



2015 Member Survey

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Executive Summary

The ascilite member survey is conducted every two years. (It was postponed for a year in 2014 due to the introduction of new services thus giving members an additional year to experience them before being asked their opinion). The 2015 Member Survey was conducted over a two week period in May 2015.

For the 2015 survey, a total of 141 ascilite members participated, representing 27 percent of the total membership. Over 80 percent of respondents are research active.

While the number of valid responses was 138, the number of skipped questions increased from the conference section onwards in the survey thus reducing the amount of available data in the latter part of the survey.

Professional development and networking continued to serve as the main driver of ascilite membership which is consistent with past surveys. Nearly all members (88%) are happy with their membership and agree it represents good value for money (77%).

Over one third of current members are either unlikely (7%) or unsure (29%) about renewing their memberships. Clearly, the value proposition of ascilite Membership is one that remains a priority for the Executive going forward.

Most think the Executive is working in the best interests of members and the Society (78%), and the majority agree that the relationship with the Executive is positive (66%). Slightly more than half of the respondents are comfortable contacting a member of the Executive.

With respect to the conference, most see the peer review process as rigorous and fair (78%), that it's a valuable forum for research (80%), provides practical ICT knowledge (89%) and is great for networking (80%). Overall the conference is viewed as a quality, worthwhile event (75%). Fewer see the workshops as valuable (62%).

CMALT Australasia (41%) and the mentoring programme are the least familiar (26%) of our ascilite initiatives, though it is valued by those aware of them. Although we have put significant effort into promoting CMALT Australasia it is a relatively new activity and so "awareness



raising” should remain a priority. The member bulletin is the most valued (58% suggest maintaining it as is) while the annual conference was considered to be the most valuable (55%) and most important (55%) program by far among all of the member services.

With respect to ascilite’s social media presence, very few respondents are familiar or engaged with these platforms, but Twitter ranks slightly ahead of Facebook and LinkedIn on most measures.

AJET is viewed as a source of high quality research by most (76%), with its impact factor seen as the most important ranking element by just over half of respondents. Up to 40 percent of respondents would be interested in more ascilite events focused on AJET publishing. Finally, 60 percent of respondents are likely or highly likely to recommend ascilite membership to colleagues; only 7 percent are unlikely to do so.

The Executive thanks the members who responded and as we move into 2016, your valued feedback will directly influence our strategic and operational planning going forward.



Methodology

While we leverage a range of ascilite activities to engage our members, it is equally important that we periodically survey the membership about their experiences, perspectives and priorities. The first member survey was conducted in 2008; our most recent survey was in 2012.

A number of questions have persisted across multiple surveys (2008, 2010, 2012), allowing us to look at member trends over time. However, as the Society has grown and evolved, so too do the issues that matter to members. Thus this year's survey includes a mix of existing and new questions. We are also mindful that our members' are often over-committed and time-poor. We therefore sought to develop a survey that was respectful of members' time, whilst offering a comprehensive, structured opportunity to provide substantive feedback.

The specific survey objectives remain unchanged from 2012:

- To determine overall engagement and satisfaction with ascilite membership.
- To identify satisfaction with ascilite member services and benefits
- To determine the important and frequency of use of member services and benefits and identify which of these impact most on engagement.
- To determine what members value most about their ascilite membership.
- To identify the extent to which members champion membership of ascilite
- To identify member preferences for future topics and initiatives
- To identify reasons for strong satisfaction and any burning issues.

Survey data were collected using Qualtrics, an online survey tool. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS 22.0 for Mac OS X; qualitative data were analysed using Atlas.ti 1.0 for Mac OS X.



Our Members

As of 2015 the ascilite membership is diverse, largely academic, and very much research-oriented. In geographic terms, our respondents are drawn from across Australia (75%), New Zealand (20%), Asia (2%) and the Pacific (2%) with a few members based in the United Kingdom (1%) (Table 6). Slightly less than one third of respondents have joined in the last year (29%); a similar number have been members between one and five years and slightly more than one third have been members for 5 or more years (Table 1).

In terms of their role in tertiary education, almost half (46%) are in the mature phase of their careers, 16 or more years experience. Just over one third (36%) are mid career professionals, defined as 5-15 years of experience. Slightly more than ten percent of respondents are in an early (less than 5 years) career phase. Students (4%) and retirees (2%) are under-represented. Compared to the 2012 member survey, these figures are somewhat skewed towards the mature career phase (37% in 2012), however these statistics are almost identical to findings in the 2008 and 2010 member surveys.

