

STUDENT SURVEY - LEVEL 1 AND 2 DIGITAL PILOT EXAMINATIONS 2017

INFORMATION ON THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE SURVEY

Three Level 1 Digital Pilot examinations were offered (English, Media Studies and Classical Studies), and three Level 2 Digital Pilot examinations were offered in those same subjects. All six of the Digital Pilot examinations required essay type answers. 4,226 students participated in at least one of the Digital Pilot examinations, from 54 schools.

1,898 of the students who participated in the Level 1 Digital Pilot examinations also participated in the Level 1 Digital Trial examinations held in September and October. 37 of the schools that participated in the Digital Pilots also participated in the Digital Trials.

651 of the students who participated in the Level 2 Digital Pilot examinations had participated in the Level 1 Digital Pilot examinations offered in 2016.

The student survey was designed to measure students' self-reported satisfaction and experience of the Digital Pilot examinations, administered by NZQA during November and December 2017. The survey included establishing whether the students regularly use electronic devices at home and at school.

NZQA received 1,068 survey responses from 1,047 students. Some students sat more than one digital examination and therefore have answered the survey more than once. Students logged into 4,498 sessions. This gives a survey response rate of 24%.

The table below shows the number of responses received by Pilot subject, in order of frequency.

Pilot Exam	Number of Responses	Percentage
English L1	664	62.2
English L2	221	20.7
Media Studies L1	88	8.2
Media Studies L2	42	3.9
Classical Studies L1	32	3
Classical Studies L2	21	2
	1068	100

The survey results for each subject are presented together because there was no statistically significant difference in the responses for each of the subjects examined digitally.

The survey was made available to students within the SoNET system, directly after they submitted their pilot examination. The survey consisted of 12 questions, with three open ended questions – see Appendix 1 for a list of the survey questions. The survey was designed to take approximately five minutes to complete. Not all the students answered all the questions in the survey. See Appendix 2 for summary tables of responses to the closed-ended questions.

2016 COMPARISON

Only three Digital Pilot examinations were offered in 2016 compared with six in 2017. In 2016, all the pilot examinations were Level 1 examinations only.

The 2016 student survey was longer, and included more open-ended questions.

1,698 students participated in the Digital Pilot Examinations in 2016. Only 134 students responded to the survey – a response rate of 8%. This very low response rate was due to technical issues experienced during the English examination which included that the survey was not immediately available to students to respond to, and had to be emailed out. In 2017, the response rate improved to 24% with 1,068 responses received.

Due to the very low response rate in 2016, comparisons of 2016 and 2017 results are not presented.

MAIN FINDINGS

OVERALL SATISFACTION

Respondents were positive about completing a Digital Pilot examination, with 98% (967 of 990) agreeing or strongly agreeing it was a positive experience. More respondents strongly agreed that it was a positive experience (54%) than agreed (44%). Levels of satisfaction were slightly higher than for the 2016 Digital Trials, where 92% felt it was a positive experience.

Responses were analysed separately by Digital Pilot subject and level to determine whether there were any differences in satisfaction levels depending on the type of subject being examined digitally. There were no significant differences.

Respondents also indicated a strong preference for completing the examination digitally rather than on paper with 95% (941 of 990) agreeing or strongly agreeing that digital was preferable to paper-based.¹ More respondents strongly agreed that digital was preferable (64%) than agreed (32%).

Respondents were asked what they liked most about completing the Digital Pilot examination and what they disliked most. The answers were free text. A text mining approach was used to analyse common themes from the responses. Common themes for the question “What did you like most about completing the examination digitally included:

- It is faster to type

¹ This was not a question in the 2016 survey.

- It is easier to type
- It is easier to edit- add/ change anything, and not worry about making mess
- It is easier to go back and correct mistakes

"We use computers all the time, in class and at home so it makes sense that we should be doing our exams online, it is also good that you have kept the option of paper for the people less familiar with a keyboard."

"Since there was a lot of writing in this exam, typing made it physically easier to cope and I was able to go back and get rid of any mistakes I made which made my thought process easier to understand and my writing clearer."

"I find it so much faster to do. Also easier because when you get a thought you can quickly type it in to the planning box to save it for later. Typing is good because you can get the thought or quote out onto the screen quicker before you forget it. A good lay out also so you can see the text right next to your writing. The drop boxes of language features is also really good. I enjoyed being able to push the button that skips back and forward through the papers / tests and I could jump from one to the other and easily just pick up where I left off."

Common themes for the question "What did you dislike most about completing the examination digitally included:

- Nothing, I really liked the exam
- Sore eyes from staring at the screen for too long
- Battery/ network issues
- Room/sound is distracting
- Internet slowing / being accidentally locked out

"I logged into the exam shortly before it begun, only to find i had been locked out for inactivity. It caused me quite a problem as it would not let me log back in. I had to get a supervisors help."

