How are students and teaching staff in further and higher education actually using technology?

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#digifest20
Why do we need to collect data about staff and students’ use of technology?

• Office for Students predicts that over a million digitally skilled people will be needed by 2022

• Recognition within the government’s edtech strategy, Realising the potential of technology in education, that ‘technology is increasingly part of our society’

• Each FE colleges spends approximately £1 million pounds a year on their ICT infrastructure and 3.8 % of universities annual budget is allocated to supporting the digital environment

• So we need evidence to support:
  - Identification of the digital skills gap
  - Return on investment
  - That students and staff are getting the full benefits of the investment in the digital environment at their institutions
  - Impact of the implementation of institutional digital strategies
  - Benchmark against other universities and colleges
Digital experience insights

- Our insights surveys provide powerful data on how students, teaching and professional staff are using technology
- Designed to help to understand and improve the digital experience in FE and HE
- We have worked with nearly 200 organisations and 135,570 responses from students and staff to pilot and refine our surveys
- An active community of practice with regular online and face-to-face events
- [https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/what-is-digital-insights-experience/](https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/what-is-digital-insights-experience/)
Student insights report 2019

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Teaching staff insights report 2019

3,049 FE teaching staff from 35 FE and sixth form colleges

3,485 HE teaching staff from 26 universities

HE students own and use more devices than FE students. About 8 in 10 students used a smartphone.

5% of FE and fewer than 1% of HE students said that they didn’t own any personal device.

Most popular activities?
- FE: making notes or recordings (57% weekly)
- HE: accessing lecture notes/recorded lectures (85% weekly)

Sizeable numbers of students say assistive technologies are vital to their learning or that they choose to use them (FE: 14%, HE: 19%)
Theme 1: the digital lives of learners

Word clouds illustrating the frequency of terms used by all students who responded to the question ‘please give an example of a digital tool or app you find really useful for learning’

FE students

HE students
**Theme 1: teaching staff and their technology**

43% of FE teaching staff and 48% of HE say they are **early adopters** of digital technologies when they can see a **clear benefit**

For support in using digital technologies: **55% FE; 33% HE** rely most on **their colleagues**; **27% FE; 32% HE** rely most on **online videos & resources**

17% FE and 15% HE say they use **assistive technologies** in their role but **24% FE; 40% HE** of these say they are not provided with **any support** in their use.
Theme 2: digital in the institution - students

72% of FE students and 87% of HE students rated their organisation’s digital provision as above average.

Reliable wifi was accessible to 82% of HE students and 71% of FE learners.

70% of HE students agreed that their organisation supported them to use their own digital devices, in contrast to 53% of FE students.

61% of FE students and 54% of HE students agreed that their organisation protected their data privacy. There has been a trend towards a significant improvement this year on this.
Key messages - digital in the institution

- **Get the basics right** - reliable cross-campus access to wifi is essential for flexible learning and this should include student accommodation areas

- **Provide good quality digital resources** - students in HE expect recorded lectures to be available and would like more consistency in audio quality and timeliness of upload

- **Second most important concern for HE students** is access to quality academic content. They feel frustrated if library searches lead them to articles that are not available. They would also like more key texts and readings to be digitised

- **Provide a variety of support options and signpost these well**

- **Actively promote health, wellbeing and online safety**
Theme 2: organisational infrastructure – teaching staff

51% FE; 58% HE rate their organisation’s digital environment as above average but 16% FE; 14% HE rate it as below average.

Only 70% FE; 84% HE teaching staff have access to reliable wifi.

Only 25% FE; 29% HE agree that teaching spaces are well designed for use of digital technology.

When teaching staff were asked if they regularly accessed the VLE on a mobile device, the average response at organisational-level was ‘disagree’.
Key messages for theme 2: organisational infrastructure

- Teaching staff want a better-quality digital environment - digital infrastructure and lack of facilities are still a barrier to improving digital teaching and learning.
- Consider learning space design – the physical space should support the seamless use of technology within the learning environment.
- FE teaching staff report lower levels of access to digital resources than their HE colleagues.
- Access to reliable wifi continues to be a concern for FE teaching staff and students.
- Teaching staff need to understand how students access content.
- The VLE is increasingly diverse.
70% of FE students and 75% of those in HE rated the quality of digital teaching and learning on their course as above average.

Around a quarter (FE: 29%, HE: 24%) of students never work online with others.

Around half of students (FE: 48%, HE: 57%) agreed they could find things easily on their VLE.

Around a third of all students (FE: 34%, HE: 31%) agreed that they were told how their personal data is stored and used.
Theme 3: digital at course level - students

Approximately a third of students agreed that they were told what digital skills they would need before their course started (FE: 36%, HE: 29%)

70% of HE students and 49% of FE students agreed that digital skills were important for their chosen career but only 42% HE students and 40% FE students agreed that their course prepared them for the digital workplace

40% of FE and 37% of HE students agreed that they had regular opportunities to review and update their digital skills

Only 3 in 10 students agreed that they were given the chance to be involved in decisions about digital services.
Key messages – digital at course level

• **Encourage collaboration to emulate business practices** - colleges and universities could do more to promote workplace practices that are valued by employers

• **Students want to be in control of their own learning progress** - organisations can support learner autonomy with online access to grades and feedback; clear calendars of assessments and milestones and access to practice questions

• **Diverging approaches to VLEs** - FE and HE sectors are diverging in their approach to providing learning environments. In HE there is convergence with institutional portals. In FE, free-standing systems such as Showbie and Google Classroom are widely used
Key messages – digital at course level

• **Embed digital skills through curriculum design** - support students to develop their digital skills prior to study, during induction and throughout their course.

