

IT Survey Lends Focus

Mercy Outpaces Nation in Technology Use

An online Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) survey was conducted during the Early Spring of 2009. The survey was sent to Mercy College faculty, staff, and students to assess the level of their use and experience with technology, their interest in learning more, and influencing factors. Data collected during the survey process was compared with findings from two national studies. The survey received a good amount of responses; a total of 1,175 people filled out the survey. The following response rates were tallied across campus constituent groups: 35% of faculty, 32% of staff and 8% of students.

All three of the Mercy College constituent groups exceeded the Pew study sample in all areas except for blogging, online games, and file sharing. The Pew study provides a context and comparison for digital lifestyles in the Higher Education arena. Pew researchers look at those technologies which enrich our lives beyond the campus walls (i.e., online shopping and banking) as well as how we use online and digital applications for innovative learning.

The college is pleased to see high use of Collaborative Authoring and Search and Reference uses, and low use of Online Gaming.

Help Around the Clock

Helpdesk Phone Support Hours Extended

Helpdesk is now available round-the-clock. Starting May 1st your call to the help desk (914-674-7526) will be answered by a support technician 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.

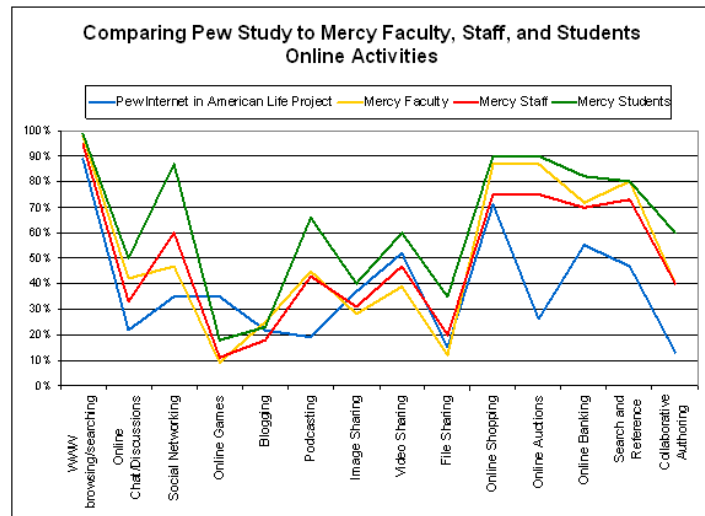
During normal operating hours (Monday through Thursday 8am to 8pm and Friday 8am to 6pm) callers will be able to get remote telephone support and if needed a technician can be dispatched on site to address the issue.

Outside of normal operating hours, remote technicians are available to provide telephone support for your issues. The remote support technicians will be able to reset passwords, troubleshoot application issues, and answer basic how to questions.

Issues reported that can not be resolved by the Helpdesk will be assigned to onsite staff to address.

High Technology Utilization

Mercy Students Lead The Way



Being Safe in Cyber Space

Beware of Phishing Scams

In March 2009 a number of Mercy users received an email that their webmail account had been compromised and that they needed to reply to the email and provide their User IDs, Passwords and Date of Birth information. This type of email is known as a Phishing Scam in the cyber world. Phishing scams are a relatively new form of Internet fraud that are becoming increasingly prevalent.

To see a sample of the fraudulent email, look on pg. 2.

This high-tech scam uses spam or pop-up messages to trick users into disclosing credit card numbers, bank account information, Social Security number or other confidential information.

Phishers send an e-mail or pop-up message that claims to be from a business or organization that you might deal with - for instance, your Internet Service Provider (ISP), online payment services or bank or even Mercy College. Often, this e-mail or pop-up window is very official looking and might even contain a company logo. The message usually indicates the need to "update" or "validate" your account information. It then directs you to a Web site that looks just like a legitimate organization's site, but it isn't. When you visit the Web site, it requests personal information that the operators then use to steal your identity or commit crimes in your name.

Being Safe in Cyber Space

Continued

Five Steps You Can Take to Protect Yourself:

1. **Don't Click on Suspicious Links**

If you receive an e-mail or pop-up message that asks for personal or financial information, don't reply or click on the link in the message. If you are concerned about your account, contact the organization in the email using a telephone number that you know to be legitimate.

2. **Never Email Sensitive Data**

Don't send personal or financial information via e-mail. It's like handing a thief your wallet.

3. **Check Your Financial Records Often**

Review your credit card and bank account statements often to determine whether there are any unauthorized charges. Notify immediately of suspicious charges.

4. **Keep Your Anti-Virus & Spyware Current**

Use anti-virus software and keep it up-to-date. Some phishing e-mails can contain software that will harm your computer. Additionally, this software can track your Internet browsing habits without your knowledge. Up-to-date anti-virus software can help protect your computer from inadvertently accepting these types of files.

5. **Don't Open or Download Unknown Files**

Be cautious about opening any attachment or downloading any files from e-mail you receive, regardless of who sent them. You can assess its contents in the bottom window pane without opening and then delete.

If you believe you've been a victim of a phishing scam, notify the Helpdesk immediately and file a complaint at www.ftc.gov. Below is a replica of the malicious email:

ATTENTION:

This mail is to inform all our [Mercy] users that your webmail account has been compromised by spammers by gaining access to your webmail account and have been using it for illegal internet activities. You are requested to provide your current login credentials to enable us reset your webmail account password immediately to avoid abuse of your account.

*User Name ID

*Password

*Date of birth

You shall be contacted with a new password upon completion and you are advised to provide the above information or your account will be terminated by the abuse team.

Thank you for using Mercy webmail!

Mercy Maintenance Team

You can also visit the FTC's Identity Theft Web site to learn how to minimize your risk of damage from ID theft.

Go to: <http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft>. Or contact the anti-phishing group: <http://www.antiphishing.org/>.

Creative Communication

Educating with Social Networking

Any teacher knows that college students today are some of the most proficient networkers and collaborators on the planet. [Educause](http://www.educause.edu)¹ estimates that upwards of 80-90% of U.S. college students have profiles on Facebook, and teachers are tapping into the communication power and educational value of these sites.

The mobility and interactivity of these sites is ideal for collaborative learning. "The anywhere availability of it is great for the on-the-go student contributing to a team project," Dively points out. "Students and teachers are leveraging the most they can out of these free tools that keep them instantly connected no matter where they are."

Teachers are enjoying the enhanced relationships and understanding it facilitates between them and their students. And College PR execs are tapping into the niche marketing opportunity 'Facebook Flyers' presents, where paid ads created by users are shown to select networks. An ad about an upcoming campus election or a link to the campus theatre ticket office gets to the right audience.

The New York Times notes the benefits for small businesses in its [June 25, 2008 article](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/25)², all of which apply to the college classroom. Social networks, dictated by special interests, often function more effectively than traditional industry trade organizations do. Businesses can build visibility within their market sector and compare notes with each other. Facebook is a perfect platform for idea-swapping and is an effective tool for keeping employees up-to-date on company news.

A recent University of Minnesota [research study](http://www.umn.edu)³, extolled the educational value their high school students got from social networking. They point out that it's another way to sharpen skills like creativity, writing, customizing content, and evaluating diverse viewpoints. A marriage of video-conferencing and social networking is hovering on the horizon which will further cultivate the relationship students want to build with their teachers. If used strategically, social networking sites facilitate the broader learning process and prepare students for the important part affiliations play throughout one's life - from high school, to college, to the workplace.

¹<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7025.pdf>

²<http://www.nytimes.com/inc.com/inc1214228836673.html?ref=smallbusiness>

³http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/family/20598114.html?location_refer=Editorials