Postcards from the Future - scoping students' future digital needs

#digitalstudent  http://digitalstudent.jiscinvolve.org
Welcome and introductions

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Phase 1 study reviewed students’ expectations and experiences of the digital environment at university.

Desk study | review of institutional data | survey of institutional stakeholders | student focus groups

Consultation phase to inform guidance to institutions, recommendations and proposed solutions.

Parallel study in FE and Skills plus review of practice in schools to identify likely incoming expectations.

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Findings: expectations

- WiFi
- Access and awareness
- Functional skills
- Situated practices
- Attributes and identities
Findings: expectations

Many expectations are implicit – so students will punish failure but may not recognise success (unless we tell them about it!).
Experiences...

- Highly variable in respect of: previous experience, chosen subject, personal preferences and aspirations
- **Value perceived in retrospect**: unexpected is developmental
- Study habits with technology are hybrid: informal, peer supported + academic, formally acquired
- **Critical moments with technology often formally taught**: e-journals, data analysis, design, ref/project management...
- **Teaching staff confidence** still important
- Digital identity a key motivation and outcome
## Transactional vs Transformational

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transactional</th>
<th>Transformational</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessing networks</td>
<td>Sharing ideas, engaging in dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessing hardware and software</td>
<td>Encountering threshold concepts and practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessing general and course-related information</td>
<td>Developing independent study habits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signing on to university systems</td>
<td>Collaborating on projects</td>
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<td>Booking appointments</td>
<td>Producing new digital artefacts</td>
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<td>Submitting work, receiving grades</td>
<td>Reflecting, reviewing, revising</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reference management, data analysis, e-journals, specialist tools...</td>
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<td>Expectations largely established in advance by</td>
<td>Expectations largely established during studies in dialogue with tutors and</td>
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<tr>
<td>transactions with other service providers</td>
<td>peers</td>
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Emerging issues

Changing nature of affiliation

Branding and blending of institutional services

Spaces + places, real + virtual

Contractual + informal

'Walled gardens: paths out'
An orientation on the future

education technology action group

learning is a lot more global

on-line learning an entitlement

new emerging teaching and learning

Cloud

servers & services cloud based

digital

2020?
2025 looks like this

better measures of performance

students with sight & control of their own complex learning data

we will know a lot more about how we learn

tech will be personal, wearable etc
Activity: postcards

bit.ly/digipostcards

Postcard 1. Everyone's so informal here

Postcard 2: Wired schools

Postcard 3: Just in time, just for me

Postcard 4: Weakening ties

Postcard 5: Open everything
Choose a postcard from the future. Discuss:

a) What are arriving students likely to expect from HE?

b) How can HE (uniquely) enable students?

Be ready to feed back:

c) What one thing should universities do today to ensure students are prepared for various digital futures?
What one thing should institutions do?

- How do we engage students in developing the digital environment?
- How do we manage student expectations of the digital environment?
- How do we support students and staff to use their own devices?
Engaging students in dialogue

Gathering information
- Surveys, interviews, focus groups to find out about student expectations
- Participative / observational methods to explore practices and attitudes
- Social media – with students' consent – to collect information
- Analyse existing data e.g. NSS/USS/ISB/PRET/local surveys

Stimulating, gathering and responding to ideas
- Interactive and fun e.g. crowdsourcing, hashtags, ideas tree, padlet...
- Make sure students can share ideas and see how they are acted on

Representation

Partnership projects: 'making things better'
Engaging students in dialogue

What does your institution do in this space?
Further resources

» Helen Beetham speaking about the project in June 2014
» Highlights of the ‘digital student’ interviews, August 2013
» Executive summary of the original HE study outlining the digital student challenge
» Institutional solutions‘ - describing possible institutional responses in a variety of areas
» National solutions – blog post summarising outcomes from the final consultation event
» ‘Listen to students’ – posters for comment and reuse.
» ‘Enhancing the digital student experience’ – cards for comment and reuse
» ‘Digital experiences in the curriculum‘ – cards for a variety of staff development activities
» A new resource: four postcards from the future

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For conclusions and recommendations:

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Resources for your use...

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How do we find out more about students' digital experiences and expectations?

- Ensure the digital experience is covered in assessments of student satisfaction – ideally through qualitative as well as quantitative methods.
- Undertake regular and comparable data collection in order to identify trends.
- Share interesting and effective approaches to engaging students in their digital experience, including qualitative methods and use of online services/apps.
- Develop an effective online communications strategy: ensure everyone knows what is being done to develop the digital environment and how it will benefit them.
- Engage students in discussion about their digital practices in and beyond the curriculum.
- Aim to move from consultation to engagement approaches whereby students are empowered to develop their own and their shared digital environment for learning.
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