Native Language University Digital Textbook Collection

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Introduction

For years, professors and students in Estonian universities have been using foreign language textbooks to teach and learn at universities. These textbooks, written by foreigners, do not take into consideration the uniqueness of specific countries and/or nationalities. Professors who decide to write and publish Estonian textbooks encounter a number of problems, such as:

- Funding for publishing (usually, only one edition of a textbook is released which quickly goes out of print; and, a second edition does not appear until years later, if ever);
- The low-rank accorded to textbooks on an official academic resume which is used to determine the advancement of academic careers – this is different from institutions in many large countries where the publication of textbooks is given considerable weight to determine academic advancement; and
- The uncertainty and small size of the Estonian textbook market.

These factors do not motivate Estonian professors to spend a lot of time writing Estonian textbooks in addition to their daily academic and research work. In the Estonian textbook market, a print run usually varies between 500 and 1,500 copies; if these are sold out, it will take years, if ever, for a new edition to be printed. Less than 1.1 million people in the world speak the Estonian language, and university students in Estonia make up a very small percentage of this number. As a result, the cost of textbook prices can be quite high for the average university student and the number of titles that are published will cover only part of the actual need of registered university students. Textbook turnover in the second-hand market is very modest. It is nearly impossible to get a used textbook from a bookshop because university bookstores do not have a policy to buy back used textbooks. Once the first edition is sold out,
second-hand books from antique bookstores, libraries and copying are the main sources that students depend on to access textbook material. It can be argued, that the small size of the Estonian textbook market is itself the main cause of the illegal copying issue. Students tend to borrow a book from a library and photocopy the entire book. University libraries are therefore the main and the first source of students when they need textbooks in Estonian.

Even though, students depend heavily on library acquisitions to support their program of study, as a rule, the University of Tartu Library can only cover about 20% of the book requirements for any course at the University. For example, based on the annual report for 2007, Tartu bought Estonian textbooks for students at a ratio of one book per five students (2008). This means that about 80% of the students had considerable difficulty in accessing textbooks in Estonian. Taking into account market realities, finances and fulfilling the students’ need for textbooks an innovative Estonian language textbook project was explored. The Library decided to investigate a digital solution to this growing problem.

Before starting the project, various options were researched in order to find the most suitable digital platform for the collection. In addition, specific standards were created to determine which textbooks would be chosen for digitization. A submission process was created for titles to be digitized and during the first year of the project a compensation system for authors was established. Pre-project research methodology and stages of the project are indicated in Table 1 which shows the research prior the project and steps taken to implement the project.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how a small language e-textbook collection can be successful and significantly influence a society, even if the project is limited to one university. Despite the difficulties in accessing information in native languages, especially in small countries, it is hoped that Tartu’s experience can serve as a model for other Estonian institutions to introduce an e-textbook scheme and also encourage other small nations to start e-textbook collections in their mother tongue/language. After operating for a year and half, Tartu considers the project a success, even though further research needs to be done.

Research before Starting the Project and Choosing the Platform

Digital textbooks enable users to visualize 3D models and very complicated graphs and pursue direct links to other materials. The ideal digital textbook is a much more sophisticated than a paper publication. While currently many

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1 In this chapter the words “Tartu” and “Library” are also used to designate the Library at the University of Tartu.
E-textbooks are merely digitized versions of paperbacks, it is likely that in the future digital versions will appear before paper editions with only a reduced version of a digital textbook printed on demand. Some profound changes are needed before this vision can be realized. The digital textbook described above is much more complicated to create than a traditional paper publication. The additional effort has to be valued by universities and publishers and a new business model has to be developed to replace the existing model.

Open access textbooks have a number of benefits:

“These include keeping content current, timely, and fresh; personalizing content for a course; marrying the content with pedagogy and curriculum for a richer experience; breaking the textbook into granular pieces for instructors to personalize and adapt; making the content portable and adaptable; and offering students (and school systems) free and lower-cost alternatives to print books” (Polanka 2010).

It is expected that new software will shortly become available which enables the publication of a multimedia (text)book for an iPhone, iPad, and other Apple products. Publishing will cost approximately $100 (Kruuse 2010).

Until now textbook writing and publishing have been based mainly on contracts between academicians and publishers. Many specialists claim this to be a market that publishers protect strongly. In the case of Estonia, the Estonian Ministry of Education and Science as well as the University of Tartu have funded textbook publishing without any conditions on price or distribution. This means that the Government and University contribute financially to the production of the same textbook three times:

- First: The authors are usually faculty members whose salary comes from a university budget— all major universities in Estonia are directly or indirectly funded mainly by the Government;
- Second: A university or the government financially supports textbook publishing by paying entirely or partially for the printing, editing, authors’ fees, etc.; and
- Third: A university library will buy the textbooks.

