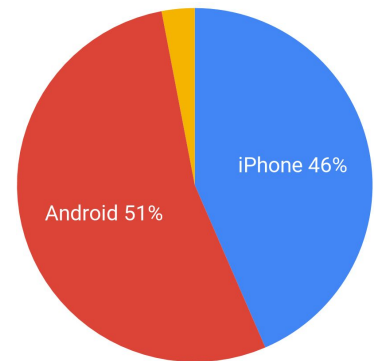# Tech Snacks: What Your Students Think About Brightspace

As part of OTLE's self-assessment process, each year we ask students to complete a Brightspace experience survey about their device usage, Brightspace habits, overall Brightspace satisfaction, and open-ended questions about how they'd like to see Brightspace improved. Here's some of what we found this year! *107 students participated in this year's survey, our largest sample ever.*
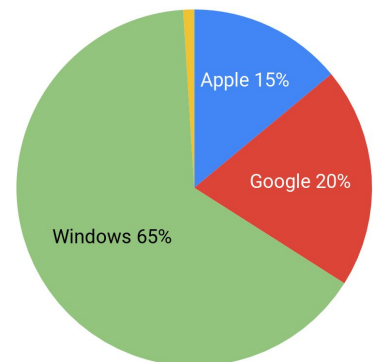
Smartphones

97% of responses said they had a smartphone, and they're fairly evenly split between Android and iPhones. 7% of students said they used their phone as their primary device for accessing Brightspace. These numbers have been fairly stable over the last three years. The small number of students who don't have a smartphone seem to be consciously choosing not to use one.

iPhone 46%
Android 51%

Why this matters — You can generally expect nearly all of your students to have smartphones available for activities like in-class polling, taking photos and recording videos, or doing in-class internet research. But you should still be prepared for the occasional student without a smartphone and allow them to partner with another student with a smartphone if needed.

Laptops

Surprisingly, over 98% of responses said they have a laptop computer, *more than have a smartphone*. 69% of responses said their laptop was their primary device for accessing Brightspace. Both of these numbers are up from the previous year's survey. As we noted last year, an increasing number of students use Google Chromebooks as their primary laptop — 20% of responses in this year's survey.
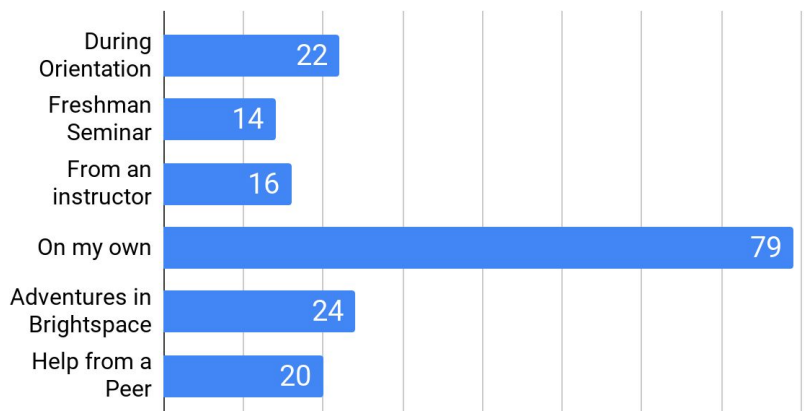
Apple 15%
Google 20%
Windows 65%

Why this matters — Chromebooks are not like other computer operating systems, where the user installs software like Microsoft Word or Adobe Photoshop. Nearly everything on a Chromebook is done through the Chrome web browser, and it uses online services like Google Drive for word processing or slideshow production. You might consider including a note in your syllabus and/or assignment instructions about what file formats you accept, and what students should do if they're using Google Docs.

How they learn Brightspace

For the first time this year, we added a survey question asking how students learned to use Brightspace.

How did you learn to use Brightspace? (Check all that apply)

During Orientation: 22
Freshman Seminar: 14
From an instructor: 16
On my own: 79
Adventures in Brightspace: 24
Help from a Peer: 20

Why this matters — Many new students are coming to their first week of class with little or no knowledge of Brightspace. Consider passing out copies of our "Getting Started on Brightspace" handout, referring students to OTLE (Cowan 110) for Brightspace orientation, or asking OTLE staff to visit your freshman classes and introduce ourselves.

Student Comments

Along with the quantitative survey questions, we also gave students a chance to provide open-ended comments about their Brightspace experience. The results were shockingly consistent, and the vast majority fell into two general categories. These are just a sample:

Gradebook, gradebook, gradebook

Make it easier to find grades and reports from professors

I think there should be a way to see the total grade rather than the grades of each individual assignment.

make it so we can see our overall grade

I have one instructor who doesn't use brightspace for grades and assignments and I think if they used Brightspace it would make it a lot easier.

Some use seperate off-site grading programs that when not taught clearly and correctly how to use, it is very frustrating.

Put grades in only brightspace and not another program

I wish they would post grades more frequently.

Always post grades. Some are very good about posting grades and with others you do not know until final grade is received.

I would like all teachers to post current grades in the grade book in brightspace

Course design and organization consistency

make teachers follow the brightspace layout more. every teacher has their class set up differently, & it is confusing to many people.

All assignments listed in one place for each module.

Teachers should be more reliable on posting when stuff is due on brightspace.

Use it in a uniform manner ie post thing in the content/ put description of the assignments in the content, not just the syllabus.

I wish professors would use content instead of clogging the news feed. More organization would be better. Consistency is key.

For instructors to be more uniform on how they put things on brightspace so you don't have figure it out for every different instructors.

I wish they would all use it in the same way. It is confusing to try and figure out how each instructor uses it and what they do/do not post. Some instructors provide a great amount of information and others provide none at all. It would be nice to have the same experience regardless of the instructor.

Not all professors post due dates clearly for assignments and if they do they are not a part of the reminders we get via email and sms. Most of them are not very organized either and it makes it very difficult to ind assignments and due dates. This has been a problem since I transferred here.

I wish my instructor made the tests easier to find. I have struggled a lot knowing when there is a test and where to find it because it is hidden, and not easy to access.

I wish more instructors would use it for deadlines and updates. I rely on Brightspace for keeping organized and up to date on my grades.

Use Brightspace more! Some are more organized than others too. I feel like everyone should follow similar guidelines to avoid confusion.

I wish they used the homepage of classes to post more announcements.

organization of assignments. AND UPLOAD GRADES

All use the same format for their classes.