



Summary of *The ECAR Study of Students and Information Technology, 2009*

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The 2009 study explores student information technology skills and how students use IT on campus, with a particular emphasis on the use of IT in courses. Comparisons will be made with the findings from previous annual studies (2004 through 2008), and longitudinal trends will be identified.

We ask the following research questions:

- What kinds of information technologies are students using, and with what levels of skill?
- What do students perceive to be the value and advantages of the use of IT?
- What is the experience of students with IT in their courses?
- What obstacles do students face in their use of technology?

Methodology

The study consists of a web-based quantitative survey of undergraduate students from different types of higher education institutions in the United States. Freshmen and seniors are the focus of the study for four-year institutions, as they represent students early in and near the end of their college careers. For community colleges, students in all classifications are invited to participate. Student responses will help us answer questions about what kinds of skill and attitudes students have on entering college and how their skills and attitudes have been affected by their college experience.

We will host the survey on the website of the professional association, EDUCAUSE (<http://www.educause.edu>). Students will not receive any compensation for participating in the survey. For institutions wishing to participate, there will be a lottery for prizes to reward students who complete the survey and provide their e-mail address. Students will not be contacted directly by the investigators.

Students at some institutions will also participate in qualitative interviews via focus groups. A few instructional support staff and university administrators will also be interviewed. Participation in these focus groups and interviews is voluntary.

Risk/Benefit Analysis

There are no risks associated with this study. Participation is voluntary. Data is collected only via the survey. Student responses to the survey questions will be confidential. Participating institutions will receive their students' responses without any confidential data, such as the open-ended comments and e-mail addresses.

Subject Consent

By responding to the survey, students will be giving their consent to participate. Students under the age of 18 will not be permitted to participate.