

UNDERSTANDING THE AVAILABILITY OF E-BOOKS FOR NDSU ENGLISH CLASSES
AND ENGLISH/ENGLISH EDUCATION MAJORS' PERCEPTIONS OF E-BOOKS

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Marie Joy Dillon

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Marie Joy Dillon

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Dr. Kevin Brooks

Chair

Dr. Amy Rupiper Taggart

Dr. Roger Green

Approved:

April 12, 2016

Date

Dr. Gary Totten

Department Chair

ABSTRACT

While research on college students and their use of e-books has emerged, there have not been studies done on the use of e-books by English and English majors specifically. This research aims to fill that gap. An analysis of the number of required textbooks that were available as e-books for English classes at NDSU revealed that just over half (or 67%) of the required books were available in e-book form. Surveys were distributed to English and English education majors at NDSU to determine their use of e-books and their attitudes towards them. Follow up interviews were also conducted to gain more insight. The majority of the participants agreed that they preferred print books over e-books, but they did acknowledge that e-books could be useful for some applications and agreed that e-books will still exist in the future.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Electronic books or e-books have become popular in the last few years. In fact, according to a leading researcher on e-books, linguist Naomi Baron, by January 2011 more Kindle e-books were being sold than paperback books (7). In addition to this, Baron also states in *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World* that from 2010 to 2012, sales of print books dropped nearly 16 percent in the United States (7). While some books are not yet available in e-book format, every day more and more e-books are becoming available to be purchased and downloaded. E-books are becoming popular not just for the average person who likes to read, but also in the academic community, I believe particularly for undergraduate English majors and English education majors since their major involves a lot of reading.

College students are beginning to choose e-books over print books because e-books are usually cheaper than print books, they take up less space, and it can be easier to annotate them. It is possible to carry around a library of hundreds of books in a thin e-reader device like the Kindle or the iPad instead of carrying around a stack of books. It is also possible to highlight text in an e-book, add bookmarks to important pages, and even write notes. Being able to write in the margins of a printed book, highlight important text, and use paper bookmarks is one option, but having many different bookmarks and a lot of writing and highlighting could get distracting while a person is trying to read. An advantage of e-books is the ability to create electronic notes and bookmarks so that students can be more organized and still be able to read the text. It also allows them to access those notes and bookmarks anywhere at anytime. Another possible benefit to using e-books instead of print books is that e-books are more environmentally friendly, or at least they would seem to be.

According to Baron's study about college students' preferences for print versus e-books, the majority of students preferred the print version of books for both pleasure and academic reading (Baron 83). While students are aware of e-books and the potential benefits of them, such as convenience and lower cost, they are still not using them as much as the print versions of books. Baron found that convenience was what students liked most about reading on a digital screen. Cost was the second most important factor, followed by the concern about how books impact the environment (Baron 85). English majors and English education majors often read a lot of books, but they might not always be willing to choose the e-book option of a book. Baron has found that undergraduate college students prefer print books, but she has not studied the preferences of English and English education majors specifically.

For English majors and English education majors, e-books are generally primary texts, such as fiction, drama, and poetry, all of which are currently quite widely available. There really aren't many linguistics e-books or e-book anthologies available in the field of English right now, according to my analysis of the required books for NDSU English classes. There are some PDFs available, particularly electronic journal articles from a college library. My project looked at the attitudes towards e-books held by undergraduate English and English education majors at NDSU, and the availability of e-books for the English curriculum at NDSU. English majors and English education majors are often avid readers, but sometimes traditionalist. They love books, but they might not always be willing to choose an e-book over a print book. They prefer being able to visualize something on a particular place on a page and hand writing notes in a paper book.

For my project, I did a study of e-books, looking at both the positive and negative aspects of them. There are both benefits and drawbacks to using e-books, especially for English and English education majors, but I wanted to determine how English and English education majors feel about and use e-books. To accomplish this, I first did an analysis of the current English curriculum at NDSU to determine the availability of e-book options for the required texts. The results of this, which are contained in Chapter 3, told me how many of the required texts are currently available as e-books. Next, I distributed a survey asking questions that helped me to determine what English and English education majors' attitudes towards and perspectives on e-books are and their current usage (or non-usage) of them. I wanted to determine if they are embracing e-books or resisting them and why. I followed up this survey with interviews to have a deeper conversation about how they feel about using e-books, how they use them, and their preferences of e-books vs. print books. This data, which is discussed in Chapter 4, together with the results of my surveys and interviews, gave me a clear picture of whether English and English education majors are currently embracing or resisting e-books and why. I was then able to make recommendations about the feasibility of the English curriculum including more e-books and what English teachers can do to make students ready for e-books. There is not a separate chapter for research methods, but rather the methods are folded into the relevant chapter. The chapters will be as follows: Chapter 2 contains a literature review of relevant sources, Chapter 3 contains a discussion of my research methods and results when analyzing the required texts of English classes, Chapter 4 contains a discussion of my research methods and results from my surveys and interviews, and Chapter 5 contains a discussion about further study that could be done.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarship on e-books is just starting to emerge. A number of studies have been conducted on the use of e-books by a variety of age groups, ranging from elementary students to high school students to college students. Research on college students, their use of e-books, and their attitudes towards them has emerged. Linguist and professor Naomi S. Baron of American University in Washington, D.C. is a leading scholar in this field. She focused her research on undergraduate college students in the United States, Japan, and Germany, asking whether they preferred reading in print or digital reading and inquiring about the reasons for this. Overall, she found that the majority of college students preferred reading in print. Studying the habits and preferences of college students was just one part of her research. She also analyzed in detail the benefits of digital reading as well as the drawbacks. Other smaller studies have also been conducted on individual college campuses by researchers such as Andy Reville et. al., Nancy M. Foasberg, and Cynthia L. Gregory.

In her book entitled *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World*, Naomi Baron discusses the continuing increase in digital reading and the effect that has had on print books as well as on reading itself. She talks about both the advantages and disadvantages of digital reading. Some of the advantages that she discussed are convenience, environmental benefits, and cost (62). Some of the disadvantages of digital reading that she discussed are a tendency to get distracted by multitasking (88), difficulty in concentrating on reading (89), and a potential for eyestrain (91). She also discusses how digital reading has shaped and is continuing to change the experience of reading. With so much to read, strategies are being used by publishers to make it easier for readers to consume all that text. One strategy is what Baron

calls “snack reading,” which is basically where text is broken down into smaller pieces like the serialization of books or the publishing of shorter works (Baron 56-57). One of the most important findings in Baron is her own research about whether undergraduate college students in the United States, Germany, and Japan preferred e-books or print books. She found that the students in all three countries preferred print books for both schoolwork and pleasure reading. 59% of the students in the United States, 75% of the students in Japan, and 68% of the students in Germany indicated that they did their reading for school on paper (Baron 83). 73% of the students in the United States, 76% of the students in Japan, and 69% of the students in Germany indicated that they chose paper for pleasure reading (Baron 83). I wanted to test these results among English majors, just a few years later, to see if there are any changes and to see if a group of book lovers will make a difference.

Another finding that Baron discusses is that e-books may not be as environmentally friendly as they seem to be. She cites an article that was written by Daniel Goleman and Gregory Norris in the *New York Times* which said that more minerals are needed to create a single e-reader than are needed to make a printed book. Goleman and Norris also stated that more greenhouse gases are produced when creating an e-reader than when creating a printed book. In addition, Baron notes that “...paper, unlike many components in digital devices, is a renewable resource” (Baron 69). There is also a large amount of heat that is produced by servers that contain the data that consumers access on their devices. Another factor to consider is the fact that printed books can be resold or passed from one person to another, so instead of a student buying a new textbook they can buy a used one, which will also cut down on the environmental impact (Baron 69). 21% of the responses that Baron received from the students indicated that

“...what students liked most about reading onscreen involved something ecological...” (Baron 87). The students indicated a concern for the environment and how digital reading could save resources (Baron 87).

Baron’s book provided me with a solid foundation for my project and allowed me to look at the many different facets of e-books, but she did not investigate the preferences and habits of English and English education majors specifically. That is what I will be adding to this research. A close analysis of the disciplines might be the next step for this kind of research. Also, looking at the use of e-books in different classes specifically might be a good next step as well. When setting up my research project, I also looked to other scholars to help me lay a foundation for my research besides Baron, such as Andy Reville from Miami University.

In their article entitled “Book Lovers, Technophiles, Pragmatists, and Printers: The Social and Demographic Structure of User Attitudes Toward e-Books,” Andy Reville et. al., report on people’s opinions and perceptions about e-books at Miami University. To conduct this study, they distributed a survey to the campus community using open ended questions about their usage and opinions of e-books. They then divided up the responses and placed each person into one of four categories: Book Lovers, Technophiles, Pragmatists, and Printers. The following descriptions of the categories were given. Book Lovers have a deep connection to books in print form and do not like reading texts on a screen. Technophiles see the many advantages of e-books, such as being able to easily search the text, and they enjoy reading digital texts. Pragmatists see both the positives and negatives of print and e-book formats. They like being able to easily search the text of an e-book, for example, but also would not like to read an entire book on a screen. Pragmatists do not generally read entire books, however, according to the

study. Printers have a preference for print books; however, unlike Book Lovers, they cannot read any type of a digital text and must print them in order to work with them. The study found that the majority of the students surveyed were Book Lovers (31%), 28% were Printers, 22% were Technophiles, and 19% were Pragmatists. The types of survey questions used in this study helped me to compose my own survey questions and gave me an idea of some of the responses I was likely to get. This was a good source for previous research that has been done on my topic. English majors likely could fall into any of these categories, depending on individual preferences, but Book Lover would be the most likely.

Nancy M. Foasberg, in her article entitled “Adoption of e-Book Readers Among College Students: A Survey,” discusses a survey that she conducted to determine whether e-books have become popular among college students or not. She asked questions about whether students used e-book readers, how often they used them, and for what purpose they used them. She found that most college students that she surveyed do not read e-books (74%), and those that do (23.5%) generally use them for leisure reading and not textbooks. Of the 23.5% of students who do use e-books, 85.7% of them used them for leisure reading while only 38.1% used them for class work. The largest barrier to getting an e-book reader was cost, followed by selection and the cost of e-books, according to the findings of the study. This study helped to give me background information to use in my paper, and it helped me to formulate questions for my survey, such as where undergraduate English and English education majors get e-books from and how they view e-books.

