

October 21, 2010, 3:04 am

Would You Trade Your Paper Books for Digital Versions?

By [SHANNON DOYNE](#)

Student Opinion

Questions about issues in the news for students 13 and older.

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Do you own an e-reader or read books on your phone? Have you ever used an electronic textbook? Studies show that while young people are interested in e-readers, [two-thirds of them do not want to give up traditional print books](#). What do you think? Should students be given a choice? What are the benefits and drawbacks of print books and textbooks? How do you think reading on an electronic device would change reading, studying and learning for you?

In the article ["In a Digital Age, Students Still Cling to Paper Textbooks."](#) Lisa W. Foderaro writes:

The explosion of outlets and formats — including digital books, which are rapidly becoming more sophisticated — has left some students bewildered. After completing the heavy lifting of course selection, they are forced to weigh cost versus convenience, analyze their own study habits and guess which texts they will want for years to come and which they will not miss.

"It depends on the course," said Victoria Adesoba, a pre-med student at New York University who was standing outside that school's bookstore, a powder-blue book bag slung over her shoulder. "Last semester, I rented for psychology, and it was cheaper. But for something like organic chemistry, I need to keep the book. E-textbooks are good, but it's tempting to go on Facebook, and it can strain your eyes."

For all the talk that her generation is the most technologically adept in history, paper-and-ink textbooks do not seem destined for oblivion anytime soon.

According to the National Association of College Stores, digital books make up just under 3 percent of textbook sales, although the association expects that share to grow to 10 percent to 15 percent by 2012 as more titles are made available as e-books.

Students: Tell us your thoughts on the growing offerings in digital books and textbooks. Do you like the idea of having your books on a Kindle, Nook, iPad or other device? What might be the drawbacks? What percentage of textbooks do you think will be digital 10 years from now? Do you think you'd read more if you had access to e-books? How do you think e-books will change studying and learning?

Students 13 and older are invited to comment below. Please use only your **first name**. For [privacy policy](#) reasons, we will not publish student comments that include a last name.

Teachers: In this [Student Opinion question](#), students address a more general theme about textbooks: What values and ideals do they convey?

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From 1 to 25 of 71 Comments

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1. 1. October 21, 2010 8:09 am [Link](#)

I think digital text books are not a good idea. The reason why is it gets rid of the traditional open a book, and reading it the old fashioned way. You cant always have electronics on you, but a book you could litterally take anywhere. Im not slamming the digital books, but they are not as worthy as the single type of regular book. I think once you get too involved with technology you become not independent, and thats whats wrong with us today.

I think there will be a good 25 percent increase on the electronic books in the next decade. The reason why is because more and more people are getting more electronics, and more people choose to refer to technology to do things in their every day lives. Its sad, but it is true. Eventually technology will eventually have a mind of its own.

— *Cory H*

2. 2. October 21, 2010 8:09 am [Link](#)

I would continue using paper books because it is the traditional way. I trust technology and everything that it has done for us and what it will do for us but electronic books is a little over the top. I don't even read that much but when I do I prefer paper books.

— *jason*

3. 3. October 21, 2010 8:10 am [Link](#)

I like the idea of using an Ipad, but I think kid's will find a way to play around with it and they won't focus on their work. I think 50% of the textbooks 10 years from now will be digital. I would rather read a book than an Ipad mainly because I am used to books and would not want to stare at a screen for 5 hours. E-books will change education, but in some ways for the worse.

— *anthony*

4. 4. October 21, 2010 8:12 am [Link](#)

Even though we have become more based on computers and electronics, we need the books. For people like the person above she needs the book to keep for future reference. E-Books and things like that can get lost in a computer crash or if your Ipad breaks. E-Books and things can be fun to use but can get very boring after awhile and are very expensive for people to invest in. Since we are in a depression as it is, families can not afford to invest in a two hundred dollar reading tool when they can rent the book from the library for close to nothing. In the future I believe the number of books left will be very low. Most everyone wants electronics in every aspect of their life, just look we have auto parking cars, phones that can unlock your car and house. Humans have just become to attached to electronics.

— *Tyler*

5. 5. October 21, 2010 8:12 am [Link](#)

I really don't care if I switched to a digital one or not, because I never really read the books anyways. if I do read a textbook, yeah, it'd be cool for all of them to be in one little device that was lighter and smaller. It'd also be nice if I could hook it up to headphones and it'd read it to me, I might actually be able to learn. But other than that, I don't really care if I use electronic books for school or not, a book is a book, a snoozer is a snoozer. I don't like them.

