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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

'Pepper & Friends' fans discuss strategies for saving show

By Emily Ponder

August 6, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Liz Schmidt will draw a black border around the Sept. 18 box on her calendar. For her, it will be a day of mourning, the last day “Pepper & Friends” will air on KOMU/Channel 8.

Schmidt and more than 60 community members met Wednesday to discuss actions that could be taken to challenge the cancellation of KOMU’s long-running local talk show.

The town hall style meeting was true to the community content of the show attendees were trying to save. Despite a light-hearted opening with a song about crossing bridges sung by meeting facilitator Larry Brown, the mood at the meeting turned serious as attendees voiced opinions and concerns about the reasons for taking the show off the air.

“We wanted the public to be able to come out and try to get answers from the three people that would know the answers to the questions,” said Nancy Atkinson, who helped organize the meeting and gather petitions from the public.

Organizers of the meeting invited all parties involved, including KOMU general manager Marty Siddall, MU Chancellor Brady Deaton, MU Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services Jacquelyn Jones and the show’s host, Paul Pepper. While Siddall, Deaton and Jones were unable to attend, Pepper was there.

The agenda of the meeting originally included a question and answer session with Siddall, Deaton and Jones, according to Mary Hussman, who also helped organize the event. Instead, questions for them along with the evening’s discussion were recorded and will be delivered to each individual on Thursday, Atkinson said. Cutout boards in the shape of those absent were set on chairs and labeled with names to represent the absent parties.

The primary reason for canceling the show, according to an original news release from Siddall, was due to budget issues. Siddall was unable to return phone calls Tuesday and Wednesday. However, Mary Jo Banken, director of the MU News Bureau, took media calls on behalf of Siddall.

Banken was unable to comment on Siddall's reasons for not attending the meeting. A statement from MU, approved by Siddall, Deaton and Jones, was also released Wednesday. The statement provides further detail about the cancellation and KOMU's commitment to community service, and Banken said the statement was meant to be read at the meeting in lieu of Siddall's attendance.

The statement said criteria for making operational decisions to cut the program was directly related to the academic environment at KOMU, which is affiliated with the MU School of Journalism and provides a training ground for broadcast students. Because it is a learning environment, it is "imperative" not to operate at a financial loss, according to the statement.

"It was basically a business decision, and you'll see that when you look at the budget," Banken said.

According to the operating budget for "Pepper & Friends," the show lost \$74,211.50 in the 2009 fiscal year. The statement also pointed out that efforts to work within a budget were not solely aimed at "Pepper & Friends" but resulted in the elimination of 13 jobs in the weeks prior to the decision to eliminate the program.

At the meeting, responses to the statement, which quoted the revenue and cost of production, were generally ones of doubt about the accuracy of the information.

"I cannot agree that it's the money," Pepper said at the meeting. Pepper said he and co-host James Mouser both offered to take a pay cut that would cover almost the entire loss but said Siddall did not accept the offer.

The general consensus of the meeting was one of taking action to keep the show on the air. Already, petitions and letters have been delivered to Siddall, Deaton, Jones and the Federal Communications Commission in addition to a protest outside of KOMU last month. Atkinson said she felt responses to the efforts have been "canned answers."

"I call it propaganda," Atkinson said.

Atkinson said she has received a letter from Siddall that did not satisfy the answers to her questions. She said it addressed efforts from KOMU to include the community content featured on "Pepper & Friends" in other news segments.

KOMU plans to keep content similar to "Pepper & Friends" in its morning programming and will feature the popular "Pet Corner" segment of the show on the 5 p.m. newscast, according to the MU statement.

However, community members still voiced concern at the meeting over the loss of community content and decided to take action in various forms including researching the show's advertising revenue and taking legislative action.

"This is just one in a series of public statements," Brown said.



'Save Pepper' event set on campus today

Wednesday, August 5, 2009

The movement to save the KOMU-TV talk/variety show "Pepper & Friends" continues with a town meeting tonight on the University of Missouri campus.

The meeting will be from 7 to 8 p.m. in Room 113 of the Arts and Sciences Building. Organizers are inviting any interested members of the public and MU administrators to attend.

KOMU, a university-owned television station, announced in May that the station is canceling "Pepper & Friends," with the last show scheduled for Sept. 18. Host Paul Pepper has since made a deal to do weekday segments for radio station KBIA starting in October.

The★Star

THE KANSAS CITY STAR

Thursday, Aug 6, 2009

MU chancellor says ex-coach Stewart no longer shaking the money tree

Brady Deaton, chancellor of the Columbia campus of the University of Missouri, is shaking his head over the hubbub created by a story from St. Louis that **Norm Stewart** is no longer a special assistant to Deaton.

"I never thought this was much about Norm not having a title," Deaton said. "He certainly has a title as coach emeritus of the University of Missouri."

