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Student experience and expectations of technology

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Abstract

The Students' Experiences and Expectations of Technology Survey (SEETS) was designed to provide USQ with an understanding of how its student's are currently using the technologies they have access to in support of their learning and how they might like (intend) to use them in the future. It also investigated the differences between their use of technologies for academic purposes compared to their use in everyday life.

This survey was previously used by three universities in Sydney in 2010; Macquarie, UTS and UWS (Gosper, Malfroy, McKenzie & Rankine, 2011), and was broadly based on both the ECAR Survey, originally developed by EDUCAUSE (ECAR, 2008) and the Great Expectations of IT Survey (JISC, 2008) from the United Kingdom. To help determine which tools should be included in the survey reference was made to the work of The Horizon Project, a project of the New Media Consortium (http://www.nmc.org/horizon). However, it was also recognized that not all student, and in this case USQ students, have access to, or use the latest technologies (Kennedy, et al., 2008), it was therefore important to ensure this survey also covered the use of more traditional technologies (email, SMS, mobile phones), together with the more recent cloud based technologies.

There were twenty-five (25) different technologies covered by the survey, along with the LMS. These included: instant messaging, text message (SMS), email, collaborative/ conferencing technologies, mobile phones for voice calls, mobile phones with internet access, social networking sites, virtual worlds, blogs, wikis, online multi-user computer games, podcasts/webcasts, social bookmarking/tagging, software used to create audio/video materials, presentation software, data analysis software, Google docs, e-portfolios, GPS tagging, library search engines, internet search engines, RSS feeds, interactive whiteboards, web development software, and tablet computers.

Abstract continued

The survey was administered in 2012 and was open to all USQ students and was delivered online. The survey received 1181 valid responses. All respondents were offered the opportunity to participate in a series of follow-up focus groups to be run later in Semester 2 2012, of which Thirty-four students participated. Participants in these groups answered a series of question that had been developed after the survey data had initially been analysed. These questions were designed to provide further insight to the main themes arising from this analysis.

The poster will provide a summary of the finding from this survey and focus groups. The findings suggest that students largely want to use a range of technologies to enhance their experience in the online environment, but within certain constraints and with a lot more consistency among the different environments they use. For example they clearly indicated they wanted a more consistent use of tools like, lecture capture, virtual classrooms, e-portfolios and mobile apps. They wanted their communications to be provided predominantly through the LMS and via email. They used social media, but they didn't want that space to be mixed up (confused) with what they needed to do in their learning
space.

Keywords: Educational technology, social technologies, administrative technologies, LMS

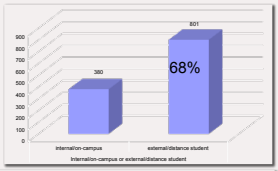
Why this research?

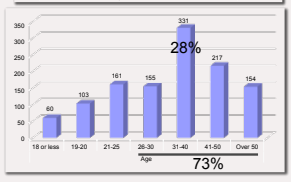
- The evolving opportunities technological change provides requires the frequent evolution of services and curriculum to facilitate engaged learning.
- The resources and costs involved need to be carefully weighed up against the potential benefits of the affordances.
- Important to have an evidence-based approach to inform strategy and planning.
- Understanding how and what students' use and what their expectations of technologies for both life and study is clearly essential.
- The technologies explored here included, institutional systems (email, LMS), Web2.0 technologies (social networking, cloud & shared spaces) and personal devices.
- This presentation provides some initial findings and reflects on some implications for emerging learning environments and meeting expectations for 'todays' student.

