

## Market insights into higher education

### An eTextbook publisher establishes strategic partnerships

#### Abstract

CourseSmart has assembled the largest selection of eTextbooks in North American Higher Education. Founded in 2007 through a joint venture of leading textbook publishers, the company is well known as a first mover in the eTextbook industry. While students recognize the benefits and convenience of eTextbooks, academic institutions were extremely slow to adopt digital course materials. CourseSmart needed assistance in introducing the eTextbook concept to premier institutions that would help lead the way for other schools in their adoption and thought process for the deployment of institutional wide eTextbooks. As a fundamental publisher CourseSmart did not have the relationships necessary to complete the objective.

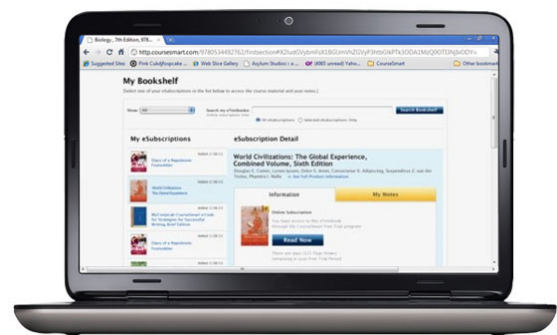
#### The Challenge

CourseSmart was challenged in describing its fundamental value proposition to academic institutions. Although its original market strategy involved selling directly to students the company was continuously challenged in facilitating instructor adoption, allowing students to gain access and having the institutions support the required technology to make it all work.

To overcome these obstacles, CourseSmart needed to build close relationships with higher education institutions. After several years of pursuing institutional relationships, however, the company had only successfully established one solid institutional deal.

CourseSmart engaged the Gilfus Education Group to develop a practical strategy to deploy its eTextbook offerings to higher education institutions. The company needed access to high level individuals within higher Education that could provide guidance and insight towards institutional wide decision making. The Gilfus Education Group leveraged its vast network to put together a small consortium of 12 to 15 schools that could participate in an eTextbook implementation re-

## CourseSmart



# Gilfus Education Group®

Education Strategy, Research and Implementations

search study. The goal was to build an understanding of eTextbooks in order to socialize the concept of institutional wide eTextbooks, increase awareness, usage and adoption of eTextbooks by college and university faculty members. It was equally important, from a technology perspective, to identify the best possible channel through which faculty and students could conveniently access eTextbooks. Finally, CourseSmart wanted to facilitate institution-wide adoption by communicating with campus leaders, such as Provosts, Deans, Chief Information Officers, and Chief Academic Officers.



## How the Gilfus Education Group helped

The “Faculty Instant Access” research program was created to promote eTextbooks to instructors and stimulate institutional relationships. It offered colleges and universities an opportunity to participate in a field study of eTextbooks for the purpose of evaluating the new technology and assessing the effects of faculty having instant access, to almost every eTextbook available.

The Gilfus Education Group leveraged its knowledge of the higher education market to promote the program. Its team of experts identified colleges and universities with a penchant for innovation that were likely to embrace the convenience and capabilities of eTextbooks. Promotional materials were designed based on messaging and value propositions that resonated with higher education instructors. Finally, instructor access to the CourseSmart library was streamlined by leveraging the single sign on capabilities already deployed at each institution.

Additionally, the Gilfus Education Group identified opportunities for CourseSmart to improve its eTextbook sales volume through integration with the greater information infrastructure of higher education institutions. Students could purchase and access eTextbooks directly at the course level in the institution’s Learning Management System.

The Faculty Instant Access Program became successful within its first few months. Ten higher education institutions entered into formal relationships with CourseSmart through the Gilfus Education Group, within a six month period. As a result of both the market development and technology guidance provided by the Gilfus Education Group, CourseSmart is still the leading provider of eTextbooks to higher education institutions. Its foundational relationships with colleges and universities provided a solid effective barrier to entry against competitors. CourseSmart has maintained its innovation and market leadership in an increasingly competitive and rapidly evolving industry.

**For more information, contact:**

Gilfus Education Group

888.861.3375

[sales@gilfuseducationgroup.com](mailto:sales@gilfuseducationgroup.com)