

# intercom

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## REMOTE & AUSTERE COMM

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- ▶ Wolfpack Comm poised on the peninsula
- ▶ Tactical, deployable ATCALS
- ▶ Making an impact: Kandahar Comm

# eBooks!

## Easing the reading load for students

Ask anyone who has been to the Air and Space Basic Course or Squadron Officer College what they remember most about their experience, and one of the items they're sure to mention is the amount of reading. Each student receives more than 800 pages of course material.

So the communicators at Air University and the instructors at SOC took a page from corporate America where electronic books, or eBooks, are replacing handouts and other printed training material. After taking a hard look at the economic and logistical benefits, it just made sense to make the change.

eBooks are small, portable, lightweight reading devices about the size of a standard hardcover book that offer an alternative to paper. Besides being more portable than an 11 inch stack of handouts, SOC thought there was the potential to reduce its printing costs of about \$400,000 per year. After a pilot study showed 75 percent of students who tested the product rated them as excellent or better, SOC decided to roll them out in both courses.

Since August 2005, SOC has reported a savings of about \$34,000, and it expects to see even more savings this fiscal year as it nearly eliminates 8 million pages of printed text. Additionally, the flight commanders will be able to save more than 2,000 hours each year that they had previously spent unpacking, sorting, performing quality control, updating, and distributing books to the classrooms. Another advantage they offer over paper is that they give curriculum developers the power to update course material at any time during the course. The students simply attach their devices to an "e-Content Distribution Node," a five-port switch found in each classroom, and refresh their content in about 10 minutes.

These devices allow students to do more than simply read through page-after-page of text. They're also able to do a text search, highlight important passages, underline, circle, and write short notes directly onto the screen. One can then plug the device into a USB port and download those notes to an image file for printing or later review. So ultimately, this technology is proving itself to be a worthwhile, cost saving addition to the classrooms. This is just an example of the kind of innovative, learning-enhancing technology Air Education and Training Command is bringing to the Air Force. (AETC/SC)



### IT showcase

"Innovative technology" was the operative term when AETC showcased its information technology initiatives at the AFCEA and SAF/A6-sponsored Air Force IT Day in November. Representatives from AETC/SC, Air University, and Sheppard AFB's 82d Training Wing, presented vendors with ongoing and potential training

enhancement opportunities. Such new-generation ideas as WiMAX to provide a blanket of wireless connectivity across a base, Podcasting, wireless classrooms, student workstation remoting, using streaming video to store and broadcast lectures, and wireless rugged laptops for training mechanics, gave vendors an idea of how the command is aggressively modernizing the Air Force training environment.