2017 FACULTY IT SURVEY

2017 Faculty IT Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This is the first UBIT survey specifically designed to delve into the specific technology needs and preferences of University at Buffalo faculty. As such, it provides an important baseline for the future. It also paves the way for better understanding today, as UBIT redoubles its efforts to engage faculty.

UBIT would like to thank the faculty at the University at Buffalo for their candor and willingness in responding to this survey; their input will serve to improve IT offerings at the university for the entire community.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey was open from April 10 to April 23, 2017. Data was collected using Vovici™ software. There was a total of 482 valid unique responses.

The instrument contained 33 questions and was designed in consultation with Instructional and IT support staff, the UB Faculty Senate IT Subcommittee and the Technology and Infrastructure Subcommittee of the Instructional Facilities Steering Committee.

Faculty were encouraged to participate by direct email. The survey was also promoted through social media, the UBIT website and UBNow e-newsletter.
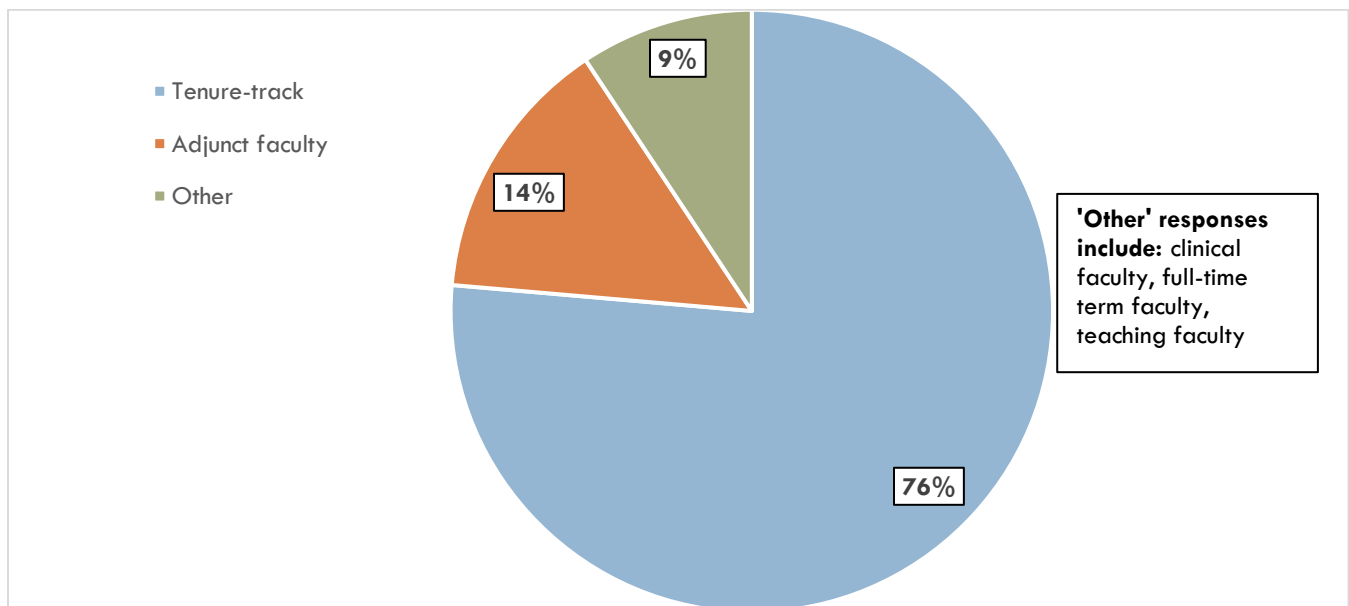
PART I. FACULTY AND TECHNOLOGY

