
Norshuhada Shiratuddin, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This article describes an ongoing project on the use of electronic books (e-books) in a higher institution and starts with a discussion on the diversity of e-book definitions to address misconception of its concept. Then, the advantages and associated technology such as hardware, software, formats, and standards are detailed. Comparisons between formats, a discussion on where e-books can be acquired and purchased, the electronic publishing process, e-book compilers, and personalized e-books are also explained. The final part of this article highlights the idea of marketing e-books electronically to improve accessibility and also assist lecturers to market their publications. In addition, the results of investigating buyers’ views are discussed briefly where a formula for pricing e-books based on student attitudes is also proposed.

Keywords: education market; Internet marketing; marketing strategies; users attitude

INTRODUCTION

The growing interest in electronic books (e-books) has resulted in a collection of hybrid definitions of the term (Carvajal, 1999). Initially, paper books that had been converted to a digital format (usually through digitizing processes that allowed them to be displayed on computers) were defined as e-books. Then, the term also encompassed multimedia, hypertext, or hypermedia systems that are based on a book metaphor. Next, the definition has been extended to include book titles that are available online, can be read as e-mail, can be retrieved by a portable electronic reading device, or can be a file that can be downloaded onto a computer (Carvajal, 1999; Allen, 2000; Clister, 1999). Another recent interpretation of an e-book is the “print-on-demand” book, whereby the contents of a book are stored in a system connected to a high-speed, high-quality printer, from which printed and bound copies are produced on demand with the possibility of buying chapter-by-chapter, customized books (Hawkins, 2000a).

E-books are also defined diversely by researchers to fit their own expectations. For example, Bonime and Pohlmann (1998) describe any kind of digitized information ranging from a CD-ROM title to an online...
interactive database or a collection of Web pages as an e-book. Barker (1998, 1999) defines an e-book as a collection of reactive pages of electronic information that exhibit many of the characteristic features and properties of a conventional book. Meanwhile, Open eBook (OEB) Forum avoids using the e-book term since different people use the term differently. Instead, OEB Forum defines a more precise terminology: the digital content that users read (i.e., a paperless version of a book, article, magazine, etc.) is called a publication, the physical device used to read a publication is called a reading device (e.g., dedicated readers, personal computers, or personal digital assistants), and the combination of software and hardware that processes content and presents it to the users is called a reading system.

Some projects give distinct names to their e-books to represent the outcomes of their studies (Norshuhada, 2002). These include Catenazzi, Landoni, and Gibb (1993) who reported two forms of e-books used for scientific publications — one is the Hyper-Book and the other is the Visual-Book. In general, and in the context of this article, the definition of an e-book is partly adopted from Landoni and Gibb (2000), who stated that “the result of integrating a classical book structure, or rather the familiar concept of a book, with features which can be provided within an electronic environment, is referred to as an e-book.” Table 1 summarizes the many definitions of an e-book.

This article starts with a discussion on the advantages of e-books. Then, the hardware- and software-based e-book readers and the different types of e-book formats and standards are detailed. Next, a comparison between formats is discussed, followed by a discussion on electronic publishers (e-publishers), electronic bookstores (e-bookstores), and digital libraries where e-books can be acquired and purchased. The publishing process, how to build e-books using e-book compilers, and making personalized e-books are also explained. The final part of this article highlights the idea of marketing e-books electronically to improve accessibility. In addition, a formula to price e-books based on students’ attitudes is also proposed.

### ADVANTAGES OF E-BOOKS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Many higher education (HE) institutions publish books, research reports, lecture modules, theses, and other informa-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Digitized information from paper version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Multimedia/hypermedia applications based on a book metaphor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Print-on-demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A collection of Web pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Portable reading devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Researchers’ own expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Related Content

Mobile Commerce and Usability
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/mobile-commerce-usability/4880/](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/mobile-commerce-usability/4880/)

A Modified Value Iteration Algorithm for Discounted Markov Decision Processes
[www.irma-international.org/article/a-modified-value-iteration-algorithm-for-discounted-markov-decision-processes/133383/](http://www.irma-international.org/article/a-modified-value-iteration-algorithm-for-discounted-markov-decision-processes/133383/)

Framing ERP Success from an Information Systems Failure Perspective: A Measurement Endeavor
[www.irma-international.org/article/framing-erp-success-from-an-information-systems-failure-perspective/179624/](http://www.irma-international.org/article/framing-erp-success-from-an-information-systems-failure-perspective/179624/)

Managing E-Business Change
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/managing-business-change/12621/](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/managing-business-change/12621/)

Impediments to Effective Management of Project Interdependencies: A Study of IT/IS Project Portfolios
[www.irma-international.org/article/impediments-to-effective-management-of-project-interdependencies/179623/](http://www.irma-international.org/article/impediments-to-effective-management-of-project-interdependencies/179623/)