

PAN-QUEBEC SURVEY OF THE PRACTICES, COMPETENCIES, ATTITUDES, BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES INHERENT IN THE USE OF ICTs BY POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

Researchers: **Bruno Poellhuber**, assistant professor (bruno.poellhuber@umontreal.ca)
Thierry Karsenti, full professor and director of the CRIFPE (thierry.karsenti@umontreal.ca)
Jacques Raynaud, full professor and director of MATI Montréal (jacques.raynaud@hec.ca)

Financing: Canada Research Chair on Information and Communication Technologies in Education and MATI Montréal

We live today in a rapidly evolving information society, and ICTs have become critical tools for accessing knowledge, but while major studies are carried out regularly in the United States and elsewhere in the world on student use of ICTs (such as ECAR and Pew Internet), few reliable data are available for the student population in Quebec. We would like to remedy this situation by conducting a **broad survey of the entire post-secondary student population** in Quebec, **in French and in English**.

The survey results could be used to inform discussions on certain institutional priorities (laptop purchasing programs, development of online courses, professional development for teachers, cell phone policies, etc.). A survey project for college-level teachers is also in preparation.

TARGET OBJECTIVES

The general objectives of the project are 1) to draw up a comparative and longitudinal portrait of the use of ICTs and Web 2.0 tools by post-secondary students in Quebec and 2) to identify and gain a better understanding of the practices, competencies, attitudes, benefits and challenges inherent in the use of ICTs by post-secondary students in Quebec.

FACTORS JUSTIFYING THE STUDY

- Potential of ICTs in relation to the issues of academic perseverance and success, especially among boys
- ICTs as a prerequisite for accessing knowledge in university
- Importance of IT skills for post-secondary students
- Advent of Web 2.0 and its role in the acquisition of knowledge and competencies among students
- ICT integration issues in college- and university-level teaching
- Lack of rigorous studies on ICTs in post-secondary pedagogy

METHODOLOGY

We will undertake a vast online survey among all post-secondary students in Quebec, that is, all students registered in a college- or university-level educational institution in Quebec (**private, public, Francophone and Anglophone**). The instrument to be used was validated in summer 2010 with a sample of 301 college- and university-level students. We hope to receive about 20,000 responses.

The questionnaire that will be used is based on an **extensive review of the literature** drawn from questionnaires already used and particularly on the ECAR and Pew Internet studies. It covers the

following topics: access to ICTs, attitude toward ICTs, sense of competency with ICTs, use of ICTs, social networks, use of ICTs for studies, informational skills, and communication with educators. While the survey questionnaire was not directly based on the **cégep student ICT and informational competencies profile**, it nevertheless covers a very large portion of it.

METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION AND ETHICAL PRECAUTIONS

The project **received an ethics certificate** from the Université de Montréal and does not have to be submitted to any other local ethics committees. The project presents minimal risks, and the students will respond anonymously. A consent form, already approved by a sponsoring committee, will be presented to the students as soon as the survey homepage loads.

Since the validity of the survey relies heavily on achieving a good response rate, we will use **a variety of measures to maximize the response rate**. We have obtained a **promise of cooperation from cégep and university student associations**, which will send their members an invitation to participate in the survey. For college-level educational institutions, we are counting on the cooperation of ICT respondents and the college directorates to distribute the invitation to participation **starting April 15, 2011**, through one or more of the following means (in the following order of preference):

1. Message sent by Mio or DECclic
2. Message on homepage of the college's digital learning environment (e.g., DECclic)
3. Email to all students
4. Invitation to participate distributed or announced by instructors in class

Ads will also be placed in certain media, and participation in the survey will be promoted via Facebook and Twitter.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING

The educational institutions that participate in the initiative **will receive a report based on data from the respondents in their institution** and one based on data from all respondents at that level of education. On request, they **will also receive all data from respondents in their own institution**, which they can use to carry out additional analyses. The participating students will run the chance of winning one of many prizes (iPod, iPad, etc.).

TIMELINE

- Inform institution directorates and transmit information documents (March 25)
- If the college has an ethics committee and policy, send the relevant documents to the committee chief (March 25)
- Receive participation decision from directorate (April 11)
- Choose distribution method for invitations sent to students (before April 11)
- Adapt invitations and distribute to students (April 15)
- Send a first reminder to students (April 22)
- Send a second reminder to students (April 22)