

The Text and Academic Authors Association (TAA) is a nonprofit membership association of more than 1,200 textbook and academic authors. TAA is the only association committed solely to assisting and protecting the rights of textbook and academic authors. TAA was established in 1987 for those interested in developing and publishing educational materials, including textbooks, articles for academic journals and other academic writing, software, videos, monographs, reference books, and multimedia CD-ROM disks. TAA's mission is to enhance the quality of educational materials and assist text and academic authors in matters involving them, including taxes, copyright, royalties and better appreciation of their work within the academic environment.

Since its inception in 1987, TAA members have held the problems of complimentary copies and used textbooks to be among the most worrisome and aggravating ones of the profession. An historical look at TAA's fight against the sale of complimentary copies can be found on its website at: www.TAAonline.net/mediaroom/stompcomp.html

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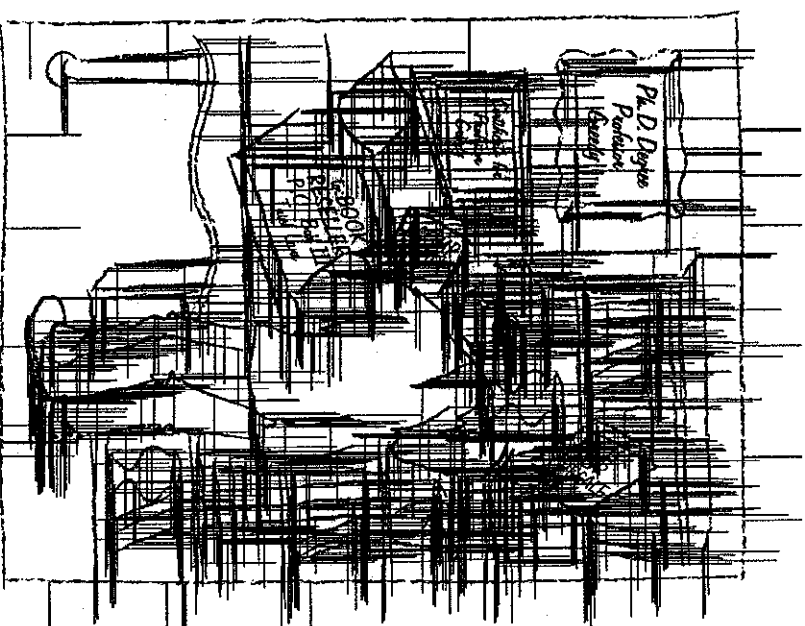
TEXT AND ACADEMIC AUTHORS ASSOCIATION

www.TAAonline.net

Stomp the GOMP

Why You Should Stop Selling Your Comp Copies to Book Resellers

> By selling complimentary copies, you contribute to the used book problem, and the high costs of textbooks



The high cost of textbooks is a hot topic in the news these days. Congress is initiating a probe into the cost of college textbooks; California and other states are proposing legislation aimed toward curbing the price of textbooks at both el-hi and college levels; and CALPIRG, the California arm of PIRG (Public Interest Research Group), gained national attention with its call for publishers to reduce the price of textbooks and to lengthen the time between revisions. While CALPIRG is blaming what they see as frequent and unnecessary revisions as the cause of high textbook prices, the real culprits behind the rising cost of textbooks are the sale of used books and complimentary copies.

The general public is unaware of this practice, mainly because those who profit from it don't want it to go away. Most college administrators do not want to discuss it; book vendors and college bookstores exploit it; and faculty who are doing it don't want to lose the money it generates.

Publishers freely distribute their textbooks to faculty members for their examination, in the hope that they will adopt the book for classroom use. Some faculty members sell these books for cash to used-book dealers at prices ranging from \$10 to \$35 per book. These books are sold as used books, sometimes even as new books. When this happens, the publisher receives no revenue and the author, the creator of the intellectual property, receives no royalty. The lost sales are treated as a cost of doing business that is ultimately reflected in new book prices.

Think twice before selling your complimentary copies to book resellers

When you sell your complimentary copies to book resellers, you are inflicting much more damage to the textbook industry than your sale is gaining you. Each book you sell to book buyers takes the place of a new book that pays royalties to authors, and earns revenue for publishers, causing them to have to introduce a new edition more frequently just to recoup some of the loss of funds from those sales.

The Text and Academic Authors Association (TAA) asks that rather than selling your complimentary copies to book buyers, you donate them to your university library, send them back to the publisher, or destroy them. Selling these books only hurts students in the long run by causing textbook costs to rise.

Selling comp copies is not illegal, but it is unethical

TAA realizes that selling complimentary copies is not illegal, but, and many colleges and universities agree, it is unethical. It is the seediest side of the entire used book problem.

Book resellers know how seedy the practice is, and the fact is that it is frowned upon by both employers and colleagues. That is why some book resellers make it easy for faculty members to resell books "confidentially." Bookbyte.com assures its customers that their privacy is protected, "NEVER" sharing information with anyone. Why would you need to assure your customers so vehemently of such confidentiality when soliciting for used textbooks unless

you knew that some faculty selling comp copies may be ashamed of the act?

One book reseller even advises its customers, "We understand your need for privacy; if other instructors or students see that you sell college textbooks (desk copies, etc.), they might not understand that sometimes shelf-space is more important than collecting dozens of books on the same subject! [Why would they not understand that?] While packing your books to ship to our online service, your colleagues will assume you are merely 'taking your books home.'" Why the need for this "assurance" of confidentiality if the faculty member is doing nothing wrong? Why does the faculty member need to skulk around to resell his or her comp copies? Because it's wrong to do so and even the book resellers know it.

Walk a mile in our shoes

Put yourself in our (the author's) shoes. What if students could legally record your lectures as video podcasts and sell them to other students, who would get the same credit for taking the class as a series of podcasts as they would for taking the live class from you? After spending hours developing your lectures, your unique way of teaching your subject, and standing in front of a classroom for a full year delivering your lectures, those same lectures would earn you nothing the second year. No one signs up for our live lectures anymore because they can take your class via a video podcast for half the cost.

What would you do? You would most likely change your lectures a little bit each year, so that students who videotaped last year's lectures and tried to sell them to students wanting to take the podcast version of your course this year, would be out of luck. The school isn't going to accept a student's podcasted attendance of your course unless it is exactly the same as your live course. And since you are forced to do the additional work of changing your lectures each year to get around these podcast versions of your courses, which gain you no revenue, you ask every year for more money to teach that course. It's only fair right?

Sometimes the changes you make to your live lectures really are warranted. There have been advances in your field, etc. But no one cares about that anymore. They only

see you as a greedy professor who doesn't want students to take your course if you don't get some money for it, so they ignore your explanations, and they say you are only greedy, and you want students to suffer at your expense.

To top it all off, not only are the students on your campus benefiting from the podcast versions of your lectures, but the students at other universities (where you have contracts to teach, say during the summer months) are also benefiting through podcast resellers who buy up copies of the podcast versions of your lectures and sell them to these students — with no royalties from these sales coming back to you. The next summer, the school in which you contracted to teach some summer courses, calls up and says, "We won't need you this year. We have the podcasts of your lectures."

Please think about that when book buyers, who did not toil for years to write that book, or expend any resources to edit it or in any way produce its final product, knock on your door or send you an email asking you to sell those pesky complimentary copies that are cluttering your bookshelves...

