How is IT for you?

Online survey of 1st yr undergraduates - Dec 2011

Purpose of survey

ITS 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 fourth 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 49 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. 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 into Study Direct.

Email message

    Subject Line : Claim 50p free printer credit

    To all first year students
    From IT Services

    Dear student,

    Before you go away for Christmas, and while you can still remember
    your initial experience of computing at Sussex, please would you
    complete a short online survey:
    How is IT for you?

    <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/survey>

    The survey is now open and will close on Friday 9 December.

    You will also be prompted to complete this survey when you login to
    Study Direct.

    IT Services (ITS) are keen to hear about you and your experiences so
    we can improve our services.

Last year more than 600 students completed the survey, and you can read about the actions that ITS took as a result at

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

As a thank you for completing this short survey, which should take only five minutes, we will credit your printing account with 50p. Please make sure you fill in the ITS username box at the beginning of the survey so we can credit your account, which will be done during the Christmas vacation ready for you when you return next term.

Thank you and have a happy Christmas.

IT Services

The survey closed on the last day of term, Friday 9 December and by then **537** out of possible 4371 students had completed survey, so **12%** 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 *537* replies are representative and give us good feedback.

(This compares with 17% in Dec 2010, and 17% in Dec 2009.)

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/2011summary.pdf

A spreadsheet containing the full **537** replies, (with names removed), is published at

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/pdfs/surveys/2011replies.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 2010, Dec 2009, included in italics if a similar question had been asked.

Number of responses

There was a good response, **12%** of all 1st yr ugs, **537** out of a possible 4371, (*17%, 17%*), and from all departments except Education.

There were slightly more responses from female students than male students **56%**, (*57%,60%*). There were more responses from UK students **78%**, (*73%,80%)*, compared with Overseas students.

Introduction to using IT

Most students, **89%**, (*86%,85%*) had found it straightforward to obtain their computing account as part of online registration.

IT induction for was delivered with a 15 min IT induction presentation, with 2 short film clips, "Using IT@Sussex", was arranged for each School, along with the Library induction session. This was centrally timetabled and presented during the first three days of Freshers' Week, (as requested by students in a previous survey). Additional sessions were arranged for other groups such as PGCE.

Students had found the IT induction session useful, **40%**, *(49%,43%)* with **25%**, *(23%,25%)* being neutral and only **6%**, *(6%,10%)* had not found it useful. Despite the presentation being centrally timetabled, there were still some students, **29%**, (*22%,20%*) who had not attended the session.

This year, as last, "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 10 -"word-of-mouth", ITS web pages,* "Using IT@Sussex" booklet, "Using IT@Sussex" presentation. *Dec 09 - Sussex Direct, "word-of-mouth", printed leaflets, ITS web pages.)*

Most students **95%**, that used the service, were satisfied with the face-to-face assistance and advice they had received at the IT Service Desk in Shawcross, however, of the students surveyed, **45%**, *(39%,41%)* had not yet visited the IT Service Desk. Only a few were dissatisfied **3%**, *(3%,4%)*.
Following feedback from previous surveys, the opening hours of the IT Service Desk had been extended into the evenings during term time weekdays, and **48%** (56%) students were pleased with this extension, although **51%** (43%) had not used yet.

As last year, at this stage **85%**, (*82%, 85%*) said they had not used the telephone / online assistance from the ITS. Similarly **71%**, (*67% 66%*) had not used the email or online web forms, but **92%** said they were satisfied with the advice.

Own computers

Nearly all students owned and used their own computing equipment. Just 1 student **<1%**, (*1%,1%*) did not have a computer, or laptop or games console.

Students owned more PCs than Macs, **478** compared with **172**, (*598 v 158, 569 v 103*). Students owned other computer equipment including – **21** (10)Linux computers, **30** (*28, 22*) netbook or tablet computers, **31** (10) iPAD, and **69** (*99, 89*) games consoles.

Laptops

As last year most students **98%**, (*95%, 95%*) owned a laptop or netbook.

The majority of these 1st yr ug students did not take their laptops into lectures, **75%**, (*76%, 79%*).