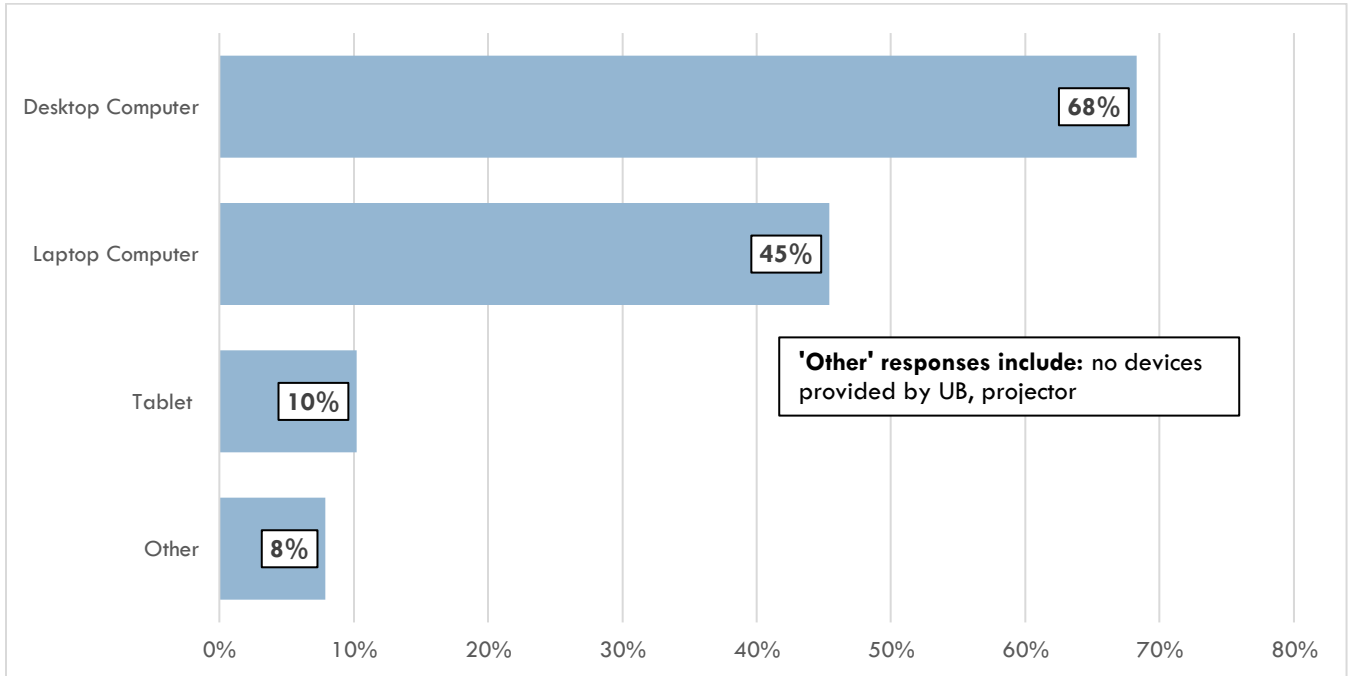**In which school or college do you teach?**
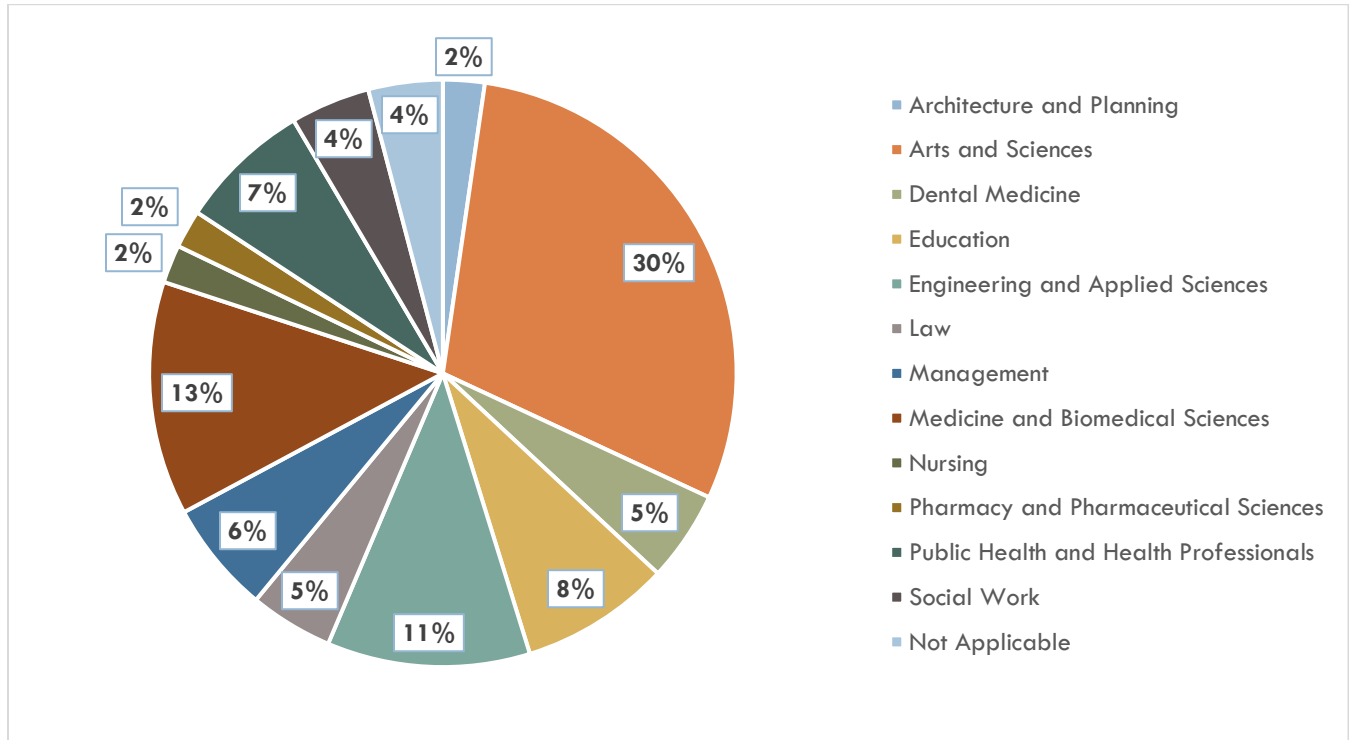
When compared to the 2016 UBIT Student Experience Survey, faculty survey respondents were more concentrated in the College of Arts and Sciences (30% vs. 24%), and less concentrated in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (11% vs 26%).
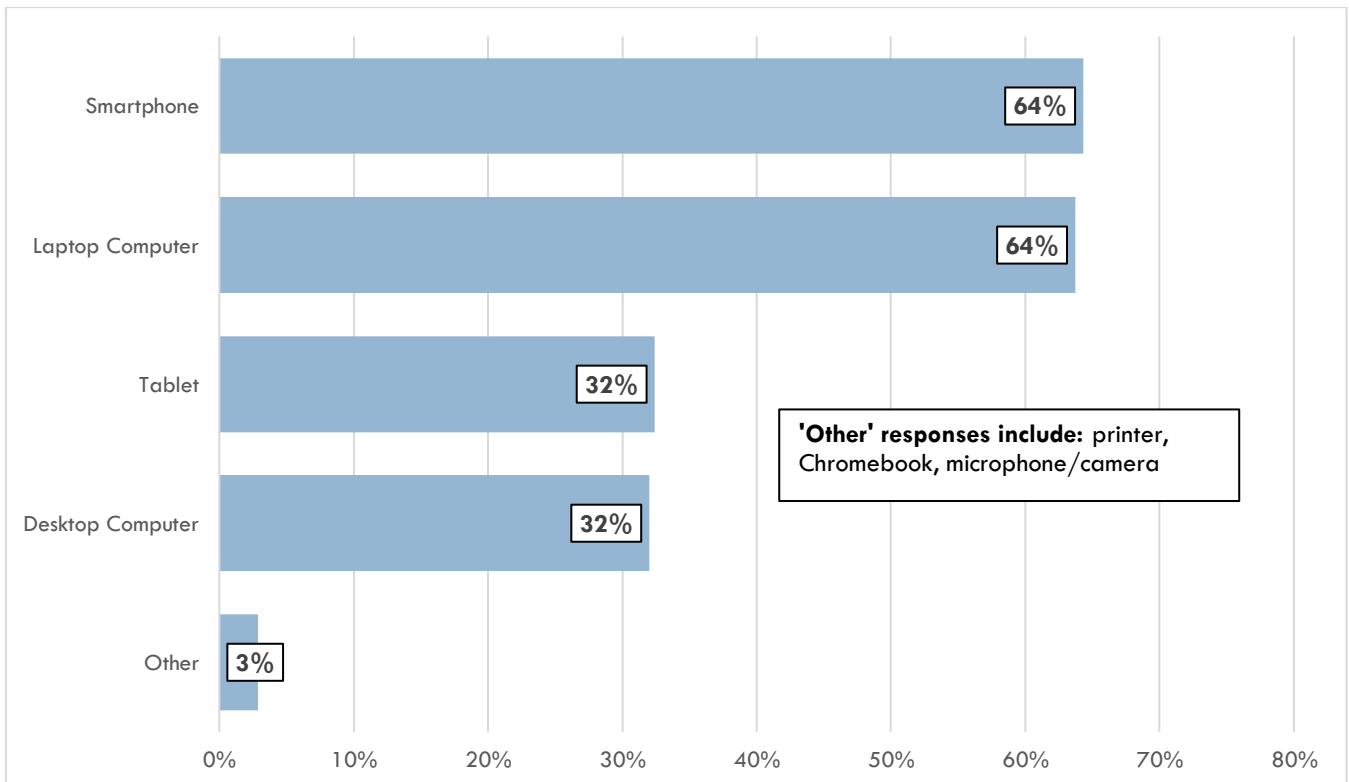
Which best describes your position?

'Other' responses include: clinical faculty, full-time term faculty, teaching faculty

Which *UB-provided* devices do you use for work?

Device	Percentage
Desktop Computer	68%
Laptop Computer	45%
Tablet	10%
Other	8%

'Other' responses include: no devices provided by UB, projector

Which *personal* devices do you use for work?

Device	Percentage
Smartphone	64%
Laptop Computer	64%
Tablet	32%
Desktop Computer	32%
Other	3%

'Other' responses include: printer, Chromebook, microphone/camera

Responses to both this survey and the 2016 UBIT Student Experience Survey illustrate a trend toward mobile computing; faculty regularly supplement their UB-provided desktop computers with personal mobile devices and laptops for work at UB.

Which operating system is on the device you use the most?

