

2011 Lectures Online Survey results

Introduction

In 2011 Monash University Lectures Online (MULO) participated in an international benchmarking survey called Echo360 Feedback Loop. The online survey was designed with input from multiple higher education institutions to gather both quantifiable and qualitative feedback regarding lecture capture.

The objectives were three-fold:

1. To measure MULO usage patterns and satisfaction and understand user profiles, attitudes and preferences.
2. To benchmark against other universities using Echo360 product in Australia and overseas.
3. To commence the process for gaining a longitudinal measure of the above.

The survey was conducted online from 15 September to 13 October 2011. A link to the survey was published on the MULO website, the Library website and the blog. It was targeted at undergraduate and postgraduate Monash students in Australia who have used the Lectures Online service.

This report is based on an analysis of the Summary Report produced by Echo360.

Response statistics

A total of 1,245 students participated in the survey. This represents 2.3% of students enrolled at Monash campuses in Australia.

- **Class level:** Majority were undergraduates = 27.3% 1st year, 29.2% 2nd year, 25.5% 3rd year and 9.9% 4th year; 5.7% postgraduates, 0.2% honours, 0.2% non-degree and 2% other.
- **Enrolment status:** 85.5% full-time, 12.8% part-time and 1.7% other.
- **Employment:** 35.8% not employed, 50.1% work 1-20 hours per week, 11.1% work 21-40 hours per week, 3% work 40+ hours per week.
- **Study mode (where classes were attended this semester):** 46.8% on campus; 31.2% mostly on campus, some online; 9.5% equally on campus and online; 7.1% mostly online, some on campus; 5.3% all online.
- **Age:** 77% are 17-23 years old; 9% 24-29 years old; 4.7% 30-39 years old; 4.7% 40-49 years old
- **Gender:** 64.7% female and 33.2% male
- **Disabilities:** Learning disabilities 94.9% no, 2.3% yes, 2.7% did not respond; Physical disabilities 94.1% no, 3.1% yes, 2.8% did not respond.

- **Source countries:** 96.7% Australia, 2.1% Malaysia, 0.2% China, 0.2% Switzerland, with a sprinkling from a host of other countries.

Students were asked to identify which faculties offered recorded lectures in Semester 2 2011 or to select the faculty for the course they used recorded lectures the most. The top two faculties were Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (19.1%) and Business and Economics (18.7%).

Value	Count	Percent %
Art and Design	12	1%
Arts	193	15.5%
Business and Economics	233	18.7%
Education	24	1.9%
Engineering	64	5.1%
Information Technology	53	4.3%
Law	136	10.9%
Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	238	19.1%
Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences	79	6.3%
Science	205	16.5%
Monash College	3	0.2%
Other (please specify)	5	0.4%

Summary of findings

The survey presented statements about their usage, attitude and preferences regarding lecture capture technology. Respondents were asked to indicate if they strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree or were neutral about each statement.

Usage and attitude

The results show 46.5% of students view recorded lectures multiple times per week and 30.8% at least once per week. Another 8.2% even use recorded lectures daily while 14.5% do so once per month.

How often do you view recorded lectures?

Value	Count	Percent %
Daily	102	8.2%
Multiple times per week	579	46.5%
Once per week	383	30.8%
Once per month	181	14.5%

There were three statements about how the students used lecture capture technology:

- **To learn at my own pace:** A combined 89% agreed/strongly agreed, while a combined 3.6% disagreed/strongly disagreed and 7.4% were neutral about the statement.
- **To revisit and clarify complicated or confusing topics:** A combined 89.9% agreed/strongly agreed, while a combined 3.3% disagreed/strongly disagreed and 9.3% were neutral about the statement. Another 3.7% indicated this statement was not applicable.
- **To help prepare for exams:** A combined 81.6% agreed/strongly agreed, while 5.3% disagreed/strongly disagreed and 9.3% were neutral about the statement. Another 3.7% indicated this statement was not applicable.

Students also responded to some value statements about lecture capture technology.

- **Helps me stay in a class I otherwise would have dropped:** A combined 49% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed, while a combined 24% disagreed/strongly disagreed. Another 26.8% were neutral about the statement.

I have a clash in my timetable and online lectures mean that I don't miss out on lectures.

It enables me to be able to afford being in this course without missing out.

It allowed me to get around lecture clashes without missing out or dropping out of a class.

It allows students to take clashing subjects, as many law subjects run only one stream.