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

- *"I prefer to handwrite lecture notes on printed off lecture slides."*
- *"most gave an introduction saying they did not want laptops present in their lectures.."*
- *"Because I like writing by hand as I think it is quicker"*
- *"Poor battery life and too heavy."*
- *"My laptop is too bulky to take to lectures plus I am also paranoid that I'll drop it or someone will steal it"*
- *"I don't want to be distracted."*
- *"no charging points, too much effort to take with, possibly not enough space"*
- *"I do maths and it is far easier to take notes on paper!"*
- *"I use my Kindle to follow my lectures"*
- *"Didn't realise we could do that!"*
- *"I use a recording pen. It is clunky to take a whole laptop with you, and you can write with a pen."*
- *"Because it is heavy, and I prefer to write side notes around my printed notes from Study Direct. In some lectures also, the lecturers suggested not to use a laptop! I find it distracting as well."*
- *"I take my iPad. Laptop is too big"*
- *"it distract my attention listening in lectures class or I might just login on facebook chatting which I didn't get wat the teacher is saying because my attention is not there."*

It was still alarming that **80** (96) students, **15%**, *(14%,11%)* do not have, or think they do not have, anti-virus software on their own computer. ITS recommend Microsoft Security Essentials (MSE), 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, MSE and then Macafee.

Mobile Phones
Most **99%** students owned a mobile phone, of which **72%** had internet enabled phones. The most popular phones were Blackberry **20%** and iPhones **19%,** these were followed by HTC **12%** then Samsung and Nokia at **8%** and **7%.** The most popular providers were O2 **28%** Orange **20%** Vodafone **19%** and T-Mobile **13%.**

44% of students were satisfied with the mobile voice and text reception on campus although **48%** were dissatisfied, and **5%** did not use.

Of those that had internet enabled phones **32%** were satisfied with the mobile phone internet service on campus although **27%** were dissatisfied, and **18%** did not use. **27%** of the students, that did use the internet, found the 'SussexMobile' web link useful for checking information while **36%** had not used the facility.

There were many similar comments concerning locations with unsatisfactory reception of both voice and internet reception. The main locations mentioned were the Library, Lecture rooms and Residences.

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 **37%**, *(39%, 45%)* of students were satisfied with the reliability and speed of Resnet, and **42%**, (40%, *35%)* were dissatisfied, although **10%**, *(10%, 8%)* did not use, - presumably not living on campus.

40%, *(36%, 32%)* of students were satisfied with the reliability and speed of eduroam, but **35%**, *(23%, 17%)* were dissatisfied, and **18%**, (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 **207** replies requesting wireless coverage in the residences, and giving the following reasons

- *"Halls! The cables are a nightmare – very slow and you can't move from your desk!"*
- *"I would like wireless coverage in my halls of residence as using the pink cable is annoying and dosen't stretch to all areas of my room."*

- *"In housing on campus, but I hear there are plans to do so – pink cables are sometimes unreliable/fall out as they are slightly broken."*
- *"again, within residential buildings I expected wireless internet coverage."*
- *"In the university accommodation! Most students own laptops, which are made for wireless internet."*
- *"all accommodation should have wireless, which is apparently being put in place but probably will not see much of it before the first year of living on campus is over."*
- *"Rooms. I live in York House and I prefer to do my homework in my room. It's frustrating when the Internet stops working and even though there is a computer room, it is not an ideal place to work because it is crowded and loud."*
- *"In on campus accommodation. No signal in East Slope which is annoying when you have wifi equipment like iPods or iPads"*
- *"Park Village, probably other halls of residence too. Cables are very impractical. Also, the cable provided had been chewed by a rat/the last person that lived here. Wireless shouldn't be exclusive to those in the newer more expensive accomodations."*
- *"halls! My internet is weak and too slow for video skype with my parents and friends who live in belgium."*
- *"Would like reliability in accommodation to be better – would like to sit in the kitchen with flatmates with my laptop."*

Other areas mentioned included

- *"The whole of campus. Why on earth would I not want wireless access anywhere?"*
- *"library – limited service in Chichester lecture theatre."*
- *"Everywhere!"*
- *"All over please!."*
- *"in the majority of academic buildings, to maximise places to work"*
- *"Open air spaces"*
- *"Anywhere on campus will be great. It is annouying that some places have wireless but some dosen't"*
- *"It would be useful across campus, but particularly in the main academic areas and the cafes/bars."*
- *"café, bramber house, east slope bar"*
- *"at least in every seminar or lecture room"*
- *"EVERYWHERE that students and staff are likely to go, sit, try to work"*

