

# UCISA Digital Capabilities Survey 2014 - Results

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## Keywords

Digital capabilities, digital literacies, information literacies, media literacies, strategy, BYO

## 1. Summary

The extended abstract should contain a short summary subsequently used in the program. It contains enough information for the readers to become acquainted with the extended abstract without reading it. The summary should not include tables, figures or illustrations.

The UCISA User Skills Group conducted a survey during August and September 2014 on how UK higher education (HE) institutions are developing and supporting staff and student digital capabilities. A total of 156 HE institutions in the UK and Ireland were invited to respond via an online questionnaire containing quantitative and qualitative questions. Sixty three responses were received; a response rate of 41%.

Digital capabilities were defined as *those that fit an individual for living, learning and working in a digital society*. This definition also includes the infrastructure and digital environment in which individuals live and work, and a range of other capabilities including information literacy, digital professionalism, ICT skills, digital scholarship and electronic collaboration and communication.

This presentation will summarise some of the key findings from the survey in the following areas: strategy, delivery, implementation and practice, bring your own, differentiation and inclusion, looking to the future. This presentation also provides recommendations to the sector.

## 2. Extended Abstract

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be by far the most progressive, most often making use of new communication methods such as Twitter, social media and videos, in addition to established communications channels.

#### **Section 4: Supporting Bring Your Own**

Easy and secure access to campus networks seemed to be largely available across the sector, but challenges remain around the flexibility of space and furniture, the provision of power to both permanently installed hardware and the use of personal devices (BYOD), wifi saturation and bandwidth, accessible wifi printing, and the support provided to users.

#### **Section 5: Supporting differentiation and inclusion**

Some institutions indicated that all their teaching, research, institution and system websites are device friendly, but where institutions still need to implement device friendly sites, most are prioritising institution websites over others. Strategies for providing open research content were more developed than those 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.

Nearly as many institutions were working towards accessible and inclusive guidelines for the release of student created digital materials as were not. This is fraught with difficulties which may be difficult to resolve.

#### **Section 6: Looking to the future**

Institutions overall seemed relatively positive about their ability to develop students and staff digital capabilities over the next two years. However, the most significant barriers for future development of student digital capabilities were felt to be lack of money, department culture, competing strategic initiatives and institutional culture. The most significant barriers for future development of staff digital capabilities included competing strategic initiatives, institutional culture, lack of money, and department culture.

Key initiatives being implemented, scoped or investigated in the next two years included developments and reviews of teaching and learning systems, and a range of digital literacy related projects. Infrastructure and training and development projects were also frequently identified.

The most important departments for effecting change included IT services, Academic development/Learning Technologies, and the library, with most institutions citing between one and eight different services, departments or groups. A small minority of institutions listed job titles or units that specifically feature digital literacy. It will be necessary to involve academic staff and students in this development too; working together effectively within institutions and across the sector will continue to be beneficial and essential for driving this agenda of change.

#### **Section 7: Concluding remarks**

Keeping pace with the pressures arising from the rapid development of technology requires innovative responses. 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.

#### **More information**

The full survey and executive summary can be found online at [www.ucisa.ac.uk/digcap](http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/digcap).

### **3. AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES**



Gillian Fielding is Chair of the UCISA User Skills Group, a national body of universities and colleges involved with providing staff and student training in digital skills/literacies.

Gillian's day job is the Digital Skills Manager at the University of Salford, Gillian is also module leader on the PGCAP module, Flexible, Distance and Online Learning. The Digital Skills team provide training and support in a wide-range of learning technologies and digital literacies such as Blackboard, Turnitin, learning technologies, MS Office, AV equipment, etc.

Previously Gillian has been a lecturer in further education and has held institutional-wide roles managing the implementation of learning technologies. Gillian an early FERL ILT Champion.

Gillian has presented at conferences nationally and internationally: Blackboard World, Solstice, CLTR, LILAC, UCISA, JISC.

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Rebecca McCready is the Learning and Teaching Advisor in the Faculty of Medical Sciences at Newcastle University and has been in post delivering IT and digital skills teaching and support to undergraduate and postgraduate students for the last ten years. This role has also seen her involved in the development and delivery of an innovative assistive technology loans scheme for all, a novel software program which analysis and provides assessment and feedback on document formatting, and other institutional-wide projects relating to digital literacy and IT facilities development. Rebecca has completed a PG Certificate in Academic Practice, is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy since 2005, and has been a member of the UCISA User Skills Group since 2013. She has presented at local and national conferences including ALT-C, and published in a variety of journals including PESTLHE and ALT-N. Her interests lie in innovation in teaching technologies and methodologies, usability and accessibility, and the development of the digital capabilities agenda.