



Case Study



TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

In many fields, the passage of time is paralleled by progress: discoveries, developments, and ideas passed on to best prepare students to continue such progress. But unfortunately, the age-old traditional textbook industry has been unable to keep up with documenting all this new information for students and professors alike.

In the same vein, the way professors present this information has evolved as well—and traditional textbooks simply are not cutting it anymore.

ABOUT SKYEPACK

Skyepack designs custom digital course materials for educators across the country, giving them access to a dedicated team of designers who curate and create innovative—and course-specific—digital educational materials. Throughout the thorough design process, Skyepack independently builds upon the existing course materials of instructors, sourcing additional relevant resources through their digital database and giving professors time to focus on what is most important – improving their effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

The modernized approach to creating custom learning materials from Skyepack allows professors to provide students with the most up-to-date information, ensuring that course materials are as flexible as the lesson plans of professors. Best of all, the low-cost and budget-friendly solutions from Skyepack ensure financial accessibility and equal learning outcomes for all students.

THE CHALLENGE

Dr. George Eichenberg is a criminal justice professor at Tarleton University College of Liberal and Fine Arts.

About three years ago, Dr. Eichenberg realized that traditional textbooks were not working for him and his students. He disliked the available textbooks, as the content and the composition were limiting his teaching abilities and did not match his presentation style. Because of this, he ended up writing the majority of his materials and referencing materials in the public domain.

But sourcing and writing content all on his own was unsustainable. Eventually, the Skyepack team reached out to him, and he was interested in learning more about how he could help curate digital learning materials to best present information he wanted students to know in a way that complemented his teaching style.

THE STRATEGY

Criminal Justice is a vast and varied field that is constantly changing. Different jurisdictions imply different laws, and new judicial precedents are frequent. Because of this, the abandonment of traditional textbooks for his course materials helped Dr. Eichenberg ensure effectiveness. After an introductory chat with the Skyepack team, they got to work on developing a sample e-textbook based on his materials and his syllabus to prove to Dr. Eichenberg that they could take some of the work of content curation off his hands. And it worked.

After reviewing the sample set of materials, Dr. Eichenberg was convinced, describing that “it had all the neat stuff that I like, but just don’t have the time (to find).” As a result, the Skyepack team pressed on; over the next few months, Dr. Eichenberg and the Skyepack team worked together to source information, develop drafts, and make edits and changes to his new Criminal Justice coursepack. When asked about this process, Dr. Eichenberg emphasized that the team was “very, very flexible and easy to work with...They usually got back to me within a day or two with changes.”

Additionally, as a professor who had only ever relied on traditional textbooks or his materials beforehand, Dr. Eichenberg was pleased with how easy the digital materials from Skyepack were to interact with and change. He noted, “I’m not a techie...the technological skill level matched my own.”

Overall, Dr. Eichenberg wanted to ensure these new materials would match his approach to teaching Criminal Justice. The Skyepack process ensured this would be the outcome and Dr. Eichenberg noted that now, what his students reference via the e-textbook “goes along pretty well with what I’m teaching in class.”

Lastly, Dr. Eichenberg noted that the low price point of these materials makes them accessible. A significant percentage of his students are first-generation college students, and many work to put themselves through school or get stuck in a drop-in/drop-out cycle due to financial burdens. “I really like that Skyepack is so reasonably priced for what you get—textbooks have gotten so ridiculously expensive, and there are so many...I couldn’t use all the chapters...With this, they’re getting the exact materials I want them to have at an extraordinarily reasonable price.”

IMPACT

Dr. Eichenberg was particularly thrilled with how the custom digital materials from Skyepack matched his course content and teaching style—and the impact the materials are having on his students. “I think they’re doing better...I know I’ve got more students who are accessing it and reading it,” as opposed to not doing so with his former course materials.

He also added that the editability of the e-book helps keep the information fresh, relevant, and accurate, which is especially important in the ever-changing criminal justice field. “Recent changes...have had a major impact on the way we teach...But with the course pack, I can react a lot faster and get materials to students a lot faster.”

Additionally, Dr. Eichenberg noted that the development process helped him think through his classes and what he was teaching students. He thinks the process of sourcing, drafting, and editing the materials helps to keep him on track during the semester, adding that he’s “a little better organized” because of it.

Lastly, Dr. Eichenberg emphasized the value of the Skyepack format.

“I THINK THE WAY THE MATERIALS ARE SET UP...(IS) MORE ADAPTABLE TO STUDENTS’ LEARNING STYLES...STUDENTS TODAY ARE A LITTLE MORE VISUAL...WITH SKYEPACK, THEY CAN STAY FOCUSED AND STAY BETTER ORGANIZED.”

A TRUSTED PARTNERSHIP

“As you can probably tell, I’m very enthusiastic about it. The teams have been very easy to work with and very responsive. I like the materials and the students seem to like the materials. Overall, **I think it’s a win for everybody involved.**”

Looking for a partner to help you develop custom digital course materials for higher education, K-12 education, and corporate instruction?

Go to the link below to schedule a 20-minute introductory call with Skyepack today!