

EDUCAUSE Research in the Academic Communities

Student Technology Study 2018 2018 Research Prospectus

I. Project Overview

Technology is a critical part of the teaching and learning mission—as well as the research mission—of higher education. Since 2004, the EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR) has been researching undergraduate student technology experiences and expectations. In 2014, 2015, and 2017 ECAR expanded its research on perspectives on technology in higher education to investigate faculty technology experiences. The scope of the EDUCAUSE Technology Research in the Academic Community (ETRAC) work includes surveying undergraduate students annually with a base survey, supplemented with thematic sections designed to explore contemporary higher education IT issues. Taking the opportunity to expand the scope of populations studied in this type of research every other year allows EDUCAUSE to tell a broader story about the status and efficacy of technology in higher education.

This research is survey based. In conjunction with subject-matter experts (SMEs) who offer a diversity of perspectives, ECAR develops the survey instrumentation and then establishes the research methodology before partnering with individual institutions to invite members of their respective academic communities to participate in the surveys. Our surveys ask respondents to share their current technology experiences, needs, and expectations about technology and IT issues at their campus. The results of these studies can be combined to provide multidimensional perspectives of these stakeholders' technology experiences.



The undergraduate **student study** explores technology ownership, use patterns, and expectations as they relate *to the undergraduate student experience*.

Research Objectives

The purpose of ETRAC is to understand the technology, experiences, needs, and expectations of academic community members and stakeholders and to help higher education IT professionals and decision makers use IT to advance the institution. This project looks at perceptions of IT from the outside to help IT leaders and IT services professionals:

- Improve IT services
- Increase technology-enabled productivity
- Prioritize strategic contributions of IT to higher education
- Plan for technology shifts among the various constituencies of the academic community

- Become more technologically competitive among peer institutions
- Catalyze new business models and/or strategic initiatives around technology use and adoption to transform higher education in innovative ways

II. Research Methodology

This study consists of a web-based quantitative survey of undergraduate students from different types of higher education institutions. EDUCAUSE develops the survey instruments for undergraduate students in the academic community (aligned with the project’s research objectives), and locally assigned survey administrators at our partner institutions administer the survey to their community. The data are centrally collected in a secure, cloud-based repository that is only available to authorized EDUCAUSE researchers.

General Timeline

- **Prior to the 2017 EDUCAUSE Annual Conference:** Resource materials and the “intent to participate” form made available
- **Mid-August 2017 through mid-January 2018:** Survey development and programming
- **EDUCAUSE Annual Conference through January 2018:** Survey invitation window open for participation in the next round of studies (formal invitations sent to all EDUCAUSE primary representatives plus past survey administrators)
- **February through April 2018:** Data collection—survey deployed at participating institutions
- **May through September 2018:** Data analysis and report writing
- **Fall 2018:** Report released

III. Form Factors/Deliverables in 2018

- Research hub
- Reports
- Survey instrument
- Slide deck
- Infographic

Participating Institutions Only

Specific institution-based results and comparative (anonymous) peer benchmarks will be shared with participating institutions. For each study in which an institution participates, the institution will receive access to the following:

- Raw data files of de-identified (anonymous) survey responses
- Aggregated summative data and comparative benchmarking data from (anonymized) peer institutions to each participating institution

IV. Partners/Collaborators

Principal Investigator/Project Lead

- D. Christopher Brooks, Director of Research, EDUCAUSE, cbrooks@educause.edu

ETRAC Research Team

- Jeffrey Pomerantz, Senior Researcher, EDUCAUSE, jpomerantz@educause.edu
- Jamie Reeves, Program Manager, EDUCAUSE, jreeves@educause.edu
- Mike Roedema, Statistician, EDUCAUSE, mroedema@educause.edu

Subject-Matter Experts

- Bryan Best, University of La Verne
- Samantha Earp, Smith College
- Shawn Miller, Duke University
- Richard Sebastian, Achieving the Dream
- George Veletsianos, Royal Roads University

V. Dissemination/Marketing Plan

The audience for this work is broad and includes people both inside and outside higher education IT.

Below is a partial list of potential audiences:

- IT leaders
- T&L leaders
- IR professionals
- Higher education press
- Technology researchers
- Vendors of technology products
- Librarians
- Faculty professional development providers

Dissemination plans beyond the traditional EDUCAUSE systems are TBD but will include:

- Posting a research hub on the EDUCAUSE website and announcing the publication of the 2018 studies
- Hosting an *E-Live!* webinar to share final results
- Presenting the results at the 2018 EDUCAUSE Annual Conference, the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI) Annual Meeting, and at least one national non-EDUCAUSE conference
- Publishing reports on aggregated summative data and focused themes in EDUCAUSE and non-EDUCAUSE venues

VI. Risks/Contingency Plan

There are minimal risks associated with these studies. Participation is voluntary.

VII. Subject Consent

By responding to the survey, respondents will be giving their consent to participate (see project website for full details about informed consent: <http://www.educause.edu/ecar/about-ecar/technology-research-academic-community>). Individuals under the age of consent will not be allowed to participate. Data are collected only via the survey. Responses to the survey questions will be maintained in an anonymized research data set, available to authorized EDUCAUSE researchers.

Participating institutions will receive their participants' anonymized responses.

Risks for the implementation of these studies are minimal because this is an annual iteration of an

established study. Providing adequate time for institutions to secure IRB approval is essential. EDUCAUSE therefore provides this and all necessary resource materials about the studies to institutions in order to facilitate institutional IRB approval.