



SEMINATOR: LEARNING CONTENT CREATION

The faculty roles of content expert and learning content author, and the preeminence of the textbook as of the form and measure of learning content, are being disrupted by publishers and others moving into new roles and creating new learning content formats. Open Educational Resources (OERs) are also poised to take a share of the learning content market if they hit stride. Student choices and behaviors are, and will continue, shaping learning content. Student performance is the emerging driver that all content creators must successfully address.



Keypoints:

- For a century, faculty members' work [as expert,] to vet research and to establish disciplinary norms has been an indispensable resource.
- Digital technology has diluted those roles and blurred the distinction between faculty's local creation of content for their courses and the globally shared resources of commercial publication.
- The textbook's value proposition of authority, accessibility, and affordability sustained the college textbook in the past century, and it remains the mainstay of high-enrollment introductory courses. But assorted forces are picking apart that kingpin status.
- The most significant response to the cost crisis has been the rise of the open educational resources (OER) movement—the basic proposition of which is to restore textbook affordability by socializing production costs and offering materials free or at radically reduced prices to end consumers.
- More sophisticated, “smart” digital materials have the potential to marginalize faculty content creators. Creating higher value-added adaptive learning content and gaining greater control over the education value chain are prominent among the publishing industry's solutions to the erosion of the print textbook market.
- It seems likely that professorial expertise will play a less dominant role in formal learning content creation in coming years. From below, faculty authors will face competition from empowered amateurs and “edupreneurs” determined to democratize learning access or re-direct profits. From above, publishers will turn to platforms and products they control.
- **Key Trends:** Price pushback, declining course materials sales, OER gathering funding and political support, digital educational content gains ground, zero-cost distribution channels, winner-takes-all economics, and proliferation of content creators

Mapping the Learning Content Ecosystem

SCORECARD

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Supplier Power

- Rise of superstar faculty/Winner-takes-all
- Most use open channels + social networks
- Nature of learning content is changing
- Slow shift to emphasis on content curation: integration, contextualization
- Publishers developing instructional design skills
- Intellectual Property gets blurry—advantage to publishers



Buyer Power

- Power is diffused, but price sensitive + social media savvy
- Value buyers + Convenience buyers
- Growing preference for textbook rental
- Students reading less
- Different attitudes toward sharing, intellectual property, etc.
- Gone digital, but like print textbooks



Rivalry Level*: 4



Competition is intense among and between both academics and publishers to be creator/controller of content.



New Entrants

- Possible shift to campus-wide licensing
- Possible rise in academic-content-for-hire
- Social networks + Flashnotes-type e-marketplaces make it possible to bypass publishers and distributors
- OER finds voice



Substitutes

- Publisher-created content
- Informal content (e.g., YouTube, Khan Academy)
- Content exchanges
- Sharing economy (think Uber for textbooks)

*Rivalry is an indication of competition in the segment from 1-lowest to 5-highest; both among current players and between them and new entrants.



Critical Questions: Learning Content Creation

- 1. Are there "star power" faculty authors on your campus? What percent of your faculty are authoring their own course materials to supplement purchased course content? In place of it?*
- 2. What percent of adoptions does the campus store manage (the market share)? What learning content are faculty using for which they do not submit an adoption request to the campus store?*
- 3. Are there faculty using print custom learning materials? Digital custom? What percent of each? What is the store's involvement with these materials (e.g., sales, copyright clearance, compilation, curation)? Are there services the store could be offering to assist faculty and provide more choice to students?*
- 4. Are any campus departments or faculty involved in the creation or use of MOOCs on campus? What course materials are being used for the course? Where are they being obtained? How about the more common distance learning courses?*
- 5. How knowledgeable is the store staff on the adaptive digital learning products/platforms available? Can/does the store provide first-level information and support to faculty and student users?*