

**Tablet Technologies in UK
HE 2014**

HeLF Survey Report



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ABOUT THE HEADS OF E-LEARNING FORUM (HELF)

HeLF was established in 2003 as a UK 'network of senior staff in institutions engaged in promoting, supporting and developing technology enhanced learning' (HeLF, 2014). Each UK Higher Education institution can nominate one representative to HeLF which now has over 130 institutional members.

HeLF has three face to face meetings each year on a topical eLearning theme. It also has an active mailing list which is restricted to HeLF members in order to provide a closed forum for debate on current issues.

HeLF acts as 'an advisory body for national and governmental organisations' such as the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA) and JISC, on 'issues relating to e-learning institutional strategy and implementation'. It is 'proactive in soliciting responses from such bodies and promoting the views of its membership'.

Enabling collaboration on 'the strategic implications of developing and implementing eLearning', HeLF supports 'the processes by which e-learning strategy can be effectively created, and implemented, including advice, support and co-operation between members' (HeLF, 2014).

More information about HeLF and its activities is available at <http://www.helf.ac.uk/>

Acknowledgement

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the analysis of the Heads of e-Learning Forum (HeLF) survey on UK Higher Education (HE) provision, policies and support for tablet technologies undertaken during March/April 2014. The report considers the impact of these technologies on learning and teaching and the role of the Head of eLearning and on their teams. A total of 48 responses to the survey were obtained, representing 37% of the total HeLF membership.

Results from the survey indicated that strategic approaches to the adoption of tablet devices were patchy, with the majority of respondents indicating that drivers generally originated at the level of the individual member of staff or department, rather than a coherent institutional response. In the vast majority of cases, respondents indicated that tablet devices were used for administration rather than for learning, teaching and assessment.

In terms of technologies, iOS devices dominated, irrespective of whether staff were given a free choice of the tablet which they obtained or whether the institution dictated the device. Very few institutions (<20%) had policies relating to the use or management of tablet devices but the vast majority (~75%) were actively considering these.

Responses indicated that the impact on Heads of eLearning and their teams had to date been minimal, however it was anticipated that this would change as policies and strategies were developed further. In the majority of institutions (~60%), the embedding and evaluation of tablet devices was also supported by dedicated project funding.

Overall the national picture depicted in this survey shows a similar pattern and trajectory of adoption as was observed in the initial HeLF Electronic Management of Assessment (EMA) survey in 2011. However the impact on Heads of eLearning and their teams in relation to EMA at that time was considered to be significantly greater than noted in this survey.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the analysis of the Heads of e-Learning Forum (HeLF) survey on UK Higher Education (HE) provision, policies and support for tablet technologies undertaken during March/April 2014. It considers the impact of these technologies on learning and teaching and the role of the Head of eLearning and on their teams. The report also enables the sharing of policies, guidelines and case studies. It is based on the perceptions of HeLF members on the situation in their own institution. The report combines the quantitative data with the qualitative results.

For clarification the term “tablet technology” is defined as: “a portable computer that uses a touchscreen as its primary input device.” (<http://www.techterms.com/definition/tablet>), for example, an iPad, Nexus10, Microsoft Surface or Kindle Fire. This survey is not directed at smartphones or laptops, although it is appreciated that the distinctions are fine within what is a grey area.

This report is the fourth in a series of surveys of HeLF members that aim to understand and track the changing digital landscape in UK Higher Education, and its impacts on Heads of eLearning. Three earlier surveys on the Electronic Management of Assessment (EMA) undertaken from 2011 to 2013 are available on the HeLF website at: <http://www.helf.ac.uk>

METHODOLOGY

This research on the UK HE provision, policies and support for tablet technologies draws upon the perceptions of HeLF members on the situation in their own institution. Its members have an overview of eLearning strategy, policy and practice in their institution.

The HeLF membership was surveyed online in March and April 2014. The survey was developed by the authors who are members of the HeLF Steering Group. All the data has been held anonymously and securely. The results have been analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods.

RESULTS

There were 48 responses from separate institutions, resulting in a response rate of 37%. The results to each question are given below.

PURCHASING TABLETS

QUESTION 1: DOES YOUR UNIVERSITY PURCHASE TABLETS FOR THE FOLLOWING GROUPS OF PEOPLE?

	Academics	Administrators	Students
The whole Institution	2	0	1
For an entire Faculty	5	0	1
For an entire Department	7	0	9
Individuals	45	33	9

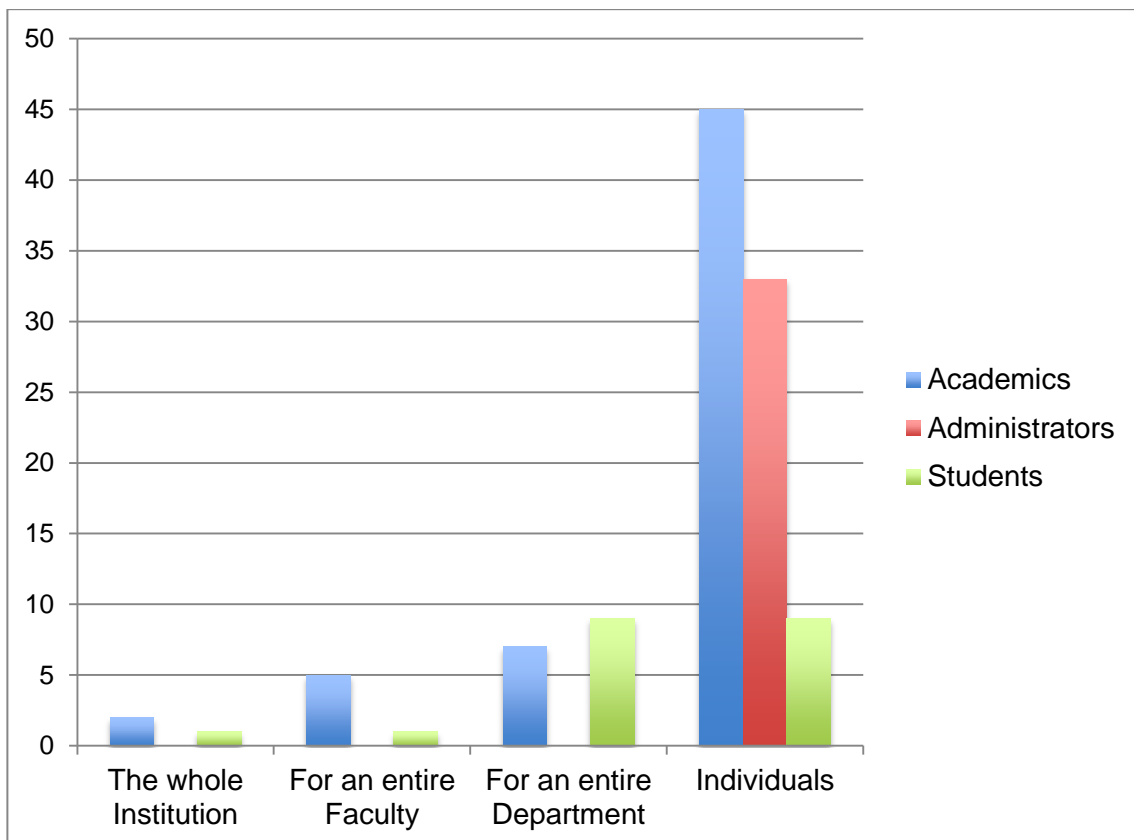


Figure 1: The number of Universities that purchased tablets for specific groups of users

Nearly all institutions purchase tablets for individual academics, about 67% purchase them for administrators and nearly 20% purchase them for students. 25% purchase them for all academics in entire Departments and Faculties and nearly 20% purchase them for all students in entire Departments and Faculties. Tablets are apparently never purchased for all administrators within in an entire Department or Faculty.

QUESTION 2: IF TABLETS ARE PURCHASED DO STAFF/STUDENTS HAVE A FREE CHOICE OF TABLET EG IPAD, ANDROID, WINDOWS?