"I would occasionally click outside of the text box unintentionally and it would say that I was about to be logged off despite the fact that I had not left the google chrome tab. I also found that it was hard to stick to the word count due to the ease of writing and how much I could write in the time given."

"The fact that a red border is shown when you type over the recommended word count, if a word count is recommended there shouldn't be something, such as the red border, that will cause you to panic, especially during an exam, as I am already stressed as it. If I exceed the RECOMENDED word count, that is my choice, and the red is really annoying when you're typing away and that irritating colour, which can be associated with the word STOP, it can be a bit off putting, but other than that I had no difficulty or other dislikes. Maybe changing the colour would be help, but it was truly off putting."

"The constant tap tap tapping of the keyboards in the room made it harder to concentrate on writing than if we were to do it on paper"

"The school desktop computer annoys me a lot. The keyboard for one and the fact i am not used to it so it takes awhile to get myself used to it. Also i hate the fact i can't turn down the screen brightness. Writing this now, my eyes are quite blurry from the 3 hours staring at this bright screen. Some feedback would be for NZQA to allow chargers to be entered into the exam and especially for the school to provide more charger places for the chargers during the exam. note most of this feedback is for my school - i really like the digital format!"

THE DIGITAL TRIAL EXAMINATION EXPERIENCE

Preparation

NZQA made familiarisation activities available to students who were participating in the Digital Trial and Pilot examinations. The purpose of the familiarisation activities was to provide students with the opportunity to experience the look and feel of a digital examination, including the login and submission process that students would experience, and the different tools that are part of the digital examinations.

74% of respondents (752 of 1011) agreed or strongly agreed that they found the familiarisation activities useful in their preparation for their digital examination. 21% of respondents (213 of 1011) said that they did not know the familiarisation activities existed.

On the day

54% of respondents (280 of 516) reported using a school-provided device to complete their Digital Pilot examination, and 46% of respondents (236 of 516) reported using their own device.

27% of respondents (258 of 940) reported they used a desktop computer to complete their Digital Pilot examination, and 72% (677 of 940) reported they used a laptop. Only five respondents (< 1%) reported they used a tablet.

9% of respondents (95 of 1022) reported experiencing network problems and 7% (74 of 1022) reported experiencing device problems when accessing or completing the Digital Pilot examination.

98% of respondents (968 of 992) found it very easy or easy to navigate through the Digital Pilot examination.

97% of respondents (963 of 991) found entering their responses to the Digital Pilot very easy or easy.

92% of respondents (914 of 989) agreed or strongly agreed that completing the Digital Pilot examination took less time than they would have expected had it been paper-based.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL

At home

92% of respondents (970 of 1051) reported having more than one device at home. 62% of respondents (653 of 1051) reported having three different types of devices available at home.

At school

Very few respondents (5) reported never using digital technology to support their learning in class or for homework.

86% of respondents (898 of 1050) reported that digital technology is used in class to support their learning very often or quite often. A further 14% (147 of 1020) reported using digital technology in class occasionally.

89% of respondents (923 of 1041) reported that digital technology is used for homework very often or quite often. A further 10% (107 of 1041) reported using digital technology in class occasionally.

73% of respondents (764 of 1040) reported that digital technology is used in internal assessments very often or quite often, 24% (244 of 1040) reported it was used occasionally, and 3% reported it was never used.

SUGGESTIONS/FEEDBACK

Respondents provided a range of suggestions in answer to the question "Are there any features or functions that you think future digital assessments should include?".

Common feedback themes from respondents include feedback on spell check, the word count function, the ability to highlight texts, and scrolling issues.

"With the planning space, it'd be cool if you could see all your writing at the same time rather than have to scroll through it all in a small box - but apart from that it was good! :)"

"i think the digital exam should be available to more subjects as well as being able to draw diagrams and stuff whilst planning"

"I wonder about the spellcheck on digital exams for English exams, as it may set people doing the exams digitally at an advantage over people doing their English exam on paper. For other subjects where spelling does not matter as much, I believe the spellcheck is a good idea though."

"I want the digital exam to continue to be an option for all year levels and possibly branch out into the humanities subjects as that would highly increase their chances of getting a better grade if the option was available."

"- Adding a highlight function on unfamiliar texts- Adding a control-f/search function on unfamiliar texts without triggering the black screen- I found that there were too many scrolling bars which was slightly confusing- For unfamiliar, even after completing all 3 sections, it showed up yellow, not green"

"Allow us to use the paper resource booklet to prevent students like me from stressing. Additionally, review the code to see why the navigation bar was flashing."

"I think that the digital exams should not be changed, I do think that all future exams should be digital."

"didn't realise there was spell check until the end. should just have words spelt wrong underlined straight away rather than having to press a button."