Respondents held a range of appointments in tertiary education. Around one quarter (26%) were professional or general staff members: across the various options academic staff accounted for approximately 60 percent of respondents. A minority were either unemployed (7%) or held an appointment that was neither academic nor professional ("Other" = 5%) (Table 2). Nearly all respondents—over 80 percent—were research active, either because their role requires it (50%) or they elect to conduct research (33%). A further eight percent aspire to become research active.

In terms of length of membership (Table 1), the responses are skewed somewhat towards longer term members: 39 percent have been members of ascilite more than five years. However, almost one third of respondents have joined in the last 12 months. Around half of all respondents are at the mature stage (16 or more years) of their career (Table 2). These are similar numbers compared to previous member surveys.



<i>Length of membership</i>	<i>Percent</i>
< 1 year	29
1-3 years	21
3-5 years	11
5-10 years	22
>10 years	17

Table 1 - Length of membership

<i>Career stage</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Student	4
Early (<5 years)	12
Mid (5-15 years)	36
Mature (16+ years)	46
Retired	2

Table 2 – Career stage

We encouraged respondents to indicate more than one reason for joining ascilite, thus the figures in Table 3 aggregate much higher than 100 percent. Professional development opportunities, an alignment between their work and the society’s focus, potential to enhance professional capabilities and development and accessing information regarding use of ICT in tertiary teaching were commonly cited. Around a quarter of respondents cited having their



institution pay their membership, the subsequent discount on conference registration for members and the recommendation of ascilite by someone else as reasons to join. Compared to the two most recent member surveys, professional development is the most consistent highly ranked reason for joining the society.

<i>Why become a member (%)</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2010</i>
Professional development opportunities	55	64	59
Focus of ascilite aligns with my work and/or responsibilities	45	60	61
Potential to enhance my professional capabilities and development	43	53	59
Access to info regarding use of ICT in tertiary teaching and learning	40	45	56
Institution paid my membership	26	30	18
Conference registration cheaper	25	44	34
Recommendation from friend/colleague/existing member	23	17	23
Access to specific membership benefits such as the Community Mentoring Program, webinars, ascilite awards and CMALT Australasia	15	13	9
Other	4		

Table 3 – Why become a member

A limited number of respondents joined ascilite to access specific member services. Among “other” reasons to join, the following were cited:



- As a recent immigrant I was hopeful that ascilite would be a way for me to connect with like-minded people in my new context
- Had to be a member to lead a SIG
- I have been a member intermittently over a long career, but more recently I particularly wanted to revisit the connection, after an unanticipated break in my career
- mentoring
- ODLAA (Open and Distance Learning Association of Australasia) [membership] expired
- Opportunities to share/disseminate projects to a relevant community and gain feedback

Similarly, respondents were also able to tick more than one choice to describe what sort of appointment they currently hold (Table 4). Over half view themselves as an academic or learning developer; a third as educational researchers. One fifth are discipline-based academics, while one quarter hold professional staff appointments.



<i>Appointment type</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Academic (or learning) developer	55
Educational researcher	30
Professional or general staff member	26
Discipline based academic	21
Other academic staff	7
Not currently employed	7
Other	5

Table 4 – Appointment type

Nearly all respondents are research active, whether required of their role (50%), or not (33%). Only five percent of respondents are not research active and have no plans to be such (Table 5). “Other” includes: enrolled in PhD and hope to become research active, looking for collaborators to become research active, and retired.



<i>Research Activity</i>	<i>Percent</i>
I am required to be research active	50
I am not required to be research active, but I conduct research nonetheless	33
I am not research active, but would like to be	8
I am not research active, nor would I like to be	5
Other	4

Table 5 – Research activity

Most respondents are based in Australia (75%) or New Zealand (20%) (Table 6). Equal numbers were based at a university, either in a capital city (42%) or major, non-capital city (42%). Relatively few respondents work in a polytechnic, TAFE, or other tertiary provider. “Other” includes those positioned at a regional university, as an independent consultant, a health care professional, or retired (Table 7).

<i>Geographic location</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Australia	75
New Zealand	20
UK	1
Asia	2
Pacific	2

Table 6 – Geographic location



<i>Urban location</i>	<i>Percent</i>
University in capital city	42
University in major non-capital city	42
Another tertiary provider	4
Polytechnic	3
TAFE	2
Public sector or government	2
Private industry	2
Other	4

Table 7 – Urban location



Perspectives on Membership & the Executive

Overall respondents are happy (85%) with their ascilite membership (Table 7). They find value for money in their membership (77%), view the Executive as working in the best interests of the society and its members (78%), agree the leadership is effective (75%), have a positive relationship with the Executive (66%), know at least one executive member by name (69%), and see value for money (77%) in their membership. A somewhat smaller number (55%) are comfortable contacting the Executive.