	Yes	No	It varies
Staff	16	13	16
Students	1	12	7

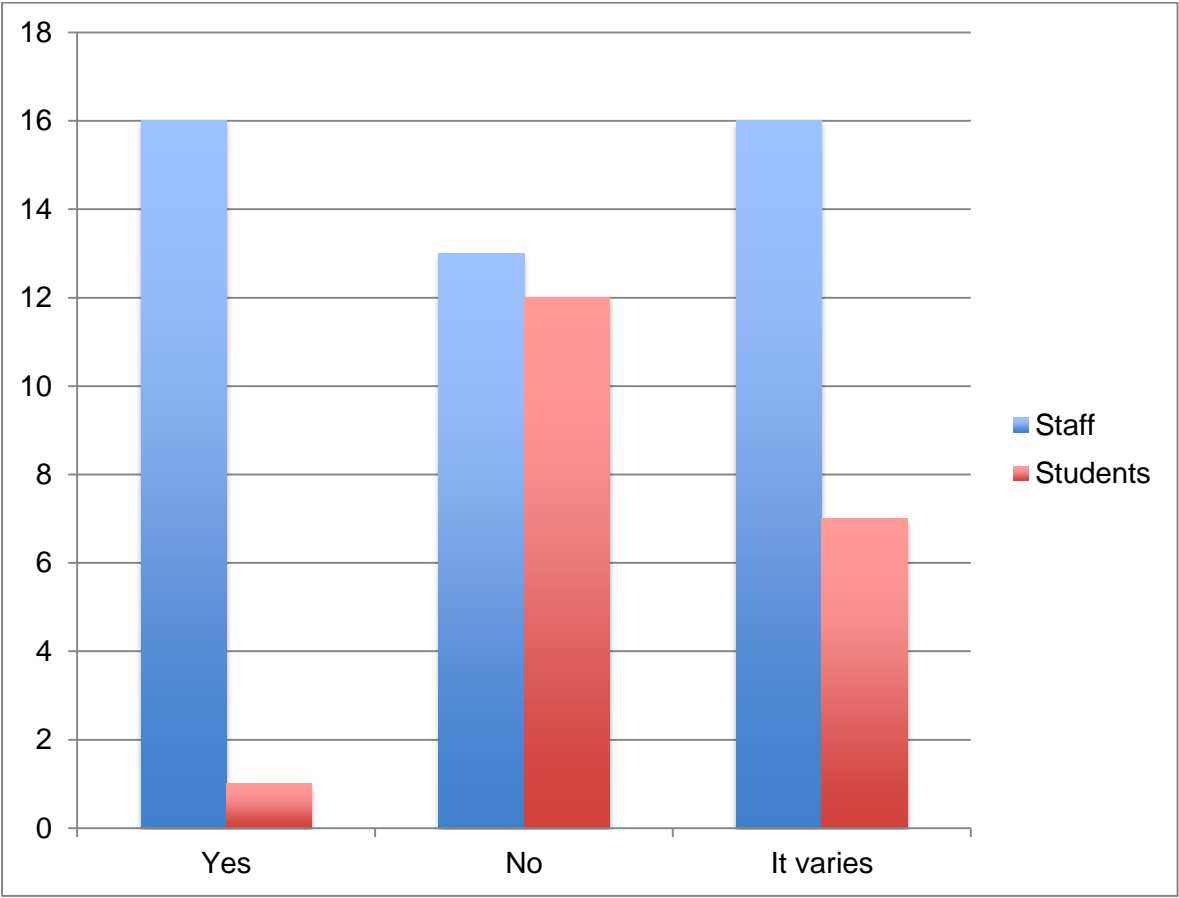


Figure 2: If tablets are purchased do staff/students have a free choice of tablet e.g. iPad, Android, Windows?

The picture regarding device choice within institutions varies markedly. Similar numbers of institutions allowed a free choice of device compared to those who dictated the device choice to staff. The number of institutions where no single model of device selection existed was identical to that where a free choice existed. It is therefore clear that institutions have not yet defined a clear model for purchasing tablet devices. Students were less likely to be able to choose.

QUESTION 3: IF TABLETS ARE PURCHASED AND THERE IS NOT A FREE CHOICE WHAT DOES THE INSTITUTION/FACULTY/DEPARTMENT PURCHASE?

	iPad	Android	Windows
Staff	25	6	3
Students	9	5	1

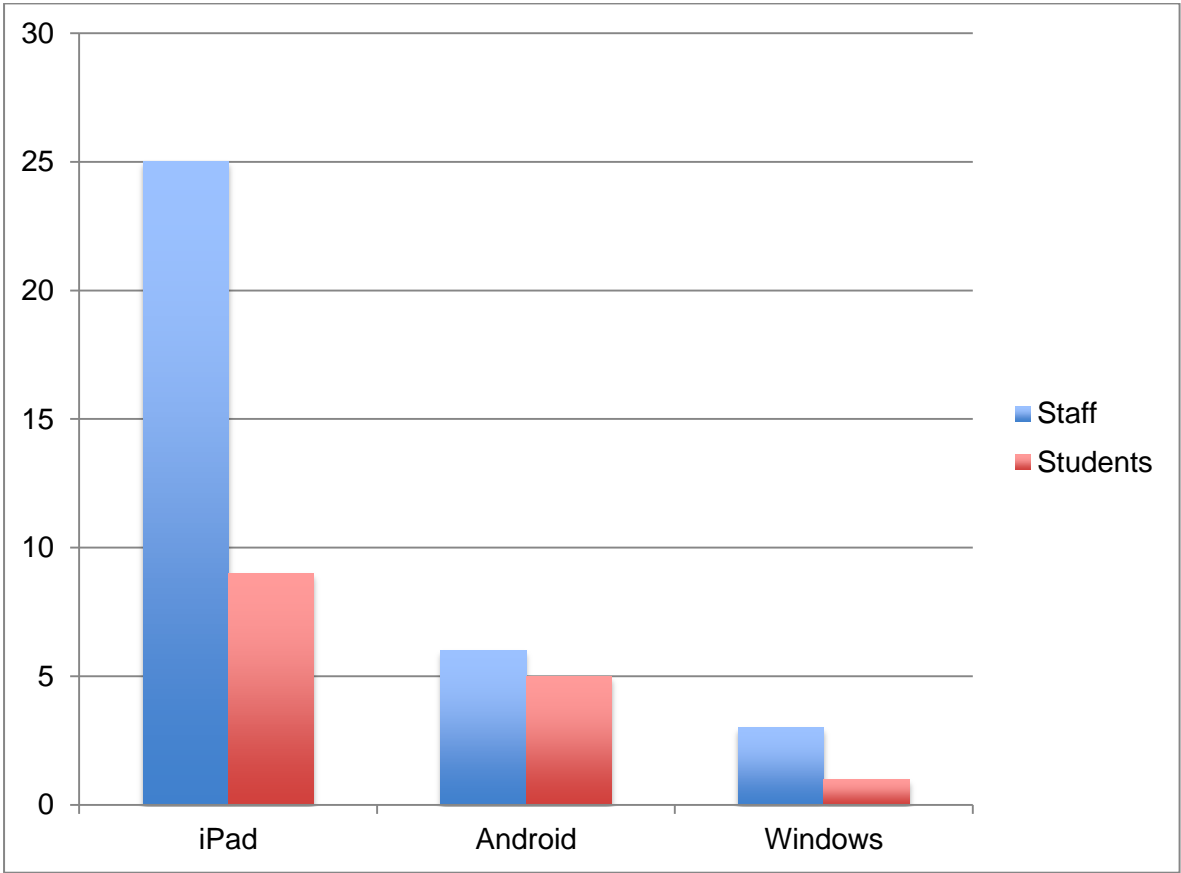


Figure 3: If tablets are purchased and there is not a free choice what does the institution/faculty/department purchase

iPads are the greatly preferred choice by institutions and departments where there is not a free choice. This distinction is less marked in relation to students, however their numbers are small compared to staff.

TABLET LOANS AND USE

QUESTION 4: DO YOU HAVE A SCHEME FOR LENDING TABLETS?