Cynthia L. Gregory, in her article entitled “‘But I Want a Real Book’ An Investigation of Undergraduates’ Usage and Attitudes Toward Electronic Books,” talks about a study that was

conducted of undergraduate students to determine their usage and attitudes toward electronic books. The survey showed that undergraduates have mixed feelings about e-books, and that many of them stated they would use e-books but still preferred print books. Gregory also looks to the future, mentioning that at the time of the study Google had begun to digitize academic libraries. She wondered if this will impact libraries and undergraduates' use of an attitudes towards e-books in the future. I used the information that this study found to provide background and context. I also used the types of survey questions Gregory used to help me formulate my own survey questions.

There have been numerous studies conducted about e-books and many studies about how college students specifically use and think about e-books. Baron's research on undergraduate college students in the United States, Germany, and Japan and their perspectives about e-books contained good information about college students both internationally and in the United States. She found that overall the college students that she surveyed preferred print books over e-books for both academic and pleasure reading. While these studies focused on college students in general, they did not look at English majors and English education majors to see their attitudes towards e-books and their usage of them. My study focused on English and English education majors specifically. The following chapters contain the methods I used to conduct my study as well as a discussion of the results. I also talk about the significance of the specific questions that I chose.

CHAPTER 3: ENGLISH DEPARTMENT REQUIRED TEXTS ANALYSIS

Methods

Despite the many studies that have been conducted about the use of e-books, those studies have focused on college students' use of e-books in general or on a specific department such as business, as Carol Simon of the Joan and Donald E. Axinn Library of Hofstra University in New York, wrote about (Simon 263). There are no studies that focus on e-book usage in English departments, specifically how close we are to being able to adopt e-books in English departments. I wanted to see the availability in order to test the viability of using e-books in the English curriculum at NDSU. I also wanted to see if e-books are being assigned in English classes. To accomplish this, I conducted a study that looked at the required books for the undergraduate English curriculum at NDSU to determine the availability of e-books. I also conducted a survey and follow up interviews of English and English education majors at NDSU. My methods for that survey and the interviews are in Chapter 4.

I began my analysis of the required books for the English classes by compiling a list of all of the required books for every undergraduate English class offered at NDSU for Fall of 2014. I then used the NDSU Bookstore's website to look at the options available for purchasing the books to determine if e-books are available in place of print books for each book. I also checked three vendors who sold e-books: Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and the iBooks store (by Apple) to determine the availability of e-books and books from them as well. I noted the price of each e-book and where it was available. I compiled and analyzed the results so that I had a clear picture of the availability (and affordability) of e-books for the English curriculum at NDSU in Fall

2014. This allowed me to determine if e-books are available for English classes at NDSU and how this impacts students' decisions about purchasing books for their classes.

The results will be relevant to more than just our English department at NDSU because the English curriculum at NDSU is similar to many other English departments at state colleges, especially land grant colleges. By knowing how many e-books are currently available in our English curriculum and knowing what it would take to get students to choose e-books, we can see if changes should be made to get students to choose the e-book option more often. There are benefits to using e-books, but students might not currently be recognizing those benefits. The results of my study will allow us to see if and why that is occurring and what could be done about it.

Results and Discussion

After completing the analysis of required books for English classes specific to English and English education majors (excluding first year and upper division writing classes) in Fall of 2014, I found that out of the 104 required books, 70 e-books were available, which means that 67% of the required books were available in e-book form. Out of the 70 available e-books, 68 of them were available from Amazon, and Amazon had the highest number of e-books (97%) available when compared to the NDSU Bookstore (4%), Barnes & Noble (87%), and Apple's iBooks (90%). There were some e-books that Amazon didn't have, however, that one of the other vendors had. The NDSU Bookstore has very few e-books available, and they can only be rented for a period of 365 days. There is no option to purchase the e-book to keep. Students can get the same book on Amazon for a cheaper cost. While renting an e-book from Amazon is cheaper than buying it from Amazon, paying a little more money means that students can keep

the e-book and use it again in future classes without having to purchase it or rent it again if they need it. This issue of rental cost versus purchase cost and the possibility of future use will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Pricing, while often similar between the three companies (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Apple's iBooks), could also range anywhere from as little as a \$.40 difference to as much as a \$14.72 difference in cost for the same e-book. For 67%, or 70 out of 104, of required books, a book was available in e-book form from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or Apple's iBooks, but only three out of 70 (or 4%) e-books were available from the NDSU Bookstore. All three e-books were only available for rent for a period of 365 days and there was no option to purchase the e-book version. These books were entitled *An Introduction to Language*, *The Non-Designers Design Book*, and *"They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, all of which fall into the category of academic textbooks as opposed to novels. All of these e-books available from the NDSU Bookstore were also available from Amazon. *An Introduction to Language* was available to rent for 360 days from Amazon or to buy from Amazon. *The Non-Designers Design Book* and *They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* were available to buy from Amazon.

According to my analysis, academic textbooks used in English studies, such as anthologies or books about linguistics, are less likely to be available in e-book form than novels are. For the five out of twenty one total classes (or 24%) that have zero e-books available, all of the required books are anthologies or textbooks. The classes are as follows: English 220: Introduction to Literature, English 222: Introduction to Poetry, English 225: Introduction to Film, English 315: British Literature I, and English 458: Advanced Writing Workshop. There are six

required books total between those five classes: *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*, *Backpack Literature*, *Norton Anthology of Poetry*, *Looking at Movies* (with 2 DVDs), *Norton Anthology of English Literature with KJV Bible*, and *Crafting Digital Writing*. None of the anthologies, such as the *Norton Anthology of Poetry*, that are required books in the English classes are available in e-book form. Novels, on the other hand, are more likely to be available in e-book format.

Novels are a lot easier to find in e-book format, and they are available from more stores, giving readers more options to purchase them and allowing them to search for the best price. Many famous novels, such as the *Odyssey*, were available in e-book form from multiple stores, making it easy for students to get ahold of an e-book copy of these books. Some popular novels that were published many years ago and are in the public domain are available in e-book form for free or for a very low cost, such as \$.99. An example of this is *Moby Dick*, which was available from Amazon as an e-book for only \$.99 and available from Apple's iBooks for free, even though both of these were different versions than the version listed on the required books page of the NDSU Bookstore's website. These low prices offer students the opportunity to save a lot of money on those books, which is very important to students, according to my interviews and survey. I will discuss this point further in Chapters 4 and 5 when I discuss the results of my survey.

In five out of the twenty one total classes, or 24%, there were zero e-books available, as illustrated in Table 1 on page 13. The classes who had zero available e-books were as follows: English 220: Introduction to Literature, English 222: Introduction to Poetry, English 225: Introduction to Film, English 315: British Literature I, and English 458: Advanced Writing

Workshop. Only five out of twenty one, or 24%, of the classes had all of the required books available as e-books. They were: English 167: Introduction to English Studies, English 209: Introduction to Linguistics, English 275: Introduction to Writing Studies, and English 317: American Literature I. About 3/4 of the classes, or 16 out of 21 (76%) had at least one e-book available. In many classes, most of the required books were available for purchase as e-books, yet one or two were not. An example of this is the English 455/655: International Technical Writing class, in which two out of the three required books, *Global English Style Guide* and *Intercultural Communication*, were available in e-book form from multiple stores, yet the last required book, *Global Contexts*, was not available as an e-book. Another example of this is the English 271: Literary Analysis class, in which only one out of the four required books, *Dracula*, was available as an e-book from multiple stores, yet the other three books, *How to Interpret Literature*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *Closer*, were not available as e-books. Based on these findings, it looks like students have a set of choices to make.

Table 1
Availability of E-books for English Classes

Number of Classes (out of 21)	Number of e-books available
5 (or 24%)	0
5 (or 24%)	all required books
16 (or 76%)	at least 1

In some instances an e-book version was available for a certain book, but the e-book version was not the same version of the book that was listed under the course requirements. Many different publishers have published many different editions of those books, and a teacher may pick a particular edition from a particular publisher to use for class but an e-book version

may not be available for that particular edition or from that particular publisher. For some books, the version may not matter because the content is the same, such as for the *Odyssey*, which was a requirement for English 240: World Literature Masterpieces. For classics such as this, the content may or may not change from edition to edition and publisher to publisher. Some works were originally written in a language other than English and then translated into English. The accuracy of those translations can vary, so a particular version might be more accurate than another. Purchasing an e-book or getting one for free might allow a student to get the same content as the required book on the list. In some cases, however, a teacher may request a particular edition from a particular publisher because it includes extra discussion about the book or is a special translation that is different from the alternate version that the e-book is available in. In this case, a student who has the e-book version of this book would not have the same version that the teacher, and probably most of the class, is using. It is important in this instance to get everyone on the same page.

This concept of different versions of books deserves further discussion and study. 19%, or thirteen out of 70, e-books were not available in the teacher preferred version but were available in a different version in e-book form. Over 3/4 of the available e-books had the correct version available from at least one vendor, or 57 out of 70 (81%), to be precise. Even for the e-books that were available in the correct version from at least one vendor, often times that version was a lot more expensive than other versions from other vendors. For example, in English 317: American Literature I, there is a required book called the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* that is available in e-book form from Barnes & Noble for \$9.99 and iBooks for \$10.99, however, there is also an e-book version that is the wrong version available for only \$.99 from

Amazon. If a student knew that it didn't matter what version of the book they chose, they could pick the cheapest version from Amazon and save \$9 to \$10. Literature classes often times required mostly novels. A lot of times the e-book versions of classic novels are very cheap, usually \$.99 or sometimes even free. Sometimes these "cheap" e-books are less user friendly because the formatting can be off or the proofreading isn't as good. Some of the newer novels are more expensive, regardless of what version is purchased, however, and for textbooks generally there is only one version available. Teachers should communicate information about whether the version of the required books matters or not right away at the beginning of the semester so students know if they need to make sure they have the correct version or if they can purchase whatever version is the cheapest. Cost is a main factor that students consider when deciding whether to purchase e-books or print books, which will be talked about further in Chapter 4 when I discuss the results of my survey and interviews with students.

If the English department at NDSU promoted e-books as good learning tools, they might be open to allowing students to use the cheaper version of an e-book. If the teacher preferred version of an e-book is available from the NDSU Bookstore required books list it will be more expensive (more than \$.99) but also usually better proofread with better formatting, closer to the print version of the book. If formatting and good proofreading are very important to a student, used copies of books can be purchased for a lower cost as well, if a student is willing to spend some time searching multiple bookstores for the best price. This is another issue that will affect students' decision about whether to buy e-books or print books.