Although a few commented

- *"Reliable internet connection. Relatively good wireless coverage."*
- *"I love the fact you can use wifi pretty much all the places on campus I have tried, especially in Bramber House Eat Central, where you can have a snack and catch up with things online."*

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, **72%**, *(71%, 73%)* had found this useful, **20%**, *(23%, 19%)* did not live on campus).

With the "pink" cable ITS provided a – pink "Welcome to Resnet," sheet containing 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, **52%**, *(48%, 48%),* to configure their laptops to connect to the ResNet. They also helped each other, **8%**, *(8%, 9%),*

ITS also provided a "green sheet" of instruction for connecting to the wireless network – eduroam .

As last year, students used the ITS information **40%**, (35%,*30%*), to configure their laptops to connect to the eduroam, as well as helping each other, **10%**, *(10%, 9%).*

Again, 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.

7%, *(17%,12%)* students took advantage of these drop in sessions, (+ their parents, siblings!), and of these **6%**, *(6%, 7%)* needed longer one-to-one sessions for connecting to ResNet. Similarly **8%**, *(11%, 5%)* with **5%**, *(4%, 2%)* needing one-to-one sessions for eduroam.

This year there were only **14** comments from **537** replies, (14 from 667 in Dec 10, but *19 from 640 in Dec 09*) 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 is much simpler for students.

Again there were many, **87**, *(97, 74)* comments about the helpfulness of ITS staff.

Computer clusters

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

The most popular places for using computers were the Library, **84%** (*66%,79%)* and IT Services, **55%**, (*61%,42%)*, followed by York House **17%**, (23%, 22%), Pevensey **13%**. (21%) JMS, which is also open 24 hr, was still only **4%**, (*5%, 5%)*. Other clusters, which are not open 24 hr, were **3-9%** (4-7%),and Bramber House was slightly lower this year at **7%**, (9%, 6%).

This year there were a few more students **53** from 537 replies, *(Dec 10 – 39 from 667 replies, Dec 09 - 26 from 640)* 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 Information screen in IT Services – Shawcross, helpful?" **23%,** *(34%, 40%)* students said yes, but more, **72%**, *(57%, 53%)* said they did not look at them!

Lecture and Seminar Rooms

Most students **84%,** (*82%, 77%)* thought the teaching environments were well supported with projectors, smartboards and other audio visual equipment.

83% students, who had used the service, thought that lecture capture helped support their learning, although **35%** (35%, *36%)* of students could not tell as their lecturers had not used it.

Sussex Direct and Study Direct

As in previous years over **94%***, (94%, 93%), s*tudents strongly agreed/agreed that Sussex Direct was useful for finding information. **92%**, *(89%, 86%)*, students thought that Study Direct helped support their learning, and was easy to use, **93%**, *(92%, 88%)* and performance, time to load pages, was acceptable, **87%**, *(89%, 88%).*

Web site usage

As last year Facebook **92%**, (*92%, 89%*) was the site that many students said they used regularly, followed by YouTube **66%**,(*66%,66%)*. **62%**, (60%,*44%)* students used Skype regularly too.

We added Sussex webmail to the list last year, and similarly **70%**, (*66%, 66%*) students used Sussex webmail regularly, which matched responses about the email service.

Printing

68%, (*68%,66%)* students were satisfied with the printing service with a further **18%,** (*18%, 19%)* 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 **69%**, (66%, *73%*) said is useful.

This year there were, **15,** (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

68%, (58%, *64%*) of students are satisfied with the 10GB of backed up file storage they are given, although **30%**, (*39%, 33%)* students have not used their N:drive for storing their files yet.

Email Service

ITS provide a webmail service. **88%**, *(89%, 86%)* students were satisfied with the email service, and only **9%**, *(6%, 7%)* dissatisfied.
Most students **do** use their Sussex email, with only **3%**, *(3%, 6%)* who do not.

