

2000 Alumni Information Technology Survey

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Background

The 2000 Alumni Information Technology Survey was proposed as an ongoing effort to measure Alumni's satisfaction with computing resources at UW-Madison. Specifically, the objectives of the survey were to:

- Survey recent Alumni in order to determine levels of satisfaction with campus information technology services.
- Determine the extent to which those services prepared them for technology in the workplace.
- Determine Alumni satisfaction with this level of preparation for technology in the workplace.
- Determine potential areas of improvement in student technology offerings.
- Provide some trend comparisons with a similar, 1998 Alumni survey.
- Gauge the potential for distance education courses via the Internet.

Methodology

The 2000 Alumni Information Technology Survey was mailed to 1000 randomly selected UW-Madison Alumni beginning March 14, 2000, accompanied with a pre-paid return envelope. Surveys were sent to Alumni who graduated between May, 1998 and December, 1999. Returns were collected until April 24. One post-card follow-up was sent to obtain a final response of 34 percent (1000 minus 19 undeliverables and 336 completed surveys). An approximation of the survey margin of error is +/- 5.3 percent.

DoIT worked with Wisconsin Survey Research Lab (WSRL) for population sampling and mailing. Survey design, processing returns, data analysis, and report writing was done by Communications.

Overview: Survey Highlights

Alumni spent an average 18 hours per week using a computer during their last semester on campus.

The majority of Alumni were employed (91%), with about three quarters of those in an area related to their field of study while at UW. Alumni estimated they spent 26 hours per week on their computer at work. Forty-five percent of employed Alumni were making \$35,000 or more per year.

The largest increase in use of DoIT services among Alumni was in Product Sales, which almost doubled, although some of this effect may be due to changes in how this service was described in the current survey. All services but computer training courses experience slight increases in perceived satisfaction.

Overall, approximately 89% of Alumni were very or somewhat satisfied with UW-Madison information technology services, which is very close to current student satisfaction levels. While 74% rated their own computer skills as excellent or good upon graduation, only 55% said the UW had prepared them very well or well for the workplace. This was a drop from 64%

Sixty percent of the respondents received their Bachelor's degree at UW, 25% their Master's, and 13% their Ph.D. On average, Alumni attended the UW an average of 9 semesters.

Approximately 59% of Alumni indicated some degree of likelihood of taking a class via the Internet. Continuing education courses were the most popular program among these interested individuals, with about half expressing interest in certificates and Master's degrees each. Time was the chief barrier for both interested and uninterested

respondents. However, money was a bigger barrier among interested Alumni, while uninterested people were concerned with the lack the personal interaction and the quality of such a degree. Slightly more than half of employed Alumni (56%) said they were offered some type of tuition reimbursement from their employer. Many of these individuals said their employer covered all continuing education costs.

Frequency Runs and Analysis

The following section presents the results of the survey. Where possible, the current data is compared with 1998's results.

1. On average, how many hours per week did you use a computer during your last semester at UW-Madison?

Alumni used a computer an average of 18 hours per week during their last semester at UW-Madison. The standard deviation of 16.5 is in parentheses in the last column of the following table. This means that 68% of alumni used a computer between 2 and 35 hours per week.

	2000 (n=332)
0 - 9 hours	27.7%
10 - 19 hours	34.3%
20 - 29 hours	20.2%
30 - 39 hours	7.8%
40 - 49 hours	4.8%
50 + hours	5.1%
Mean (SD)	18.2 (16.5)

2. While attending UW-Madison, which of the following services were you aware of and which did you use? [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

Interpretation of the following tables must be tempered by realizing that this year's descriptions used more specific DoIT titles to describe the services, unlike the more generic descriptions used in 1998. The largest changes in awareness occurred for Product Sales, Training and Equipment Service.

Awareness		
	1998	2000 (n=335)
Campus computer labs (InfoLabs, ARCH Labs)	98.1%	96.4%
WiscWorld suite (modem pool, Eudora email, Netscape Navigator)	98.4%	94.9%
DoIT Help Desk (by phone, email, or walk-in)	90.2%	94.9%
DoIT Product Sales	78.8%	89.9%
Computer training courses	76.3%	82.1%
DoIT Equipment Service	51.9%	74.0%

The only area where there was an appreciable change in use was for Product Sales. Again, it is likely that this change is a result of the change in description of this service; we see no similar movements or trends in annual student survey data.