- **Helps me balance my schedule, including school, family and/or work responsibilities:** 61.4% strongly agreed and 27.9% agreed, while 1.6% strongly disagreed and 1.8% disagreed. Another 7.3% were neutral.

It allows me to listen to lectures when I normally cannot due to work commitments.

It means I am still able to work 2 days a week and listen to the only lecture I miss due to work. I would not be able to pay my rent if I could not work 2 days a week.

Having a young family I can attend uni some days a week but then spend time at home and 'go' to lectures in the evenings – it would take me at least 2 years longer to finish my course without recorded lectures.

Can listen to lecture in my own time allows me to work and study (study wouldn't be possible without this option).

- **Reviewing lectures is a substitute for attending class:** 27.7% agreed and 15.3% strongly agreed while 7.7% strongly disagreed and 24.4% disagreed and 25.1% neutral.

I prefer attending the lectures but if I happen to miss one for some unavoidable reason then I can catch up.

I find it a useful backup to class learning but never as a substitute.

The ability to refer back to the lecture (and pause the lecture) to clarify some stuff on the notes. Helps tremendously in revision and organising of thoughts and concepts.

- **Relying on recorded lectures because this course is not taught in my native language:** 36.7% strongly disagreed and 15% disagreed with this statement; 12% were neutral and 26.1% said the statement was not applicable to them; 5.2% agreed and 5% strongly agreed with the statement.

English is not my native language. Echo helps me to catch up with info that I missed during the lectures.

- **Helps me better understand my instructors with strong accents:** 27.8% agreed and 24.6% strongly agreed; 19.9% were neutral and 10.6% said it was not applicable; 7% strongly disagreed and 10.1% agreed with the statement.

Offers flexibility as sometimes it is difficult to concentrate during lecture due to it being very noisy or the lecturer's strong accent.

- **Helps me use my time more efficiently:** 46.9% strongly agreed and 35.5% agreed; 7.4% were neutral while 2.6% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed.

It saves me so much time, living so far away, when I have one lecture a day, I can watch it online rather than using ¼ tank of petrol and over 2 hours driving.

Allows me to manage my time and studies the way that suits me; living more than 1 hour away from university campus makes community very expensive and moreover extremely tiresome.

Lecture capture technology may not be suitable as a substitute for attending class but makes juggling a busy and hard life much, much easier. I don't think I could cope without it.

Time flexibility. I can pause when I want and don't have to sit for a whole hour. I can pick up where I left from.

- **Improves my overall learning experience.** 45.2% strongly agreed and 43.7% agreed; 9% were neutral while 1.4% disagreed and 0.7% strongly disagreed.

I am not attentive at 8am...not in an optimal state for learning complex financial concepts. By being able to listen to a recording later in the day, I am able to learn infinitely more effectively than if I only had the option of attending lectures early in the morning.

I like the flexibility and efficiency. Flexibility in that I can listen to lectures when I want, in a comfortable environment which helps me better understand and absorb the material than if I am tired and have to attend a lecture in person.

Efficiency in that I can skip over or listen to lectures at a faster speed for material I am already comfortable with, and slow down or revise areas which I find more challenging.

The ability to pause, rewind and relisten to a complex sentence/concept. Also to relisten to an entire lecture as revision. The ability to study at your own time, in the order you wish to proceed at. The ability to study in conditions favourable for learning, i.e. brightly lit room, large spacious desk, no distractions.

- **Earn higher grades when I use recorded lectures:** 25.6% strongly agreed and 33.6% agreed; 36.1% were neutral while 3.2% disagreed and 1.4% strongly disagreed.

Having recorded lectures for a unit in my opinion helps the student get better grades.

This statement can be juxtaposed with a question asked in the demographics section of the survey. The question, **What grade do you expect to earn in this course?** which had the following responses: 28.6% HD, 52% D, 16% C, 3.1% P and 0.4% N.

Preferences

Students were also asked several preference-related statements.

- **I would like to see lecture capture technology offered in more of my courses.** 63.9% strongly agreed and 24.6% agreed; 10.3% were neutral while 0.6% disagreed and 0.7 % strongly disagreed.

Only 2 of my 4 units record lectures unfortunately.

All the units should have online lectures.

Make lecture recordings compulsory for all units.

Most of the subjects I take don't record.

- **The ability to study both online and in-class helps me understand concepts better.** 59.2% strongly agreed and 28.1% agreed; 6% were neutral while 0.7% disagreed and 0.6 % strongly disagreed. Another 5.3% indicated this statement was not applicable.

