

Truman State University Technological Needs of Students

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Final Report

Technology is changing fluidly every day. Truman State University is no different from the rest of the world. It is TSU's Information Technology Service's mission to change, adapt, and be ahead of this technological revolution. For this study, ITS has defined their goals for the near future by attempting to answer three main questions: *What types of new technological services would Truman students like to see from Truman State Information Technology Services? How can Truman State University integrate into the increasingly mobile technological world in a way that most benefits students? Are off campus students able to utilize on campus technology as much as is beneficial to them?* These questions are what this report will attempt to answer in order for ITS to be more efficient in this new technological based world.

In order to better prepare for this study, research was taken from other schools in the Missouri region. There are five locations for Information Technological Services on the Saint Louis University campus, a substantial amount, which makes it easier for students to get the help they need. At Southeast Missouri State students are able to find detailed information about ITS online, their hours of operation, locations, and staff. Here at Truman State University, there is only one location for students to find help with their technological issues.

It would seem today that a college student would be anomaly if he or she did not own a mobile phone. Like the rest of the world, college campuses all the country are learning that they must provide mobile services to satisfy their students. The University of Missouri has begun to offer student discounts from companies such as AT&T/Cingular, Sprint/Nextel, and U.S. Cellular.

Many schools offer random helpful services to their students. Most schools now have some version of what Truman State calls "TruView," a personalized platform for students to use e-mail, register for classes, pay their bill, and many other things. At SEMO, students are offered tutorials for using school software like Microsoft Office 2007. CD/DVD duplication and advice on where to legally download music are other services that SEMO IT offers their students. At the University of Missouri all students are capable of having their own web pages and are all given the opportunity of receiving the same training that IT workers do. It is obvious that Truman State has a lot to compete with even in the state of Missouri.

After researching what is available at other schools in Missouri, the things that are lacking at Truman become more obvious. Truman State University's ITS does not offer any technical support or features that deal with mobile devices. Better coverage for cell phones, class information through text messaging, and a connection with the Truman Blackboard system are features that ITS could consider adding. There are numerous hardware and software add-ons and features that Truman could possibly add to their technical arsenal. Connection and usage of on-campus computers by students either off campus or other remote places is something that Truman ITS could possibly improve on. This study took these ideas and presented them to the off- and on-campus student body and asked for their feedback regarding their current concerns and what they hope to see in the future.

Out of 5,468 Truman students, 1,922 were sent an invitation to take the survey concerning their technological needs. Of those 1,922 who were sent an invitation 334 responded to the call. The population sample studied did not significantly differ in demographic composition from the actual Truman population, for example: the male/female ratio that answered this survey did not significantly differ from Truman's 58% female and 42% male composition. Although the primary make up of the sampled population by age was freshman, answers to survey questions did not significantly differ

between class levels. All of these population factors considered it was appropriate to extrapolate the following sample population findings to the entire Truman State population.

Answering the question: What types of new technological services would Truman students like to see from Truman State Information Technology Services? Data was collected in order to determine which types of operating systems are used by students, how the students use ITS, how resourceful ITS services are, and what improvements students would like to see at Truman State's technology. It was found that a majority of students use the Windows operating system though more and more Macs are being used. This information, along with additional information regarding ITS services used, it was found that more knowledge of Mac computers by ITS would be very helpful to students. Though there are more Windows users, the number of times that students visit ITS in a given semester does not significantly differ between Mac and Windows users.

The main reasons that students use ITS services are help with viruses, internet, technology rental, and other unspecified problems. The average student visiting ITS two times a year, the most prevalent of the problems mentioned above was internet. Most internet problems consisted of both slow internet connections and computers that were unable to connect to it at all. When asked about what services they would like to see from ITS student's responded that increased Y-Drive space, more information about ITS during Freshman Week, keeping older versions of Microsoft Office on campus computer, and discounted off-campus internet would be useful. This feeling of usefulness was significant at the .05 level.

In order to answer the research question "How can Truman State University integrate into the increasingly mobile technological world in a way that most benefits students?" students were asked to answer questions regarding their current cellular phone service and their opinion on possible mobile add-ons. In the entire survey sample, only 334 students responded that they did in fact not own any

