VitalSource®

Case Study: BPP University

VitalSource helps ensure every student benefits from a modern learning environment

BPP has evolved over the years, starting as an organisation providing course materials for business and accountancy, then eventually becoming a full-fledged university in 2007. They now offer degrees in business, law, accountancy, technology, financial services, and more.

As a relatively new university, BPP prides itself on its forward-thinking approach to teaching and learning—a trait it shares with VitalSource, which has been its partner since 2014.

Accessibility: Helping all students get the most out of BPP courses

Accessibility of learning materials is a key issue for higher education institutions, and one which VitalSource is committed to helping address.

BPP delivers online, distance learning, and face-to-face courses to a wide range of students with varying needs. This means that as well as discussing key issues within lectures and seminars, students are expected to undertake independent reading of additional texts, which are hosted within the BPP virtual learning environment.

> "Accessibility is something we are focused on, particularly with the provision of our professional apprenticeship courses, where professionals are teaching professionals and many of the students are distance learners. We want to make sure that as we roll this out, we take into account the increasingly diverse student body in terms of age, distance, and ability."
>
> Andy Horton, Library Manager, BPP Law School

The university is focused on providing each of its students with the tools and materials they need to succeed in their academic endeavours—no matter how they choose to learn or what extra support they may need.

Currently, BPP uses VitalSource for the provision of its core texts. In the past, students were issued with just a print version of the textbooks, but today the library works in conjunction with the learning support team and VitalSource to provide eTextbooks or digital resources for all students.

Not only do digital learning tools help BPP's students learn independently and at distance, they also support its students with additional needs to get the most out of the course. Support for these students is delivered by BPP on a case-by-case basis, but one tool that seems to be universally favoured is the read-aloud function.

> "Lecturers may teach you for an hour, but that won't be enough to fully widen your knowledge. Core texts are an absolutely key source of information and learning, and being able to access them on my laptop or mobile device has been very useful.
>
> "As a student with a visual impairment, I used to rely on someone reciting sections of books to me or having core texts converted into an accessible format. With VitalSource, all my core texts are available in an accessible format, and one which is compatible with my adapted computer and its speech synthesiser."
>
> - BPP Law student with a visual impairment

VitalSource

VitalSource recently commissioned research surveying students across 184 UK universities about their interaction with eTextbooks.

- All respondents with a disability reported that links to eTextbooks within the course model saved them time and hassle, and had a positive impact on their learning experience.

- Compared to all students, they are more likely to report that eTextbooks make them feel prepared (78% compared to 73%) and worry less (66% compared to 60%).

- Students with a visual, hearing, or other cognitive disability were more likely to report that some features, such as ability to magnify text, had a positive impact on their learning compared to their peers (94% vs. 87%).

This particular BPP Law student was new to digital learning tools and was being supported by the library in finding cases and legislation online. VitalSource met with the student to ensure he knew how to navigate around his core texts using the keyboard. We demonstrated how to use tools that allowed him to copy and paste materials and use references within the texts to find the information he needed from these texts more easily.

"I would absolutely recommend VitalSource to any visually impaired student, and in fact, I have. I recently attended a forum for university students with disabilities and suggested that other students ask their universities about subscribing to VitalSource."

- BPP Law student with a visual impairment

Being able to listen to a voice that is familiar while learning can have a real benefit for those students who rely on the read-aloud function of their eTextbooks. With VitalSource, BPP is able to ensure that all of their core texts and other necessary materials are synced to the voice reader on their personal computers, meaning they can learn in a way that they feel comfortable with from day one.

"We want to ensure that all of our students can have that level of independence. To be able to study independently with their own assistive software so they're not dependent on those around them. We feel that digital tools can support this goal, and it is something we focus on when making decisions about which product interfaces to use and partners we work with."

Andy Horton, Library Manager, BPP Law School

Choosing partners with shared values

It was this focus on the independence and freedom for students, no matter their needs, that led BPP to choose VitalSource as its eTextbook provider.

VitalSource: Committed to Accessibility

Our aim is to bring exciting, engaging, and accessible content to all learners. We provide easy-to-use tools to those with disabilities in order to help them succeed.

For over a decade, VitalSource has been committed to providing digital course materials with superior accessibility options for our desktop, online, and mobile eTextbook reader (VitalSource Bookshelf®) applications. So regardless of your choice of device or browser, we will be there for you.

VitalSource maintains an ongoing commitment to assure that its delivery platforms conform to both domestic and international accessibility standards wherever possible. In doing this, we enable every user to take advantage of assistive technology as they require it, without the need for any special versions of our applications or content.

www.getvitalsource.com

Asia | Australia | Canada | Dubai | Germany | Mexico | South Africa | United Kingdom | United States