Southern Utah University 2010 Information Technology Survey

SUU Compared to ECAR

11/10/2010
Introduction & Acknowledgements

The Southern Utah University (SUU) 2010 Information Technology Survey was conducted during the spring 2010 semester. The survey was pushed to student computer labs and classrooms where students were given the option to participate in the survey. The scope of results obtained from SUU represents a sample of 1672 students. The results obtained from the SUU survey are, in this document, compared to the results obtained by EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR). ECAR’s results were obtained from a sample of nearly 40,000 students comprising 39 different educational institutions across the United States.

Permission for SUU to use ECAR’s results in this document was given on August 26th, 2010 by Ron Yanosky the acting director and senior fellow at ECAR.
Results

SUU students fit well into national norms for the number of students that own a desktop computer. The actual number of SUU students who own a computer is slightly below national norms (5%) but within the margin of error. Other deviations are within 1.5%.

When it comes to laptop computers, SUU students who own a laptop are within 2.3% of national norms but the number whose computer is one year old or less is 11.9% below the nation while those that are two years old is almost 11% higher.
Students in the nation spend more time using the internet than do SUU students. SUU students tend to use the internet for less than 10 hours a week at 46% while most national students use the internet more than 10 hours a week at 69%.

SUU students and students across the nation do a great deal of text messaging with 90% of SUU students doing it on a weekly or more frequent basis, with the nation at a close 85%. It can also be seen that SUU students spend much less time downloading web based music and video as SUU is more than 40% below the nation.
SUU students come close to the nation with how they contribute content online, although SUU is 7% higher than the nation when it comes to students contributing content to blogs.

5) How often do you contribute content to the following for school, work, or recreation?

- Contribute to video websites
  - SUU: 44.8%
  - ECAR: 41.9%
- Contribute to wikis
  - SUU: 39.0%
  - ECAR: 41.9%
- Contribute to blogs
  - SUU: 44.0%
  - ECAR: 51.0%

SUU is only 2% or less different from the nation with how its students prefer to have IT in their courses. Nearly 60% of students like only moderate use of IT in their courses.

6) Which best describes your information technology preference for courses?

- Exclusive
  - SUU: 3.5%
  - ECAR: 3.0%
- Extensive
  - SUU: 20.9%
  - ECAR: 18.0%
- Moderate
  - SUU: 59.6%
  - ECAR: 60.0%
- Limited
  - SUU: 14.0%
  - ECAR: 16.0%
- None
  - SUU: 2.0%
  - ECAR: 3.0%
The data show a big difference, 12%, in the ability of SUU students to expertly use the internet to gather information.

SUU students also have a difficulty being able to evaluate the information they obtain online with SUU dropping below the national norm on those that are expert and very skilled at evaluating information.
SUU students seem to have difficulties understanding ethical and legal issues of Internet use with those that are expert and very skilled falling below the national norm and those that are less skilled being greater than the national norm.

7h) Understanding the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access to and use of digital information

- Expert: SUU 8.0%, ECAR 15.2%
- Very skilled: SUU 30.0%, ECAR 33.2%
- Fairly skilled: SUU 34.6%, ECAR 42.0%
- Not very skilled: SUU 17.0%, ECAR 13.5%
- Not at all skilled: SUU 3.0%, ECAR 3.5%
SUU is higher than the nation in library website usage at 2% greater, presentation software usage at 5% greater, and spreadsheet software usage at 8% greater which is an indicator that SUU demands a bit more from its students regarding IT.

8) Are you using the following for any of your courses this semester?

