

Research Report on Digital skills

Module: Digital Skills and Research Module

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Abstract:

We live in a world of speed, in a world full of technology and people open to knowledge, who want to evolve as much as possible and exceed any limit, when it comes to learning and curiosity. Is the digital world the future? Nobody knows the answer, but what we know for sure is that we are evolving, every day, thus, the interest in knowing the term "technology" as well as "digital skills", is constantly growing.

A study by the company "Capital one", from America, shows that jobs that require average employment skills, today necessarily require digital skills, and this percentage has increased by 82%. An impressive percentage. In the study to be presented, 15 candidates took part, all students at the UWTSD university, they were asked to fill in a questionnaire of 6 questions, having as main idea "digital skills".

With the help of this questionnaire but also with the help of other studies conducted in other countries, we could conclude that the students who show an interest in the use of technology, is in a large number, being able to say that they represent the majority.

We can see the increased number of hours spent by them on different mobile applications, as well as their enthusiasm when the classes are combined with a drop of technology, saying that "*the classes become more active, and we are more attentive to the teachers*". (Beacher H., 2000)

Introduction:

Technology is everywhere. From smartphones and apps to laptops and social media, technology has become a permanent element in the lives of children, students, as well as adults.

The technology has simplified the lives of all people in several ways, including by providing easy access to information, advanced communication technology tools, home and shopping comfort, improving entertainment, and improving efficiency and productivity. Technology has also encouraged innovation and creativity in society and increased convenience in doing business.

Technology has led to increased comfort in education through such platforms as online learning institutions. From the millions of books and information that are at a simple "click", from the students to different applications, which facilitate communication between them, as well as to their development.

To be able to fully benefit from this technology, which drives the world, surely any human, needs a complete package, called digital skills.

Digital skills can be defined, as those competencies, that differentiate people from each other, when it comes to analysing them and looking for a job. Given the ever-increasing growth of demands around the world, this set of skills we can consider essential.

Research design:

Research question:

As we already notice, technology has been installed, over the years, in every field, whether we are talking about a simple book, which we choose not to take "physically" from the library, and rather, to read it online. At the simple doctor's appointments, which can now be done, just in a few minutes, at the endless queues at the restaurant, now most of them ordering online, at the school that lately, has been online.

According to research conducted by Microsoft News, many universities, declare without reservations, their support for their students, towards the implementation and improvement of digital skills. Considering that this is the future, many of the universities invest in various equipment as possible and in the staff that must offer support to future graduates.

A Deputy Vice-Chancellor at another higher education institute admitted: *"The university trying to develop students' digital capabilities alone is not going to work...I need to offer digital capabilities to our students and to our employees, but I need help to do it."*

According to the same study, we are shown information that leads to the conclusion that parents are becoming more and more worried when it comes to the future, their children. Thus, they are guided from an early age to the requirements that society imposes on them, day by day. Parents have the certainty that in the future, children can find a satisfactory job.

Paul Philips, Principal and Chief Executive at Weston College, said: *"There is a huge pressure on younger students from their parents to make sure they are on a solid route to employment. I have never seen it so great as now."*

Starting from this information, I propose the next question *"are the students and the staff, confident in the use of technology?"*. The answer is simple. According to a study, conducted by *Deseret-News*, we can see how people spend on average per day, between 8-9 hours, using mobile phones, computers, or laptops.

We can consider that this time, used by the student using any device, is used for sending emails, communication with other students, or their teachers, as well as online meeting.

Method:

My proposed method is to help and understand, students, who do not consider technology so important, or do not know how to use it, want to make this studio, because, as we can see, the number of students who are not confident in using technology, is in the minority. This study, wants to answer the question, why?

My proposed method is based on a student questionnaire and analysis of other data. Thus, I made a question questionnaire (table 1), and I sent to several 25 students, who were represented by my colleagues from the academic year, 2022. Out of 25 students, only 15 participated in this study. I admit, it was not easy, to have several 15 participants, with the help of email addresses, I contacted each of them. Some did not answer me, others were sceptical. With the help of email addresses, I managed to recruit only 10 students, the remaining 5, I asked them during the breaks, from the course, Digital skills.

