

Economic impact of digital textbook piracy

This one-pager highlights the economic consequences of piracy of digital textbooks targeted at higher education and is based on a report prepared by Hjarn von Zernichow Borberg, CphFacilitation in February 2024.

The analysis deals with the losses due to piracy of digital textbooks and focuses in particular on the financial losses for Danish rights holders (authors and publishers) and for the Danish state. The estimate of the total economic loss also includes the sales of foreign-produced books sold in Denmark.

CONSEQUENCES - here and now

- In 2022, rights holders, the state and others lost an estimated DKK 225 million on piracy of digital textbooks in higher education.
- Danish publishers and authors lost an estimated DKK 59 million in 2022.
- The amount was estimated to correspond to at least 31% of the total value of the textbook market (new book price) in 2022.

Losses by stakeholder and estimated value of the total student book market in 2022

Stakeholders	Losses due to digital piracy in DKK million.					Total market (new book price)	
	The state	Bookshops etc.	Authors	Publishers	Total	Value	Losses in percent
Danish production	29	59	26	33	147	474	31
Foreign production	16	31	14	18	78	256	30
Total	45	90	39	51	225	730	31

Note: Due to rounding, columns may not add up to total.

CONSEQUENCES - in the longer term

- The incentive to produce textbooks disappears.
- A lack of marginal profit in the Danish book industry may mean that Danish-produced textbooks with Danish content, examples and guidelines are not developed to the same extent as before
- Danish-produced textbooks means, for example, that textbooks are directly based on the executive orders that form the basis of the education programs. Similarly, Danish-produced textbooks are based on a Danish pedagogical tradition and written in Danish. Danish books are normative for e.g. welfare education.
- The quality of future education will deteriorate. If there is less or no Danish production of books, it will affect the quality of education in Denmark and all students, but especially those groups of students for whom English textbooks become a barrier to their learning.