Use		
	1998	2000 (n=335)
WiscWorld suite (modem pool, Eudora email, Netscape Navigator)	92.7%	85.7%
Campus computer labs (InfoLabs, ARCH Labs)	82.9%	77.6%
DoIT Help Desk (by phone, email, or walk-in)	67.7%	66.0%
DoIT Product Sales	24.4%	40.6%
DoIT Equipment Service	10.8%	14.3%
Computer training courses	15.5%	13.4%

3. **Please indicate your satisfaction with each of these UW-Madison services using the scale below. If you did not use a service check “N.”**

On a scale of 1 to 5, the WiscWorld suite received the highest average satisfaction ratings. All areas but Training saw increases in satisfaction.

Satisfaction		
	1998	2000 Average Rating (n=335)
WiscWorld suite (modem pool, Eudora email, Netscape Navigator)	4.2	4.5
DoIT Product Sales	4.0	4.2
DoIT Help Desk (by phone, email, or walk-in)	3.8	4.1
Campus computer labs (InfoLabs, ARCH Labs)	3.8	4.0
DoIT Equipment Service	3.5	3.9
Computer training courses	3.6	3.6

4. Overall, how satisfied were you with UW-Madison information technology services?

A large majority of alumni (89%) were satisfied with UW-Madison IT services in both 1998 and 2000. Because different scales were used for each year, it is difficult to make a direct comparison.

	2000 (n=327)
Very satisfied	45.9%
Somewhat satisfied	42.8%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8.6%
Somewhat dissatisfied	1.8%
Dissatisfied	0.9%
	1998
Very satisfied	26.5%
Satisfied	57.8%
Somewhat satisfied	11.8%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2.6%
Dissatisfied	1.0%
Very dissatisfied	0.3%

4a. If you were dissatisfied, please explain why.

The majority of responses to this question were unable to be condensed into meaningful groups. Two areas did consistently occur, though, and these were complaints about crowded InfoLabs and the Help Desk.

	2000 (n=34)
Crowded computer lab	20.6%
Help Desk not helpful	17.6%
Other	60.8%

5. Name the one area in which UW-Madison information technology services could most be improved.

The overwhelming favorite response to this question was the desire for more computers in campus computer labs.

	2000 (n=191)
More computer in labs	31.9%
Improve Help Desk staff, better training of staff	14.1%
More training courses, publicize training courses	12.0%
Speed of Internet connections, modem pool, decrease busy signals	6.8%
Longer hours in computer labs	5.2%

6. Overall, how would you rate your computer skills upon graduation from UW-Madison?

This table shows no substantial changes in alumni's rating of their computer skills upon graduation. Almost three-quarters rated their skills as excellent or good.

	1998	2000 (n=327)
Excellent	26.6%	26.1%
Good	44.3%	47.4%
Slightly above average	20.9%	20.1%
Slightly below average	7.3%	4.8%
Poor	0.9%	1.2%
Very poor	-	0.3%

7. In retrospect, what would be the most effective way to acquire computer skills while a student at UW-Madison. [CHECK ONE BOX ONLY]

Alumni felt that training courses offered by the UW would be the most effective way to acquire computer skills. There is a definite grouping that occurs in these data. UW-related training accounts for about 60% of the responses while learning by one's self or from friends accounted for about 43% of the responses.

	2000 (n=333)
Training classes offered by the UW	35.7%
UW courses	24.0%
Self-taught	23.1%
Learn from peers/friends	20.1%
Training classes not offered by the UW	1.2%
Other	6.6%

8. Overall, how well did UW-Madison information technology services prepare you for the workplace?

Overall, alumni seemed to say that they are entering the workplace less well prepared than they did in 1998. In 1998 about 64% rated their preparation as very well or well, while this year about 55% rated their preparation similarly. Appendix A lists the reasons for respondents' answers as well as the skills alumni find most useful.

