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### Collaborating to Support Student Success: Exploring Free e-Text Access at Illinois State University

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# COLLABORATING TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS: EXPLORING FREE E-TEXT ACCESS AT ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Julie Murphy, Collection Assessment Librarian

Mallory Jallas, Student Success Librarian

Anne Shelley, Scholarly Communication Librarian

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a dark grey background with a light blue circuit board pattern. The pattern includes vertical lines, horizontal lines, and small circles representing components or nodes.

# OUTLINE

- INTRODUCTION
- TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY AT ISU
- CONNECTION TO STUDENT SUCCESS

Anne Shelley

- PROJECT BACKGROUND

Julie Murphy

- PRELIMINARY PROJECT FINDINGS &  
NEXT STEPS

Mallory Jallas

# INTRODUCTION



US



PROJECT  
FUNDING




ILLINOIS STATE  
UNIVERSITY



MILNER  
LIBRARY

The background is a blurred image of a library with wooden bookshelves filled with books. Warm, out-of-focus lights create a bokeh effect in the upper right. Light blue circuit-like lines with circular nodes extend horizontally from the left and right sides of the central text box.

# TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY AT ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY



# ISU TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY COMMITTEE

- Academic Senate,  
Mixed Representation
- Student and Faculty  
Surveys
- Presentations
- Website

# LIBRARY EFFORTS



## Workshops for Faculty

Partnership with Center  
for Teaching, Learning,  
and Technology



## Outreach

Presentations  
Individual  
Meetings



## OER Working Group

Formalize  
Library OER  
Support



# TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS



# TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS

- The cost of textbooks is rising with the increasing cost of higher education
- Growing body of literature focusing on impact of open educational resources, access to course text, and student success
- Impact of COVID-19 and student access to course materials
  - Additional costs and challenges

# TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS @ ISU

- Spring 2019 ISU Student Survey:
  - **73% of students did not acquire a required textbook** due to cost
  - **89% of students delayed purchasing a textbook** due to cost
  - Students use a **variety of sources to acquire textbooks:**
    - **7% use Milner Library**

# STUDENT SUCCESS @ ISU

- Summer 2020 – New Interim AVP for Student Success
- Goal is to develop a campus-wide student success plan (Fall 2021)
  - Affordability is key
    - Recent data citing that the most common reason for students to leave ISU is financial
  - Reducing barriers for students
    - Focus on policies and practices that are inequitable
- Milner Library is viewed as a partner in these efforts



# PROJECT BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION

# CARLI COUNTS PROGRAM

- CARLI (Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois) Counts Program
- Demonstrating the impact that Milner Library can have on student success at Illinois State University
- Textbook Affordability concerns
- Mitigating COVID impacts on ISU students
  - Physical access to course reserve books
  - Financial impact of the pandemic on students and families

# ERESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

- The eBooks for this project should:
  - Be available for institutional license
  - Offer COUNTER compliant statistics
  - Provide a consistent user experience
- We preferred two platforms:
  - Ebook Central
  - EBSCO eBooks



# RANKING CANDIDATES & RECRUITMENT

- Identified classes that would work well with our criteria
- Ranked classes based on student savings vs. Library cost



# ACQUISITIONS & CATALOGING CONSIDERATIONS

- The eBooks for this project should:
  - Be available for institutional license
  - Be purchased via GOBI and not directly from the vendor/platform
  - Offer licensing options that support usage for the entire class, typically unlimited or non-linear
  - Be discoverable in the library Catalog

# IMPLEMENTATION

- Timeline issues
- 52 course sections enrolled, 75 titles provided
- More than 2941 students impacted
- Placed access links in course Sakai pages

# ACCESS SERVICES & REFERENCE CONSIDERATIONS

- The eBooks for this project should:
  - Be provided directly to the course instructor
  - Be accessible to students in the LMS
  - Be discoverable in the library catalog
- We will fold in all that we learned to enhance our next project.



**PRELIMINARY PROJECT  
FINDINGS & NEXT STEPS**

# MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THIS WORK

Quantitative: usage statistics, cost/use, and value-based calculations

- Sample cost analysis:
  - XX Course – 149 students enrolled, unlimited eBook cost for library: \$94.42, campus bookstore price for student: \$67.95, student savings: \$10,124.55, benefit-cost ratio: 107

Qualitative: surveys and focus groups with student and faculty participants

- Sample survey questions:
  - How did having these eBook(s) provide impact your success in this course? (student)
  - Do you think that access to the provided eBook(s) impacted the grades or retention of any students in your course? (faculty)

# INITIAL FINDINGS: FOCUS GROUPS

- Faculty Focus Groups:

- Benefits: Day 1 access, contributed to equity in the classroom, cost savings for students, convenience of access impacted teaching – all students on the same page
- Challenges: E-text learning curve, more screen time for students – screen fatigue during the pandemic, concerns about reading comprehension

- Student Focus Groups:

- Benefits: Cost savings, alleviating textbook stress, keyword searching, annotation tools
- Challenges: WIFI issues impact access, eyestrain, timeout issues, lack of OCR, DRM restrictions for printing and downloading chapters

# INITIAL FINDINGS: SURVEY

- Faculty Survey (n=34):
- 71% of faculty respondents indicate that their opinion of Milner's resources has improved due to their use of this provided e-book.
- Student Survey (n= 509):
- 67.6% of student respondents indicate that their opinion of Milner has improved due to their use of this provided e-book.
- 60.9% of student respondents indicate that they would be "very likely" to register for a class with a library-provided ebook in the future, and 34.7% are "somewhat likely." Only 4.4% of respondents say they would be somewhat or very unlikely to.
- When asked about a future course offering sections using digital textbooks or traditional textbooks, 18% indicate a preference for the traditional print book, 53% indicate a preference for the e-book, and 28% report no preference between them.

# NEXT STEPS: ASSERTING THE VALUE OF THIS WORK & CARRYING IT FORWARD

- Finalizing our project analysis & writing up our findings
- Communicating the project within our institution & externally
- Continuing to develop workflows to systematically approach the acquisition, maintenance, promotion, and ongoing assessment of assigned ebooks
- Nurturing campus-wide partnerships to support textbook affordability
- Expanding the narrative of the library's contributions to positively impacting student success



# THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?

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- Anne Shelley – [aeshell@ilstu.edu](mailto:aeshell@ilstu.edu)