

Key Findings for the Fiscal Year 2006 Core Data Service

With data from 960 participating institutions, the EDUCAUSE Core Data Service helps campus planners make informed decisions

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Higher education faces relentless pressure for accountability, including for IT initiatives. Responding appropriately requires reliable data about IT practices, structures, and expenditures at comparable institutions. A number of data-collection activities arose through the years to meet this need.

In 2003 EDUCAUSE launched a program called the EDUCAUSE Core Data Service (CDS), which consists of

- an annual survey that collects data about IT environments and practices on (primarily) member campuses;
- a Web-based, interactive database service available to all who complete the survey through which they can access data contributed by their peers to help benchmark, plan, and make decisions about IT on their campuses; and
- an annual, publicly available summary report about campus IT environments based on data contributed through the survey.

A defining characteristic of the EDUCAUSE CDS is its collection and presentation of data identifiable by institution in the interactive database component of the service. A second fundamental principle of the program is that only



those campuses that complete and submit the survey each year may log into the interactive database site. However, EDUCAUSE feels an obligation to provide some overall data analysis to member campuses that do not participate, as well as to the vendor community that supports the association, and thus publishes an annual summary report, the key findings of which are summarized here.

Methodology

All data captured by the core data survey are submitted electronically through a Web-based interface that enables respondents to answer the approximately 50 questions grouped under five categories: IT Organization, Staffing,

and Planning; IT Financing and Management; Faculty and Student Computing; Network and Security; and Information Systems. Participants can enter data, save them, and return to the site at another time to enter more data or change data already entered. They have about two months to submit the survey, which can take anywhere from several hours to several days to complete, depending on the ready availability of the campus data requested. Note that all financial data sought are for the previous fiscal year, so actual funding/expenditures rather

than projected budgets are captured. For example, the survey launched in January 2007 sought financial data for fiscal year 2005–2006 and thus is referred to as the 2006 core data survey. Once a campus submits its survey, data cannot be changed except by special request, for example, in the case of incorrect data having been submitted.

Embedded throughout the survey are a variety of pop-up and linked help notices, electronic navigation to a glossary of terms and definitions, and other aids to clarify questions and to obtain consistent responses. An audit system provides red-flag messages to respondents if inconsistent data are entered, giving the respondent an opportunity to correct data after

viewing an explanation of why the data appear to be problematic.

A total of 933 institutions had submitted the 2006 survey when we froze the data set in May 2007 to do the analyses for the summary report. As of December 1, 2007, 960 campuses had completed the survey, a 35 percent response rate of EDUCAUSE members and other invited institutions, the highest to date. Responding institutions were 55 percent public and 45 percent private.

Key Findings

The findings reported below are based on the frozen data set of 933 institutions. The purpose of the summary report is to provide aggregate data in simple form for those who do not have access to the interactive database service. In our analyses we have not tried to provide every possible cut on the data but rather some summary data that we believe will be widely useful.

Looking at IT organizational structures and leadership, two interesting findings include the following:

- The most commonly reported title was CIO, which was reported either as a unique title (22 percent) or as part of a broader title (18.6 percent) for a total of 40.6 percent of ALL responses, up from 35.3 percent last year.
- The percentage of top-level IT persons sitting on the president's cabinet increased nearly 2 percent over the last year, from 46 percent to 47.8 percent of ALL respondents, but once again a higher percentage (about 63 percent, up from 59 percent) of AA schools reported this to be the case. As well, AA schools showed a much higher percentage of top IT administrators reporting directly to the president (46.9 percent as compared to 31.5 percent for ALL respondents).

Some notable findings related to IT management practices include the following:

- Looking at the total number of centralized FTE IT staff, there was a significant mean increase of 1.85 FTE staff for ALL responding institutions.

- The mean number of individuals (all employees, including faculty, plus all students, both full-time and part-time) supported per centralized FTE IT worker was just under 187.9, representing a significant decrease over the past year.

- While 2005 had an across-the-board increase in number of computers owned or leased by institutions in all Carnegie groups, the fiscal year 2006 results found no significant change in this number for any of the groups.

