How is IT for you?

Online survey of 1st yr undergraduates - Dec 2010

Purpose of survey

IT Services again invited all 1st yr undergraduates to complete an online survey at the end of their first term at university to get feedback on their first experiences of using IT.

This was the third year we had run the survey, and following the most useful feedback in previous years we repeated the survey this year, with similar, but updated where appropriate, questions.

The online survey, using Study Direct, consisted of 41 questions including 2 free text questions for additional negative and positive comments.

Advertising survey

An email, containing a direct link for filling in the survey, was sent to all 1st yr undergraduates on Wednesday 1 Dec 2010. As an incentive/thank you we offered 50p printing credit to each student who completed the survey, and we highlighted this in our email and advertising.

The survey was advertised on the university student web pages, ITS web pages and Latest News, ITS status screens, and posters in ITS, Library, and PC rooms. Students also saw the survey when they logged in to Study Direct.

The survey closed on the last day of term, Friday 10 December and by then **667** out of possible 3949 students had completed survey, so **17%** response.

As last year we followed the replies as they came in, and noticed that after the first 100 or so the pattern of their responses was similar, with no great change as more replies were received, so we consider *667* replies are representative and give us good feedback.

(This compares with 17% in Dec 2009, and 33% in Dec 2008.)

As well as answering the questions, most of the students also added constructive comments and suggestions, which we are following up.

Publishing feedback from survey and actions proposed

This summary report, along with reports from previous surveys, is published on the ITS web pages under

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

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/pdfs/surveys/2010summary.pdf

A spreadsheet containing the full **667** replies, (with names removed), is published at

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/pdfs/surveys/2010replies.xlsx

The list of actions that IT Services are taking, and this will be updated through the year, is published at

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/pdfs/surveys/2010actions.pdf

Summary

The following comments are grouped by topic picking up responses and comments from different parts of the survey, so this does not follow the order of the questions in the survey.

Not all % add up to 100% as it was not compulsory for students to enter a response for each question.

The main figures for this year are shown in bold, with figures for the previous two years, Dec 2009, Dec 2008, included in italics if a similar question had been asked.

Number of responses

There was a good response, **17%** of all 1st yr ugs, **667** out of a possible 3949, (*17%, 34%*), and from all departments except Education.

There were slightly more responses from female students than male students **57%**, (*60%,65%*). There were more responses from UK students **73%**, (*80%,79%*), compared with Overseas students.

Introduction to using IT

Most students, **86%**, (*85%,78%*) had found it straightforward to obtain their computing account as part of online registration.

ITS had reviewed and changed IT induction for Autumn 2010. This year a 15 min IT induction presentation, with 3 short film clips, "Using IT@Sussex", was arranged for each School, along with the Library induction session. This was centrally timetabled and presented slightly earlier in the first three days of Freshers' Week, (as requested by students in last year's survey). Additional sessions were arranged for other groups such as PGCE.

This year more students had found the IT induction session useful, **49%**, (*43%,38%*) with **23%**, (*25%,45%*) being neutral and only **6%**, (*10%,15%*) had not found it useful. Despite the presentation being centrally timetabled, there were still some students, **22%**, (*20%*) students who had not attended the session.

This year "word-of-mouth", closely followed by ITS web pages, then the printed "Using IT@Sussex" booklet with the "Using IT@Sussex" presentation were the most popular ways of getting information about using IT. *(Dec 09 - Sussex Direct, "word-of-mouth", printed leaflets, ITS web pages, Dec 08 - printed leaflets, "word-of-mouth", Sussex Direct, the ITS web pages.)*

More students **57%**, *(53%,47%)* were satisfied with the face-to-face assistance and advice they had received at the IT Service Desk in Shawcross, which seemed low considering all the good comments later in the survey about the helpful staff, but then **39%**, *(41%,44%)* students had not yet visited the IT Service Desk. Only a few were dissatisfied **3%**, *(4%,5%).*

Following feedback from previous surveys, the opening hours of the IT Service Desk have been extended into the evenings during term time weekdays, and **56%** students were pleased with this extension, although **43%** had not used yet.

As last year, at this stage **82%**, *(85%, 72%)* said they had not used the telephone / online assistance from the ITS. Similarly **67%**, *(66%)* had not used the email or online web forms, but **29%** *,(29%)* who had used them were satisfied with the advice.

Own computers

Nearly all students owned and used their own computing equipment. As last year only 9 students **1%**, *(1%,1%)* did not have a computer, or laptop or games console.