Operating System	Percentage
Windows 10	36%
Mac OS X	34%
Windows 8 (or earlier)	22%
Linux or other Unix-based OS	3%
Don't know	2%
iOS	2%
Android	1%
Other (please specify)	1%

Like UB students, the majority of UB faculty use Windows on their main device, although a smaller percentage of faculty have upgraded to the latest version, Windows 10, than students (36% of faculty compared to 48% of students, according to 2016 data).

What is the estimated age of the device you use the most?
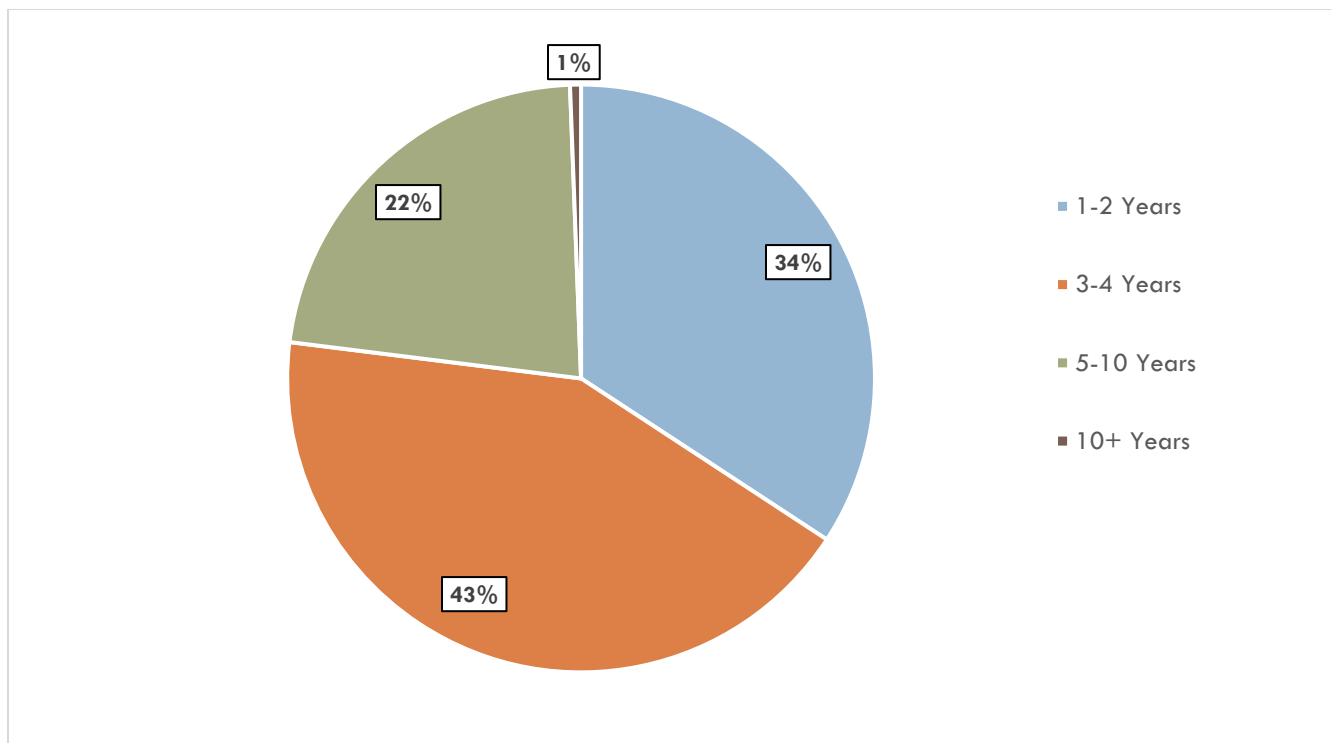
Greater than three-quarters of faculty respondents are using devices fewer than five years old (77%).
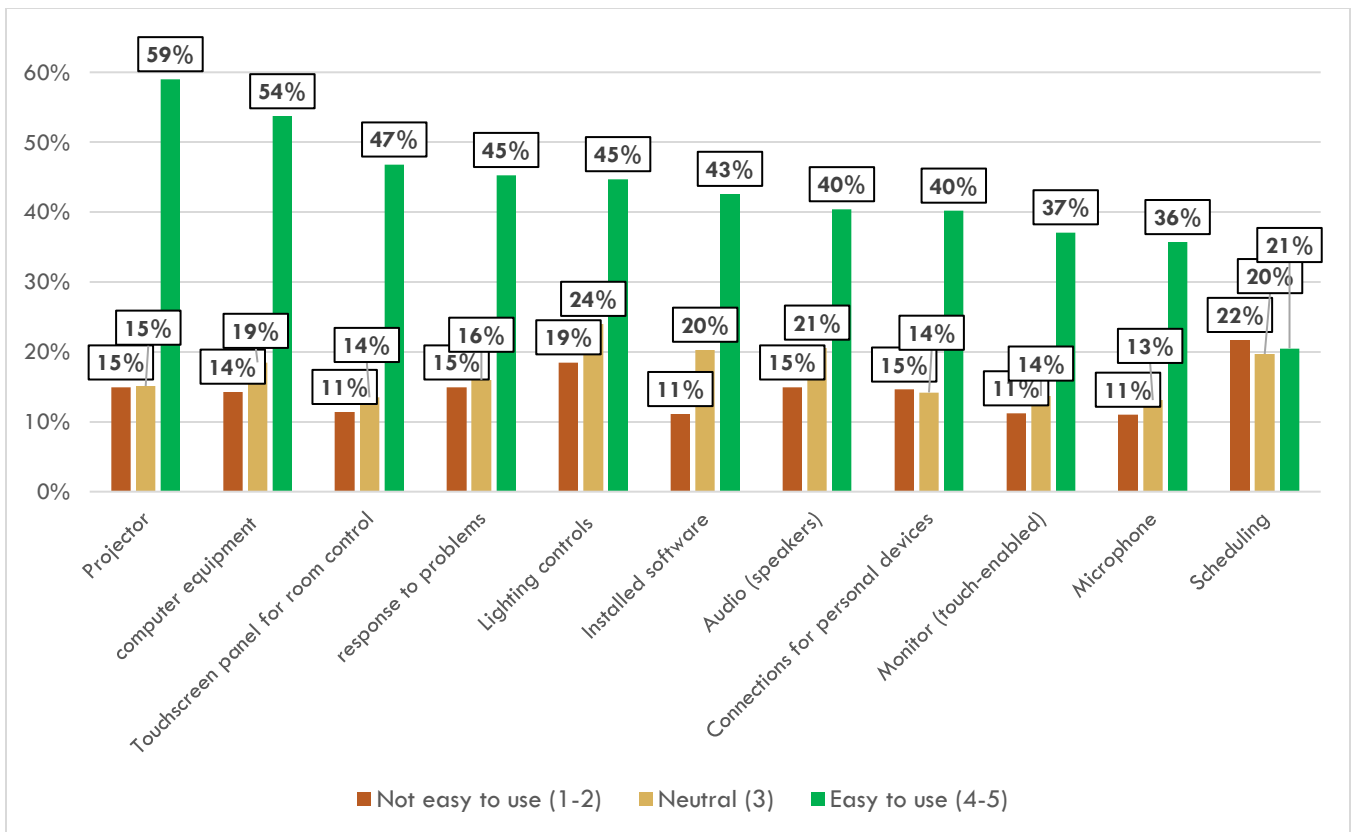
PART II. CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

How satisfied are you with each of the following types of classroom environments?