In 16 out of 21, or 76% of the English classes, an e-book version was available for at least one of the required books. For English 209: Introduction to Linguistics, there was only one

book required, *An Introduction to Language*, and that book was available to rent in e-book format at the NDSU Bookstore or Amazon, and it was also available for purchase from Amazon as an e-book as well. The following information about the cost of the options for obtaining this book can be found in Table 2 on page 17. The rental price for 365 days (or 1 year) from the NDSU Bookstore was \$192.35. The rental price from Amazon was less than half that at \$90.93 for 360 days, but the cost slowly decreased the shorter amount of time a student wanted to rent the book. For example, if the student only wanted to rent the e-book for one semester, it would cost \$60.17, which is about \$30.00 cheaper. The cost to purchase the e-book to keep was \$153.49 from Amazon, quite a bit higher than Amazon's rental price. In contrast, the cost to purchase the print version of the book new from the NDSU Bookstore was \$198.30, and the cost of a used copy of the print version of the book from the NDSU Bookstore was \$148.75. The cost of a new copy of the print version of the book from the cheapest third party seller from Amazon was \$69.35, and the cost of a used print book from the cheapest third party seller from Amazon was \$37.50 for a book in "good" condition. This particular book was also available to be rented as a print book from Amazon (it could be either new or used) for \$33.24 for a semester. Barnes & Noble did not have an e-book version of this book, however, a print version could be rented for \$33.24 for one semester. The cost of a new copy of the print version of the book from the cheapest third party seller from Barnes & Noble was \$160.19. The cost of a used copy of the print version of the book from the cheapest third party seller from Barnes & Noble was \$49.99. Overall, the cheapest option to get a copy of this book would be to rent it from Amazon or Barnes & Noble as a print book for a semester for \$33.24. Of course, if the student needed the book again at some point they would have to purchase it again or get a copy from the library or

another source. For just a few dollars more, they could buy a used print copy in “good” condition from a third party seller on Amazon for \$37.50 so they could keep the book in case they needed it for future semesters. Amazon had the cheapest prices, followed by Barnes & Noble and then the NDSU Bookstore. This represents the pattern that appeared for prices on almost every book. There are many other bookstores that sell new and used books, so it might be possible to get even better prices if a student is willing to take the time to shop around. The choice about whether to keep the book for future semesters is another decision that students have to make when buying books each semester.

Table 2
An Introduction to Language Cost Breakdown

Rental/Purchase Option	Cost (from low to high)
Barnes & Noble (rent as a print book for one semester)	\$33.24
Amazon (rent as a print book for one semester)	\$33.24
Amazon (purchase as a used print book from the cheapest third party seller)	\$37.50
Barnes & Noble (purchase as a used print book from the cheapest third party seller)	\$49.99
Amazon (purchase as a new print book from the cheapest third party seller)	\$69.35
Amazon (rent as an e-book for 360 days)	\$90.93
NDSU Bookstore (purchase as a used print book)	\$148.75
Amazon (purchase as an e-book)	\$153.49
Barnes & Noble (purchase as a new print book from the cheapest third party seller)	\$160.19
NDSU Bookstore (rent as an e-book for 365 days)	\$192.35
NDSU Bookstore (purchase as a new print book)	\$198.30

Large, expensive textbooks raise a different set of questions for students than highly available and much cheaper novels. Students are more likely to re-read novels again in the future so are therefore more likely to have a desire to keep them rather than selling them back at the end of the semester. According to Baron's first study that she conducted, 61% of the students surveyed stated that they "sold their textbooks at the end of the course 'most of the time'" (Baron 82). According to the findings of the same study, 59% of the students stated that they "reread academic works 'occasionally' or 'never'" (Baron 82). Two thirds of those students were more likely to re-read a book if it was a print book rather than an e-book (Baron 82). If over half of students sell their textbooks back at the end of the semester, they will most likely choose a print version of the book that they can sell back rather than an e-book version of the text that they cannot sell back. Also, renting the book (in e-book or print form) so that they only have it for one semester at a lower cost might be a good option as well.

The discussion of rental costs brings up another factor in a student's decision of whether to purchase a print version of a book or an e-book version of a book. If a student wants to save some money and wants an e-book version of a book that can only be rented, they will only be able to access that book for a set number of days. Paying a little more for a print version of that book or buying an e-book version that didn't expire might save them money in the long run in this case. Of course some students do sell their textbooks back at the end of the semester and they may have chosen to sell that particular book back, in which case they would have to use other options to get the book again if they needed it in the future.

In addition to these issues of cost, I also saw in my analysis the need to think about the different kinds of classes that are offered and to see the e-book availability of each. For example,

almost 3/4 of the required books for the core English classes are available in e-book form. For many of those core classes, only one or two books are not available in e-book form. For example, in the English 467: English Studies Capstone Experience class, only one book was not available in e-book form, the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. That book could probably be substituted for another similar book that is available in e-book form or the material could be found in online articles or websites. Substitutions could be made for other classes to make them more e-book friendly as well.

E-book Availability for Types of Classes

Almost 3/4 (nine out of thirteen or 69%) of the required books for the core English classes at NDSU are available in e-book form. The following information about the availability of e-books for the core English classes can be found in Table 3 on page 20. The core English classes of the English curriculum at NDSU are as follows: English 167: Introduction to English Studies, English 271: Literary Analysis, English 275: Introduction to Writing Studies, and English 467: English Studies Capstone Experience. All required books available in e-book form for English 167: Introduction to English Studies and English 275: Introduction to Writing Studies. The only book (out of five total required books) that is not available in e-book form for the English 467: English Studies Capstone Experience class is the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. For the English 271: Literary Analysis class, only one out of the four required books, *Dracula*, was available in e-book form. This is a popular novel, and it was available from Amazon (a different version), Barnes & Noble, and iBooks. The other three books, *How to Interpret Literature*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *Closer* were not available in e-book form.

Table 3
 Availability of E-books for Core English Classes

Class Number	Number of E-books Available
167	3 out of 3
271	1 out of 4
275	1 out of 1
467	4 out of 5

For the Literature Survey Courses, English 240: World Literature Masterpieces, English 315: British Literature I, and English 317: American Literature I, 75%, or 15 out of 20 books were available in e-book form. A breakdown of the availability of e-books for the literature survey courses can be found in Table 4 on page 21. English majors are required to choose just one of those classes. One of the books that were not available in e-book form was the *Norton Anthology of English Literature with KJV Bible* from the English 315: British Literature I class. One of the books that was available as an e-book was the *Scarlet Letter* from the English 317: American Literature I class. The English 317: American Literature I class had seven required books, and all seven were available in e-book form. The required books consisted of popular classic novels, such as the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. No anthology was required for that class, which makes the class more e-book friendly. Anthologies are generally not available in e-book form, so the classes that use them are less e-book friendly. If classes were to move away from the anthologies and choose other texts instead, they would be more e-book friendly. Students are also required to choose one of the following two classes: English 316: British Literature II and English 318: American Literature II, both of which are only

available in the spring semester so the data about their required books was not included in this study which focused on the fall semester.

Table 4
Availability of E-books for Literature Survey Courses

Class Number	Number of E-books Available
240	8 out of 12
315	0 out of 1
317	7 out of 7

English majors are also required to choose two cultural diversity classes. Five out of twelve possible classes were taught in the fall semester of 2014. Those classes are the following: English 330: British and American Women Writers, English 336: Literature and the Environment, English 341: 20th Century American Fiction, English 455: International Technical Writing, and English 474: Native American Literature. See Table 5 on page 22 for a breakdown of the availability of e-books for cultural diversity classes. Out of the 32 required books for these five classes, almost half (15 out of 32 or 47% to be precise) were available in e-book form. Only one class, English 341: 20th Century American Fiction, had all six required books available in e-book form. Two classes, English 330: British and American Women Writers and English 455/655: International Technical Writing, had all but one required book available in e-book form. For the English 330: British and American Women Writers class, the book that wasn't available as an e-book was *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. For the English 455/655: International Technical Writing class, the book *Global Contexts* was not available. E-books are becoming more popular, and every day more books are becoming available in e-book form. If I were to look up all of the

required books again today it is possible that more of them might be available as e-books, and if they aren't available today they very well might be available in the near future.

Table 5
Availability of E-books for Cultural Diversity Classes

Class Number	Number of E-books Available
330	6 out of 7
336	4 out of 7
341	6 out of 6
455	2 out of 3
474	3 out of 9

Novels are more likely to be available as e-books, and the core classes and survey classes are nearly 3/4 of the way to being e-book friendly. Some of the non-canonical literature classes, such as the English 474/674: Native American Literature class, have only a few e-books available, in this case, 1/3 or three out of nine or 33% of the books were available in e-book format. The three books that were available as e-books are as follows: *Way to Rainy Mountain*, *Heirs of Columbus*, and *Shell Shaker*. The rest of the books, such as *Birchbark House*, *Nothing But the Truth*, and *Other Destinies* were not available as e-books. If the English department was trying to promote e-books as a good learning tool and an acceptable option for required class books it would be difficult for teachers who were teaching the non-canonical literature classes because many of those books simply are not available in e-book form and that would be a problem for teaching diversity.

In conclusion, the NDSU English department is e-book friendly for some classes but not all of them. A total of 70 out of 104 required books had e-book versions available, which means

that 67% of the required books were available in e-book form. That is not quite 3/4 of the required books. The literature courses that required novels were the most likely to be e-book friendly, while those that required anthologies were the least likely to be e-book friendly. Some classes had most of the books available in e-book form, except for one or two, and that could be problematic for students, as I discussed earlier in the chapter. By changing some of the required books from books that are not available in e-book form to books that are available in e-book form, the department could become even more e-book friendly. There is also the issue that students might not be aware of the benefits of e-books, not know how to use them, or not know if their teachers approve of e-book usage in class. With some guidance and instruction from instructors, I believe that students would be more likely to use e-books for their classes. The data discussed in this chapter is represented by the Table A1 in Appendix C.

CHAPTER 4: SURVEY

Methods

In this chapter, I will explain the methods I used to conduct my research and discuss my results. I decided that a survey would be the best way to gather a large volume of information from as many students as possible. Since the survey was anonymous, I hoped that students would feel comfortable responding to my questions. I wanted to get as many responses as possible so that I could get an accurate picture of the attitudes of undergraduate English and English education majors at NDSU towards e-books.

I distributed an IRB approved survey to undergraduate English and English education majors at NDSU via e-mail. The survey asked them questions to obtain information about how they perceive e-books and the extent to which they use them for school and for pleasure reading. To accomplish this, I provided questions that are multiple choice as well as some that allowed for more open ended responses. As of the Spring semester of 2015, there were 63 English majors, 16 English education majors, and 32 pre-English education majors at NDSU. My goal was to receive responses from 1/3 of those students for a total of 37 responses. I also hoped to conduct follow up interviews with approximately 1/3 of those students for a total of 12 interviews, 3 from undergraduates in each year in college (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors). I did not do statistical analysis, just as Baron didn't in her book *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World*; however, the data I collected gave me a clear picture of what the attitudes of NDSU undergraduate English and English education majors are towards e-books and how they use e-books. The survey was comprised of questions regarding how long they have been an

undergraduate English or English education major, what year they are in college, their age, and their gender, as well as the questions listed in Appendix A.