	Institutional	Local
Academics	8	21
Students	3	14

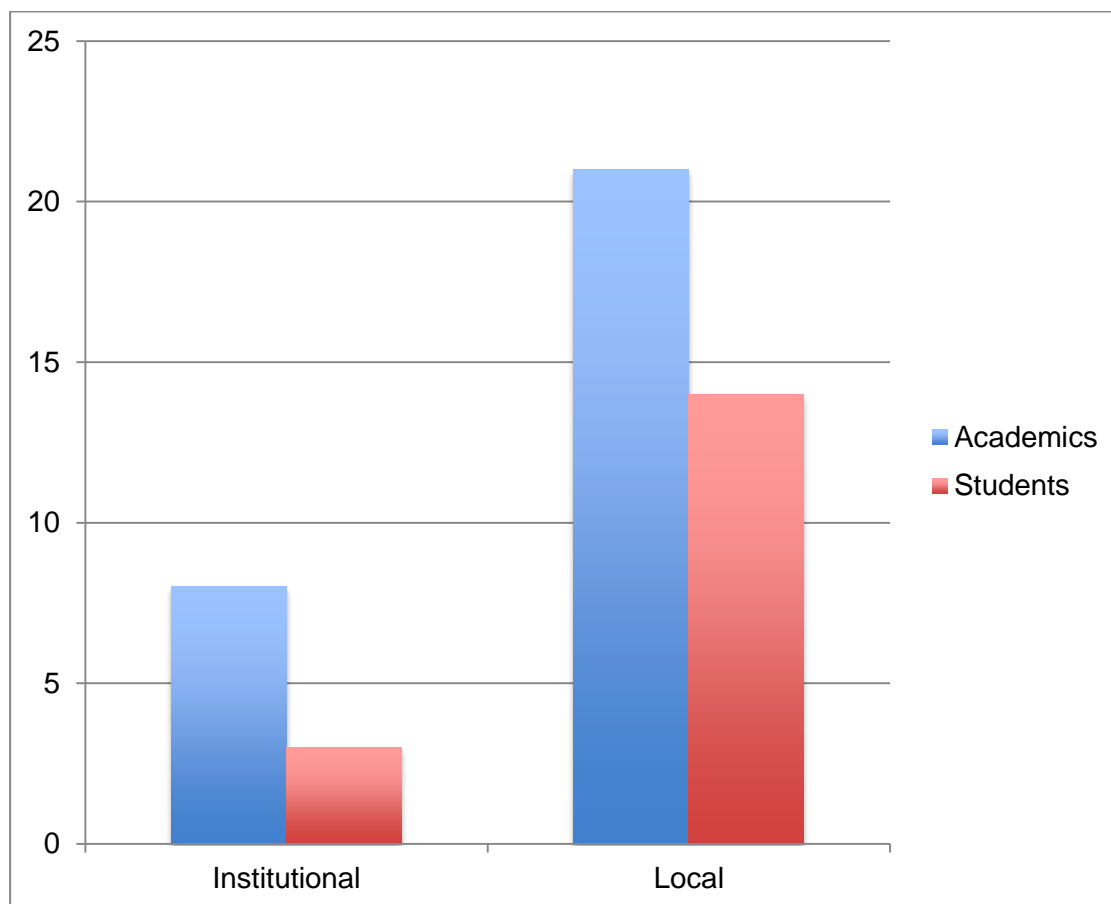


Figure 4: Lending schemes for tablets

Just over half the institutions who responded have a scheme to lend tablets. Lending tends to happen locally, with, perhaps surprisingly, more lending to academics than to students.

QUESTION 5: IF YOU HAVE A SCHEME WHAT TYPE OF TABLET CAN BE BORROWED?

	Response Percent	Response Count
iPad	64%	29
Android	24%	11
Windows	12%	5

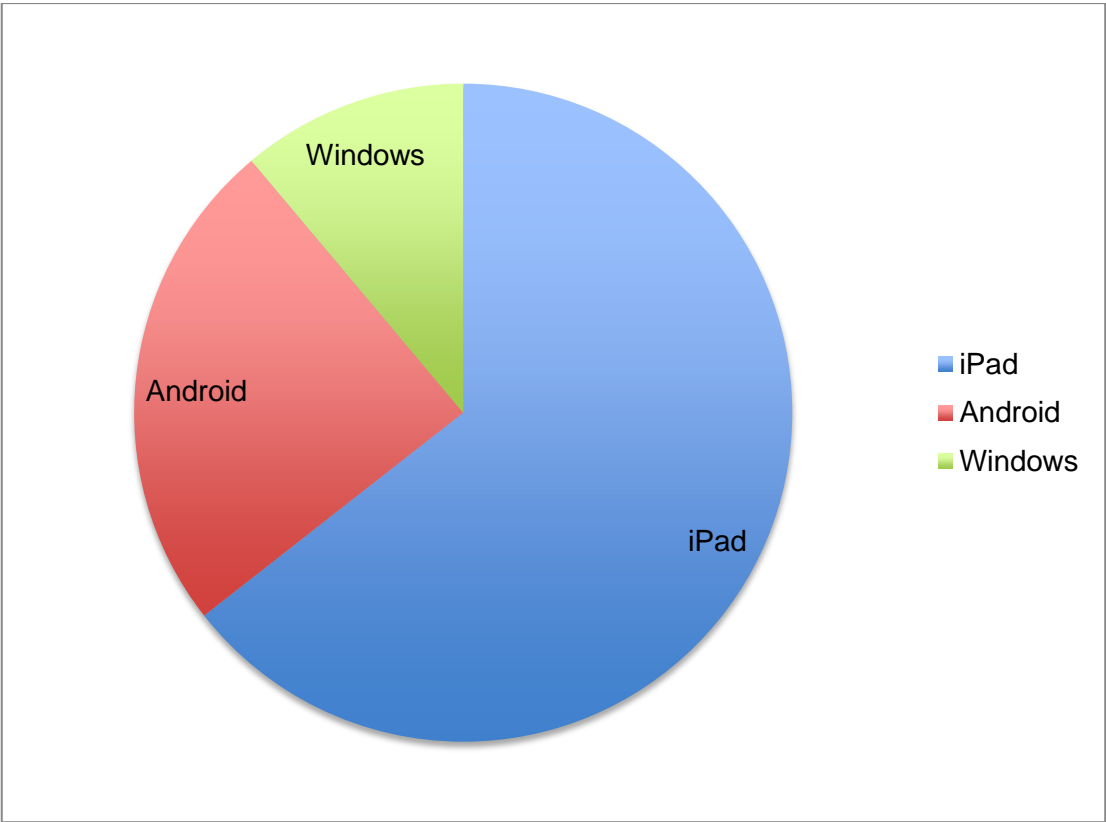


Figure 5: Percentages of types of tablet that can be borrowed

All of the institutions which have schemes in place (except for one) lend iPads, with a third also lending Androids. Institutions may have more than one scheme in place and these schemes may not lend the same types of device.

QUESTION 6: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LOANING TABLETS?

	To academics	To students
IT Services	12	4
eLearning Team	12	3
Library	3	4
Administrative staff	5	4

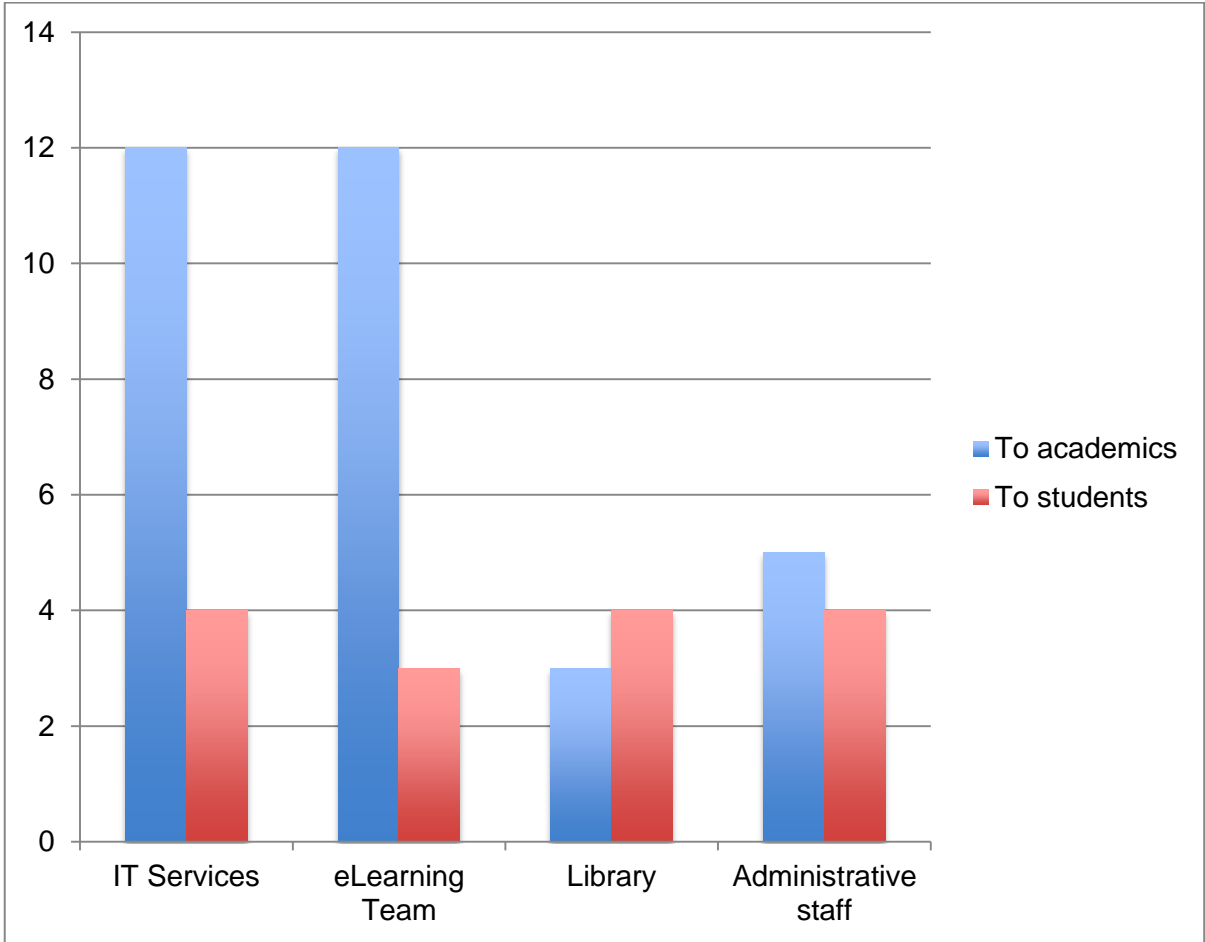


Figure 6: Responsibility for loaning tablets

There is a mixture of responsibility for managing lending schemes with the main lending providers being central IT Services or the central eLearning Team. In other cases departmental administrators or local eLearning teams or local IT representatives operate the scheme. In a number of institutions, tablets are loaned to academics who can then subsequently lend them to students.