"Other feedback: I think that digital exams should only be for english, not for subjects like science, maths or music etc. This is just because I feel like the amount of writing required in english is much easier to do on a device but for other subjects it's not a problem and converting the exam for other subjects to a digital exam would be more confusing for students"

"The UI for answering is a bit basic, but not distracting, an improvement would be nice but not important"

"I would love if the digital exams gave a red line indication (like microsoft word/google docs) whenever you spelt a word wrong, especially when you are rushed to write more than 1 exams in the time limit and may not have time to look for typos."

"There should not be 2 scrollbars on the website when completing the exam, because to get from the top to bottom of the webpage I have to scroll on both scroll bars."

"I honestly can't think of anything that I think could have been better. Everything worked really well, but it was simple enough to not be too overwhelming. I think the minute you start adding other features it might become too confusing. I really enjoyed the experience overall."

STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What device did you use to complete this digital exam?

School provided

Your own device

Desktop

Laptop

Tablet

2. What devices do you have access to in your home? Select all that apply.

Smart phone

Laptop

Desktop computer

Tablet

3. How often is digital technology used in your learning?

	Very Often	Quite Often	Occasionally	Never
In class				
For homework				
For Internal Assessments				

4. Did you experience any network or device problems while accessing or completing this digital exam?

No problems

Or (tick all that apply)

Network problems

Device problems

5. I found the familiarisation activities useful in my preparation for my digital exam.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree I didn't know they existed

6. What did you like most about completing the exam digitally?

What did you dislike most about completing the exam digitally?

7. How easy was it to navigate through the digital exam?

Very easy Easy Difficult Very difficult

8. How easy did you find entering your responses to the digital exam?

Very easy Easy Difficult Very difficult

9. I found completing the digital exam took less time than I expected than if it had been paper based.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

10. I preferred completing the exam digitally rather than on paper
Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

11. Overall, I found completing this exam digitally was a positive experience.
Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

12. Are there any features or functions that you think future digital exams should include, or do you have any other feedback?

SUMMARISED RESPONSES BY QUESTION

Q1a What device did you use to complete this digital exam?

	frequency	percentage
Desktop	258	27.4
Laptop	677	72
Tablet	5	0.5
	940	

Q1b What device did you use to complete this digital exam, school provided or your own device?

	frequency	percentage
School Provided	280	54.3
Own Device	236	45.7
	516	

Q2 What devices do you have access to in your home?

	frequency	percentage
Tablet	1	0.1
Desktop Computer	3	0.3
Laptop	62	5.9
Laptop Tablet	13	1.2
Laptop Desktop Computer	17	1.6
Laptop Desktop Computer Tablet	8	0.8
Smart phone	15	1.4
Smart phone Tablet	9	0.9
Smart phone Desktop Computer	19	1.8
Smart phone Desktop Computer Tablet	10	1
Smart phone Laptop	259	24.6
Smart phone Laptop Tablet	150	14.3
Smart phone Laptop Desktop Computer	199	18.9
Smart phone Laptop Desktop Computer Tablet	286	27.2
	1051	

Q3 How often is digital technology used in your learning?

In Class	frequency	percentage
Very Often	517	49.2
Quite Often	381	36.3
Occasionally	147	14
Never	5	0.5
	1050	

For Homework	frequency	percentage
Very Often	620	59.6
Quite Often	303	29.1
Occasionally	107	10.3
Never	11	1.1
	1041	

For Internal Assessments	frequency	percentage
Very Often	457	43.9
Quite Often	307	29.5
Occasionally	244	23.5
Never	32	3.1
	1040	

Q4 Did you experience any network or device problems while accessing or completing this digital exam?

	frequency	percentage
No Problems	853	83.5
Network Problems	95	9.3
Device Problems	74	7.2
	1022	

Q5 I found the familiarisation activities useful in my preparation for my digital exam.

	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	206	20.4
Agree	546	54
Disagree	35	3.5
Stongly Disagree	11	1.1
I didn't know they existed	213	21.1
	1011	

Q8 How easy was it to navigate through the digital exam?

	frequency	percentage
Very Easy	510	51.4
Easy	458	46.2
Difficult	23	2.3
Very Difficult	1	0.1
	992	

Q9 How easy did you find entering your responses to the digital exam?

	frequency	percentage
Very Easy	502	50.7
Easy	461	46.5
Difficult	27	2.7
Very Difficult	1	0.1
	991	

Q10 I found completing the digital exam took less time than I expected than if it had been paper based.

	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	573	57.9
Agree	341	34.5
Disagree	68	6.9
Strongly Disagree	7	0.7
	989	100

Q11 I preferred completing the exam digitally rather than on paper.

	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	629	63.5
Agree	312	31.5
Disagree	40	4
Strongly Disagree	9	0.9
	990	

Q12 Overall, I found completing this exam digitally was a positive experience.

	frequency	percentage
Strongly Agree	536	54.1
Agree	431	43.5
Disagree	20	2
Strongly Disagree	3	0.3
	990	