How is IT for you?

Online survey of 1st year undergraduates - Dec 2012

Purpose of survey

ITS again invited all 1st year 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 fifth 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 48 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 yearr undergraduates. As an incentive/thank you ITS ran a prize draw entering all participants for a chance to win one of two Nexus 7 tablet PCs, and we highlighted this in our email and advertising.

The survey was advertised on the university student web pages, ITS web pages, Latest News and ITS status screens. Students also saw the survey when they logged into Study Direct.

Email message –

> Subject Line : How is IT for you? – complete survey for chance to win a Nexus 7

> 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>

This survey is now open and will close at the end of term on Wednesday December 12th.
Fill in the survey now, it should only take 5-10 mins to complete, and you could win one of two Nexus 7 Tablets.

To take part in the prize draw you will need to provide an email address at the end of the survey. The winners will also be announced on the IT Services web page in January before the start of the Spring Term.

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

This is the fifth year we have surveyed first year undergraduates, and valuable feedback from previous years helped make the case for

· increasing the number of computers available to students - now over 950
· improving and extending the wireless coverage on campus into many student social spaces
· installing wireless in the residences
· enabling web printing from laptops.

See
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/about/improvements

You will also see the 'How is IT for you?' survey listed on your Study Direct home page.
You can access the survey at any time during the availability period in order to complete the survey.
Please note, you can only respond once.

Thank you and have a happy Christmas.

IT Services

The survey closed on the last day of term, Wednesday 12 December and by then **504** out of a possible 3546 students had completed survey, so **14%** response.

(This compares with 12% in Dec 2011, and 17% in Dec 2010.)

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 **504** replies are representative and give us good feedback.

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, comments and follow up actions, is published on the ITS web pages under

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

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/pdfs/surveys/2012summary.pdf

A spreadsheet containing the full **504** replies, (with names removed), is published at

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/pdfs/surveys/2012replies.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 percentages 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 2011and Dec 2010), included in italics if a similar question had been asked.

Number of responses

There was a good response, **14%** (*12%, 17%*) of all 1st year UGs, **504** out of a possible 3546, and from all departments.

There were slightly more responses from female students than male students **52%**, (*56%, 57%*). There were more responses from UK students **75%**, (*78%, 73%*), compared with Overseas students.

Introduction to using IT

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

An IT presentation – 'Get connected' was delivered with 2 short film clips and a booklet, in Fresher's Induction. This was centrally timetabled and presented within the first three days of arriving on campus, (as requested by students in previous surveys).

Additional sessions were arranged for other groups such as PGCE.

43%, *(40%, 49%)* of students had found the IT induction session useful, with **24%**, *(25%,23%)* being neutral whilst **12%**, *(6%,6%)* had not found it useful.
There were still some students, **10%**, *(29%,22%)* who had not attended the session, but an improvement on previous years.

This year the most popular ways of getting information about using IT were the, "IT at Sussex Booklet" , closely followed by "ITS presentation in 'Get connected'", then jointly followed by the "ITS web pages" and "Word of mouth" *(Dec 11 -"word-of-mouth", ITS web pages, "Using IT@Sussex" booklet, "Using IT@Sussex" presentation. Dec 10 - "word-of-mouth", ITS web pages, ITS booklet, ITS presentation.)*

As in previous years most students **91%**, that used the service, were satisfied with the face-to-face assistance and advice they had received at the IT Service Desk in Shawcross. Of the students surveyed, **45%**, *(45%, 39%)* had not yet visited the IT Service Desk. Only a few were dissatisfied **5%**, *(3%, 3%).*

Following feedback from previous surveys, ITS opened an additional IT Help Point in the library, with opening hours during week days. **22%** of students have used this facility and found it helpful, although **75%** had not yet used this.

Similar to last year, at this stage **86%**, (*85%, 82%*) said they had not used the telephone / online assistance from the ITS. Similarly **67%**, *(71% 67%)* had not used the email or online web forms, but **91%** of those who had said they were satisfied with the advice they received.

Own computers

Nearly all students owned and used their own computing equipment. Just 4 students **<1%**, *(1%,1%)* did not have a computer, or laptop or games console.