We asked if students logged in to their Sussex email directly or set up forwarding to a personal email account. Slightly more than last year, over **88%**, *(87%, 78%)* students do login to their Sussex email, with only **13%** (12%, *20%*), redirecting their mail.

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, or passing on to other departments for action, is being compiled and will be published and reviewed and updated through the year, as last year.

Comments and suggestions for improvement

There are some areas that were frequently mentioned, in decreasing order they were:

• *Unreliability/speed of Resnet*	*58 comments*
• *Extend wireless coverage*	29
• *Unreliability/speed of eduroam*	28
• *Printing – too expensive*	34
• *Printing - have to print online course material*	2
• *Printing - unreliabile, need more printers*	23
• *Computers -* *not enough, difficulty finding a free PC* *or finding the PC cluster rooms*	32
• *Email service*	8
• *Sussex Direct*	13
• *Study Direct*	12
• *ITS staff*	6
• *Other*	9

Some examples are:

Induction and support

- *"IT help in the Library."*
- *"more university computer, there still is not enough. Also more it support staff, the queue can be long"*
- *"information provided in your room of computer cluster rooms and how to find them…*
- *"More help with setting up the initial wired connection in rooms"*
- *"There should be more dates available for training sessions that are per term, if there are small groups of 6 or 7 etc, they should still run training sessions, just in a smaller room. The smaller the group the more effective the support because you have time to get personal assistance with specific issues."*

Computers

- *"Sometimes when you try to log onto a computer it never quite gets there and shows a loading page for ages. It would be good to fix this completely"*
- *"More computers may be needed, especially during times when lots of people have deadlines etc. Also, more spaces to sit with laptops if there are no computers free."*
- *"The locations of every PC cluster should be more widely advertised – before this, I only knew of computers in ITS and the library"*
- *"The university has chosen to enrol a high numbers of students this year and receiving funding for all of these students therefore adequate provision should be made for everyone. In the private sector and increase in demand that lead to an increase in income would be matched with an investment in infra structure to meet that demand – probably by leasing if a reduction in demand was anticipated in the future. Other universities manage to have a far higher number of computers available, so why can't Sussex?"*

Printing

- *"I don' think we should pay for printing. But as an improvement reduced costs may also be helpful"*
- *"Printing should definitely be free. It would help my learning immensely if I at least had a large amount of printing credit given to me at the beginning of each term."*
- *"Printing often not working – Library people do not know how to fixl."*
- *"There are often no computers available in the library or other locations to print off essays etc. It would possibly be useful if there was a couple of designated 'printing only' computers so the turnaround of people being able to use them would be much quicker than currently."*
- *"Facilities for cheaper printing – such as drafts. This would be useful to print large readings"*

- *"A potential suggestion – being able to print from personal laptops whilst for example in the library or other printing locations"*

Internet access

- *"Faster and more reliable internet connection. More reliable and accessible wifi."*
- *"Internet in halls is virtually unuseable from 10am til 11pm. Youtube normally wont even load at a speed which you can watch it. The internet speed and setup have caused us no end of headaches. Most people without windows 7 had lengthy setup issues with the internet."*
- *"Make eduroam accessible for blackberry phones. Also provide wireless access in all areas of accommodation. Improve internet connection and speed via the pink cables. More computers in facilities such as Shawcross."*
- *"I think you guys should open the ports for Xbox Live and allow us to play. Many of us have Xboxes here and the yearly subscriptions which cost around £40. I used to use my Xbox as a form of escapism from work and to simply relax. It's also good for communicating with my friends at other universities (all of which are allowed to play Xbox Live)."*
- *"The internet is often slow during the day with loading video files, which I would presume is due to high demand for internet at this time, however it would be useful if the internet was faster during the day."*
- *"faster internet speeds, as sites like youtube will not work during peak times. Or better information about when peak times are."*

Sussex Direct, Study Direct, lecture capture

- *"I wish the law lecturers would record the lectures and have them available to listen to, seems unfair to me that other students have access to their lectures to listen to again and we don't."*
- *"Recording lecture facilities in more lecture theatres"*
- *"Forum emails going directly to email account."*
- *"When I use an ITS computer, I have to log in to windows, log into sussex direct and log into study direct, all with the same username and password. I would like to only do this once."*
- *"Whilst Echo 360 is a great concept, it does need to work consistently. In some lecture theatres that has been an issue this term which means you are unable to rely on its availability which is very frustrating."*