QUESTION 7: WHAT PERCENTAGE OF STAFF HAVE A TABLET (EITHER INSTITUTIONALLY PROVIDED OR OWNED BY THE INDIVIDUAL)?

	0 - 25%	26 - 50%	51 - 75%	76 - 100%
Senior management	10	6	9	17
Academics	16	17	8	0
Administrative staff	35	3	2	0
Students	13	13	8	0

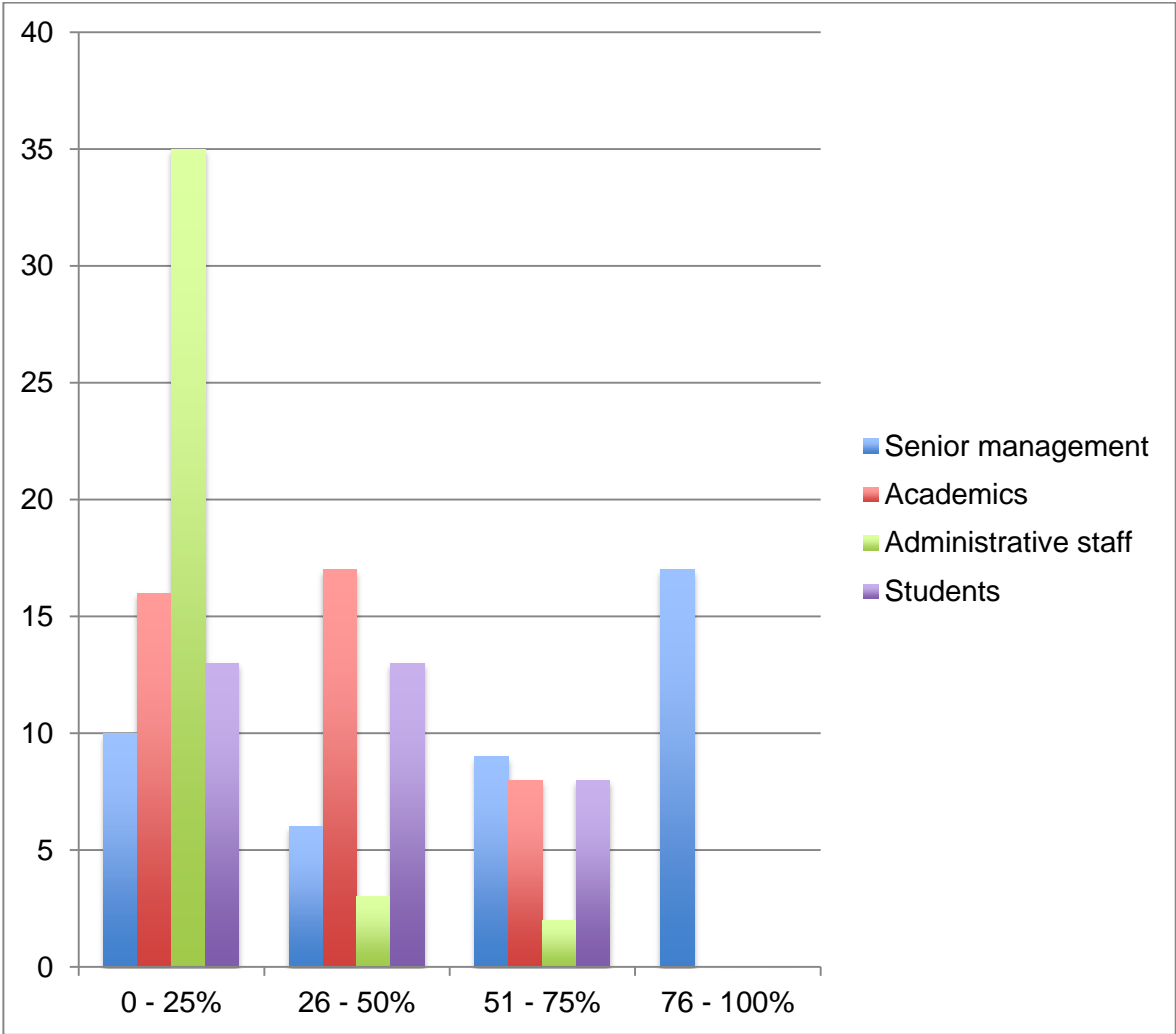


Figure 7: Percentage of staff categories having a tablet (either institutionally provided or owned by the individual)

More senior managers have tablets than any other group. Administrative staff are least likely to have them. However, responses to question 1 showed about 67% of institutions purchase

them for individual administrators. Question 1 did not distinguish between senior management and administrative staff, so it may be that respondents to Question 1 have conflated administrative and management staff. It seems therefore that senior managers in an administrative role, as opposed to senior academic managers, may be the principal users of tablet devices.

Respondents reported a broad range of student ownership of devices. However it is recognised that this question may be difficult to answer other than for devices which have been purchased for students by the institution. Overall reported ownership rates of tablets by students are perhaps lower than may have been anticipated given current perceptions about the growth of tablet ownership and student purchasing of such devices. (CISCO, 2012, Howe *et al*, 2014, Ofcom 2013, Farmer, 2014)

QUESTION 8: WHAT ARE ACADEMICS USING TABLETS FOR?

	0 - 25%	26 - 50%	51 - 75%	76 - 100%
Administration	19	11	1	5
eFeedback	31	5	0	1
During f2f sessions	28	5	2	1
During field work	28	3	2	1

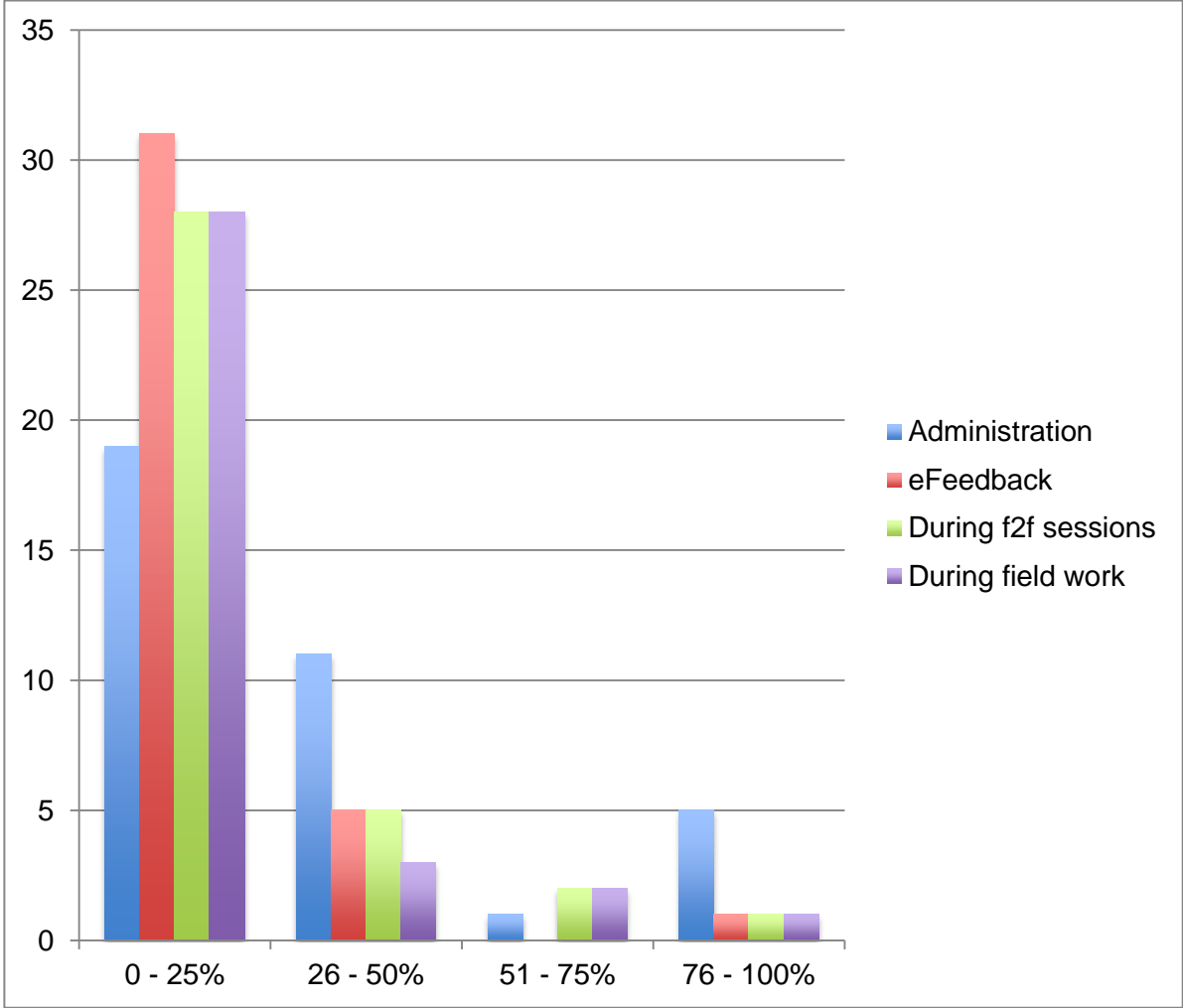


Figure 8: What percentage of academics are using tablets for different tasks?