Despite the large amount of money spent on textbooks, Estonian authors are not motivated to write textbooks because the profit goes to the publishers and the lack of academic recognition given to authoring textbooks vis-à-vis publishing an article in well-known journal. A university’s ability to influence faculty members publishing behavior is evident when one considers what happened at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) when, in March 2009, MIT introduced a policy that requires faculty members to grant MIT non-exclusive permission to include their works on the institution’s Open Ac-
cess (OA) platform provided they are not sold for profit (Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2009). Textbooks might easily be the next step. It would possibly be much easier to implement similar conditions for textbooks in small countries rather than in large ones such as the United States. A very big book market complicates the implementation of an OA policy for textbooks. US Representative Bill Foster submitted a bill to the House entitled: Learning Opportunities with Creation of Open Source Textbooks (LOW COST) Act of 2009 on March 12, 2009 which aims to “develop and implement open source materials that contain educational materials covering topics in college-level physics, chemistry, or math”. As of August 2010 this Bill had not reached the House for voting (US. House of Representatives 1464 2009). This initiative may change the situation in the US textbook market significantly.

Between January 2008 and January 2009, the UK’s Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) researched the usage of digital textbooks in Britain in a National E-book Observatory Project. The main aim of the project was to research students’ actual usage of the e-textbooks and how that influences publishers and libraries. Thirty six higher education e-books were made available throughout Britain, 127 universities and half a million users participated in this research. The results showed that the majority of students and professors used e-books at some point. The results also showed that students mainly look to the library to provide required e-textbooks. This research should encourage publishers because it demonstrated that e-books are not used to replace printed books – students still borrow and buy printed books (Estelle et al. 2009). There have been various other free e-textbook initiatives; however, they were primarily among students of one university and with the main goal to reduce the cost of textbooks for students.

Cost reduction is one of the key aspects that make e-books more attractive for users; this could help to ease demands on library resources. Based on information from the Estonian Digital Books Center, e-books in Estonian tend to be 30% – 40% cheaper than paperbacks (Aasta lõpuks jõuab turule 1000 Eesti kirjanduse e-raamatut 2010). In Europe, the most significant obstacle obstructing universal use of all e-resources is the higher VAT charged in many European countries for e-resources as compared with paper versions. A very important survey on the impact of VAT on libraries and the scientific publication market was undertaken by the Frankfurt Group (2006). This survey showed that because of the higher VAT charged on e-resources, “it is cheaper for libraries to order printed versions of resources in addition to the electronic version.” It found that in the VAT exempt libraries the growth of switching to only electronic resources was much higher (281%) than in not VAT exempt libraries (121%).

Before establishing the Estonian university textbook collection, Tartu assumed that there was a need for this type of collection; even though no research had been conducted to confirm this assumption. Some professors at the
University were questioned in order to determine their opinion regarding publishing Estonian e-textbooks. Generally the feedback was positive with professors suggesting that they would be interested in this type of publishing opportunity. Based on the feedback received – professors wanted limited access, limited downloading ability, printing and copying – the Library decided to look for options that would accommodate all these requirements. Before choosing the platform for this project, Tartu also considered displaying Estonian e-textbooks in its DSpace digital repository. The use of a third party platform saved money as well as the time required to develop and test domestic software.

A 2008 ebrary survey among students who used electronic sources for studying showed that E-books were the second and e-textbooks the 11th most used academic resources (2009). E-books and e-textbooks were in the top ten sources most trusted by students. Compared to the year before, there was an increase of 22% in usage of these resources. In this survey, 51% of the students said they used electronic books “often” or “very often”. A study conducted by the University of Strathclyde showed that the vast majority of students would be interested in using e-books (77% of the respondents) and over half of the respondents (55%) said that they are already reading online (Shiratuddin et al. 2003). On the other hand, a survey done at Oregon State University showed that a clear majority of students (93%, 228 out of 245) preferred print textbooks to electronic versions (Christie, Pollitz and Middleton 2009). This was a little discouraging for the project at Tartu as the results showed that a library still needs to provide students with paperback textbooks. This was also confirmed by statistical analysis done at Tartu. Students in the ebrary survey indicated that when it came to an e-book, it is important that the book is searchable, that it has anytime access, that it can be used off-campus and that many students can use it at the same time. These were some of the criteria that Tartu took into account when deciding how and where to display its Estonian e-textbook collection.

