About ACCC

The Academic Computing and Communications Center provides and maintains technologies and services critical to many university functions. Whether you are using a classroom, making a phone call, or sending an email – chances are you’re using an ACCC service, even if you don’t realize it!

From infrastructure services like the UIC network and data storage, to communication and collaboration services like websites, email, and calendaring, ACCC is here to provide and support the technologies you need to achieve your goals – whether they be learning, teaching, research, or administrative.

Mission

To enable excellence through information technology.

Vision

To be a trusted strategic partner for innovative and transformative information technology solutions.

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

In September 2019, ACCC conducted a comprehensive survey to better understand UIC students’ experience with faculty’s use of technology in and outside the classroom.

For the purposes of this survey, the term “technology” was defined as “software or hardware.” A total of 2,101 students partook in the survey, which offers insight into the types of technology faculty members use, how well students say their instructors make use of classroom technology, why students do or do not enjoy using technology in the classroom, and more.

This report is a compilation of survey results, data analysis, and insights.

Goals

The survey was conducted to gain insight on UIC students’ understanding of their instructors’ use of technology in and outside the classroom, and to gather feedback on the students’ perceived level of knowledge instructors possess as it pertains to technology use.

Disclaimers

To be retained for analysis, respondents had to answer any five of nine main survey questions.
Survey Questions

Q1  What is your student status at the university?

Q2  What college are you in?

Q3  Do you have any courses in large classrooms (100+)?
   Q3.1 In the large classrooms I attend, I enjoy learning in a large classroom. (rate agreement level)
   Q3.2 In the large classrooms I attend, my instructors know how to use all of the technology in the classroom. (rate agreement level)

Q4  I learn best when my instructors use technology to support their lectures. (rate agreement level)
   Q4.1 Could you please describe what (your answer to Q4) depends on?

Q5  Do your instructors use technology available in their classrooms?

Q6  My instructors use the following technologies to support their teaching in classrooms. (check all that apply)
   Q6.1 Please rate the expertise of your instructors with: (services)

Q7  My instructors use the following types of technologies to support their teaching outside of the classroom. (check all that apply)
   Q7.1 Please rate the expertise of your instructors with: (services)

Q8  My instructors engage their students well without needing to use technology.

Q9  My instructors use Blackboard.
   Q9.1 My instructors use Blackboard well.

Q10 I am required to utilize technologies for my assignments (this doesn’t include using the projector for presentations).
    Q10.1 My instructors require me to create these types of assignments. (check all that apply)
    Q10.2 My instructors provide instruction (guides, how-to information) for using technology for my assignments.
    Q10.3 The university provides instruction for using technology for my assignments.

Q11 I enjoy using technology for my assignments.
    Q11.1 Please tell us why you enjoy/do not enjoy using technology for your assignments

Q12 I have the skills to use technology for my own learning.
Key Insights

The majority of student respondents to this survey identified as first-year students, while the most popular college in terms of responses was that of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Students rated their instructor’s expertise on several classroom technologies, each with an average rating of over 3.0/4.0, that is, on average, students say their instructors’ expertise in the use of classroom computer/control panel, document camera, polling tools, wireless presentation software for collaboration, and other services, is “good.”

While some 72% of student respondents indicated all their instructors use Blackboard, nearly 50% of those student respondents said all their instructors “use Blackboard well,” while the other 50% said some did, indicating an opportunity for improvement in terms of faculty understanding, navigating, and utilizing Blackboard.

Among the 90.7% of students indicating they enjoy using technology for assignments, reasons listed included that technology use is simpler and more convenient, that it makes work faster and more efficient, that it is less wasteful/more environmentally friendly, and more professional, and boosts productivity.

Some students who said they do not enjoy using technology for assignments said instructors were not well-versed in using the technology, while others noted that technology is sometimes frustrating and a distraction, or does not work properly.

Feedback gathered from students indicated an overall positive experience with technology use both inside and outside the classroom, while also identifying an opportunity for faculty to better understand how to use technology. ACCC offers several professional development and training opportunities including custom webinars focused on teaching and learning solutions.

Technology use is simpler and more convenient, it makes work faster and more efficient, it is more environmentally friendly and more professional, and boosts productivity.

