IIT Student Technology Survey results

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The 2013 IIT Student Technology Survey has successfully come to a close. In comparison to the last survey, which was conducted in 2011, this year's results show a significant increase in satisfaction with technology services. The survey response rate was approximately 20%, with the greatest response from students in their first and second years.

How Students are Using Technology: Over the past two years there has been a dramatic increase in the use of mobile devices. This increased mobility highlights some of the technology services that are most important to students.

`Over 96% of students own a laptop, and 97% of laptop owners also have an Android or an iOS device, with 18% reporting they own all three. All of these mobile devices have a significant impact on the wireless network resources on all campuses. To support the increasing number of mobile devices, OTS has more than doubled the University's bandwidth, and invested significant resources into the wireless network.

IIT Network: Providing a fast and reliable wireless network is one of OTS's most important services. Over the past few years OTS has strategically upgraded areas within Main Campus from Wireless G to secure (encrypted) Wireless N, which offers improved wireless service to the IIT community. This transition has taken place in stages to limit interruption or connectivity difficulties. The transition is almost complete and secure Wireless N service is available in most academic buildings as well as student centers, and on-campus housing.

As illustrated by the accompanying graph, satisfaction with the IIT wireless network has improved over the past two years. Student satisfaction with the reliability of the IIT network on Main Campus increased 16.5% from 2011, with a 76.5% satisfaction rate overall.

Student satisfaction with regard to IIT's Main Campus wireless network coverage increased to 79% of respondents expressing satisfaction, up from 60% in 2011. On-campus resident satisfaction with the IIT network is also higher than in previous years, with 70% indicating that the network in their residence is sufficient for their needs.

Although there have been significant improvements there is still a need to expand and enhance wireless services. Completing the Secure Wireless N deployment on Main Campus remains a top priority for OTS.

Blackboard: As students are becoming more mobile, utilization of Blackboard has also increased with 87% of students stating that Blackboard has been used in at least some of their classes. Of the respondents, 78.5% reported that Blackboard was used for more than 80% of their classes. Students reported that it is easy to access, gives greater control over their class workload, and enables them to accomplish classwork more quickly. Additionally, the Gradebook was indicated as a helpful new tool. The Blackboard Mobile Learn App is an added service that provides a mobile web page for each IIT class. This application brings the Blackboard teaching and learning tools to a mobile device, giving students and faculty access to their courses wherever they are.

The majority of students did endorse ease of access on mobile devices, though there was slightly less support for this experience. Dissatisfaction with accessibility of the Blackboard Mobile Learn App was largely due to Blackboard beginning to charge for the app in Fall 2012. To help lessen the impact of this fee, IIT is refunding students the cost of the app as a HawkCard credit. Refunds can be requested by contacting the OTS Support Desk at supportdesk@iit.edu.
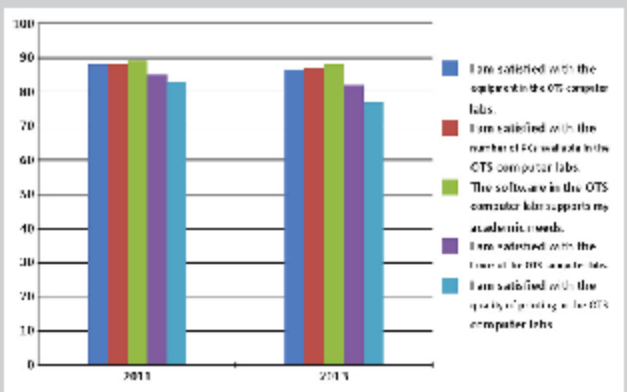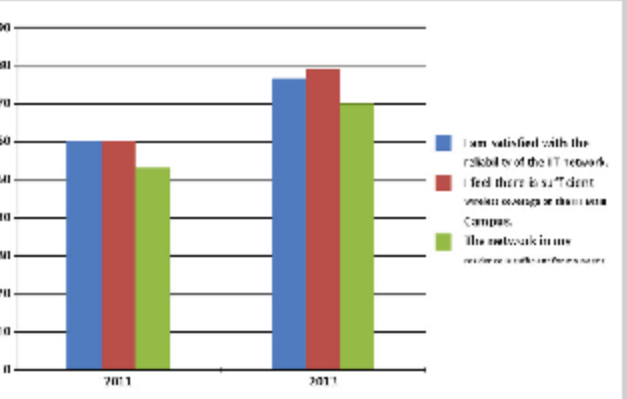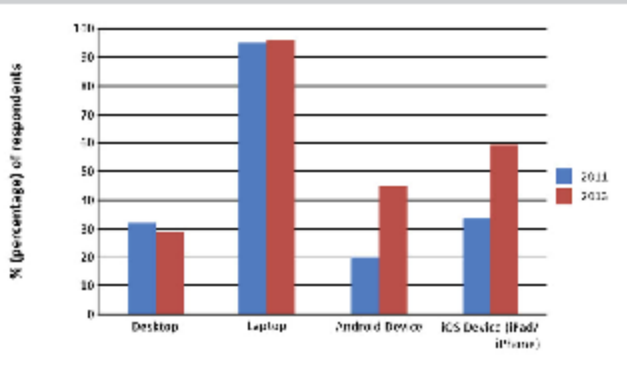
Computer Labs and Printing Services: In general, satisfaction with the OTS computer labs remained about the same since 2011.