Students owned more PCs than Macs, **598** compared with **158**, *(569 v 103, 966 v 152).* Students owned other computer equipment including – **10** Linux computers, **28** *(22)* netbook or tablet computers, **10** iPAD, and **99** *(89)* games consoles.

Only **5** students do not have a mobile phone. **59%** have smart phones, i.e. mobile phones with internet access, while **39%** have mobile phones without internet access, but this survey was conducted before Christmas. The types of smart phone owned included **104,** *(116)* iPhone or iPod touch, **97** Blackberry, **56** Nokia, **37** HTC, and **111** other.

This year we introduced "SussexMobile" for smart phones so asked the question "If you have an internet enabled phone and have used 'SussexMobile,' have you found it useful for checking your timetable, looking at campus maps and other information?" **150** students agreed, while **230** had not used SussexMobile yet.

Laptops

As last year most students **95%**, *(95%,94%)* owned a laptop or netbook.

The majority of these 1st yr ug students did not take their laptops into lectures, **76%**, *(79%, 85%).*

The answers to the question,"If you do not take your laptop or netbook to lectures, please could you say why not?" can be summarised with the following quotes

- *"because my laptop is too heavy."*
- *"Insurance only covers any damage done to the laptop in my room - too expensive to add additional insurance coverage."*
- *"battery life is not brilliant, and I like to make notes by hand"*
- *"Laptop bags are bulky, lecture hall desks are too small for my laptop and as I type loudly I would be distracting to others."*

- *"Faster at writing than typing, typing lecture notes up later drives the material in further, weight and bulk"*
- *"My laptop is too wide to put on the lecture hall tables. Also the presentations and handouts are posted on Study Direct therefore, I can simply take notes down on paper and go back to the presentation whenever I need it."*
- *"I concentrate more when physically writing notes. I also print the power points beforehand, so I don't really need my laptop. Most people that do bring their laptops end up going on facebook anyway!"*
- *"I would get distracted with internet or games if i had it with me!"*
- *"Often frowned upon - looks as though you're not engaged with lecture"*
- *"because nobody else seems to, i didnt know that you were allowed to"*
- *"Not allowed by seminar tutor. And its easier to take a pen and paper rather than my laptop."*
- *"I do it in the U.S., but here it seems that either the professors don't approve of them or you're not really supposed to do it in general. Not a lot of people do. Besides, I like taking notes by hand."*
- *"My lecture are maths/science so I am mainly taking notes in the form of equations etc so find it easier to do them by hand."*
- *"There are plenty of computers available on campus at the library and computer clusters, I prefer to print out lecture slides and annotate by hand. Hand written notemaking is good."*

96 students, **14%**, *(11%,10%)* do not have anti-virus software on their own main computer. ITS have purchased the virus protection software, Kaspersky, for PCs which students (and staff) can install for free, and this is advertised at induction and on all ITS information – leaflets, web pages etc.

Of the virus software used, the most common were Norton, AVG, Macafee and then Kaspersky.

Resnet and Wireless

We asked separate questions about internet access in the campus residences, the Resnet wired network, and the across campus "eduroam" wireless network.
This year only **39%**, *(45%)* of students were satisfied with the reliability and speed of Resnet, and **40%**, *(35%)* were dissatisfied, although **10%**, *(8%)* did not use, - presumably not living on campus.

36%, *(32%)* of students were satisfied with the reliability and speed of eduroam, but **23%**, *(17%)* were dissatisfied, and **31%**, *(39%)* did not use.

We also asked the question "Are there any other areas on campus where you would like wireless coverage?".

There were **225** replies requesting wireless coverage in the residences, and giving the following reasons

- *"It would be nice to have wireless coverage in the housing accommodations instead of ethernet only"*

- *"Accommodation as most other unis do that I know of. I can't use my laptop in the kitchen area"*
- *"In accomodation so you can connect more then one laptop to the internet and you can use your laptop in other areas of the room rather then just where the cable will reach."*
- *"In our rooms! Then we can use our Ipod touches etc."*
- *"Wireless would be nice over the accommodation, as you will be less restricted about where you can work. It would be nice to be able to all work together in the kitchen area, but there is only one connection in there."*
- *"In halls, as sometimes you want to work in the kitchen for a more sociable environment, or when doing group work."*
- *"I think it would be very helpful to have wireless in the accomodation as this would allow students to revise together and generally make moving around a lot easier."*
- *"I would appreciate wifi in the housing, or at least the ability to plug in your own router, especially as I own an iPhone and iPad that need wifi given the poor signal on campus."*
- *"The wireless coverage in the halls is little to none. Sometimes I want to connect to the wireless network from my friend's room in lancaster house but doesn't connect to eduroam."*

