The student consumer and the rise of e-textbook platforms
Digital Textbooks UCL 10th May 2018

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CONTEXT
The new role of the library in teaching and learning outcomes
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Briefing paper
Ken Chad & Helen Anderson

The student consumer and the rise of e-textbook platforms
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Briefing paper
Ken Chad
Key Trends and Their Potential Impact

- Some agreement on key trends e.g. OA, changing L&T practices, political environment
- However, many trends considered significant and so no clear consensus on what is important
- Nearly all trends considered by some to be transformational but only for a minority in every case
The figure presents a survey on the impact of various trends in academic libraries. The trends are listed as:

- Open access
- Measuring library impact on students
- Changing learning and teaching practices
- Government cuts
- Students as customers
- REF
- Anytime, anywhere, any device access
- TEF
- Brexit
- Tracking user activity
- Learning analytics

Each trend is categorized into five levels of impact: Transformational, Significant impact, Small impact, No impact, and Don't know.
“Educators, institutions, and even state legislators are turning their attention toward Open Educational Resources (OER)”

“Students tend to be more engaged with learning on the whole if they engage with library resources, interact with library staff, and spend time using libraries”.

“The importance of ‘high quality teaching’ in Higher Education (HE) is becoming increasingly emphasised both in the United Kingdom (UK) and abroad .....Excellence in teaching has become entrenched in higher education policy and in the educational strategies of academic institutions, and increasingly linked to the performance and assessment of these institutions”

Higher Education Academy (HEA), 2016
Fees accounted for more than two-thirds of total income at 42 per cent of UK universities, while 22 institutions depended on fees for more than three-quarters of their income in 2015-16.

The risks of this are obvious: a sudden drop in student demand, even spread over a few years, could be catastrophic: a peril highlighted by the strong correlation that now exists between changes in real-terms income for universities


“Every time a student interacts with their university – be that going to the library, logging into their virtual learning environment or submitting assessments online – they leave behind a digital footprint. Learning analytics is the process of using this data to improve learning and teaching”

https://www.jisc.ac.uk/reports/learning-analytics-in-higher-education
There is ‘growing evidence of just what poor value for money many universities are providing’, with students ‘cheated of the benefits they were repeatedly assured they could expect in return for their money’.

‘The producer interest reigns. The voice of the consumer, in other words the student, has not been taken greatly into consideration’.

Consumerization is the reorientation of product and service designs around the individual end user. The emergence of the individual consumer as the primary driver of product and service design originated from and is most commonly seen as a major IT industry shift.

The primary impact of consumerization is that it is forcing businesses.. to rethink the way they procure and manage IT equipment and services.
Platforms are Eating the World

We are in the midst of a seismic shift in business models, powered by the Internet and a generation of connected users.

Outlook 2014: Platforms are Eating the World

Thinking about textbooks
Overcoming the “textbook taboo”

“At a time when it is increasingly necessary for libraries to find new ways of being mission-critical to their sponsoring institutions, this aversion to textbook provision seems to me increasingly self-defeating"

A library led e-textbook service leads to ‘higher engagement of learning from students, their increased satisfaction with the University and Library, plus addresses the issue of reducing their direct costs’.

Value for money?

Are institutional/library e-textbook programmes good value?
£2 million invested

Middlesex University free books for everyone

“Money was allocated by the University Executive. This was new money which had not previously been allocated either to Schools or the Library”

“The Library is responsible for administering the project”

UKSG webinar Q and A
Where will the money come from?

“Yes, we really, really, haven't got any money”

Librarian messages to publishers. UKSG Presentation 2016
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1suoalVAsrH5HQ_s8YZkA6YcBa5aKJ_klSXw-debl_eU/edit#slide=id.p14
Where will the money come from?

Substantial funding *is* available in response to good value propositions
“If there is a failure to demonstrate [the] value [of library] resources there is a risk of a lower institutional priority being placed on them and a resulting reduction in funding, with those core users being disadvantaged over time”

TEF: what does it mean for academic libraries? By Maxine Melling and Margaret Weaver. Insights – 30(3), November 2017
£26 million

“The new library will provide our students with a state-of-the-art, high-quality study environment”

Stella Butler, Leeds University Librarian

“Pedagogy is the driver for the changes in library design”

Ann Rossiter, Director SCONUL
“Additional capital investment of £5.3m in the last three years has been focused on a complete refurbishment of the libraries .. and a new replacement library ... As a result, student use of library learning resources and facilities has significantly increased.”