<i>Agree</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Happy with membership	85
Value for money	77
Executive working in best interests of members and society	78
Relationship with executive is positive	66
Executive's leadership is effective	75
Know at least one executive member's name	69
Value for money	77
Comfortable contacting the executive	55

Table 8 – Value of membership

Additional comments to this question included: “I felt welcome at the ascilite conference when I first went even though I knew very little”, “there is no option to say ‘Don't Know’”, and “what the exec do is not all that transparent”.



While most respondents plan on continuing as members, almost one third are unsure. Of the small number of respondents who are unlikely to renew, their reasons include: not great value for money, job insecurity/restructuring, negative experiences with joining/webinars, conference fee is too high, financial limitations, struggling to leverage membership into meaningful connections, retiring, or not enough rigorous research.

<i>Intention about remaining a member</i>	<i>2015 (%)</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2010</i>
Unlikely to renew	7	0	0
1-3 years	17	11	23
3-5 years	20 (47*)	53	53
More than 5 years	27	*	*
Not sure	29	35	23

Table 9 – Intentions to remain a member

**For both the 2012 and 2010 member surveys, there was no option beyond five years. Combining this year’s top two bands gives us 47%.*

In addition, more than half of respondents were likely (likely or highly likely) to recommend joining ascilite to colleagues. Only a small number—less than 10 percent—would be unlikely to do so.



How likely are you to encourage colleagues to become a member ***Percent***

Highly Likely	34
Likely	26
Somewhat Likely	23
Undecided	7
Somewhat Unlikely	4
Unlikely	3
Highly Unlikely	2
Prefer not to answer	1

Table 10 – Likelihood to recommend membership

Burning Issues

We asked respondents to give feedback on any aspect of their ascilite membership, as “burning issues”. Although a small percentage of respondents provided any feedback in this section (8%), their feedback included both positive and negative comments.



<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
Love the newsletter	Conference sessions filling up too often – unacceptable based on registration fee paid.
More webinars from the special interest groups (SIGs); and more SIGs	Conference fee too high
What about a special interest groups mobile technologies for field based assessment SIG?	Widen scope - very university context dominated
	The society needs to better support research while still remaining committed to practitioners.
	Worried about the quality and impact factor of AJET and the quality of papers at ascilite conferences
	Demands on voluntary executive members too high and hard to sustain.

Table 11 – Burning issues

Member Benefits

We asked our members about a range of available ascilite services. Overall, the ascilite annual conference is viewed very positively by respondents (Table 12). We also asked members about their views on professional development, networking and communication (Table 13). Again, in both of these questions, respondents were able to respond affirmatively to more than one response.



<i>Agree</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Valuable forum for learning about practical uses of ICT in tertiary	89
Valuable forum for learning about quality research	80
Valuable forum for networking	80
Peer review is rigorous and fair	78
Is a high quality, worthwhile event	75
Contributes significantly to my professional development	70
Workshops are valuable	62

Table 12 – Value of the annual conference

<i>Agree</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Website is easy to use	78
Website information is useful	79
Informal networking opportunities are valued	66
Opportunities to develop knowledge and skills through things like webinars	72
ascilite membership is a valued item on my resume	71

Table 13 – Value of networking, professional development & communication



We also enquired about how *familiar* members are with the specific ascilite services and the value they ascribed to each of them by asking if we should *maintain, enhance or discontinue* the service (Table 14).

Programme	Familiar	Maintain	Enhance	Discontinue
Community mentoring programme	19	31	16	1
Annual conference	27	50	30	-
Sponsored conference workshops	19	39	10	1
Bulletin	26	58	15	1
Webinars	23	45	17	1
AJET	22	49	23	-
ascilite awards	19	41	16	1
CMALT Australasia	11	23	8	1
Website	21	50	26	-
Social media presence: Twitter	13	30	6	1
Social media presence: LinkedIn	9	21	5	-
Social media presence: Facebook	9	16	5	3

Table 14 – Familiarity & value of specific ascilite services



Engagement

In addition to perceptions and awareness of programmes, we were keen to ascertain the extent to which respondents engaged with certain programmes (Table 15).

Programme	Never or Rarely	Sometimes	Often or Very Often
Mentoring	75	13	11
Annual conference	20	33	46
Sponsored conference workshops	60	33	6
Bulletin	11	23	65
Webinars	49	36	14
AJET	29	23	46
ascilite awards	75	19	3
CMALT Australasia	84	10	5
Website	36	41	22
Twitter	87	7	4
LinkedIn	84	9	5
Facebook	74	16	8

Table 15 – Level of engagement with each ascilite service



Similarly, we asked which one of our programmes respondents find *most valuable* and *most important* (Table 16). While not everyone’s replies are identical, when aggregated this data broke down exactly the same.

