How Was IT For You?
First year student survey December 2013

Comments and Suggestions

An analysis of the survey questions has been completed and the results are represented in the infographics at:

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/about/surveys/2013survey_summary

The last two questions asked students to list their comments and suggestions for improvement, and to list the aspects of IT which are good. Over half the students completed these questions and their very valuable comments and suggestions will be followed up. The list of suggestions will be reviewed by IT Services and a list of actions, including changes to processes or systems, is being compiled and will be published by the end of March, to be reviewed and updated through the year.

Any comments which indicate that students are not aware of IT services or online documentation have been given written responses as part of this document.

Computers on Campus

Students are 95% happy with the provision of computers but would like more computers available for use in the library and they like 24/7 access to the computer rooms. The comments can be broken down into the following categories:-

    👎 Not enough computers (especially in the library)   37

    👍 24/7 computer rooms   33

Sample comments

- *I love the setup at the library with the computer suites, but there is always a shortage of computers. If there were more that would be fantastic!*
- *More computers are needed in the library. It's hard to get one at busy times.*
- *Each set of residences should have their own set of computers and printers.*
- *Computer clusters are a secret well kept – I haven't seen any information about them, except the ones in the library and just recently found out that there are computers in other buildings.*
- *Better indication of where public computers are available.*
- *During busy times in the library when all the PCs are taken, some people leave the computers logged onto their username to save the computer while they go to the toilet/lunch etc. Not doing so would allow other people to use the computers - instead of them being wasted!*

- *24/7 access to computers and printers can be a real help especially should a student's printer break right before the deadline!*
- *The computers made available 24/7 are extremely useful, especially when it comes to courses where you must use programs that you may not be able to access on your personal computer.*
- *What I liked the most about the IT service is the 24/7 availability of most of the facilities.*

Response: IT Services will investigate whether there are ways to provide more computers 24/7. We will also investigate ways to raise the awareness of all public computer rooms on campus. We will discuss, with the library ways of providing more computers.

Access to the internet

More than half the students (52%) would like to see further improvements in the Wi-Fi service. The comments can be broken down into the following categories:-

☜ Improve connectivity in general	83
☜ Improve speed and bandwidth	70
☜ Problems with the initial setup during Fresher's week	51
☜ Improve connectivity in Northfield	27
☜ Improve connectivity in the Library	20
☝ Good coverage	50
☝ Help with connecting laptops and other mobile devices	30

Sample Comments

- *The wireless internet connection is often very slow in the library as so many people are trying to use it, that could definitely be improved*
- *Better Wi-Fi connection in Residences (esp. Northfield). It is very temperamental and cuts out frequently as well as often taking a long time to actually be able to connect.*
- *The Internet connection is very slow, if I have to watch a film or documentary for part of my course I have to stay up until very late before it will even load, let alone buffer. I'm not sure if this is due to my location (park village) but it's not my computer, and in other Wi-Fi zones outside the university it runs at normal speed.*
- *Significantly increase efficiency and coverage of Wi-Fi at Northfield residence*
- *The only issue I have with IT at Sussex was the difficulty of connecting when school first started in fresher's week. If I wasn't an overseas student who needed it to contact people in the States I would have been more okay with how long it took to access Wi-Fi.*
- *The wireless connection is difficult to set up and the massive use of computers by students sometimes collapses the net*
- *ITS provide a good service across the majority of the university to enhance learning. I mostly appreciate the campus wide Wi-Fi that is available for students*
- *Beside the problems at the beginning with connecting my laptop to the internet on campus, I never had any problems with IT at Sussex. The support I received at Shawcross was fantastic.*

> *That's great!! I also like the huge amount of computers on campus!! You guys do a good job!!!!*

- *Shawcross is a very friendly place to go and the staff there have been of excellent help to me. I usually use my wired connection in my room which I find brilliant but even when I'm on the Wi-Fi I find I have great access which is useful to me as I don't have internet on my phone, only on my ipod.*

Response: IT Services has plans in place to improve the connectivity in the Library, Fulton, Silverstone and Northfield residences and will report on the progress of this development work as each phase is completed.

IT Services will be carrying out further investigations as to why some students experience frequent connection and disconnection problems with the Wi-Fi network. Any student who is experiencing disconnection / connection problems should contact IT Services on 8090 to make an appointment for a specialist advisor to check devices that have these issues.

Problems connecting to the campus network from the student residences during arrivals weekend were caused by unprecedented attempts to connect to our unsecured setup website. These connection attempts were caused as new students and their families came onto campus with smart phones. This caused the setup website to stop working making it very difficult for new students to automatically connect to the campus network from their study bedrooms. We employed extra staff but the setup network problems still caused a huge support queue at the IT Service Desk in Shawcross. IT Services recognises that initially the network problems were unexpected and that the provision was inadequate for the demand, but we have already made changes to the system that should prevent a similar problem in future years.

We also have plans in place to improve the bandwidth for student residences although the time schedule for this has not yet been formalised.

