

Preface

The spread of instant electronic communication has changed not only the economy itself but also the way students learn economics and the way instructors teach the subject. A textbook, perhaps supplemented by a few photocopied handouts, used to be almost the only source of information for students. A blackboard was often the instructor's only teaching tool. All this has changed, and so have the textbooks.

Today, both students and instructors rely on the Internet as their primary source of information about current economic events. They still need a good textbook to provide a framework for organizing all the information that is available, but that textbook needs to mesh with the material available from on-line news sources, blogs, and social media. This fifth edition of *Introduction to Microeconomics* from BVT Publishing includes several changes that integrate it more smoothly into the world of e-learning.

First, the book has a new look with more color and more pictures. The new design is not just decorative—it also makes the analytical graphics more readable.

Second, the book has a new style. A couple of years ago I started a blog, and the exercise of blogging regularly has affected the way I write. I have revised the entire text to make the language more active with shorter sentences, shorter paragraphs, and shorter chapters. Chapter titles are more descriptive and less technical. With all these changes, the book now reads less like a series of journal articles and more like something students might actually want to read.

In addition to a more inviting presentation, much of the content is new, including new case studies and examples throughout the book. Topics range from the price of chocolate to the latest clean air regulations to China's monopoly of rare earth elements to changes in the distribution of income and the way poverty is measured.

Furthermore, the range of new case studies and examples is not limited to those included in the book itself. Every week, Ed Dolan's Econ Blog provides new material to both students and instructors. The blog's Resource Center for Teaching Economics, found at dolanecon.blogspot.com, brings regular posts on micro- and macroeconomic topics. A Topic Index and Course Planning Guide helps instructors and students find relevant older posts by grouping them in a way that reflects the sequence of a typical

economics course. In addition to original material, the blog regularly features links to news items, articles from the business press, government documents, and other material relevant to the course. Students and instructors can also follow @DolanEcon on Twitter to keep up with the latest economic news. I also invite instructors and students to suggest topics for blog posts or submit guest posts of their own on favorite subjects.

Finally, this edition recognizes the fact that instructors no longer rely solely on blackboards and photocopied handouts as teaching aids. Most instructors now regularly use slide shows, smartboards, and videos in class, and course web sites to help students with their studying between classes.

One important aid to e-teaching and e-learning is a complete set of PowerPoint™ slides, which include all of the graphs and tables from each chapter, plus other relevant material that is available as a supplement to *Introduction to Microeconomics* from BVT. Beyond the basic slides for each chapter, Ed Dolan's Econ Blog provides additional content in PowerPoint format that can be cut-and-pasted directly into classroom presentations or posted to a course web page.

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As always, I thank the entire publishing and editorial staff of BVT Publishing for their highly professional support. They are a pleasure to work with, and I hope that all students and instructors who use this book benefit as much as I have from their unique and innovative approach to textbook publishing. Enjoy your teaching and learning!