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Most Valuable</i>	<i>Most Important</i>
Mentoring	6	6
Annual conference	55	55
Bulletin	13	13
Webinars	3	3
AJET	13	13
CMALT Australasia	2	2
Website	6	6

Table 16 – Most valuable & most important ascilite services

Respondents were able to name “other services” that could be offered by ascilite. Fully 14 percent identified a specific programme idea, including:

- a MOOC
- Structured outreach to new members
- TEDTalks
- Developing networks
- Grants innovative projects
- Google Plus community



- more active asynchronous discussion
- online virtual conferences/workshops
- PhD student consortium at conference
- Some financial support to the students
- Student Travel Grant or Scholarship
- virtual attendance at conference, apart from webinars
- more F2F sessions via Skype or similar; skill development/training opportunities online at reduced cost to members
- Advocacy for people working in educational technology

We also invited respondents to make more general comments on this section, some of which echoed the specific ideas in the previous question. Responses included:

- Developing networks - ascilite already does a good job with this, but it is likely to become an increasingly important area
- Grants innovative projects
- Tighten up the ones we've got!
- Maybe a Google Plus Community
- more active asynchronous discussion
- online virtual conferences/workshops
- PhD student consortium at conference
- Some financial support to the students
- Student Travel Grant or Scholarship
- Wondering about advocacy for people working in Educational Technology.



The Journal (AJET)

The Australasian Journal of Educational Technology (AJET) aims to promote research and scholarship on the integration of technology in tertiary education.

Most respondents agreed that AJET is a valuable source of high quality research articles (Table 17). A majority (76 percent) were interested or perhaps interested in ascilite AJET-focused activities (Table 18).

<i>Valuable source of high quality research</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Disagree	4
Not sure	11
Agree	76
Does not apply	3
Prefer not to answer	6

Table 17 – AJET as a source of high quality research

<i>Interest in AJET related activities</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	40
Perhaps	36
No	12
Does not apply	8
Prefer not to answer	4



Table 18 – interest in AJET related activities

We also asked respondents, what factors are important in ranking educational technology journals: impact factor was by far the highest ranked factor (Table 19).

<i>Ranking of factors in terms of importance</i>	<i>Percent Ranked first</i>
Impact factor	54
ERA Ranking	19
AJET Open Access status	14
Absence of publication charges	8
Review and publication process	8
Google Scholar h-index score	4
My institution's journal rankings	1
Early release of accepted articles	2

Table 19 – Factors influencing a decision to submit a paper to AJET

A small number of respondents provided addition comments related to AJET, including:

- Valuable journal
- AJET is ascilite's flagship product and needs strong support
- I am worried about the quality and impact factor. I've also found the editorial team and board to be a bit of a closed shop, with recruitment practices that aren't fully transparent. I think the old editorial team, despite its flaws, did more to promote the journal and increase visibility and citation rates.



- If the activities mentioned here do occur, please send info to newer members. These kinds of activities would be extremely beneficial to new researchers and others who are a new environment like me.
- Special editions may generate more collaboration and interest

General comments

Finally, whilst keen to leverage the efficiencies of a comprehensive survey, we were equally keen to give a mechanism for more naturalistic comment about ascilite. There were two questions in this section: overall satisfaction as an ascilite member, and how could ascilite do better. We have included all the feedback, though some contributions have been edited slightly for efficiency.

Overall Satisfaction

The annual ascilite conference was the most frequently commented upon topic. Community, often ascilite as a learning community (or a means of finding learning community), and networking also featured prominently. Finally, initiatives such as the Bulletin that focused on communication with and between members also trended.

Some of the key themes among the responses were:

- Access to learning communities/communities of practice
- Networking
- Resources and information around learning technologies
- Educational development
- Annual conference



Doing Better

As a more thoughtful question, the responses to “how could ascilite do better” covered more topics. Regardless, some themes emerged, including improving the society’s (and, presumably, the annual conferences’) websites, conference fees perceived as too high, conference quality, outreach (to members), advocacy (to policy and decision makers), and various additional themes below.

Some of the key themes among the responses were:

- Communication: through the website, social media and networks, from the executive directly
- Look at the costs associated with attending the annual conference
- Maintaining or improve high standards
- Ensuring relevance to different sorts of tertiary institutions, including non-universities and research-intensive universities
- More outreach to new members
- Focus on research rigour
- Consider more regional events