Nearly 50% of student respondents said all their instructors “use Blackboard well,” and the other 50% said some did, indicating an opportunity for improvement utilizing Blackboard.
Respondent Demographics

Student Type
Of the 2,101 student survey respondents, 28.8% identified as first-years, 14.9% as second-years, 16.2% as third-years, 13.2% as fourth-years, 3.4% as five+ years, and 23.5% as graduate students.

College Affiliation
A total of 37.2% of survey respondents were students of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, while 18.3% were enrolled in the College of Engineering, and 10.54% in the College of Business Administration.

NOTE: Colleges with less than 3% respondent representatives are listed as “All Others.”
Technology in the Classroom

A total of 66% of student respondents indicated that they learn best when their instructors use technology to support lectures, while only 1% disagreed, and 33% said it depends. Of the 656 students that indicated what it depends on, popular reasons included the subject matter, the instructors’ level of understanding of how to use the technology, the instructors’ ability to teach/relay learning material to students with the use of technology, and whether the technology was functional at time of use.
What Students Said

“Teaching quality still depends largely on how good the teacher is. We learn the best from teachers who are very engaged (who love teaching), who are aware of what our needs are, and who know how to use technology in ways that help us (and not in ways that don’t help). Things that help include recording lectures for students who can’t make it to class that day, polling tools when the teacher knows how to use it and doesn’t show the results while students are answering, which leads to everyone picking the same answer even if it’s wrong, microphones for larger classes of 50 or more people, webcasts for meetings between different campuses, interactive and unfolding cases. Things that don’t help include failures in recording technology (lecture gets cut off, volume too low, can’t see the slides, this happens ALL THE TIME), webcasts with the same problems, too many flipped-classroom lectures leading to under-preparation (should be a mix of traditional didactic and flipped, with twice the usual preparation time for flipped).”
—Graduate Student | College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

“It really comes down to whether the professor actually knows how to use the technology in class. I have a class where the professor wastes time trying to use the technology for the class instead of actually teaching.”
—Fourth-Year Student | College of Business Administration

“Sometimes it is unnecessary, and/or they [instructors] don’t know how to properly use it.”
—Fourth-Year Student | College of Applied Health Sciences

“Instructor quality is the most important part of every learning experience. Great lectures (even when displayed using technology) require great lecturers, period.”
—Graduate Student | College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

“Sometimes I like that the teachers use new technologies to teach the class and make it efficient for themselves and their students. It keeps the class up to pace and on-track.”
—First-Year Student | College of Nursing
Of the classroom technologies instructors use to support their teaching, 93% of student respondents indicated their instructors’ use of a classroom computer/control panel, while 64.1% said their instructors use video (Panopto, Echo360, Vimeo, YouTube, etc.), 42.6% use a document camera, 55.6% use polling tools (iClicker, Poll Everywhere, Echo360), 18.5% use wireless presentation software for collaboration (Solstice), and 6% indicated the use of other technologies such as microphones, speakers and projectors, as well as lecture capture, and video conferencing (Zoom), game-based learning (Kahoot), and data visualization software (Tableau).
Learning in Large Classrooms

A total of 1,487 (70.8%) respondents said they are enrolled in classes with 100+ students. Of those students, 9.6% strongly agreed and 45.1% agreed with the statement that they enjoy learning in these large classrooms, while 23.1% disagreed and 5.7% strongly disagreed, and 16.5% had no opinion.

I Enjoy Learning in Large Classrooms!
How well do students say UIC instructors use classroom technology?

In the large classrooms they attend, 58.1% of student respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that their instructors know how to use all technology in the classroom, while 33.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 8.9% had no comment.

When it comes to specific technologies, instructors’ expertise on classroom computer/control panel received an average rating* of 3.12/4, while the use of document cameras came in at 3.13/4, polling tools at 3.2/4, wireless presentation software for collaboration at 3.16/4, video at 3.14/4, and other at 3.04/4.
Technology Use Outside the Classroom

UIC instructors use a variety of technology tools to support teaching outside the classroom. Blackboard and its related tools (announcements, quizzes, online discussions, etc.) were the most popular of technologies, as 96.6% of student respondents indicated use, while social media came in last at 8.9%. Some 56.4% of students said their instructors use eTextbooks outside the classroom, while 43.3% use video. Technology identified as other (7.9%) includes learning management systems (Piazza & Moodle) and grading platform (Gradescope).
How Students Ranked Instructor Use of Technology

Of those technologies used outside the classroom, instructors’ expertise on Blackboard and its related tools received an average rating* of 3.25/4, while knowledge of video came in at 3.21/4, eTextbooks at 3.16/4, and social media at 3.02/4.

