

Digital Capabilities Survey

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Background

- Compliment the UCISA Technology Enhanced Survey (TEL) Survey
- Development of digital capabilities across the UK HE sector
- Benchmark
- First of a biennial study
- International opportunities

Definition

Digital capabilities are those that **fit an individual for living, learning and working in a digital society.**

Scope

Digital capabilities:

- more a condition to attain than a threshold to cross
- are role specific
- ever changing
- and require embedding into the curriculum or role.

We considered:

- staff
- students

Context

- Work on digital literacies/capabilities by Jisc, UCISA, HEA etc
- Increased competition within the HE sector
- Focus on improving the student experience and producing highly employable graduates.

Expectations

- Encourage dialogue within responding institutions
- Flag the importance of digital capabilities for both students and staff
- Empower and support change

Limitations

- Number of staff to be consulted
- Number of sections to be consulted
- Timing of survey

Coverage

- 156 institutions invited
 - All 134 UUK
 - 22 other HEIs
- 96 institutions provided a survey rep
- Ran 1st August - 19th September 2014
 - (5 weeks + 1 week extra)
- 63 surveys returned – 41% response rate

The Results

Section 1: Defining digital capabilities

Findings and recommendations

Section 1: Findings

- Great deal of similarity
- Common themes:
 - Ability to choose appropriate technologies
 - Embedding of digital tools into teaching or research
 - Ensuring that infrastructure and support are adequate
- Some acknowledgment that digital capability requirements vary between roles and subject areas.

Section 1: Recommendations

- Adopt a standard definition
- Use for benchmarking
- Make sharing resources and exemplars using common terms and standards more easy
- Specific competencies and baseline measures can be developed from this, to enable competency or fluency to be demonstrated

The Results

Section 2: Strategy

Findings and recommendations

Section 2: Findings

- Most important factors:
 - Student expectations and requirements (for staff and students)
 - Student Experience Survey (for staff and students)
 - Development of innovative pedagogic practices (3rd for students)
- Of low importance:
 - Develop unique selling point or use as a marketing tool
- Other strategies
 - Estates and Staff development (mid-table)
 - Marketing was least important
- Only 11 institutions expressly cited a member of their *senior management team* as having responsibility for digital capabilities.

Section 2: Recommendations

- To be most effective, a strategic cross-institutional approach to developing digital capabilities should be adopted, integrating into areas that may not have previously fully engaged in this agenda such as Estates and Marketing.
- Senior management involvement and support should be encouraged for driving digital capability change agendas.

The Results

Section 3: Delivery, implementation
and practice

Findings and recommendations

Section 3: Findings

■ Emerging practices in:

- **students** - curriculum-based initiatives, integrating digital capabilities into learning outcomes, handbooks and the curriculum, and extra-curricular activities, including using students as change agents and digital champions
- **staff** - included integration into annual appraisals, managing a digital profile, digital scholarship practices and induction processes

■ Mandatory training

- Students (40%) - on VLEs and Turnitin, IT and Library induction
- Staff (41%) - systems training before access is granted, IT induction and mobile learning/VLE

■ Certified training

- Students – 54% offered no certified training
- Staff – 38% offered no certified training
- ECDL was the most popular for staff

Section 3: Recommendations

- Institutions will need support to harness the potential of emerging practices to provide a broad portfolio of opportunities to motivate and reward students and staff and positively change culture.
- This will be aided by sharing toolkits, proposals and resources across the sector, and promoting student-staff partnerships in co-developing digital capabilities within institutions.
- Institutions should enable the creation and embedding of holistic, relevant and creative digital curricula and training opportunities for students and staff, and encourage effective work and study using technologies

The Results

Section 4: Bring your own

Findings and recommendations

Section 4: Findings

- Easy and secure access to campus networks largely available
- AV facilities becoming increasingly flexible
- BYO practices vary
- Challenges remain in some areas:



- flexibility of space and furniture
- the provision of power to both permanently installed hardware
- bring your own devices
- wifi saturation and bandwidth
- accessible wifi printing
- support provided to users

■ Admin rights cited frequently as a barrier

Section 4: Recommendations

- National organisations should collaborate with heads of service and users to develop coherent policy guidelines for bring your own.
- Institutions should review how to provide a robust and flexible digital environment to enable personalised ways of working.

The Results

Section 5: Differentiation and
inclusion

Findings and recommendations

Section 5: Findings

- Some indicated that their teaching, research, institution and system websites are device-friendly, but where they still need to implement these most are prioritising institution websites.
- *Strategies for providing open research content* were more developed than for *teaching content*.
- Documents and software for students were generally more accessible and inclusive than those for staff, but it may be that software and platform suppliers limit control over this.

Section 5: Recommendations

- Guidelines, tools and practices that enable the delivery of open educational and research resources should be further developed and disseminated.
- Institutions and organisations should collaborate to develop requirements and specifications for commercial systems, thereby leveraging maximum benefits.

The Results

Section 6: Looking to the future

Findings and recommendations

Section 6: Findings

- *Most significant barriers* for future development of digital capabilities:
 - Students - lack of money, department culture, competing strategic initiatives and institutional culture.
 - Staff - competing strategic initiatives, institutional culture, lack of money, and department culture.
- **Key initiatives coming up:**
 - Reviews of teaching and learning systems
 - A range of digital literacy projects
 - Infrastructure, training and development projects
- **Key agents (depts) of change:**
 - IT Services, Academic Development/Learning Technologies, Library

Section 6: Recommendations

- Co-developing digital capabilities could take the form of sharing skills and expertise in functional IT, but should move towards partnership working (such as staff-staff, staff-students) exploring the potential of technology to enhance learning, teaching, research and administrative practices.

The Results

Section 7: Concluding remarks

Findings and recommendations

Section 7: Findings

- The challenges of collaborating and sharing ideas and information across institutions were felt to be difficult to surmount but will result in positive outcomes for individuals, teams and institutions if successful.
- Clearer descriptions of skills and competencies required for roles and disciplines will help frame and focus activities and provide motivation and direction for culture change, employability and competitiveness.

Section 7: Recommendations

- There is a need for more effective mechanisms of sharing existing good practice within the sector, and managers should consider how they make their staff aware of other existing resources such as those from Jisc and the HEA.

What next?

- Share and converse
 - Launch webinar Weds 3 December 2014
 - <http://digitalskillsanddevelopment.ning.com>
 - #ucisadigcap
 - Other events, BETT, LILAC, JISC Digifest..
- Full report published – January 2015
- Digital Capabilities 2 day event (with Jisc)
 - 3 and 4 June 2015, Salford
- Collaborate
 - Nationally and internationally
- Survey 2016

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