Nottingham Trent University TEF Submission
“Our learning resources are acknowledged within both the HE sector and professional associations are being amongst the best in class.”

Nottingham Trent University
TEF 2 Year Provider Submission
New ways of making textbooks

Open Textbooks have seen impressive growth and impact in the North American context, through providers and initiatives such as OpenStax, the Open Textbook Network, BC Campus, and Lumen Learning.

The UK Open Textbooks project aims to test the transferability of the OpenStax and OpenTextbook Network approaches to the UK context

http://ukopentextbooks.org/
New ways of making textbooks

“The advent of the TEF provides another incentive...to raise the topic of institutionally produced textbooks higher on the agenda” Lara Speicher, Publishing Manager, UCL Press

Institution as e-textbook publisher

“The fundamental question the project seeks to address is whether the institution as e-textbook creator will help students by making higher education more affordable, and promote a better, more sustainable information environment for libraries, students and faculty”

Institution as e-textbook publisher. Investigating the viability of higher education institutions publishing their own e-textbooks. Jisc R&D project 2014-2018
https://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/projects/institution-as-e-textbook-publisher
Beyond the e-book & e-textbook
Library vs. learning resources?

This was said back in 2001!

“There is a burgeoning area of overlap between the ‘learning resources’ which academics wish to install in their VLEs, and the digitised learning resources which libraries are making available" John McColl

“It doesn’t take a genius to figure out that the adoption of technology in the learning sphere is mostly determined by its ability to produce enriched and personalised learning experiences”

“what these texts also offer students is the opportunity to increase their engagement with the material and work in a collaborative way with their lecturers and peers. Devices allow students to be constantly connected to their friends; sharing ideas and messages between one another.

Digital learning resources allow students to create working groups, in which they can share notes between themselves and with their lecturers.

By empowering students to access their materials in a flexible, responsive way, lecturers may get more out of the sessions they provide with a classroom that is better engaged with the course materials.”

Widening student participation through technology. John Donovan Research Information 20 November 2017
Many universities now mandate or strongly encourage the recording of all lectures in rooms where this is enabled. By September 2015, 42,000 lectures had been recorded (80 per cent of the total lectures taking place) at the University of Manchester, and 95 per cent of students surveyed wanted to see the system used even more widely.
Books as Open Online Content (BOOC)

“These innovative ‘living books’ feature articles of various types, in a non-linear thematic presentation that offers readers the option to select and sort subjects they wish to read. With long and short articles, blogs, videos, audio and Storifys, these ‘books’ grow over a period of time.” UCL Press
Focus on Ux

Students’ studies have become inextricably linked to personal technology, just like every other aspect of their lives. They conduct much of their research, and complete their assignments, on computers, tablets and smartphones, which means there is value in providing students with digital materials that fully integrate into the tools they already use.

A platform: consummates matches among users and facilitates the exchange of goods, services or social currency---enabling value creation for all participants

Create value using resources they don’t own or control—so they can grow much faster

Platforms derive value from the communities they serve
The rise of the platforms

The platform can be thought of as a filter. Just as Uber delivers the ‘best’ taxi ride or Airbnb the ‘best’ accommodation, the e-textbook platform delivers the ‘best’ learning resource. Data is the driving force.

The student consumer and the rise of e-textbook platforms. HELibTech Briefing paper March 2018
“It’s great to be launching this partnership with Bibliotech. It was set up by students who saw the potential of technology to provide online access to thousands of textbooks and learning materials, and gives a truly affordable option for many students, who would otherwise struggle to pay for these resources”

Caroline Mackay, licensing manager at Jisc Collections
Final thoughts
Library vs. learning resources?

As part of strengthening their value proposition we expect to see more libraries take a holistic view of the management, discovery and delivery of a wide range of learning resources. At the moment many valuable resources stand apart from the conventional library collection.