The tool and method

- Methodology: Mixed Methods
  - Students' Experiences and Expectations of Technology Survey (SEETS)
    - It contained 127 questions, coving student's access and use of technologies
    - Plus four open-ended response questions
  - Online focus groups (n=34) using Blackboard Collaborate
- Five main sections
  1. Technologies currently used in everyday life for social and work purposes.
  2. Current & preferred use of technologies for learning and communicating with the wider university.
  3. The services and support provided for learning.
  4. The technologies used to interact with the university for administrative purposes.
  5. General demographic information

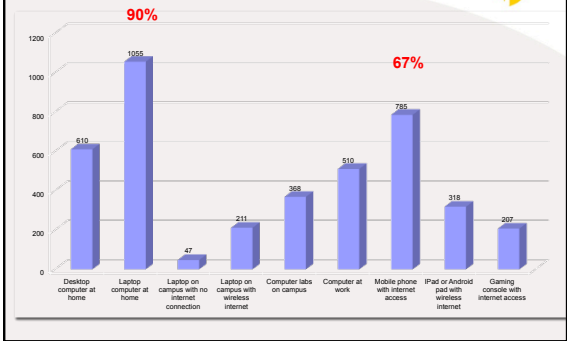
Base demographics



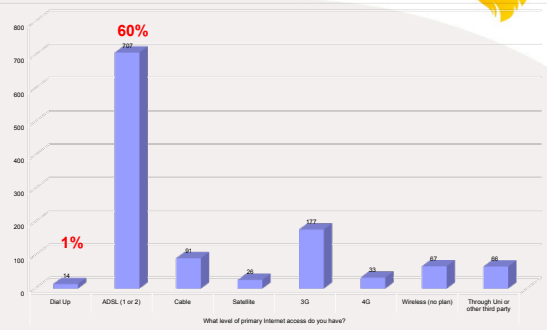


- N = 1181
- 68% external/distance
- 56% Part-time
- 65% Female
- 73% Mature age
- 67% Undergraduate
- 40% In their first year
- 40% work Full-time
- 29% No paid employment

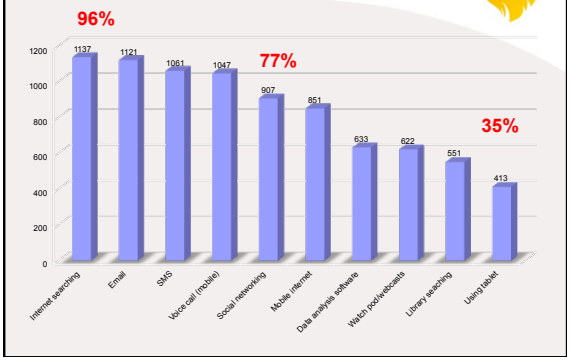
The computing equipment they have access to



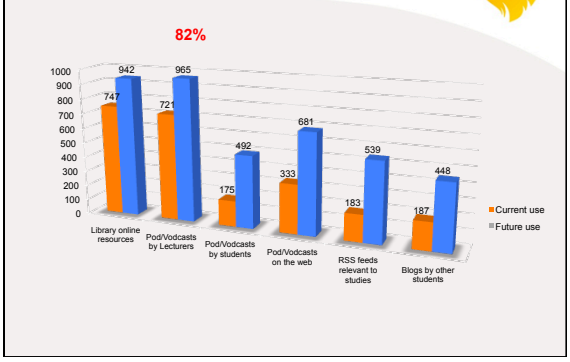
Primary Internet access



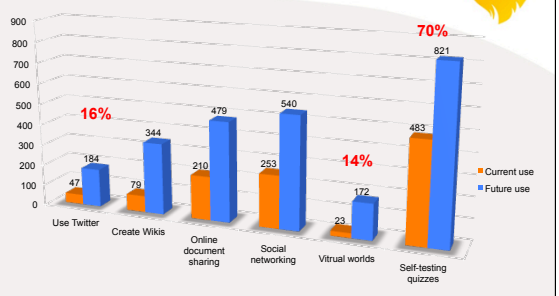
Top 10 tools used outside study



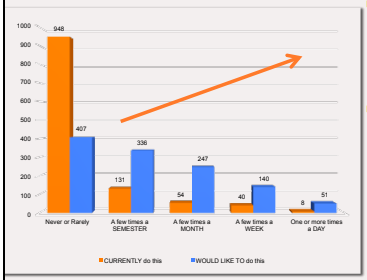
Some interesting shifts



Technologies for learning

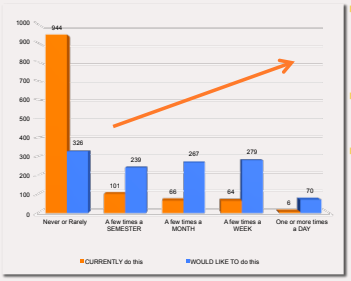


Develop an ePortfolio as a record of learning and experiences for professional or employment purposes



