

Press release**Press enquiries for Economist Intelligence Unit:****Joanne McKenna: +44 (0)20 7576 8188 or joannemckenna@eiu.com****27 October 2008**

Technology will significantly reshape higher education over the next 5 years, global survey reveals

Sixty-three percent of academics and business executives report that technology innovation will greatly influence teaching methodologies

Technology continues to change nearly every facet of life and its effect on education is particularly marked. According to a recent survey undertaken by the Economist Intelligence Unit, academic professionals and business executives alike agree that college and university education around the world will undergo a technological transformation over the next 5 years. In fact, according to the report, *The future of higher education: how technology will shape learning*, nearly 60% of all respondents expect that professors will teach in more than one medium by 2013, and 60% say that online learning will be a fundamental component of the education experience. The report is published by the Economist Intelligence Unit and sponsored by the New Media Consortium.

The survey also revealed that corporate-academic partnerships will become more common in the future. Sixty-four percent of respondents expect that universities will frequently partner with corporations and other third parties to create new areas of study over the next five years. This is significant considering that only one in five respondents believe that their domestic academic institutions are quicker than companies to develop and implement new technologies. To attract corporate partnerships, however, survey results indicate that institutions will need to demonstrate a commitment to advanced technologies. This puts institutions in a “chicken and egg” bind: on the one hand, universities need private-sector resources to sustain technological leadership, but on the other they must demonstrate technical prowess in order to attract that investment in the first place.

New technologies are affecting other areas of campus administration as well. Social-networking tools are helping to build connections with alumni and to support career service activities. E-marketing campaigns expand the reach and success of recruiting and fundraising efforts, and drive down the cost of direct-mail campaigns. And automated self-service programmes reduce the burden on administrators and streamline course registration.

Other key findings from the survey include:

- ***Online learning is gaining a firm foothold in universities around the world.*** More than two-thirds of respondents from academia say that their institutions offer online courses. Many of them, especially those with a public-service mandate, consider online learning vital to their mission, placing advanced education within reach of people who might otherwise not be able to benefit from it.
- ***University respondents view technology as having a largely positive impact on their campuses,*** but acknowledge that operational challenges may hinder the full benefits from being realised (for example, tenure, promotions and other organisational practices may need adjustment to encourage faculty members to adopt new technologies). In addition, technology may be disruptive in ways not intended: respondents note a rise in student plagiarism, cheating and distractability, which they attribute to easy access to mobile technologies.

- ***Higher education is responding to globalisation.*** Respondents say that having an overseas presence will be the norm for the majority of universities over the coming years, and 54% of academic respondents say their institutions either already have foreign locations or plan to open them in the next three years. Distance education is also becoming increasingly global, with universities in the US and overseas leveraging advanced technologies to put education within reach of many more individuals around the world.

“The survey results make clear that technology innovation will continue to change the way students learn and professors teach, and will be an important differentiator as universities around the world compete for the best and brightest minds,” says Debra D’Agostino, Deputy Director in the Americas, Industry and Management Research, at the Economist Intelligence Unit. “Furthermore, collaborating with corporations to refine curricula and provide greater access to technology tools can help to ensure that students are well prepared for the business world.”

The future of higher education: how technology will shape learning, is available free of charge at the following URL: <http://www.eiu.com/nmc/futureofuniversities>

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About the survey

The survey, conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit in July and August 2008, included responses from 289 participants: 189 responses came from higher education and 100 came from companies. The US accounted for slightly over one-half (154) of all respondents, with the remainder distributed through Europe (69), Asia-Pacific (43) and the rest of the world (23). Of this total, board members and C-level respondents made up 43% of private-sector respondents, while professors, deans and other faculty members accounted for 86% of those surveyed from academic institutions. In addition, 12 interviews were held with university chief information officers and leaders in the private sector.

About the Economist Intelligence Unit

The Economist Intelligence Unit is the business information arm of The Economist Group, publisher of The Economist. Through our global network of more than 650 analysts and contributors, we continuously assess and forecast political, economic and business conditions in more than 200 countries. As the world’s leading provider of country intelligence, we help executives make better business decisions by providing timely, reliable and impartial analysis on worldwide market trends and business strategies.

About the New Media Consortium

The New Media Consortium (NMC) is an international not-for-profit consortium of nearly 300 learning-focused organizations dedicated to the exploration and use of new media and new technologies. Its membership constitutes an elite list of the most highly regarded colleges and universities in the world, as well as a growing list of innovative museums, research centers, foundations, and forward-thinking companies. The consortium serves as a catalyst for the development of new applications of technology to support learning and creative expression, and sponsors programs and activities designed to stimulate innovation, encourage collaboration, and recognize excellence among its member institutions. For more information on the NMC, visit its website at www.nmc.org.

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