Aligning resources to courses

“our resource list management service ensures that learning resources are aligned with academic courses”

Nottingham Trent University
TEF 2 Year Provider Submission
By “investing our efforts into developing a genuinely effective, interactive and responsive reading list system” librarians at the University of Birmingham are aiming to “transform the teaching and learning experience for students and academics”.

Transforming student learning through ResourceLists@Bham. Polly Harper & Ann-Marie James. SCONUL Focus. 2017
“By allowing digitised copies of chapters... to be uploaded and automatically copyright-checked – academics are saved a lot of administration time and can focus their energies instead on choosing the right resources for their list. Most importantly, though, items that would have ordinarily been restricted to print-only access can be made available. For distance learners especially, this is transformational”.

Transforming student learning through ResourceLists@Bham. Polly Harper & Ann-Marie James. SCONUL Focus. 2017
‘All this suggests a trend for library technology and educational technology to merge. We will certainly see reading list systems, VLEs and digital textbook platforms better integrated and perhaps even subsumed into common learning services platforms.‘

The new role of the library in teaching and learning outcomes. By Ken Chad & Helen Anderson. Higher Education Library Technology (HELibTech) briefing paper (No. 3). June 2017
Nottingham Trent University
Student Dashboard

Nottingham Trent’s learning analytics initiative is designed to ‘increase retention, improve attainment and increase belonging within the course community’

Engagement scores for each student are calculated from Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) access, library usage, card swipes and assignment submissions
Data to predictive analytics

Such approaches aren’t just about improving retention and graduation rates, nor are they for those institutions that suffer from low rates, but they represent an opportunity to **improve the overall student experience**.

Students deserve more **personalised learning** in higher education. Predictive analytics can help make learning and support services more targeted, identifying students according to their characteristics, and understanding the risk of them disengaging or dropping out.

How analytics can support student success. Charles Prince
Wonkhe 26b April 2018 https://wonkhe.com/blogs/how-analytics-can-support-student-success/
The battle for data

“We take in data from disparate silos, unify and transform it to derive new variables. Ninety-five percent of the predictive power of our Student Insights Engine and action apps comes from derived variables that inform more than 1,500 predictive models.”

https://www.civitaslearning.com/
The value of data analytics will surely be a key driving force. Data from reading lists and digital textbook platforms combined with information from other institutional systems on student retention and academic performance will produce powerful insights. Such analytics will be invaluable to institutions, publishers and intermediaries as they look at new ways to deliver content.
The revolution—will it come?

“I think that it is past time for us to take digital libraries to the next level...But if this switch, from individuals reading books and articles one at a time in print to individuals reading books and articles one at a time on their own digital device is all we get from the digital revolution, then it won’t have been much of a revolution”

Chris Bourg, Director of Libraries at Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Aside from affordability, neither the UK Open Textbooks nor the Jisc Institution as e-textbook publisher initiatives has a strong focus on the user experience. Their stated goals are around finding new business models for e-book production.

The student consumer and the rise of e-textbook platforms. Ken Chad Higher Education Library Technology. March 2018

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Have we been trying to solve the wrong problem?

Clayton Christensen 15 years ago:
“Hundreds of millions have been spent to apply new technologies - the Internet and e-book displays, specifically - to reshape the college textbook industry. Innovators have attempted to develop and sell tablets that can display downloaded textbooks...Would we expect these investments to generate significant growth? Our guess is that they will not”.

Have we been trying to solve the wrong problem? Are we producer not student focused?

“Although we would like to that all undergraduate students are rigorous seeker of knowledge the job that many college students are really trying to get done from our observation, is to pass their course without having to read the textbook at all. These companies have spent a lot of money helping students to do more easily something that they have been trying not to do. It would probably take far less money to create from the same technology a service called "Cram.com" - a utility that would make it easier and cheaper for students to cram more effectively for their exams.

There are a lot of textbook-avoiders on campus- a huge market of nonconsumption”
Who will decide the future?

[Publisher]s are unlikely to be the ones who decide what the future of textbooks will look like. That decision will get made by students....and by faculty, who are in the best position to know which types of digital materials produce the best learning outcomes.

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