A university library needs to be accessible to university students, even if they do not come physically to the library. A study done by the University of Toronto Library showed that students preferred working remotely rather than in the library (Grey 2008) which is one of the reasons why e-textbooks need to be available via remote access. Gray’s article also provides the various reasons why the University of Toronto chose the MyiLibrary platform (2008). Similar reasoning was behind the Tartu’s choice of ebrary as platform for the Estonian e-textbook collection. Reasons driving Tartu’s choice included:

- The University of Tartu Library had been subscribing to the ebrary database for some time, thus it was already known to the institution. Knowing the wide range of content and having previous experience and knowledge about this database, made ebrary a trustworthy choice for the University. In addition to selling licensing and selling content, ebrary is
one of the few companies that offer libraries the option to upload their own materials in order to distribute these online (McKiel 2008). Ebrary’s survey among libraries showed that 42% of libraries (out of which, 77% were academic libraries like Tartu), purchase or subscribe to e-books from ebrary (Mullakey 2008). This confirmed that ebrary would be a great option for displaying Tartu’s Estonian e-textbook collection;

- ebrary offered the right cost model for Tartu to display its e-textbook collection. The University considered the possibility of building its own platform, but declined to pursue this option due the time constraints and financial considerations. With ebrary a yearly fixed price is agreed upon with the option to upload a few hundred of books. This meets the University’s needs because, at this time and in the foreseeable future, there are not likely to be thousands of Estonian textbooks that could be uploaded;

- Right use model – most of our professors did not want students to be able to download PDF files of a textbook unto their computers. Ebrary offers a page-by-page view option of e-books as well as facilitating printing and copy-paste restrictions which complied with the author’s conditions. Ebrary also facilitates any e-textbook user’s basic needs: 24/7 availability, search-ability, simultaneous accessibility, and up-datability (ebrary allows changes to, for updating purposes, a fixed number amount of files per year). All of these are functionalities required by the University based on pre-launch feedback received from our professionals;

- ebrary uses known standards – PDF and HTML. Estonian textbooks are sent to ebrary in PDF format, which is the easiest format for our professors to submit their e-textbooks to the Library;

- ebrary is publisher-neutral, meaning that a national, small publishing company can have its books displayed next to those of large publishing houses; and

- ebrary provides a platform which allows access only to persons associated with Tartu.

Methodology for Choosing E-Textbooks for the Collection and Submission Process

Having decided to use the ebrary platform for Tartu’s Estonian e-textbook collection, the second step was to determine which titles that would be placed in the collection. A number of factors were taken into consideration in the selection process:
- The textbook had to be in Estonian – it could be a translation of a foreign language text, but there had to be an Estonian version;
- The main target audience of these textbooks had to be persons in higher education;
- Titles in the collection did not necessarily need to include the words “textbook” or “manual”. Obligatory or highly recommended titles for higher education or those in high use by students were the key factors for inclusion in the collection. This included books that are out-of-print or not available from book vendors, but which are still used in the University on daily basis; and
- The University of Tartu Publishing Council recommended highly that authors who received funding for publishing from the University place an electronic version of their book/s in the University’s Estonian e-textbook collection. The University did not stipulate a deposit date for the electronic version; therefore authors are able to choose when they deposited their books in the electronic collection. As a consequence, the paper edition may appear before the electronic version is made available for use within the University.

When the project started in 2008, the following were used to determine the first selection of titles to be placed in the collection:

- Library lending statistics for Estonian language books from the previous year – these were then divided into academic and non-academic titles;
- Publishers of academic books, beginning with those with imprints from the University of Tartu Press, helped the Library to narrow the list of books to be included based on their sales figures. At first, books that were still on sale were eliminated from the list. The total number of potential books used in academic work was eventually narrowed down to slightly over a hundred books; then
- Negotiations were conducted with the authors of the titles chosen for inclusion in the Estonian e-collection.

The negotiation and submission processes at Tartu are as follows: professors of the university are offered an opportunity to submit their published and unpublished textbooks to the ebrary platform. Those submitting a published work complete a questionnaire, which requests general information about the work e.g. printing and copy-paste restrictions and other comments. The digital textbook coordinator provides the metadata and submits that information and the textbook to ebrary for publishing. The students of Tartu can access submitted textbooks through the University’s network or outside of the network by using their university username and password. Currently, there are 49 Estonian e-textbooks in the collection...
books in the collection representing a range of subject areas. Copy-paste limitations, different for each book, are based on author stipulations.