Technology in centrally scheduled classrooms is supported by central IT; departmental classrooms are maintained by individual schools or units.

Classroom Type	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Centrally scheduled classrooms	49%	12%	19%
Departmental classrooms	48%	12%	18%
Online learning classrooms	17%	7%	7%

*Table excludes respondents who indicated "Don't know/Not Applicable"*

Please rate the following aspects of classroom teaching technology at UB with regard to ease of use (1 – poor, 5 – excellent).

Overall, faculty respondents reported satisfaction with classroom teaching technology, making little distinction between UB's centrally scheduled classrooms—which are supported by central IT—and departmental classrooms.

While more respondents rated classroom technology easy to use in nearly every category, respondents had the most trouble with classroom scheduling and lighting controls. The projectors, computers and touchscreen room control panels—three devices necessary for class presentation—were rated easiest to use.
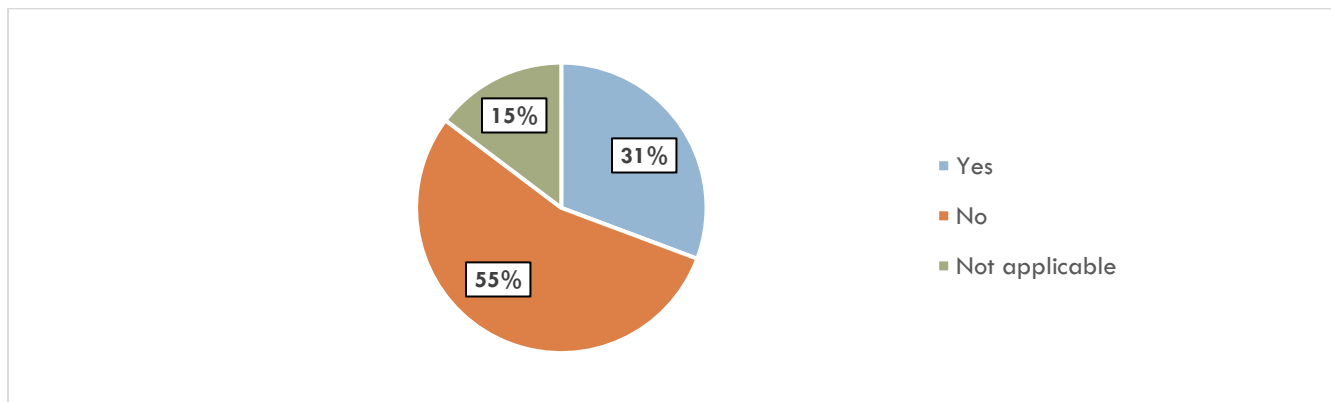
Do you prefer to use the provided computers in centrally scheduled classrooms, or would you rather use your personal devices?
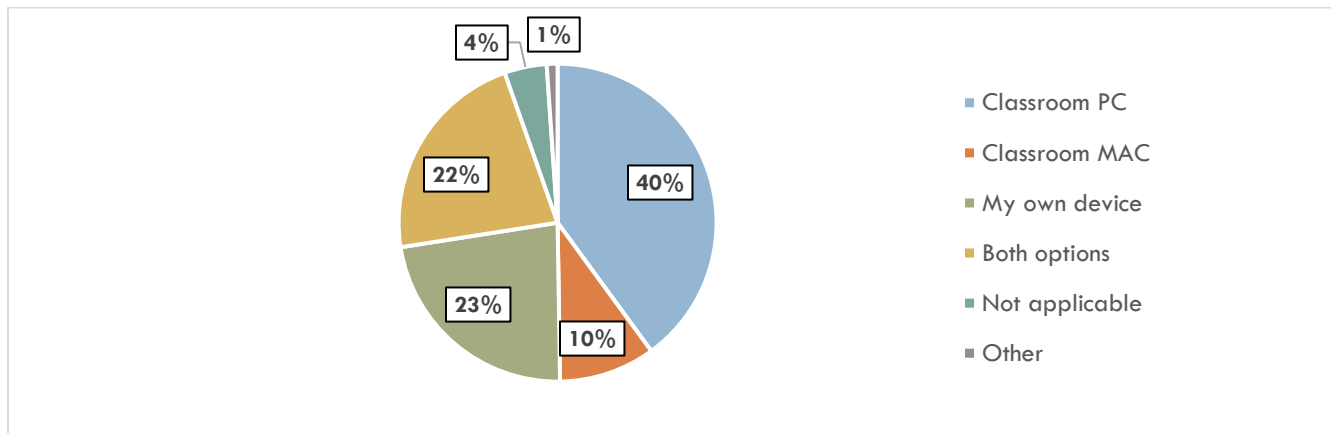

72% of faculty respondents would prefer that the university continue to provide computers in classrooms; 23% prefer using a personal device instead.

Mobile devices in the classroom

Do you encourage the use of smartphones and tablets in class for class-related activities?

In what ways do you encourage the use of smartphones and tablets in your classes?

'Other' responses include: quick research, accessing UB*learns*, quizzes using Google Forms
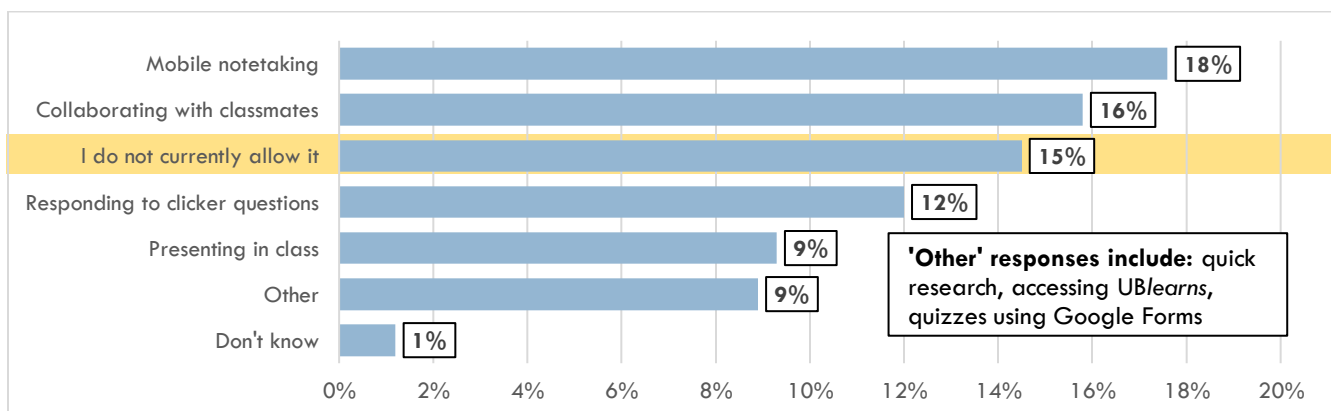
See page 7 for a closer look at faculty opinions on mobile technology in the classroom.

