Students’ engagement with technologies: Implications for university practice

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The project: broad scale survey

Scope: across three Sydney universities

Aims:
- Students’ access to technologies
- Use of technology in students’ daily lives
- Experience with using technologies for learning
- The quality and consistency of experience of IT on-campus
- Expectations of what the university should provide

Method: online survey
Response: 10,269 full responses: 1104 (MQ), 7419 (UWS), 1754 (UTS)
Survey

- 25 technologies were surveyed
- 127 survey questions about use of technology for learning, administration, communication, social and work purposes.
- Students rated use of technologies on a 5 point scale. Percentages in the tables in slides show the percentage of students who used technologies in top 2 categories
- 4 open-ended questions
Students’ current use of technologies compared with preferred use for coursework learning
Current and preferred use of tools in Blackboard

- Announcements on login
- Online unit outline
- Lecture recordings
- Discussions
- Quizzes for assessment
- Track progress & grades
- Mail staff & students
- Quizzes for feedback
- Submit assignments online
- Return assignments online
- Track progress & grades
- Online content
- Mail staff & students
- Quizzes for feedback
- Submit assignments online
- Return assignments online
Students’ current everyday use of Web2.0 compared with their preferred use for coursework learning

- Social networking - Facebook Twitter: More use for learning
- Podcasts - You Tube: More use for learning
- Skype, Elluminate: More use for learning
- Google docs
- Wikis
- RSS feeds
- Blogs
- Tagging - del.icio.us
- Virtual worlds

Percentage distribution chart for preferred use compared to everyday use.
Summary of findings

- At each University, students expressed surprisingly high satisfaction levels generally with the use of technology at their university.
- Responses were remarkably similar across all three Universities, and across different cohorts including low SES.
- Students are seeking access, efficiency and connectedness.
- Students don’t want or expect the latest technologies simply because they are there; they want technologies they know will work.
- Students want more effective use of the core technologies – LMS and iLecture:
  - Online submission, email, quizzes, reporting on grades.
- Students want an increasing focus on interaction and connectedness – discussion forums, RSS, collaborative tools (skype/ad Adobe Connect, interactive whiteboards, blogs.)
More findings

- Students have regular, but not extensive, use of social media in their personal lives but don’t (yet?) show a preference for it for coursework learning.

- Students want better technical infrastructure:
  - powerpoints to charge electronic devices
  - better wireless networks on campus
  - spaces on campus to use mobile technologies
  - better on-campus access to computing facilities

- Students highlighted a need for further professional development of staff:
  - 82% of students are satisfied with their skill level
  - 59% are satisfied with the skill level of academic staff
Implications for planning

- Continue to invest in robust and reliable infrastructure
- Improve investment in professional learning for academic staff to make best use of the technologies
- Maintain core technologies, such as the LMS, online Library technologies, lecture recordings etc. Students rely on these, they value them.
- Careful and strategic planning for integration of new technologies and new learning spaces on campus
- Managing student expectations – the evidence is that students show a high use of ownership and use of technologies in their personal lives so they expect access to technologies at University.