

December 2006

The Global Text Project: Engaging Many for the Benefit of Many More

Don McCubbrey
University of Denver- Chair

Wayne Huang
Ohio University

Chris Wagner
City University of Hong Kong

Rick Watson
University of Georgia

Follow this and additional works at: <http://aisel.aisnet.org/amcis2006>

Recommended Citation

McCubbrey, Don; Huang, Wayne; Wagner, Chris; and Watson, Rick, "The Global Text Project: Engaging Many for the Benefit of Many More" (2006). *AMCIS 2006 Proceedings*. 113.
<http://aisel.aisnet.org/amcis2006/113>

This material is brought to you by the Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS) at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in AMCIS 2006 Proceedings by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

The Global Text Project: Engaging Many for the Benefit of Many More

Don McCubbrey
University of Denver, Chair
dmccubbr@du.edu

Wayne Huang
Ohio University
huangw@ohio.edu

Chris Wagner
City University of Hong Kong
iscw@cityu.edu.hk

Rick Watson
University of Georgia
rwatson@terry.uga.edu

Textbooks are considered expensive in Europe and the U.S., but they are far beyond the reach of many in developing economies. For example, a \$108 Biology textbook sells for \$51 in Africa,¹ but the U.S. GNI per capita is \$41,400, and the figure for Uganda is \$250.² Obviously, the developed world's textbook business model does not meet the needs of those in the developing world. We need a publishing model that can meet the needs of Uganda and the many other countries that are not among the World Bank's high-income countries (those with GNI per capita above \$10,066).

Mass education has created tremendous opportunities and wealth for people in developed countries. It has enabled many to escape poverty. Mass education for the developing world is dependent among other things on finding low cost means of delivering free, quality, content to many. We believe we have a model for developing the necessary content, and by enlisting the support of the worldwide academic community, we can create an endeavor that can engage many for the benefit of many more. It is called the Globaltext project.

The Globaltext project was initiated in early 2006 to develop a series of free, open content, electronic textbooks using modified wiki software. A complete description of Globaltext is available on the project's website at <http://globaltext.org>. Briefly, the project was initiated as a result of two events: (1) the announcement and enthusiastic reception of the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project at MIT <http://laptop.org>, also known as the \$100 laptop project, and (2) the experience in the developing a free wiki XML textbook by faculty and students at the University of Georgia since 2004. (Please see <http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/XML>).

The impetus for developing the information systems text as one of the first in the series is based on:

- The worldwide community of IS academics is a closely-knit community. Individuals know each other and have a long history of cooperating with each other on a global scale. Creation of an open content textbook will require the cooperation of the worldwide community of faculty and their students, as well as practitioners.
- The IS community, of all academic communities, should be the one that is an early adopter of technology that holds the promise of being able to create a state-of-the-art textbook.
- The textbook created by the community will be best-in-class, up-to-date, and, perhaps most importantly, made available at no cost to students anywhere in the world, but particularly in the developing world in line with the goals of the OLPC project.

The panel, together with those in attendance, will examine the structure of the Globaltext project, trends, possibilities, and the organizational frameworks and incentives put in place to bring open content to our classrooms in a meaningful way. The panel members have experience in Wiki technology, textbook writing, open content textbook authoring, and translating an open content textbook.

¹ <http://www.maketextbooksaffordable.com/newsroom.asp?id2=15618>

² [http:// worldbank.org/](http://worldbank.org/)