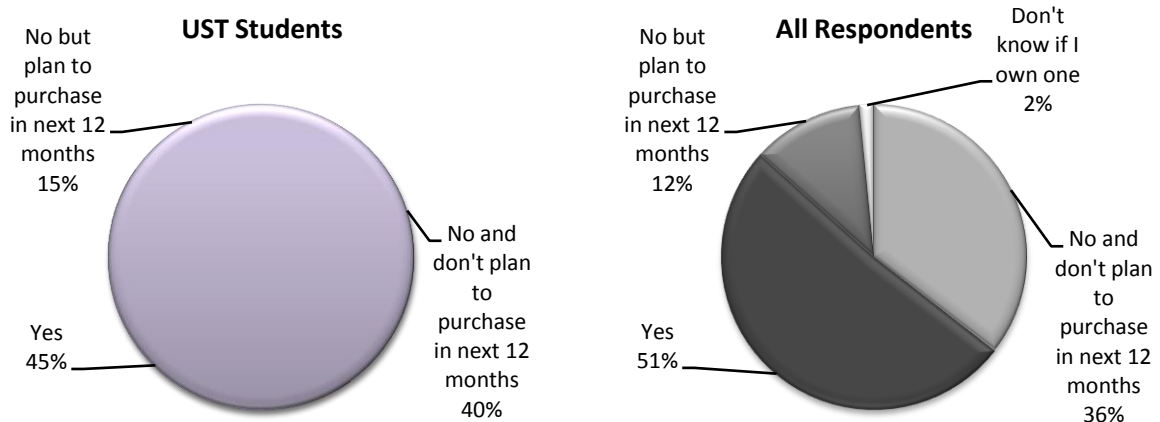


## Mobile Technologies and Services

Past ECAR surveys have shown that cell phone ownership is widespread among college students but that far fewer students reported owning “smart phones” or devices capable of accessing the Internet. With the increasing popularity of the iPhone, Blackberry and others handheld devices, it is not surprising to that the number of students owning Internet capable handheld devices is growing. In the 2007 ECAR survey, only sixteen percent of St. Thomas students reported owning a “smart phone” capable of accessing the Internet, and in 2008 fifty-four percent indicated they owned an Internet capable *cell* phone. In 2009, forty-five percent of St. Thomas participants report owning an Internet capable *handheld* device.

### *Do you use a handheld device capable of accessing the Internet (whether or not you use that capability)?*



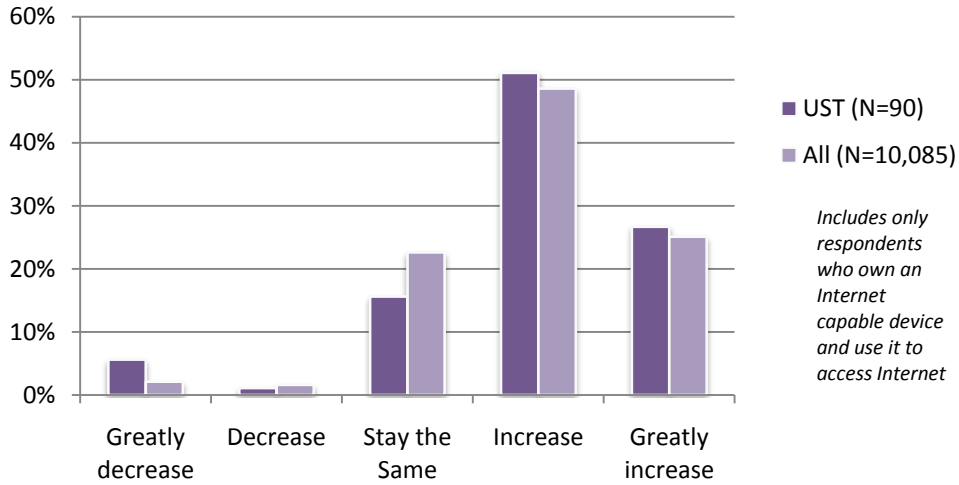
Of the St. Thomas students who own an Internet capable device, roughly one-third use the device on a daily basis but nearly forty percent say they do not use the Internet capability. Cost of the device and the service were among the main reasons why students choose to not use the Internet on their handheld device. In addition, students indicated that they have other ways to access the Internet (e.g., laptop or desktop computer) and over a quarter say they never use the Internet from their handheld device when a computer is easily available.

When UST students do use their phone to access the Internet, most say they access social networking web sites (80%), check news, weather, or other informational web sites (76%), and check email (72%).