*Ratings calculated on 4-point scale with 4 = Excellent, 3 = Good, 2 = Fair, 1 = Poor.
Technology for Assignments

Not including projector use for presentations, 90.4% of students said they are required to utilize technologies for their assignments, while 9.6% said they did not. Some 79.6% said they are required to create text documents, 55.4% PowerPoint presentations, 14.5% video, 11.3% photographs, 10.5% use graphic design/illustration, and 10.4% infographics, while 3.9% indicated they are required to create audio podcasts.

When it comes to technology and assignments, 90.7% of 1,883 student respondents indicated it is an enjoyable experience, while 9.3% said it is not.
Why Students Enjoy Using Technology: What They Said

Of the 1,470 students that explained why they enjoy using technology for assignments, 47% said it is because it is easier, simpler and more convenient to use, 21% because it is faster and more efficient, and 8% because it is less wasteful/more environmentally friendly, while others noted it fosters organization (6%) and collaboration (5%).

“It helps not only the students but also teachers with a more interactive environment, allowing us to engage and tune-in to the material being discussed within a small or larger lecture classroom.”
—First-Year Student | College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

“It speeds up the process of learning, as technology is such a powerful tool to get ahead and research.”
—Third-Year Student | College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

“It is a lot more convenient and faster to use technology.”
—Graduate Student | College of Pharmacy

“First of all, I enjoy using it when it works. Those rare occasions that it doesn’t work well are a nightmare.”
—Fourth-Year Student | College of Engineering
Why Students Do Not Enjoy Using Technology: What They Said

Of the 152 students that provided a reason as to why they do not enjoy using technology for assignments, 21% indicated that the process was complicated, 20% said using technology was less engaging, and 17% said it added tedious steps. Another 8% said it is frustrating, while 7% indicated they do not know how to use it, 4% said it was because their instructors were not well-versed in using the technology, and 16% said they prefer pen and paper, while 9% said they prefer working hands-on.

“There have been many times when submitting assignments has taken longer than doing the assignment.”
—Second-Year Student | College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

“Technology can be unreliable at times.”
—Third-Year Student | College of Engineering

“It means more screen time.”
—Second-Year Student | College of Medicine Chicago
My Instructors Use Blackboard Well!

Use of Blackboard

Of the 2,101 student respondents, a total of 1,513, or 72% indicated all of their instructors use Blackboard, while 25.8% said some do. Of the 2,054 students responding to the statement “my instructors use Blackboard well,” 49.6% indicated all their instructors use Blackboard well, while 49.9% said some do, and 0.5% said that none do.
Guidance with Technology

While 97.4% of 2,062 student respondents said they possess the skills to use technology for their own learning, 2.6% indicated they do not.

Of the 1,880 students that responded to the statement “my instructors provide (guides, how-to information) for using technology for my assignments,” 70.7% indicated they did receive instruction, while 29.3% said they did not.

When asked the same question on a university level, 66.5% of student respondents indicated that UIC provides instruction for using technology for their assignments, while 33.5% said it does not.
Professional Development Resources

ACCC offers a variety of Professional Development and Training opportunities including ACCC-run workshops and webinars on popular ACCC-supported technologies, a large collection of on-demand online video tutorials via LinkedIn Learning, select vendor-led webinars, and one-on-one consulting on teaching and learning with technology.

**Webinars & Workshops** | ACCC’s Learning Technology Solutions team offers free professional development through online webinars and in-person workshops to help faculty, instructors, and teaching assistants with teaching with technology and software including Blackboard Learn, Cisco Webex, and Panopto.

Browse ACCC webinars at [go.uic.edu/LTS_Professional_Development](go.uic.edu/LTS_Professional_Development).

**Online Training via LinkedIn Learning** | LinkedIn Learning offers a collection of 15,000+ video tutorials on leading software, technology, and soft skills. Many tutorials consist of 6 to 8 hours of detailed training broken down into easy-to-manage 5 to 15-minute segments. The video tutorials are taught by industry experts and are available 24/7 for convenient, self-paced learning.

Sign into LinkedIn Learning with your UIC NetID and password at [go.uic.edu/LinkedInLearning](go.uic.edu/LinkedInLearning).

Have questions about this survey or ACCC-hosted professional development and training? Write to us at **LTS@uic.edu**.