Findings and Problems Encountered

After a year and half operation, various findings and issues were noted. One of the major issues that had to be constantly dealt with was copyright. When the project begun, library staff were not aware of the range of potential questions and problems associated with copyright laws. Similarly, authors were also not aware of their rights with respect to their intellectual property. In many ways, publishing companies are still dictating the entire process. Authors, though rightful owners of their textbooks, do not want to confront or have problems with publishing companies. As a consequence, many of them would rather not submit their books to the collection. Other universities have faced similar issues while trying to digitize textbooks; as a result when it arose the issue did not come as a surprise. Publishers are often not willing to make their titles available for electronic publishing because they are afraid of losing potential revenue from sales. On this issue Ball, Beard and Newland argue that “Publishers must realize that, if their content is not available electronically, it will not be used, much less bought, by students; if it is not used by students, it will not be bought by libraries either” (2008).

Interestingly, the Library has also had some problems with receiving positive replies from publishers even with respect to books that have already been sold out. Some publishing companies have refused to allow the Library to place books that are no longer available for sale in the e-collection by claiming that they are expecting the author to submit a second edition for printing in the future. Publishers further assert that including a title in the e-collection could demotivate an author from releasing a second edition.

The biggest challenge has been receiving book files from publishers. Even if the publisher has no limitations on publishing the book in the collection, several of them have either withheld the files or sought to charge a fee for giving the electronic files to the Library. Considering that Tartu is paying authors a book license, the Library cannot afford to pay the publishers as well, and, certainly not the prices that are being quoted. At the same time, a number of publishing companies have been very agreeable and responded quickly on hearing about the University’s e-textbook collection.

Unexpectedly, the time required to hold discussions with publishers, negotiate with authors, gather the questionnaires and collect the PDF files of books, replies and contracts from authors was extremely time-consuming. Even though, prior to the project, the Library received positive feedback from authors on the creation of the e-collection. The process began with the Library sending out mass emails to faculties. Little feedback was received. Even if some mem-
bers of the faculty were interested, they all wanted it be personally contacted by the Library before submitting the necessary paperwork and files. In some cases, the entire process from sending out initial email until the book ended up in the system, took over half a year. As a result, one conclusion that could be drawn is that while professors are very interested in submitting their textbooks to the project; each of them seems to want a personal approach.

Based on feedback and communication with authors, it is clear that it is important to establish a compensation system from the start. One of the main questions asked by authors was: would they get paid; and, how much? Initially, authors were asked how much compensation they would require for having their textbooks placed in the collection. Only a very few offered a figure. After offering what was considered to be a reasonable amount, many of them found that the offer was too low and gave the book for free. At some point, authors started to ask what was used to arrive at the basis for compensation. It became necessary to establish a system that could be applied to all books. Since most of the textbooks have been bought by the Library, a compensation system, based on the price of three paperbacks of a given title to be included in the e-collection, was developed. So far, it seems that the compensation system has been accepted by the authors, with few complaints being received.

Comparison with Paper Textbooks

At the beginning of 2010, lending and usage statistics between paper and e-versions textbooks were analyzed – in total 34 titles were analyzed. Statistics for the first full year of e-textbook usage showed that certain popular paper books are also at the top of the statistics for digital usage. Books in Economics and Psychology were the most popular e.g. *Introduction to Economics* – 337 loans; *Microeconomics* – 192 loans; and, *Handbook of Pedagogical Psychology* – 172 loans. Digital usage for the same titles was: 421, 269 and 392 respectively. The average class size for these courses per semester tends to be around 200 students. In terms of the number of pages viewed for the same e-textbooks those figures are as follows: 10,529, 4,821 and 3,820. Since most authors have forbidden printing and copying these activities are limited. These statistics suggest that less than 100 pages each are accessed for most books.

Out of the 32 digital and printed books which were compared, 12 of the digital versions were viewed more times than the paper version was borrowed (37.5% of the total). It is important to note that only two books were available only in digital format. In addition, only a few of the borrowed printed books with digital versions did not have hits on the digital copy. For example, *Molecular Cell Biology* was borrowed 62 times and only once digitally. (A possible reason for this was that the digital version was only added to the collection in November 2009, while the paper version had been borrowed all year. Hope-
fully next year, the statistics for this title will be totally different.) Similarly, the paper version of *Introduction to Econometrics* was borrowed 101 times, but viewed digitally only 7 times.

Based on these statistics, it can be said that the most popular paperback textbooks are also the most popular e-textbooks. This suggests that the 20% service delivery that the Library has with respect to paper textbooks is not enough to meet the needs of users, and that the digital textbook collection is helping to close the gap that exists with respect to students accessing textbooks. These findings show that beside e-textbooks there will be continuous need for paper textbooks. This, to some extent, concurs with Oregon State University’s finding on this issue. E-textbooks without any printed version in the Library’s course reserve might be problematic for students because of different attitudes to reading text for a long time on a screen. Research has shown that screen reading is 10% – 20% slower than reading from paper. It was never intended that the digital e-textbook collection would be a 100% substitute for paper textbooks, the main goal of the collection was to provide a satisfactory alternative for textbooks.

### Research Feedback

During this project, the Library has constantly been looking for ways to improve its collection – by adding more textbooks, making negotiations easier, and, mainly to make the collection more visible to all students and faculty. It is important that new services offered by the Library are promoted. At the University of Nevada at Las Vegas it was found that marketing e-books is extremely important if a library wishes its digital book collection to be successful (Sinha and Tucker 2009). Posters were displayed inside the Library at the University of Tartu and a website banner was added to the Library’s homepage to promote the collection. But, after a year of operation it appears that these are not sufficient promotional activities. In order to find out how to better promote our collection, it became necessary to find out what people thought of the collection. So, in addition to collecting statistics, it was decided that authors would be consulted on their views about the collection after it had been in use for over a year. Even though students were also given an opportunity to send written feedback about the collection, no comments were received from them.

In the summer of 2010, a questionnaire was sent to authors whose textbooks are in the collection. Unfortunately, the number of responses received was quite small. There is the possibility that timing was one of the causes of the low response rate – the examination period and summer vacation. About 15% of authors replied to our survey.

The questionnaire consisted of thirteen questions (Appendix II). Authors were asked about their usage of the ebrary database in general plus various
questions directly connected to the Estonian e-textbook collection. Based on these replies, a little over half of the respondents are not using the ebrary database. 71% of the authors were happy with the way the e-books are displayed in the database. Of those who were not satisfied some said that the help area of the webpage took up too much space compared to the actual book. Further, some were not happy with the content and search options. The same number of authors said that they are recommending e-textbooks to their students, but only 14% have received any feedback about the collection or e-textbooks. 71% of authors also said that getting feedback would help them to prepare the next version of their textbook.

When asked about usage statistics, 57% of the respondents said that they would be interested in receiving some kind of statistics. Authors would be particularly interested in receiving statistics regarding the number of users and pages viewed. In addition, 71% of the respondents would also be interested in receiving comparison statistics about paper and e-versions.

With respect to how authors electronically locate e-textbooks – all three options (search engine, Library website, and electronic catalog ESTER) were used to about the same degree. A search engine was used a little more than other two options. 71% of respondents found that the e-textbook collection is easy or fairly easy to find. All of the respondents were either satisfied or fairly satisfied that they had submitted their textbook to the collection. When asked if they were satisfied that only the University of Tartu students and staff could access the collection, 57% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with access protocols. Many respondents also suggested that there should be more e-textbooks available in the collection and it would be important that at least basic subject textbooks are accessible in a digital format.

The feedback received from the survey also indicated that some improvements need to be made to the Estonian e-textbook collection. One of the main things is to make the collection more visible to students and professors in order to improve usage. Having a stable and easy to find link on the Library website is a major necessity. In addition, in order to reach students, additional research is necessary as well as more effective marketing. At the beginning of the new school year (2010-2011), the Library plans to promote Estonian e-textbooks to a broader student audience and make marketing the e-textbooks collection a priority. It was also discovered that the ways students and professors try to access the collection does not always match how librarians access the collection, so an important goal is to not only make the collection visible, but also more easily accessible.

Information literacy courses are excellent opportunities to promote the availability and possibilities of e-textbooks. Internet-based courses on information literacy have enjoyed great popularity among Tartu’s students since 2006. WebCT-based courses enable the Library to give practical exercises to students. Experiences with the e-textbook collection demonstrate that there is a
special need to inform professors about the collection, what it offers and how it can be used. This finding is supported by the University of Worcesters experience with e-books – certain titles are well used, largely due to especially persistent lecturers issuing group work to students on titles they know to be available. The link with lecturers has been the most successful way to promote the e-books (Taylor 2007). The hope is that at Tartu such initiatives will result in an expansion of the collection and lead to an increase in usage statistics. Needless to say, Tartu is taking seriously all suggestions given by authors with regard to electronically providing additional titles and basic textbooks to its students.