— *matt*

6. 6. October 21, 2010 8:13 am [Link](#)

I would not trade my paper back books for digital books. Personally I think that is one of the dumbest things that has come out in today's market. There are too many things that could go wrong with digital books. The battery could die; server could go out, could be difficult to see in the sunlight, bulky equipment. With a paper back book, it is simplicity, you just take it with you and read. Wherever and whenever. Textbooks are a good idea to have on digitally but not leisure reading books. Textbooks in our school are low as it is in numbers, so we read on the screen. That is the only time that I will accept a digital book, other than that, I am completely against it.

— *aspen*

7. 7. October 21, 2010 8:16 am [Link](#)

Yes, I would trade my textbooks for digital versions. I think if I could hear it, and watch the examples given on a screen, that it would be alot better. I think it would be better for my learning abiltity. and it might make things easier to learn by. we should try it at least and see how well or unwell it goes. hopefully, if more people get better grades as a result to this, then we could keep them in the schools. most people are drawn to attention, and if we have lots of graphics and the information on a screen, we can comprehend the lesson much better. everyone is not the same, and does not have the same learning ability, but I think that having the digital version of textsbooks is worth a try.

— *jackie*

8. 8. October 21, 2010 8:27 am [Link](#)

I do not own a e-reader on my phone and I do not have a e-reader book at my house. No I have not ever used a electronic book and I do not have a electronic book at home either. I think that it would be easier just to keep the regular print paper because everyone has always use it and it would be a big change in life for everyone who likes to read books. I dont read good on the computer so I think that I wouldnt read on a e-reader to good.

— *kyon*

9. 9. October 21, 2010 9:43 am [Link](#)

Yes i Would. I Love To Listen Rather Than Read. But Most Of The Time If Your Listening To Something You Dont Pay Attention In Class...So Idk It Would Be Good In Some Ways But In Others In Not Sure.

— *Tori R*

10. 10. October 21, 2010 9:44 am [Link](#)

No I would not trade my paper books for digital versions. This is because to many things could go wrong with it. Like dead batteries, or something wrong inside of it. I think I will stick with my paper books. Like in a way I would like to use an lpad, but I do not know how well that would end up. I like digital things, but I am not so sure for a book, I don't know. I am kind of stuck.

— *Sydney*

11. 11. October 21, 2010 9:44 am [Link](#)

i hardly ever read books so i could care less if they were electronic. the only time i do read is if its for school or if its a magazine that i like. so yeahhhh. besides i dont ever have time to sit down and read a book i have more important things to do then to read.

— *Ashley*

12. 12. October 21, 2010 9:44 am [Link](#)

If I had a choice wheather or not to have printed paper books or the digital version? I would actually want to try the digital version because since kindergarden I have always had the printed books. I know it will not be something that I am use to but I would like to try it anyway. Like my parents always tell me try something new than doing the same routine all the time. So I would like to try it one day if my school gave us the opportunity to do it. Some people have told me that it is really complicated but I think it is only because they are not use to the fact that it is a different technology. And others have told me they really enjoyed and made it easier for them to learn more things in school. For me I would have to learn for myself.

— *Alexis*

13. 13. October 21, 2010 9:47 am [Link](#)

No because digital versions can fail and glitches and thing of this nature can happen. If these things happen there would be no reason to continue class until its fixed. I like books because there's no way to get glitches, failures, but books can get ruined easy but digital versions can be sent to another computer or phone and used again and again. It's would take some get use to digital versions but your still learning but now you can write in your digital versions.

Yes I would but not because its digital but because of the different study, research and activity that could be made.

Drake: Please, please, PLEASE write ONLY YOUR FIRST NAME when you post your comments. – Holly

— *Drake*

14. 14. October 21, 2010 9:48 am [Link](#)

I would definitely not like having digital version of books and papers and stuff. I don't really like using the computer or my phone to much because after a while my head and eyes start to hurt. I think that in about 10 or fewer years most of our reading is going to be electronically. Many people are saying that kids shouldn't spend much time in the computer or on the phone, and by turning our books from paper to electronically it's just not helping out at all. Not many people like using computers to much and I'm one of them. I don't think that I would learn more by this; instead I would end the class with a headache and not be able to concentrate in any class at all.

— *Elia*

15. 15. October 21, 2010 9:50 am [Link](#)

I would not trade my paper books for digital versions. Whenever I try to read on the computer, I always end up losing my place. As a result, I reread the same line over, and over again. I also get a headache if I stare at a computer screen for too long. My eyes start to burn, and it makes reading unenjoyable. I don't understand why you would want to read from a screen. I think it is much simpler to be able to bookmark your pages and turn to them in a paperback book. I am all for the use of technology, but I think it ruins the enjoyablity of reading

— *Rebecca M.*

16. 16. October 21, 2010 9:50 am [Link](#)

I agree wiht Jackie I think is it is better to watch the lesson in action like a movie and go through it step by step that way I learn more. And I am alot better with digital things rather than reading it i can listen to it and watch it. So I think that the digital things should come forth. Wow that was weird but I would really be better with technical/digital things so this would be better for me. And I am kinda of a geek I guess you could say.