	1998	2000 (n=324)
Very well	20.4%	15.4%
Well	43.8%	39.5%
Somewhat well	30.4%	36.4%
Somewhat poorly	2.7%	4.6%
Poorly	1.3%	2.2%
Very poorly	1.3%	1.9%

9. In what technological area(s), if any, could UW-Madison have better prepared you?

	2000 (n=155)
Spreadsheets	14.8%
Creating websites, using HTML, etc.	11.6%
Databases	8.4%
Training courses, software in general	8.4%
Internet tools	7.7%

10. What computer skills learned while at UW-Madison are the most useful to you?

	2000 (n=240)
Internet tools	36.7%
Word processing	33.3%
Spreadsheets	21.7%
Email	20.8%
Microsoft products/Office	11.7%

Section 2 - Current employment

11. Are you currently employed?

About the same percentage of alumni are currently employed in 2000 (88.1%) as were in 1998 (90.6%). During the next alumni survey this data should be clarified by asking about full- or part-time employment, or number of hours worked per week.

12. On average, how many hours per week do you use a computer at work?

Only currently employed individuals responded to this question. Respondents used a computer an average 25 hours per week at work. The standard deviation of 15.2 indicates that 68% of alumni use a computer anywhere from 9 to 40 hours per week.

	2000 (n=294)
0 - 9 hours	21.1%
10 - 19 hours	11.2%
20 - 29 hours	20.7%
30 - 39 hours	21.8%
40 - 49 hours	19.7%
50 + hours	5.4%
Mean hours (SD)	24.6 (15.2)

13. Is your position directly related to your area of study while at UW-Madison?

About 76% of employed alumni are working in a position related to their field of study, the same amount as in 1998.

14. How important are each of the following skills to your current position? Use the scale below. If you do not use a skill, check “N.”

Using a scale of 1 to 6 indicated that the most important skills are the very same ones which are most used by students on campus: word processing, email and Internet tools. Specific IT skills listed under the “Other” category are rated most important. The top two areas volunteered by alumni here were databases (15.7%) and presentation/graphics programs (14.9%).

	1998 Average Importance	2000 Average Importance	Significance	Do not use
Word processing	5.2	5.3	-	5.1%
Email	4.9	5.2	**	4.5%
Internet tools	4.5	4.9	**	7.7%
Spread sheets	4.6	4.8	-	12.8%
Web page development	-	3.4	-	35.1%
Other	5.6	5.6	-	10.1%

*= p<.05; **=p<.01

15. Overall, how important are the computing skills you obtained while at UW-Madison to your current position?

While the majority of alumni find their computer skills important in their current position, there are a number who find them unimportant.

	1998	2000 (n=291)
Very important	39.7%	39.5%
Important	30.5%	29.2%
Somewhat important	19.4%	16.8%
Somewhat unimportant	4.0%	4.8%
Unimportant	3.3%	4.8%
Very unimportant	3.3%	4.8%

16. What degree did you most recently receive from UW- Madison?

There was a increase in the percentage of Ph.D.s responding to the 2000 survey.

	1998	2000 (n=335)
Bachelor's	62.2%	57.9%
Master's	22.5%	25.4%
Ph.D.	8.8%	12.5%
Other	6.6%	4.2%

17. When did you receive this degree?

	2000 (n=291)
1998	
May	20.4%
August	14.7%
December	14.4%
1999	
May	19.5%
August	14.7%
December	16.2%

18. What college(s) did you graduate from? [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

	1998	2000 (n=334)
Letters and Science	41.7%	47.9%
Education	14.7%	12.9%
Business	9.7%	11.4%
Engineering	10.0%	9.9%
Agricultural and Life Science	11.9%	9.6%
Family Resources and Consumer Science/Human Ecology	3.1%	3.9%
Nursing	2.5%	2.4%
Law	2.8%	2.1%
Medical	2.2%	1.8%
Pharmacy	2.5%	1.8%
Institute for Environmental Studies/Natural Resources	2.5%	1.5%
Veterinary Medicine	2.8%	0.3%

19. How many semesters (not including summers) did you attend UW-Madison? (Include all semesters as a student, both undergraduate and graduate.)

Alumni attended the UW for an average 9 semesters. The standard deviation of 3.5 indicates that 68% of alumni attended from between 5.5 and 12.5 semesters. Looked at another way, fully 34% of alumni spend between 10 and 13 semesters attending the UW.

	2000 (n=334)
1 - 4 semesters	9.0%
5 - 8 semesters	42.2%
9 - 12 semesters	34.4%
13 - 16 semesters,	11.4%
17 + semesters	2.7%
Mean (SD)	9.0 (3.5)

20. Are you currently enrolled as a student at any institution?

Slightly more alumni indicated they were attending college this year (21.1%) than in 1998 (18.0%).

