Korean Digital Textbooks: Radical Change on a Bumpy Road in Korea

London Book Fair
London, UK
10th April, 2014

Sunshik Min OBE
President, YBM
YBM

- Started as a Publisher of a Bilingual Magazine in 1961.
- Publishing
  - Textbooks
  - Magazines
  - English as a Foreign Language Study Materials
  - Dictionaries
- Online Education
- Schools
  - Language Schools: Children - Adult
  - K-12 International Schools
- Testing
  - TOEIC: 3 million tests per year
  - Microsoft Office Skill tests
- Social Services
  - Korean Language Study at Oxford, Harvard, UBC, and others
  - Support for North Korean Refugees’ English Learning
Korean Textbook Market

❖ Government-Controlled
  • Itself as Publisher
  • Curriculum
  • Contents
  • Eligibility as Publishers
  • Pricing

❖ EBS
  • Korean SAT
Ministry, publishers clash over prices of textbooks

By Bahk Eun-ji @Korea Times - Updated : 2014-03-27

The Ministry of Education (MOE) ordered publishers to lower the prices of textbooks for primary and secondary schools, Thursday.

Publishers, however, refused to accept the demand, and the dispute has left students taking classes without textbooks although the new semester started almost four weeks ago.

In addition, the Korea Authorized and Approved Textbook Association (KAAT) stopped publishing textbooks from March 19, saying it will continue the stoppage until the ministry sets “a reasonable price.”

The MOE ordered the average price of 99 textbooks for high schools to be cut by 44 percent to 5,560 won from 9,991; and for elementary schools by 34.8 percent to 4,493 won.

The ministry revised the Regulations on Curriculum Books last month so that the education minister can order price adjustments if they are deemed to have been unfairly set.
Types of Textbooks

• Government Publication
  – Authors Appointed by the Ministry of Education
  – Government as Copyright Holder and Publisher

• Government-Approved Textbooks
  – Private Publishers
  – Government Guidelines
  – Review by the Ministry of Education

• Government- Authorized Textbooks
  – Private Publishers
  – Government Guidelines
  – Review by Local Education Boards
Government Textbooks

• Elementary School:
  – Grades 1 - 2:
    • Every Subject
  – Grades 3 - 6:
    • Korean Language, Social Science, Ethics, Math, and Natural Science
Approved Textbooks

• Elementary School:
  – Practicum, Health and Sports, Music, Fine Arts, and English Language

• Middle (G7-9) and High School (G10-12):
  – Korean Language, Social Science including History, Ethics
Authorized Textbooks

• All other subjects
## Textbook Market

unit: KRW in millions; Source: Mr. Tae Nyun Kim at the National Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Government-Approved</th>
<th>Government - Authorized</th>
<th>subtotal</th>
<th>ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary</strong></td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>32,809</td>
<td>10,577</td>
<td>133,386</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Middle</strong></td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>28,010</td>
<td>136,906</td>
<td>172,915</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>15,186</td>
<td>169,254</td>
<td>196,440</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>subtotal</strong></td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>76,004</td>
<td>316,736</td>
<td>502,741</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ratio</strong></td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
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</tbody>
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Ancillary Market

• Reference Books, Self-Study Guides and Mock Test Practice Books
  – Korean, English and Science: 35%, 25% and 30% of Textbook Sales by Volume
  – Other Subjects: 10%

• Educational Broadcasting Station
  – Government Policy
  – Revenue of KRW200 billions
Digital Textbooks

• Plan by the Ministry of Education
  – Announced on 29 August 2012
  – To Be Implemented in 2014
  – Elementary School:
    • Government: Social Science and Natural Science
    • Approved Textbooks: English
  – Middle and High School:
    • Approved Textbooks: Social Science
    • Authorized Textbooks: Natural Science and English
    • English Textbooks: e-Textbook 3.0 to Be Used
History of e-Textbooks

• Preliminary Trial Use
  – 2011
  – G1-12: Korean, Math and English
  – 100 Schools for Trial Use

• Conversion of Paper Books to PDF file format on CD -> Not Popular

• Version 3.0 from 2013
  – Student-Oriented Software with Interactivity and Search Function Added to Previous Version
  – Made Compatible with PC and Smart-Devices
CDs for Teachers

- Private textbook publishers voluntarily prepared CDs for teachers in 2011 as a support material that teachers liked.
- Then, the Ministry of Education mandated that textbook publishers develop and provide a CD-ROM version of teachers’ guides for use from 2013.
  - Elementary: All subjects
  - Middle: Natural Science and English
Concerns: Bumpy Road

- How to Set Standards for Hardware and Software – Korean or Global Model
- Pricing:
  - Government Budget
  - Private Resistance
  - New Law for Government to Control Prices
- Speed and Flexibility – Government
- Association of Digital Textbook Publishers