Faculty voices: mobile devices in the classroom

A majority of respondents do *not* encourage the use of mobile devices for classroom learning, and 15% of faculty do not allow the use of mobile devices in the classroom at all. In the 2016 UBIT Student Experience Survey, 24% of students reported that professors do not allow them to use mobile devices in classrooms.

Whether mobile devices are beneficial or detrimental to classroom learning is an issue that elicits strong opinions among UB faculty. When asked what could UBIT do, if anything, to further encourage the use of smartphones in the classroom, many respondents expressed cynicism that these devices could be used productively without posing a distraction:

> *"I wouldn't want students to use mobile devices more in class. They can be very distracting."*
>
> *"The use of technology in the classroom is a distraction."*
>
> *"Students tend to use them to check email and surf the net. They are distractors."*

...others went further, stating that they were unlikely to, or would never, consider it.

Faculty respondents who *were* willing to consider a role for mobile technology in the classroom asked UBIT to provide more guidance on how these devices might be useful:

> *"If I were more familiar with how to incorporate [them]."*
>
> *"If there were obvious and simple ways to use them to improve student learning."*
>
> *"Some info sharing on good methods to use in instruction…"*
>
> *"I need activities that would make use of them. Ideas of what to do."*

Still other respondents offered their own ideas on how mobile technology could be leveraged, and what UBIT can do to facilitate:

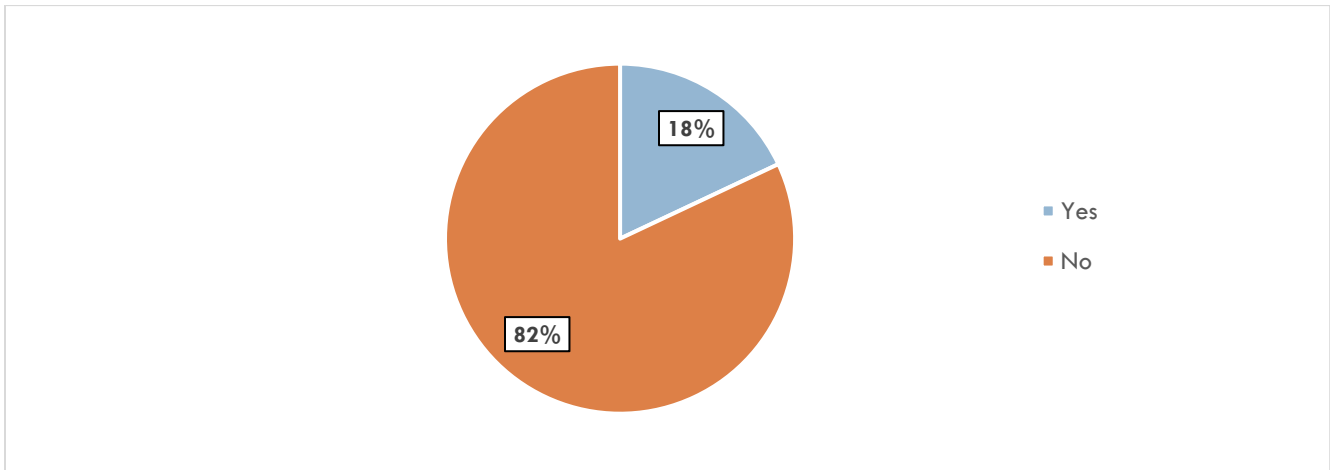> *"…better, more stable, faster Internet connections."*
>
> *"If they could act as clickers?"*
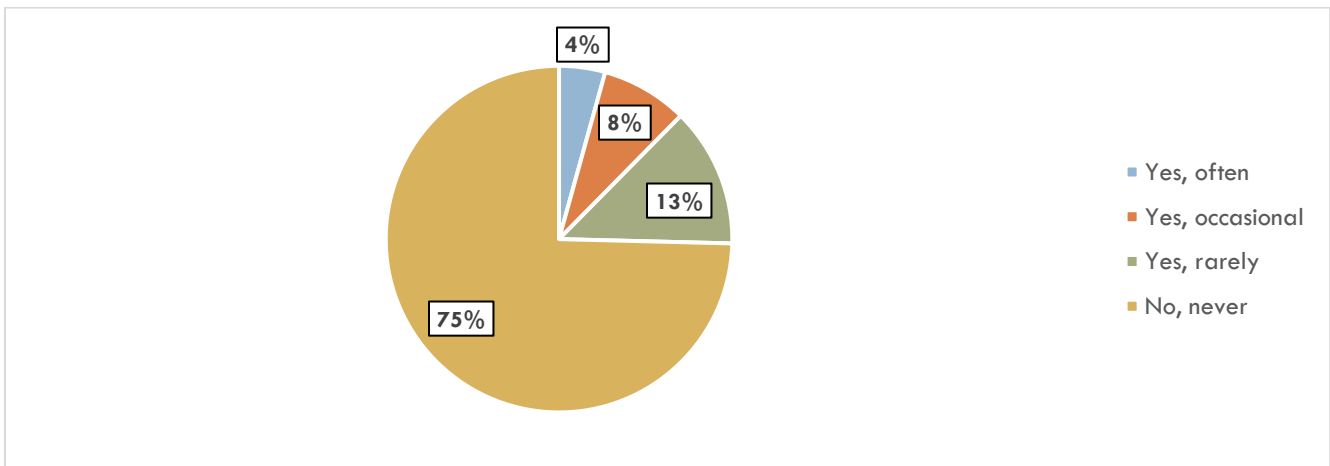>
> *"Plugs in the floors would help students."*
>
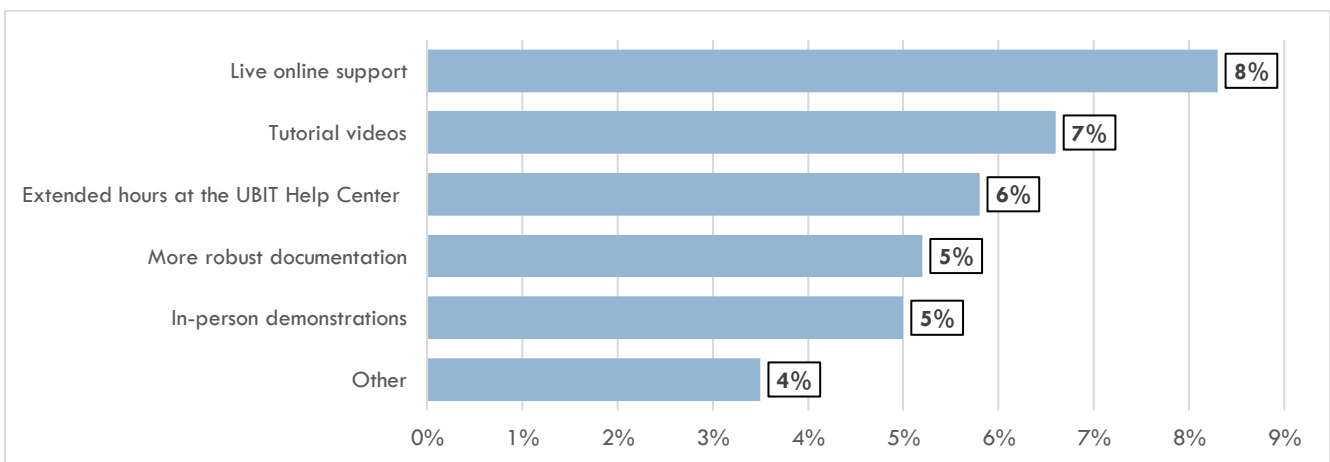> *"Screen sharing technology on a group/individual level."*

Online teaching

Do you teach any online-only courses?