— *Jonathan*

17. 17. October 21, 2010 9:52 am [Link](#)

I would not like to trade books for digital ones because I would be too worried about doing other things that what I was supposed to be doing. It would be a big hassle because a lot of kids wouldn't be using the books for the right reason. And most school probably couldn't

afford them right now anyways. And they would be a bigger reasonability and most kids can't even keep up with their regular textbooks. Why should they put an expensive piece of Equipment into their hands?

— *Chris L*

18. 18. October 21, 2010 9:53 am [Link](#)

I do not own an e-reader on my phone and I do not have an e-reader book at my house. well basically i have never even used one, or even use a electronic book which i don't have one at home either. Which i don't think i would change my regular book for these, because i think i would be better just using what i have now.

— *aaliyah*

19. 19. October 21, 2010 9:54 am [Link](#)

Yes, I would try my paper books for digital ones. That would be much easier to keep up with. Also it wouldn't get ripped or anything like paper books do. If all the students at this school had digital books, things would be much easier. I don't think the students would try to write on them or anything because it's a digital book. The world is becoming more into the future and now and days it's all about the latest gismos and what not. All these smart phones and computers and junk like that. For example, who ever thought they would come up with an iPad? haha I really don't see the point in the iPad. But if the digital books looked like that, it would be pretty cool.

— *erikk*

20. 20. October 21, 2010 10:02 am [Link](#)

I would not trade my paper back books for a digital version. I think it would be like reading on a computer. it hurts my eyes and i usually end up with a headache. So i would rather read my books as they are.

— *Jessica*

21. 21. October 21, 2010 10:06 am [Link](#)

I think it would be cool to have digital text books but it would get old. Plus some days we wouldn't get to use our books because the computers at school are always down, I dont think it would be any different with digital text books.

— *drew*

22. 22. October 21, 2010 10:10 am [Link](#)

I would would trade my paper textbooks for computer versions. I don't like to read all the time, but the computer would give the option of listening to the material. Another reason is that I don't have to follow the text with my finger.

— *MAAI*

23. 23. October 21, 2010 10:10 am [Link](#)

Personally, I like reading a regular text books. I don't like reading long stories or even lengthy emails on the computer because it strains my eyes and gives me a headache. It would be neat if students had the choice to read either on the computer or in a book.

— *Stormie*

24. 24. October 21, 2010 10:11 am [Link](#)

yes i think it's be pretty cool. except that i think you should have a choice some just prefer books

— *brenna*

25. 25. October 21, 2010 10:11 am [Link](#)

I belive that it would be very neat to have technology rather than books but, i also think it could cause some probs. I belive that if we had things like the ipad people would not really be doing there school work they would be messing around on them! there would be alot of people not learning anything.

— *megan*

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Comments of the Moment

[“ Children need to have structured learning. We cannot allow children to simply learn what they want, that is too much responsibility to give such an undeveloped mind. Adults should pick what we need to learn, because they have already learned it, and can decide what is important for students to learn.”](#)

— Jeremy M (DB)

How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?

“ This free school idea relies mostly on trust in which they will make the right choices. Which most kids probaly don't have at a younger age and probably would take advantage of the whole free school idea. I think I would have to experience this free school learning 1st hand to understand the full benefits and disadvantages...Overall i would rate this idea a 2 out of 5 for the trust factor.”

— Matt B4 (DB)

How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?

“ I just feel that paper book are better. There's just something cozy about curling up with a worn yellowed paperback on a cold day. I just really can't picture myself curling up with a cold stiff metal machine.”

— Christine

Would You Trade Your Paper Books for Digital Versions?

“ The life sentence, in my thoughts, would be pure torture-- having to life out the rest of your life in jail and not be able to be free again? Imagine that. It's a fate worse than death.”

— Megumi

Do You Support or Oppose the Death Penalty?

“ Personally, I like paper books. There's nothing like the smell of a brand-new paperback, with its crisp white pages and stiff, untouched spine. Digital books are cool, handy, and innovative - but they're just not the same. I already get most of my textbooks online, which is useful, since it takes a lot of weight off my backpack. If it was a book I wanted to read for leisure, I would prefer a hard copy.”

— Sam B.

Would You Trade Your Paper Books for Digital Versions?

“ Well, I own a kindle but I don't like it because it's digital; I like it because it's convenient. My parents can barely ever bring me to the library or to a bookstore, and when they do it takes me awhile to find a book. Now, when I think of a book I want I can just buy it immediately. Of course, I still use paper books when I can; I read paper and digital evenly.”

— Melissa

Would You Trade Your Paper Books for Digital Versions?

