

## American Public University System Online Course Guide Project



The American Public University System Online Course Guides Project <http://apus.campusguides.com/librarysubjectguides> is an initiative led by APUS's Online Library, collaborating with the university's globally geographically distributed teaching faculty to replace the university's traditional textbook curriculum model. The project's goal is to create a brief companion website, called an online course guide, for each course, program and school in the university and creating an innovative and powerful new millennial online set of curricular resources for over 1800 courses and 80 undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs across seven schools. The guides combine the library's key licensed resources and the best of open source and multimedia range of content, in direct curriculum support of the course or program incurring both massive cost savings for students and the university and providing a 21<sup>st</sup> century online textbook that is created by faculty and librarians working together for a creative and innovative new alternative to 19<sup>th</sup> century textbook models.

### Main Benefits

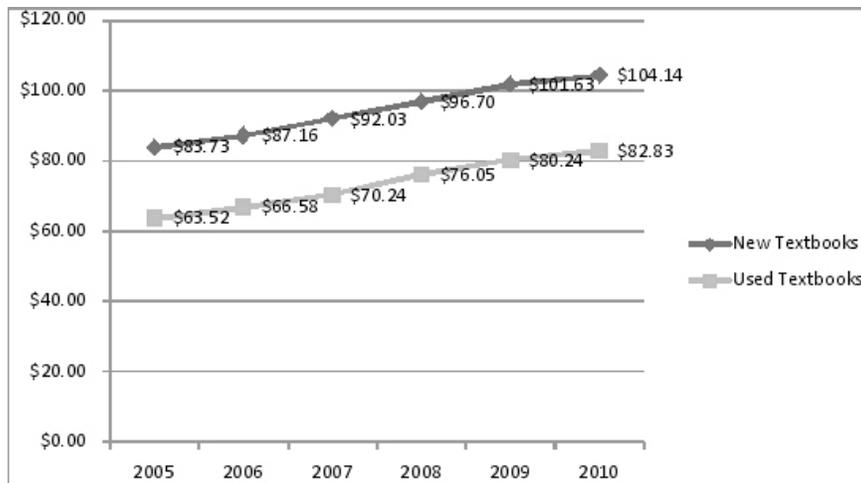
- 1) Multimedia Pedagogy
- 2) Cost Control: Massive Cost Savings to the University in Print Textbook Replacement
- 3) Curriculum Quality: Peer reviewed eBooks and articles, Open Source and online library resources vetted by Librarians and Faculty
- 4) Information Literacy Focus
- 5) Tutorial Center Integration.

## **Project Goal**

When online students need to read curricular material online or conduct academic online research for a class assignment, they can look in their virtual classroom for help. At times a direct link to the corresponding course guide will be made available by the course instructor. If not, the student can access the course guides link to the Online Library, which makes available the Library Subject Guides website. The range of different faculty, programs and schools have become aware of the potential of multimodal methodology with regards to curricular learning objects and the importance of a range of curricular sources especially in distance environments. Faculty have strongly embraced the online course guides new multimedia curricular ideas to take advantage of the guides' power as a foundation for curricular replacement through video, podcasts, articles and datasets and use these as a direct curricular replacement for week by week classes, assignments, forums and readings. Here, a tab contains traditional online articles and texts (e-reserves) from the libraries paid vendor resources but also includes other tabs the full range of the webs multimedia possibilities on other tabs (videos, podcasts, datasets, links to interactive possibilities, open source possibilities)

## **Project Impact**

The innovation with the course guides provides massive cost savings to students, faculty and the university. It keeps tuition low by directly utilizing online library resources for needed curriculum. By identifying supplementary multimedia open source materials, the university and students benefit by both free text books/e-textbooks to undergraduate students and curricular components that take advantage of twenty first century methodologies and combine the best of vendor worlds, new media and open source materials. Links are vetted by librarians for ADA, copyright and quality assurance working synergistically with faculty in a close relationship that takes advantage of digital communication and possibilities for collaborative work. From the Library Subject Guides website, students can browse or search to see if a guide corresponding to their class or degree program is available. The Library Subject Guides website can be accessed directly by all from the Internet at, <http://apus.campusguides.com/index.php?gid=564>. Licensed resources are restricted to APUS faculty and students.



Average Price Print and Used Textbook Costs 2005-2011

## The Online Course Guides & New Technology

The American Public University Course Guides open a new pedagogy by forwarding an intuitive, web-based production environment that would not otherwise be available for faculty to create pedagogical bridges between the library and twenty first century university. This new pedagogical model provides a foundation for a range of multimedia curricular sources makes serving our students and collaborating with teaching faculty easy, particularly in a global online learning environment



The project's online course guides infrastructure create easy curricular replacement possibility bringing this down from levels previously impenetrable. Faculty are able to tailor curricular components on the open web and create dynamic new paradigm university resources: open, multimedia and paradigm shifting in wider budgetary implications but also harnessing student learning preferences with regards to robust

academic video, podcasts and a range of media curricular artifacts not present in say a simple PDF or Word Document .

## **Project Contributions**

The project represents a paradigm shift from both print and vendor published e-textbooks presenting an approach that is easy replicable and can replace current dominant 19<sup>th</sup> century textbook models. Others can easily replicate the model with nay university or college possessing existing infrastructures (libraries, faculty, instructional designers). This project demonstrates a best practice paradigm that would address similar needs in three key aspects:

- **Scope:** The project aims to create and maintain a guide for each course and program in an entire University ( for American Public University, 80 programs, 1800 courses). The infrastructure may provide a robust foundation for all faculty and an easy open web doorway for students to gain new millennia course materials and begin the research process online.
- **Collaborative Component with Faculty:** The project creates a new infrastructure among librarians, instructional designers and teaching faculty opening curricular possibilities to multimedia and web 2.0 methodologies and connecting faculty with library subject specialists to create new bridges for research and scholarship.
- **Curricular Replacement Possibility,** The project creates curricular components on the open web harnessing student learning preferences with regards to robust academic video, podcasts and a range of vendor and curricular materials. The course guide infrastructure is also fully congruent with all mobile platforms.

The American Public University Online Course Guide Project is a paradigm shift in both how an online library is utilized on campus making both library resources central, utilized and primary to the online university endeavor. The project incurs massive savings for students and allows incredible forward innovation with a new media pedagogy transition from the 19<sup>th</sup> century textbook model rearticulating it for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Online Course Guides Effectively Respond to the New Needs of Online Education. The significance of the project is clear at this online institution where program directors and teaching faculty have realizing the paradigm shift and advantage of the web for curricular possibilities and enabling broader populations of students globally. The initiative now includes widespread curricular elements of multimedia, Web 2.0, video and is in full swing with a third e-press component.



The Online Course Guides gives American Public University System an intuitive, web-based production environment that would not otherwise be available for faculty and students. It is extremely innovative in providing direct use of online library resources as curricular replacement and yet can be easily duplicated by other providers with simply willing faculty and a cadre of online librarian subject specialists.

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