

Change Makers:
Creativity and Value
Project

2022/23

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Washing Machines on Campus

The Issue at Hand

As we are all aware, doing our washing is an essential part of our daily routines. Especially as University students as for some this is the first time in their lives where they are doing this for themselves. Even though in student accommodation, there are shared spaces, doing washing should be quite a simple task. However, in our student accommodation this is not the case. I have been staying at this accommodation for a year and a half and I have personally have had many issues whilst using the washing resources on campus. For example, back in October 2022, I went down to put my washing in, however found that all of the machines were being used. However, two were due to finish and so I decided to wait until the people had come and collected it. However, after ten minutes nobody came and there were then two other people waiting. They didn't come for another five minutes and I was waiting fifteen minutes before I could even put my washing in. Once it had finished, I was also then left waiting for a dryer to become available.

Another example of the issues I have experienced with the washing resources was actually from a conversation with another person. This person lived in ABN 2 and they had to come over to the laundrette for ABN 3 and 4 as all of the machines in the laundrette for ABN 1 and 2 were out of order. This meant that there were only four machines available for all four buildings.

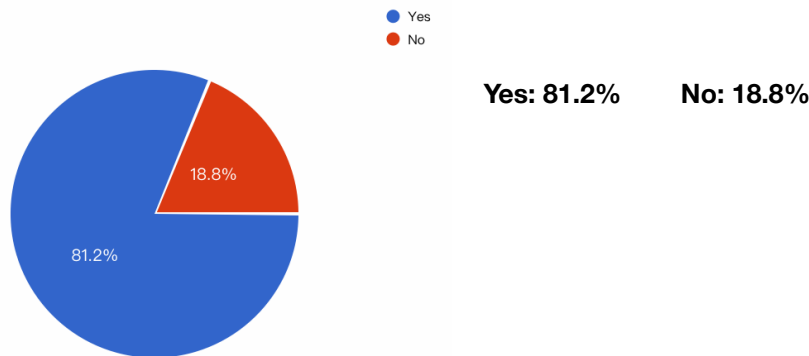
So many issues occur with the washing machines on campus and I have heard complaints from so many people. This made me realise that something needs to be done about it. Why should we have these issues with trying to do something as simple as wash our clothes? What can be done about it? This is what led me to decided to base on project on this.

Primary Research

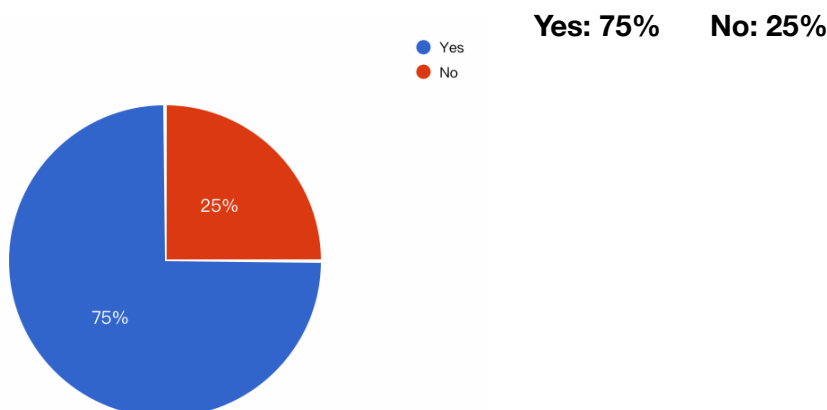
The issue of the washing machines are not a new thing. This is because I again personally had a few issues with them during my first year and also had people tell me from different flats and year groups that they have had issues. In general there is a lack of washing resources on campus. On the campus there is a total of eight washing machines and eight tumble dryers. There are two laundrettes and one is allocated to two of the buildings. However each of the ABN buildings have nine flats of eight rooms. This means that there are seventy two rooms in each building and between the two buildings there approximately hundred and forty four students and four washing machines between them all if all of the rooms were being used.

To gain information to help the process of this project. This is because this issue effects a certain demographic, and gaining feedback and information from them is crucial. To gather the opinions of my peers, I created a survey of five questions about the washing machine issues and distributed it to the students who live on campus to gain the required information. Reviewing what my peers had stated about the washing machines and there responses made is very clear that it is an issue that is effecting the student accommodation. Looking at the responses it allowed me to make some interesting conclusions.

Question 1: Have you ever gone to do your washing and found that they were all being used?