At the end of the survey, it asked if the person taking it would be willing to do a follow up interview. This interview was approximately 30 minutes long, and I asked broad, open ended questions to have a discussion about how individual students who are undergraduate English and English education majors at NDSU use e-books. Two students agreed to be interviewed, and I used the questions listed in Appendix B as a starting point and asked a few additional follow up questions when I wanted to hear more about something they said.

Significance of These Questions

My purpose in asking the specific questions I did, both in my survey and in my interviews, was to determine what English and English education majors think about e-books and if they use them. I wanted to determine what the students see as the benefits and constraints of using e-books and the current state of the availability of e-books in the English curriculum at NDSU. If e-books are available and if students see more benefits, should our English department and English departments at other colleges consider a wider adoption of e-books? While students seem to be aware that there are some benefits to using e-books, they are not necessarily fully aware of the learning potential or future benefits of e-book usage.

Results of the Survey and Interviews and Discussion

Even though I had a goal of getting 37 English and English education majors to take my survey, I ended up getting 22 responses. Of those 22 students, four were freshmen, three were sophomores, three were juniors, and twelve (or 54%) were seniors. Of the 22 students who took the survey, 68% of them were females, or 15 out of 22. When asked how long they had been an

English major, just over half of them (or 59%) indicated that they had been an English major for three or four years. Overall, the majority of the survey respondents were female seniors who had been an English major for at least three years. Two students agreed to be interviewed, one who reads e-books and one who has in the past but doesn't currently. The sample size for the interviews was very small, which means that the views of these two students do not necessarily reflect the views of the majority of English and English education majors at NDSU.

Nearly every student who responded to the survey indicated that they have used e-books at some point in their lives, either at NDSU or elsewhere. In fact, only two people out of 23 said that they have not used e-books before. For those two students who have not used e-books before, one student stated, "I prefer regular books. Reading for too long on screens hurts my eyes." The other student talked about how they liked the feel of a real book in their hand. The student also stated, "I also think that real books are easier to navigate, they never glitch, and you can have it with you even when there isn't WiFi." The student went on to say that, "They don't have batteries that die, and they're easy to share and take notes in." The only negative things they mentioned about paper books were the weight and portability. When asked about what factors influence their decision to choose an e-book over a print book, students cited, from most important to least important, cost, convenience, portability, access to an electronic dictionary, the search feature, and electronic annotations.

Benefits and Constraints of Using E-books

When the two students who had never used e-books were asked in the survey what the benefits of using e-books seemed to be, both indicated that they are cheaper than print books, they take up less space than print books, they are more portable than print books, and they are

more environmentally friendly than print books. One student also indicated that they are lighter than print books. For the drawbacks or constraints of using e-books, both students agreed that they didn't like e-books and that they love print books. One student also indicated that it is difficult to annotate e-books and that they do not own an e-reader or tablet. The person who does not currently use e-books stated that the primary benefit of using e-books is that they are easier to hold when you are lying down. Another benefit this person mentioned was the word search function. They stated, "...I use that [the word search function] all the time in online articles when I'm doing research...but I haven't used it for e-books."

Students who have used e-books in the past were asked about the benefits of e-books to better understand what their perceptions of e-books are and why they use them. Of the students who have used e-books in the past, 16 responded when asked what they consider to be the benefits of using e-books. 3/4 of those students indicated that e-books are cheaper than print books. 81% said that they take up less space than print books and that they are more portable than print books. 63% said they are lighter than print books. 44% said that e-books are more environmentally friendly than print books. 1/4 of the students indicated that it is easier to annotate e-books than print books. The top benefits that 81% (or 13 out of 16) of students indicated were that e-books take up less space than print books and that they are more portable than print books. A few other benefits that were added in by students were that e-books can be downloaded for free, they can be easily searched, and that they are easier to locate and obtain quickly. This data is illustrated by Figure 1 on page 28.

When students who have used e-books in the past were asked about the drawbacks or constraints of using e-books, 3/4 of the 16 students who responded indicated that the main

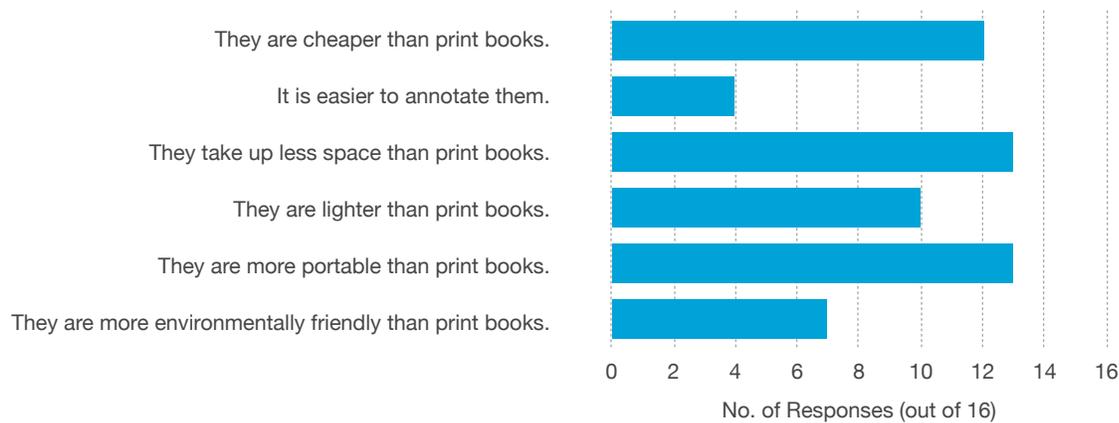


Fig. 1. Benefits of Using E-books According to E-book Users

drawback of using e-books is that the device that you view them on must be kept charged in order to be able to read the book. 31% of them, or 5 out of 16, said that it is difficult to annotate e-books, uncomfortable to read them for a long period of time (because of screen glare, eyestrain, etc.), and that you need a specific device to view them on. Three students, or 19%, said that it is too easy to get distracted while reading an e-book. This data is illustrated by Figure 2 on page 29. Naomi Baron discusses in her book the issue of getting distracted while reading on a digital device. She states that, “Digital devices inherently provoke distraction, whatever else you are trying to do” (Baron 211). During my interviews, the person who does not currently read e-books listed two challenges associated with using e-books. The first was battery life and having to keep the device that you are reading e-books on charged. The second challenge was lighting. The person who does use e-books also pointed out a challenge, stating, “I don’t know why but I prefer looking at a hard copy. Maybe it’s something with the screen, but...I feel like I’m not as focused when I’m reading an e-book...”

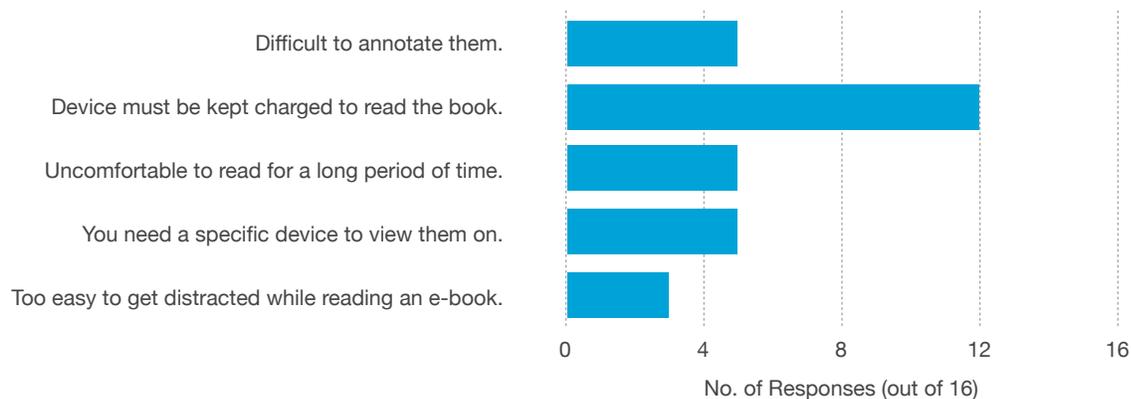


Fig. 2. Drawbacks or Constraints of Using E-books According to E-book Users

Devices Owned By Students

Students who have not read e-books in the past were asked in the survey about which electronic devices they own. Both students indicated that they owned computers and smartphones. One person also indicated that they owned an e-reader. The same question was asked of students who have read e-books. Of the 15 students who responded, all but one indicated that they owned a computer. 80%, or 12 out of 15 students, indicated that they owned a smartphone. Eight out of 15, or 53% of students said that they owned a tablet. Six out of 15, or 40%, said they owned an e-reader. Students clearly have devices for reading e-books; however, tablets and e-readers are more conducive to reading e-books than computers and smartphones. This data is represented by Figure 3 on page 30. One interesting finding was that even though 6 students indicated that they owned an e-reader, when asked how they view e-books 13 out of 17, or 75% of them said that they viewed e-books on a dedicated e-book reader. The terms “e-reader” and “tablet” could have been defined better, which might have caused the respondents to choose a different option. This is further discussed in the next section.

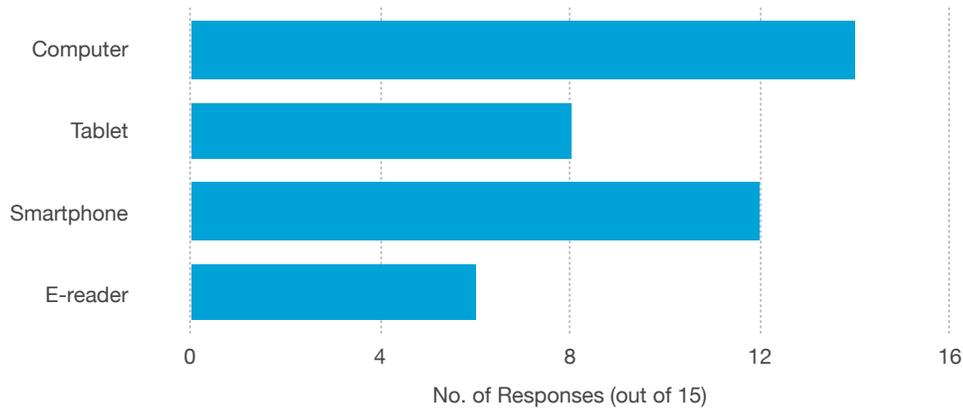


Fig. 3. Devices Owned by E-book Users

How Students View E-books

For students who have read e-books in the past, they were asked how they view e-books. 3/4 of them, or 13 out of 17, said that they viewed e-books on a dedicated e-book reader (such as the old Amazon Kindle - not the Kindle Fire, the Barnes & Noble Nook, etc.). Just over half, or 59% of them, said that they viewed e-books on a smartphone. 53%, or 9 out of 17 students, indicated that they viewed e-books on a computer. 47%, or 8 out of 17 students, said they viewed e-books on a tablet (such as the iPad, Amazon Kindle Fire, etc.), and 41%, or 7 out of 17, said they viewed e-books online. Despite the large number of students who said they viewed e-books on a dedicated e-book reader, according to the previous question they were more likely to own a computer than an e-reader. This data is represented by Figure 4.