- Yes
- No

18%

82%

Do you ever teach sessions of your typically in-person courses remotely?

- Yes, often
- Yes, occasional
- Yes, rarely
- No, never

4%

8%

13%

75%

What would improve support for online-only courses?

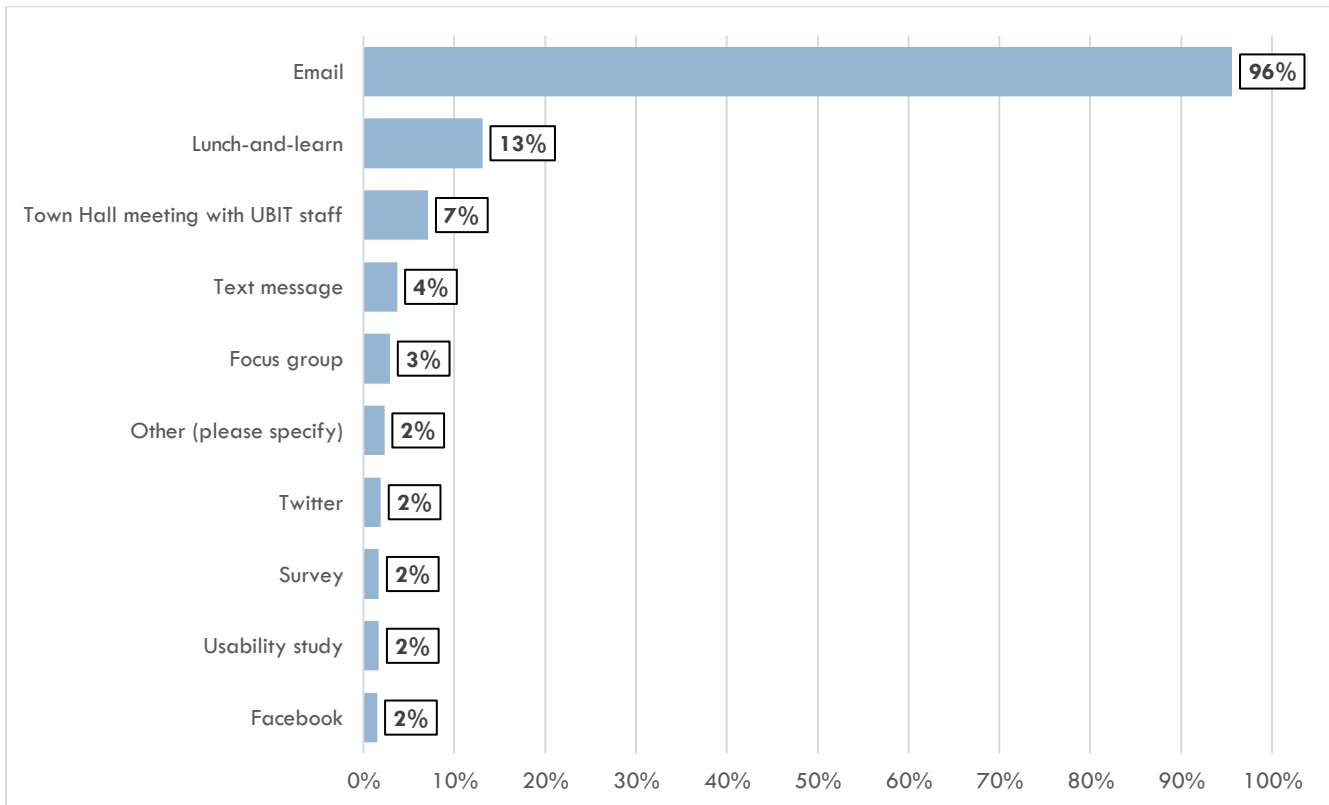| Category	Percentage
Live online support	8%
Tutorial videos	7%
Extended hours at the UBIT Help Center	6%
More robust documentation	5%
In-person demonstrations	5%
Other	4%

PART III. UBIT SERVICES

Online tools

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following UBIT services:

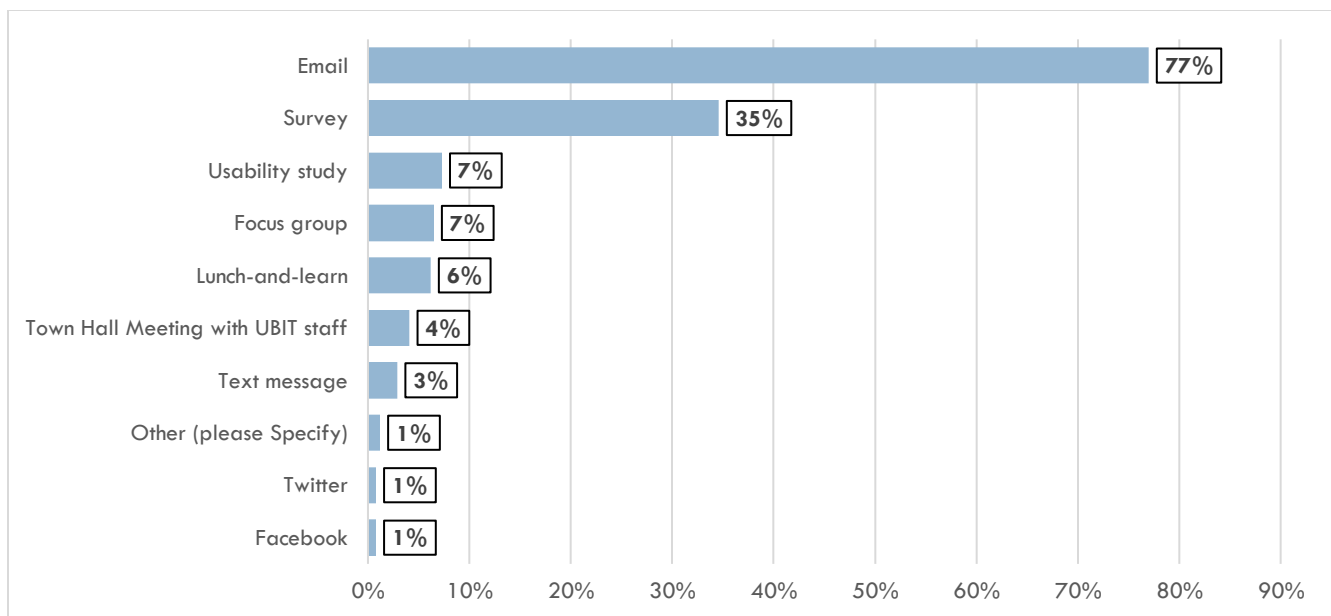|	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
UB Alert	71%	18%	3%
MyUB	69%	18%	8%
UB*learns*	62%	13%	17%
UBmail (powered by Exchange)	58%	15%	20%
HUB Faculty Center	52%	16%	21%
UBITName Manager (password resets)	28%	21%	4%
UBclicks	4%	8%	5%

Table excludes respondents who indicated "Don't know/Not Applicable" – see page 10 for UBbox metrics

Two-way communication

How would you like to be notified about new technology and software options?