The questions asked were intended to find out, how many of them use technology and to what extent, the questions asked being such as: "When was the last time you used technology?", "How confident are you in using technology, as a student?", "How do you collaborate with your colleagues, in carrying out a project?", "How do you communicate with your teachers, through what environment?".

So, with the help of this questionnaire, I wanted to find out, if at UWTSD, there are students, what they still refuse to use the technology, to what extent, and why.

Etichal considerations:

The most problematic ethical considerations, which must be taken seriously, is those imposed by the communication barrier. Many students, of other nationalities, want to study at this university, or any other, many already know English, but it can still be a problem for them, how to understand or express themselves. Although English is an international language, there are still students who are put in difficulty when they must

communicate. Thus, through the help of other students who already know this language very well, as well as other foreign languages, we can overcome this barrier.

Or, another option, extremely effective, is the hiring of a translator, who can help students, and one of the most desired solutions, is the implementation of English language courses, during the academic year. This being, as an extra activity.

Another communication problem can be resulted, due to the student's disability, so, very encouraging is the fact that, in some situations, the student can attend classes right from home, something that can put him among ordinary students. In this way, no discrimination can be achieved, due to technology.

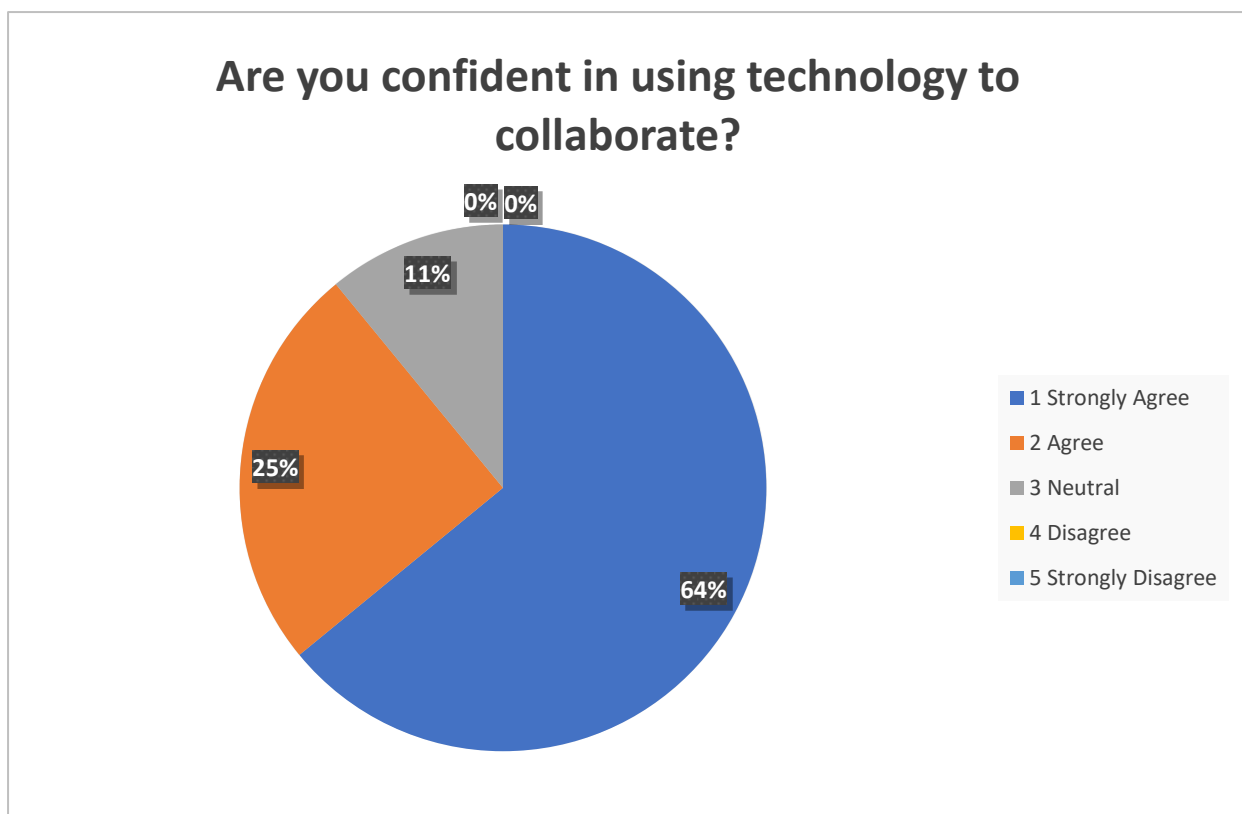
“Students works together to create projects, or they can learn from each other by reading the work of their peers” (Keser and others, 2011).

