2013 ECAR Student Technology Survey

Background on the History and Purpose of the Survey

The EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR) has been surveying undergraduate college students across the country for the past ten years. The survey is designed to provide insight into students’ choices and preferences for technology that supports their educational experience. The survey also helps to identify how and when students are using technology, as well as expected trends for technology in the classrooms of the future. In 2013, Portland State University participated in this study, along with over 250 other higher education institutions. The findings were distilled into four broad themes, which are listed below as key findings. These themes help surveyors better understand how students experience technology, and the ways in which new, better, or more technology can impact students’ relationship with information technology. Below are key findings/themes from the survey results.

2013 ECAR Key Findings:

- Students recognize the value of technology but still need guidance when it comes to using it effectively for academics.
- Students prefer blended learning environments and are beginning to experiment with MOOCs.
- Students are ready to use their mobile devices more for academics, and they look to institutions and instructors for opportunities and encouragement to do so.
- Students value their privacy, so using technology to connect with them has its limits.

ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Technology, 2013

Technology Training in the Classroom

The mix of types of devices owned by PSU undergraduate students isn’t changing much from year to year, but the prevalence of any one type of device is shifting notably. The devices used by students is similar to devices owned, but much different when it comes to which devices students are actually using the most.
Technology Training

When students were questioned regarding their experience with receiving technology training in the classroom at PSU, a majority of respondents said that all, most, or some of their teachers had provided adequate training on technology. Only 15% of students surveyed said that they had not received adequate training on technology from their instructor.

Almost two-thirds of respondents said that they preferred face-to-face training when being introduced to new technology.

Do PSU Instructors Provide Adequate Technology Training?

PSU Undergraduates Prefer Face-to-Face Training for Technology

PSU Response to Survey Results:

- Many PSU students commented on deficiencies in the wireless connection around campus. PSU leadership responded to this sentiment by approving a large investment to improve wireless connectivity at PSU.

- Many PSU students commented on their desire for more online content, including lecture capture associated with their classes. PSU has been working for years now to increase the amount of courses, programs, and degrees that are available to students online.

- When asked about new or “cutting edge” technologies that students would like to see integrated into their educational experience, the majority of respondents wanted a deeper understanding of the technology that is already in place. PSU IT is responding to this information by making sure that current systems are fast and reliable, as well as providing regular training for these systems.

Summary

Portland State University received a lot of useful information from the 2013 ECAR Student Technology Survey. The IT leadership gained a detailed insight into the students’ networking experience on campus, as well as their preferences for technology based learning. The survey results greatly supported the investment of about $1,000,000 in wireless and network infrastructure, which will be implemented during fiscal years 2014 and 2015 to help better support the demands for stronger and faster internet connections at PSU. Also, the survey findings are right in line with PSU’s continuing efforts to provide more online learning opportunities for all of our students.

For full survey results and findings, please click link below: