



Student Watch 2012: Student Attitudes & Perceptions



Linking Course Materials to the Connected Student

Overview

The study is conducted by OnCampus Research, a division of the National Association of College Stores (NACS) and sponsored and published by the NACS Foundation.

The purpose of the study is to explore students' decisions on course materials and provide insight that will help college stores to more effectively serve their student market. More specifically, information is collected on:

- Students' textbook format preference and usage, digital versus print
- Students' purchasing habits and attitudes towards course materials, including rentals
- Student usage of Smartphones and eReader devices

Eighteen campuses participated in the online study conducted between October 1 and October 31, 2011. Campuses were recruited to reflect, as closely as possible, the true make-up of all U.S. colleges and universities in terms of school type (public versus private), program type (2-year versus 4-year), and school size (small, medium, and large).

More than 10,500 usable surveys were completed by the deadline date.

Selected Highlights:

- Students estimate spending \$655 (down from \$667) on required course materials within the past twelve months. An average of 57% is spent at the college store either in store or online.
- Prior to the start of the term, the majority of students (47%) go to their physical campus bookstore or to their campus bookstore's web site to find information about which required course materials they need for class.
- Approximately 67%--up from 57% of students report regularly ("often" and "always") comparison shopping for required course materials.
- Students indicated that the most important factor when deciding if they will purchase required course materials for a class is the price of the course materials. In previous studies the two most important factors were linked to the class itself - the extent to which there are assignments, exams, or in-class work based on the course materials and whether the class falls within their major of study—these have now fallen to the second and third most important factors.
- Interestingly, given the importance of price, most students rarely or never consider the cost of course materials when deciding on a career, major, or which courses to take.

- Students rated the confidence they are getting the lowest possible price as the most important factor when considering *where* to purchase their required course materials.
- If students decided not to purchase their required course materials, the top three reasons selected were price (22%), didn't want it/didn't think they would need it (19%), and already owned the textbook/materials (17%).
- Of students who say they have purchased required course materials from an online source within the past 12 months, approximately 23% (up from 19%) say they experienced a delay in expected order delivery.
- Approximately 24% (up from 18%) of students wait until after classes begin to purchase their required course materials. Only 13% of students purchase their required course materials a month or more before classes start.
- Approximately 20% of students reported renting textbooks for the fall 2011 term.
- Seventeen percent of students own an eReader device. Of those owners, 39% purchased it for school use.
- The most common ways students are accessing digital/electronic textbooks include purchasing a pin code or access code at the college or university bookstore (57%—up from 51% in 2010) purchasing an e-text directly from a publisher (42%) and accessing electronically through a course management system or professor web site (e.g., WebCT, Blackboard) (34%—down from 42%).
- According to students, professors utilizing required course materials continues to decline—to 75% from 79% in 2010, and 81% in 2008.
- Fifty-six percent of students use a smart phone as their primary mobile phone.

When citing survey results, please properly credit the data as follows:

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This study is funded by the NACS Foundation and is offered at a value price of \$599. College and universities may receive an additional discount for a price of \$119. More information can be found here: <http://www.nacs.org/store>