

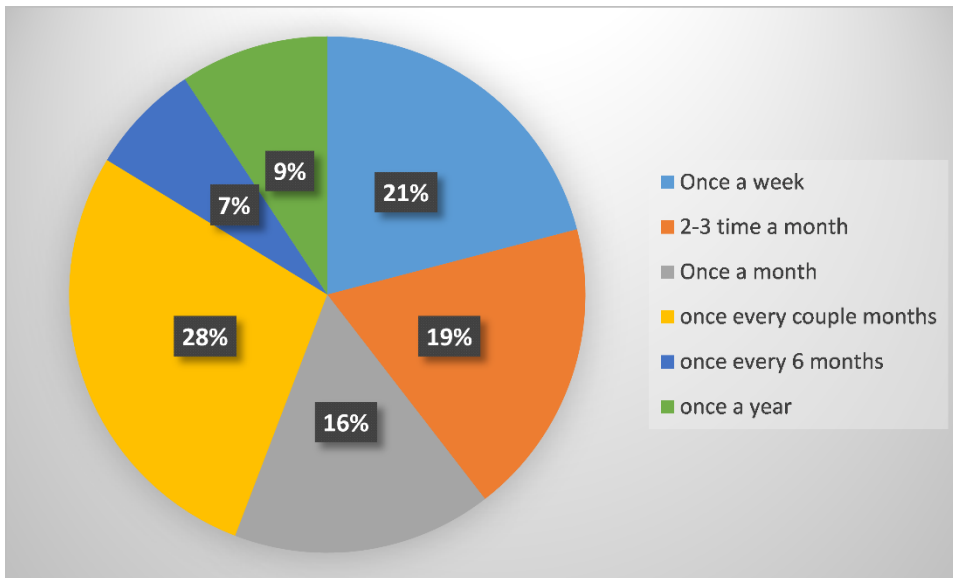
Collaborate User Survey 2015

This report provides a summary of the responses to the Collaborate User Survey 2015 which we ran in March 2015. It was created by the Learning Teaching and Web Section within Information Services.

This survey was sent out to the Virtual Classroom/Meeting User Group and the Collaborate Alerts mailing lists which reach approximately 320 staff at the University. There were 45 responses to the survey. These lists include staff who we know use Collaborate, there may be more staff who use Collaborate and hopefully will be included in the survey next year as we continue to add people to the above mailing lists.

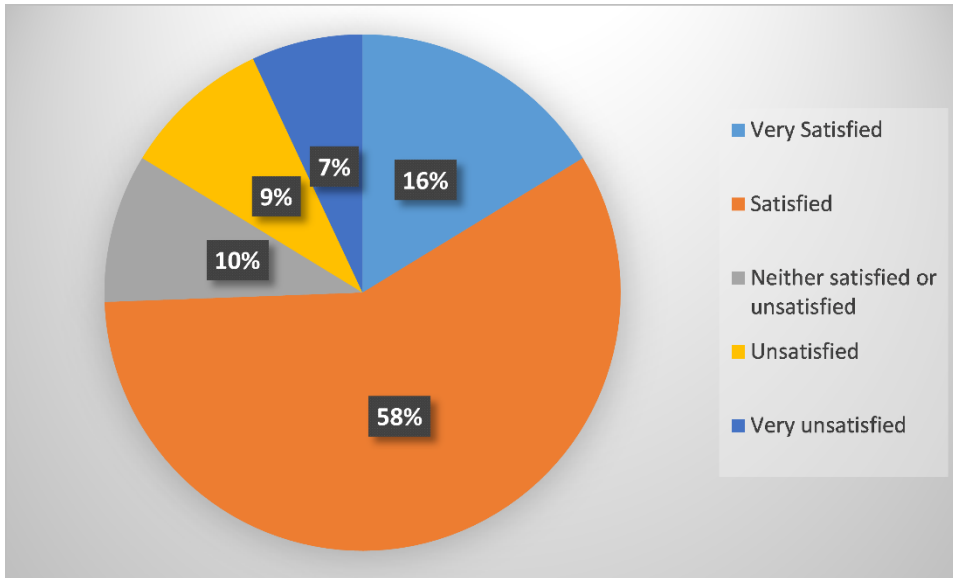
This was the first year of this survey which we now plan to undertake annually as we will be able to compare data and feedback from previous years and continue to improve the Collaborate service and support within the University.

Q.1 How often do you use Collaborate?



