



XplanaBook 1.0 Whitepaper

Revolutionizing Learning: Media Books as Learning Tools

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Introduction

In a rapidly evolving digital world, people seek instant gratification. Cell phones, PDAs, MP3 players and other technological devices saturate the market as society responds to e-products that make life easier, more accessible, and most of all, convenient. E-books represent the ever-changing and fast-paced nature of today's world. High-tech, low-cost advancements in technology are ideal as educational tools, and e-books continue to be an important and viable tool in the future of education.

What is an E-book?

An e-book is an electronic version of a book that can be viewed on a computer or electronic device such as a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant). E-books can be computerized forms of any type of book; however, for the purposes of this paper, the term e-book refers to an electronic textbook unless otherwise noted.

There are two main types of e-books. The first is an exact computerized replica of a textbook with additional features such as a search tool, zoom, bookmark and highlighting tool. The second type of e-book consists of text identical to the traditional textbook (unless a change is desired) and multimedia aspects such as audio, video and interactivities.

E-books have existed in some form dating back to the 1960s. Over several decades, the concept of integrating text and multimedia elements has evolved into an educational archetype that is revolutionizing learning. Despite slow beginnings, e-book popularity has increased significantly in recent years in conjunction with advancing technology and the expansion of distance-learning.



Why E-books?

In light of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, most educators recognize that students have different learning styles, and these different needs must be met in order to ensure a quality education. E-books aim to remedy existing gaps in the education of students with various learning styles. Media books such as XplanaBook are equipped with a variety of features that significantly enhance the learning experience. By incorporating text, video, audio, and an assortment of learning activities, these media books offer a multi-dimensional education targeted at a variety of learning styles.

Besides the endless educational opportunities they present, e-books also afford students a weightless alternative to heavy textbooks and a learning source that does not tear or stain if mishandled. Students no longer have to worry about forgetting or losing textbooks—all they need is access to the web. This convenience also applies to publishers, as e-books allow for facile and off-cycle editorial content alterations to amend mistakes or outdated material.

In addition to convenience, e-books also boast broad usability. Not only do e-books appeal to the tech-savvy, but their simplicity and easy-to-follow format establish them as a marketable learning tool for the most technologically impaired.



Market Forces

Research indicates that rising textbook prices, desire for new technology, cheaper costs and growing popularity of online courses will spur the need for e-books and media books. The demand for this simple and effective learning technology will soon increase dramatically despite the relatively slow emergence of e-books into the educational mainstream. According to the Open E-book Forum, first quarter sales of e-books in 2004 increased 46% from the same quarter last year while revenue was up 28%. Though these statistics encompass all forms of e-books-- both textbooks and novels-- evidence illustrates the rapid growth in popularity of e-books.

As textbook prices steadily climb to compensate for high production costs and dwindling sales, students begin to look to alternate means of attaining textbooks. Used books generate revenue for university bookstores, but hurt the publishing industry as fewer books are purchased each year. Students need less costly alternatives to exorbitantly-priced textbooks and publishers require a more cost-effective way of producing course material without losing money or increasing book prices. E-books and media books are the solution.

College students are at the forefront of the technology movement, as they have witnessed, and eagerly invested in, the evolution of the internet, PDAs, MP3 players, cell phones and various other technological developments. Emerging technology is often quickly embraced by college students and young people alike who have grown up with a dependence on computers and subsequent technology-based inventions. Though many students have not yet been exposed to e-books, student awareness of and interest in e-books is significant. Recent surveys by the National Association of College Stores and Pearson revealed that 27% of college students prefer digital textbooks and 51% of college students are interested in e-books.

It is evident that the interest and demand for e-books exist, and statistics suggest that the popularity of this learning solution is on the rise. The market is ready for e-books, the students are ready, and so should be publishers and software developers. The transition from textbooks to e-books will be advantageous for publishers, as e-books are significantly less costly to manufacture. Publishing an e-book eliminates middlemen responsible for printing, binding, shipping and various other costs incurred in the distribution process. E-books must simply be built and then are accessible through an online course or whatever function the e-book serves.

While a general societal enthusiasm for new technology and cost-effective solutions are the driving force of the market, a burgeoning interest in distance learning through online courses provides a further demand for e-books. As online courses flourish and gain notoriety as credible degree-earning alternatives to brick-and-mortar universities, the demand for e-books will be considerable.



Standards in the E-book Reader Market

As e-book readers sprout up to accommodate the demand for e-books, some standard features are now being recognized. Many e-books are evolving into media books that are equipped with the capacity to include embedded media types. For example, in a foreign language textbook a student can click on a word and hear the correct pronunciation. Many e-books also showcase the ability to create internal links or links to external URLs for supplemental information. The majority of e-books now come with bookmarks, highlighting tools and search functions.

Why XplanaBook?

XplanaLearning's expert team of professionals labored to develop a cutting-edge integrated learning tool that is revolutionizing education. XplanaBook is a Flash-based system from which both students and instructors profit. The easy-to-use functionality of the media book will promote student learning and interest, while the adaptable nature of the product will please publishers and instructors. XplanaBook's superior design is unique in that it permits easy modification and customization to meet each book's specific needs.

XplanaBook incorporates many features into its e-book that facilitate the learning process. An easily navigable format, internal search option and page locator are efficient time-savers. Vibrant images and graphics visually stimulate students while audio clips and assessment tests involve them in interactive activities. Unique to XplanaBook is a voice recorder with playback. Other features include:

- **Full-scale and scalable viewing** Allows students to view pages at a preferred size.
- **Zoom** Lets students enlarge areas of the page for a more detailed look.
- **Highlighting tool** Writes anywhere on the page with the option to delete.
- **Links** Ability to create links to internal pages and external URLs guarantees a seamless connection from the e-book to outside resources.
- **Bookmark** Enables the reader to easily pick up where he or she left off.
- **Controlled printing** Allows for the printing of each page in the original page format or the way it was altered.
- **Table of Contents** Displays an easy-to-follow table of contents that is accessible on-demand.
- **Search option** Helps readers easily find particular pages, topics or words.
- **Glossary** Allows readers to understand definitions of words in each e-book.
- **Index** Makes navigation through the e-book easier as readers can jump to the page of their desired subject matter.
- **Integration with LMS platforms** Enables a seamless integration of an e-book into an online course.
- **Embedded media** Engages and informs readers through audio and video clips.
- **Interactive assessments and activities** Target different types of learners and aid in attention retention.
- **Flexible and efficient delivery models** Allows for product customization for individual clients.
- **Flexible security** Ensures protection of copyrighted material.



Concluding Thoughts

As the textbook publishing business struggles against the expansion of the used-book market and waning sales resulting from necessary price increases, e-books will revitalize the market. In this nascent field, XplanaBook paves the way for the e-book explosion with its unique features and ability to adapt e-books to suit a client's specific requests. XplanaBook provides enhanced learning opportunities showcased in a state-of-the-art design for optimal learning potential. Through XplanaBook and other innovative educational software products, Xplana Learning envisions the future of education and produces it for the present.

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