Based on research, it has also been found that practically no author has received any feedback from students on how or if they are using the e-textbooks. Ways will need to be found to get students to submit more feedback about the collection or individual textbooks in the e-collection. On this issue Kline and Williams (2008) argue that:

“Casting the user in the role of critical evaluator makes users a part of the solution of bringing forth a product that meets their expectations. One is more likely to be tolerant toward a new product if one is asked to critique the product and provide feedback to the vendor.”

In order to improve the collection, especially when it comes to choosing textbooks that are being added, effective feedback from students and other users is vital for the project.

After a year of operation, it can be said that a proprietary platform would have given more freedom and options (copyright, printing, statistics, etc.) and visibility (all collection would have been automatically shown and promotion would have been more successful) to the Estonian e-textbook collection. The feedback from the survey as well as other types of feedback from students and professors show that the absence of a proprietary platform decreases the success of the collection. A proprietary platform would have enabled the collection to be clearly separate and easily accessible. Further, without a proprietary platform the possibility of linking books to other materials, for example, other textbooks in the same database or the University of Tartu Study Information System where many professors keep their course materials is restricted, although some linking is possible in the ebrary database – for example links to websites mentioned in books.

Research Limitations

Based on feedback received from authors, it was discovered that the ebrary platform provides only limited statistics. At the present time, statistics are only
provided on the following issues: number of users, number of pages viewed, copied and printed. Some authors and librarians would like to receive more detailed statistics about the usage of e-textbooks. For example, statistics about how long a particular book was accessed by a user; exactly which pages were read; and, where the books were accessed would be useful information. In addition, it would be interesting to know if students take notes while reading or what kind of other study skills and/or learning aids they use (highlighting, etc.). Such statistics could help authors as well as the Library to develop the collection further.

The Library explored the possibility of adding statistical software (for example, Google Analytics) to the collection to acquire data that ebrary does not provide. Unfortunately, ebrary did not allow software from other vendors to be added to their system. Had the Library built a proprietary platform, a range of statistical collection options would have been part of the software’s programming.

Due to the lack of user feedback and a low response rate of authors to the feedback survey, the Library was only able to make limited assumptions about the usage of the collection. Had more detailed feedback been received from the students and other users, this information would have been used to improve the collection and make more conscious and reasoned choices in terms of which textbooks were added to the collection. Currently, only lending statistics of printed books are being used to determine which textbooks are digitized. In addition, feedback from students could also help authors to improve new editions of their textbooks; therefore, the Library is planning to conduct some extensive research among its users. This will provide useful data on the usefulness of e-textbooks.

Interestingly, there exists also some evidence that only 20% of high school students believe strongly in the future of e-textbooks while 80% of the students have some dislike of using e-textbooks (Wojcicki 2010). It is hoped that during the proposed research it will be possible to discover the attitude of innovative and technologically advanced Estonian high school and university students towards the use of e-textbooks. These results could be of possible interest to other libraries as well.

**Practical Implications**

The Library has been one of the main supporters of Open Access (OA) initiatives in Estonia. When the project began, it was hoped to have an entirely open textbook collection that could, in the long run, evolve into a nationwide OA collection which would receive financial support from the Government. All Government supported publications should be available nationwide and via OA. All University supported publications should also be available through
OA with no limitations for University use. Currently, the Library is working towards the last goal. Hopefully from the fall of 2010, the University of Tartu Publishing Council, will adopt a declaration which states that all authors who wish to receive funding from the University in order to publish Estonian language textbooks must donate an electronic version of their textbook to the collection. At the same time, the Library is going to encourage authors through the University of Tartu Publishing Council to create interactive e-textbooks with videos, 3D pictures, etc. Such options would give e-textbooks additional value compared to paperback releases.

With regard to opening the Estonian language textbooks to nationwide use, Tartu has had some negotiations with the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (hereafter the Ministry) on this matter. In 2008, the Ministry initiated a nationwide program to finance Estonian language higher education textbooks. The main goal of this national project is to maintain and develop Estonian language in higher education (Estonia. Ministry of Education and Research. 2008). Currently, the Ministry is supporting the publications of paper versions of textbooks, but as a result of our negotiations, e-textbook publishing is being considered.

