Unlimited any time, anywhere access to e-textbooks

University of Roehampton and BibliU Education
https://bibliotech.education

Students at the University of Roehampton have easy, unlimited access to e-textbooks via edtech startup BibliU Education's institutional e-textbooks subscription service.

Andrew Knight is collections manager in library services at the university. He says BibliU's platform supports the institution in delivering resources seamlessly, wherever and whenever students want to access them. Students like BibliU's platform because it's app-based so they can access their books on any device without having to download and save files. It's also been easy for the institution to adopt:

"BibliU integrates with all our existing library systems, it's compliant with current industry standards and it offers analytics so we can see how students are using not just books but sections and even individual pages so we can monitor the return on our investment and refine our book selections in future," said Andrew.

"Before making any decisions we carried out a comprehensive market study and BibliU's offer ticked more of the necessary boxes. We undertook a paid-for pilot focused on five of our courses and feedback showed that it's intuitive, the accessibility features are good and it is device agnostic. Unusually, there's no limit to the number of users – content we've selected is available to every student and that means students are spared the expense of costly textbooks."

Andrew has found the BibliU team are keen to work as partners to the university; they've been quick to make adjustments when asked and they have participated in a number of events to promote the platform and help students and staff to get the most out of it.

"They ask lots of questions. They make sure they understand exactly what we need and, when they've worked on it, they come back to check that we've got what we were looking for. In our sector sometimes established vendors don't really listen but we've found that BibliU in particular, and edtech startups in general, are responsive and pliable."

Andrew Knight, collections manager in library services, University of Roehampton.
“We believe our solution is unique in the academic libraries space,” said Tom Bruining, head of growth at BibliU. “It’s the only one that is compliant with all industry standards – and I’m including the really big players when I say this – and it’s also the only core e-textbooks service with COUNTER (projectcounter.org) accreditation.

“We’ve built it from the ground up to enable students to use textbooks in the ways they want to.”

The BibliU interface encourages students to find their own resources and shape their own learning experience. It offers book recommendations based on the course that people are studying and things they’ve read before, and it also provides a search facility so people can find things for themselves.

“We’ve designed the platform around the needs of students and we know it’s the best that’s out there, but it was a challenge to get institutions on board in the early days,” said Tom. “Often, there’s institutional unwillingness to try new things but over the past three years we’ve developed close partnerships with Roehampton and a number of other universities so now we have champions in the sector and that is encouraging others to give us a try.”

Getting started with a startup
Working with a startup offers universities unique opportunities, believes Andrew Knight.

“The product may not be fully ready yet, but if you go into the conversation in an open-minded way you’ve got a chance to create exactly what you want,” he said. “Get them in, ask them to show the academics what the solution does (or will do) and take it from there. Good startups are open and committed and this can make life a lot easier for institutions that are willing to try something new.”

“For both parties, it’s often a good idea to run a small-scale pilot first, and to set out clearly what’s expected. Between you, you can achieve something that’s tailor-made to your specific requirements.”

Andrew Knight, collections manager in library services, University of Roehampton.