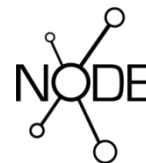


UWA TechNODE bulletin 2015

First Year Undergraduate Students



Key findings from the 2014-15 survey of first year UWA undergraduate students

- ❖ 96% of UWA first-year undergraduate respondents own smartphones, 94% own laptops and 46% own tablets.
- ❖ Students communicate with their friends through text messaging (44%) and social media (37%) and prefer to hear from the university via targeted and relevant email (85%) or Facebook pages/groups (70%).
- ❖ 95% expect their university lectures to be recorded and available on LCS. 72% of students would prefer to have the software and tools required for their studies on their own devices rather than use university facilities
- ❖ Facebook, YouTube and Instagram are the social media platforms most used by current students. 40% used social media more in 2014 than in the previous year.
- ❖ 87% of respondents consider themselves to have good digital skills and 94% consider it important to gain digital skills for their careers
- ❖ 27% of visits to the UWA Current Students website are from a mobile device

Overview of the NODE survey

The annual NODE survey is managed by UWA Student Services and has been administered to first year undergraduates since 2005-06. Some questions are modified each year in response to key issues of interest to the University and to reflect the changes in available technologies. Other questions are maintained in the survey to observe trends over time. Students are surveyed at the end of their first year of undergraduate study and survey responses are made available via the TechNODE bulletins. This report summarises data gathered from students who were first year undergraduates at UWA in 2014.

New in 2014-15

New questions for the latest survey asked students when/why they upgrade their mobile devices, their thoughts on gaining digital skills, preferences for accessing computing facilities on campus and usage of the platforms Pinterest, Snapchat, Tumblr and social TV. Analytics from UWA social media and web channels have been added to demonstrate student behaviour.

Using and upgrading devices

This survey posed new questions regarding students' upgrading of phone and tablet devices. Most students wait to upgrade their devices until they perceive that they're starting to work inefficiently (phones 63%, tablets 93%), while others upgrade when their plans expire (phones 34%, tablets 2%) and the rest upgrade as soon as a new version is released (phones 2%, tablets 4%).

Regarding the use of a potential UWA mobile app, 97% of respondents responded positively. Of potential features, the top 5 most favoured were: course-related notifications (90%); access to UWA email (71%); calendar of UWA events (59%); campus map (52%); notifications about student life/activities (52%). Other app features were seen as less desirable such as the UWA Contact Directory (25% listed this in their top 5), access to personal library account (25%), parking map (21%), askUWA FAQ (18%).

Respondent expectations that all UWA lectures are recorded increased slightly to 95% and access is consistent with the previous year: 68% mostly stream and view them online, 22% download them for later viewing, 9% do both and 2% indicated that they don't use the LCS.

Ownership of mobile and portable devices

Consistent with previous surveys, 99% of respondents own a mobile phone (mobile phone ownership has been at 99% or more since the survey began in 2005). Smartphone ownership has increased from 90% in 2012-13 to 95% in 2013-14 and 96% in 2014-15. 52% of those smartphones are Apple and 47% are Android, while 1% of respondents had Windows or Blackberry phones.

Laptop ownership in 2014 was consistent with previous years at 94% (up 1% from 2013-14). 78% of respondents sometimes or always bring their laptops to campus, and 22% (up 6% from previous survey) do not bring them to campus at all.

Tablet-device ownership is increasing by over 10% each year, from 24% (2012-13) to 34% (2013-14) and 46% in 2014-15. The biggest increase since last year is in ownership of Android tablets (24%, up 5%), while Apple tablet devices have dropped 9% to 65% of all devices.

Communication and interaction with friends

When communicating with friends, more students prefer social media platforms in 2014 (37%) than in 2013 (35%). Preference for text messages has slightly dropped to 44%. Phone calls are favoured less (3% compared to 5% in 2013) and communication through mobile apps is up slightly (14% from 12%). 2% of students favour email to communicate with their peers.

Communication and interaction with the university

When receiving communication from the university, 85% of students still prefer hearing about campus events and opportunities via targeted emails (4% up from 2013) and 70% through Facebook groups and pages. Other communication options like a blog for students, online discussion boards, instant chat sessions and LinkedIn groups are not favoured as highly (21%, 19%, 8%, 2%).

Digital skills

When asked about digital skills (the ability to confidently and competently use digital tools and devices), 87% of respondents rate themselves as digitally competent and 10% need help (2% struggle to learn new digital skills). Most students consider it important to gain these skills (95%), practice them at university (83%), and gain them for their careers (94%). 71% of respondents think that their lecturers consider digital skills important for students to have.

Students use a variety of ways of learning a new digital skill with 66% reporting that they'd try to work it out for themselves, 47% would search for tips online and 47% would go through any tutorials or 'getting started' guides if available. 26% would ask a friend from uni, while 25% would use the help or FAQ options within the tool, and 13% would ask someone at home.

UWA Students analytics: online and social

Student Services manages four social media channels for current students and a range of web channels including the Current Students website and askUWA.

- Instagram (est 2013) is the fastest growing channel with 3085 followers (up 770% from Feb 2014).
- The UWA Students Facebook channel (est 2005) with almost 15,000 followers is used to aggregate all other non-official channels with relevant, audience-focused and timely posts gaining an average 25%-50% reach (compared to benchmark levels of between [2.5%](#) and [16%](#) average organic reach for Facebook pages).
- The UWA Students YouTube channel (est 2011) hosts 118 videos centred on the enrolled student experience and there have been approx. 260,000+ minutes watched in total. Average view duration is 3 minutes.
- Twitter is not commonly used by students but the UWA students account (est 2011) is employed as a strategic and social listening tool.
- Analytics demonstrate that popular and successful online content is original, specific to UWA audiences and contains stories about student life. Events, resharing content and promotional content are less successful.
- The peak timeslot for all channels is evenings between 6-10pm, most notably Sundays and Wednesdays.
- Users visit the Current Students website to access student webmail, LMS, studentConnect and OLCR. 20% of users access the Current Students website via mobile phones and 7% via tablets. 70% of those devices were Apple iOS, 24% Google Android and 6% Microsoft Windows Phone.
- The most popular content in askUWA (Current Students) related to dates of teaching weeks (37763 views in 2014), the definition of GPA and WAM (combined 39843 views) and access to unit results (25581 views).

Social media use

Tools are ranked by students' mean level of experience and confidence (out of 5) below:

1. Facebook profiles (4.38)
2. Facebook groups/pages (4.05)
3. YouTube (3.84)
4. Instagram (3.38)
5. Snapchat (3.25)
6. Twitter (2.94)
7. Tumblr (2.80)
8. Pinterest (2.33)
9. LinkedIn (2.21)
10. Social TV (1.43)

40% of students reported using social media to a greater extent in 2014 than in 2013, (45% remained about the same). 63% believe they waste too much time on social media, 59% try to limit the time they spend, and half of respondents have considered deleting/deactivating at least one of their accounts.

University files and computing

Most students use more than one location to store their university-related documents and files. Laptops are used by 80% of respondents, followed by USB drives (50%), emailing files to themselves (32%), and desktops (23%). Web-based cloud storage, e.g. Dropbox, increased 2% to 28% while use of the UWA cloud storage UniDrive dropped to 5% (down 3%).

When considering University computing facilities in the future, 72% would prefer to be provided with the appropriate software/tools for their own devices that they bring to campus and 28% would prefer to use UWA computing labs equipped with the appropriate software.