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

- *Helpfulness of ITS staff*   *87 comments*
- *PCs – number, 24 hr access*   *33*
- *Sussex Direct*   *24*
- *Study Direct*   *20*
- *Internet access*   *27*

- *Printing*   *14*

- *Other*   *11*

Some examples are:

General
- *"Reaction times to problems (ie. The system crash due to the heating malfunction in early November) is fantastic!"*
- *"Being able to import my timetable to my calendars on my computer and iPhone has been very useful."*
- *"SMS cancellation notifications are very useful. By far best system for large organisation I've ever used."*

Induction and support

- *"Open 24 hours which is extremely useful. Helpful staff who will help with printing troubles and other things as well as they can. Top quality service."*
- *"My one experience with IT services was getting my internet up and running. This was done very effectively."*
- *"The people at IT services sorted out my internet connection problems well "*
- *"Good support if your computer/internet is not working."*
- *"I really appreciate the support available, face-to-face when setting up my internet connection, since my computer was extra hard to connect."*
- *"I appreciate the helpfulness and friendliness of the IT staff. I am also glad that there is advice on personal laptops etc. instead of just our Sussex accounts"*
- *"I think the service is exceptional, I am not a natural computer user and when I initially struggled to set up my netbook to work at Sussex the IT staff not only helped me resolve the problem they did not make me feel stupid either. All the systems are easy to use but if I did have a problem I would not hesitate to go back to Shawcross. I think your fab!"*
- *"The introductory talk on IT services was very well presented and very engaging."*
- *"Quality of information/FAQ's/How-to-guides is very good."*

Computers, printing, software

- *"Fast reliable computers (having Windows 7 is particularly appreciated) and web services – I could not imagine university study without Sussex Direct or Study Direct."*
- *"The campus computers are well maintained and fast enough for most uses, 24Hr computer clusters are a fantastic idea."*
- *"I like that there are lots of computers. I like having the option to use macs, as I don't know how to use PCs very well. I like having the option to print."*
- *"I think the new computers in the library are excellent there wasn't enough before."*

- *"think IT services are very helpful to student here by providing printing materials to student and enable student to access the internet on campus anytime thats is very good "*
- *"I like the amount of 24 hour access rooms with printing. Very useful for last minute corrections of essays."*
- *"Printing facilities are good."*
- *"I like the printing account top-up booths. Internet is reasonably fast…."*
- *"computer clusters spread all over the campus and easy to use."*

Internet access

- *"It provides an acceptably fast internet service and sufficient computer access."*
- *"The internet is fast and good most of the time, all courses and timetable is available, only assignment results are not always available in good time."*
- *"The smiling faces of the people on the IT desk are always lovely. Internet is pretty fast most of the time."*
- *"Internet connection speed is great, IT services at Shawcross are very helpful and being able to drop in and ask questions or sort out problems with laptops etc is something I have found extremely useful."*
- *"The amount of quality computers and the speed of internet during off-peak hours."*

Sussex Direct, Study Direct, lecture capture

- *"Sussex direct and Study Direct are fantastic; as I am studying English and History it is great that lecturers can upload electronic reading as this saves a lot of valuable time than looking for texts in the library."*
- *"It is good sussex direct/study direct I like a lot think it is good format of distributing relevant information about courses."*
- *"Student support is good. Study/sussex direct is very well presented and useful, and the lecture capture facilities are very helpful."*
- *"I was a bit sceptical at first about sussex not using blackboard, which most universities use, but sussex direct and study direct proved to be quite the alternative. Thank you."*
- *"I think study direct and sussex direct is a fantastic interface, easy to navigate and makes academic life a lot easier."*
- *"Sussex direct and study direct are extremely helpful and informative. Would be lost without it."*
- *"STUDY DIRECT IS BRILLIANT – so much better than Blackboard."*
- *"Lecture capture is a very useful tool with nearly all lectures being recorded it is great for revision/missed lectures."*