

Why I like Books24x7

Books24x7, Online Training, 2004, Books24x7, \$399 - \$49.

Review by Bill Ellet

It doesn't seem to be a likely match: the web and full-text books.

The web is all about quick hits: news stories (the shorter the better), images, music downloads, brief retail transactions. Even the most advanced simulations rarely have screens with much text. The virtual rule of thumb is to limit the amount of text on a screen to a minimum.

Most of the book-related sites we have reviewed specialize in summaries of business books (e.g., Means Business). They either try to summarize all business books from major publishers or just those deemed significant. Books24x7 began with an ambitious goal: to offer online as many full-text business books as possible.

Once you set up your homepage—created when you first log in with your assigned information—it offers a variety of search options. First you enter a subject of some kind. Then, you can select these options:

- All books: full text search on all books
- Titles, Authors, Publishers and ISBN: catalog search only
- My Bookshelf: full text search of all books on the bookshelf (including subfolders)
- Book List: full text search of the last list of books shown

“My Bookshelf” is a customized list that you build as you search the Books24x7 database. You build it by topic and by title. The topics you elect are displayed in the lefthand column of your homepage under the “Bookshelf Folders” heading.

Finally, you decide on the collections that you want to search:

- All Collections
- ExecSummaries (see below for more explanation)
- ITPro
- BusinessPro

Your homepage also has links to New Books and Top Books. Subscribers are regularly emailed messages about new books posted on the site.

As you use the search function and other resources such as “Top Books,” you can build an impressive library of books to examine. In fact, the danger of this type of service for avid readers is the “kid in the candy store” phenomenon: you may build a library that has so much in it that you are deterred from exploring it. I confess that this is the greatest hazard of the site for me. I see title after title that promises to examine an issue I am interested in so how can I resist adding it to my bookshelf?

Your starting point for finding books.

Where's My Bookshelf?



Search Results

20 books found for query: **case-based teaching**

Books: [1-10] **11-20** (of 20)



Effective Writing for E-Learning Environments

by Katy Campbell

ISBN 1591402166

Idea Group Publishing © 2004 (582 pages)

This text is a combination manual/workbook that leads users through the steps of preparing effective content for the Web and display media such as electronic slide shows.

Top Section Hits (of 5 in this book)

Glossary (F-M)

Chapter 8: The Active e-Reader (Supporting Cognitive Processes)

Effective Writing for E-Learning Environments Handbook (9: Usability Testing)

Relevant Chapters in the [Table of Contents](#)



Web-Based Instructional Learning

by Mehdi Khosrow-Pour (ed)

ISBN 1931770147

Idea Group Publishing © 2002 (306 pages)

From online quizzes to Web-based lectures, this reference takes a look at the prospective Internet-based education of the future.

Top Section Hits (of 3 in this book)

Chapter 22: Who Benefits from WWW Presentations in the Basics of Informatics? (The WWW in Learning)

Chapter 21: Learning with Multimedia Cases in the Information Systems Area (Introduction)

Chapter 21: Learning with Multimedia Cases in the Information Systems Area (Preliminary Results)

Relevant Chapters in the [Table of Contents](#)

Once you click into the full text of a book, you can bookmark the text, bookmark it and add note, download a PDF or audio version of the book (if available), or order a physical copy of the book. Books24x7 is smart enough to realize that some of us will want to rummage through the chapters and read a few here and there; some of us might want to download portions or the complete copy of a book; and some of us may want to order the book to read in the conventional and comfortable way.

The PDF option is, in my opinion, a major advantage of the service. You can download the book and delete everything except the chapters that matter to you. You then have the wisdom of the those chapters just a click away.

Major triage

I found that I like to have the full text of the book available to sift through and make judgments on my own. I find it stunning to be able to access, online, a comprehensive business library that is growing all the time. But what if you aren't a bibliophile and want some help in determining business books worth your precious time? Given the absurd number of business books published each year, this need is understandable. Through a partnership with Soundview Executive Book Summaries, the site now offers a service that performs a triage on new business books. Soundview screens a large number of the business books each year and recommends a small number of them, providing summaries of each selected book and of each chapter in the book.

For instance, in a recent search of new leadership books available through the Executive Book Summary search option, these were the first three result:

Into the Unknown: Leadership Lessons of Lewis and Clark's Daring Westward Expedition

Generating Buy-In: Mastering the Language of Leadership

Put the Moose on the Table: Lessons in Leadership from a CEO's Journey...

The advantage of the Executive Book service is that you receive an informed selection of business books published during a year and well-written summaries. In other words, they do the work of sifting through published books and let you know about the ones they think are worthy of your scarce time. The downside is that you have to depend upon the selection of unnamed reviewers, and you have access only to the summaries, not the full text of the books.

All is not perfect

The search engine employed by Books24x7 can produce odd results. I tested it with a variety of search words and phrases and found that the search engine was like most available on the web these days. They can provide results that are far too narrow—or utterly empty—or far too broad depending on the text you type into the search box. The rules for the search are far from intuitive, and my guess is that most users will not take the time to educate themselves in the rules and quirks of this particular search engine.

In addition, do not suppose that all books published by training and business publishers are present in the database. I did a search on a book we recently reviewed, *Making Sense of Online Learning*, published by Pfeiffer, and came up empty. A few other books in the business and training area produced no hits. For example, Clark Aldrich's seminal look at training simulations, *Simulations and the Future of Learning*, published by Pfeiffer, is not in the database. But other Pfeiffer titles are present. What is the standard of selection that applies here?

Pricing

Unlike many online providers, Books24x7 has a clearcut pricing schedule:\

- ITPro \$399.00 (per seat)
- EngineeringPro \$399.00 (per seat)
- BusinessPro \$399.00 (per seat)
- FinancePro \$399.00 (per seat)
- OfficeEssentials \$49.00 (per seat)

Volume discounts are available for all of the online libraries.

Recommendation

Books24x7 does not include all the business books published in the U.S., and its search engine is no better or worse than those of many online search services: if you guess right, you get good results; if you don't, you get an avalanche of material. Nevertheless, this business book service beats much of the competition by offering a large assortment of books in full text, giving you the option of reading it online, in PDF form, or

in book form (assuming you're willing to buy the book). I really appreciated the utility of the PDF download for saving book chapters that I will refer to over and over again.

Product Ratings

Books24x7

Ease of navigation	***
Holds user interest	***1/2
Production quality	***
Value of Content	****
Instructional Value	***1/2
Value for the money	***
Overall rating	***1/2