- Use college/university library website: SUU 75.0%, ECAR 73.0%
- Use presentation software: SUU 66.5%, ECAR 60.0%
- Use spreadsheet software: SUU 54.0%, ECAR 46.3%
- Use social network site (Facebook, etc.): SUU 27.8%, ECAR 24.0%
- Use wikis: SUU 25.3%, ECAR 24.0%
- Use instant messaging: SUU 20.0%, ECAR 14.0%
- Use graphics software: SUU 15.5%, ECAR 14.0%
- Use blogs: SUU 15.0%, ECAR 11.5%
- Use a programming language: SUU 11.1%, ECAR 11.0%
- Use podcasts: SUU 6.0%, ECAR 6.0%
- Use video creation software: SUU 11.0%, ECAR 10.0%
- Use audio creation software: SUU 11.0%, ECAR 5.0%
Half of SUU students feel that their professors have adequate skills to use IT in courses. 41% of students at SUU feel like their professors show them how to perform course tasks that require IT with the nation coming in even lower at 33.8%.

Almost every student at SUU has taken a course using a CMS (eLearning) at 96% of students, 7% more than the nation. The data show that the use of IT in driving courses at SUU is high.
84% of students at SUU said they used eLearning during the semester with the nation at a close 80%. These numbers indicate that a large number of courses are using CMS systems to drive course work.

**11) Use a CMS (eLearning) during the semester?**

![Bar chart showing use of CMS (eLearning) during the semester for SUU and ECAR.]

Two thirds of students surveyed in both the nation at SUU have generally a positive experience with CMS systems (eLearning) while only a few, less than 5%, have a negative experience.

**14) Overall experience with eLearning**

![Bar chart showing overall experience with eLearning for SUU and ECAR.]

Positive: 67.0% for SUU, 63.4% for ECAR
Neutral: 31.7% for SUU, 23.0% for ECAR
Negative: 5.0% for SUU, 4.8% for ECAR
Just under 40% of SUU students said they get more actively involved in courses that use IT, but just over 40% didn’t seem to care one way or the other. SUU comes out ahead of the nation with those that agree or strongly agree.

57% of SUU students said that using IT in courses improves their learning while the nation is at just over 49%. Thus far SUU students seem to like using IT more than the national norm.
SUU ranked nearly the same with the nation on the convenience of IT use in course activities with more than 70% of students saying that it makes their course work more convenient.

**15c) IT makes doing my course activities more convenient**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>SUU</th>
<th>ECAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

68% of SUU students agree that the IT they use in courses will prepare them for the workplace while 47% of national students said IT will prepare them for the workplace.

**15d) IT will adequately prepare me for the workplace**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>SUU</th>
<th>ECAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IT service availability at SUU faired quite a bit better than the nation with 61% of students saying services were there when they needed them whereas the national norm was just over 50%.

As a nation, most students seem to prefer traditional class encounters and 67% of students would not skip class even if materials were available online. In comparison only 47% of SUU students said they would not skip class if materials were available online. SUU nearly doubles the national norm of students that agree that they would skip class if materials were available online.
SUU matches the national norm quite closely with exactly 51% of students defining themselves as mainstream adopters. But almost double the amount of SUU students say they are late adopters of technology compared to the national norm of 8.8%.

The national norm here is pretty even with only about a 2% difference in students that like and dislike learning with text-based conversations. But SUU has a “no” with more than half of students saying they dislike learning by text-based means which is 12% more than the nation with only 32% of SUU students saying “yes”.

16) Technology adoption

17a) I like to learn through text-based conversations over email, IM, and text messaging
SUU and the national norm are nearly identical here with a 1% or less difference for each result where half of students say they like to learn through programs, games, and simulations while 30% don’t.

**17b) I like to learn through programs, video games, and simulations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>SUU</th>
<th>ECAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUU and the national norm are nearly identical here with less than a 1% difference for each result. 38% of students like to contribute content to websites, blogs, and wikis to learn where roughly 44% don’t.

**17c) I like to learn by contributing to websites/blogs/wikis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>SUU</th>
<th>ECAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At SUU and nationally, students like to learn by searching for the information themselves using the internet with 75% of SUU students saying they like this method.

The conclusion can be drawn from the data that a quarter of all students probably don’t have any experience with podcasts and webcasts.
SUU’s results here are expected, with 74% of students wanting to be notified by text message when there is a campus emergency since it was noted in question 4 that 90% of students use text messaging weekly or more.