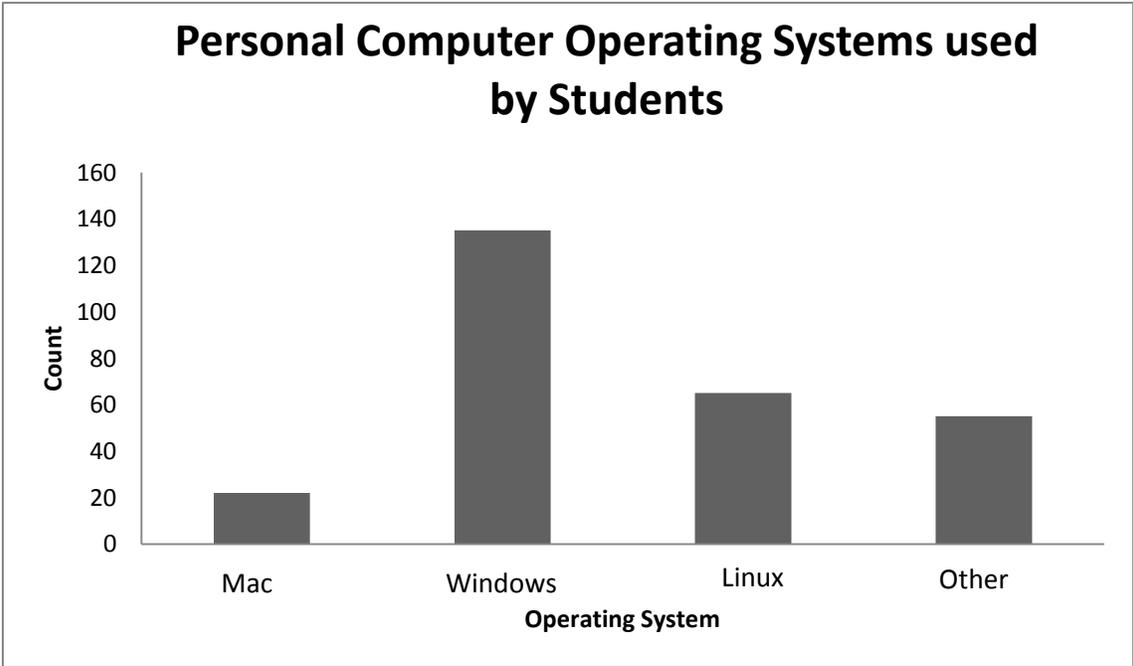
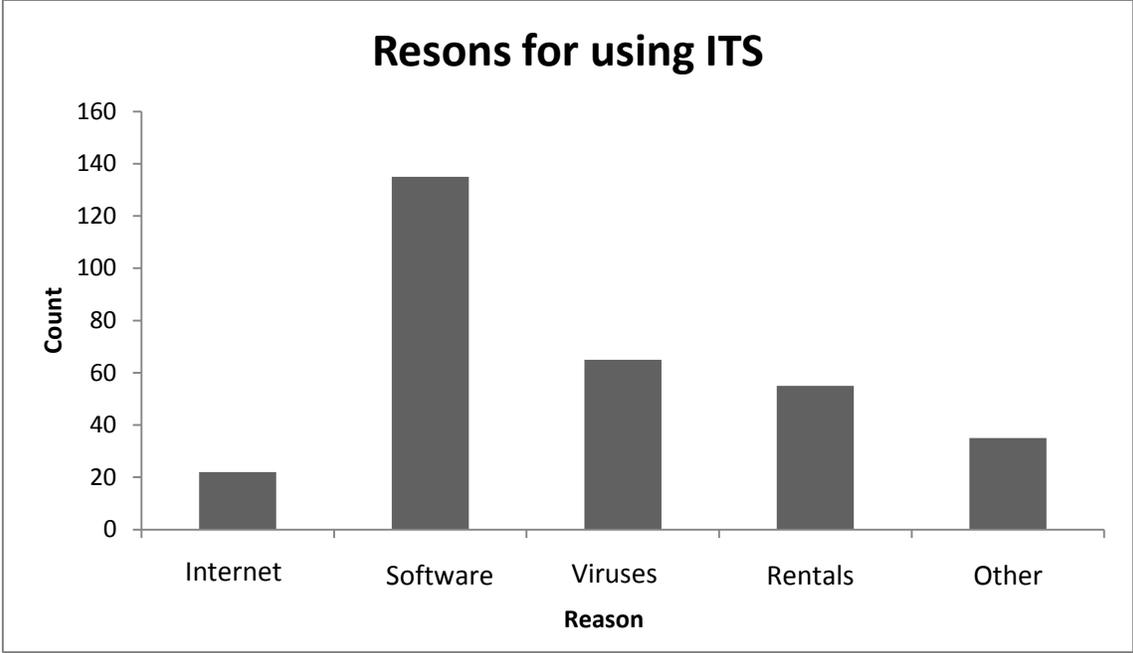
type of cellular phone. Among those students that did have a mobile phone AT&T was the most popular carrier with more than double the subscribers than the second highest which was Verizon. After specifying the carrier that they subscribed to survey takers were asked to rank their coverage. Using a one-way-ANOVA test and following up with a Bonerroni post-hoc test this study was able to rank the carriers coverage from best to worst: 1 U.S. Cellular, 2. Verizon, 3. Sprint, 4. Other, 5. AT&T, 6. T-Mobile. The top three carriers did not significantly differ from one another by coverage rating, "other" carriers were significantly better than T-Mobile. Violette Hall and Magruder Hall were cited frequently as having reception problems.

Of possible new mobile services asked about the only one that students felt would be significantly useful was a mass texting service that would deliver class notifications. Students responded that text notifications about campus events and mobile Blackboard would not be to 5 scale, 1 being not useful and 5 being very useful, then finding if their mean answer differed significantly from 3. A rating of 3 was assumed to be a neutral feeling.

Are off campus students able to utilize on campus technology as much as is beneficial to them? 67.8 percent of students have never heard of VPN/Proxy, the software that allows them to connect to their on campus files and research databases. Of those (off and on campus) who have heard of VPN/Proxy find it useful, easy to upload, and easy to use. The respondents rating of usefulness was significantly larger than the neutral answer at the .05 level. When students are forced to travel to campus it is most often because they are in need to school printers, all other reasons occurred far less than printer use. As far as in class concerns some students responded that more power outlets and Mac connections to projectors would be convenient in classrooms; students bring their computers to class on average 1.7 times per week.

There were few other questions that were asked related to the concerns of this study. Only 35.5 percent of students use TruView Pipeline. 87.3 percent of students approve of the new e-mail service provided by Gmail. 81.9 percent of students find DegreeWorks useful.

In conclusions there are many small changes that Truman State Information Technology Services could make that would be beneficial to students. Even though ITS really has no control over cellular phone service, they could advise incoming freshman on which carrier to subscribe to. One clear request of students was that ITS needs to have a greater knowledge of Mac operating systems because it is clear that Mac users visit ITS just as much as Windows users. Off campus and on campus students are equally aware of VPN/Proxy but this is not a large amount, those who do know about it find it useful and easy to use. Other than the larger mentioned concerns, there are many other small things that students would find useful from ITS. It is this study's hope that Truman State Information Technology Services can use this information to better themselves and Truman State University.



Cellphone Carrier used by Students

