OpenStax College Textbook Display FAQ

Fall 2014 Hardcover textbook display: 2nd floor Newman Library.

Free electronic versions of OpenStaxCollege textbooks are available from a VT library Summon search: Search "OpenStax" at http://www.lib.vt.edu or visit http://openstaxcollege.org/books

Q: **These are lengthy, full color, and organized like any intro textbook. What's "free" about them?**
A: PDFs, web, ePub, & Bookshare formats are free online at: http://openstaxcollege.org/books
iBook versions are available for $4.99 each
Hardcover print versions are available at cost of printing, usually $30-50 depending on the book size.
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Q: **These are free. They must not be any good. Who writes these anyway?**
A: Academic subject specialists are commissioned (e.g., paid) to write the textbooks, and other academic subject specialists are commissioned to peer review them. A list of senior and contributing authors, reviewers, and their institutional affiliations are listed at the front of each textbook.

Q: **So. . . who pays for these to be produced?**
A: OpenStax College is able to sustain itself primarily through mission support fees from partners, such as online homework providers. Initial funding has come from a number of grantees, including: William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 20 Million Minds Foundation, Maxfield Foundation, Rice University, and others.

Topics currently covered: **Coming in 2014 / early 2015**

Q: **Why were these nine topics were selected first? And why isn't my subject area covered?**
A: High enrollment, introductory courses with high textbook costs represent the greatest opportunity to save students the largest amount of money. Additional books have been announced and are currently being developed (U.S. History, Chemistry, Psychology and PreCalculus). Funding for an additional ten titles was announced in August 2014.

See **http://guides.lib.vt.edu/oer** for additional sources of open textbooks and educational resources.
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Your professor can make the best decision about what materials are right for your class. Faculty, please contact http://openstaxcollege.org/contact or arwalz@vt.edu for more information.

Q: **Are these comparable to commercially produced textbooks? What about course software?**
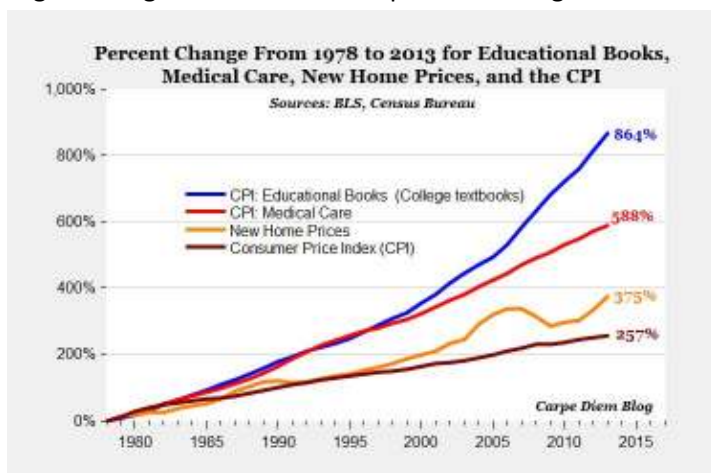A: Yes! OpenStax College textbooks are written by academic subject specialists, peer-reviewed, professionally developed, and have free online auxiliary teaching materials. Many can also be bundled with homework and assessment software many professors already require students to purchase – such as Sapling Learning, WileyPlus, WebAssign, ExpertTA, and others.

Q: **What else can you tell me about open textbooks from OpenStax College?**
A: Your professor is the best person to determine if a particular textbook is a good fit for your course. If your professor is interested in reviewing a textbook, please have your professor contact http://openstaxcollege.org/contact or Anita Walz arwalz@vt.edu regarding review samples.

Q: **So, what is the agenda here?**
 A: Textbooks have become increasingly expensive. Lowering cost and access barriers education is a significant goal for funders of OpenStax College and other open educational resources (OER) initiatives.

Furthermore, because OpenStax College textbooks are openly licensed with a "Creative Commons Attribution 3.0" license, anyone can to copy, redistribute, remix, transform and build upon the material – as long as they attribute the items' creators and properly cite the Creative Commons license. OpenStax provides an interface where teachers can modify any text, swap in different examples, customize place names, rearrange chapters etc. Customize your version here: http://cnx.org

Q: **Won't this hurt the Virginia Tech Bookstore?**
A: The VT Bookstore is a member of the National Association of College Stores. This means that faculty may adopt and the VT bookstore may order and distribute OpenStax College textbooks and/or any bundled software in the same way as other textbooks and software.

Q: **Can you tell me more?**
A: Yes! VT Library's Open Education Librarian, Anita Walz, or another library representative would be happy to talk with you, your faculty, or student group. Contact Anita at arwalz@vt.edu or 540-231-2204

Additional information related to open educational resources is available at: http://guides.lib.vt.edu/oer

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