction of the cost. E-book device manufacturers had been able to provide reading devices that were portable enough and affordable enough to satisfy consumers. Amazon, the market leader of early adopters in electronic books, released its Kindle DX in 2009. An electronic survey was constructed to determine the views and usage of e-books as well as the features people found most important. The survey was distributed online via email and through various social networking sites. The effect of electronic books on the reading comprehension of middle and high school students was examined using an experimental posttest-only control-group design. A convenience sample of 140 randomly assigned middle and high school English students at an independent school in eastern North Carolina participated. If the effect is negative, however, the adoption must be reconsidered. This study examined middle and high school students’ use of a tablet computer to read eBook passages displayed using Riverside Publishing’s (2012) Testing Interface. In a survey, students at the University of Illinois reported their acceptance of e-texts. Fifty six percent of the survey participants reported using a combination of traditional and e-texts (Shelburne, 2009).