

Use of Broadband in Education Survey Findings

Computer usage and Internet access is becoming increasingly prevalent in US educational institutions. From elementary to graduate level, technology is being integrated into the schools at every level. Administrators, educators, and students alike are using computers and the Internet in new ways. Cahners In-Stat Group recently completed a survey examining the state of technology implementation in the US educational institutions, the results of which uncovered the current adoption rates and several unexpected trends.

According to the survey, 99.6 of respondents, including both administrators, faculty and students, had access to a computer on campus. While the majority of these respondents had access to a desktop PC, surprisingly over one-third of respondents had access to a laptop. Furthermore, the majority of those with access to a laptop, owned that computer. The prevalence of laptops was especially high in colleges and universities where over 40 percent of respondents had their own laptop.

The prevalence of Internet access on campuses was almost as high as that of computer usage, with 98.3 percent of respondents having access to the Internet on campus. The incidence of Internet access was lowest in elementary and secondary institutions (which still had a strong 93.8 percent of respondents with access) and strongest in colleges/universities and professional schools. A very small percentage of respondents were limited to dial-up access with almost 85 percent of respondents with exposed to some variety of broadband access (for the survey purposes, broadband was defined as anything faster than a 56k dial-up modem—e.g. cable modem, DSL, ISDN, T-1 line. etc). Interestingly, despite the high prevalence of personal computers and the integration of the Internet into the school's operations, there were very few school computer requirements placed on students. 70 percent of respondents claimed that there were no computer requirements for students. The most stringent environment in terms of requirements is professional schools.

Students are becoming increasingly mobile in their use of computers and educational institutions are more demanding that students are enabled with this mobility. While 5.8 percent of institutions require that their students have desktop PCs, a slightly higher percentage, 6.6 percent, require that their students have laptops. The requirement for laptops is especially high in professional schools where 16.7 percent require students to have laptops (compared to 4.2 percent being equipped with desktop PCs). In addition to examining the prevalence of computer and Internet usage, the In-Stat survey also examined how these capabilities are being applied in the educational environment. Based on the survey data it is evident that these elements are becoming important tools in the teaching process. As this integration continues to evolve, the educational environment will become an increasingly important and leading edge market for these products and services.

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