- The ratio of centralized IT funding spent per FTE student for ALL respondents increased from the FY2005 to the FY2006 survey, with a median of \$909 per FTE student for ALL respondents.

- The estimated percentage of campus computers with replacement cycles funded in the budget remained constant for all of the Carnegie groups except doctoral institutions, where a significant increase was observed.

- Overall, the percentage of institutions that reported using an outsourcing or ASP arrangement to run at least one campus IT function increased over the past year, from 57 percent to nearly 62 percent, the second year in a row showing a significant increase.

- There was an increase overall in the percentage of schools that track bandwidth utilization (from about 67 percent to over 71 percent). In addition, there was a significant decrease in the number of AA schools that reported no tracking or shaping of bandwidth use.

Some notable findings related to IT security practices include the following:

- Overall, fewer than 1 percent of ALL respondents reported having no firewalls, with the most common strategy being the deployment of a firewall at the external Internet connection (89.3 percent, an increase from the previous year).

- Nearly 50 percent of ALL campuses reported having deployed personal firewall software, a significant increase.

- Far and away the most common security practice is requiring all critical systems to be expeditiously patched or updated, with more than 97 percent of ALL respondents reporting this practice and no significant differences among Carnegie groups.

- More than 63 percent of ALL respondents reported that they had undertaken a formal campus security risk assessment, up from 58 percent last year.

- Nearly 57 percent of ALL respondents reported that they require end-user authentication for all network access. Another 24.2 percent are either in the process of implementing this requirement or are planning to do so, with an additional 12 percent considering it.

With regard to student and instructional computing:

- More than 12 percent of ALL respondents offer a service to provide online music and movies, an increase of 50 percent in the number of schools that reported offering such a service last year.

- The percentage overall of institutions that reported employing a course management system for all or nearly all courses increased significantly, while the percentage that reported not using a CMS decreased once more, with fewer than 1 percent of ALL respondents reporting not using or planning to use a CMS.

- There was an increase among ALL respondents in offering many kinds of support to faculty in the use of IT in teaching and learning, with "faculty training on request" the most employed support mechanism, reported by more than 94 percent of ALL respondents.

Notable changes in the deployment of technologies included the following:

- There was a significant increase in the use of voice-over-IP technology among ALL responding schools.
- The highest level of wireless network access is in libraries, with over

80 percent of ALL respondents reporting that 76–100 percent of their libraries provide wireless access, an increase of nearly 10 percent over last year and 30 percent over the previous three years.

- There was a significant leap in deployment of wireless security technologies at all types of institutions, with an approximately 7 percent increase in deployment overall and about a 34 percent increase over the previous two years.
- The spam plague that all campuses have unfortunately suffered has resulted in almost universal adoption of antispam tools, with nearly 98 percent of ALL respondents having already deployed this technology and fewer than 1/2 percent of campuses not planning to do so.
- Nearly 75 percent of ALL respondents have deployed antispyware software, with only 2.5 percent not planning to do so, indicating that this technology

also has been readily embraced in a very short period of time.

With regard to information systems implementations:

- The percentage of institutions completing an ERP implementation increased significantly, with more than 53 percent of ALL respondents reporting a completed implementation.
- Purchasing a commercial product and customizing it is the most common system acquisition strategy, with about 77 percent of ALL institutions reporting this strategy.
- About 91 percent of ALL responding institutions have implemented a web portal or have such an implementation in process or planned.
- More than 96 percent of ALL institutions with a web portal implemented or planned reported that they have integrated or plan to integrate the portals with campus information

systems, with this high level of integration consistent across all types of institutions.

The *EDUCAUSE Core Data Service Fiscal Year 2006 Summary Report* is available at no charge in PDF format at <http://www.educause.edu/apps/coredata/reports/2006/>. General information about the Core Data Service may be found at <http://www.educause.edu/apps/coredata>. Note that the aggregated data in the summary are not nearly as helpful in benchmarking as accessing the database and using peer group analysis for much finer-grained comparisons, which we recommend. You can gain access to this service by completing the 2007 core data survey, which became accessible for data entry early in 2008. *e*

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