Other areas mentioned included

- *"the whole of the library!!!!!"*
- *"Stronger signal outdoors like in Library square would be nice."*
- *"CHichester lecture theatre reception"*
- *"The Meeting House - it is a bit hit and miss in this building."*
- *"Muslim Student Centre"*
- *"The laundry room in Stanmer"*
- *"More in the cafes, and quicker, please?"*
- *"The bars."*
- *"on my way from classroom to my dorm, that i can use skype to make phone call to my girlfriend"*
- *"I strongly believe that WiFi access should cover the whole campus!"*

Although a few commented

- *"I haven't yet come across an area without wireless."*
- *"I haven't found anywhere without wireless coverage that is inconvenient."*

Configuring own computer to connect to Internet

ITS provided "pink" cables in each bedroom for students to use to connect their laptop to ResNet, so they did not have to bring a cable with them, or find one to buy if they had forgotten.

Nearly all students who lived on campus, **71%**, *(73%)* had found this useful. (**23%**, *(19%)* of those replying did not live on campus).

With the "pink" cable ITS provided a "blue" sheet – "Welcome to Resnet", along with a "pink sheet" of instructions for connecting to ResNet. These instructions were quite short as they used the Xpress Connect configuration application with Sussex settings that ITS had purchased.

As last year, students used the ITS information, **48%**, *(48%),* to configure their laptops to connect to the ResNet. They also helped each other, **8%**, *(9%),*

The "green sheet" of instruction for connecting to the wireless network – eduroam were also simple with Xpress Connect.

As last year, students used the ITS information **35%**, *(30%),* to configure their laptops to connect to the eduroam, as well as helping each other, **10%**, *(9%).*

Again, like last year, ITS ran drop in sessions for connecting to ResNet and eduroam on the Saturday and Sunday of Freshers' Weekend. The drop in sessions continued into Freshers' Week as usual.

17%, *(12%)* students took advantage of these drop in sessions, (+ their parents, siblings!), with **6%**, *(7%)* needing longer one-to-one sessions for connecting to ResNet. Similarly **11%**, *(5%)* with **4%**, *(2%)* needing one-to-one sessions for eduroam.

This year there were only **14** comments from **667** replies,*(19 from 640 in Dec 09, but 114 from 1088 replies in Dec 08*) about the complexity/difficulty of connecting their own computer to the Internet, i.e. setting up own laptop for Resnet or wireless. So the introduction of Xpress Connect last year has continued to make it much simpler for students to set up their computer to connect to the internet.

Again there were many, **97**, *(74)* comments about the helpfulness of ITS staff.

Computer clusters

Similar to previous years **79%**, *(79%,80%)* students were satisfied with the computer clusters, although **9%**, *(11%,13%)* have not used them yet.

The most popular places for using computers were the Library, **66%** *(79%,71%)* and IT Services, **61%**, *(42%,36%),* followed by York House **23%**, *(22%),* Pevensey **21%**. JMS, which is also open 24 hr, was still only **5%**, *(4%, 5%).* Other clusters, which are not open 24 hr, were **4-7%** ,but Bramber House was slightly higher this year at **9%**, *(6%, 3%).*

This year there were a few more students **39** from 667 replies, *(Dec 09 - 26 from 640 replies, Dec 08 - 82 from1088)* who said that there were not enough PCs, or they had difficulty finding a free PC, or finding the PC clusters, and there were other students who said there were plenty of computers.

In answer to the question "Do you find the plasma screens that advertise PC availability useful in helping you find a free cluster room PC?" **34%,** *(40%)* students said yes, but more, **57%**, *(53%)* said they did not look at them!

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Lecture and Seminar Rooms

Most students **82%,** (*77%,80%)* thought the teaching environments were well supported with projectors, smartboards and other audio visual equipment.

A lecture capture service was introduced in the Autumn 2009. Of the 419 students who have had access to recordings of lectures, **79%** thought that these recordings supported their learning. The other 232 students could not tell as their lecturers had not used it.

Sussex Direct and Study Direct

As last year over **94%***, (93%), s*tudents strongly agreed/agreed that Sussex Direct was useful for finding information. **89%**, *(86%)*, students thought that Study Direct helped support their learning, and was easy to use, **92%**, *(88%)* and performance, time to load pages, was acceptable, **89%**, *(88%).*

External web sites

As last year Facebook **92%**, (*89%, 86%*) was the site that many students said they used regularly, followed by YouTube **66%**,(*66%,71%*). **60%**, (44%,*27%)* students used Skype regularly too.

