

University of Adelaide

Data that enables evidence informed discussions about the digital experience

"The Jisc Insights survey provides us with the data we need to have evidenced informed discussions about where we can improve the digital experience – and what we do well! In short, it enables us to have focused discussions with our students to unpack what 'better' looks like."

Colleen Ortega, manager learning enhancement, learning enhancement and innovation, University of Adelaide

Rationale

The University of Adelaide undertook the student digital experience insights survey in both 2017 and 2018. In both cases the strategic context was provided by the Strategy for Learning, Teaching and Assessment 2016-18, which undertook to: *"Promote the development of evidence-informed models of learning, teaching and assessment, enriched by appropriate and effective use of digital technologies"*.

In 2017, the primary goal was to baseline student opinion as Adelaide began to implement a new digital literacy framework and associated activities with academic staff. In 2018 there was also an interest in benchmarking against regional (ANZ) and UK universities.

Implementation

Having run the survey before, the Adelaide team planned their approach carefully, beginning with ethics approval for collecting and using student data. They secured high level support from Learning Quality and from the director of student experience and developed a comprehensive communication plan. This involved sending the survey link to all students and following up via social media messages and digital signage in key locations. There were links to the survey

from the LMS sites of some core modules with high student enrolments, and \$50 vouchers were offered as a further incentive.

The survey was open from week seven to week ten of the semester (23 April to 20 May). Compared with 1,581 responses (c. 7%) in 2017, in 2018 the response rate was 2,203 (c. 10% or an increase of 39% in the sample size). In 2017, 40% of respondents were under 21 and 33% over 25. In 2018, 50% were under 21 and 19% were over 25, making it difficult to compare the two data sets directly. Students in the lower years of their undergraduate degree were more likely to respond than final year students or postgraduates.

Key findings and impact

Once the data had been analysed and compared with other ANZ universities, it became clear that Adelaide students were undertaking digital learning activities more often than the average for ANZ students overall. The figures for the proportion of students undertaking these activities weekly or more are as follows:

- Watch or listen to recorded materials:
Adelaide 88% | ANZ 83% | UK 63%
- Access lecture notes or recorded lectures:
Adelaide 92% | ANZ 87% | UK 84%

- Use social media for informal learning: Adelaide 55% | ANZ 51% | UK 47%
- Ask peers for assistance with digital issues: Adelaide 37% | ANZ 30% | UK 38%
- Manage links or references online: Adelaide 66% | ANZ 71% | UK 65%

Some other strengths emerged from the statistical data:

- The overall quality of the university's digital provision was rated highly
- There was good support for students using their own devices (BYOD)
- Respondents agreed that MyUni courses were well designed
- Reliability of wifi was high with 92% of student reporting reliable access (up from 88% in 2017)| ANZ 85%| UK 83%

A few areas were identified as priorities for improvement, and these are the focus of attention and action planning going forward. The ambition is that Adelaide students should all:

- Understand how personal data is stored and used
- Be prepared for the digital skills required in their courses
- Have regular opportunities to update digital skills
- Be prepared for digital workplaces
- Have support with assistive technologies if they need it

A fairly high percentage (39%) of Adelaide students said that the use of digital materials makes them less likely to attend face-to-face classes. Additionally, a very high percentage (94%) of Adelaide students reported they would like either the same or more digital technologies to be used in their courses. This is a complex issue that requires further investigation.

The results of the survey are driving initiatives to support the implementation of the university's [digital capabilities framework](#).

The development of the framework has centred on staff and student engagement, involvement of external stakeholders and experts, a review of good practice across the university, and co-creation of working solutions. Digital capabilities initiatives will:

1. Prepare students for the digital workplace
2. Improve the student experience of online courses in the LMS
3. Improve the use of digital media and tools in course design
4. Provide training for students and staff
5. Review infrastructure to enable student development of digital capabilities

The 2018 Insights findings have been communicated to students using digital signage, LMS announcements, and "You said, we did" posters. Follow-up has included the addition of an 'assistive technology' question on Adelaide's internal MyUni (LMS) satisfaction survey, and various student and staff digital capability workshop pilots.

In future, Adelaide will consider including customised questions in the student survey and will run the associated survey for teaching staff in order to compare the two perspectives in 2020. The team has created a framework for comparison of data from year to year and will continue communication of findings to different units and stakeholders.

Contact:

Colleen Ortega, manager learning enhancement, learning enhancement and innovation, University of Adelaide
colleen.ortega@adelaide.edu.au