

## Jisc Digital Student consultation process: ALT webinar 01/04/14

### Findings from Group One

The question '**what do we still need to find out about students' expectations and experiences of the digital environment**' yielded some interesting information about what people are already finding out in their institutions.

1. There are plenty of surveys taking place. Often these look at **students' satisfaction with existing provision** such as the VLE, lecture capture, ICT support. Some look at more general **issues in students' digital practice** e.g. use of social media and personal devices. Surveys often focus on specific groups of students, and/or on students in transition.

From this (small) group it seems that surveys are viewed positively as a means of gathering information about students at scale. Information gathered from e.g. focus groups and interviews was considered harder to analyse and harder to draw general conclusions from. However, it was acknowledged that survey 'fatigue' can set in. Incentives such as prize draws (e.g. for an iPod) have been used with some success.

2. There is a more complex question underlying these surveys, concerning **what impact students' perception of the digital environment has on their overall satisfaction** with their experience. The NSS provides limited opportunities for students to feed back on these aspects of their study, though that may change with the new question set. Meanwhile we need to know whether there is:  
(a) a **threshold** effect – a minimum level of expectation below which students begin to feel dissatisfied and to 'punish' their institution with poor feedback and/or complaints, and/or  
(b) a **positive** effect – a positive relationship between investment in the digital environment and students' overall levels of satisfaction.

3. Another research area raised by this group was **preferences for segregating/integrating personal and institutional digital media**. More needs to be known about:

- (a) staff and student preferences in this area
- (b) the proportions falling into the segregator/integrator groups
- (c) whether and how the proportions are changing
- (d) nuances within this overall picture
- (e) reasons for the difference, or correlations with other factors e.g. ICT confidence, age, culture.

A related research area is '**web residency**', as explored through the [HE Academy call for discipline-related projects](#) in this area. This concerns how staff and students establish confidence in various online 'spaces'.

Another way of approaching this research area is to ask **how staff and students navigate boundaries between personal/institutional spaces**, and other boundaries introduced by the prevalence of digital media, for example closed/open, free/paid for etc etc. This would be qualitative research focused on how these boundaries are perceived and recognised, and how individuals adjust (or fail to adjust) their practices for different perceived norms.

4. Transition is an emerging research area. **How do students approach the transition from non-HE to HE modes of study**, particularly in respect of their use of digital technologies? How do they approach other key transitions e.g. into first assessment, into final year/postgraduate modes of study? Other questions might include:

- (a) How well do institutions support those transitional journeys? Or: what does it look like when those transitions are well managed
- (b) How do students understand those transitions in prospect, in process, and in retrospect?
- (c) What role can digital technologies play in supporting transition e.g. by providing familiar interfaces and environments? How can reliance on digital technologies by institutions e.g. for enrolment and assignment submission make transition more difficult for (some) students?