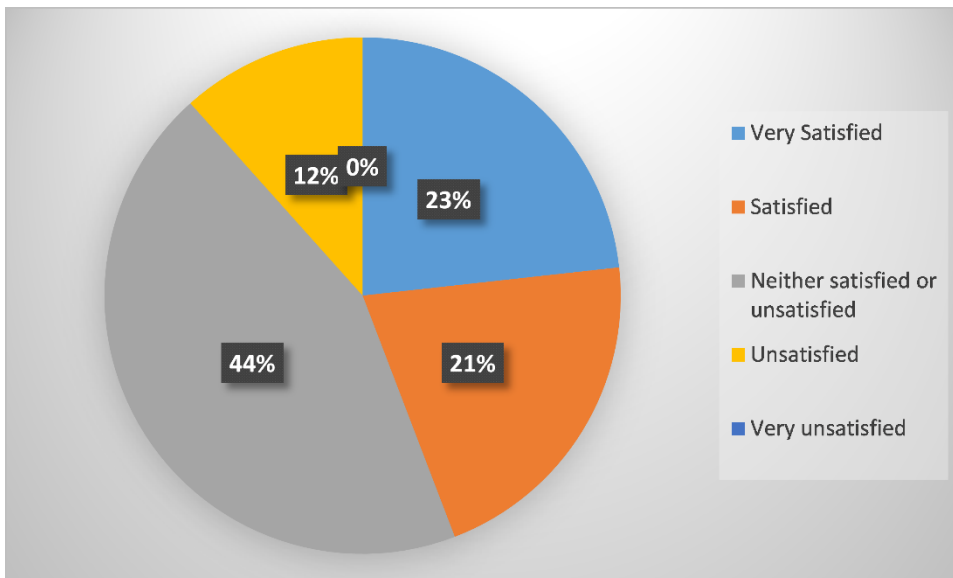
As this survey was only sent out to staff who we know to use Collaborate, our first question was to find out how frequently they use it, and this confirmed that everyone who responded to the survey have used Collaborate. This graph shows that one fifth of those surveyed were using Collaborate once a week.

Q.2 How satisfied are you with Collaborate?



As can be seen in the graph above over 74% of respondents were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the Collaborate tool. There is room for improvement which is why we have the user group involved in the beta testing and feedback sessions for the Collaborate upgrade in 2016. Hopefully with users’ feedback from the beta it will create a tool that will meet user satisfaction.

Q.3 How satisfied are you with the current Collaborate support service?



Next year we will ask this question a bit differently, maybe “have you accessed the Collaborate support service at the University?” because we do not think the survey participants may have understood what we meant by the “Collaborate Support Service”. It could have been better worded by us stating that we meant support at the University and not by the company Blackboard Collaborate. Next year, this may give us the information we were seeking, which is if the Collaborate support at the University is satisfactory and helpful to our users.

Q.3.a If possible could you please give further details as to why you are satisfied or unsatisfied with the service? (Selection of Comments)

The selected comments below give an idea of how users feel about the support provided by the University in terms of the Collaborate service. It seems that the service provided by the University is overall satisfactory, much of the issues lies with the tool, specifically the fact that it runs on Java. This is something that Blackboard Collaborate are aware of and are addressing with the upgrade to the service.

Also, next year to improve this question we will ask if the issues mentioned related to any helpline calls and would ask for the reference number so that we can further investigate the issue.

“There have been a few glitches with Collaborate - the biggest issue is the Java applet and students (and staff) struggling with that and not being able to access the session.”

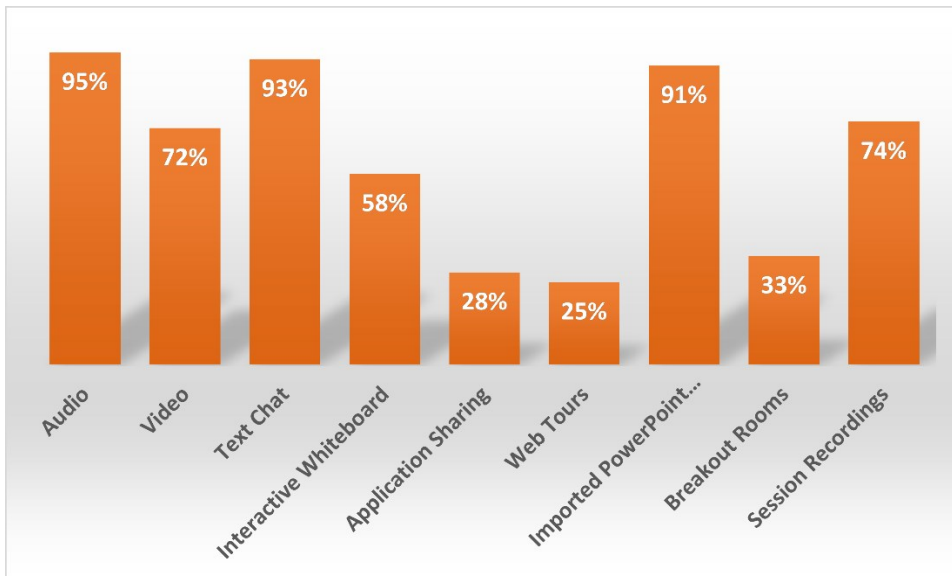
“Online tech support very clear and good to signpost participants to”

