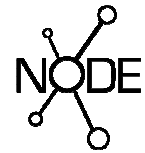# TechNODE bulletin 2013

Key Findings from the 2012-13 survey

90% of first year respondents own internet-capable smartphones and 24% own a tablet device.
Laptop ownership is high (93%) and are used as students' preferred method for storing files and reading ebooks

1 in 4 first years have downloaded more than 25 apps onto their primary mobile device
97% of respondents are interested in a UWA app with a student calendar and campus map the most favoured features

Students typically use text messages or social media to contact each other
Students have concerns about how their increased use of social media impacts on other areas of their lives

Facebook, YouTube, instant messaging and discussion boards remain the most popular online tools for engagement
Use of ebooks and Twitter has risen while blogging, RSS and email use have all decreased

Overview of the NODE survey

The annual NODE survey is managed by UWA Student Services. 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 the 2012 First Year cohort.

New in 2012-13

New questions focus on brands of smartphones and tablets, use of Instagram, trends in social media use and preferences for apps and university communications. 316 First Year students responded to the 2012-13 survey (response rate of 14% from a 2283 survey population).

Communication and social media use

- SMS remains the most preferred method for students to contact each other (51%) with social networks also popular (33%). Only 1% of students used email as their preferred method.
- Students were asked about their use of social media. 49% responded that they had considered deleting a social media account during 2012, 78% were concerned that they waste time on social media or use it to procrastinate and 64% make efforts to restrict the amount of time they spend on social media.
- Only 17% said their use of social media was lower in 2012 compared to 2011 with 30% indicating it was about the same and 51% saying their use had risen.

Device ownership and usage

Laptops are owned by 93% of First Year students and numbers have been steadily rising each year. More students are also bringing their laptops to campus (70% routinely brought their laptops to UWA in 2012 compared to 59.7% the previous year).

Students were asked about how/where they stored computer files such as assignments and project data. Cloud storage has jumped from 6.7% in 2011 to 18% in 2012, although laptops are still the most popular storage option (84%) followed by USBs (56%), email (32%) and desktops (22%).

Mobile phone ownership has been at more than 99% since the survey began although the rate of smartphone ownership has risen to 90% in 2012-13 from 83.6% in 2011, 76% in 2010 and 42% in 2008.

Just over half (53%) of smartphones are Apple products with 38% Android devices, 6% Blackberry and a small number of other devices including those using Windows OS.

Tablet-device ownership is lower than for laptops or mobile phones but has risen to 24% in 2012 from 13.9% in 2011 and 8.7% in 2010.

Compared to 2011, students who owned tablets in 2012 are using note-taking, calendar and media tools to a greater extent than they did before and playing games about the same amount (56% in 2012 compared to 54.1% in 2011).

78% of tablets owned by First Years in 2012 were Apple iPads, down from 87% the previous year with a growth in ownership of Android devices to 17%.

Online Tools and Platforms used by students

Respondents to the NODE survey have consistently said that they prefer to use a different set of tools for engagement (chatting with friends, joining programs, finding out about campus life) than they do for learning (communicating with teaching staff, handling assessments, discussing course-content).

For engagement, students are most experienced in using YouTube (99% access this tool), Facebook profiles (97%), Facebook pages (93%) instant messaging (85%), and discussion boards (82%). Use of these tools has been consistently high across all years and has grown each year.

Since the last survey there have been moderate areas of growth in the use of some tools such as Twitter (38% used this tool in 2012 up from 31.6% in 2011 and 24% in 2010) and just over half of First Year students who responded to the survey use the photo sharing site Instagram. Use of LinkedIn has remained steady in 2012 at 8% (7.5% in 2011). Tools such as blogging, podcasts, RSS have continued to decline in use amongst students.

eBooks

Use of ebooks has again risen since the last survey with 25% preferring to read e-versions (up from 16.3% last year and 8% the year before) and 64.7% using them if they have to. Laptops are still the most popular device for reading ebooks (77% use theirs) although reading on smartphones has jumped to 34% from 22.2% to be as popular as desktops (35%). Use of tablet devices has also risen to 26% up from 13.5% and eBook readers are up to 16% from 5.2% the previous year.

Privacy online

Most students (77%) are comfortable with the information about them that appears online. However more students are being mindful of their online behaviour, with 99% (up from 93.5%) making efforts to protect their online privacy, 91% thinking about who can access their online information (up from 86.1%) and 64.3% saying they read the terms and conditions of online tools they use (consistent with the previous year). More students than ever are concerned about the potentially risky behaviour exhibited by their friends with 93% (up from 74%) observing their friends uploading information that they think they will regret later.

Mobile apps

For the first time, the survey asked smartphone and tablet owners about the apps they had downloaded to their devices (ie NOT including those pre-installed):

- One in four (25%) have more than 25 apps downloaded to their device (16% have >5, 20% have 6-10, 16% have 11-15, 15% have 16-20 and 7% have 21-25)
- 74% of device owners do not have a QR reader app (37% don't know what this app is for and 37% were aware of QR codes but did not use an app, 26% have downloaded a QR reader app)

Demand for a free UWA app for students is fairly high (78% said they would use it, 19% said they might do but would like to see it first and 3% said they would not).

Students were asked to choose up to 5 features they would like to see included if UWA had an app for students:

- Calendar that could be set up to combine classes, events and appointments was the top choice (selected as one of the top 5 features by 73% of respondents)
- Campus map (69%)
- Availability of computers on campus (49%)
- Transperth information and timetables (46%)
- Access to borrowing record at UWA libraries and option to renew books (34%)
- UWA contact directory (34%).

Demand for a parking map (31%), askUWA database (23%) and a shared–check-in map (10%) were all lower and other suggestions included menus/price lists for campus food outlets and an option to view recorded lectures via a mobile app.

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