OA portals for study materials, including e-textbooks, like Merlot <www.merlot.org> and Connexions <http://cnx.org> are good examples of how to develop OA collections. Merlot has especially rich and diverse content. Building confidence with users is crucial for a portal to be successful. Merlot has an icon for peer-reviewed materials this builds the confidence of users. In some disciplines only a few materials are reviewed are reviewed in Merlot, and the majority of content in this OA portal lacks quality assurance certification. Merlot’s peer review is done by an editorial board. Connexions has a function called Lens that gives additional information about persons and organizations who trust a particular piece of information in the portal. In the case of small countries like Estonia and languages that are not widely spoken like Estonian, a prominent local editorial board is needed to vet materials that are published in Estonian or other Native languages. This is important in order to build user trust. An OA Estonian e-textbook collection inevitably needs the strong support of the Estonian Government, universities and private donors given the experience of the previously mentioned two portals.

Additionally, if the collection is developed nationwide it would provide a better gauge of real use and success of the collection. Quantitative research about usage and attitudes towards OA should also be conducted across Estonia in order to not only improve the University’s Estonian e-textbook collection. This research could also help to introduce OA and e-textbooks nationwide. This quantitative research should involve most Estonian higher education institutions and should cover attitudes towards OA, e-books and e-textbooks. A good example of this type of research is the British National E-book Observatory Project (Estelle et al. 2009). It is believed that research such as this would
benefit universities, libraries, the general public and also the Ministry. In order for this research to have significant impact to all counterparts, the Ministry should be its initiator.

Social Implications

Even though, more detailed research needs to be done in order to improve the Estonian e-textbook collection at Tartu, the Library feels that it has started a project that potentially has great social impact not only within the University, but also on the general public. Throughout the first year, the Library and university staff have gained much new knowledge about copyright laws. Establishing the collection has given the Library an opportunity to educate all parties involved in the project about copyright. The Library’s staff have organized and participated in various events in order to disseminate information about copyright and other issues concerning e-content. It is hoped that these activities will be continued.

In addition, like the rest of the world, Estonia is taking a quantum leap in the field of digital products. E-books, e-textbooks and e-readers are becoming more popular and part of everyday life. Further, new technologies, like e-ink, enable the reading of e-books better than on a regular computer. Negotiations with the Ministry to establish a national e-textbook collection indicate that Tartu’s collection has had an impact which extends beyond the closed university network. In addition, this collection has also opened up a wider discussion about OA in higher education in Estonia.

Among the future goals of the project is to continue efforts towards opening the collection to all higher educational institutions in Estonia. Also being considered is the use of technological innovations such as e-book readers in order to promote and ease access to the Estonian e-textbook collection.

Value of the Collection

When the collection started, because the Library was only interested in Estonian language higher education textbooks there was uncertainty about the impact that it would have. It was known that most university professors who write articles do so in English while those who write textbooks do so in Estonian. Since English articles have a higher impact and influence on an author’s academic career it was assumed that it would have been harder to get any materials from authors that were in English due to the possible impact that such a deposit may have had on their academic advancement. Owing to the small size of the Estonian book market, there was some uncertainty as to whether authors would donate their Estonian materials to the Library’s database. To the sur-
prise of the Library, stressing the language factor made the project even more successful. Authors seemed to like the idea that the textbooks which would be included in the database would only be titles that were in Estonian. Further, it was evident that authors were more willing to donate their material if they knew which audience it was going use it – limiting the use of the collection to the university community made the target audience very clear to them. In addition, if the Library is going to preserve a digital version of a textbook in the collection for a long period of time it meant that the Library could provide authors with a copy of their work at any point in time. This indicates the importance of digitization and long term preservation, especially as many authors did not have a digital version of books they had written. This way, the Library is preserving a piece of Estonian language and literature. This could also been another factor which influenced authors to give their textbooks to the Library for this project. It is believed that national and perhaps personal pride could have also been factors for authors agreeing to give copies of their textbooks to the collection. Again, further research is needed to confirm our assumptions.

The Library believes that its Estonian e-textbook collection could provide other university libraries with a model to develop a textbook digitalization system. Such a collection would also increase students’ access to knowledge for free. Tartu believes that a language-based collection model such as theirs would be more suited to countries whose textbook markets are similar to Estonia’s. The Library assumes that for textbooks with large markets (like English) enough of a profit is made, so that a title is reprinted once the first edition is sold out. In addition, textbooks in languages that are widely spoken can also be sold internationally. Again, more research in this area would be necessary to confirm the assumption that a language-based collection model is more suitable for languages that are not widely spoken.