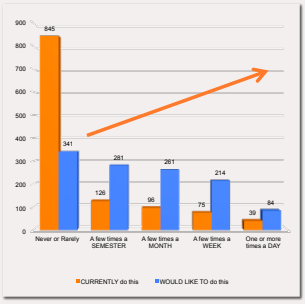
- While 8.7% reported current regular use of ePortfolio for professional or employment purposes, 37.1% reported wanting to use this more often.
- 541 students (57%) who had selected 'never to rarely' moved their preference to wanting some level of engagement with this technology.

Use web conferencing or video chat (eg Skype, Wimba, FaceTime) to join in remotely to lectures or tutorials



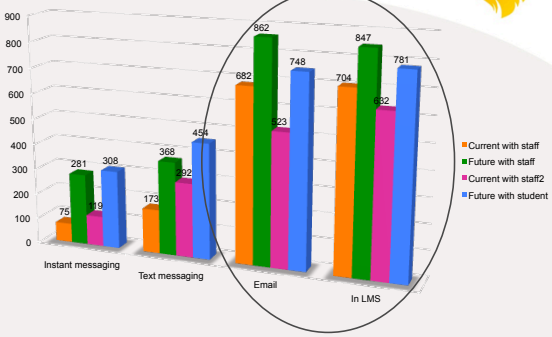
- 80% (944) of students have not used web conferencing to join in with lectures or tutorials in the past
- 65% (618) of these respondents said that they would like to in the future.
- This has significant implications as to how USQ may look to engage with this type of technology in the future

Use web-based document tools (eg Google docs) to work collaboratively on activities and assignments

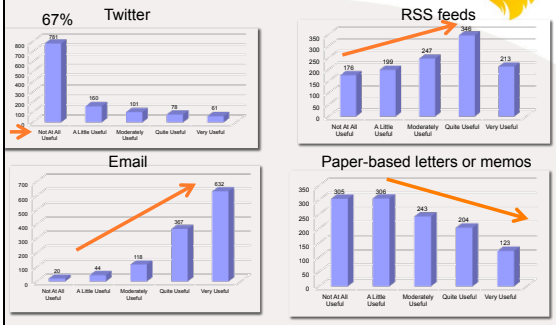


- 17.8% of students reported current regular use of web-based document tools,
- 47.3% reported wanting to use these more often.
- 504 students (43%) moved their preference from 'never to rarely' to wanting some level of engagement with this technology

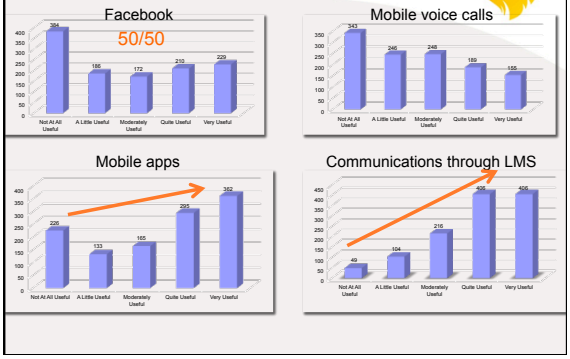
Student with staff
Student with student



Technologies for Admin Purposes



Technologies for Admin Purposes



Take home messages from FGs

- They are starting to use iPads more but mainly still use laptops.
- Recorded lectures provide flexibility and mobility, eg. able to play on iPod and listen while travelling etc. Able to repeat sections. Hearing/ seeing lecturer gives better 'feel' for information than reading on printed page. Other students ask questions during lecture, which can give additional information. Feel more connected to group.
- Respondents saw the USQ*StudyDesk* as adequate in contributing to their feeling part of a 'community of learners' and were opposed to using Facebook which they see as for personal use only.
- 'Consistency' was a main theme that has emerged both from this survey and Focus Groups. Consistency in the 'look and feel' of study desk, the quality of resources available, the staff interaction online. But not sameness.
- Strong preference for us to provide online training for technologies.