### Expectation for Future Use of Mobile Devices

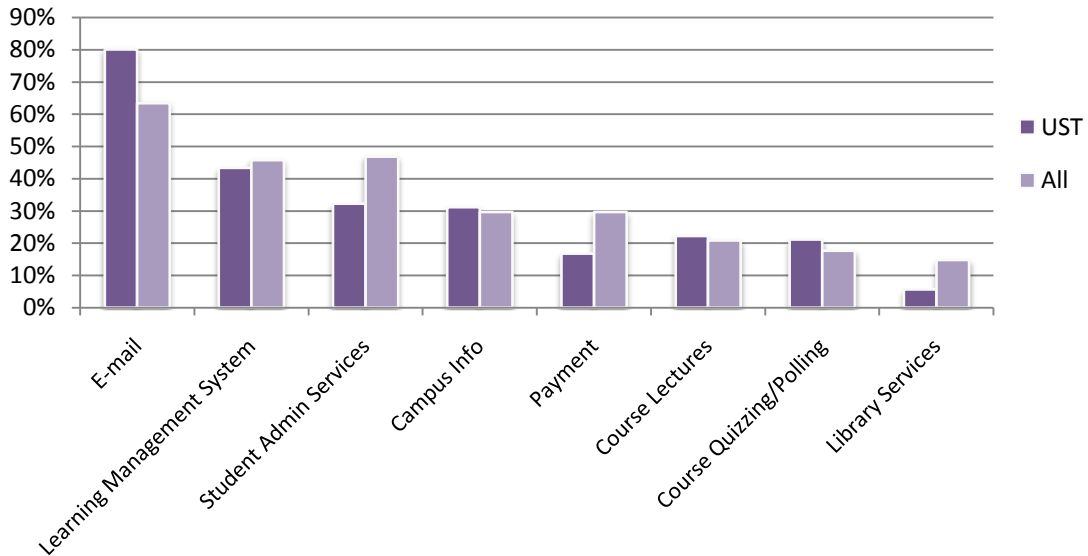
Most students expect to increase their use of handheld devices to access over the next three years while almost half of all ECAR survey respondents, and forty-seven percent of UST respondents, agree that they expect to use their handheld device to do things that they currently do on their laptop or desktop computer.

**Anticipated Increase/Decrease in Use of Internet from Handheld Device in Next Three Years**



When asked which of the information technology services they would be most likely to use if it was available on a handheld device, the majority of students indicated they would use email, their institution’s learning management system (e.g., Blackboard), and student administrative services (e.g., Murphy Online).

**Which information technology services would you use on a handheld?**

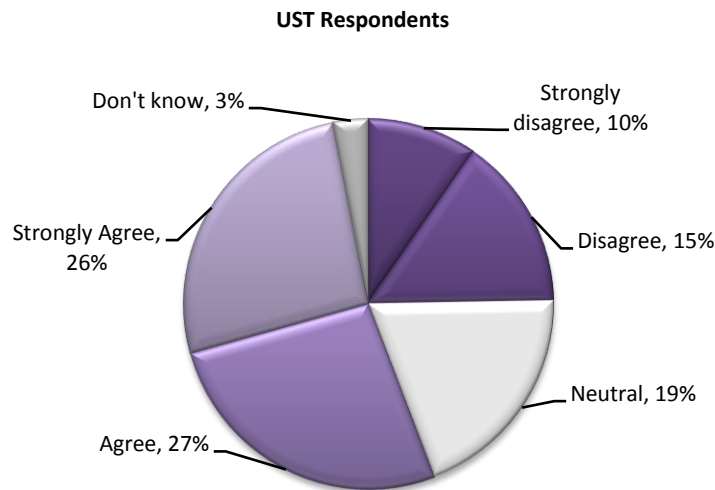


Mobile devices appear to be the preferred method of communication in the event of a campus emergency. Sixty-six percent of UST respondents preferred to be notified via text message and

just under one quarter preferred e-mail. None of the respondents selected social networking sites as the first choice for emergency notification.

While it is clear that that an increasing number of students are purchasing handheld devices and expect to access a variety of university services in the very near future, most St. Thomas students (78%) currently do not use their cell phone or handheld device for class activities. However, a surprising number (34%) admit to using their handheld device for non-course activities during class time. Agreement as to whether faculty should have the authority to limit the use of devices during class time is mixed with a quarter of St. Thomas students disagreeing.

***Instructors should have authority to forbid use of cell phone/handheld during class***



**Instructional Technology**

As has been the pattern with the previous three years, student preference for amount of technology used in courses is *moderate* (61% of UST students). Fewer students (15%) prefer a limited amount of technology while eighteen percent prefer taking courses that use technology extensively.

