

Academic e-book conference in Cape Town

Van Schaik Bookstore will host its first e-book conference at Zevenwacht Wine Estate in Cape Town today, Wednesday, 5 May 2011. The conference, In Search of E-learning Excellence, will emphasise the way forward for academic e-books in the South African context and the benefits of adopting this technology into the academic environment.



Speakers include William Chesser, VP of Ingram Digital, Arthur Atwell from Book Works, Martin Butler, Butler Research and Ben Williams from Little White Bakkie. They will be tackling issues such as, current trends in global e-textbooks; alternative models for e-book content distribution; packaging and tailoring for specific audiences with African case studies and the role of booksellers in the e-book supply chain to students. The key findings will be made available publicly.

Melvin Kaabwe, digital manager at Van Schaik Bookstore, believes that e-books are the future. "We recognize that the potential of e-books in the academic market is enormous and are striving to keep pace with technological developments and to offer the best e-book solutions to our customers."

According to Kaabwe, the benefits of e-books for students include, "Improved access to extended resources for students including multimedia within e-books; simultaneous multi-user study groups, search and highlighting properties that can be socially networked over distributed geographic locations; automatic marking and convenient assessment tools for lecturers which are personalised per student and an additional income stream for publishers."

Industry challenges

The industry is currently challenged by the limited available undergraduate study material in e-book format; lack of strategy from government to contribute financially to e-book readers to tertiary students and the fact that publishers prefer to own the entire e-reading supply channel on their own individual platforms because they have spent vast amounts in doing so and therefore want to recoup their investments.

Attendees will have an opportunity to see exhibitions of some of the latest hardware, access platforms, and other software involved in delivering academic e-reading and course management. In addition, they will have the opportunity to pose questions during panel discussions.

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