The majority of the students, completing this survey owned computing equipment with the Operating System displayed in English **90%** but **9%** had it displayed in another language. (However, only 23% of students completing this survey were from overseas.)

Students owned more PCs than Macs, **386** compared with **139**, *(478 v 172, 598 v 158)*. Students owned other computer equipment including – **13** *(21, 10)*Linux computers, **49** *(30, 28)* netbook or tablet computers, **52** *(31, 10)* iPads, and **75** *(69, 99)* games consoles.

Laptops

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

The majority of these 1st year UG students did not take their laptops into lectures, **66%**, *(75%, 76%)*.

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

- *"A laptop, its too bulky and heavy to carry around everyday."*
- *"It's too heavy and it wouldn't add to my learning experience"*
- *"I own a laptop and I don't take it to lectures as it's quiet heavy and I'd much rather just write notes down."*
- *"I own a Dell laptop, and I don't take them to lectures because its battery life is short and it is heavy to carry around."*
- *"It is quiet heavy to carry around. Hardly anyone else takes theirs. I am slow at typing"*
- *"I prefer to take handwritten notes as the format is easier to add other notes/writing to."*
- *"I wouldn't be able to type fast enough to keep up…I am unsure how lecturer's will react to students using laptops in lectures and seminars"*
- *"tacking it to lectures doesn't provide a vast amount of benefit as it can be difficult to enter some of the mathematical symbols required"*
- *"battery life is not strong"*

- *"I prefer to make notes on paper"*
- *"There is no plugs for the charger and the battery can't last very long."*
- *"I don't take it because of it is because of its size."*
- *"sometimes takes too much space"*
- *"All lectures are online and I would get distracted on my laptop."*

It is still alarming that **66** *(80, 96)* students, **14%**, *(15%,14%)* 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, which is advertised at induction and on all ITS information – leaflets, web pages etc.

The most common virus software used is MSE followed by Norton, AVG, and MacAfee.

Mobile Phones

Most **99%** *(99%)* students owned a mobile phone, of which an increasing number **84%** *(72%)* had internet enabled phones.

The most popular phones were iPhones **33%** *(19%)***,** Samsung **20%** *(8%)* Blackberry **10%** *(20%)*, HTC **10%** *(12%)* then followed by Nokia at **5%** *(7%)*. The most popular providers were EE/Orange/T-Mobile **28%** *(33%)*, O2 **27%** *(28%)*, Vodafone **19%** *(19%)* and Virgin **4%**.

60% *(44%)* of students were satisfied with the mobile voice and text reception on campus although **34%** *(48%)* were dissatisfied, and **6%** *(5%)*did not use a mobile phone.

There were many similar comments concerning locations with unsatisfactory reception of both voice and internet reception. The main locations mentioned were the residences: Northfield, Lewes Court & Park Village.

Of those that had internet enabled phones **52%** *(32%)* were satisfied with the mobile phone internet service on campus although **24%** *(27%)* were dissatisfied, and **11%** *(18%)* did not use.

Of those who use SussexMobile **94%** *(27%)* of the students found it useful for checking information, while **25%** *(36%)* had not used the facility.

ResNet and Wireless

We asked separate questions about internet access in the campus residences, the ResNet wired network, and the "eduroam" wireless network.
This year **60%**, *(37%, 39%)* of students were satisfied with the reliability and speed of ResNet, and **33%**, *(42%, 40%)* were dissatisfied, **11%**, *(10%, 10%)* did not use, - presumably not living on campus.

48%, *(40%, 36%)* of students were satisfied with the reliability and speed of eduroam (Wireless network), but **52%**, *(35%, 23%)* were dissatisfied, and only **4%** *(18%, 31%)* did not use.

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

Following the recent upgrade of the wireless network around campus and in residences there was a positive response to this question.

