## eTextbook Research Study

## Letter of Invitation

**Dear Student:**

This email is an invitation to participate in a thesis research study to investigate how mid-career learners enrolled in an online graduate course view and engage with e-textbooks assigned as required course readings. The study will also explore how attitudes and engagement practices are shaped by the circumstances in which e-textbook use takes place. Review and analysis of the data will provide insights into e-textbook usage and will help to shape policies and practices regarding e-textbook use at Athabasca University and elsewhere.

I am seeking your participation because you are currently engaged in a graduate course that makes use of an e-textbook. Your experiences are important because you are in the vanguard of a multi-year transition to e-textbook use by all students at Athabasca University known as the [*e-Text Initiative*](http://etext.athabascau.ca/). As few previous studies have looked specifically at what mid-career learners in graduate courses think about e-textbooks and how they make use of them, your participation is especially important.

A *grounded theory approach* will be used to investigate this topic. This would entail your participation in two surveys – a *Demographic Questionnaire* and an *Attitudinal Survey* – conducted early in the term, and may also entail a recorded telephone interview toward the end of the term to capture your experience as an e-textbook user. The time commitment for each survey will be 10 minutes or less and, if you are invited to participate in an interview, it will require about 30 minutes of your time.

If you are interested in volunteering for this study, please complete the *Demographic Questionnaire and Consent to Participate* form hyperlinked to this email.

Please be assured that your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation. You have the right to refuse to participate and to withdraw at any time during the survey and interview process. In this case you can simply email the researcher and inform him that you wish to withdraw from the research. You may also skip questions or refuse to answer any question posed to you in an interview or in a survey.

All information collected from you will be stored in a secure location that can be accessed only by the researcher and all information will be held confidential. The data collected will be coded so that no identifying information remains. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be protected at all times. On completion of the data analysis, a summary of the results of this research will be made available to all interested participants upon request.

If you have any questions about this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact the researcher, Ken Desson, by email at kdesson@androcom.com.

**Please note:** This study has been reviewed by the Athabasca University Research Ethics Board.  Should you have any comments or concerns regarding your treatment as a participant in this study, please contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-800-788-9041, ext. 6718 or by e-mail to rebsec@athabascau.ca

Thank you in advance for your interest in this project.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Desson

M.Ed. (DE) Student

Centre for Distance Education

Athabasca University

Tel: 613-238-3639

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If you would like to participate in this study, please proceed to the *Demographic Questionnaire and Consent to Participate* form by clicking on the link below.

[**Demographic Questionnaire and Consent to Participate**](https://secure3.athabascau.ca/limesurvey/index.php?sid=713194&lang=en)

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You are not obligated to participate in this research. However, if you ***do not*** want to participate, it would be helpful for study validation purposes if you would briefly provide your reason(s) for not participating by sending an email to the researcher at kdesson@androcom.com.