

Global Survey Validates New Student Sensibilities and Learning Approaches

If you were forced to make a choice, would you want a car or an Internet connection? For 64 percent of the 3000 global college students and new college grads surveyed in the 2011 [Cisco Connected World Technology Report](#), the answer is life online. In fact, 40 percent said the Internet is more important to them than dating, going out with friends, or listening to music. Not surprisingly, 66 percent said the most important technology in their lives was a mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet.

How can primary and secondary schools capitalize on these findings to increase student engagement? For ideas, we caught up with Cisco's Renee Patton, U.S. public sector director of education, and Frank Florence, senior director of education marketing.

What does students' attachment to the Internet mean to educators?

Frank Florence: This survey validates what many educators have long suspected—that the current generation of students wants to learn in fundamentally different ways. They live in a connected world and don't necessarily relate to textbooks or the traditional classroom setting. Technology needs to be an integral part of how we engage students.

Approximately nine out of ten students in the survey said they had a Facebook account, and about a third of those checked it at least five times a day. How can educators turn this to their advantage?

Renee Patton: If we can't find ways to engage students in the learning process, we'll lose them. So if students are using Facebook in school, rather than being upset about it, we can view it as an opportunity. The larger question is, how we can take advantage of tools like social networking, lecture capture, and virtual field trips to engage students?

What are some examples of using social networking tools for next-generation learning?

Florence: The key is engaging students and making course content relevant. For example, a physics professor might integrate an online gaming exercise into the curriculum. A business professor might set up online communities on Cisco Quad™ or on Facebook where students can collaborate on team projects.

Patton: Bringing video into the learning experience is another effective way to engage today's students. Technologies like Cisco TelePresence® and WebEx® make it easy to connect students and experts in different locations and to capture lectures for later playback. Cisco Show and Share® makes it easy to share videos, either with the entire school community or a specific class. Students can leave comments as they do on YouTube. There's also Cisco TelePresence Synch, which teachers can use to add video calls from multiple locations to interactive whiteboard training sessions.

What do the influx of mobile devices and the increased use of video mean to school networks?

Patton: The district IT team needs to make sure the wireless infrastructure can support the massive influx of personal devices on campus. That's especially important in high-density environments like classrooms, cafeterias, gymnasiums, and stadiums. It's important to make sure that more devices and more video don't slow performance of administration and learning applications.



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How urgent is it to adapt to the new student habits underscored in the survey?

Florence: It's very urgent. The overall U.S. high school graduation rate is currently just 76 percent. Even among graduates, many are not prepared for basic college math, science, and English. High school students are on a journey of discovery, and if social networking, mobility, and video can make learning a bigger part of that discovery, we have an exciting opportunity. A great success story is the Mooresville Graded School District in North Carolina, where students in grades 4-12 now receive an Apple MacBook they can use to access video and learning materials over a Cisco wired and wireless network. Since the district implemented the program, graduation rates increased from 68 to 86 percent. The district's test scores soared to fourth out of 115 districts in the state, despite being number 101 in per-pupil spending.

For more information about the Cisco Connected World Technology Report, visit: www.cisco.com/go/connectedreport

To read the full case study on the Mooresville Graded School District, visit: www.cisco.com/web/strategy/docs/education/mooresvillegraded_cs.pdf



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