“Any queries or problems have been addressed quickly and to my satisfaction.”

“it's quick and easy to use; now that it is contained in a launcher, it's very much better than the old java-based set-up (which was painful).”

“I think the problem is with the tool, not the service. Many students fail ever to get Collaborate working at all (or are put off by the perceived complexity of setting it up)...”

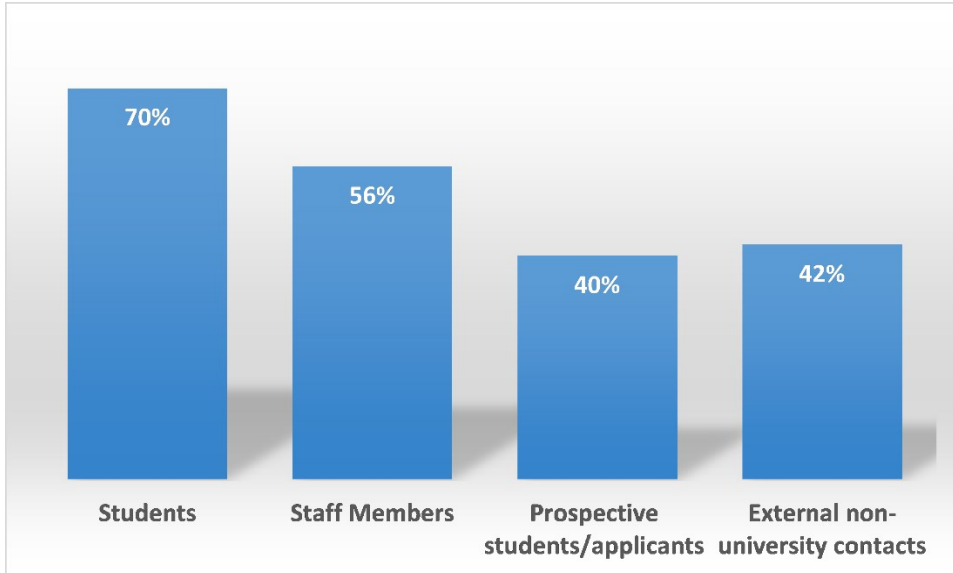
Q.4 What tools do you make use of within Collaborate?



Audio, text chat and PowerPoint presentations are the most used tools, which we would expect. It is interesting to note that Session Recordings are very popular, as this is something that makes Collaborate a very useful tool as it gives users the ability to record their sessions and then convert them to MP3, MP4 or .jar files to save and share at a later date.

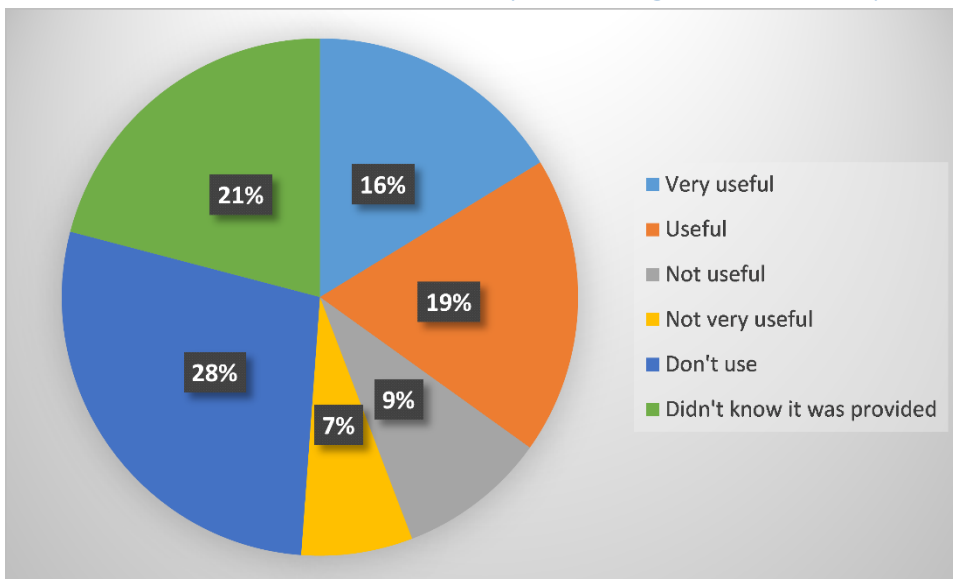
It is important for us to understand what the most used tools are as this will help shape the upgraded Collaborate. Blackboard Collaborate have asked for our input when shaping the upgraded tool. Knowing what the most used tools are gives priority to those tools being available within the upgrade, which will hopefully help with user satisfaction of Collaborate.