SUU fits into the national norm with nearly 50% of students owning an internet capable device. SUU is a bit above the national norm with 39% of students saying they don’t have an internet capable device and they don’t plan on getting one in the near future.
SUU fits just under the national norm for those students that use their internet capable devices with each time period coming within 1%.

**20) Use internet on your handheld device**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>SUU</th>
<th>ECAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a week</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per semester</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The time SUU students spend using the internet on their handheld device is much lower than the national norm with 23% of SUU students using the internet on their device less than 15 minutes a week.

**21) Approximately how much time each week do you use the Internet from your handheld device?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>SUU</th>
<th>ECAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 15 min</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 30 min</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 60 min</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 hours</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 5 hours</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 hours</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ hours</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
25% of SUU and national students that use handheld devices expect that their usage will increase greatly while over 40% say it will increase.

The national norm is more evenly distributed than SUU’s distribution but SUU students prefer a desktop or laptop computer to a handheld device with 66% of students saying they never use their handheld internet capable device if a desktop or laptop is available whereas only 26% of national students responded that way.
Based on question 24, it is easy to see why 62% of SUU students said that there are plenty of other ways to use the internet and this is why they don’t use internet on their handheld device while the national norm is lower at 50%. Also looking at results regarding the cost of handheld devices and the cost of applications that are useful to students on the devices the data show that SUU students find internet usage on handheld devices expensive.

27) What keeps you from using the internet on your handheld device

- Plenty of other ways to access the internet: 49.9% (SUU) vs. 54.0% (ECAR)
- No compelling reason to access the internet: 15.4% (SUU) vs. 18.0% (ECAR)
- Cost of the handheld device: 36.4% (SUU) vs. 50.0% (ECAR)
- Cost of the data service: 46.2% (SUU) vs. 50.0% (ECAR)
- Device usability issues: 32.0% (SUU) vs. 24.5% (ECAR)
- Inadequate battery life: 18.0% (SUU) vs. 11.0% (ECAR)
- Limited access to the network: 20.0% (SUU) vs. 13.3% (ECAR)
- Network connection too slow: 25.0% (SUU) vs. 15.9% (ECAR)
- Lack of applications that are useful to me: 26.0% (SUU) vs. 20.0% (ECAR)
- Cost of applications that are useful to me: 26.0% (SUU) vs. 20.0% (ECAR)
- Concern about security/privacy: 8.0% (SUU) vs. 9.4% (ECAR)
- Concern about health problems: 7.1% (SUU) vs. 1.1% (ECAR)
- No compelling reason to access the internet: 7.0% (SUU) vs. 7.1% (ECAR)
14% of SUU students say they use their handheld device for course related activity while the national norm is 11.3%. A majority of students, 67% at SUU and 76.5% nationally, said they don’t use their handheld device for course related activities.

About 30% of students, both at SUU and nationally, said they use their handheld for non-course related activity. Just over 50% of SUU and national students said they do not use their handheld for non-course related activity.
Half of all students, both nationally and at SUU feel that instructors should have the authority to forbid handheld devices in class.

50% of SUU students agree that they plan on doing more on their handheld device in the next 3 years while 44.5% of the nation agrees.
SUU’s student age group distribution is nearly identical to that of the nation with nearly 90% of students fitting into the 18 to 29 age group range.

The student sample from SUU was almost evenly distributed at 50%.
SUU is above the national norm on the academic performance of its students.

32) GPA

SUU has slightly more full time students the national norm.

34) Full time or part time student

30% more of SUU’s students live off campus than the national norm with only 12% of its students living on campus.

35) Residence location
SUU comes close to the national norm on almost all majors except for Education/Physical Education where it is nearly double the national norm of 9.3% coming in at 18%.
Conclusion

SUU students fit well into national norms for the number of students that own a desktop computer. The actual number of SUU students who own a computer is slightly below national norms (5%) but within the margin of error. Other deviations are within 1.5%

When it comes to laptop computers, SUU students who own a laptop are within 2.3% of national norms but the number whose computer is one year or less old is 11.9% below the nation while those that are two years old is almost 11% higher.

