

On the University Library Services Innovation for Obtaining Electronic Textbooks under the Circumstance of Covid-19 Epidemic--a Case from Wuhan University of Technology

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ABSTRACT. The outbreak of the COVID-19 in Wuhan in early 2020 has become a major public health emergency in China. All the universities in China have postponed their spring semester and the service of university libraries is facing great challenges. Innovation in library service is necessary under the circumstance of COVID-19 epidemic. Wuhan University of Technology (WHUT) library collected and edited the electronic textbooks via different accesses and eventually completed *The Guide of Obtaining Electronic Textbooks*, which has brought a great help to both students and teachers during their self-quarantine period. The library provides innovative services in order to explore new and better university library service under the circumstance of COVID-19 pandemic.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19, University library, Innovation services, Electronic textbooks

1. Introduction

The outbreak of the COVID-19 in Wuhan in early 2020 has become a major public health emergency in China. In order to prevent the spread of the epidemic to campus and ensure the health and life safety of teachers and students, on January 27, 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the Notice of the Ministry of Education on Delaying the Beginning of the Spring Semester in 2020 and called on the schools nationwide for “suspend classes but to continue learning”. To meet the current and future needs of users, the library should have new service concepts, new service models and higher service capabilities, that is, to establish the concept of “taking the users as the center”[1], build service models and improve service capabilities to adapt to the new situation[2]. Under this unprecedented new coronavirus pandemic, how should the library, as a teaching auxiliary unit of universities, serve the teachers and students who have “suspended classes but to continue learning”? Both teachers and students need electronic textbooks for their online classes. Meeting the needs of readers (teachers and students) is the service purpose of the library [3].

2. Service Model of Obtaining Electronic Textbooks in Domestic University Libraries under the Epidemic

Browse the WeChat official accounts of the university libraries, and we may find that most libraries recommend some free internet platforms for the access of electronic textbooks. This service has the following problems: first, readers can only obtain some or few electronic textbooks of the publishing house from these free and open publishing house platforms, but not the whole; second, there are many publishing houses that do not have access to free electronic textbooks open platforms; third, there are no recommendation in the WeChat official account that provides convenient and quick access to electronic textbooks, just like the library OPAC system works. Ranganathan, an outstanding Librarian in the world, put forward the famous “The Five Laws of Library Science” as the general principle of library cause in 1931, among which the fourth law “saves readers’ time”, emphasizing the efficiency and benefit of library service, and the direct purpose of library service is to save readers’ time[4]. In order to save the time for readers (teachers and students) in obtaining electronic textbooks, the main content of service for obtaining electronic textbooks provided by the library is to make *A Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks*, which can be used by teachers and students as the OPAC system of the library, to obtain electronic textbooks conveniently and instantly.

3. Making a Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks

3.1 The Purpose, Thought and Method of Making the Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks

There are two principles to be followed in resources organization of library: one is the principle of document guarantee, the other is the principle of reader guarantee. The principle of reader guarantee requires the library to organize resources observing the principle of convenient retrieval and utilization for readers [5]. Under this principal, to better serve the readers, each electronic textbook is collected, classified and sorted out according to its different access. The purpose of applying innovative service in obtaining electronic textbooks is to provide teachers and students more convenient and instant access to the electronic textbooks that they need through the Guide and strive to achieve the effect of “one demand, one access”.

3.2 Preliminary Preparation

3.2.1 Set Up Service Group for Obtaining Electronic Textbooks

The library director of WHUT was in charge of the work of obtaining electronic textbooks, and established exclusive service groups for electronic textbooks: group for collecting and arranging electronic textbooks; group for intellectual property issues during the obtaining and use of electronic textbooks; group for technical issues such as network platform and library account number; and group for the work of publicity, training and online promotion.

3.2.2 Copyright of Electronic Textbooks

Obtaining electronic textbooks involves copyright issues. The library should provide the readers with the service of obtaining electronic textbooks legally, and the readers should use the acquired electronic textbooks reasonably and legally as well, otherwise, they may fall into the trouble of legal issues. Libraries and readers should strictly abide by the relevant provisions of Article 22 of the copyright law of the People's Republic of China, which regulates the reasonable use of copyright.

The library drafted the Notes for the legal use of electronic textbooks. The WeChat official account released it. Meanwhile, the 7th Notice on prevention and control of Covid-19 by Wuhan University of Technology was also issued, in which the legal use of the electronic textbooks was clearly stated, and the notes for the rational use of the electronic textbooks was taken as the notice appendix.

3.2.3 Collecting Information of Undergraduate Teaching Textbooks

There are 3695 undergraduate courses in the spring semester of 2020 in Wuhan University of Technology. From February 6 to February 29, the library has received eight batches of undergraduate course information from over 30 schools and offices of WHUT, involving more than 3000 pieces of courses and textbooks information. After a careful checking of all this 3000 information one by one, about 600 duplicated information was removed and eventually a total of 2503 textbooks were confirmed.

3.3 The Process of Making the Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks

By collecting the information of electronic textbooks on the internet from free but time limited platforms, by contacting 149 publishing houses for textbooks, and by combining the existing resources of the library, the guide book was eventually completed. This paper categorizes the acquisition of e-textbooks into five accesses: the first one is the existing resources of the library -- Xuexi tong, “teaching reference system”; the second one is the existing resources of the library -- “Duxiu platform”; third, the publishing house’s online platform, free but just for limited time; the fourth one is the publishing houses’ customer-tailed service for WHUT; the fifth one is the self-compiled teaching materials, textbooks that are compiled by WHUT teachers themselves.

