

Students increasingly depending on Internet

A survey reports 42% of students use it most often to communicate

BY LYDIA K. LEUNG
MICHIGAN DAILY (U. MICHIGAN)

ANN ARBOR, MICH. — The Internet has become an essential component of college life, both for communication and academic purposes, according to a recent survey done by the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

The survey of 2,054 college students nationwide found that 42 percent of students use the Internet most often to communicate socially.

In addition, 95 percent of students surveyed said they use e-mail for social communication at least once a week while 21 percent of them said they send social related e-mails at least once a day.

LSA sophomore Nicole Vanneste, who checks her e-mail a couple of times a day, said she uses e-mail over 75 percent of the time for communicating with friends.

"My cell phone bill went up once when I couldn't get Internet access for two weeks," Vanneste said.

The most commonly used Internet communication tool by students who responded to the survey is e-mail, followed by instant messaging, which accounts for 62 percent and 29 percent of the students, respectively.

In addition to using the Internet for social purposes, the study also found many students turning to the Internet to help with work for their classes.

The survey found that 73 percent of the students use Internet more than the library for searching for information while only 9 percent of the students do the opposite.

"The library is overwhelming," said LSA

freshmen Alex Leb, who said he prefers doing his research at home on the Internet because he can have more personal space there and thinks it is more controllable.

Due to the convenience and availability of information on the internet, the library is no longer the only place for searching for different kinds of information, which is the main cause for the switch in research habits, student said.

"Going online is much simpler," first-year Dental student Scott Behnan said.

He added that using search engines such as Google and Yahoo is better than going to the library because of its convenience.

The Internet also acts as a bridge for students and professors to communicate.

Seventy-seven percent of the students who participated in the survey said they have used e-mail to ask their professors questions about an assignment.

LSA junior Jamie Babin said the Internet is a good way for students and professors to communicate and it facilitates interactive learning.

"The tool is easy to learn and use," she said.

In addition to e-mail, Babin said the Coursetools Web site, which allows professors to post class materials on the Internet, has also made learning an easier and faster process.

Engaging in classwork online, in sites like Coursetools accounted for 38 percent of student usage, the second highest use in the survey.

The survey also found that the use of Internet is higher among college students than the general population, 86 percent versus 59 percent.

The differences are mainly due to heavier usage for downloading music files, instant messaging and online chatting among college students, the survey stated.

Byrd

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That breakdown of Emerson's words by one of my contemporaries, I think, best characterizes college.

Here we are, preparing for life, growing in anticipation of the future. The concept itself is inspiring, especially once we get over that initial shock: "Dear God, I don't know any of these people, and I have to feed myself!"

After all, we are here so that we can find out just what is truth and what is good. Because life is changing, and I have a feeling that it's going to be bigger than ashtrays.

Byrd is a first-year print journalism student.

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