SUU is slightly ahead of the nation in the number of students using computers and the Internet for course related activities and recreation. But the data show a deficit in the ability of students to use the Internet effectively for information gathering. SUU students also have difficulty being able to evaluate the information they obtain online.

One area of great concern is that SUU students seem to have greater difficulty than national norms in understanding ethical and legal issues of Internet use. This is an issue that probably should be addressed more completely in the university’s basic computer courses.

Almost all of the students at SUU have experience using eLearning and have generally enjoyed using it. However, if professors put a greater emphasis on the usage of eLearning, it could cause the number of students that show up to class to go down since students said that if more class material was available online they would consider skipping class more often.

Nearly 40% of SUU students said that they would get more actively involved in their courses if IT was used more. 57% said that they feel like using IT in their courses helps them to learn better, which is 10% above the national norm.

More than three quarters of the students at SUU agree that IT makes their course activities more convenient which is on par with the national norm. Nearly the same amount feels that the use of IT in their courses is helping them adequately prepare for the workplace which was 10% higher than the national norm.

Two thirds of students said that the IT services that the school offers are available when they need them which is 10% higher than the national norm. Only 10% of SUU students said that it isn’t available when they need it.

SUU students are mainstream technology adopters, meaning they adopt technology when the people they know around them start adopting. 30% of students said they are early adopters or innovative adopters that adopt before the people around them do.

While SUU students like using technology to learn, a majority of them don’t like using text-based conversations to learn. Half of the students like to learn by using programs, video games, and simulations and about 28% of students like to learn by using the Internet to contribute content to websites, blogs, and wikis. 75% of SUU students like to learn by performing internet searches which shows a desire for self-directed learning. The quality of this search based learning could be improved if students had a better understanding of how search engines worked and knew more efficient ways to get exactly what they are looking for.

In emergency situations when students on campus need to be contacted quickly, it would appear that the best method would be to send a text message, since 74% of the students on campus said they were available via text messaging. With this kind of saturation there is almost a guarantee that there is at least one of these texting students per class at any given moment. However, in past tests of the emergency notification system, cell phone companies have throttled
the number of messages coming from SUU servers. So there are technical hurdles to overcome to help this notification medium become more effective.

While half of the students at SUU have internet capable handheld devices, only a third of them use the internet daily and 40% said they never use it. Of those students that do use the internet on their handheld only about 40% use it more than 30 minutes per week. This is actually about 20% more than the national norm.

More than a third of SUU students believe they will be using their internet capable handheld device more in the next 3 years which is just slightly lower than the national norm. But a majority of students, 66%, said they prefer to use a desktop or laptop computer if one is available to use the internet which is double the national norm.

What keeps SUU students away from using handheld devices is that they feel there are plenty of other ways to access the internet, the cost of handheld devices is high, and the cost of the data service is high.

Few students actually use their handheld devices for course related activities with only 14% saying they do. This is only slightly above the national norm.

Half of all students, SUU and national, believe that professors should have the authority to forbid handheld devices in class.

90% of students at SUU fit into the 18 to 29 age group which is nearly identical to the national norm, with only 0.4% difference. The gender sample from SUU was nearly symmetrical at 50% with only slightly fewer males participating in the survey whereas the national split was a 40-60% with males at 40%. Academically, SUU has a higher overall GPA standing than the national norm which a majority of students receiving a B+ or higher GPA. Fitting in with the national norm, slightly more than 90% of SUU students are full time. Most of SUU’s students reside off campus at just under 90% of the students while nationally only 60% of students reside off campus.

SUU comes close to the national norm of the distribution of majors with the majority of students studying Business, Education/Physical Education, Life Science/Biology and Other (which includes Math, Information Systems, and Computer Science).