• Ensure they know what **digital skills** they need to have **before they start** and provide opportunities to develop these only online.

• Raise awareness of the **importance of digital skills** - not all students are fully aware of the importance of digital skills within the workplace. Clear articulation and alignment of study and workplace practices throughout learning can help to ensure these skills are recognised and understood.
FE teaching staff, in general, carry out digital teaching activities more often than those in HE. The percentage carrying out each activity ‘weekly or more’ were:

- **Live polling or quizzing**
  - FE: 23%
  - HE: 11%

- **Create digital learning materials**
  - FE: 35%
  - HE: 24%

- **Give personalised digital feedback**
  - FE: 28%
  - HE: 20%

66% FE; 62% HE would like digital technologies to be used more than they are now in their teaching practice.
Theme 3: digital at course level

Word clouds illustrating the frequency of terms used by all teaching staff who responded to the question ‘please give an example of a digital tool or app you find really useful in your job role’

FE teaching staff

HE teaching staff

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Key messages for theme 3: digital teaching

- **Teaching staff need to be confident in a range of digital activities** - our activity list suggests a baseline that teaching staff could master before moving on to a more varied range of digital teaching practices:
  - Set collaborative work in an online or virtual learning environment
  - Create/curate your own digital teaching materials (over and above use of Word or PowerPoint)
  - Use polling or quizzing – student survey responses show that FE students in particular find these engaging
  - Build in giving digital feedback to students (in any format) as a regular part of assessment and feedback practices
When digital was used:
75% of HE and 63% of FE students agreed that they were more independent in their learning.

76% of HE and 58% of FE students agreed that they could fit learning into their life.

Around 4 in 10 students wanted digital technologies to be used more on their course.

When asked to select what options would be most useful to learners, HE students chose:

- More practice questions available online (35%)
- Course-related videos (23%)
- References and readings (20%)

Majority of students prefer to learn using mixture of individual and group work, but sizable minority preferred to learn on their own (FE: 36%, HE: 43%).
Theme 4: professional development of teaching staff

Only 14% FE; 9% HE agree they receive reward or recognition when they develop digital aspects of their role.

36% FE; 34% HE agree that they have regular opportunities to develop their digital skills.

Only 15% FE; 13% HE agree they have time and support to innovate.

33% FE; 27% HE agree that they receive guidance about the digital skills they are expected to have as a teacher.

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Theme 4: professional development

60% FE; 18% HE agree that they are informed about their responsibilities to help students behave safely online.

Only 26% FE; 16% HE agree that they are informed of their responsibilities in relation to assistive and adaptive technologies.

“In the 'classroom' the use of digital technologies inevitably requires different interactions, relationships and expectations for tutors and students. After more than ten years teaching at the university there are times recently when I have felt completely deskilled.”

HE teaching staff
Key messages for theme 4: professional development

- Staff need to know their investment in digital teaching will be rewarded
- Professional development must be timely and sustained over time - more CPD and training are key to improving teaching staff confidence and expertise with technology
- Provide focused CPD in multiple formats
- Student-staff partnership initiatives can be a powerful driver for change and support across the organisation.
- Staff need support to meet their legal responsibilities in relation to assistive and adaptive technologies - UK organisations have a responsibility to support staff with ensuring all their digital practices are accessible and inclusive
Hearing from you…

• Do these results align with the experiences of your students and staff?

• Which result surprised you the most?

• Download the reports and 'at a glance' staff and student HE and FE summaries from https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/reports-and-briefings/our-reports/
‘Further analysis of the 2019 student and teaching staff survey datasets reveals that, within the same institution, there is a positive statistical correlation between student ratings for the quality of digital teaching and learning on their course and the level of support that teaching staff say they receive to develop the digital aspects of their role.

This highlights the value of investment in the digital development of teaching staff.’
Resources to support an excellent digital experience

Available from https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/reports-and-briefings/our-briefings-and-toolkits/

• Jisc NUS roadmap for supporting students to improve their digital experience at university and college
• Enabling an excellent digital experience guidance for engaging senior leaders and informing digital (FE and HE versions)
• Exploring the student digital experience: student, staff and organisational factors
• Using persona analysis to compare student social behaviours with institutional digital provision: a pilot study
• Toolkit for arriving students – launched today!
Further information

• Digital experience insights: https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/

• Digital experience insights reports: https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/reports-and-briefings/our-reports/

• Sign up to run student, teaching and professional services staff 2019/20 surveys: https://digitalinsights.jisc.ac.uk/subscribe/find-out-more/

• Join our digital experience insights community jiscmail.ac.uk/JISC-DIGITALINSIGHTS-COP and join by clicking on the 'Subscribe' button

• Sign up for our community of practice event on 21 May at the University of Northampton https://www.jisc.ac.uk/events/building-digital-capability-and-digital-experience-insights-community-of-practice-21-may-2020

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Thank you

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