Option	Percent
Email	96%
Lunch-and-learn	13%
Town Hall meeting with UBIT staff	7%
Text message	4%
Focus group	3%
Other (please specify)	2%
Twitter	2%
Survey	2%
Usability study	2%
Facebook	2%

**How would you like to provide feedback about technology?**

UBIT strives to find two-way channels of communication that fit the needs of our customers. UB faculty overwhelming prefer email to both hear about, and provide feedback on, campus technology—to a much higher degree than students, only 66% of whom want to hear about new IT offerings through email. Students are also more interested than faculty in receiving updates through text messages (17%).
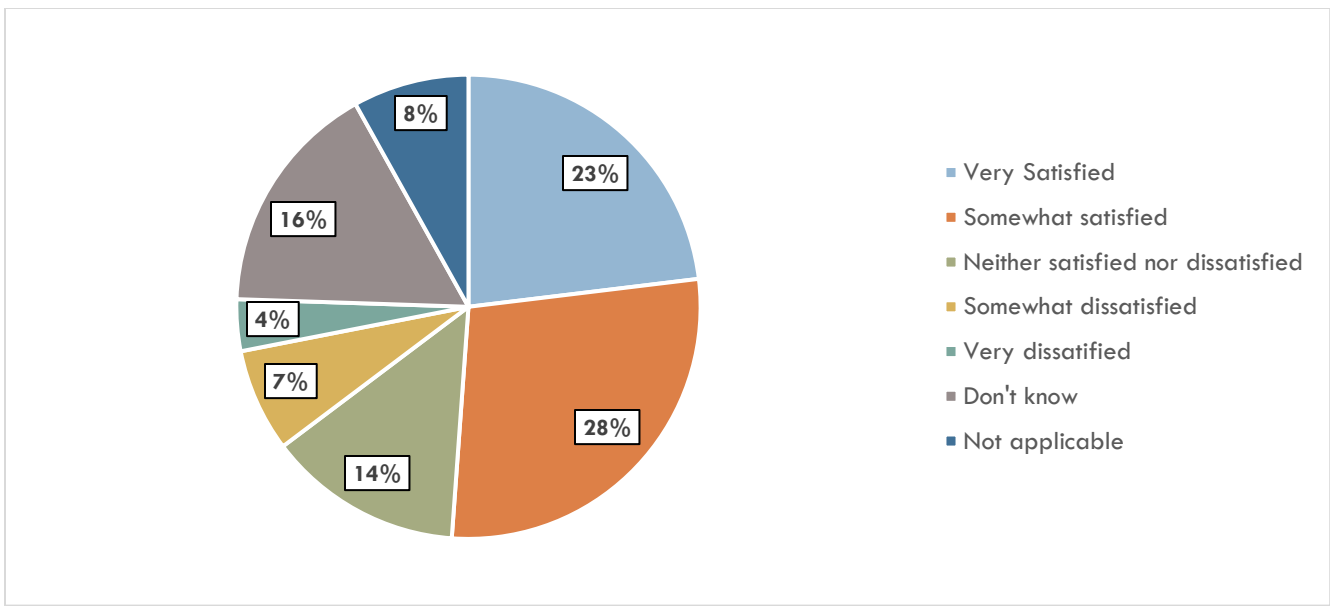
UBbox

UBbox, a cloud file storage and sharing solution for UB students, faculty and staff, was introduced in 2016. A major focus of UBIT communication efforts for the past year, roughly 75% of faculty respondents are aware of UBbox. This figure is consistent with UB students, about 77% of whom were aware of UBbox as of 2016.
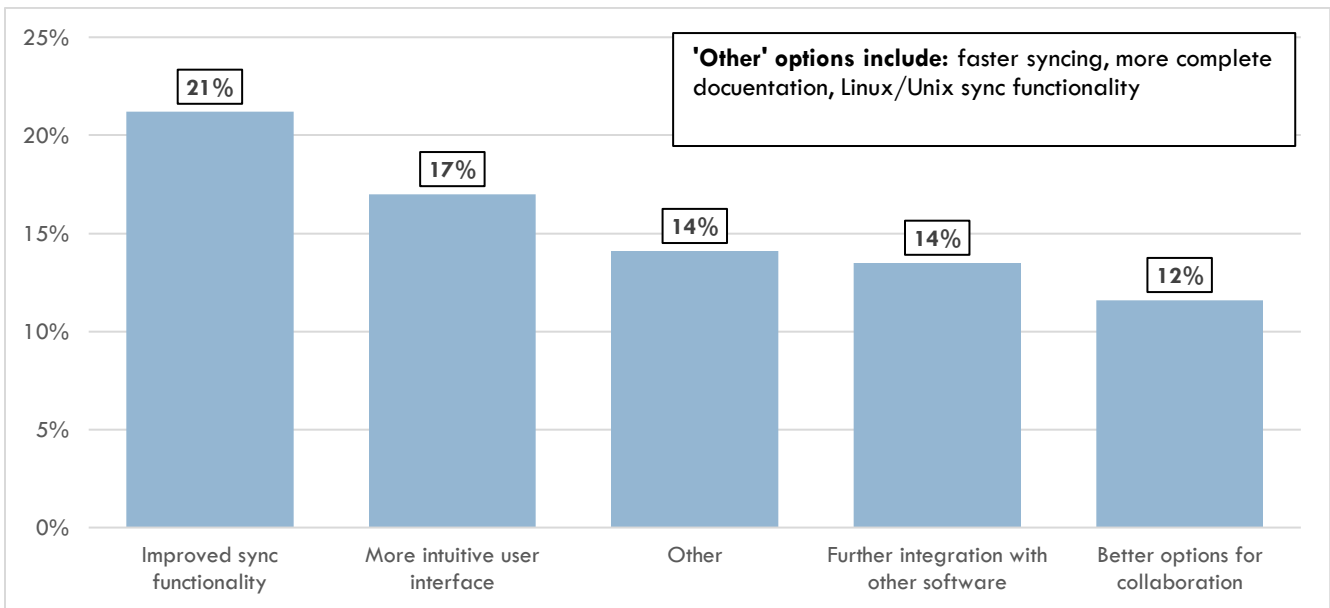
How did you find out about UBbox?
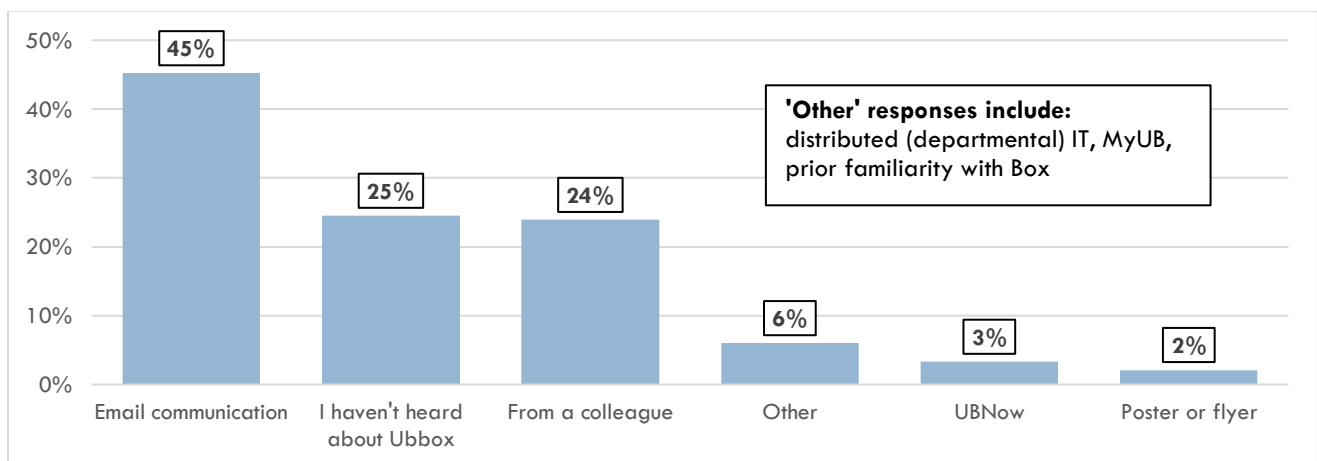
In line with faculty communication preferences (see pages 9-10), the percentage of faculty that learned about UBbox through email (45%) is much higher than that of student respondents to the 2016 survey (18%), who mainly acknowledged they learned about from print signage around campus.

