VitalSource®

The Road to Digital

Central Michigan University's
Inclusive Access Program

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Crafting CMU's Vision

Tailoring IA for Student Success

Central Michigan University (CMU) has embarked on a transformative journey to enhance its educational resource delivery through an Inclusive Access (IA) program.

CMU created and refined its IA program to best fit the needs of its students and the institution, exploring learning objectives, overcoming challenges, and creating a vision for the future of course materials on campus.

Inclusive Access is a course-by-course delivery model that ensures students are ready to learn on day one. With IA, digital content is automatically delivered to participating students by the first day of class, and all content is discovered, managed, and accessed within the campus learning management system (LMS).

Increased Sell-Through with IA

CMU's community-oriented atmosphere has been the bedrock of the bookstore's growth. Experiencing a low sell-through rate for physical textbooks, the institution recognized the necessity of a digital shift. From the start, **the three goals for the Inclusive Access program were affordability, ease of billing, and day-one access.**

Kim Yates, Assistant Director, CMU Bookstore, explained that sell-through rates led them to initially explore IA. "[Before IA] if I was ordering 80 books, I was only selling maybe 40 of them. With IA and with digital, our opt-out is only 3%, so we're getting 97% sell-through."

The IA initiative presented a viable solution, **ensuring near-total sell-through and financial benefits for students.** The partnership with VitalSource provided the technological and strategic support needed to navigate this transition effectively.

> "I reach out every time a physical book is added and ask the instructor if they want to participate [in digital IA]. According to the metrics, we're about 40% now in IA, so I keep growing the program. That's the other main goal."
> **Kim Yates, Assistant Director, CMU Bookstore**

IA Campus Champions

When CMU started IA with just a few classes, getting faculty approval for the new program was a hurdle to overcome. "The biggest challenge for us was the buy-in from faculty because they're the ones making the choice, and it's worked out. We started slowly with just a few classes, and now we're trying to get everything as much as possible into the IA program," said Barry Waters, Director, CMU Bookstore.

Even beginning with only a handful of classes, **the program received an overwhelmingly positive response from the CMU community,** growing to 40% of classes participating in IA. The program's low opt-out rate and the introduction of a centralized resource hub in the university's LMS, Blackboard, signify the successful integration of digital resources into the academic fabric. **Administrators have reported significant financial savings for students, which reflects the program's alignment with the university's fiscal goals.**

The positive outcomes affirm the program's role as a valuable asset in fostering accessible and cost-effective education for the university's student body.

> "The champions of IA on campus are the instructors. It's their choice to participate, so they'll speak with their colleagues and spread the word. And the ones that I have are loyal and know it's their choice to participate. It's a good relationship with our instructors."
> **Barry Waters, Director, CMU Bookstore**

CMU by the Numbers

40%
Digital/IA

50k
IA Units per Semester

97%
Participation Rate

Student Savings Since Program Inception is Now $6,710,690

Unlocking Success

CMU saw the value in both VitalSource and the comprehensive Verba Campus Tool Suite that came with the partnership, including Verba Connect.

"Working with VitalSource makes IA so easy. It's streamlined and becoming more streamlined every semester. The [Verba] Collect tool allows us to communicate directly with instructors, gives instructors a chance to mark interest in IA, and lets us reach out and ask them to participate," said Yates.

"It's very easy to use, and the folks [at VitalSource] are very easy to work with, making it different from others. Everybody knows there is help, personal help, here anytime they need it," said Yates.

The partnership has thrived on mutual support and a shared goal of improving access to affordable educational materials.

> "The experience with VitalSource has been wonderful, and the support that we've had has been just wonderful. Just a great group of people to work with and [I'm] so glad that we've partnered with them."
> **Kim Yates, Assistant Director, CMU Bookstore**

Advancing into the Future

As CMU looks ahead, the goal is to amplify the IA program's reach and get the word out about affordability with the aim of exceeding the current 40% digital adoption rate. The university plans to continue its vigorous outreach efforts by utilizing VitalSource's Verba Collect adoption tool to identify and promote IA-eligible materials. **The ultimate objective is to further integrate IA into CMU's culture, making it a cornerstone of the university's resource provision strategy.**

"If we're at 40% now, let's try to hit 50% in the next year… just reach out every time a book is adopted and do the research on it to see if it is available in IA, which Verba Collect helps with. It shows us what's available, confirms that, and then sends an email. We gain new courses every semester and just reach out and spread the word," said Yates.

40%
Growth

2023

IA

Goal of 10% increase
in IA over the course
of **the next year.**

50%
Growth

2024
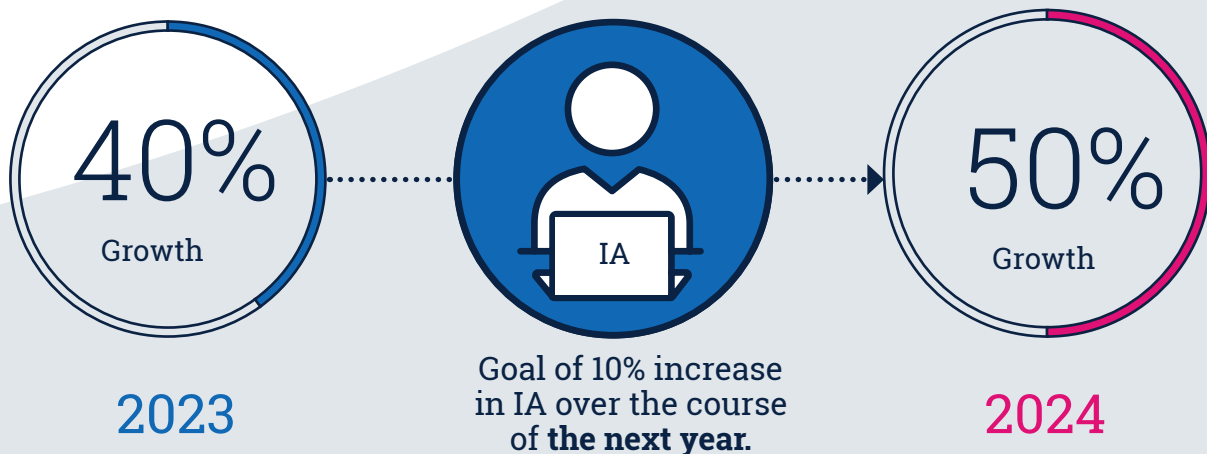
Strategic Lessons from CMU

For institutions on the cusp of adopting an IA model, CMU and VitalSource advocate for a **gradual, informed approach.** Initiating the journey with a solid partnership and clear communication between all stakeholders is essential. Engaging faculty and students early on, addressing their concerns, and demonstrating the tangible benefits of IA are critical for fostering acceptance and achieving enduring success.

Overall, CMU's adoption of IA with VitalSource has not only **revolutionized its bookstore operations** but has also set a precedent for how educational institutions can **leverage technology to improve students' access to learning materials.**

[IA has] been great for us and it's more cost-effective for our students. Plus, they have it all on day one in the [campus LMS]."
Kim Yates, Assistant Director, CMU Bookstore

> **"**

"This collaboration has led to a streamlined process for data collection, enrollment tracking, and instructor engagement, distinguishing CMU's IA program from others."

Kim Yates, Assistant Director, CMU Bookstore

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An Inclusive Access Case Study

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