The highest area of reported usage of tablets by academics is for administration with little use in learning and teaching. However, responses to this question indicate a broad coverage of use, but it is clear that adoption of tablets within academic practice remains limited.

QUESTION 9: POLICIES

	Yes	No	Under consideration
Bring Your Own Device for academics	10	20	16
Bring Your Own Device for students	8	18	18
Switch it On ie permitting the appropriate use by students in formal taught sessions	4	30	7
Paperless meetings	7	28	6
Remote Tablet device management (e.g. Airwatch)	5	31	5

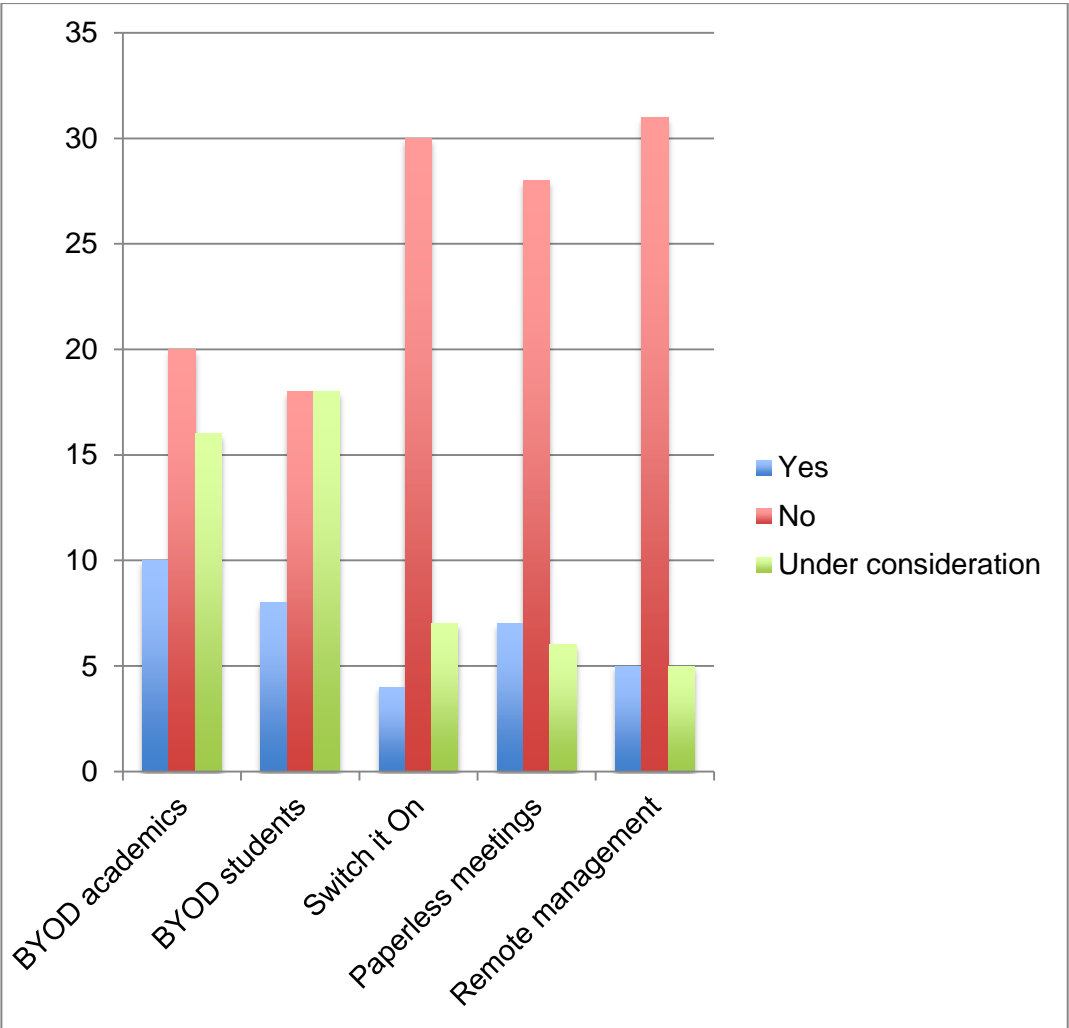


Figure 9: Policies

The majority of institutions who responded do not have policies on:

- Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) for academics
- Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) for students
- Switch it On ie permitting the appropriate use by students in formal taught sessions
- Paperless meetings
- Remote Tablet device management (e.g. Airwatch)

Where policies are in place, these tend to be focused on BYOD and administrative rather than academic purposes, which reinforces the responses to Question 8. A range of policies are under active consideration by significant numbers of those institutions who responded.

QUESTION 10: WHO FUNDS THE PURCHASE OF APPS FOR TEACHING OR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES?

	For academics	For administrative staff	For students
University	7	5	2
Department	33	23	12
Individual	23	18	20

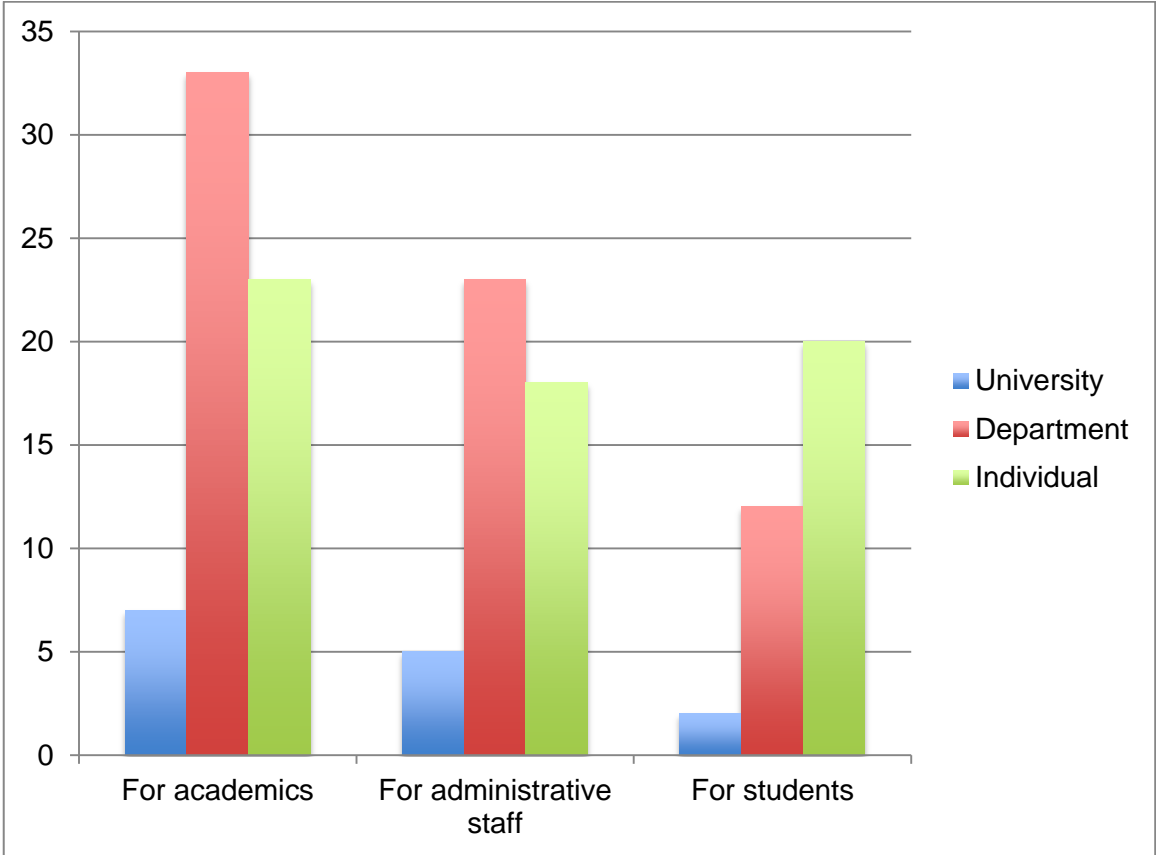


Figure 10: Funding for the purchase of apps for teaching or administrative purposes

It is mainly departments and individuals that fund the purchase of apps for academics, administrators and students. This reinforces responses to Question 9 and thus may change with the development of policies.