I enjoy the flexibility it gives me in terms of learning at my own pace and revisiting complicated topics that I did not fully comprehend during the lecture.

- **I prefer a combination of online and in-class learning (blended learning) over only in-class learning.** 40.1% strongly agreed and 26.8% agreed; 17.8% were neutral while 6.1% disagreed and 1.9 % strongly disagreed. Another 7.2% indicated this statement was not applicable.

[It is] an aid to physical in-class learning.

Clarifying concepts at my own pace outside of the in-class environment.

As an OCL student I am able to gain similar information in regards to the subject matter.

Some units chose to not record the lectures so that people attend. Silly idea. A lot of people who can't attend just can't attend. It's as simple as that, not recording them does not make a huge difference to my motives to attend but causes a huge inconvenience.

- **I prefer a combination of online and in-class learning (blended learning) over only online learning.** 43.9% strongly agreed and 26.6% agreed; 14.9% were neutral while 4.7% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. Another 8% indicated this statement was not applicable.

I wish we can just go back to in-class studying and learning, as it is the only way to learn. All the online classes and blended learning are personally just a money saving antic and the production of mass degrees that are worthless in the work place when doing needs thinking and analytical intelligence.

- **I like the flexibility of the blended course.** 26.6% strongly agreed and 48.4% agreed; 22.1% were neutral while 1.9% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed.

It allows a person to have flexibility in that if you miss a lecture you can easily catch up.

Flexibility and efficiency in maximising and saving time.

I can review the lectures over and over again until I get a grip on the topic. I can learn at my own pace and have time to take notes and do readings.

- **I would recommend blended learning to my peers.** 24.9% strongly agreed and 42.9% agreed; 28.6% were neutral while 2.5% disagreed and 1.1% strongly disagreed.

- Other trends in student preferences:

- 24% use Facebook to communicate with other students about their studies in all courses, 45.5% use it in some courses and 30.4% never.
- 92.4% never used Facebook to communicate with their instructors about their studies, while only 1.7% did in all their courses and 5.9% did in some courses.
- 58.3% never participated in online study groups with other students, 33.8% participated in some courses and 7.9% did in all courses.
- 33.9% never participated in in-person study groups in some courses, 13.1% in all courses and 53% did in all courses.

Satisfaction

Overall students were satisfied with lecture capture technology as provided to them in their course: a combined 85.7% were very satisfied/satisfied, 9.3% neutral and a combined 5% dissatisfied/very dissatisfied.

Issues and recommendations

While students were satisfied overall with the lecture capture technology, they have identified other types of technologies they wish were available to help them get more out of their education. Many offered suggestions for improvement to the current service being offered.

Technical

- **Better quality audio** – The most important and frequently cited issue is the quality of the audio which needs to be improved. Related to this is the expectation of students that lecturers should know how to use the technology, use the microphone close enough to be audible, use mouse pointer rather than laser pointer, etc. Better microphone system could be set up to capture class contribution.
- **New functionalities/features** – Include interactive features (e.g. tablet PCs where lecturer can interact with the onscreen lecture slides), comment/discussion threads, ability to show the overhead projectors and videos when lecturers use/show them, update user interface (looks very old and clunky)
- **Better streaming** – The new format is not suitable for netbook screens. Scrolling to a specific time in the lecture causes it to skip to roughly +/- 1 minute or it takes you back to the start. The streaming has some flaws, e.g. lack of hotkeys, no playback speed options, imprecise seek/scroll bar and the requirement of constant internet connection. Flash player streaming is very bad for replays; consider other formats compatible with iPads.

Administrative

- **Broader uptake** – It may not be possible to record all lectures for all subjects, but it can be made available for large units.
- **Better labelling** – according to title/topic, along with date and time of lecture.
- **Have all learning material in one place** – Rather than going to different websites for recorded lectures, lecture notes, etc by week/module. Blackboard does not work with tabs and is a little outdated.

Following are the recommendations arising from the results of the Echo360 Feedback Loop:

1. Communicate to users regarding MULO upgrade to address technical issues.
2. Implement the communication strategy to reach more academic staff and broaden use of lecture capture for more units.
3. Develop and implement a plan to improve labelling of recorded lectures, i.e. encourage lecturers to title their lectures and guide them to the tools that make it possible.
4. Contribute to the development of Moodle to integrate access to recorded lectures.

5. Conduct the survey yearly to gain a longitudinal measure of usage, satisfaction, attitude and preferences.