Email

Students were 90% positive about the email service, but the following comments have been addressed and broken down into the following categories, in order of frequency:

☞ Webmail interface not very user-friendly	5
☞ Deleted emails in Webmail remain in the Inbox	4
☞ Access to Sussex email from smartphones, tablets, Gmail	4
☞ Cannot create extra folders with Webmail	2

Sample comments and responses:

Many of the email comments are covered in the online Webmail guide at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/help/guide?id=1. We often find that users are not aware of this guide that explains a lot about how to use student mail.

☞ Webmail interface not very friendly

- *The layout of Sussex Webmail could be improved and more user-friendly.*
- *When replying, forwarding or saving emails, you have to guess which button is what or place the mouse on them and wait a bit, which is not possible when using a smartphone or tablet*

Response: It's difficult to make the Webmail interface universal across all devices. The Guide to Webmail explains the basics and describes all the on-screen buttons and icons.

☞ Deleted emails in Webmail remain in the Inbox**.**
- *I would like it if I could permanently delete my emails from my Sussex Webmail because as far as I'm aware you can't currently do that.*
- *I don't understand why deleted e-mail messages stay in the inbox instead of disappearing into a 'deleted' folder*

Response: As standard, when you click the **Delete** icon on a selected message, it will be greyed out and marked for removal, and you need to click on the **Compact** tool button at the bottom left of the Webmail screen to permanently remove the 'deleted' emails. Other deletion options are available: go into **Personal Settings** and then click the **Server Settings** option, and you'll see a number of options that can be chosen to suit your preferred method of deleting emails.

☞ Cannot create extra folders with Webmail

- *The Sussex email client could be seriously improved by allowing us to create folders so that we don't just have one inbox filled with emails but can archive into different folders easily.*
- *We can't organise emails into folders.*

Response: You can create extra folders in Webmail. See the **Your Mail Folders** section in the Guide to Webmail on the ITS website.

☞Accessing email from smartphones

- *I cannot send any emails from my Sussex account from my phone, so I always have to respond to emails with my personal email address.*

Response: There are a number of articles on the ITS website describing how to use Sussex email with various smartphones. Browse the articles at: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/help/faqbrowse?cat_id=1

☞ Emails seem to be missing or have been deleted.
- *Emails are deleted after a certain amount of time.*
- *Can't emails be ordered so the most recent appear at the top, rather than going from the oldest to the newest?*

Response: Emails are not deleted in any automatic way; only you can delete your emails. If any of your email seems to be missing, this maybe because you're not making use of Webmail's navigation tools to page through your emails or sort them in the required order.   Full details can be found in the article at:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/help/faq?faqid=2522

See also the Webmail Guide, accessible from the Webmail login page (see the link near the bottom of the login page).

Study Direct and Sussex Direct

Both Study Direct and Sussex Direct are held in high regard by the students, with a 98% satisfaction. The comments can be broken down into the following categories:-

👍 Supports studies	27
👍 Lecture capture supports studies	13
👎 Improve navigation	5
👍 Simple to use	5

Suggestions for improvements to Study Direct and Sussex Direct included improved navigation and   a single sign in facility.

Sample comments

- *Study Direct & Sussex Direct are so useful to check my personal details and study information and easy to use*
- *Sussex direct and study direct are useful both for information and study material.*
- *I really like Study Direct and Sussex Direct, they are very helpful in my studies, and I don't know how I would study without recorded lectures and slides!*
- *Having the ability to access the recordings whenever I want has helped immensely and helped me not fall too far behind. Also I feel the videos will prove to be invaluable for going over notes and revising for exams.*
- *Study direct and Sussex direct are incredibly useful, along with recorded lectures for supporting my learning.*
- *Video recordings of lectures are SO HELPFUL this should be extended to more subject areas!*
- *Study Direct, Sussex Direct and webmail are extremely useful, particularly recorded lectures for revision.*
- *Sussex Direct and Study direct are also very user friendly and run smoothly.*
- *I really like study direct. I think is a very organised site where everything is easy to find, for example: the name of the tutors, the library account, lectures, etc.*
- *Generally I think Sussex direct and study direct are very difficult to navigate. I am now at the end of my first term and am only now getting slightly used to the site.*
- *When the study direct site is reduced to a smaller browser size, the navigation bar is removed, which is sometimes annoying when trying to multitask with it open*

- *Having to log in separately to Wi-Fi then Study direct then Sussex direct seems awkward-there should be a way of being automatically logged into Sussex direct and study direct if logged in to Sussex internet-or at the very least logging in to one web service should mean being logged in to the others.*
- *combine the Sussex and Study direct into a one website*
- *I really like study direct. I think is a very organised site where everything is easy to find, for example: the name of the tutors, the library account, lectures, etc.*

Response:

The single sign on for Study and Sussex Direct is back after we had to remove it during the systems upgrade.

A leaflet called 'Study direct - learning online ' gives information on how to get started with Study direct and is available for students to download and print.