The majority of St. Thomas students (90%) have taken a course that used Blackboard. Sixty percent say they use Blackboard at least weekly or several times a week, while a quarter use Blackboard in some way on a daily basis. Nearly three-quarters report a positive experience using Blackboard and just over half consider themselves quite skilled with using Blackboard.

Faculty typically use Blackboard as a means to distribute course materials, and most of the St. Thomas respondents (77%) say they do not skip class when course materials from lectures are online. Technologies like Blackboard are a primarily convenience for students although a good number agree (57%) that the use of technology in their courses improves their learning. Only thirty-six percent agree that they are more involved in courses that use technology. According to the authors of the ECAR study, student comments suggest that faculty strike a balance

between classroom interaction and use of technology – students desire convenient access to course materials but also value face-to-face interaction.

Students are generally positive regarding faculty skill and use of technology. Approximately half of the St. Thomas respondents say that their instructors are skilled at using technology in courses while just under half indicate they are prepared to use the technologies employed by their instructors.

Most/all of my instructors...	UST Respondents
...use technology effectively in courses.	56%
...have adequate technology skills for carrying out course instruction.	52%
...provide students with adequate training for the technology the instructor uses in his/her course.	45%

In addition to Blackboard, faculty integrate a range of applications and technologies including social networking site, blogs and wikis, and games and simulations. St. Thomas students indicate the most commonly used technologies and software in their courses are:

- Library web site (82%)
- Presentation software (75%)
- Spreadsheets (52%)
- Social networking web sites (25%)
- Discipline specific software (17%)

Overall, most St. Thomas students say they do not contribute content to wikis, blogs and video web sites, regardless of whether it is for school, work, or recreation. They are, however, using social networking web sites on a daily basis (79%) as well as text messaging (76%). Social bookmarking/tagging (e.g., del.icio.us) appears to have fallen out of favor – eighty-eight percent say they never use it. Similarly, online virtual worlds like Second Life or Forterra are used by only a very small percentage of students (4%) although slightly more students (23%) indicate they use online multi-user games for school, work or recreation.

### **How students view their skill with technology**

Looking toward the future, just over half of UST respondents say that the technology used in their courses will have adequately prepared them for the workplace. Most students are mainstream adopters of technology - nearly sixty percent say they pick up new technologies about the same time as their peers. Over eighty percent say they are highly skilled at using the Internet to effectively search for information, and almost sixty percent say they are skilled at

evaluating the reliability and credibility of online sources of information. When asked to rate their skill level with understanding the legal/ethical issues regarding access to and use of digital information, forty-six percent of St. Thomas participants rated themselves as very skilled or expert.

### ***About the ECAR Study***

Each spring, a random sample of freshmen and seniors at St. Thomas are invited to participate in the EduCAUSE Center for Applied Research survey. The study is a national, longitudinal survey and seeks to gain a better understanding of students' behaviors, attitudes, skills and preferences with information technology. The full ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology for 2009 can be found at [www.educause.edu/Resources/TheECARStudyofUndergraduateStu/187215](http://www.educause.edu/Resources/TheECARStudyofUndergraduateStu/187215), and the St. Thomas survey data is available by contacting IRT at [irthelp@stthomas.edu](mailto:irthelp@stthomas.edu).

### ***Archive of UST ECAR Articles***

#### **2008: Trends in Student Use of Social Networking Sites**

[www.stthomas.edu/bulletin/2008/12/03/web-wednesday-trends-in-student-use-of-social-networking-sites](http://www.stthomas.edu/bulletin/2008/12/03/web-wednesday-trends-in-student-use-of-social-networking-sites)

#### **2007: Trends in Student Use of Technology**

Part 1: [www.stthomas.edu/bulletin/2007/11/28/trends-in-student-use-of-information-technology-a-sea-change/](http://www.stthomas.edu/bulletin/2007/11/28/trends-in-student-use-of-information-technology-a-sea-change/)

Part 2: [www.stthomas.edu/bulletin/2008/02/06/trends-in-student-use-of-technology-part-ii](http://www.stthomas.edu/bulletin/2008/02/06/trends-in-student-use-of-technology-part-ii)

**2006 Study:** [www.stthomas.edu/bulletin/2007/02/14/web-wednesday-survey-reveals-trends-in-undergraduate-use-of-information-technology/](http://www.stthomas.edu/bulletin/2007/02/14/web-wednesday-survey-reveals-trends-in-undergraduate-use-of-information-technology/)