



## University professor explains...

# Why College Students Prefer Print Over e-Books

Our thanks to Dr. John Richard Schrock for his permission to reprint this enlightening article about college students' preferences for printed textbooks.

A professor of biology and director of biology education at Emporia State University, Dr. Schrock is an acclaimed author, columnist, editor and speaker.

American university students this year are still using printed textbooks far more than eTexts.

In 2010, it was predicted that eTexts would rise from 2 percent of college course materials to over 18 percent after 2014. It didn't happen.

### Paper Best for Academics

In the "Student Reading Practices in Print and Electronic Media" study to be published in the journal *College & Research Libraries* in September 2014, researchers tracked the reading habits of juniors, seniors and graduate students at the College of New York.

Although students used electronic media for non-academic reading, they relied on paper for academics.

### Digital Books Distasteful

There are "a lot of misconceptions about Millennials" as a digital generation, according to researcher Nancy Foasberg who led the study.

*The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported on Foasberg's research: "Several students in Ms. Foasberg's study expressed a distaste for digital textbooks.

"Some who had used e-books said they would not use them again because they found the embedded links distracting and because they could not interact with the content as they could with print texts—highlighting or taking notes in the margins, for instance.

"And since the students had to print out digital texts, whatever money they had saved by not buying printed copies was largely lost to printing costs."

### The Brain Likes Print

Another writer, Ferris Jabr, details the extensive research over the last two years that confirms the science behind students' intuitive preference for printed text. In the November 2013 issue of *Scientific American*, Jabr lays out the shortcomings of reading from screens in "Why the Brain Prefers Print."

Summarizing recent research from Tufts University, Indiana University, University of Stavanger (Norway), Karlstad University (Sweden), Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, University of Leicester, University of Central Florida and San Jose State University, the downsides of reading on-screen are piling up.

### Words Lost on Screen

Research indicates that the brain treats words as physical objects which have a placement on a page but are fleeting on screen. Measures of brain activity are high when a student writes letters by hand, but not when typed.

Many of us experience "drifting away" while scrolling. Research shows that scrolling promotes shallow reading and reduces comprehension.

Text provides us with both "deep reading" and context.

### Better Comprehension

Reading printed text is less taxing cognitively and provides us with more free capacity for comprehension.

Reading on the Kindle "ink" format that imitates paper is less taxing than reading the backlit screens of other readers, cell phones, tablets and computer screens. Indeed, most readers report higher levels of stress, eye strain, and scrolling that "drains more mental resources."

Researchers found that screens promote browsing, taking shortcuts, and scanning. Readers of print are

much more likely to re-read and check for understanding.

### Higher Test Scores

For college students, the bottom line is: "Will the format affect my test scores?" Researchers found that "...volunteers using paper scored about 10 percentage points higher...students using paper approached the exam with a more studious attitude than their screen-reading peers..." Under both modes, students could superficially "remember" but those studying printed text "knew with certainty," a trait likely related to the deep-reading of print.

### More Distractions

Will the next "digital generation" avoid this difference and be better adapted to screens? Even with young children, researchers found the screens got in the way. Children were distracted into fiddling with the knobs on the device and otherwise being distracted by the technology.

### No Doubt About It

Despite a decade of hype, American college students appear to agree with the survey of students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico where 80 percent of students preferred print to screen in order to "understand with clarity."

You will probably agree as well. After all, you are reading this complex summary—in print.

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## Independence Day

Copresco will be closed Friday, July 4 for Independence Day.

Enjoy a pleasant summer holiday with your family and friends.



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Address Correction Requested

A preacher retired and moved to the country. He noticed a sign advertising a used lawn mower, which he needed, so he stopped at the farmhouse. A young boy led him behind the barn, where the mower sputtered along. The preacher revved it a few times, mowed a line or two and agreed to buy it. Later in the day, the young lad was riding his bicycle when he noticed the preacher yanking furiously on the engine-starter rope. The kid stopped and watched for a couple of minutes, then asked, "What's wrong?" "I can't get this stupid thing to start," came the exasperated reply. "Do you know how?" The kid shrugged, "You just have to cuss at it a little." "Now you listen



here," said the preacher indignantly, "if I ever did cuss, not saying I have, I've forgotten how to do it after all these years." "Preacher," the boy explained patiently, "just keep on pulling that rope—it'll come to ya."

★ ☆ ★

"It took me 17 years to get 3,000 hits in baseball. I did it in one afternoon on



the golf course."—Babe Ruth

★ ☆ ★

An old woman was visiting her doctor, and complained about being tired and creaky all the time. "You have to expect things to start deteriorating," the doctor chided. "Besides, who wants to live to be 100?" The elderly woman replied, "Anyone who is 95."

★ ☆ ★

Marriage: a word that means you are ready for commitment. Of course, so does insanity.

★ ☆ ★

"Golf is like chasing a quinine pill around a cow pasture."—Winston Churchill

★ ☆ ★

Proverb: a short sentence based on a long experience.

I know I think too much, but when they ship Styrofoam, what do they pack it in?

★ ☆ ★

For their commencement exercises, my kid's college plays different music for different majors. For computer science majors they play "High Hopes." For liberal arts majors they play "Baby, It's Cold Outside."

★ ☆ ★

"The secret of managing is to keep the guys who hate you away from the guys who are undecided."—Casey Stengel

★ ☆ ★

Ma'am," the cop said after pulling the woman over, "I'm putting you down for 55." "See?" she gloated to her husband, "I told you this hat makes me look young."

★ ☆ ★



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