Q.5 Who do you use Collaborate with?



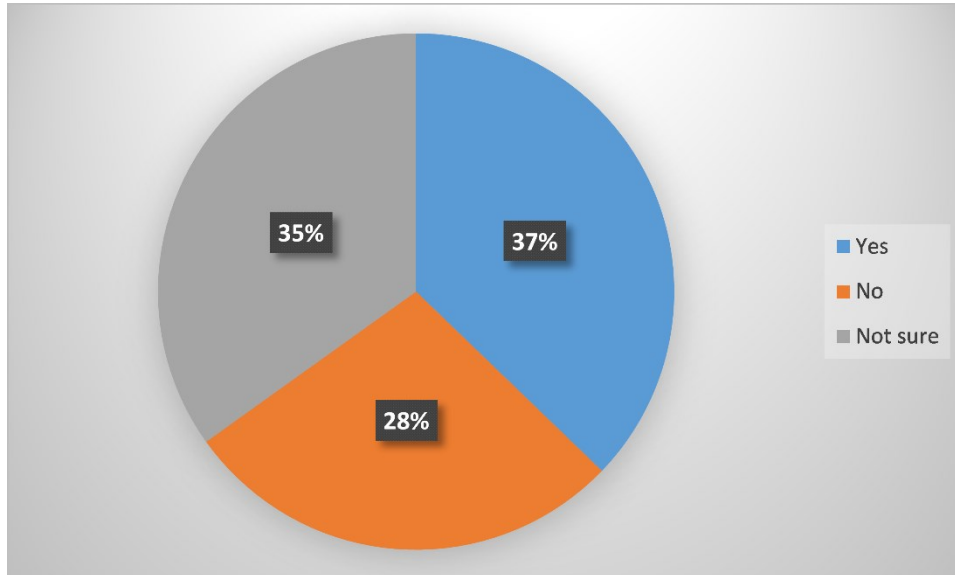
We found it interesting that 42% of staff use Collaborate with external contacts (people outwith the University). We are working on providing case studies of this service and to know that 42% use the tool for external contacts suggests that there needs to be a case study to represent this. Also, this shows that Collaborate is being used in a virtual meeting capacity very often and not just as a virtual classroom.

Q.6.2.a Face to face University training usefulness (1=very 4=least)



21% of respondents didn't know that Collaborate training is provided by Information Services. This suggests that we need to work on promotion of the Collaborate training provided by Information Services in the future.

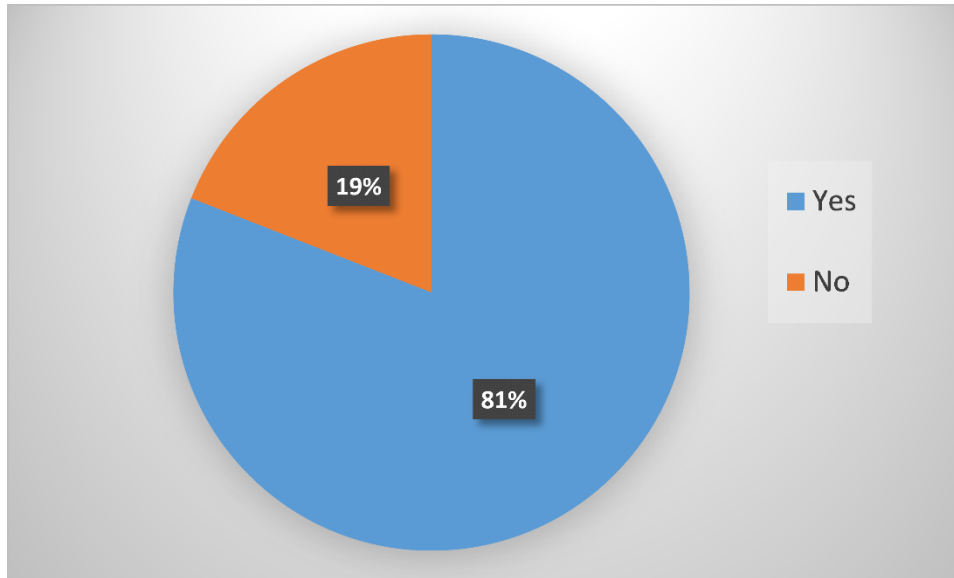
Q.7 Would you find online scheduled training useful?