QUESTION 11: HOW ARE USER ACCOUNTS AND APPS MANAGED ON INSTITUTIONALLY PURCHASED DEVICES?

	For academics	For administrative staff	For students
Creates own ID	29	23	16
Institution creates ID	14	14	8

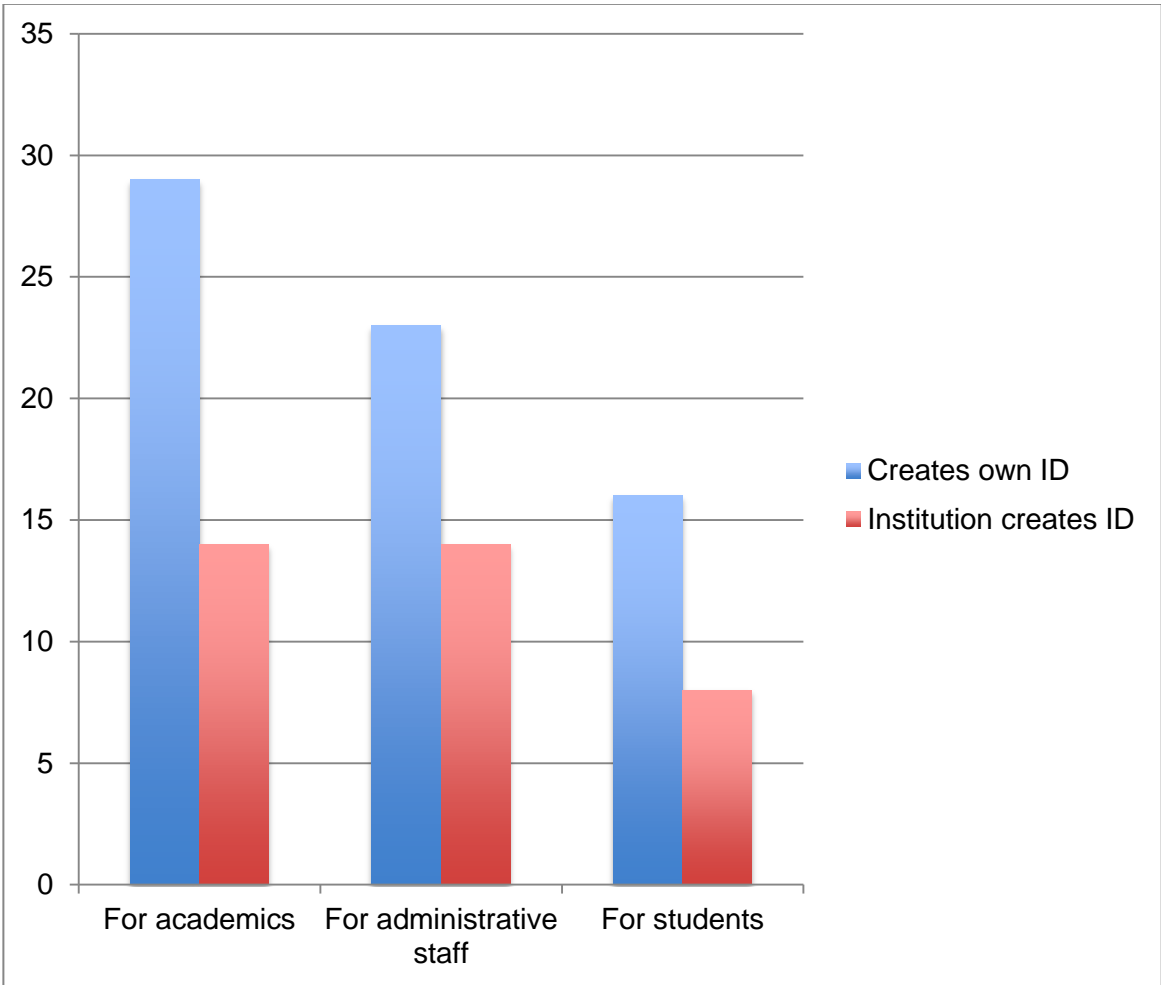


Figure 11: How are user accounts and apps managed on institutionally purchased devices?

In most cases, across all categories of users, individuals rather than the institution create their own ID and subsequently use this to self-manage their own device. Again this reinforces responses to Question 9 and may change as policies are developed.

QUESTION 12: ARE SUPPLIED TABLET DEVICES ISSUED WITH A CORE SET OF APPS PRE-INSTALLED?

	Yes	No
Academics	11	30
Administrative staff	6	26
Students	5	17

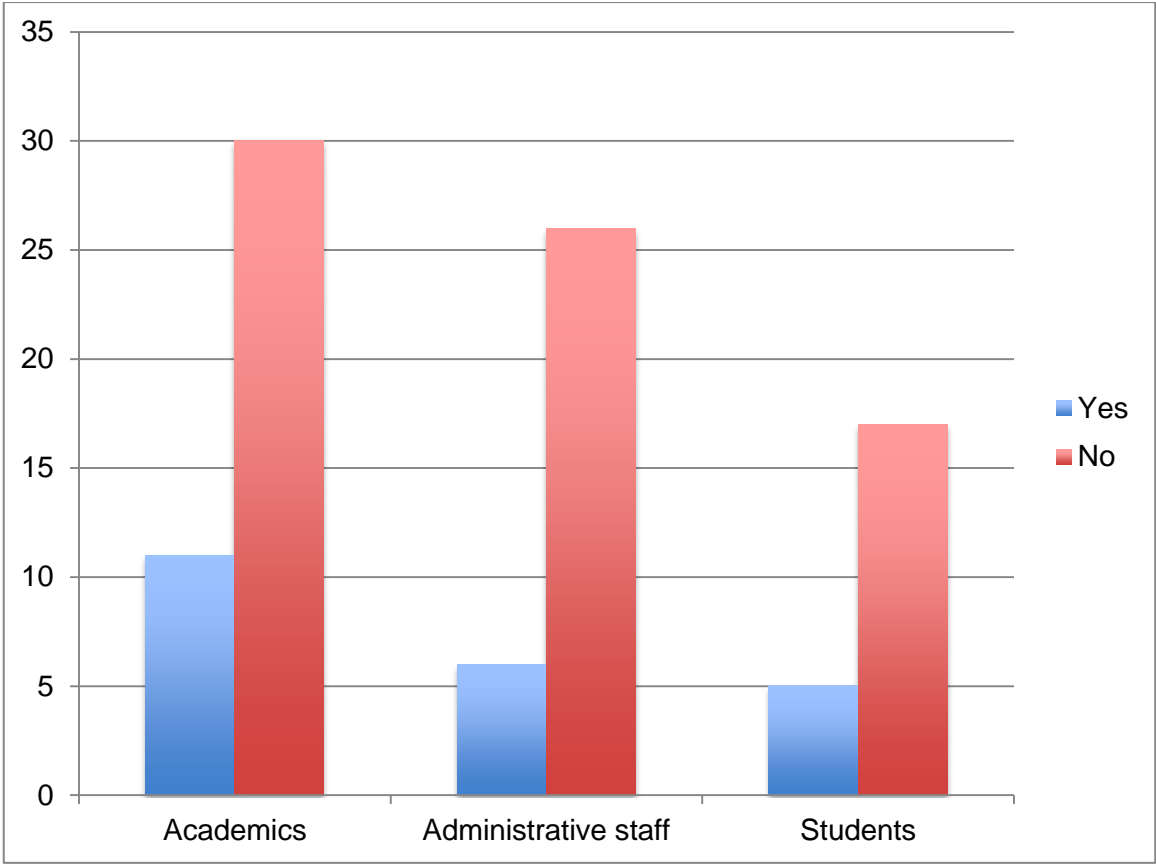


Figure 12: Are supplied tablet devices issued with a core set of apps pre-installed?

Most tablet devices which are issued, irrespective of the end user, are not supplied with a core set of apps.

If apps are supplied they include: Airwatch, Aurasma, Blackboard Mobile, eduroam, Explain Everything, Goodreader, iAnnotate, Meraki, Nearpod, Rosetta Stone, Skype, Turnitin, University (e.g., CampusM), Virtual desktop and some subject specific.

QUESTION 13: HOW DO YOU PROVIDE FUNDING TO SUPPORT PROJECTS TO INVESTIGATE THE USE OF TABLET DEVICES TO SUPPORT LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT?