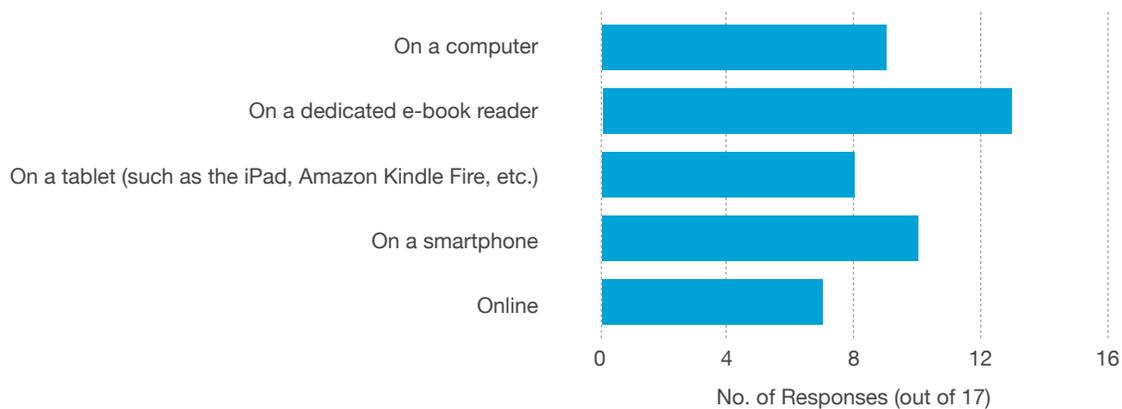


Fig. 4. How E-book Users View E-books

The reasons why the students chose the devices they did to view e-books were explored during the interviews. When asked which devices they use to view e-books and why, both students mentioned that they use a tablet for viewing e-books. The student who does not read e-books said that they received a tablet as a gift so they had read e-books on that in the past. The student who does read e-books said that they have a device that is both a tablet and a laptop that they use for everything, including reading e-books. The student who does not read e-books also mentioned that they use their tablet for other things besides reading e-books, such as watching Netflix or playing a game.

How Students Use E-books

Students who have read e-books in the past were then asked about how they use e-books. Out of the 16 students who responded, all of them indicated that they use e-books for leisure reading. Half of them stated that they used e-books to read as a requirement for a class. Two out of 16, or 13% of students, indicated that they used e-books to read for a class as supplemental reading that was not assigned or to do research for an academic paper. This data is represented by Figure 5.

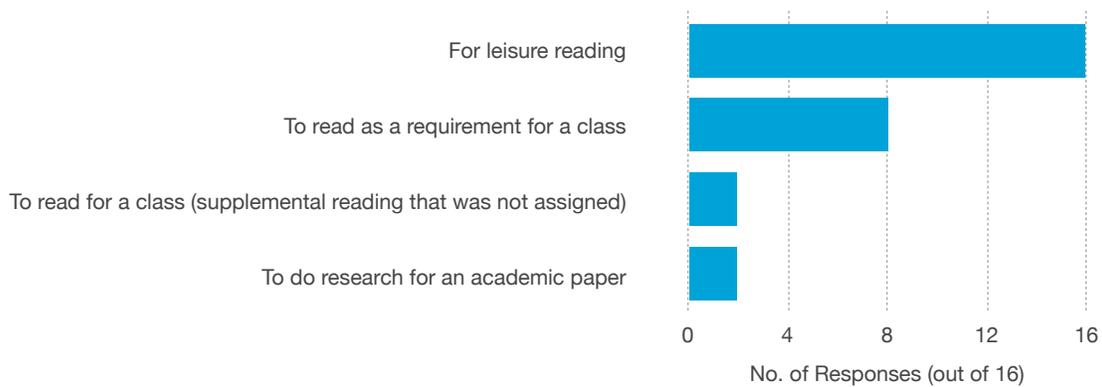


Fig. 5. How E-book Users Use E-books

Electronic vs. Print Books for Academic Reading

Students who have read e-books before were asked when both an electronic copy of a book and a print copy of a book are available how often they would choose the electronic version for academic reading. Out of the 16 total respondents, 6 or 38% of them said sometimes, 38% said rarely, one said often, one said very often, and two said never. This data is illustrated by Figure 6.

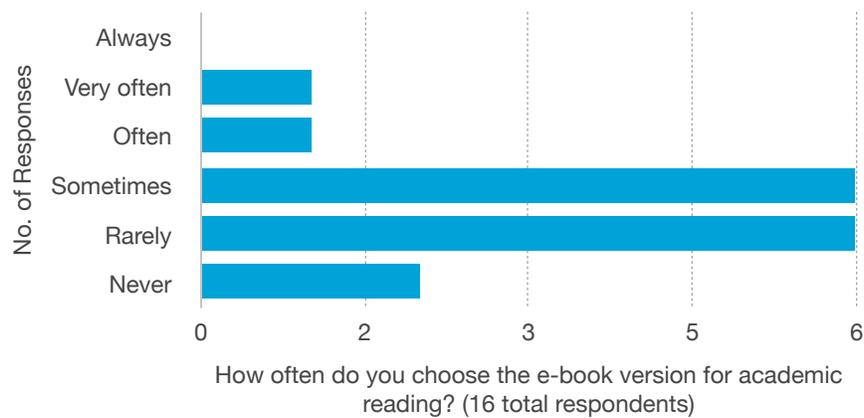


Fig. 6. Choosing an E-book for Academic Reading

When asked how often they would choose the electronic version of a book for pleasure reading when both a print copy and an electronic copy of a book were available, 38% or 6 out of 16 students who have read e-books before said that they sometimes choose the e-book version. One student indicated that they often choose the e-book version. 3 students, or 19%, said they rarely choose the e-book version. 1/4 of the students, or 4 out of 16, said that they very often choose the e-book version. Two students out of 16, or 13%, said that they never choose the e-book version for pleasure reading. These results are illustrated by Figure 7 on page 33.

More students choose e-books for pleasure reading rather than for academic reading. The results of Baron's study were slightly different. She found that 59% of students in the United

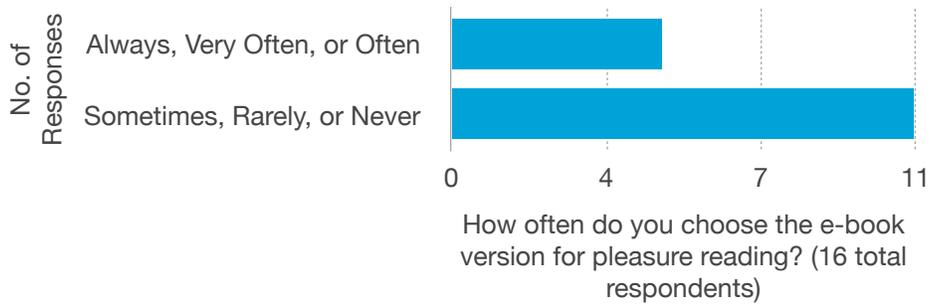


Fig. 7. Choosing an E-book for Pleasure Reading

States preferred print when reading for school and 73% preferred print when reading for pleasure. Out of 16 students who responded to my survey, 5 of them (or 31%) said they always, very often, or often chose an e-book for pleasure reading. 11 out of 16 (or 69%) said they sometimes, rarely, or never chose an e-book for pleasure reading. For academic reading, only two students (or 12.5%) out of 16 said they chose an e-book. This would seem to indicate that the majority of the students that I surveyed are what Andy Reville et. al. call “Book Lovers,” which are people who like the physical book, do not like reading long texts on a screen, and generally choose a print book when reading for pleasure (Reville et. al 421). Baron found that 41% of students in the United States preferred a digital screen for schoolwork and 27% preferred a digital screen for pleasure reading. Students from Japan and Germany gave similar answers (Baron 84). It is important to note that Baron asked about reading on a digital screen, which could mean e-books, electronic journal articles, or other digital reading whereas my study focused solely on e-books.

There are many factors that influence their decision of whether to choose an e-book or a print book. These factors are as follows: cost, convenience, portability, electronic annotations, access to electronic dictionary, and the word search function. Out of those factors, the majority of students indicated that cost was the main factor that they considered when making their

decision. 14 out the 16 students who responded, or 88%, cited cost as the main factor in their decision making process. Convenience was the second factor that was most commonly mentioned. 69%, or 11 out of 16 students cited convenience as a factor that they consider. Half of them chose portability. Access to an electronic dictionary and the word search function were the next most important feature, with two out of 16 students indicating those. The word search function was something that the two students wrote under the “other” category. Electronic annotations were the least important feature, with only one student indicating that they consider that factor. These results are illustrated in Figure 8. Baron discusses convenience, cost, and environmental benefits as factors that students consider when deciding between an e-book or print book. According to her survey, “57 percent of all responses to the question of what they liked most about reading onscreen involved something relating to convenience” (Baron 85). “... 11 percent of the participants mentioned cost as what they liked least about reading in print” (Baron 86) and “...21 percent of the answers regarding what students liked most about reading onscreen involved something ecological” (Baron 87), according to Baron. While my study showed that cost is the most important factor that influences the decision to choose an e-

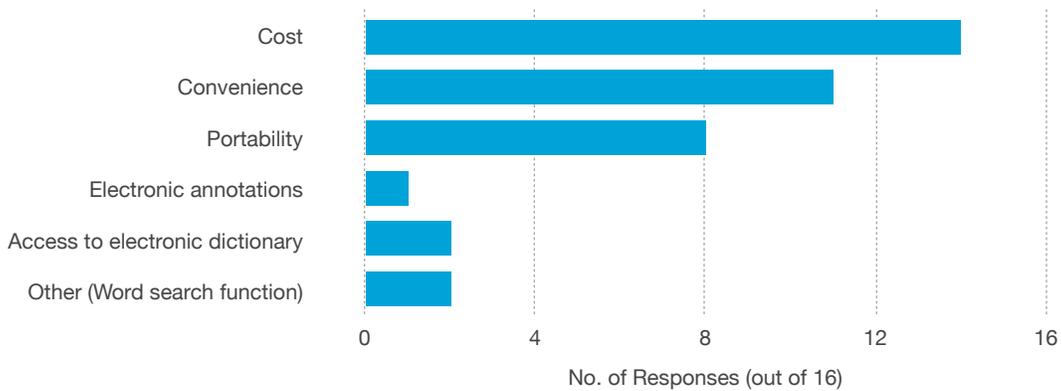


Fig. 8. Factors That Influence the Decision to Choose an E-book

book and convenience is the second more important factor, Baron's study shows the opposite. In Baron's study, students cited convenience the most, followed by cost.