It's interesting to note that there isn't a definite majority. Maybe if we had provided more information about the idea for online training there might have been a different response?

The idea would be to provide scheduled online training after users have attended the initial training for Collaborate. This would be a scheduled session for users that would like to practice using Collaborate so that they can become familiar with the tool before they need to use it for teaching, presenting or moderating a session. Also, we could be going to have online training for the introductory session to Collaborate as different people have different preferences and offering online training alongside face to face training may reach more staff and students around the University.

Q.8 Would you recommend the Collaborate service to a colleague?



81% of respondents would recommend the Collaborate service to a colleague. Below are reasons as to why people answered “yes” or no”.

Selected Comments from “No” I would not recommend the service:

“The need for external users to download the software, the interface, the general experience.”

“Each time I have tried to use Collaborate, it doesn't work properly (or at all on some occasions)”

“Unstable and not well supported if using a mac”

“yes because it's free

no because you can't import word etc.

no because tried to use it for one project and participants and just too IT clueless to figure out how to use it even with full detailed instructions and they prefer skype”

“I have done before, more than once, but they couldn't get it working so we gave up and reverted to skype”

Selected Comments from “Yes” I would not recommend the service:

“I have recommended it to a colleague for her undergraduate recruitment because it is a good tool to use to reach out, in particular, to prospective students.”

“I'm now delivering lectures and tutorials (6 hours per week) to small groups of students using Collaborate and I find it a good way of doing this for students based at different locations.”

“It's a good system that's reasonably well-featured and fairly straightforward to use. In its niche, it's the only thing that really does the job.”

“It is designed for classroom use. That is what it does.”

“Recommend it as it is the key University supported system for virtual seminars”

"I would recommend it for group sessions since a link can simply be sent to the participants; in comparison, Skype and Google Hangouts need registrations etc. I would not recommend it so much for one-to-one sessions - in those cases, Skype is simpler."

Q.9 Do you use other virtual meeting tools? (Home & Work)

- Skype
- Facetime
- Lync (now Skype for Business)
- Adobe Connect
- Google +
- Got-to-Meeting
- Ekiga
- Web-Ex
- Hello (Mozilla)
- Bluejeans
- Big Blue Button
- Web2Present

Q.10 Additional Comments for improving the Collaborate Service.

- *"Simplify"*
- *"Probably its weakest feature is the audio quality, which is really quite ropey at times."*
- *"Lose the need for Java!"*
- *"Being able to pre-load presentations would be a great improvement."*
- *"Examples of how Collaborate has been used - even just a list of bulletin points with a short description."*
- *"there could be a better 'pointer' tool for the tutor to use"*

Conclusions and Recommendations

Blackboard Collaborate is currently working on upgrading the service. The University of Edinburgh is helping to shape the upgraded Collaborate by being a part of the beta testing. We are having our users involved with the beta testing by having regular online meetings within the beta. We ask our users to test the beta and to provide feedback so that we can filter this back to Blackboard Collaborate. Many of the feedback suggested in Q.10 will be met with Collaborate Ultra, which is the new name of the upgraded Collaborate. Some improvements within Collaborate Ultra are:

- Improved Audio and Video
- Simpler interface
- No more Java, it will be web-browser based
- Ability to drag and drop PowerPoint and PDFs
- Along with many other improvements as Blackboard Collaborate continue to shape the upgraded service.



Additionally, the Collaborate Service team will be working on improving the service's webpages this summer. We will add examples of how Collaborate can be used around the University as well as collecting more case studies to further support current and potential users.

Author: Kelly Hall/June 2015