However, student satisfaction with the quality of printing in the computer labs was lower this year, with 77% of students expressing satisfaction compared to 83% in 2011. Given that utilization of printing services continues to be the top reason that students go to the computer labs, this is an important area of focus going forward. Students also indicated that access to specialized software, access to desktop computers, and internet access are also main reasons for computer lab use.

OTS updates equipment in labs on a three-year refresh cycle along with new software as indicated by academic needs. Given the consistency of satisfaction from 2011 to 2013, these resources are being well utilized by students and are consistent with their needs.

OTS has also added more Remote Printing Stations around campus, including in SSV and Gunsaulus Hall with the support of and Housing & Residential Services. These residential Remote Printing Stations are available 24/7 for residents with access to the buildings. Student comments indicated that mobile printing and more printing stations are the two services they want to see expanded. OTS will be working to improve these and other services over the summer.

Food Advisory Board returns to campus

Harshita Iyer
SGA VP OF STUDENT LIFE

In light of recent changes in rules regarding meal plans and prices, there has been a lot of interest in students wanting to help shape and develop the dining program on campus. To direct this interest better the Student Government Association is bringing back the Food Advisory Board, which was a little inactive during the last semester. The first meeting for the Food Advisory Board happened on Thursday, April 25th. In attendance were Mariah Dixon, Jahna Soomer-James, Yunhui Kim and Kaysha Henry from the student body as well as Chris Ferenc, the General Manager of IIT Dining Services and Jovanny Zepeda, the Executive Chef.

The first meeting was an introduction into what the biggest student concerns are and how they might be addressed by IIT Dining Services. The Food Advisory Board aims to open up the lines of communication between Dining Services and the IIT student body. Topics discussed at the first meeting included bringing back the Pasta Bar in The Commons and reintroducing the "Tower Burger" in the Bog. The current situation on the Pasta Bar is that Dining Services is aware of students wanting it back and are waiting to finalize plans with their team. Ultimately, any changes made in The Commons or dining at IIT in general need to balance satisfying the majority, providing options for specific dietary needs and meeting financial requirements. IIT's population is highly diverse and this proves to be challenging at times, but it is something that the Sodexo team at IIT is continually developing. Another consideration is the cost of the food. A lot of the time, adding in something new in The Commons means altering the standard menu offerings to keep costs (and hence the price) constant. This indicates a trade-off, and student participation in helping decide the tradeoff is always welcome.

Other topics that were touched upon included: redirecting the traffic in The Commons, having pre-packaged lunch for people to grab and go if they have class, and adding the condiment table across from The Grill to the Salad Bar, among many others. These projects are still at the discussion stage though, if you feel very strongly about them, make sure you make your voice heard by attending future Food Advisory Board meetings.

The next FAB meeting will be in the Fall, and there will be publicity for anybody who is interested to join. There is also a possibility of collaboration between FAB and the Food Committee, which is a project by RHA. So look out for more on this topic if you are interested in working on campus food quality. Until then, you can email me, the VP of Student Life for SGA at hiyer1@hawk.iit.edu. If you truly want to see changes in campus food, this is the best opportunity to deal directly with the people in charge.

So come be a part of the change!

SGA Senator Spotlight

Name: Anurup Kankanhalli
Position: Greek Council Senator
Email: akankanh@hawk.iit.edu
What prompted you to join SGA?:
I wanted to help improve the college experience here at IIT and I thought SGA would be a great way to do it. As the Greek council Senator, I feel I bring a unique perspective to SGA.
Which projects have you worked/working on?:
I am currently working on the course retake policy and the additional reading day project.
What aspect of the university experience are you most passionate about improving?:
I am really passionate about improving the academic and social aspects of the university experience here at IIT.
Cool fact about you?:
I love power tools, and I am starting to build my own collection of them.