

California schoolbooks going digital

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California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, seen here on June 02, has announced plans to phase out school textbooks in favor of digital learning aids as the state looks to plug its massive budget hole.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has announced plans to phase out school textbooks in favor of digital learning aids as the state looks to plug its massive budget hole.

The measure -- dubbed the Digital Textbook Initiative -- will see California schoolchildren ditch "outdated" traditional maths and science textbooks for digital versions later this year, Schwarzenegger said.

"Kids, as you all know, today are very familiar with listening to their music digitally and online and to watch TV online, to watch movies online, to be on [Twitter](#) and participate in that and on Facebook," Schwarzenegger said.

"So this is why I think it is so important that we move on from the textbooks," the Republican Governor told schoolchildren in Sacramento on Monday according to remarks released by his office.

"The textbooks are outdated, as far as I'm concerned, and there's no reason why our schools should have our students lug around these antiquated and heavy and expensive textbooks.

"California is the home of Silicon Valley. We are the world leader in technology and innovation, so we can do better than that."

California is the first state in the United States to introduce such an initiative, Schwarzenegger said. The move comes as Schwarzenegger looks to slash spending across a range of sectors in a bid to narrow California's projected 24 billion dollar budget deficit.

With the average price of a school textbook coming in it around 100 dollars, Schwarzenegger said initial savings from the plan would be between 300-400 million dollars. If the scheme was widened to cover more subjects, hundreds of millions more would be trimmed from the annual budget, he said.

"I know this is, of course, a dramatic shift from the status quo and there is some resistance in some cases," Schwarzenegger said.

"But I feel that this is the wrong time now to hold onto the status quo, because this is one of the worst economic and financial crises that the state has been in since the Great Depression.

"The state has a tremendous lack of money; therefore we had to make severe cuts to schools, billions of dollars of cuts, so we have to find every possible way to think outside the box."

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