Abstract

In today's digital world, there is an assumption by many that digital formats are better, and this mindset has carried over into education. E-textbook sales have increased in recent years indicating their presence is growing and they are here to stay. While e-textbooks may be a more affordable and convenient alternative to print for some, research indicates students still have a preference for print textbooks. Following various pilot programs and studies, students have reported they feel they learn less reading e-textbooks and it is easier to become distracted and harder to read on a screen. The answer, however, is not to abandon e-textbooks. This essay examines student and instructor preferences, psychological research, and eye tracking data related to the use of digital textbooks and argues that it is imperative to give students the choice to use digital or print textbooks, and that e-textbooks need to have effective interactive features to facilitate student learning.

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