We added Sussex webmail to the list last year, and similarly **66%**, (*66%*) students used Sussex webmail regularly, which matched responses about the email service.

Printing

68%, (*66%,62%)* students were satisfied with the printing service with a further **18%,** (*19%, 22%)* students who had not used the printing service yet, (so assume they had printers of their own)

Last year ITS introduced a double sided printing service which **66%**, (*73%*) said is useful.

As in the previous years though there were several, **30,** comments that the cost of printing was too expensive, and that they should not have to print out so much course material themselves.

File Storage

58%, (*64%*) of students are satisfied with the 1GB of backed up file storage they are given, although **39%**, (*33%,43%)* students have not used their N:drive for storing their files yet.

Email Service

Last year ITS introduced a new webmail service. **89%**, *(86%,82%)* students were satisfied with the email service, and only **6%***, (7%,14%)* dissatisfied.
Most students do use their Sussex email, with only **3%,** (*6%, 2%)* who do not.

We asked if students logged in to their Sussex email directly or set up forwarding to a personal email account. More than last year, over **87%,** (*78%*) students do login to their Sussex email, with only **12%** (*20%*), redirecting their mail.

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Comments and Suggestions

The last two questions asked students to list their comments and suggestions for improvement, and to list the aspects of IT which are good.

As in previous years, most students completed these questions and their very valuable comments and suggestions will be followed up by ITS.

The list of actions that ITS are taking, and this will be updated through the year, is published at

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/pdfs/surveys/2010actions.pdf

Comments and suggestions for improvement

There were some areas that were frequently mentioned and they were:

• *Unreliability/speed of Resnet*	*81 comments*
• *Extend wireless coverage*	*33*
• *Unreliability/speed of eduroam*	*32*
• *Printing –*	
too expensive, have to print online course material	*30*
unreliabile, need more printers	*32*
• *Computers -*	*39*
not enough, difficulty finding a free PC or	
finding the PC cluster rooms	
• *Email service*	*9*
• *Sussex Direct*	*8*
• *Study Direct*	*10*
• *ITS staff*	*8*
• *Other*	*14*

Some examples are:

Induction and support
- *[There should be] "2 chances to do the induction during freshers week."*

Computers
- *"Warmer computer rooms please? Also more computer rooms!"*
- *"Library should have more PCs as it gets really crowded during midday."*
- *"More computers in the library needed - also, annoying when they are needed for work and people are sitting on Facebook!"*
- *"I was totally unaware that there were computers available in other areas around campus. They should be better signposted."*
- *"Need more info on exactly where the computer cluster rooms are in each building, as some of the buildings are hard to navigate around if you don't know them."*

- *"special area just for printing as some people use university computers for facebook etc which wastes other peoples time when all they need to do is print."*
- *"More stand-up terminals like the ones in Shawcross would be good."*

Printing
- *"Printing is too expensive!"*
- *"I'm an international exchange student. in my original university, the fee for print out is included in our study fee and i can print out 1000 pages in a year."*
- *"printing should be free but limited. For example please let each student account have 10-15 pages/month. If they use more than that they have to pay 5p/page. This would be helpful."*
- *"Rework buying printing credits, a minimum of £10 is too much."*
- *" it would be very useful if you could use the printers from your laptop (e.g. by logging onto study direct etc)"*

Internet access
- *"Improve the speed of the internet, please, especially in the evening it is incredible slow."*
- *"Everything is very nice except that the Resnet internet speed is quite slow between 5pm - 12am usually. I'm an international student, so I use skype to talk to my family back home and my connection usually gets from every 2 minutes."*
- *"Wireless coverage at the halls of residence would be really useful. People in my flat are constantly fighting over the single network cable in the communal area."*
- *"I think the internet speeds in accomodation needs to be improved, as sometimes it hinders my online research and some files and documents take a long time to download. I would also like to see once the internet speeds and capacity have been improved, that you allow the use of gaming consoles online, as services such as Xbox live use less bandwith than a pc anyway."*

Sussex Direct, Study Direct, lecture capture
- *"More advice on the use of the ITS for example Sussex Direct and the Electronic Library."*
- *"It took a while to get used to using Sussex Direct and Study Direct as it was hard to know what to find where. I think that they're great resources but why are they two separate things? Would it not be easier to combine the two?"*
- *"To be honest the only "bad thing" I found on IT services is that some of the lecturers are not updating their course into study direct! I would be really happy if the lecturers are motivated somehow by IT Services to update their course into study direct."*

Positive aspects

There were many positive comments, and the areas that were most praised were:

• *Helpfulness of ITS staff*	*97 comments*
• *PCs – number, 24 hr access*	*59*
• *Sussex Direct*	*44*
• *Study Direct*	*46*
• *Internet access*	*36*
• *Printing*	*29*
• *Other*	*19*

Some examples are:

General
- *"it's good that you try to develop and ask for feedback!"*
- *"Your email service always keeps me up to date, especailly when I have not hot water or heating I can quickly find out why, you seemed to have linked the whole uni up."*

Induction and support
- *"The presentation at the beginning of the year was an excellent introduction. I have yet to have any significant problems, which in itself should highlight the adequacy of the introduction as well as the IT setup around campus."*
- *"I like the fact that we had information on our arrival of how to set up the connection on our own laptops. It made everything so much quicker.*
  I also like that there are some areas that provide 24/7 access to computers."
- *"There is a lot of support for people like me who struggle with using computers and lap-tops. The presentation on IT and the library was helpful for me."*
- *"the it services are very helpful and the longer opening hours are more than adequate allowing you to visit them for longer."*
- *"All staff I've spoken to have been really friendly and helpful. I found the leaflets with ITS information on extremely useful, especially for setting up the internet and other general information."*
- *"IT help service at Shawcross is very good. And the Sussex iPhone App is really good as well."*
- *"Really happy with how helpful the staff in ITS have been. I am a mature student living off campus but they have helped me set up my laptop and now I have my new phone I am sure if I asked they would help with that......so thank you so much."*
- *"The IT services have been extremely reliable when it comes down to internet connection and i.t. related help. I had a few problems getting connected halfway thorugh the term but after talking to the IT help at shawcross over the phone I had it up and running in a couple of minutes. Thanks for making my move to uni a less stressful experience!"*

Computers, printing, software

- *"the pc cluster rooms and printing/scanning facilities are good and lecture capture is really helpful"*
- *"The extent of support available, and the 24 hour IT facilities, always helpful when deadlines are looming."*
- *"The fact that we can access computers during the night, every day of the week is great, in France every cluster room closes at 7 or 8 p.m."*
- *"I love how the York house computer lab is closer to my accommodation (Brighthelm) compared to the other computer rooms, and that it is open 24 hours, with fast internet and printers. The fact that it has a shop right below is a great factor as well-when I'm working on an essay and in the computer lab for long hours, it's nice to be able to get some food from the shop."*
- *"I am especially happy that there are facilities for MAC users."*
- *"The Apple computers are brilliant, the amount of computers is about right, they are very quick to load and powerful. The printers are good quality, there is an opportunity to scan which is good and the fact there is no blocking means that computers are more attractive as it is easy to have a break on facebook or listen to music or watch a youtube video then get back to work. I prefer using the computer labs then my laptop at home"*
- *"Double printing is absolutely benefit us the most, not only saving our money, but also more environmental friendly."*
- *"I find the shawcross cluster useful since there are usually less people there and i've found it easier to get in and out. The prices for printing are very good as well since I come from an American university that charged 15 cents per print. Lecture capture is really useful especially when a lecture is missed. You don't fall behind."*
- *"Friendly and helpful environment. Pleased that some software is available to download straight from ITS website for use on home/personal computer. Also, the support for OS's other than Windows is very useful."*

Internet access
- *"I think it's great that IT provides ethernet cables for ResNet."*
- *"Campus Eduroam wifi is excellent."*
- *"Internet connection is very good on campus but would prefer wireless all over."*
- *"PC cluster in York House is very efficient for residents as it doesn't require students to travel across campus to find a computer in the evening.*

  Speed of Resnet is surprisngly quick for standard page browsing, however very slow at streaming videos."
- *"I think it is good that there is wireless internet in the laundromat in park village. It helps get work done while waiting."*
- *"The internet speed is satisfactory, it would be nice if it was faster, as a film student looking up videos is and im sure will become more of a part of my course, and waiting for these to load can be frustrating, but it's nothing that can't be dealt with. I think everything's fine, and have full faith in being able to talk to someone if it isnt!"*

Sussex Direct, Study Direct, lecture capture
- *"The timetable on the sussex direct home page is useful. Good tabs indicating where to go on the page."*
- *"Study Direct was helpful because I could go back and look at powerpoints or documents lectures from previous weeks. It was helpful when it came to writing my essays for week 10."*
- *"Study Direct is a great learning tool and enables quick feedback, has definitely helped me."*
- *"I feel that the lecture captures that I can access online helped me a lot when I was on crutches and couldn't make it to lectures. I found it annoying to always look up my timetable online because I had to keep signing in, but now I have the app, it's much easier."*