“ I think it would be cool to have ebooks, but I don't know if it is the best idea. When people are on the computers they are so tempted to go on different websites. People will play games, go on facebook, or even tumblr. I would personally rather have paper books.”

— jessi

Would You Trade Your Paper Books for Digital Versions?

“ The only time I think I would like a digital book would be for a trip just so I wouldn't need to carry so much with me. I read all the time, I love to read. I like regular books.”

Too much can go wrong with these digital ones. Screen could mess up, batteries go bad, it wont charge, etc. yeah it be cool to have one but they cost a lot. If I ask for one that's all my Christmas. It's not worth it. Books are cheaper."

— Angelica C.

Would You Trade Your Paper Books for Digital Versions?

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" I would actually want to try the digital version because since kindergarden I have always had the printed books. Like my parents always tell me try something new than doing the same routine all the time. So I would like to try it one day if my school gave us the opportunity to do it. Some people have told me that it is really complicated but I think it is only because they are not use to the fact that it is a different technology. And others have told me they really enjoyed and made it easier for them to learn more things in school. For me I would have to learn for myself."

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— aspen

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— Tyler

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— anthony

Would You Trade Your Paper Books for Digital Versions?

" In all honesty living to be 100 years old doesn't seem as good as other students make it out to be. Imagine having to suffer with limited mobility, failing health, and

watch all those you've cared about over a lifetime slowly die off. To me living to be 100 seems more of a punishment than a privilege. ”

– Matt S

Do You Want to Live to 100?

“ I was reading through the answers so far, and almost everyone says that their room is their favorite place... My favorite location to be is either in my dining room or my living room. They are connected, and it's where my family sort of gathers. I guess if my family gathered in my room I'd like it better, since I just like being around them.”

– Maggie

What is Your Favorite Place in Your House?

“ I am a teacher in a regular school, constantly considering why many of my students seem to have little interest in education. I would love to incorporate some of the ideas and structures of a free school into my parochial high school classes. Education cannot be forced; students will only learn when they want to learn. The question, for me, is whether freedom or force is more likely to make them "want to learn." I am not sure; perhaps the answer is different for different kids.”

– Laurie

How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?

“ I would like to live to 100 years old...but on one condition- I could not be miserable. If I was suffering from some crazy disease and I could not walk, talk, or do any of the things that I love to do, then what would be the point? I only want to be on this Earth if I am in high spirits, and there is a reason to live.”

– Alex

Do You Want to Live to 100?

“ Live life and do not worry about when your death will be, and your life will be a great one.”

– Lauren B

Do You Want to Live to 100?

“ Maybe I'll find that reason to live so long eventually. Maybe I'll have a big family and many friends there with me. Maybe I'll be that important person I think I'll be in the future. A person of great importance to the world. Maybe I'll have many stories to tell from my many adventures. Just maybe.”

– Vince

Do You Want to Live to 100?

“ The reason, I think, that this article got so many bad reviews, is because everyone who wrote them is used to the public school system. But, at a public school, you are forced to sit at a desk and have information (sometimes useless in life) shoved down your throat; whereas, in a democratic school, we are actually interested in what we're learning. Because of this, free-school kids get the the same amount of LEARNING (not working) that public school kids get, but the difference is that kids like us learn it because we want to, not because we have to. As a side effect, most of the kids who graduate from a free-school are at the same academic level as kids who graduate from public school and, a lot of the time, a higher level.”

[— Ari & Ben \(Free-Schoolers\)](#)
[How Would You Do in a 'Free School'?](#)

[“ I think that if I lived to 100, that I would have lots of helpful advice to give a lot of people. ”](#)

[— jackie](#)
[Do You Want to Live to 100?](#)

[“ I would love to live to be one hundred years old...You live to see many decades come and go, and you learn so much, you see everything from events to fads. You can share your knowledge with those around you and see everything that is going to happen. I think that the old people are some of the greatest people to talk to and learn from. T”](#)

[— aspen](#)
[Do You Want to Live to 100?](#)

[“ I want to live to be the age of 65. The reason why is because I think at this age you have seen and done most of everything that you want to do and experience. At this age your bones are brittle, you start to have serious health problems, and two are always hurting. ”](#)

[— Cory H](#)
[Do You Want to Live to 100?](#)

[“ i wish i had the super power to end all discrimination against people with special needs. because its always wrong to hurt people like that. they have feelings to and want people to understand it and not laugh at them because of it. ”](#)

[— meg](#)
[What Superpower Do You Wish You Had?](#)

[“ I strongly support the death penalty...I say if you take a life, your life should be taken. I think that is what is wrong with our country. People are way too liberal on once someone does something wrong. ”](#)

[— Cory H](#)
[Do You Support or Oppose the Death Penalty?](#)

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We have created a run-on sentence in the paragraph in this quiz. Where should a new sentence begin?

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