



## **THE ECAR STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, 2009**

### **Purpose:**

Since 2004, the annual ECAR longitudinal Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology has sought to shed light on how information technology affects the college experience. Students were asked about the technology they own and how they use it in and out of their academic world. Information was gathered from students about their skill level with technologies; their perception of technology affecting their learning experience; and their preferences for IT in courses. In addition to studying student ownership, experience, behaviors, preferences, and skills with respect to information technologies, the 2009 study also included a special focus on student ownership and use of Internet-capable handheld devices.

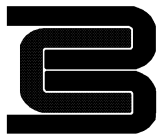
### **Methodology:**

Approximately 900 randomly selected Brazosport College students were sent an email inviting them to participate in a web-based survey on IT services. To entice their participation, survey participants were eligible to win either \$50 or \$100 gift certificates to Amazon.com. Participation in the study was voluntary, and their responses were confidential. During the survey period, several reminder emails were sent from Brazosport College to the survey sample to encourage their participation. The survey took participants approximately 15 minutes to complete. Out of the 900 randomly selected students, 89 students responded to the survey for a response rate of 10%.

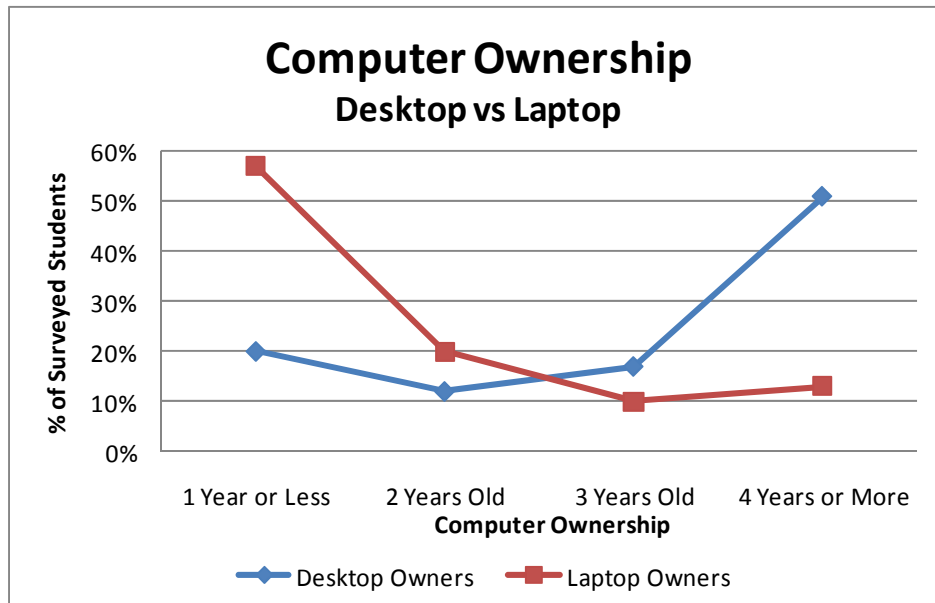
### **Key Findings:**

#### **Computer Ownership & Technology:**

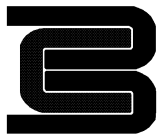
- Not surprisingly, slightly more survey students owned a desktop computer (73%) rather than a laptop computer (67%); however, students who owned laptops had newer computers than students who owned desktop computers.



- Nearly six out of ten (57%) survey students owned a laptop one year or less as compared to one in five (20%) desktop owners whose computers were one year or less. Conversely, desktop owner’s computers were older; one-half (51%) of them owned a desktop four years or more as compared to approximately one in ten (13%) laptop owners whose computers were four years old or older.

