

The OpenBook project a step towards universal access to education for all Jamaicans

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Abstract

Currently it cost approximately \$18,000 to \$20,000 Jamaican dollars to purchase required text books for students in grades four to six in primary school and first to sixth form in secondary schools [1]. Compounded over a number of years, the total cost of purchasing books could easily exceed \$200,000 Jamaican dollars per child. Additionally most Jamaican homes typically have more than one child [2] and the cost of the acquiring books is not only prohibitive to parents but it also puts a large economic burden on the Ministry of Education to purchase books for book rental in secondary schools [3] and consequently the Jamaican taxpayer. This is a recurring cost for each generation. However with the continued improvement in technology, it is now possible and feasible to significantly or eliminate this cost by employing electronic books.

This paper will present the details of the proposed Open Book project. This project will see the members of the Jamaican community, both locally and internationally collaboratively creating books for Jamaican students. Students, teachers, parents will be able to access, remix and distributed these books freely. Teachers will be able to create versions of the books that are specially adapted to the specific learning style of their students. The Ministry of education will be primarily responsible for ensuring that the books adhere to specified standards.

It is anticipated that the outcome of this project will be a significant reduction in the cost of essential textbooks for students, thus making education more accessible to the Jamaican people and removing one more barrier to universal access to education.

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