	Response Percent	Response Count
University funded scheme	40%	22
Departmental scheme	29%	16
No project funding	31%	17

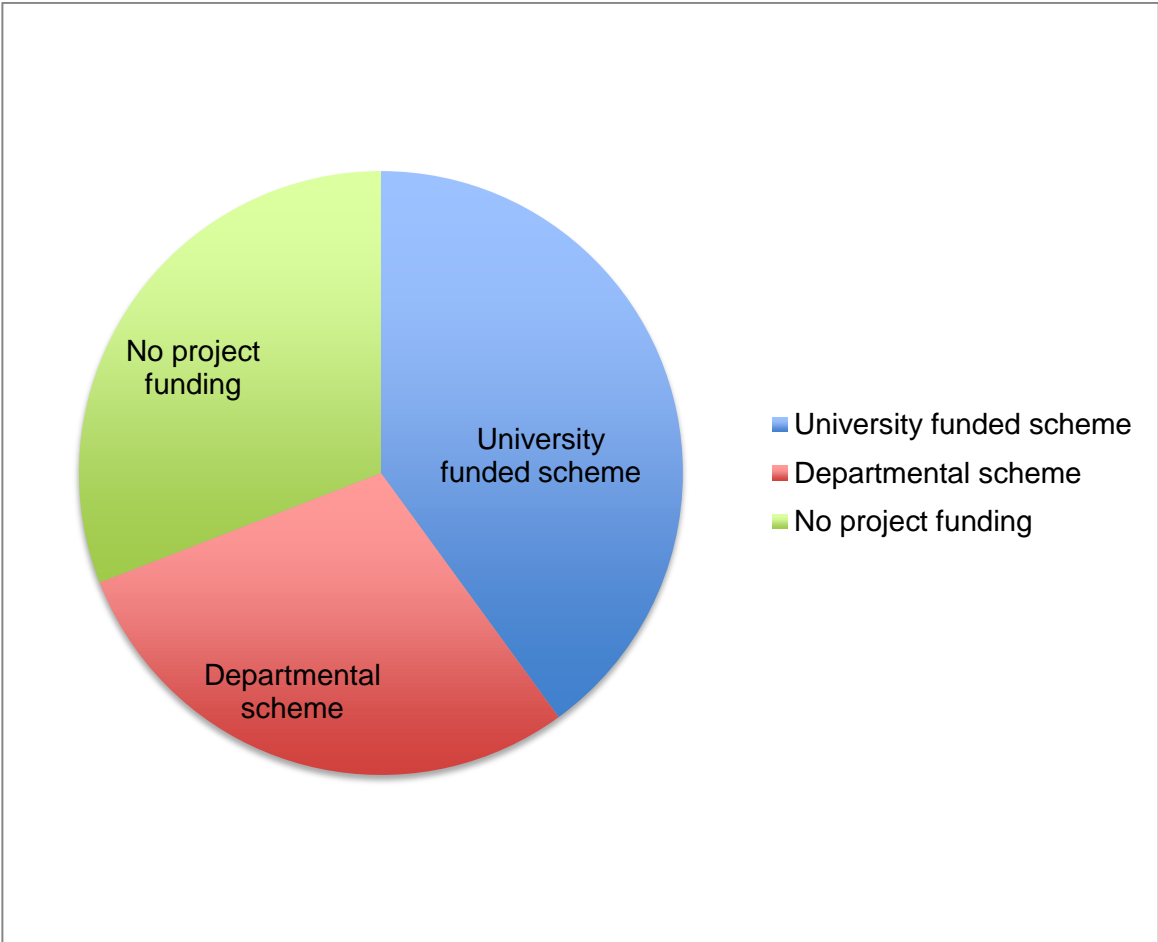


Figure 13: Funding to support projects to investigate the use of tablet devices to support learning, teaching & assessment?

Of the 13 free text responses describing funding schemes, only two institutions had received external funding to purchase tablets. The remainder, whether university or department funded, were almost wholly small-scale and practitioner led in terms of individual project aims rather than top-down, strategic in direction.

IMPACT ON ROLES, PRACTICES AND INSTITUTIONS

QUESTION 14: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THERE BEEN AN IMPACT ON ROLES?

	Significant	Minimal	None
On your role as Head of eLearning e.g. policy development, infrastructure consultation	13	30	1
The role of the learning technologists e.g. support, development	17	26	0

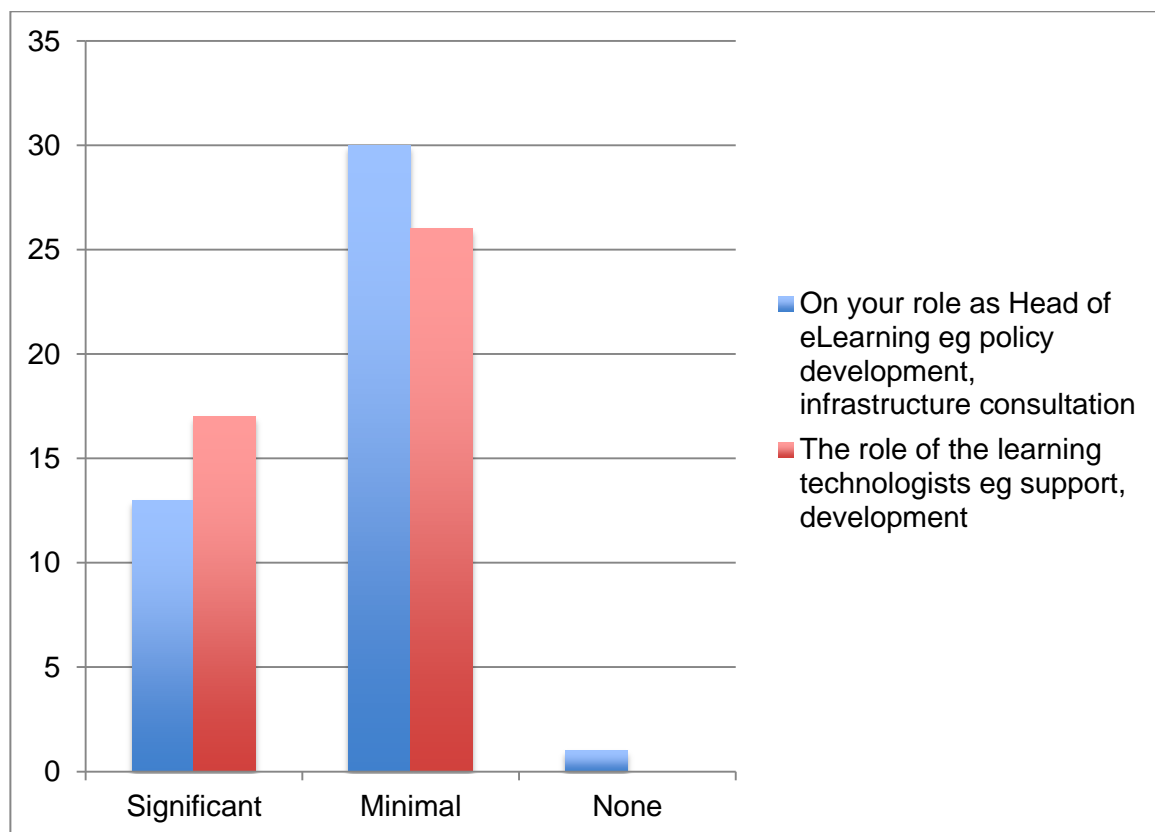


Figure 14: Impact on roles

The reasons for the low impact to date on the roles of the Head of eLearning and the learning technologists appear to be that:

- Tablets are mainly used for administration rather than learning and teaching
- Purchasing and lending occurs more in IT Services than the eLearning team

There are opposite extremes in the impact on the role, from the large amount of support required from departments in which nearly everyone has a tablet, compared to the minimal support required from departments in which few people have them.

“Significant only for those departments where tablets are being used”

The survey provides indications that the impact of tablet technologies on the Head of e-Learning and learning technologists roles will increase, for example, with increasing interest in using tablets to make face-to-face sessions more interactive, and the potential to transform marking and feedback practices using software such as the Turnitin iPad app.

QUESTION 15: PROJECT EVALUATIONS, CASE STUDIES OR POLICY DOCUMENTS

Some survey respondents kindly shared links to project evaluations, case studies and policy documents and these are provided below.