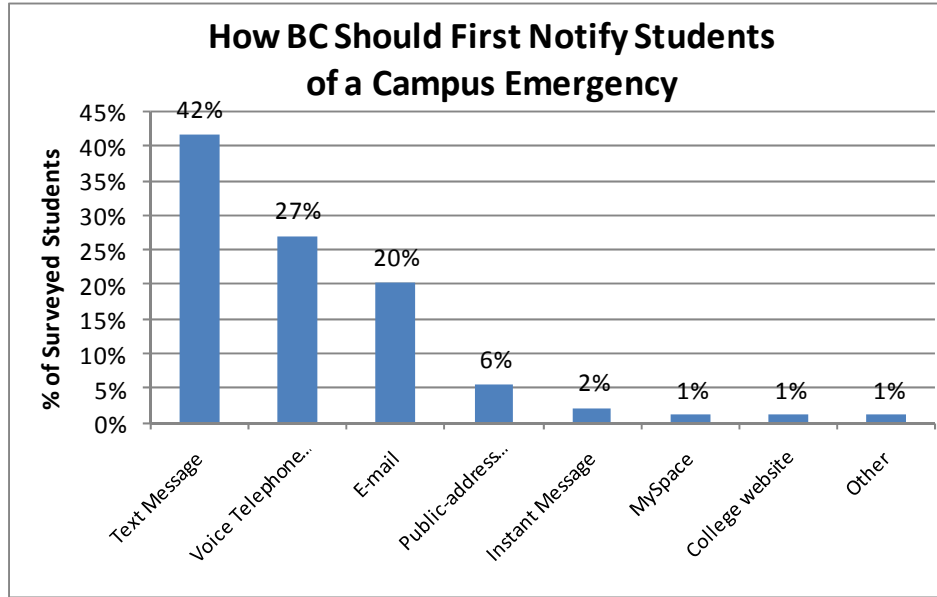


- Surveyed students spent an average of 14 hours per week actively doing Internet activities for school, work or recreation.
- Almost half of those surveyed (46%) were technology “junkies.” They described themselves as liking new technology and using it before most people or loving new technology and being among the first to experiment with it and use the new technology.

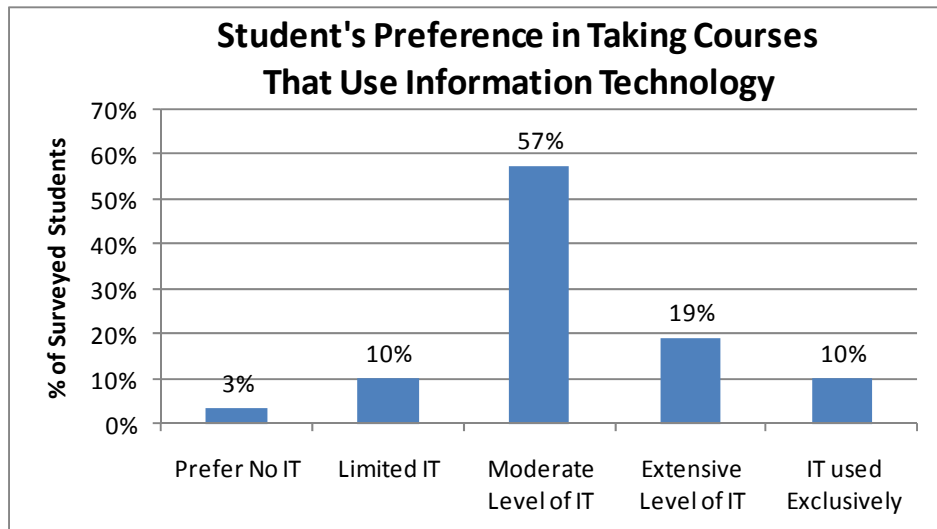


Preferences:

- The majority of students surveyed (42%) preferred to be notified of a campus emergency first by text message. The second most popular response, by one out of four students (27%), was to be notified by a telephone call of a campus emergency.



- Approximately six out of ten surveyed students (57%) preferred to take courses that used a moderate level of information technology.





#### Course Management System:

- Three-fourths (75%) of survey students took a course that used a course or learning management system (i.e., WebCt, Blackboard, etc.)
- Those students who have used a course management system (CMS):
  - used a CMS for a course during the semester they were surveyed (Spring 2009).
  - used a CMS frequently. The majority (90%) claimed to use a CMS weekly, several times per week, or even daily.
  - claimed to be fairly skilled or very skilled at using a CMS (79%).
  - were likely to describe their overall experience using a CMS as positive or very positive (75%).

#### Handheld Devices:

- Six out of ten (60%) survey students owned a handheld device (i.e., iPhone, Blackberry, Ipod touch, PDA, etc.) that is capable of accessing the Internet.
- One third (34%) of students who owned a handheld device that is capable of accessing the Internet never used the Internet from their handheld device while four out of ten students (42%) used the Internet weekly, several times per week, or daily from their handheld device.
- Those students who owned a handheld device and used the Internet function:
  - expect their usage of the Internet from their handheld device to increase over the next three years (86% claim usage to increase or greatly increase).
  - will use a networked computer (laptop or desktop), if it is easily available, instead of accessing the Internet from their handheld device.
  - had not contacted the Brazosport College IT department (BC/IT) for technical support related to their handheld device (85% have never contacted BC/IT).

#### Survey Participant Profile:

- Survey students were more likely to be a female student (65%) than male (35%).
- The average age of surveyed students was 29; however, the median age was 25.
- Survey students were more likely to be a part-time student (60%) than a full-time student (40%).
- Survey students were high achieving students; half (52%) of the students claimed to have an “A” as their cumulative grade point average (GPA) while more than one-third (36%) claimed to have a “B” GPA. Approximately nine out of ten (88%) survey respondents claimed to have an “A” or “B” as their cumulative GPA.