21. Which group describes your annual *personal* income?

A surprising number of alumni are located on the lowest end of the this income scale, but many of these individuals were currently enrolled as students. This data was gathered primarily for use in determining the potential market for continuing and distance education courses at the UW, which is addressed in the following section of the survey. However, there was a significant linear relationship between income and respondents' computer skills. Those with higher incomes tended to rate their computer skills more highly. No such relationship existed between income and respondents' ratings of how well the UW prepared them for the workplace.

Under \$15,000	17.9%
\$15,000-\$24,999	14.0%
\$25,000-\$34,999	23.1%
\$35,000-\$44,999	20.1%
\$45,000-\$54,999	12.2%
\$55,000-\$64,999	6.1%
\$65,000-\$74,999	3.3%
\$75,000-\$84,999	0.9%
\$85,000-\$99,999	1.5%
\$100,000-\$124,999	-
\$125,000 & over	0.9%

Section 3: Distance Education

23. **The University of Wisconsin's motto is "Your resource for a lifetime." In keeping with this, the UW offers a variety of educational experiences for Alumni, and is considering offering some via the Internet. In general, how likely would you be to take classes via the Internet.**

Approximately 59% of alumni indicated some degree of likelihood in taking a class via the Internet.

	2000 (n=313)
Very likely	21.4%
Somewhat likely	37.7%
Somewhat unlikely	25.9%
Very unlikely	15.0%

24. **In what particular area(s) would like such instruction via the Internet?** Only interested individuals were instructed to answer this and the following question. Beside general computer training, business and web page development were the most popular areas of instruction desired.

	2000 (n=164)
Computer training - general	19.5%
Business	17.1%
Web page development	11.6%
Foreign languages	7.3%
Education	7.3%

25. **These online courses would be offered in a variety of programs. How much do each of the following programs appeal to you? [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]**

While all three possible programs for online course delivery were popular, continuing education courses were by far the most popular. However, the popularity of each differed by the type of degree alumni had. For instance, Master's degree programs were much more popular among Baccalaureates.

	2000 (n=184)
Continuing education courses	81.0%
Certificates	56.5%
Master's degree	51.6%
Other	5.4%

26. What barriers would keep you from taking courses over the Internet?

All alumni respondents were asked what potential barriers were to taking courses over the Internet. The following table examines barriers separately for those who did and did not indicate interest in taking an Internet course. Time is the chief barrier for both groups. However, money appears to be a major barrier for interested alumni, but not so much for uninterested alumni. Uninteresting alumni are more concerned with the lack of personal interaction and poor quality of learning, as well as the fact that they do not need more college.

	Likely to take Internet course (n=184)	Not likely to take Internet course (n=125)
Time	67.2%	52.0%
Money	40.2%	17.6%
Lack of personal contact/interaction	19.6%	47.2%
Poor quality of learning/degree	9.2%	20.0%
Do not want/need more college courses	4.3%	20.0%
Some other barrier	9.8%	12.8%

27. Does your employer offer tuition reimbursement?

Slight more than half of employed alumni (55.6%) said they were offered tuition reimbursement from their employer. Of these individuals, the majority were offered 100% tuition reimbursement. Another 18% were offered between 60% and 90%.

27a. If yes, what percentage of tuition do they reimburse?

	2000 (n=309)
10% - 50%	15.5%
60% - 90%	17.5%
100%	58.7%
A specific amount	8.7%

28. **Where would you likely be when taking an Internet course?**

The vast majority of alumni said they would take an Internet course at home.

	2000 (n=309)
Home	78.5%
Work	20.1%
Somewhere else	2.6%

29. **How important would each of the following factors be in your decision to take a distance education course from the University of Wisconsin? For each factor, circle the number that corresponds to the scale below.**

On a scale of 1 to 4, topic and quality of the program were the most important factors in their decision to take a distance education. While important, the cost of the program was relatively unimportant, though more so for interested alumni.

	Likely (n=181)	Unlikely (n=113)
Topic of the program	3.9	3.8
Quality of the program	3.8	3.7
Convenience (e.g., day, time, location)	3.7	3.5
Self-improvement	3.7	3.5
Career advancement	3.5	3.2
Cost of the program	3.4	3.1
Provider reputation	3.3	3.1
Employer suggestion	3.0	2.9
Licensing/certification	3.1	2.8