

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Changing Tech Preferences Among College Students

Our Friends · Friday, October 1st, 2021

Whether you're a young person headed off to college, the parent of a college student, or a university instructor preparing course materials, technology trends are sure to be on your mind. What do today's students use on campus, and how does that impact their educational experience and work approach? The answers may surprise you, particularly in terms of how different the dominant technology is today compared to even five years ago.

Online Courses 101

During the COVID-19 pandemic, virtually all coursework moved online, no matter the school in question, but before that only a small number of schools primarily offered online educational services. What students discovered during this time, though, was that many preferred that [at least some courses remain fully online](#). This changed relationship to the classroom has consequences for what technology students use.

In order to successfully participate in online courses, students need devices that can handle serious streaming and video, which means having a quality webcam and plenty of available bandwidth. For many students, this means investing in one of the flexible tablet-laptop hybrids that dominate today, since online courses often come with digital course materials, and it's easier to read on the go when you can convert to a tablet.

The New Notetaking Style

There's been a lot of buzz in the last few years about how students learn best and whether they should take notes by hand or if they can do so on a computer. The debate is so intense that many college professors don't allow students to use computers in class. They have to take notes the old fashioned way. Still, whether they're allowed to use these tools in class or not, students are actively innovating on notetaking.

Among the most popular types of notetaking tool for college students today are [cloud-based notes programs](#) that allow them to access their notes no matter what device they're using and collaborate more easily with classmates. For students taking online courses, this kind of remote collaboration is even more important, making cloud-based notetaking tools a must for today's college student.

Social Media Savvy

Social media may not be a top priority when viewed from the perspective of the classroom, but we

shouldn't discount its importance to students, so what platforms are college students on today? Don't even consider apps like Facebook or Snapchat, which are thoroughly passe by now.

Though these platforms dominated just a few years ago, college students today have congregated on apps like TikTok and Instagram, and many have ditched traditional social media for media consumption platforms like YouTube. Some have even moved to embrace an orderly social media existence with [Notion](#), an app that's focused on organizing and productivity!

One interesting thing about all the new tools available to college students today is that they really allow young people to embrace academic styles that work for them, rather than simply taking notes with a pen and highlighters like everyone else. That may mean creating a hybrid between traditional notetaking and the digital world by using a stylus and tablet, adopting complex digital notebooks that allow them to embed PDFs and other tools into their notes, or something else entirely.

While this freedom may sometimes feel overwhelming, especially for those still sorting things out, at the end of the day, new technology ensures that every student has the tools they need to succeed.

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