



Access

Rising costs, a plethora of formats and purchase options, and the dizzying mix of access codes and unique logins have made it difficult for students to access required course materials, leading them to delay or avoid purchasing textbooks and other materials—even when they know the decision will negatively affect their grades.

At VitalSource, our mission is to simplify the journey of finding, obtaining, and engaging with required course materials needed for academic success. Our models provide seamless and affordable access for learners.

OUR PLEDGE

We have an ongoing commitment to:

- Develop innovative digital technologies that simplify content discovery and access for all
- Remove barriers that prohibit learning through collaboration with our partners
- Create new delivery models that make digital as affordable as possible
- Level the playing field for all learners
- Always offer etexts that are accessible online and 100% offline

SOLVING THE ACCESS PROBLEM

Taken together, barriers to access—high costs, confusing format and purchase options, and learning tools that require consistent internet access—can significantly harm student outcomes and retention. Worse, these barriers to access are most damaging to disadvantaged students who can least afford to navigate additional hurdles. In a recent survey conducted by Morning Consult, more than half of students (56%) said that they could only do coursework or study in the library due to delaying or not purchasing course materials.¹

Accessing assigned readings and homework should be simple so students can focus on what really matters: learning. VitalSource is addressing the access problem by streamlining content distribution for publishers, institutions, and—most importantly—students. We've made sure our content platforms and technologies operate within an institution's existing digital ecosystem, which makes it easier for students to quickly and seamlessly get their required content through the school's existing platform.

Because many learners do not have consistent, reliable access to Wi-Fi, the Bookshelf platform has been designed to work both online and 100% offline. Content can be downloaded on multiple devices, ensuring students can study without having to rely on Wi-Fi.

MODERN ACCESS MODELS:

Inclusive Access: We believe students should have access to all their course materials at the lowest possible price and on the very first day of class. Inclusive Access (IA) allows students to easily discover, manage, and purchase content within the Learning Management System (LMS)—reducing the need to search for different sources to buy content and compare prices. Students have the choice to opt in or opt out at the course level and purchases are billed to their student account through the bursar’s office, allowing students to use financial aid.

Max Inclusive Access: Institutions that have offered Inclusive Access at the course level may consider evolving to a full Inclusive Access experience for all courses and majors. Max IA puts all materials that are available digitally into Inclusive Access (or as much as possible). Students access all content on day one via the campus LMS and continue to pay for course materials item by item. They also maintain the ability to opt in or opt out at the item or course level with items billed to their student account.

With **Equitable Access programs**, all required learning materials for an entire term are provided to students directly in the LMS on day one of classes. Just like Inclusive Access, students have all their course materials on the first day of class. All students pay a single, affordable flat fee for access to all required materials for a given term. This model supports the use of financial aid, and opt-in or opt-out is available at the program level.

The **Subscription Model** provides easy, on-demand access to a wide selection of content on a platform that can be personalized to an individual user’s needs or interests. An institution may choose to create custom collections, giving students access to curated content spanning multiple sources to support learning, rather than a traditional “one book for a course” model. Subscriptions provide flexible access options and pricing models across a variety of use cases: library discovery, institutional adoptions, and subscription sales.

Direct Integration solutions provide seamless, day-one access in the LMS. This is ideal for institutions that offer materials to learners as part of their tuition or fees. Students don’t have to spend time or money on their required course materials because they are included in their up-front costs. The Direct Integration decision is made at the institutional level, however; student opt-out is available where needed.

CONCLUSION

By solving for access, institutions can also create dramatic improvements in course materials’ affordability and make higher education more equitable for all. VitalSource is committed to helping more students access the content they need with innovative solutions and platforms that simplify access to virtually any type of content (courseware, etexts, custom content, and OER). By working with our industry partners toward the same goal, we can expand the reach of high-quality materials and level the playing field with affordable access for all.

¹ VitalSource / Morning Consult 2019 Study