What Stewart, officially at least, is no longer doing is working in support of the university's capital campaign. That, in part, is because the fund-raising effort officially ended late last year.

"Norm and I talked about this in December," Deaton said. "There really is no issue beyond that."

"Norm and **Virginia** (Norm's wife) have provided great support for the university and I'm sure will continue to."

Stewart, who won 634 games as the Tigers' basketball coach, did not immediately return phone calls. However, as recently as the NCAA Tournament, Stewart expressed no displeasure with his relationship with Mizzou.

| **Mike DeArmond**, mdearmond@kcstar.com

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<http://www.kansascity.com>

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Online textbooks are gaining popularity, changing how students study

By Dani Martinson

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COLUMBIA -- Even though Steven Osterlind has authored print textbooks, **the MU education professor** decided to use a digital textbook for the first time this summer.

Osterlind, who taught an introduction to educational statistics class, said the online textbook provided students with additional information and resources if they didn't understand material covered in lecture or in their printed textbook.

Digital textbooks are able to provide direct links to accompanying audio or video. Osterlind said almost every paragraph of the textbook linked to supplementary media or guiding questions. Still, the new technology was an adjustment for his class.

"It took some time getting used to for me and the students," Osterlind said. "Students are used to things being digitally presented, but it still took them a while."

As the cost of printed textbooks continues to rise, some students and professors are turning to digital options to supplement learning. Digital textbooks are usually about 50 percent cheaper than regular textbooks, said **Michelle Froese, public relations manager for MU student and auxiliary services.**

At the same time, students don't receive money from textbook buyback like they can with regular textbooks, Froese said. Digital textbooks also tend to be available for a semester, whereas students can choose to keep their printed textbooks.

Since its launch in August 2007, students at more than 5,000 colleges and universities have purchased e-textbooks from CourseSmart, according to Gabrielle Zucker, a spokeswoman for the digital textbook company.

The California-based business has worked with 12 higher education textbook manufacturers, including Pearson, Cengage Learning and McGraw-Hill, to make about 7,000 books available in an e-book format. Zucker said the company's sales are up 600 percent this year compared to last year.

This spring, **MU's University Bookstore** offered 70 different digital textbooks, Froese said. Of the 277,966 textbooks sold last year, 326 were digital. The bookstore plans to offer about 200 digital textbooks this fall, she said.

Stephens College's bookstore, The Bookshelf, is a branch of MU's bookstore and, according to Froese, no Stephens professors plan to use digital textbooks this fall. Columbia College's bookstore is an affiliate of Barnes and Noble College Bookstores, which could not be reached for more information on the use of digital textbooks at the college.

The digital textbook used in Osterlind's MU class supplemented a printed textbook. Student Jenna Yungck said she thought the digital textbook was easy to use.

"It has great online examples for every problem," she said.

Clyde Bentley, a professor in the MU School of Journalism, said he hasn't used a printed textbook in four years. He started using digital textbooks in his advertising classes because there were few print books available on the subject.

Bentley said he found the switch to digital beneficial because it allowed information to be more easily updated. He discussed a recent experience with a printed book about Internet commerce. The book didn't mention eBay or Amazon.com because those companies weren't popular when the book was written. It then took three years until the book was printed, Bentley said.

"Textbooks are not like novels. They don't stand the test of time," Bentley said. "A textbook has to be constantly changed and updated to be valid."

While Bentley has felt confident using digital textbooks, he said his students did not initially react the same way.

“At first, the students really didn’t like it because it was online,” Bentley said. “It was really interesting because these were the same students telling me the news media needed to go to the Web.”

A research study about the use of digital textbooks at MU was conducted in the spring by a group of students in an MU marketing research class. While the research was focused on students, the group found professors were more accepting of digital textbooks than students, according to Ashley Calcaterra, a member of the research group.

“I think it’s because they (professors) don’t have to worry about the same things students do, such as the ease of studying with digital texts,” Calcaterra said.

According to Calcaterra, the research study was conducted using a marketing research process and formulas provided by the professor. About 300 students from different majors and class rankings were asked to complete a survey of about 15 questions on the uses of digital textbooks.

Calcaterra said many of the surveyed students hadn’t experienced digital textbooks and “do not fully understand how they are used.”