- *"I thought it was everywhere anyway. I have never found somewhere I can't connect"*
- *"All seems alright to me"*
- *"Wireless works in my kitchen however not in my room (northfield)… Wireless in my kitchen is GREAT though!"*
- *"again, within residential buildings I expected wireless internet coverage."*
- *"No specific areas. I find the Wi-Fi to be very reliable and useful (all around campus)."*
- *"Northfield wireless coverage is not always reliable."*
- *"when moving from point to point some time this stops the wi-fi working"*
- *"as a first year the coverage meets my needs as I usually use my laptop in my room."*

Areas students felt in need of coverage included :

- *"East Slope Bar"*
- *"The areas immediately outside of buildings."*
- *"outdoor areas near laundrette, cafes…"*
- *"Falmer House & School of social work wireless reception is very poor."*
- *"extend coverage to the eating places on campus"*
- *"parts of the buildings and the lecture theatres are not fully cover"*
- *"The sports centers"*

Although a few commented

- *"…no wifi in halls and wire keeps cutting out. Cant stream online very slow"*
- *"the connection is weak and prone to cutting out for long periods of time…."*
- *"Northfield wireless coverage is not always reliable"*

Configuring own computer to connect to the 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, **76%**, *(72%, 71%)* had found this useful, **12%**, *(20%, 23%)* did not live on campus.

With the – pink - cable ITS provided a booklet – "How to connect" containing instructions for connecting to ResNet and to Wi-Fi.

As last year, students used the ITS information, **53%**, *(52%, 48%),* to configure their laptops to connect to the ResNet. They also helped each other, **9%**, *(8%, 8%),*

As last year, students used the ITS information **52%**, *(40%,35%),* to configure their laptops to connect to eduroam, as well as helping each other, **11%**, *(10%,10%).*

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.

12%, *(7%,17%)* of students took advantage of these drop in sessions, (+ their parents and siblings!), and of these **7%**, *(6%, 6%)* needed longer one-to-one sessions for connecting to ResNet. Similarly **13%**, *(11%, 5%)* with **8%**, *(5%, 4%)* needing one-to-one sessions for eduroam.

This year there were **15** comments from **504** replies, *(14 from 537 in Dec 11, 14 from 667 in Dec 10)* about the complexity/difficulty of connecting their own computer to the Internet, i.e. setting up own laptop for Resnet or wireless.

Again there were many, **95**, *(87, 97)* comments about the helpfulness of ITS staff.

Computer clusters

This year **93%**, *(79%, 79%)* of students were satisfied with the computer clusters, although **6%**, *(9%, 9%)* have not used them yet.

The most popular places for using computers were the Library, **85%** *(84%,66%)* and IT Services, **49%**, *(55%,61%),* followed by York House **15%**, *(17%, 23%),* and Pevensey **16%**. *(13%, 21%)* JMS, which is also open 24 hours, was still only **3%**, *(4%, 5%)* The new social space locations were Northfield **18%** and Park Village **6%**. Other clusters, which are not open 24 hours, were **5-6%** (3-9%, 4-7%), and Bramber House was slightly lower this year at **5%**, *(7%, 9%).*

This year there were fewer students **25** from 504 replies, *(Dec 11 – 53 from 537 replies, Dec 10 – 39 from 667)* who said that there were not enough PCs, or they had difficulty finding a free PC, or finding the PC clusters. There were other students who said there were plenty of computers (The recent IT Improvement project has increased the number of computers available to students by 400 to 950+).

In answer to the question "Do you find the Information screen in IT Services – Shawcross, helpful?" **23%,** *(23 %, 34%)* students said yes, but **70%**, *(72%, 57%)* said they did not look at them!

Lecture and Seminar Rooms

Most students **85%,** (84%, *82%)* thought the teaching environments were well supported with projectors, smartboards and other audio visual equipment.

88% *(83%)* students, who had used the service, thought that lecture capture helped support their learning, although **22%** *(35%, 35%)* of students could not tell as their lecturers had not used it.

Sussex Direct and Study Direct

As in previous years over **92%,** *(94%, 94%) of s*tudents strongly agreed/agreed that Sussex Direct was useful for finding information. **91%**, *(92%, 89%)*, students thought that Study Direct helped support their learning, and was easy to use, **96%**, *(93%, 92%)* and performance, time to load pages, was acceptable, **98%**, *(87%, 89%).*

Web site usage

As last year Facebook **96%**, (*92%, 92%*) was the site that many students said they used regularly, followed by YouTube **79%**,(*66%,66%*). **38%** of students used Twitter regularly too.