During the interviews, the two students were asked if they thought it was easier to use a print book or an e-book, which they preferred, and why. Both students stated that they prefer a print book or an e-book for different purposes. The student who does not use e-books said that e-books make hunting and gathering through a text easier because of the word search feature. The student who does use e-books said that they prefer print books for pleasure reading, in part because they don't need to search in it. This student also stated, "...I like looking at a page more than looking at a screen, so I think that's why I would prefer it." For research, such as to find quotes in a book, the student said they would prefer an e-book.

Both students who were interviewed were asked about the last few books they had read and why they chose the e-book or print option for those particular books. The student who does not read e-books stated that the last few books they read had been print books because they were novels from a large fantasy series that began in the 1980s called *Dragonlance* and they could be purchased at a used bookstore for the cost of about a dollar but they were eight dollars in e-book form. This student stated that they did search for the e-book versions of the books because they really wanted to read the next one, but eight dollars was too much to pay for an e-book version. Cost was the main deciding factor there. The same student also talked about how convenience sometimes influenced their decision. The student who does read e-books also cited convenience as a factor in their choice. This student also stated that if they had found a book they needed as an e-book that was easier to get they probably would have chosen the e-book option.

When asked during the interviews how they would feel about being assigned a book in a class that was only available as an e-book (there was no print option), both students stated that they would be all right with it; however, both cited concerns. The student who does not use e-books expressed a concern about access for other people. This person pointed out that there might be a technology access issue unless everyone in the class was given a tablet. The student who does use e-books expressed concerns about the availability and the price of the e-book. If they could find it easily and for free then they wouldn't mind using it, but if it was expensive and only available from one publisher for one set price they would have a problem with that.

Features of E-books Used By Students For Studying or Class Reading

Students were asked in the survey which features of e-books they used the last time they were using an e-book for studying or reading it for a class. The most common feature that students indicated was the search feature, used by 11 out of 16, or 69% of students. The second most common feature that students liked was portability, which half of the students indicated. 31%, or 5 out of 16 students indicated that they used the dictionary. 1/4 of the students used the electronic notes and bookmarks features. These results are illustrated by Figure 9.

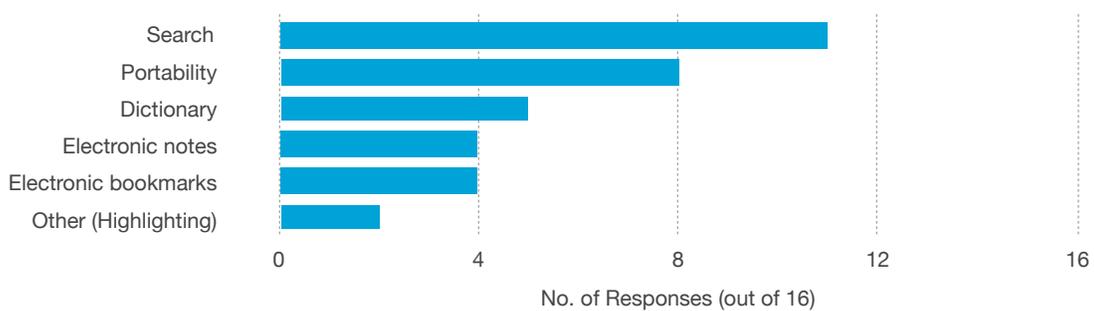


Fig. 9. Features Used When Reading an E-book for Class or Studying

E-books Recommended for English Classes

Students who have not read e-books in the past were asked if an e-book has ever been recommended for an English class that they took. Both students answered no. When students who have read e-books in the past were asked the same question, the majority of them also said that an e-book has never been recommended for an English class that they took. Out of the fifteen total respondents, only two indicated that an e-book has been recommended in an English class they took. One student said that the e-book that was recommended was the Bible. One important note is that as of 2015, e-books are not being recommended by English department faculty.

Last E-books Used For Classes

When asked to list up to the last five e-books that they had used for classes, almost half (six out of 13 or 46%) indicated that they have not used e-books for classes recently. Of the students who listed the titles of the books, about half were textbooks and half were novels. The textbooks that students listed were as follows: *Cross Talk in Comp Theory* edited by Victor Villanueva, *How to Write a BA Thesis* written by Charles Lipton, *International Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Global Issues*, the *Non-Designer's Design Book*, *Mechanically Inclined*, *Theatrical Worlds*, *Concepts of Biology*, and *Fundamentals of German*. It is important to note that not all of these textbooks are for English classes. In fact, the majority of them are not books from the field of English studies. The novels that students listed were as follows: *Hatchet* by Gary Paulson, *Gentlemen Prefer Blonds* by Anita Loos, *Breakfast on Pluto* by Patrick McCabe, *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, complete works of Shakespeare, public domain works, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* by Anne Fadiman, *What is Life Worth?* by

Kenneth R. Feinberg, and *The Geography of Bliss* by Eric Weiner. Three of these books, *Hatchet*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blonds*, and *Mrs. Dalloway* are required textbooks for English classes.

Last E-books Read for Pleasure

When asked to list up to the last five e-books that they had read for pleasure, one person indicated that they have only used e-books for academic reading and that they prefer print books for pleasure reading. Three out of the 14 students who responded indicated that they could not remember the titles, but one of those three students indicated that they read romance novels. Some of the novels that were listed are as follows: *The Hunger Games*, *The Shining* by Stephen King, *Storm Front*, *Looking for Alaska*, *Fault in Our Stars*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Outlander* by Diana Gabaldon, *Beautiful Ruins* by Jess Walters, *Game of Thrones*, and *The One* by Kiera Cass. In total, ten students listed 40 novels. *The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fire*, both written by Suzanne Collins, were mentioned by two different students. The majority of these books seem to be books that are pretty new, as opposed to the classic novels.

Seeking Out E-books For Class

Two thirds of the students indicated that they did not seek out e-books for class, or 10 out of 15 students. When asked why, one student mentioned that they could usually find e-books “for free and right away,” indicating that they don’t see it as “seeking out” if it is “easy.” This person talked about how they like reading print books more and that they value them more. Another student stated that they liked to “have something tangible in my hands.” This echoes back to what Baron discussed about the importance of the physicality of books. A second student cited lower cost and lighter weight as reasons that they would seek out an e-book for

class. A third person talked about how they like to buy the print version of books so they can sell them back, unless the book costs less than \$20. Ease of annotation was mentioned by five students as a positive reason to seek out e-books for class, particularly the ability to handwrite notes in print books. A student also stated that “it’s easier to navigate an e-book when I’m writing papers. Passages are easier to find when I can search key words to find it.” The ability to be able to keep the book for future reference, especially if it has handwritten notes in it, is one reason that students might not seek out e-books for class.

E-books and Students’ Understanding of the Text

While over 3/4 of the students, or 80%, said that they do not think that e-books improve or enhance their understanding of the text, three students out of 15 said they did think that e-books improve or enhance their understanding of the text. Their self-perception is not necessarily accurate. One student mentioned how they liked to use the electronic dictionary to look up unfamiliar words when reading an e-book. When reading a print book, they don’t take the time to go get a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words. Another student mentioned how there aren’t as many opportunities for notes in e-books. One student said, “I actually think it’s harder for me to read an e-book. I am more motivated and concentrated with print books, which helps me increase my understanding. Because it is harder for me to concentrate when reading e-books, my understanding is decreased.”

E-books, Reading Speed, and Writing Better Papers

When asked if e-books allowed students to read faster, 1/3 of students, or five out of 15, said yes, almost half (or 47%) said no, and three (or 20%) said they didn’t know. These results are illustrated by Figure 10. Students were also asked if they read more books now that they use

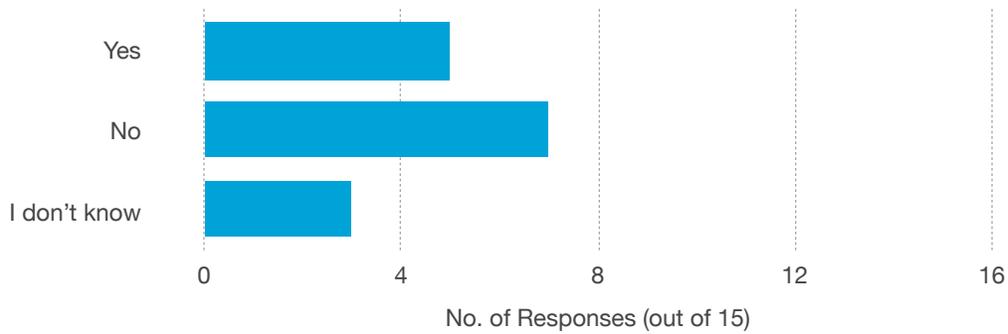


Fig. 10. E-books and Reading Speed

e-books. Almost 3/4 of the students, or 11 out of 15, said no. Four students, or 27% said yes.

When asked if they thought e-books have helped them write better papers for class, 1/3 of the students said yes, while 2/3 said no. When asked why they thought they were able to write better papers, five students responded. Four out of those five students stated that they could search the text and find passages that they wanted to work with. Over half, or 60% of students said they understood the text better. 40%, or two out of five students, stated that they could make electronic bookmarks and electronic notes. One student said they could access their books anywhere. One student said they could acquire texts faster, and one said they could copy and paste passages, which allowed more time for analysis and revision. This data is illustrated by

Figure 11. When asked why they thought they did not think they were able to write better

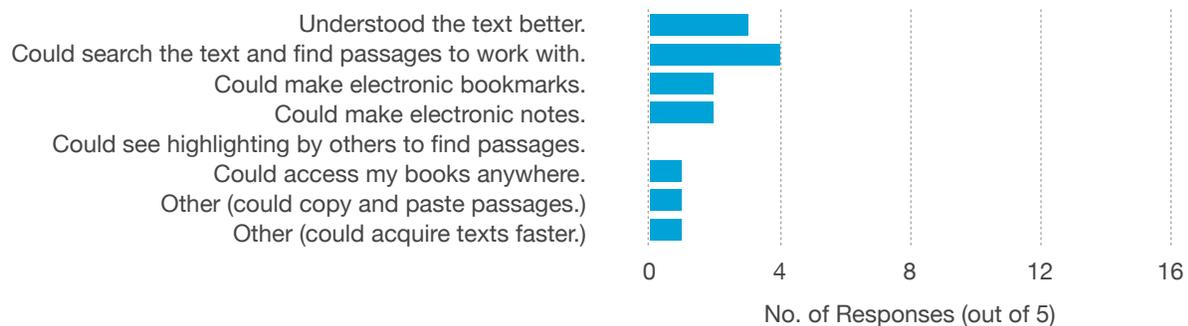


Fig. 11. Why Students Could Write Better Papers with E-books

papers, one student said that journal articles aren't usually available on their Kindle. Three students said that they don't use e-books very often or don't use them for academic purposes. One student said that they mostly use print materials. Two students described a neutral experience, where e-books have not made a difference in their writing either way.