Results:

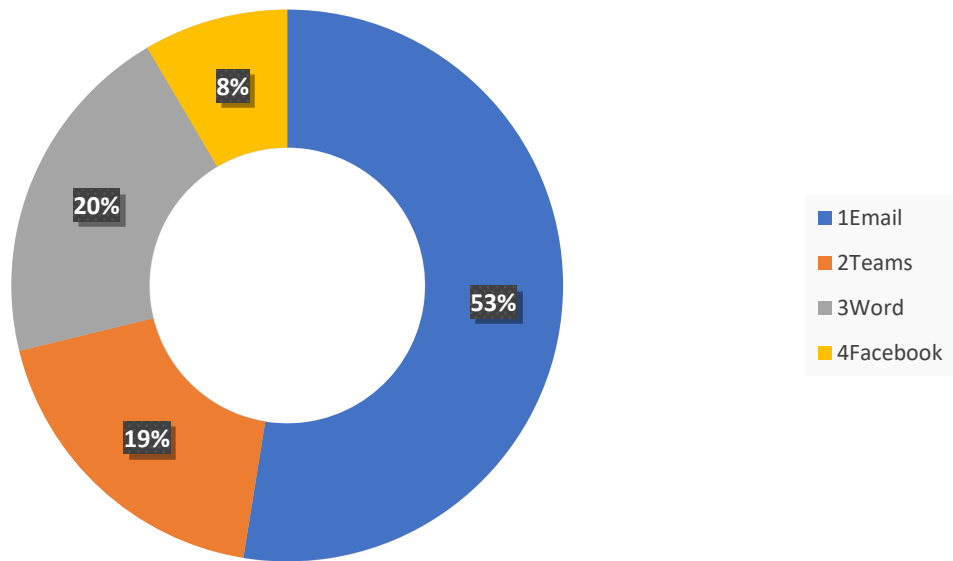
Following this questionnaire, addressed to my colleagues, since March 2022, I have collected each response individually until April 2022. In other words, for a month, I did this study and analysed each answer individually.

I illustrated the diagram, of three of the most impactful questions:

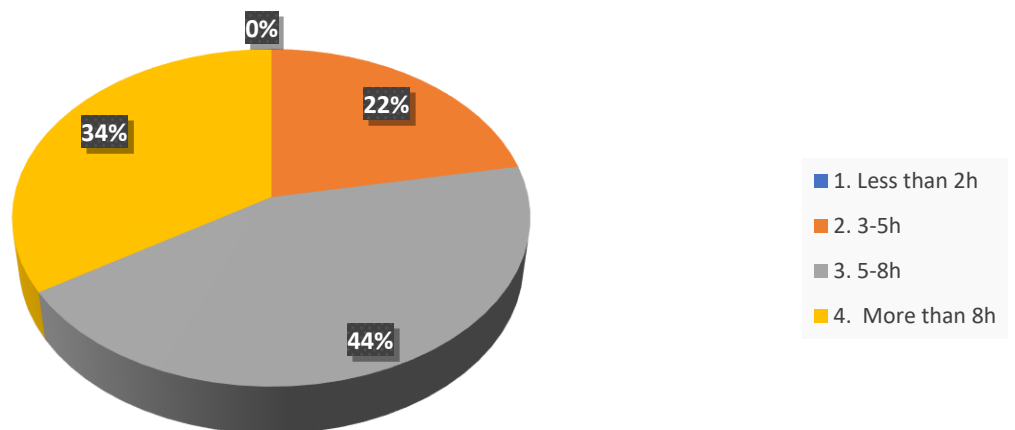
- “Are you confident in using technology to collaborate?”
- “Which digital app are you confident in using?”
- “How many hours do you spend every day using technology?”.