Conclusion

In 2008, when the project started, the Library made the assumption that a language-based e-textbook collection would be a success. Research and feedback from local authors led to the belief that this type of collection is necessary. Furthermore, the collection was inspired by the need for study materials. Size constraints of the market for titles in Estonian and a lack of reprint options in the Estonian textbook market make it difficult for students to acquire obligatory study materials. As a consequence, students turn to the university Library as the supplier of required materials in Estonian. Unfortunately, it is not possible, due to the financial reasons, to purchase a textbook for each student. This forced the Library to find other solutions to this information need. In this case, the University of Tartu Library decided to make Estonian language and widely used study materials digitally available for internal use.
During the project, Library staff assumed that certain difficulties would be encountered. Additionally, there were also other problems that had not been anticipated. Copyright matters and the lack of a compensation system were two major problems that had to be dealt with from the start on daily basis. At the same time, facing these problems, gave the Library an opportunity to educate not only library staff, but also the general public. The collection has received larger nationwide attention than was expected. It is hoped that the Estonian e-collection at the University of Tartu will encourage other university libraries in the country to develop similar collections and that a nationwide OA Estonian e-textbook collection is a reachable goal and a necessary next step in providing access to Estonian language materials.

While hoping for the development of a nationwide collection, at Tartu the improvement of its e-collection of Estonian material is continuing. After a year and half of operation, a survey was conducted with authors who had textbooks in Tartu’s e-collection. The results showed that authors do not receive enough feedback from students and that items in the collection are not always posted in such a way that they are always easily accessible. This has created a need for the Library to develop additional goals in terms of marketing and promoting the collection within the university. It will be necessary also to develop new marketing strategies which primarily targets students who are the main persons for whom the collection was developed.

Further, more detailed statistics would be a beneficial to assist with improving the collection. Unfortunately, these are not available through our current platform provider. As a consequence, the Library is still searching for alternative ways to improve its gathering of statistical data. More research also needs to be done regarding the influence that a single language has on the development of a collection. It is believed that one reason for the success of this collection is that it is focused on the national language of a small country; however, this needs to be proved. If other small countries were to develop collections in their native language such collections would serve as the basis for the collection of statistics that could be used for comparative purposes. Such a comparison would indicate if our assumption that the success of the collection is because it is restricted to a single language is correct and that such an assumption has wide applicability.

In conclusion, it can be said that when the Library started its Estonian e-textbooks collection almost two years ago, it was not sure if the collection would be successful or be of interest to anyone. To the Library’s surprise, it has received more positive feedback than it had ever expected. A collection based mainly on the need to provide students in Estonia with necessary study materials has received national and international attention. The Library hopes to continue improving it e-collection of Estonian texts, share its experience and model with other libraries interested in creating a similar collection while digitally preserving Estonian national higher education literature in the process.
References


Appendix I

Pre-project research

Stages of the project
Appendix II

Survey Questions on “Estonian language e-textbooks collection”
1) Are you a user of ebrary database e-books?
   a. Yes
   b. Rather yes
   c. Rather no
   d. No
2) Are you satisfied of the way, e-textbooks are displayed in Ebrary database?
   a. Yes
   b. No
3) If not, please explain why?
4) Do you recommend e-textbooks to your students?
   a. Yes
   b. No
5) Have you received any feedback from your students about e-textbooks?
   a. Yes
   b. No
6) Would you be interested in user statistics?
   a. Yes
   b. No
7) What kind of statistics would you be interested in? (Choose as many as apply)
   a. Amount of users
   b. Pages printed
   c. Pages copied
   d. Pages viewed
8) Would you be interested in receiving paper version and e-version comparison statistics?
   a. Yes
   b. No
9) Does a feedback help you on your next version of the textbook?
   a. Yes
   b. Rather yes
   c. Rather no
   d. No
10) How do you search for e-textbooks? (Choose as many as apply)
    a. Library homepage
    b. Electronic catalogue ESTER
    c. Search engine (Google etc.)
11) Are the e-textbooks of the University of Tartu easily findable?
   a. Yes
   b. Rather yes
   c. Rather no
   d. No

12) Are you satisfied that you gave you book to Estonian e-textbooks collection?
   a. Yes
   b. Rather yes
   c. Rather no
   d. No

13) Are you satisfied that only the University of Tartu students and staff can access these e-textbooks?
   a. Yes
   b. No

14) Please make recommendations and give an opinion about the Estonian e-textbook collection.