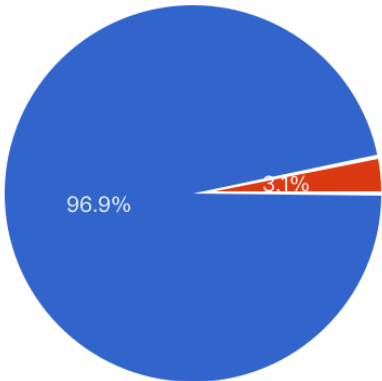
Question 2: Have you ever waited for a dryer once your washing had been completed?



3. Do you personally think that there is a lack of washing resources available on campus?

Yes: 96.9% No: 3.1%

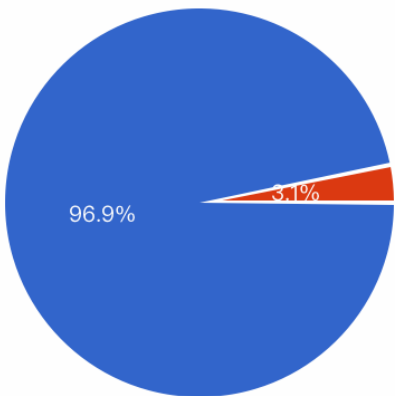
- Yes
- No



4. Do you think that students would benefit from having a format where they are aware of when the machines are free?

Yes: 96.9% No: 3.1%

- Yes
- No



5. If possible, could you give an example if you have had an issue with the washing resources?

Had to wait for a dryer as people did not pick up their washing when it had finished	Had to pay twice for a machine that was broken	N/a	Not drying correctly. Incorrect washing times on both the machine and the circuit laundry app.
The washing machines in block 1 and 2 didn't work for a good portion of the first term so it caused issues trying to do laundry as the only ones available were the block 3 and 4 ones so there wasn't enough washers and dryers for the amount of students doing their laundry.	I went down four times in one day to do my laundry and the first three times all the m'as Hines we're being used	n/a	All were out of order
no	Clothes coming out stained, still damp after using the dryer, too expensive	When I go down to do my washing and there's clothes sat in either the dryer or the washer, finished spinning and no one comes to get it	Been out of order for a whole day
There's been a few occasions where the block 1 and 2 washing machines don't work, and I've had to use block 3 and 4 instead – and this then meant there were only 4 available washing machines available on the whole campus therefore they were always full and in use so I had to wait days to do washing	Them being out of order	There is always at least one machine out of order at all times	No
Had to pay twice for a machine that was broken	They never seem to be working or free at the most convenient times	People leave stuff in first thing in the morning and not picking it up till the end of the day	Had to wait for machine to become available
	All machines were out of order	I've gone to do my washing and it took my money, but then didn't wash as said it was out of order. This happened to all four of the machines	The washers and dryers on campus are more often broken than they are working
	I've been to use the machines in ABN 1 and 2 and none of them work, I know that people have had issues with them not working since September. This means we're left with 4 washers and 4 dryers for the whole campus, I believe I've just been lucky that they've been free when I've gone to do my washing	The app also doesn't always tell me when my washing is complete	Gone down to do my washing and had to wait for a dryer to be free
	Timing was in correct	Multiple times I've tried to use the machines here and they've either been unavailable or not working. They also eat your money and that's ridiculous for students who struggle with financial issues etc.	N/A
	More washing machine and working ones		Sometime none are working. People leave washing in and don't collect it. Incorrect duration on the washers.
	No		
	No		

The results from this survey have made it very clear that there are other people on campus that believe that this is a major issue.

Secondary Research

How often do people do their washing on average?

On average, “an individual in general is likely to wash anywhere between one to three loads on laundry per week” (Bethan, 2022). However, this also depends on the person’s circumstances and preferences. These particular figures were taken into consideration based on a “seven-day week, a four-week month, and 52 weeks in a year” (Bethan, 2022). This particular information is beneficial to my proposal as it allows me to see how often an average student may do a load of washing. However, “how many loads of laundry a single person does per week is actually difficult to pin down”(Bethan, 2022). This particularly article states how a person could have “limited time to do laundry”, and even mentions how a “student at uni” could delay washing clothes for as long as possible. Compared to an individual who might have a “large capacity washing machine” which allows them to do a large load of washing at once, students in accommodation uses laundrettes which “which dictates how much washing that they can do”(Bethan, 2022). This shows how in the accommodation laundrettes on campus, which is allocated between the four buildings, if a student was to use two of the machines at a time to do a large load of washing, there would only be two washing washing machines available for the possible other one hundred and forty two students to use between them.

An article titles “laundry tips for college students” states how the “average student should do laundry once a week”(admin, 2018). However ,it also states how sometimes “there are times when you’re so busy that you end up doing your washing less frequently”(admin, 2018). But it does state how “more laundry is more fuss”.

The Circuit Laundry App

Screen Shotted from actual website: (www.circuit.co.uk, n.d.)