2503 teaching textbooks were verified and tried from these five ways. Among these 2503 teaching textbooks, collected and sorted out according to their different obtaining access, 519 of which were through the library Xuexi tong, “teaching reference system”; and 339 electronic textbooks through the library “Duxiu platform”; 432 from WHUT teachers; 772 through 23 publishing houses’ online platforms free; 489 were obtained point-to-point through the mailbox of the library. Some electronic textbooks even have more than one obtaining access. All collected electronic textbooks were classified and tabulated according to the curriculum information of 31 school of WHUT, forming the main part of the Guide, with 239 pages in total, as shown in Table 1. The five accesses to obtaining electronic textbooks formed the third part of the guide book, namely, “the way to obtaining electronic textbooks”.

In order to facilitate the readers, *A Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks* provides hyperlinks in each of the electronic catalog pages. If readers want to know any content of the guide on the catalog page, they can directly jump to the specific content page by clicking the entry of the catalog page.

3.4 Overview of the Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks

There are all together three drafts of *A Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks* for undergraduates in WHUT. On January 29, the Library completed *A Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks* for undergraduates of WHUT (version 3). 2503 electronic textbooks are required by readers, and 2052 electronic textbooks can be obtained through the Guide, with a guarantee rate of 81.98%. At the same time, the library also produced *A Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks* for postgraduates of WHUT. *A Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks* for undergraduates includes five parts: (I) Preparation of Electronic Textbooks; (II) Preparation of Electronic Textbook of Ideological and Political Course; (III) The Way of Obtaining Electronic Textbooks; (IV) Information of Each School's Electronic Textbook; (V) The Issue Concerned. In addition, there are four attachments, mainly related to the rational and legal issues concerning the use of electronic textbooks.

4. Service Mode of the Obtaining Electronic Textbooks

The work *A Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks* is posted on the Website of WHUT, WeChat official account of the WHUT library, WeChat official account of WHUT and Websites of Colleges. All teachers and students can download the Guide from above sources.

Then how to use the Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbooks? First, undergraduates and teachers find their own corresponding school on the directory page of "(IV) Information of Each School's Electronic Textbook" in *A Guide to Obtaining Electronic Textbook* for undergraduates, and then click the corresponding school linked to the specific corresponding electronic textbook information page, as shown in Table 1. Find the course on the electronic textbook information page, check the name of the textbook used, and then check the five acquisition accesses if there is any "✓" followed, indicating that the textbook can be obtained by this method. These five acquisition methods are the same as those of OPAC system. After readers find the acquisition methods in the Guide, they can obtain electronic textbooks through the acquisition access offered. If the readers find the acquisition access to the required teaching textbooks but don't know how to use this access to get the electronic textbooks, just as some readers may find the collection place of the books in the OPAC system of the library, but don't know how to find the books in the real library, they could reference to (III) The Way of Obtaining Electronic Textbooks.

Table 1 Information Sheet Of Electronic Textbooks for the Spring Semester of 2020 for the School of Resources and Environmental Engineering.

Serial number	Course name	textbook	Title of	Author	houses	publishing	reference	Access I: Xuexi tong 'house's online platform	Access II: Publishing house's online platform	Access III: Provided by the library			Access IV: Teacher's self-completed textbooks
										point	to	mm	
23	Therming Engineering	Cognition Practice of Mining Edition)	Solid (The Deposit Third	Gaofeng	Zhang Shixiong; Ren	Technology Press	Wuhan University of	✓		✓			✓
24	Toxicology	Environ Mental	Virology	Ziqiang	Meng	Higher Education Press (HEP)	Higher Education				✓		
25	Microbe B	Environ Mental Engineering	Microbiology		Zhou Qunying		Higher Education Press (HEP)		✓	✓			

5. The Follow-Up Work of Service for Obtaining Electronic Textbooks

First, teachers and students also need more current textbooks. By the end of this paper, the library has receives another 20 course information sent by the academic affairs office. For the new needs, if not in the Guide, follow the steps of making electronic textbooks, the library will continue to help readers get electronic textbooks.

Second, librarians will continue to contact the publishing house for 445 undergraduate electronic textbooks that earlier fail to be included in the Guide. It is believed that with the alleviation of the epidemic, the publishing houses will resume the work step by step and will provide more help on electronic textbooks for teaching.

Third, some of the current electronic textbooks, especially some provided by publishing houses, however, are just the first three chapters in order to protect the copyright. If the epidemic causes students unable to return to campus in the later period, the library should continue to contact the the house to obtain the rest part of electronic textbooks.

6. Conclusion

In May 1998, Professor M.K. Buckland of the United States pointed out in the *Redesign of Library Services: Declaration* that “library services have two fundamental principles: first, the role of library services is to facilitate the access to literature; second, the mission of library is to help the institutions that it serves accomplish its mission, or to help the individuals that it serves realize their own interests”^[6]. In the new coronavirus epidemic situation, although the real libraries can not be opened to serve the readers, as Professor M.K. Buckland said, “the two principles are applicable in any case, and the interpretation of them can be the basis of effective library services”. The library can still follow these two principles to carry out service innovation, better serve the readers and take on the responsibilities.

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