National Association of College Stores spokesman Charles Schmidt

Open source textbooks give students a cheaper option

By Dani Martinson

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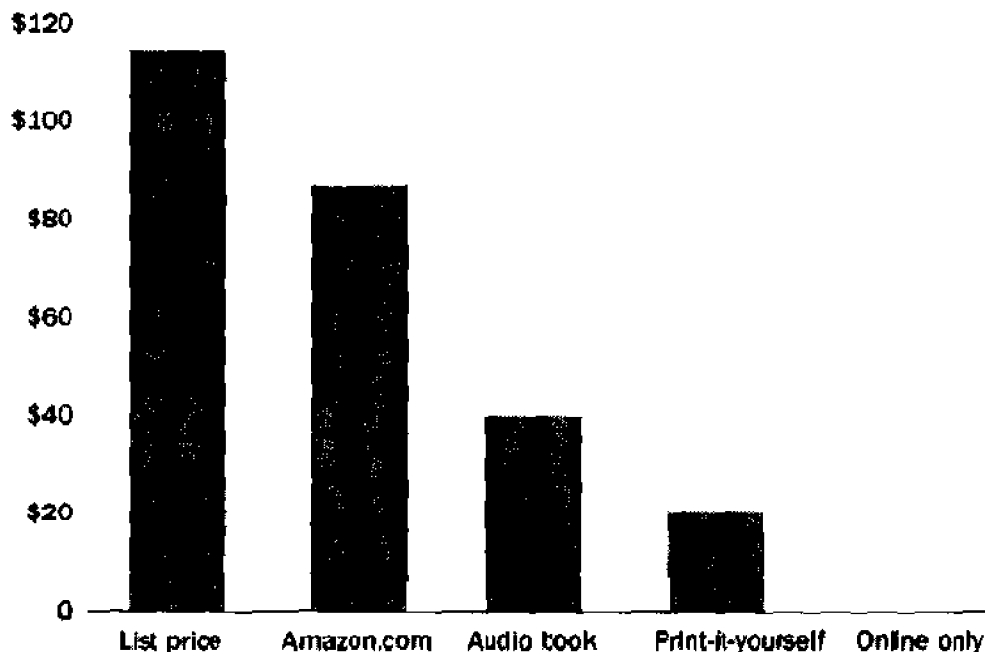
No MU Mention

SAME BOOK, DIFFERENT PRICES

Textbooks are becoming more readily available in alternative formats to help students cope with book costs. "Exploring Business," by Karen Collins, is one textbook offered in multiple formats. An open source version is also available free online.

COMPARISON OF PRICES

Prices for "Exploring Business," by Karen Collins



Source: AMAZON.COM, COURSESMART.COM, FLATWORLDKNOWLEDGE.COM

MICHAEL SCHRANTZ/Missourian

Textbooks are becoming more readily available in alternative formats to help students cope with book costs. "Exploring Business," by Karen Collins, is one textbook offered in multiple formats. An open source version is also available free online. ; [Michael Schrantz](#)

COLUMBIA — Eric Frank, co-founder of a New York-based open source textbook distributor [Flat World Knowledge](#), describes digital textbooks as act one of the digital textbook movement and open source textbooks as act two.

Open source textbooks, like the ones offered by Flat World Knowledge, can still be professionally written and edited, but they are published under a Creative Commons license that allows faculty to adapt the book to fit their individual needs.

"I think there is a lack of understanding about what open source textbooks are," said Frank, who co-founded the company in 2007. "It doesn't mean anything about how the book will be produced or created. They are defined by their legal license."

Flat World Knowledge's Web site invites users to "customize, remix, tweak and build upon our work non-commercially, so long as you credit our authors and us, and license your new creations under identical terms."

"Faculty can take an existing book by an expert and be able to view it as something they can reorganize to better fit their class," Frank said. "They can replace examples with more relevant and local examples."

Flat World Knowledge served about 1,000 students at 28 colleges and universities during spring semester, Frank said. This fall, they expect more than 40,000 student users at about 350 schools.

Four professors in Missouri Western's School of Business will team up with Flat World Knowledge in the fall to use an open source textbook for the first time in their introduction to business classes.

The decision to switch to digital was made when the college was informed that Flat World Knowledge would offer a free online version of the printed textbook, "Exploring Business," already used in the class.

"Students are spending a lot of money on books that, in their perspective, they don't use," said Beverly Payne, general business instructor in Missouri Western's College of Business. "This offers a choice for students."

Rob Boyle, a professor in the St. Louis University School of Business, will also use the "Exploring Business" open source textbook offered by Flat World Knowledge in his business foundations course this fall.

"Beyond wanting to continue with the same text, we were interested in offering students the option to buy the text, buy individual chapters or read it online for free," Boyle said.

Flat World Knowledge digital textbooks are available online for free, but they also provide options to purchase the book in other formats so students can decide what is appropriate for them, Frank said.

While Frank acknowledged the challenge faced by students without home access to a computer or Internet, he said he still thinks printed textbooks cause more inequity.

"I see a bigger inequity when a book is only available in print for over \$100," Frank said. "They may not be able to read the online book every night, but they will be able to buy the printed copy for \$30."

With the decision to switch to digital partially because of the high cost of printed textbooks, Payne said she expects students will respond favorably to the transition. However, she said it may require more responsibility of students to remember to go online and read without the reminder of a printed textbook sitting on their desk.

"I believe there will always be a need for a printed book of some sort, whether you print it yourself," she said. "Learning styles vary."