As well as looking into how often students possibly do their washing, I wanted to look into the format in which is used to use these washing resources. This is the circuit laundry app. Circuit Laundry is the laundry format that is used by the University. In order to use the resources, an app is required where the students top up their account and then use a QR Code to connect to the required washing machine or dryer. The app then shows when the cycle would finish. However, this is never fully accurate. I decided to look into the Circuit Laundry, and through this I found that there was an official website for the app, and I was even more surprised to find that there was a part of it called “Circuit View”. This features allows people to see if the washing machines and dryers that they require are available, considering if the place has Circuit View. I was astonished to find this out because as a student, I have never been informed that this was available to us, and when I asked other students I found that they were also not aware. If this was made aware to us some issues could have been solved.

CHECK MACHINE AVAILABILITY

Choose your city to see if your site has CircuitView.

City or Location

Please select a city... ▼

Accommodation Provider

Please select your provider... ▼

Laundry Room

Please select a laundry room... ▼

Going back to my survey where the question “Do you think that students would benefit from having a format where they are aware of when the machines are free? Where the question nearly had 100% on the yes option made it very clear that this format exists and is available, but it is not known and this needs to change. The format is very useful as it follows a colour coded system. These come with a key which makes is very clear when a machine is available. This has been a major break though in my research as it is allowing me to being to look at how I could bring this into my proposal.



Screen Shotted from actual website: (www.circuit.co.uk, n.d.)

Colour Psychology

As the colour code is used to signify when the machines are in use or not, I decided to look into the psychology of using colour codes, and also how the human brain reacts to them. Looking at an article by “front brake light” I found that there is a certain way that people create to the colours green and red. This was in regards to different situations where colour coding is used. Whilst this is a different scenario it is still the same psychological thought process. For example, “green is understood as a signal for safety and as an invitation to go” (Psychological effects of the colours green and red, n.d.). On the other hand “red is associated with the perception of danger and a signal to stop” (Psychological effects of the colours green and red, n.d.). This information is drilled into us from a young age and as we get older it becomes instinct to follow these psychological rules. It was also interesting to see the use of yellow as on a traffic lights, yellow/amber is used to let the drivers know to get ready to go.

Reaction to sound

As the use of colour coding and the psychological responses to it, I wanted to look into other ways that the mind responds to. That was then I thought about how the human brain reacts to sound and notifications and I thought that it would be a interesting idea to explore that could be linked to this particular topic. This is because myself and other students set timers for our washing and when the sound goes off it makes us aware that it is time to go and collect it. Looking at an article by UX Planet I found why notifications are used. For example, “notification is an act of bringing something to notice the user”(CanvasFlip, 2017). It is also “a way for an app to notify you or send you a message that you can read without having to open the app”(CanvasFlip, 2017). If it had this feature it would mean that people would not have to set separate timers, and also the timer that is automatic on the app would alert the person when it is time to collect the washing.

There are different type of sound notifications such as push notifications, passive notifications, notifications requiring action from the user, and system generated notifications etc. I personally believe that a notification for the circuit app that would be beneficial is “Notifications requiring action from the user”(CanvasFlip, 2017) as it would inform the person that they need to go and collect their washing as the cycle has been completed. Looking into how to design a notification within this article was also very interesting. It states that “you can design meaningful notifications without compromising the user experience”(CanvasFlip, 2017).

Some of these included:

- Design considering the importance of you message
- Provide enough information
- Give user the control
- Handle multiple notifications smartly
- Embrace A/B testing

This research has given me the tools and information to create my proposal in order to find a solution to this issue on the University Campus.

Proposal

After carrying out different methods of research I have put together a proposal to help this issue. I propose making a new feature on the app which allows the app to display the same features as the website. This means that instead of going onto the website, students can go onto the app to see which machines are available or not. This would mean that students would not need to walk down to the laundrettes to see if the machines are free or not. Another feature that could be added is a notification system. This feature would be added so when the timer of the washing machine or dryer would finished, a notification would go off to inform the person. This would be an alternative to setting a separate timer. As my research showed me, a “notification requiring action from the user” would be the best for this app as it would inform the person that they need to get there washing. Another notification feature would be optional. It would be an optional notification to inform the person when a machine or dryer is free if the machines are all being used or it is particularly busy. I believe that updating and altering the app to include these features would be beneficial and would solve many issues that are involved with washing machines. Looking back at my survey and the answers in regard question one and two, including these features would allow people to check on the app with there is a washing machine or dryer instead of walking down or having to check on the website. Also, in regards to question three and four, this will help improve the washing resources in a way that the student body clearly desire. I also hope that this proposal would also help the issues that people have stated in question five.

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