All U.S. Institutions

Colleges and universities use the EDUCAUSE Technology Research in the Academic Community (ETRAC) data to develop and support their strategic objectives for educational technology. With ETRAC data, institutions can understand and benchmark what students and faculty need and expect from technology. Institutions can use data to improve IT services, prioritize strategic contributions of IT to higher education, and become more technologically competitive among peers. There is no cost to participate, and campuses will have access to all research publications, the aggregate-level summary/benchmarking report, and the institution’s raw (anonymous) response data. Learn more at http://www.educause.edu/etrac.

DEVICE OWNERSHIP, USAGE, AND IMPORTANCE

2% Own zero or one Internet-capable device
66% Own two or three Internet-capable devices
32% Own four or more Internet-capable devices
29% Own a desktop
24% Use a desktop in most or all of their courses
49% Rate desktops as very/extremely important to academic success (among students who use desktops in at least one course)
95% Own a laptop
89% Use a laptop in most or all of their courses
94% Rate laptops as very/extremely important to academic success (among students who use laptops in at least one course)
53% Own a tablet
14% Use a tablet in most or all of their courses
38% Rate tablets as very/extremely important to academic success (among students who use tablets in at least one course)
97% Own a smartphone
41% Use a smartphone in most or all of their courses
47% Rate smartphones as very/extremely important to academic success (among students who use smartphones in at least one course)

Rate support of these activities from a handheld device highest:
1. Communicating with other students about class-related matters outside class sessions (78%)
2. Communicating with instructors about class-related matters outside class sessions (75%)
3. Taking pictures of in-class activities or resources (74%)
4. Checking grades (74%)

Rate support of these activities from a handheld device lowest:
1. Registering for courses (25%)
2. Producing content (23%)
3. Taking notes in class (22%)
4. Recording lectures or in-class activities (22%)

TECHNOLOGY AND THE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

18% Typically connect zero or one device to the campus network
78% Typically connect two or three devices to the campus network simultaneously
3% Typically connect four or more devices to the campus network simultaneously

Rate as good or excellent:
• Network performance (e.g., high speed, no interruptions) (52%)
• Reliability of access to Wi-Fi in classroom/instructional spaces (68%)
• Reliability of access to Wi-Fi in campus libraries (76%)
• Reliability of access to Wi-Fi in student housing/dormitories (51%)
• Reliability of access to Wi-Fi in outdoor spaces (34%)

Find the following online student-success tools at least moderately useful:
• Guidance about courses students might consider taking in the future (83%)
• Early-alert systems designed to catch potential academic trouble as soon as possible (85%)
• Suggestions for how to improve performance in a course (80%)
• Degree planning or mapping tools that identify courses needed to complete degree (90%)
• Degree audit tools that show the degree requirements completed (91%)
• Online self-service tools for conducting student-related business (93%)
• Digital tools that keep a record of services used, advice given, or decisions made (83%)

Report that most or all of their instructors:
• Use technology adequately for course instruction (68%)
• Encourage the use of online collaboration tools (54%)
• Encourage the use of technology for creative or critical-thinking tasks (46%)
• Encourage the use of student devices during class to deepen learning (35%)

Wish instructors used these resources/tools MORE:
1. Lecture capture (66%)
2. Free, web-based content to supplement course-related materials (62%)
3. Early-alert systems designed to catch potential academic trouble as soon as possible (61%)

Wish instructors used these resources/tools LESS:
1. Social media as a teaching and learning tool (42%)
2. E-portfolios (36%)
3. Student tablets as learning tools for course-related activities (35%)
Would include on a résumé:
1. Undergraduate degree/diploma (81%)
2. Certificate from an accredited college or university (58%)
3. Major projects completed during coursework (47%)
4. Certificate from an industry-based training program (42%)
5. Certificate of completion of a free course (32%)
6. Digital badge (26%)
7. E-portfolio (23%)

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

40% Are concerned that technology advances may increasingly invade privacy
90% Secure access to their computers, tablets, and smartphones with a password or PIN
36% Gave the password or PIN for their computers, tablets, or smartphones to another person in the past 12 months
19% Gave the password or PIN for an online account to another person in the past 12 months
13% Let someone log in as them to a college or university service, system, application, or website in the past 12 months
10% Have had an online account hacked in the past 12 months

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Are most satisfied with these LMS aspects:
1. Submitting course assignments (77%)
2. Accessing course content (75%)
3. Checking course progress (66%)

Are most dissatisfied with these LMS aspects:
1. Study groups with other students (20%)
2. Collaborating on projects (19%)
3. Engaging with other students (15%)
4. Receiving feedback on course assignments (15%)

9% Prefer to learn in a completely face-to-face learning environment
79% Prefer to learn in a blended learning environment
6% Prefer to learn in a completely online learning environment

43% Get more actively involved in courses that use technology
36% Are more likely to skip classes when materials presented in class are available online
38% Are more likely to skip classes when streamed or recorded lectures are available
41% Find the use of mobile devices in the classroom distracting
47% Believe the use of mobile devices in the classroom distracts other students
53% Believe the use of mobile devices in the classroom is distracting for instructors

PERSONAL COMPUTING ENVIRONMENT

Typically encounter this smartphone policy:
70% Are banned or discouraged from using it in the classroom
7% Are required or encouraged to use it in the classroom

Typically encounter this tablet policy:
40% Are banned or discouraged from using it in the classroom
20% Are required or encouraged to use it in the classroom

Typically encounter this laptop policy:
19% Are banned or discouraged from using it in the classroom
35% Are required or encouraged to use it in the classroom

Typically use their devices in the classroom for these activities:
- Smartphone: Use to engage in nonclass activities (45%)
- Tablet: Use to make other connections with the learning material (29%)
- Laptop: Use to make other connections with the learning material (51%)

Among students reporting a physical or learning disability that requires accessible or adaptive technologies for coursework:
44% Rate institutional support of needed technologies as good or excellent
12% Report that their institution is unaware of student needs

ENHANCE DECISION MAKING WITH ECAR STUDENT AND IT DATA

In 2017, ECAR collaborated with 124 institutions to collect responses from 43,559 undergraduate students about their technology experiences. The research can catalyze conversations among IT professionals about how to better serve their constituents; among institutional leaders about how to use technology strategically; and among students about how to articulate their technology needs and expectations.

ECAR research on students and IT is conducted annually, and all institutions are invited to participate for free. Participating institutions receive the annual research report; an aggregate-level summary/benchmarking report that compares the institution’s responses with other institutions; and the raw (anonymous) data of the institution’s responses, allowing institutions to conduct further analyses.

For more information, or to confirm your intent to participate in the next survey, contact the EDUCAUSE research team at ecarsurvey@educause.edu.