Corporate device policy

<http://www.brad.ac.uk/itservices/media/itservices/allfiles/documents/mobile-device-usage-policy.pdf>

Policy and guidelines

<http://www.brighton.ac.uk/clt/resources/blended-learning/blended-learning-policies/>

Reflections on the use of Tablets

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/12497737/reports/TabletsatUCS201213.pdf>

https://www.academia.edu/4492028/Persuasive_Learning_Design_through_Context_Engineering_LTRI_CS

Mobile survey and projects

<http://blogs.northampton.ac.uk/learntech/?s=MALT>

Case studies including enhancing the formative assessment environment

http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/~media/Files/publications/case_studies/ASG_Effective_Use_Mobile%20Learning

Staff training

<http://totallyrewired.wordpress.com/page/4/>

iPads project

<http://technologyenhancedlearning.net/ipadsforillustration/>

iPad project and apps

<http://blog.yorks.ac.uk/ipadproject>

QUESTION 17: FURTHER INFORMATION

Within the survey, HeLF members were given the opportunity of providing free text comments to provide further context to the use, adoption and strategic drivers for tablet devices within their institutions. This section provides details of responses from the survey, organised into the following emergent themes.

- Institutional and Local Implementation
- Device Selection and Supply
- Impacts on Institutional Systems and Processes
- Evaluation and Impact of Projects

Institutional and Local Implementation

“The introduction of tablets (iPads) has taken place in 3 ways:

Through a 1:1 scheme to introduce iPad for all staff in the School of Education. This project responded to the OFSTED requirements for reporting on the supervision of trainee teachers in School with a very short turn around. In this scheme the iPad is used as an administrative tool. iPads are issued for the length of employment whether it is long (permanent staff) or short (temporary supervisor). This project has had an impact on digital literacy (although it hasn't been measured) and on the IT management of BYOD (development of MDM, procurement through VPP, DP).

The second way is the 'unregulated purchase' for individuals where academic or administrative departments purchase iPads for their staff on request. Historically, this mode of introduction didn't go through registration with MDM so is not BYOD per se. The iPad are intended (to increase productivity and convenience) for personal use either by administrative or academic staff.

For small projects to replace dedicated and costly hardware with a combination App/iPad. For example for field work in Biosciences field courses where the iPad are used to replace portable 'clickers' to monitor primates' behaviours. As a small loan service for specific modules where students use the iPad in connection to teaching in primary/secondary education e.g. Music in Education programme or ICT in Education students.”

“The university's focus is primarily on supporting staff and students BYOD rather than investing in the purchase of tablets.”

“We are dealing with very small numbers overall. However, academics are interested in using tablets more.”

“There has been a limited role out of iPads mainly to senior managers to enable paperless meeting (which is a policy at this level), but below this level it depends of the faculties and departments if such devices are provided.”

“Purchased for specific committees to reduce paper use probably about 15% of academic and administrative staff - tends to be for people in managerial roles who attend meetings.”

“Several departments have schemes for giving out tablets, but we don't have information about overall tablet usage.”

“All Senior Management Team (VC, 2x DVC, 2x PVC); all Deans of School (5), all Associate Deans (normally 3 per school): Learning and Teaching, Research and KT, Student Recruitment/Success). Probably most Heads of Department. Only School of Health to my knowledge has purchased a set of iPads (20) that are available to use by staff - but not allocated to individuals. iPads are much less likely to be bought for staff in administrative roles, either centrally or within schools. STUDENTS - Student Union Sabbatical Officers ONLY – loan scheme.”

“Just to confirm, these data represent two departments within the University. There is no overarching policy at present.”

“Low as departments have to submit a business case to our IT Services even where purchased out of their local budget.”

Device Selection and Supply

“We are seeing increasing interest in Microsoft Surface (for students). There is a laptop / netbook loan service in the library. They are looking at whether there is demand for tablets to be included in this offer.”

“Beginning a pilot scheme in two Faculties to have a pool of iPads/tablets for lecturers to use in the classroom.”

Impacts on Institutional Systems and Processes

“As I have responsibility for classroom AV we are also looking at how the standard AV kit needs to be extended to allow presenters to use a tablet instead of the static PC. Currently testing WePresent - a wireless solution as cabling can be problematic. We present supports all operating systems - which we consider essential. It will also allow students to share their tablets with the data projector - not simply the academic's.”

“We are still awaiting high bandwidth cross-university WiFi coverage.”

“There are issues (like Qns 10 to 12), plus some technical ones such as not being allowed to use them wirelessly with the data projectors. Small issues which we are working around.”

Evaluation and Impact of Projects

“We've had a 'tablets in learning and teaching' project running this year. Blog posts at <http://blog.lboro.ac.uk/elearning/?cat=83> . This will be updated shortly with reports from individual projects. Some very positive experiences, especially around use of tablets for fieldwork.”

“iPad Project blog - <http://blog.yorks.ac.uk/ipadproject>”

DISCUSSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The survey provides a snapshot of the current situation regarding the adoption and implementation of tablet devices within the UK HE sector in early 2014. The perceptions and views of Heads of eLearning across a range of institutions, representing over a third of the HeLF membership, offers a useful starting point for the development of further surveys and development.

In particular, a number of issues and questions emerge from this research which merit closer analysis and investigation, and which HeLF intends to undertake across its membership.

- Why have tablet devices appear to have had to date only a relatively low impact on the role of Head of eLearning and learning technologists in relation to learning and teaching. Available case studies demonstrate that using tablet technologies in f2f teaching can make sessions more interactive, and change the role of the academic. It is anticipated that the impact on eLearning teams will evolve as further affordances are identified. (Beetham and White, 2013, Beetham, 2014). The authors' inference that the current focus of tablet devices in institutions on the administrative domain decreases the impact on HeLF members requires further exploration.
- The survey indicates a diversity of practice in terms of where, and how, tablet devices are supported within institutions (e.g. IT teams, eLearning teams, etc). Further research to explore how e-learning units work with IT colleagues in terms of tablet device set up and configuration when purchased; accounts for downloading apps (personal or institutional); device and app management (bulk licensing, downloading, synchronizing etc); policies for loaning devices. How does the drive from eLearning teams in terms of using apps to support academic practice link in with how devices are configured by IT teams?
- Where do Heads of eLearning see their role and influence (and that of their teams) evolving in terms of strategy, policy, best practice case studies, training and support? What strategies and mechanisms do Heads intend to adopt to better support these transitions?
- Why do there appear to be significant differences across institutions between developments whereby an entire department has issued tablet technologies to all academic staff compared to those who don't? How are these differences likely to develop in the future?
- Could a sector-wide consensus be developed on a core set of apps to support learning and teaching, and associated administration? Clearly there are local differences and drivers but we suggest there may also be a core of 'must-haves' that it would be helpful to surface.
- Are there opportunities to explore synergies with other "Heads" groups who will be similarly impacted by the increasing adoption of tablet devices? In particular, colleagues in UCISA and SCHOMS are likely to be in a similar situation and we may currently be working in silos.

CONCLUSION

This survey provides a snapshot of the adoption and utilization of tablet devices within a cross-section of UK HE institutions in early 2014. It is clear from the responses received that there is significant variability across the sector in how tablet devices are purchased and managed within institutions, and the perceived target audiences for these devices. Underpinning policies around the use of tablet devices are relatively sparse, but in a significant numbers of institutions are under active consideration. Issues around the management of devices, user accounts and apps are equally not consistently addressed across institutions. It is likely, however, that as ownership of devices and the development of policies increases, that such issues will need to be tackled more effectively. The broad diversity of approaches to device purchase, ownership and management evidenced in the survey responses highlights some of the issues in integrating what is essentially a personal, consumer device into an enterprise architecture. Perhaps inevitably as the adoption and utilization of such devices across all aspects of HE increase, institutions will need to consider and address such issues in a more consistent and coherent manner.

Impact on academic practice appears, to date, to be relatively low compared to the perceived impact on administrative usage. The principal focus of tablet devices in the administrative domain, coupled with primary responsibility for devices resting with IT Services, means that the impact on Heads of eLearning and on their teams to date has been minimal. However, innovation within the academic community, primarily supported by project funding, has given a clear demonstration that appropriate integration of tablet devices can have a significant positive impact on the student learning experience. (Johnson *et al*, 2013). In particular, the potential of tablet devices to make face-to-face sessions more interactive; to change marking and feedback practices to enable richer feedback to be provided more rapidly, and to provide greater flexibility in the place and pace of student learning means that the impact on eLearning teams is likely to increase.

It may be the case that tablet devices are still seen as a solution looking for a problem within the academic domain with a lack of clear understanding of the potential affordances of such devices on academic practice. If this is the case, then staff may perceive the tablet simply as a convenient administrative tool (as suggested from the survey data) for quickly checking email, taking notes in meetings, etc. There may therefore be a potentially significant role on e-Learning teams in working with academic staff (and through them with students) to illustrate the potential usefulness of these devices on academic practice and the student experience.

Overall the position of tablet devices within the UK HE sector in early 2014 closely mirrors the situation relating to electronic management of assessment (EMA) observed in a similar HeLF survey in 2011. It is likely that a similar rapid trajectory of uptake and integration is likely to be observed for tablets as has been observed for EMA within the sector, further reinforcing observations above on the likely impact within UK HE institutions.

REFERENCES

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