Use of E-books in the Future

In the survey, when both students who have used e-books in the past and students who have not used e-books in the past were asked if they thought their use of e-books will increase or decrease in the future, every student except two said they believed that their use of e-books will increase in the future. During the followup interviews, the two students I talked to also discussed how they thought that their use of e-books would increase in the future. This echoes what Baron said in her book *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World*. She states that "We can count on the world of reading onscreen to look very different tomorrow from the way it does today. It doesn't take a soothsayer to predict that a number of our current challenges with digital reading will sort themselves out" (Baron 216).

During the interviews, both the student who uses e-books and the student who does not use e-books agreed that e-books will become more popular in the future. The student who does use e-books talked about some of the positives and negatives associated with the future increase of e-book usage. About the negatives of future e-book use, they said, "I enjoy the smell of them [print books], and the experience of reading them, but I also think it's good because then it saves paper to not have to print lots of books." A positive that the student mentioned was ease of access. Another positive that was mentioned was that e-books make it possible for authors to be

able to self-publish their books so that more people have the opportunity to read and buy their books.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

Based on the results of my research that I discussed in previous chapters, nearly every student (except two) said they have used e-books at some point in their lives, either at NDSU or elsewhere. Most students agree that e-books are more portable than print books, cheaper than print books, and take up less space than print books, but they also agree that the device must be kept charged in order to view the e-books and that it can be easy to get distracted or uncomfortable to read for an extended period of time. English and English education majors at NDSU are more comfortable with print books overall, like the college students that Baron studied in the United States, Japan, and Germany. Despite this, however, students do see their use of e-books increasing in the future, and they view this as being inevitable.

During the interview, when asked what it would take to get them to use e-books the student who does not read e-books stated that they would use an e-book if a teacher assigned it. This student also said that they would use an e-book if it was "...significantly cheaper or free..." They went on to discuss how there are a lot of free e-books, particularly books that are several decades old and in the public domain, but some of the translations are not very good. The student who does read e-books stated, "if there was a print version and an e-book version and I had the time just to go get the print version or I could wait for it to come and I didn't need it right away, I would just go with the cheaper option." What the student meant was that if time was not a factor, they would choose the cheaper option, whether that be a print book or an e-book.

E-books are widely available, and they are becoming even more widely available all the time. As of the Fall 2014 semester, 76%, or 16 out of 21 classes already had at least one e-book available for the required books. This gives the NDSU English department as well as English

departments at other state colleges an opportunity to utilize e-books and the positive benefits that they can offer to students as well as teachers. Students are not fully aware of these benefits or do not know how to use them. A study would need to be conducted on teachers to determine their level of awareness and use of e-books. If they are not aware of the tools that e-books offer or how to use them, then I recommend teacher workshops where teachers can learn about the tools that are available in e-books and how to teach their students about those tools, such as the ability to highlight passages, save electronic bookmarks, write notes, access your book anywhere at anytime, and searching. By learning all about e-books and the tools they offer, students might decide to try them and possibly choose the e-book option for their books.

Teachers could be more up front with students about what versions of a particular book are acceptable and if an e-book option would be appropriate for that class. If students hear that it is all right to use an e-book in a class or that it doesn't matter which version of a book they have then they would be more likely to choose the e-book option. Some versions of a book have extra features, such as criticism or a study guide and that is why a teacher might choose that particular version. If teachers handed out extra materials like that separately from the book or provided links on Blackboard to it through the library or a website then the version of the book wouldn't matter because the text itself would be the same. Teachers would have to be sensitive to a potential lack of page numbers in some of the e-book versions of texts, however, and be careful to assign readings based on chapters or sections. Of course, students could also use the word search feature to find the correct section in an e-book. Many e-books have page numbers already so it wouldn't be a concern for those books.

The department could consider teaching e-books in the core English classes because they seem to be available for the majority of the core classes right now. The use of the search feature and the dictionary should be emphasized because those are the features that students will find the most helpful and easiest to use. The benefits of using e-books, such as the ease of portability, should be emphasized to give students a rationale for why we want them to use e-books for class. There are many benefits to using e-books instead of print books that students don't always see. There may be some barriers to requiring the use of e-books in class. For some types of e-books, an Internet connection may be required, meaning that if the student did not have access to the Internet or if they lost an Internet connection they may not be able to view the e-book and therefore not able to complete the reading. That would be a large obstacle, which would certainly need to be addressed. Those barriers should be discussed by the teachers and solutions should be thought of.

Another concern would be to ensure that students have access to the technology they need to be able to view the e-books. Of the 15 students who have read e-books before, only one indicated that they did not have a computer. 80% of them, or 12 out of 15 students, indicated that they owned a smartphone. Eight out of 15, or 53% of students said that they owned a tablet, and six out of 15, or 40%, said they owned an e-reader. Nearly every student surveyed owns a computer, so assuming that this is representative of the English and English education majors at NDSU, almost all students own a computer. That means that they would be able to view e-books. 80% of students would be able to read them on their smartphones. Amazon offers the Kindle app which is available on computers, smartphones, and tablets with Android, Windows, and Apple operating systems. There are also computers available to students all over campus,

such as in the library or the Memorial Union. It seems that students have access to the technology they need to view e-books.

As of the Fall 2014 semester, only five out of twenty one classes have an e-book option available for all required books. That's 24% or approximately 1/4 of English classes. 16 out of 21, or 76% of classes have at least one e-book available for the required books. Some classes could start to use e-books only right now, but approximately 3/4 of the classes would have to use at least some print books, unless teachers changed the required books. It would be possible to use a combination of e-books and print books effectively as well, with teacher guidance. Baron talks about this debate between digital reading and print reading in her book. She lists many of the benefits of digital reading, such as convenience (Baron 208) and the search feature (Baron 209). She also talks about the many obstacles associated with digital reading, such as the distractions that come up while reading (Baron 210) and the potential for eyestrain (Baron 214). With some guidance and instruction, I believe students would give e-books a try and see their benefits, but I also think that there is room for both e-books and print books in the English curriculum.

Future Study

This study focused on whether English and English education majors at NDSU used e-books and what they thought of them. It would be interesting to do a study of majors in a different field and compare and contrast between the two to see the similarities and differences in the availability of e-books and students' perceptions of them. It would be interesting to see if there were another field that has more e-books available or if the students in that field use e-books more often than students in English studies. It is already known that English and English

education majors prefer print books overall, which aligns with Baron's research on the preference of undergraduate college students of print book. Currently it wouldn't be feasible to use e-books only for English classes because approximately three quarters of the classes do not have e-books available for all required books. That will probably change in the future. If I were to do the textbook analysis again, I would probably find that a few more of the books are available in e-book form now that weren't when I first did the study in Fall 2014. This study focused on the perspective of the students, but it would also be interesting to get the perspective of the teachers to see what they think of e-books, if they personally use them, and if they use them in their classes. That is a component that is missing in my study. I also wished that I had asked more about how students actually understand e-books, in terms of the devices and how portable across devices the e-books are. That is another component that is missing in my study.

I believe that more e-books will continue to become available over time. One of the students I interviewed had this to say about the future of e-books:

...I feel like that's how technology works. Everything gets more popular and more popular, it seems that when something new comes out. And it's just easy to access...I hear about more and more e-book websites coming up all the time that I hadn't heard of before. I think it will get more popular.

Students, even English and English education majors, are not necessarily thinking about the educational value of e-books. There are a lot of educational tools that are available with e-books, including electronic annotation, electronic bookmarks, the search feature, and the ability to access a text anywhere at anytime. Many students are not aware of the potential benefits of these features. 3/4 of the English classes already have at least one e-book available for the required

books as of Fall 2014. The department could be teaching students how to use the different features of e-books so that they can see their educational value and be more comfortable with using them. E-books will continue to become more popular. If they are given an opportunity to learn how to use the tools that e-books offer then perhaps students' decisions about whether or not to choose an e-book over a print book will not just be based on price and convenience.

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APPENDIX A. SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Have you ever used e-books, at NDSU, or elsewhere? If not, why not?

If the student answers yes (that they have used e-books before):

- How do you view e-books?
- Please list up to the last 5 e-books you have used for classes.
- Please list up to the last 5 e-books you have used for pleasure.
- How do you use e-books?
- When both an electronic copy of a book and a print copy of a book are available, how often would you choose the electronic version for academic reading?
- When both an electronic copy of a book and a print copy of a book are available, how often would you choose the electronic version for pleasure reading?
- What factors influence your decision?
- Think back to the most recent time when you were using an e-book for studying or reading it for a class. Which features did you use?
- What do you consider to be the benefits of using e-books?
- What do you consider to be the drawbacks or constraints of using e-books?
- Has an e-book ever been required for an English class that you took? If yes, which e-book(s)?
- Has an e-book ever been recommended for an English class that you took? If yes, which e-book(s)?
- Do you seek out e-books for class? Why or why not?

- Do you think that e-books improve or enhance your understanding of the text?
Explain.
- Do e-books allow you to read faster?
- Do you read more books now that you use e-books?
- Do you think that e-books have helped you write better papers for class?
 - If yes, why do you think you were able to write better papers? (check all that apply)
 - If no, why not?
- Do you own any of the following devices? (computer, tablet, smartphone, e-reader, other)
- Do you think that your use of e-books will increase or decrease in the future? Why?

If the student answers no (that they have not used e-books before):

- What seem to be the benefits of using e-books?
- What seem to be the drawbacks or constraints of using e-books?
- Do you own any of the following devices? (computer, tablet, smartphone, e-reader, other)
- Has an e-book ever been recommended for an English class that you took? If yes, which e-book(s)?
- Do you think that you will use e-books in the future? Why or why not?

APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the challenges and benefits that you experience when you use e-books?
2. How would you feel if you were assigned a book in a class that was only available as an e-book (there was no print option)?
3. Do you think that it is easier to use a print book or an e-book? Which do you prefer? Why?
4. Which devices do you use to view e-books? Why do you choose these particular devices?
5. Tell me about the last few books that you read. Why did you choose the e-book or print option for those particular books?
6. What would it take to get you to use e-books?

APPENDIX C. E-BOOK AVAILABILITY IN NDSU ENGLISH CLASSES IN FALL 2014

Course Name	Title of Required Book	Cost of E-book from NDSU Bookstore	Cheapest E-book from Commercial Vendor	Total No. of Required Books	No. of E-books Available	Percentage of Required Books Available as E-books
English 167: Introduction to English Studies	<i>Ahab's Wife, or The Star-Gazer</i>	N/A	\$10.23 from Amazon	3	3	100%
	<i>Moby Dick</i>	N/A	Free from iBooks (wrong version)			
	<i>They Say, I Say</i>	\$18.80 to rent (365 days)	\$11.24 to buy from Amazon			
English 209: Introduction to Linguistics	<i>An Introduction to Language</i>	\$192.35 to rent (365 days)	\$90.93 to rent (360 days) from Amazon \$153.49 to buy from Amazon	1	1	100%
English 220: Introduction to Literature	<i>The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature</i>	N/A	N/A	2	0	0%
	<i>Backpack Literature</i>	N/A	N/A			
English 222: Introduction to Poetry	<i>Norton Anthology of Poetry</i>	N/A	N/A	1	0	0%
English 225: Introduction to Film	<i>Looking at Movies</i> (with 2 DVDs)	N/A	N/A	1	0	0%
English 240: World Literature Masterpieces	<i>Aeneid</i>	N/A	\$3.99 from iBooks (wrong version) \$8.79 from Amazon	12	8	67%
	<i>Cassandra</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>Complete Odes</i>	N/A	\$9.09 from Amazon			

Course Name	Title of Required Book	Cost of E-book from NDSU Bookstore	Cheapest E-book from Commercial Vendor	Total No. of Required Books	No. of E-books Available	Percentage of Required Books Available as E-books
	<i>The Iliad</i>	N/A	Free from iBooks (wrong version) \$7.99 from Barnes & Noble			
	<i>Metamorphoses</i>	N/A	\$.99 from iBooks (wrong version) \$4.67 from Amazon			
	<i>Odyssey</i>	N/A	Free from iBooks (wrong version) \$7.99 from Amazon and Barnes & Noble			
	<i>Omeros</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>The Penelopiad</i>	N/A	\$7.40 from Amazon			
	<i>Secret History of Mongols</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>The Trojan Woman and Other Plays</i>	N/A	\$6.99 from Amazon and Barnes & Noble			
English 271: Literary Analysis	<i>How to Interpret Literature</i>	N/A	N/A	4	1	25%

Course Name	Title of Required Book	Cost of E-book from NDSU Bookstore	Cheapest E-book from Commercial Vendor	Total No. of Required Books	No. of E-books Available	Percentage of Required Books Available as E-books
	<i>Dracula</i>	N/A	\$.99 from Amazon (wrong version) \$5.49 from Barnes & Noble			
	<i>Ma Rainey's Black Bottom</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>Closer</i>	N/A	N/A			
English 275: Introduction to Writing Studies	<i>Digital Divide</i>	N/A	\$12.99 from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and iBooks	1	1	100%
English 315: British Literature I	<i>Norton Anthology of English Literature with KJV Bible</i>	N/A	N/A	1	0	0%
English 317: American Literature I	<i>Scarlet Letter</i>	N/A	\$.99 from Amazon (wrong version) \$6.99 from Barnes & Noble and iBooks	7	7	100%
	<i>Narrative of Life of Frederick Douglass</i>	N/A	\$.99 from Amazon (wrong version) \$9.99 from Barnes & Noble			
	<i>Letters from an American Farmer</i>	N/A	\$10.10 from Amazon			
	<i>Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647</i>	N/A	\$1.99 from iBooks (wrong version)			

Course Name	Title of Required Book	Cost of E-book from NDSU Bookstore	Cheapest E-book from Commercial Vendor	Total No. of Required Books	No. of E-books Available	Percentage of Required Books Available as E-books
	<i>Leaves of Grass</i>	N/A	\$.99 from Barnes & Noble			
	<i>Edgar Huntly, or Memoirs of Sleep-Walker</i>	N/A	\$.99 from iBooks (wrong version)			
	<i>Autobiography + Other Writings</i>	N/A	\$1.99 from iBooks (wrong version)			
English 330: British and American Women Writers	<i>Northanger Abbey</i>	N/A	\$.99 from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and iBooks	7	6	86%
	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	N/A	\$9.49 from Amazon			
	<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>Bluest Eye</i>	N/A	\$7.99 from Amazon and iBooks (wrong version)			
	<i>What Was She Thinking?</i>	N/A	\$7.99 from Amazon (wrong version) \$9.99 from Barnes & Noble and iBooks			
	<i>Children of Men</i>	N/A	\$11.99 from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and iBooks			
	<i>The Quick</i>	N/A	\$9.99 from Amazon (wrong version)			

Course Name	Title of Required Book	Cost of E-book from NDSU Bookstore	Cheapest E-book from Commercial Vendor	Total No. of Required Books	No. of E-books Available	Percentage of Required Books Available as E-books
English 333: Fantasy and Science Fiction	<i>Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction</i>	N/A	N/A	9	8	89%
	<i>When the Sleeper Wakes</i>	N/A	\$0 from iBooks (wrong version)			
	<i>Handmaid's Tale</i>	N/A	\$2.99 from Amazon (wrong version)			
	<i>Divergent</i>	N/A	\$4.99 from Barnes & Noble and iBooks			
	<i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i>	N/A	\$5.99 from Amazon and iBooks			
	<i>Snow Crash</i>	N/A	\$7.99 from Amazon and iBooks (wrong version)			
	<i>Dispossessed</i>	N/A	\$7.99 from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and iBooks			
	<i>Watchmen</i>	N/A	\$11.39 from Amazon			
	<i>Orbiter</i>	N/A	\$9.99 from Amazon			
English 336: Literature and the Environment	<i>Gathering Moss</i>	N/A	N/A	7	4	57%
	<i>To a God Unknown</i>	N/A	\$10.60 from Amazon			

Course Name	Title of Required Book	Cost of E-book from NDSU Bookstore	Cheapest E-book from Commercial Vendor	Total No. of Required Books	No. of E-books Available	Percentage of Required Books Available as E-books
	<i>Future of Ice: Journey Into Cold</i>	N/A	\$9.61 from Amazon			
	<i>Refuge</i>	N/A	\$9.99 from Amazon			
	<i>Walden or, Life in the Woods</i>	N/A	\$.99 from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and iBooks (wrong version)			
	<i>English 336 Course Pack</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>Sand County Almanac</i>	N/A	N/A			
English 341: 20th Century American Fiction	<i>In Our Time</i>	N/A	\$10.99 from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and iBooks (wrong version)	6	6	100%
	<i>Yonnonidio: From the Thirties</i>	N/A	\$9.99 from Amazon and iBooks			
	<i>As I Lay Dying</i>	N/A	\$8.12 from Amazon			
	<i>Beloved</i> (with new foreward)	N/A	\$7.99 from Amazon and iBooks			
	<i>Woman Warrior</i>	N/A	\$7.64 from Amazon			
	<i>White Noise: text + criticism</i>	N/A	\$8.85 from Amazon (wrong version)			
English 423: Creative Writing Studio	<i>Art of Description: World Into Word</i>	N/A	N/A	5	2	40%

Course Name	Title of Required Book	Cost of E-book from NDSU Bookstore	Cheapest E-book from Commercial Vendor	Total No. of Required Books	No. of E-books Available	Percentage of Required Books Available as E-books
	<i>Art of Recklessness</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>Art of Subtext</i>	N/A	\$8.13 from Amazon			
	<i>Sounds of Poetry</i>	N/A	\$9.99 from Amazon and Barnes & Noble			
	<i>Story Matters</i>	N/A	N/A			
English 435/635: YAL in Multicultural World	<i>Boxers</i>	N/A	\$8.89 from Amazon	9	8	89%
	<i>Chains</i>	N/A	\$3.99 from Amazon and iBooks			
	<i>Circle</i>	N/A	\$9.78 from Amazon			
	<i>Claire of the Sea Light</i>	N/A	\$11.34 from Amazon			
	<i>Ender's Game</i>	N/A	\$3.99 from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and iBooks			
	<i>Hatchet</i>	N/A	\$4.01 from Amazon			
	<i>Literature for Today's Young Adults</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>Other Side of the Sky</i>	N/A	\$10.38 from Amazon			
	<i>Saints</i>	N/A	\$8.89 from Amazon			
English 455/655: International Technical Writing	<i>Global Contexts</i>	N/A	N/A	3	2	67%

Course Name	Title of Required Book	Cost of E-book from NDSU Bookstore	Cheapest E-book from Commercial Vendor	Total No. of Required Books	No. of E-books Available	Percentage of Required Books Available as E-books
	<i>Global English Style Guide</i>	N/A	\$17.27 from Amazon			
	<i>Intercultural Communication</i>	N/A	\$23.49 from Amazon and Barnes & Noble			
English 458: Advanced Writing Workshop	<i>Crafting Digital Writing</i>	N/A	N/A	1	0	0%
English 467: English Studies Capstone Experience	<i>How to Write a BA Thesis</i>	N/A	\$9.99 from Amazon and Barnes & Noble	5	4	80%
	<i>The Non-Designers Design Book</i>	\$21.90 to rent (365 days)	\$15.39 from Amazon			
	<i>They Say, I Say</i>	\$18.80 to rent (365 days)	\$11.24 from Amazon			
	<i>You Majored in What?</i>	N/A	\$10.99 from Amazon			
	<i>MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers</i>	N/A	N/A			
English 474/674: Native American Literature	<i>Birchbark House</i>	N/A	N/A	9	3	33%
	<i>Nothing But the Truth</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>From Sand Creek</i>	N/A	N/A			
	<i>Way to Rainy Mountain</i>	N/A	\$8.69 from Amazon			

Course Name	Title of Required Book	Cost of E-book from NDSU Bookstore	Cheapest E-book from Commercial Vendor	Total No. of Required Books	No. of E-books Available	Percentage of Required Books Available as E-books
	<i>Heirs of Columbus</i>	N/A	\$10.49 from Barnes & Noble			
	<i>Smoke Dancing</i>	N/A	N/A			
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