How satisfied are you with UBbox?

UB faculty reported slightly higher satisfaction with UBbox than students (51% somewhat or very satisfied, vs. 42% for students).
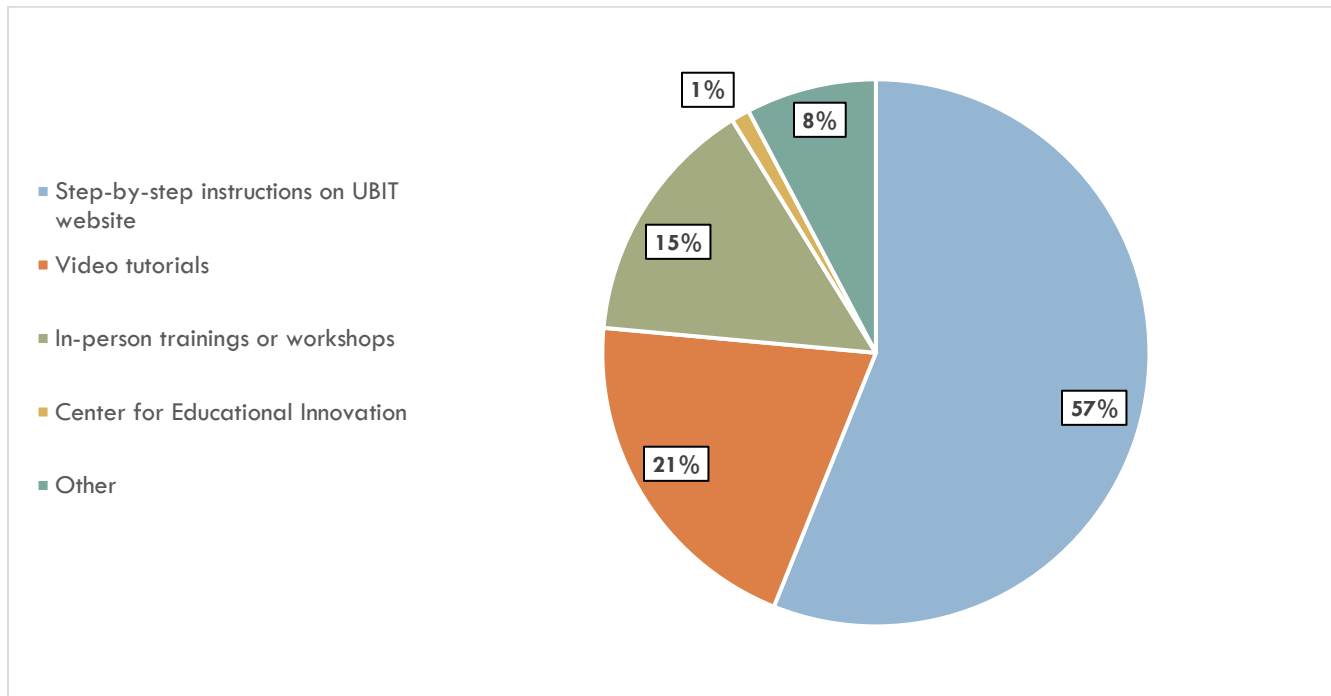
What would improve UBbox?

'Other' options include: faster syncing, more complete docuentation, Linux/Unix sync functionality

Improving UBbox sync functionality, which 21% of respondents said would improve UBbox as a whole, has been addressed with the introduction of Box Drive, a new desktop application that maps UBbox accounts to a local device. The web interface for UBbox, which 17% of respondents said should be improved, has also been updated since this survey to include improvements to search and user experience.

Getting started with IT at UB

What is your preferred method for learning how to use technology at UB?

Legend:
- Step-by-step instructions on UBIT website
- Video tutorials
- In-person trainings or workshops
- Center for Educational Innovation
- Other

Pie chart values: 57%, 21%, 15%, 1%, 8%

UBIT maintains a robust collection of online step-by-step instructions. In the past year, UBIT's support materials for faculty have expanded to include how-to/tutorial videos, with a growing catalog about classroom technology.

UBIT also engages with members of the campus community to acquaint them with technology resources early in their career as students, staff and instructors. When asked "what would have made it easier for you to get started with Information Technology at UB?", the following themes emerged from 173 responses:

Faculty would like a dedicated IT orientation session:

"Faculty orientation that outlines services."

"An in-person orientation would have been very helpful."

"…maybe a short video orientation or something like that."

Note: at the time of publishing this survey, UBIT is currently preparing a video orientation series for new faculty.

Faculty would like "welcome" introductory communication, preferably via email:

"Maybe an email referring me to CIT info pages."

"Online tutorials and emails about what's possible."

"Basic communication, e.g. by email."

Faculty want extended and more flexible Help Center hours:

"I live far from campus… so having flexible meeting options in terms of location and time is best."

"Extended hours of the helpdesk for Blackboard."

"Being an adjunct… I am not able to take advantage of face-to-face events during daytime hours."

…though the themes discussed were diverse, one common thread suggests that faculty look to UBIT to make them aware not just *how* to use campus technology, but *what is included* under the umbrella of campus technology, i.e., what is available, and how it can be used to the advantage of researchers and instructors.

PART V. CONCLUSION

The full results from this survey are available online at the UBIT website.

This survey provides a snapshot of attitudes that, over time, will help to make clearer the ways UBIT can better support faculty in their teaching, research and professional lives. Collecting the information here is an important first step toward the greater understanding that will come with persistent and purposeful dialog; the enthusiastic response to this survey indicates that UB faculty are ready and willing to participate in that discussion.