Printing

67%, (*68%,68%*) of students were satisfied with the printing service with a further **32%,** (*18%, 18%*) of students who had not used the printing service yet, (so assume they had printers of their own)

ITS recently enabled 'web printing,' the ability to print from your own laptop, to any printer, while on campus, which **81%** said was useful. This may have helped reduce the number of students unable to find a free PC to just print from.

This year there were, **11,** *(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

71%, *(68%, 58%)* of students are satisfied with the 10GB of backed up file storage they are given, although **26%**, (*30%, 39%*) of students have not used their N:drive for storing their files yet.

Email Service

ITS provide a webmail service. **87%**, *(88%, 89%)* of students were satisfied with the email service, and only **11%**, *(9%, 6%)* were dissatisfied.
Most students **do** use their Sussex email, with only **2%,** (*3%, 3%*) 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 **89%,** *(88%, 87%)* students do login to their Sussex email, with fewer students, only **9%** *(13%, 12%),* redirecting their mail to a personal email account.

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 in previous years.

Comments and suggestions for improvement

There are some areas that were frequently mentioned. These are shown in decreasing order:

- *Unreliability/speed of Resnet*   *58 comments*
- *Extend wireless coverage*   38
- *Unreliability/speed of eduroam*   26

- *Computers -
  not enough, difficulty finding a free PC*   *26*
  or finding the PC cluster rooms

- *Printing – too expensive*   1
- *Printing - have to print online course material*   2

- *Printing - unreliabile, need more printers*   1

- *Email service*   7
- *Sussex Direct*   4
- *Study Direct*   9
- *ITS staff*   5

- *Other*   8

Some examples are:

Induction and support

- *"Make it easier to connect android smartphones to Eduroam."*
- *"staff support may be available at the weekend even for limited hours 10am – 2pm"*
- *"IT services should be able to come to residences to help fix computers"*
- *"also ensure that there may be help out of weekly hours. Sometimes we face problems that do not occur during the week and would have to wait til Monday in order to resolve these issues"*
- *"Allocate more personnel to help with internet connection issues."*

Computers

- *"I feel there should be more computers available, or a limit to how long a person can be on one computer for – say 2 hours"*
- *"More computers would be good, despite being lots, at peak times its extremely hard to find one."*
- *"Although there are a lot of computers it is usually hard to find one available in the library"*
- *"…advertise all the different places that there are computers because I thought it was mainly only the library and shawcross until this survey, which would be useful for when those places are busy"*

Printing

- *"It would be nice if printing for students was cheaper or subsidized entirely from our tuition fees"*
- *"Free printing since we already pay a lot for university fees."*
- *"The price of printing is a bit too much"*
- *"Printing is quite expensive and I'm unclear on how to use uni printers."*
- *"Scrap charges for printing academic related documents (introduce free printing from study/sussex direct)"*
- *"…definitely need much more improvement is the printing facilities. We are too many students and have too few printers"*

Internet access

- *"more consistent internet connection – currently it varies between fast and extremely slow."*
- *"improve connection speed at peak times."*
- *"The internet speed in accommodation is fine but it can be very unreliable, you have to constantly reinstall Xpress which is very annoying."*

- *"The wired and wireless internet sometimes cuts out for 24 hour periods out of office hours, and yet the website says it is all running fine - maybe have somewhere for students to report losses of internet over the weekend when Shawcross isn't open, or publicise it more if there is one."*
- *"If it is possible to make the Internet faster, especially at peak hours, make it faster! I do understand, however, that this is challenging and not always possible."*
- *"after 6pm the university wirless internet becomes really slow..i can stream/watch videos as it takes really long time in buffering. this problem needs an urgent fix. otherwise its fine."*

Sussex Direct, Study Direct, lecture capture

- *"both sussex direct and study direct and the stuff personal to you should be on one or the other pages, not spread oout onto two…I also think that once you have logged into one of the sites, it should automatically log you into the other…"*
- *"The Study Direct website has room for improvement, I find. Whereas the Sussex Direct pages are well laid-out, I often find Study Direct to be a bit messy"*
- *"Some lecturers still do not put recordings of their lectures on Study Direct which is less useful."*
- *"The mobile app for Sussex Direct could update more frequently. Login to sussex direct and study direct could be mutual so you don't have to login twice."*

