

Technology in Residence Halls
Survey Results 2009
Short Report
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At the 2009 UMR-ACUHO Winter Meeting, The Assessment and Information Management Committee discussed possible survey topics. The issue of technology in residence halls is a topic that has been researched in 1984, 1987, 1989, 1996, and 2001. In an effort to help sustain a longitudinal study on trends, a survey was created that used as similar as possible questions to the 1996 and 2001 surveys.

The purpose of the study is to help institutions in the region see what other institutions are currently using and help institutions look at what trends are emerging concerning reducing costs but still providing services to students. The UMR-ACUHO Assessment and Information Management Committee distributed the survey electronically to member institutions. The survey was sent to the Chief Housing Officer or primary contact. If that individual was not knowledgeable in this area, they were asked to forward the survey on to the individual on their campus best qualified to complete it. The survey was available online at www.surveymonkey.com for completion. A total of seventy-two institutions completed the survey out of 193 member institutions, approximately 51.7% return rate. Of the 72 responding institutions, 46 (63.9%) were public and 26 (36.1%) were private. Sixty-eight responding institutions (94.4%) were four-year and four (5.6%) were two-year institutions.

The survey contained 32 questions that focused on demographics, computer services, telecommunications, cable television and magnetic/debit and student identification cards in residence halls. These areas (with the exception of magnetic/debit and student identification cards) were also covered in the 2001 and 1996 surveys. Magnetic/debit and student identification cards were not covered in the 2001 survey.

The percentage of providing computers in rooms (from institutions) appears to have not significantly changed with 2001 results at 4.6% and 2009 results at 5.6%. There appears to be an increase in access to common area computers in labs/kiosks. In the 2009 survey 73.91% indicated that the labs/kiosks were open 24 hours a day. The 1996 survey indicated that 69% were open 24 hours a day. The type of computers available in residence halls (Windows-Based PC and Apple/Macintosh) have both increased. Windows-Based PC has significantly increased from 50% in 1996, 98.4% in 2001 up to 100% in the 2009 survey. The ratio of computer to printer has stayed relatively the same range from 2001 to 2009.

Computing Services appears to provide and maintain close to half of the computer hardware in residence halls. This is similar in percentage to the 2001 survey results. A significant portion of the respondents (44.44%) who still have telephone lines have thought or are thinking of discontinuing telephones altogether because of lack of use or cost reduction.

Availability of channels has significantly increased from 1996 (10-60) to 2009 (30-100+) however range of number of channels did not change significantly from 2001 (5-120) Cost of cable appears to be increasing and moving to outsourcing to cable providers. The use of magnetic/debit and student Identification cards has increased since the 1996 survey. In the 1996 survey 20% of the institutions responded that they used debit cards and the area used was primarily food service (76%) and photocopying (33%). The 2009 survey indicates that card use has increased more than twice that to at least 44.44% and food service has increased to 87.5%.

These trends are useful in future as residence halls continue to look at contracting out services due to cost reduction (i.e. telephone and cable). These trends are also useful in looking at areas where we can provide increased access to technology that improves our technology services to students (i.e. wireless Ethernet, university channels, magnetic/debit and student identification card)

For continued longitudinal study purposes, questions asked in the 1996, 2001 and 2009 studies should be asked again in future surveys.