



Midwinter Online Conference 2024

Questions from Session 2: How Many Spreadsheets Does It Take to Communicate Textbook Affordability?

Q1: Who manages your bookstore? We have not had much luck getting usable data from our B&N bookstore.

Our bookstore vendor is Barnes and Noble. <https://www.sunyempire.edu/bookstore/>

Q2: Is the regular bookstore data feed automated or dependent on people coordinating?

The bookstore feed is not automated. Upon request, the library receives excel spreadsheets via email.

Q3: Do you collect OER data each semester?

Yes, we collect OER data for every semester. This data is then added as attributes in Banner. It's a mixture of manual processes and attributes that carry from semester to semester.

Q4: Do you have recommendations for tutorials/learning resources for Airtable? I've played around in it some but your presentation makes me think I should dig in and use it more

I mostly use the Airtable support center. They have excellent documentation: <https://support.airtable.com/docs>

Q5: How does Airtable differ from Excel in tracking course reserve data? What are the pros? What are the cons?

Airtable allows you to create different views of Airtable bases and also to create automations for emails or other actions on triggers. For example, we created views for courses that needed Alma reserve lists made, or those that needed Banner attributes needed. We could have tracked this in Excel too, but it would have been harder to use the same spreadsheet, and making separate views with data that is dynamically updated would be very hard in Excel. Basically, airtable is a great mix of an online database tool, task tracking, and spreadsheets.

Q6: How do you get the faculty "buy-in" OER adoption? How do you promote the OER adoption across your campus? Would you please share some of your successful stories and the not so successful stories?

Our most successful approach for OER and free textbook adoptions with faculty has been to work with others who are helping faculty to revise courses. This puts OER into an activity that they're already doing, and it's less of a request to do a lot more work. Almost all of the faculty have been good to work with and at least consider OER. We try to help them to analyze, and will map their course learning outcomes, modules, and outline to OER we think are good candidates so that we're not just sending them a list of OER that they need to see if it's relevant. Faculty really like that we do more upfront work to show them OER we've done preliminary review of. Our most repeated unsuccessful OER stories are when we try to get faculty to adopt courseware from the OER ready to adopt catalog from SUNY. Faculty spend a lot of time reviewing, and give us well thought out feedback that the courses just don't work well for a fully online environment. In these cases, we try to have faculty adopt the textbook, but not the courseware. But, that is sometimes not successful and they sometimes move to a commercial textbook.

Q7: How searchable is that guide? We're struggling with folks only landing on the page, not the book.

The guide (<https://subjectguides.sunyempire.edu/CourseReserves>) allows searching by book title, instructor, course name and code.

Q8: Do faculty need to agree to use the same textbook multiple semesters in a row?

We have only asked faculty to use the same textbook multiple semesters if it's part of a stipulation for a grant, such as the SUNY OER Impact Grants. But, we've found that this is not necessary. Faculty at Empire take course revision and design seriously as it's a specific part of their job duties. And, they're highly unlikely to move away from OER for several years as they do a thorough review of the course up front. The scenarios we've had where faculty move away from OER have all been justified: the student success metrics were down for OER sections, and/or faculty review the OER and find issues.

Q9: What is the time investment for reviewing the lists?

The time investment for reviewing the lists is significant if you're including searching for the ebooks, adding the titles to Alma course reserves, and adding data to Banner. We estimated about 110 hours of staff time in Spring 2024. We're looking for ways to streamline parts of the process, but it will still take significant time. However, this has greatly reduced the amount of reference questions we get at the beginning of the semester in which students ask us to search for or purchase their textbooks, so there are some related time savings.

Resources shared in chat by attendees:

- OER wikipedia entry: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_educational_resources
- Embedding Alma Analytics tables on LibGuides: <http://e-nug.org/enug-2023/enug-2023-full-presentation-information/#session5>
- Example of a form that allows faculty and instructors to submit requests: <https://lib.arizona.edu/request/ebook-availability>
- Word of caution re: AirTable: “We have been advised against AirTable due to it not meeting accessibility standards. I really wish we could use it! I'm keeping my eyes open and hoping they will improve this”.