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	9
Study Direct	18
Internet access	22
Printing	12
Other	6

Some examples are:

General
- *"I believe besides the wireless there is nothing more I could ask from IT because everything else is absolutely perfect. I have not had a single problem, not even a minor one that was noticeable enough…!"*
- *"The number and quality of the software available is fantastic, especially the Adobe suite."*

- *"Its fantastic that there are no ridiculous and nonsense IP address blocks set up – my previous college blocked forum sites, which was a nightmare when it came to trying to write code, as you could find NO online help."*
- *"The website has all the information you could want on it I have found"*

Induction and support

- *"the people that are in the IT services room are very helpful."*
- *"The booklet 'connect to It' we got in the beginning was so useful! It was really easy to follow."*
- *"when I came to get my internet sorted it was a quick process"*
- *"The IT services are very good at keeping you informed if there is anything wrong with the internet or sussex direct and tend to get it sorted very quickly."*
- *"The support in setting up the internet connection was quick and efficient, although there was a long waiting time."*
- *"At the beginning of term, the IT services were very helpful in setting up the internet on my laptop, as well as my phone"*
- *"Every time I had a problem with my internet connection I went to ITS at Shawcross and everyone was really helpful and able to solve my problem"*
- *"Staff at the Shawcross desk are very helpful, advising you whether they think it would be best for you to come back later so you actually get seen to."*
- *"I think IT Services do a great job of helping people out, and I have heard more than my fair share of accounts of people's issues being fixed by your technicians."*

Computers, printing, software

- *"I have never had an issues with a printer not working, this used to be a massive problem at my old school so I'm glad its not an issue here"*
- *"…I like the web printing service as I mainly use my laptop in the library so it is useful to be able to print from it."*
- *"Lots of computer clusters, though I tend to only use the library and shawcross for familiarities sake."*
- *"I think the availability of computer services on campus is good.. I have never had to wait too long to use the computers."*
- *"24 hour computer lab is very useful"*
- *"The amount of available computers on site is very helpful as well as the printing capabilities."*
- *"The aspect of IT at Sussex I most appreciate would be the webprinting, as I don't have a printer it's a nifty way of printing and being able to pick it up next door at the Northfield Social Centre."*
- *"I like that there are, despite all, a lot of computers with the very most modern software, which is great. Printing is also quite easy (if there are empty computers), although some times you can only print from computers at the printing room (supposedly you can send the files from every computer in the library and even from your own laptop."*
- *"I like that there are… a lot of computers with the very most modern software, which is great...."*

Internet access

- "I can get internet signal easily around the campus minus northfield sometimes."
- "I think it's brilliant that both wired and wireless connection are available, especially as it's almost everywhere on campus – my international friends can message me over the internet and it's free for them!."
- "wi-fi is excellent and the whole internet package at this uni has been great and well above my expectations."
- "I enjoy the fact that wireless wifi is available outside buildings, as when summer approaches individuals will like to sit outside the library to study. If you consider how many people are currently using the internet then you will realise that the internet on campus is not that bad."
- "There are so many good things, the existence of both wifi and cable internet in the rooms is really useful."
- "…the wireless areas are really good. I have heard of some universities who have no wireless. This is really helpful for being able to take your laptop and do work in different places."

Sussex Direct, Study Direct, lecture capture

- "The services of both Sussex and Study Direct are amazing!."
- "The recordings of the lectures are really helpful. I've found Study Direct really helpful for when lecturers put up slides before hand so I can print them & take them to the lectures."
- "The Direct and Study Direct sites are very useful."
- "Sussex Direct and Study Direct are very easy to use and provide a lot of useful information."
- "Study Direct easy to use and vital for keeping up with learning."
- "Echo 360 software used for lecture capture recordings is extremely useful..."
- "IT services are very good at Sussex. In particular Study Direct and the accessibility of lecture recordings/slides etc."