



Key Difference between Print-based and Electronic Text

Excerpts from the article, “The journey ahead: Thirteen teachers report how the Internet influences literacy and literacy instruction in their K-12 classrooms” available online: <http://www.reading.org/Library/Retrieve.cfm?D=10.1598/RRQ.36.4.5&F=RRQ-36-4-Karchmer.pdf>

“To begin with, print-based texts are fixed whereas electronic texts are interactive and malleable (Kaplan, 1991). The uses of electronic enhancements such as digitized pronunciations, graphics, and video are examples of how reading material can be manipulated and modified on the computer.”

“A second characteristic of electronic texts is the seamless incorporation of audiovisual features (Bolter, 1991; Reinking et al., 1997). Graphics are considered an integral part of the primary text within electronic environments, whereas they often are regarded as supplementary materials when combined with traditional written prose.”

“A third feature of electronic texts is the ability to access multiple resources connected to networked environments. When readers engage in print-based texts, they are confined to the limits of what is written on the paper in front of them. Reinking et al. (1997) argued that electronic texts eliminate such boundaries and provide readers and writers the opportunity to easily connect to relevant material.”

“A fourth characteristic of electronic text is that it does not follow the same traditional linear organization as print-based text (Reinking et al., 1997). Instead, hypertext allows readers to shift from one page to another through the use of electronic links. Hence, there is no fixed order that a hypertext must follow. Readers are afforded more active roles in the reading process when they navigate through hypertext.”