Which digital app are you confident in using?



How many hours do you spend every day using technology?



Discussion:

As mentioned above, the total number of participants was 15 students, students of the UWTSD university. According to them, after the completing of the questionnaire, the questions asked were as clear as possible, so that, it made it very simple to understand them. I was very surprised by the fact that, when asked "Are you confident in the use of technology?", 11% of the students were neutral, which leads me to think that they are not very familiar with the technology, and they do not know its benefits.

Very encouraging, it is, the percentage of "strongly agree", a percentage of 64%, which can lead to the answer to my question, "yes", the students, who participated in the questionnaire, are confident in the use of technology. Another answer, very satisfying, is the one given to the question, "which digital app are you confident to use?". We can see, a percentage of 53% of the student, prefers the use, the email and 20% the teams, following these answers, I can think that students use these applications, for study, and this is a good thing. We can see a percentage of 8%, as a student, what they prefer, Facebook, an answer that surprises me or not, because, we must be aware, they also have a social life. To the question, "how many hours do you spend daily using technology?", surprising is the quite high percentage, at the number of more than 8 hours daily, 34%. A percentage of 44% spend on average, between 5 and 8 hours daily, a high percentage and this one, and 0% replied that less than 2 hours. From here I can conclude that technology takes up much of the student time at UWTSD.

A study conducted at the University of Minnesota, Crookston, shows, what applications students prefer on their electronic devices. They reported that they use technology primarily for educational purposes, and on the next plan, for communication.

Students reported using computers for writing documents (99.5 percent among students) as well as e-mails (99.5 percent), followed by surfing the Internet for their pleasures (97.2 percent) and for various activities in the classroom (96.4 percent of students). Students reported the use of technology for creating/editing video and audio and for creating web pages the least.

A study made by Epson, in Romania, shows that 9 out of 10 students, prefer the use of technology when it comes to communication and learning. The results of the research show that students are more attracted to the courses, being much more active, if the teachers encourage them to use, electronic equipment.

These two studies presented, confirm the study conducted by me, for the student from UWTSD. We can clearly see that a considerable majority of students, from all over the world, prefer the use of technology, to the detriment, the type of classical learning. Thus, the students' communication, between them, is now through email or other social networks, which makes their lives easier.

Conclusion:

From the study, we can conclude that students can use with the help of technology much more effective tools for education than a simple paper and a pen, and besides the fact that their interest is aroused even more, it is also much easier to carry a device like a laptop, or smart phone, with you, as a student, than to carry books, courses, or others.

Thus, technology has thus eliminated the constraints of time and space. Online education and distance learning have been given a new dimension. Universities offer educational programs in which students can interact with each other, or with teachers on the Internet, have improved access to references, materials and can also obtain diplomas through online schooling.

This report proves how a fairly large number, so we can say, a majority, of students, from the UWTSD university, as well as other universities, from different countries, prefer technology. The proof being shown, both in the increased number of hours, what students spend daily using technology, and by their favourable responses when it comes to learning through digital skills.

The importance of technology in education cannot be highlighted enough. Its introduction in the educational field has greatly improved the process and the distribution of knowledge, making learning a more interactive and enjoyable experience. In conclusion, this study encourages learning, be it of any kind, but it should not be forgotten that technology is the future.

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Appendix:

1. Are you will be voluntary in this survey?

☐ 1 Maybe

☐ 2 No

☐ 3 Yes

2. Are you student or lecturer?

☐ 1 Lecturer

☐ 2 Student

3. What is your age?

☐ 35-45

☐ 25-35

☐ 45+

☐ 18-24

4. Are you confident in using technology to collaborate?"

☐ 1 Strongly Agree

☐ 2 Neutral

☐ 3 Strongly Disagree

☐ 4 Disagree

☐ 5 Agree

5. Which digital app are you confident in using?

☐ Word

☐ Teams

☐ Email

☐ Facebook

6. How many hours do you spend every day using technology?

☐ 1 Less than 2h

☐ 2 3-5h

☐ 3 5-8h

☐ 4 More than 8h

7. How confident do you feel using digital technology within UWTSD? 1 being lowest and 5 being highest.

1 2 3 4 5
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