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/pdfs/studydirect_student.pdf

Printing and printing cost

Students indicated an 87% satisfaction response for printing. They find it easy to use and like the fact that it is available 24/7 but would like printing costs to be cheaper and printers to have a more intuitive naming system. The comments can be broken down into the following categories:-

👍 Printing is was easy to use, worked well with 24/7 access	47
👎 Printing was too expensive	36
👎 Clearer instructions on how to use the printing	9

Sample comments

- *I really like the fact that I can print straight from my computer*
- *The printing services are very easy to use and straightforward*
- *The printing system is really efficient and easy to use. Being able to print from my own laptop is really helpful.*
- *Discount on duplex printing is a great incentive for me to print fewer papers.*
- *The number of computers provided on campus is brilliant - it's very rare to have to wait for a computer to be free in the printing areas. I've not yet seen a printer out of order either, which is good as it keeps the system flowing smoothly*
- *Printing is very expensive. Especially when we are required to print out our work by the course when there is no option for online submission'*
- *I appreciate all the IT services at Sussex, but I find the printing very expensive'*
- *The cost of the printers seems a bit much- especially the minimum top-up of £5. I'm very short on money towards the end of term and it cleaned me out*

- *I don't often print things using the university printers as I find it too expensive, but more information about how to print to uni printers from your laptop would be helpful - I don't think it's been well publicised that you can do this'*
- *Enabling printers to connect to Wi-Fi would help massively or inform students prior to their arrival they will need an appropriate cable so they can come prepared*
- *Sometimes, since I am new here, I have found it hard to find the actual printer the document was sent to. The name in the drop-down list on the computers does not really give a hint of the location as I see it, especially for the printers in the library. I suppose that is something that could be improved, though I have no good ideas for how to do it*
- *Maybe have a couple of computers near the printers that are just to be used for printing off straight away*

Response: Students can choose to print documents double sided which would save 2p per page or can print two up.   The minimum top up online is £5.00 but students can credit their printing accounts using the Printing Account Banking Stations with as little as a 50p coin. Some suggestions to the printing service are given below.

We have 44 printers setup for web printing across campus including in all the main areas of the library. We will look at raising awareness of the service through online and postcard advertising.

We do inform students when they attend their induction session that they aren't able to add routers or printers to the Wi-Fi network. Wi-Fi printers should be usable via a printer cable and we will look into asking the bookshop and union shop on campus to stock them in the future.

IT Services accepts that sometimes it is difficult to know where your printout is going to appear, especially in the library. We will look at the naming of printers in the library and the signage in the cluster areas to try and improve the situation

We currently have 3 short stay Pcs in Shawcross and will work on improving the signage to make it clear that on submission days they are only available for printing. We will also look at other locations, particularly in the library where we could implement short stay PCs.

Help and support

Students (95%) were happy with the IT Service Desk as a whole and commented on the helpful and friendly support they received from knowledgeable staff. The comments can be broken down into the following categories:-

☝ Helpful and friendly support from knowledgeable staff	118
☝ Happy with IT services as a whole	57
☝ More Help Desk staff at the beginning of term	5

Sample comments

- *For the one to one session, more staff can help with the students, so the students do not have to wait for so long'*
- *Ensuring that everyone is able to log into the eduroam Wi-Fi and to remember that at the start of term many students find it difficult resulting in huge queues in Shawcross*
- *'I emailed about a problem to do with my uni email and was really pleased to find someone had emailed back almost immediately having solved the problem very quickly'*
- *'Thanks for all the hard work!'*
- *'There is always someone to go to if you need help, that is great! I like the fact that there are so many computers and how easy it is to print and top up the account.'*
- *'Support offered is good. Staff are friendly and there is 24/7 access to computers and printers which can be a real help especially should a student's printer break right before the deadline!'*
- *'Dedication to keeping computer clusters open and constantly providing access to computers/printers is hugely useful and completely offsets things like the cost of printing and any other nags one might have. Very satisfied'*
- *'There is all the support that I need, and there are very good uses of technology such as the machines to top up the printing balance'*

Response: At the beginning of each term and especially at the start of the academic year we always ensure that we have extra staff to work on the Service Desk and help Desk in Shawcross. Sometimes however, technical problems with the service mean that students aren't able to connect to the network with their mobile devices and it is that, which this year, resulted in long queues in Shawcross.

Students appreciated the wealth of software installed on University computers.

Sample comments

- *It is great that there are so many computers available to use on campus with software like Office etc. on them*
- *Software availability is wide so there's never a case of having to consider whether a particular cluster has Maple installed*
- *The software installed in computers on campus are really helpful and as it is usually quite expensive for students to buy them it is really good that they are installed (e.g. maple, adobe suite etc.)*
- *I appreciate ITS has installed Google Chrome on the computers this year.*
- *As an Engineering student I find that a lot of the programmes are limited to the Richmond building. Maybe they could be installed on other computers on campus.*