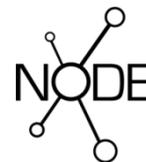


# UWA TechNODE bulletin 2014

## First Year Undergraduate Students



### Key findings from the 2013-14 survey of first year UWA undergraduate students

- ❖ 95% of UWA first year undergraduate respondents own smartphones and 51% of those devices are iPhones. 34% of respondents own tablet-style mobile devices and of those 74% are iPads.
- ❖ Facebook and YouTube remain the dominant social media platforms for this cohort (used by more than 95% of respondents) although Twitter and Instagram have seen growth since last year.
- ❖ Most students (76%) pay for a mobile data plan and 64% of those pay for more than 500MB per month.
- ❖ Calendar, email, a map, computer availability and public transport information are the top 5 features in a UWA mobile app that 96% of respondents say they would use.

### 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 2013.

### New in 2013-14

New questions for the latest survey focus on the mobile data plans used by students, the number of wireless enabled devices that students bring to campus, awareness of askUWA and other enquiry points, sources of advice students use when making decisions about university study. 488 First Year students responded to the 2013-14 survey (response rate of 14.4%).

### Connecting online

On a typical day at university, 98% of respondents said they bring at least one device that could connect to UniFi. 37% bring one device, while 53% bring 2 devices and 7% bring 3 (2% said they bring zero and 1% said they bring 4 or more devices).

76% of respondents pay for a data plan for their main mobile device and of those 30% use 4G, 59% use 3G (11% are not sure). Of students that pay for a plan, 25% pay for 200-500MB per month, 30% pay for 500MB-1GB per month, 34% pay for more than 1GB per month while 10% were not sure.

### Storing university-related files

Students were asked where they typically stored files relating to their University work and the responses indicate that individual students use multiple storage options/locations. 81% use their laptops, 51% use a USB drive, 37% email files to themselves, 23% save to a desktop computer, 26% store on a web-based cloud service (such as drop-box) and 8% said they use the UWA cloud storage UniDrive.

### Ownership of mobile and portable devices

Mobile phone ownership amongst respondents was 100% in 2013 and has been at more than 99% since the survey began. 95% of mobile phones owned by first year students are smart phones (devices with internet-accessing capabilities) which has increased slightly from 90% in the 2012-13 survey. In 2013, 52% of smartphones were Apple iPhones which is consistent with earlier surveys (45% use Android which shows slight growth and 1% use Blackberry devices, down from 6% the previous year).

Tablet-device ownership amongst respondents was 34% which shows steady growth from 24% in the 2012-13 survey (up from 13.9% in 2011 and 8.7% in 2010). 74% of tablets owned by first year students are iPads, 19% run Android operating system and 4% run Windows.

Laptop ownership amongst respondents is steady at 93% with 43% of owners bringing their laptops to campus every time they are here and 41% bringing them sometimes (16% of laptop owners say they never bring them to campus).

## Communication and interaction

Text messaging and social media sites remain the favoured means for first year undergraduate students to communicate with each other. 45% of respondents would text messaging their friends (down slightly from 51% the previous year) while 35% would use a social media platform (up from 33% the previous year). 12% are most likely to use a mobile app (eg Instagram or Snapchat) to communicate with friends whereas 5% would use a phone call and 2% email.

The majority of students have heard of askUWA (81%) and the most of those use it once a month (84%), most often navigating to askUWA from the UWA site (49% go through the front page as opposed to 41% who use a search engine to find it each time and 5% who remember the URL).

Students prefer the university to keep them up to date via targeted emails (81%) and Facebook (74%). Online discussion boards, sharing video content, and blog content written for students by staff are about equally preferred (21%, 20%, 19%), whereas online chat sessions and LinkedIn groups are not (7%, 2%).

94% of respondents expect their UWA lectures to be recorded in some way, consistent with previous surveys) with most students streaming them online (67%) rather than downloading them (21%) (9% do a mix of those and 3% said they don't use the LCS).

## Using devices

24% of respondents indicated that they prefer to read books and other documents electronically rather than hard-copy (56% will use e-versions if they have to and 10% will only read hard copy). Respondents use a number of devices to read ebooks, with laptops are the most likely device to be used (79% use them, up from 77% the previous year) followed by mobile phone (43% use them up from 34% the previous year), tablet (33% use them up from 26% the previous year) desktop (30% use them down from 35% the previous year) and ebook readers (13% use them down from 16% the previous year).

In results consistent with the 2012-13 survey, 96% of respondents in 2013-14 would use a free UWA mobile app and the top 5 most requested features were:

- Calendar of UWA events (78% of respondents would like this feature)
- Access to UWA email (76% of respondents would like this feature)
- Campus map (72% of respondents would like this feature)
- Availability of computers on campus (44% of respondents would like this feature)
- Public transport information (43% of respondents would like this feature)

Other features included UWA Contact Directory (35% listed this in their top 5), access to library account (32%), parking map (29%), askUWA FAQ (27%) and check-in to a shared map (11%). Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents have more than 25 apps on their main mobile device, and most have between 5 and 20.

## Social media use and online privacy

While Facebook and YouTube remain at the top of the list of tools used by students (95% use Facebook profiles, 90% use Facebook fan pages and 99% use YouTube – all consistent with previous years' surveys), other platforms are growing in popularity. 48% of respondents read or create Twitter content (up from 38% last year), 55% access or create content on Instagram and 14% have a LinkedIn profile (up from 8% the previous year, although 34% of respondents have never heard of LinkedIn).

48% of students have considered deleting or cancelling one or more social media accounts in 2013, and 70% are concerned about wasting their time on social media, both figures down marginally from 2012. Students are generally happy with the information about themselves that appears online but 98% still try to protect their privacy online. More respondents indicated that they read the terms and conditions and adjust privacy settings of online tools used (72% up from 64% the previous year). Despite the 80% who are happy with their online presence, 90% of students have noticed friends uploading potentially regrettable content.

---

This bulletin should be referenced as:

Cluett, L.J. (2014) UWA TechNODE bulletin 2014 – First Year Undergraduate Students: an annual synopsis of student access to, experiences with and expectations of ICT at The University of Western Australia. Available from: <http://www.staff.uwa.edu.au/teaching/student/online/node>

**Contact:** Email: Online Communities and Engagement Strategist: [lisa.cluett@uwa.edu.au](mailto:lisa.cluett@uwa.edu.au)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA