

TEU00311 – witidtm

2022 backgrounder survey results  
<https://down.dsg.cs.tcd.ie/witidtm>

# Context/numbers

- 74 registered students for 2022 TEU00311 module (as of Sep 19<sup>th</sup>)
- 42 responses (thanks!)
- Respondents more or less haven't met (much), but have a lot in common
- 2021 slides are at the end of this deck in case you're interested

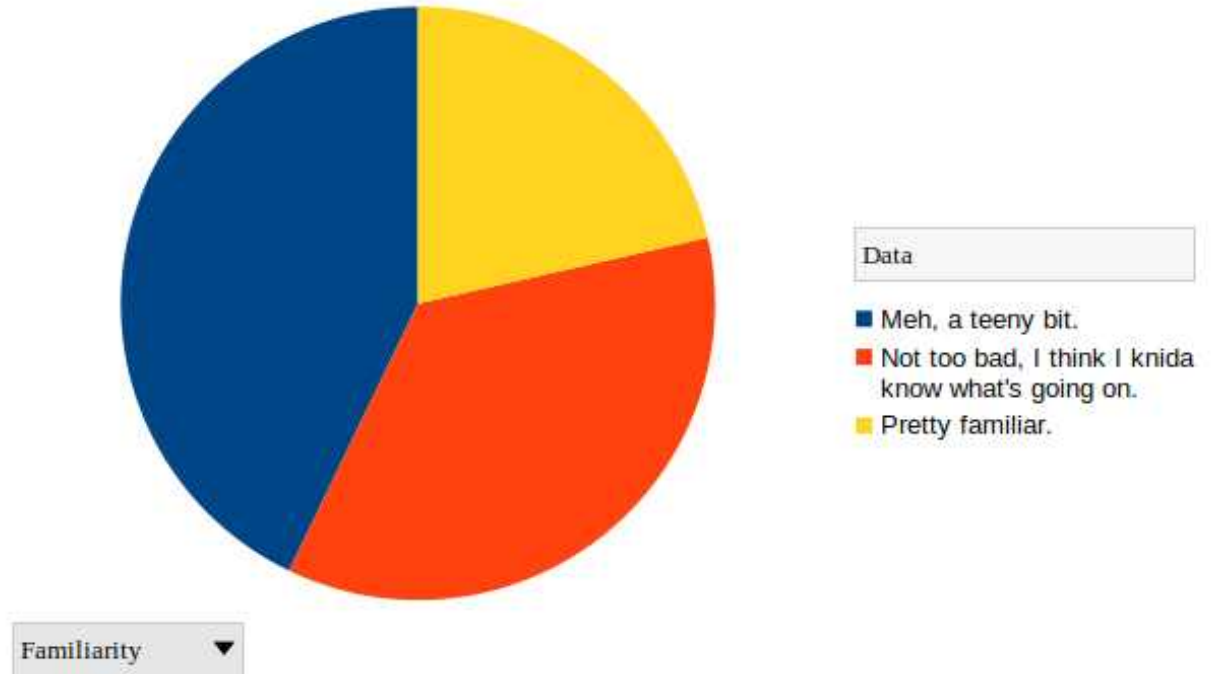
# Q1: How familiar would you say you are with how the Internet works?

Not at all – 0% !!

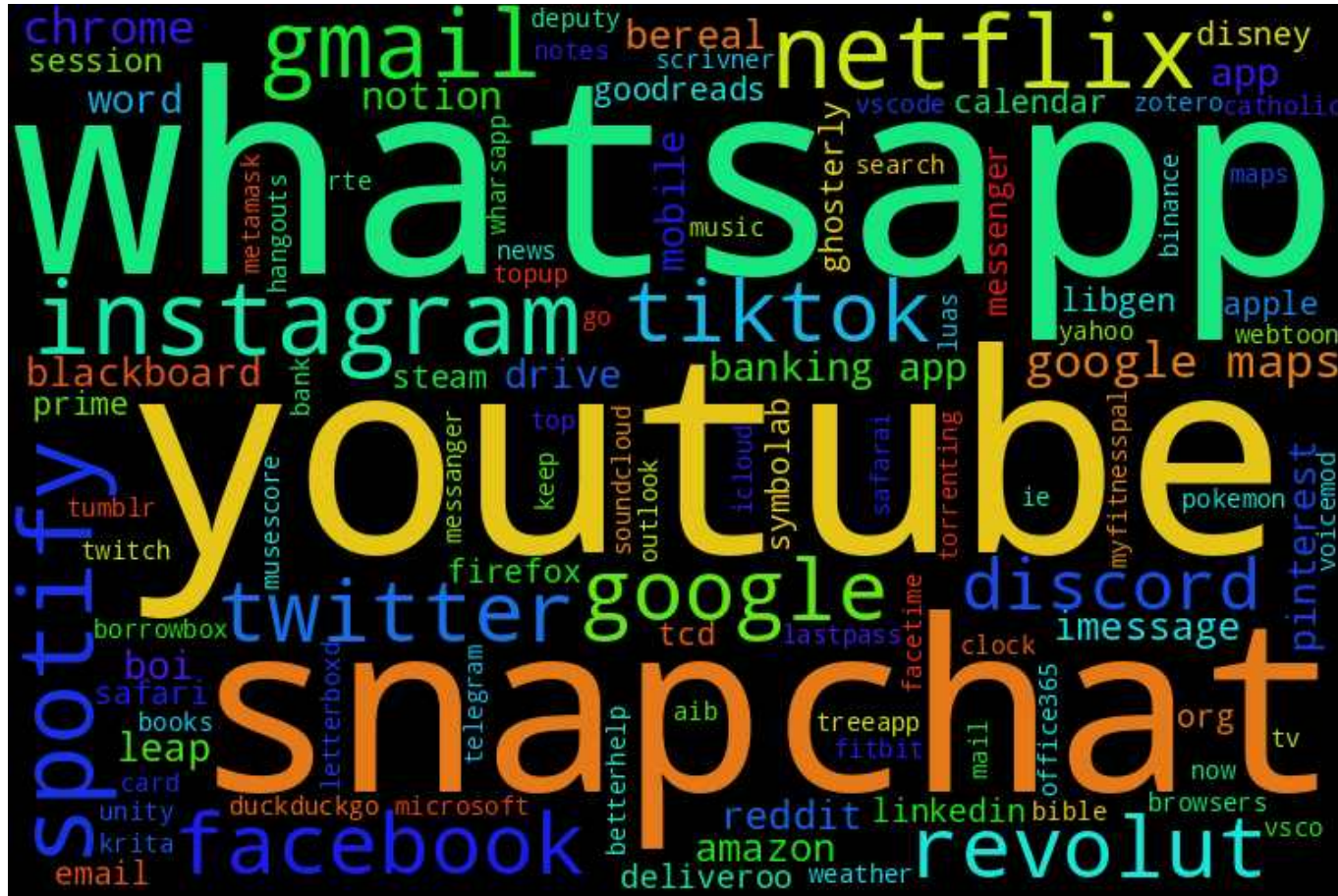
Meh, a teeny bit - 43%

Not too bad, I think I knida know what's going on - 36%

Pretty familiar – 21%



Q2: 2022: Please provide a list of the top-10 (or so) apps/tools and services that are most important to you (e.g. whatsapp, netflix etc.).

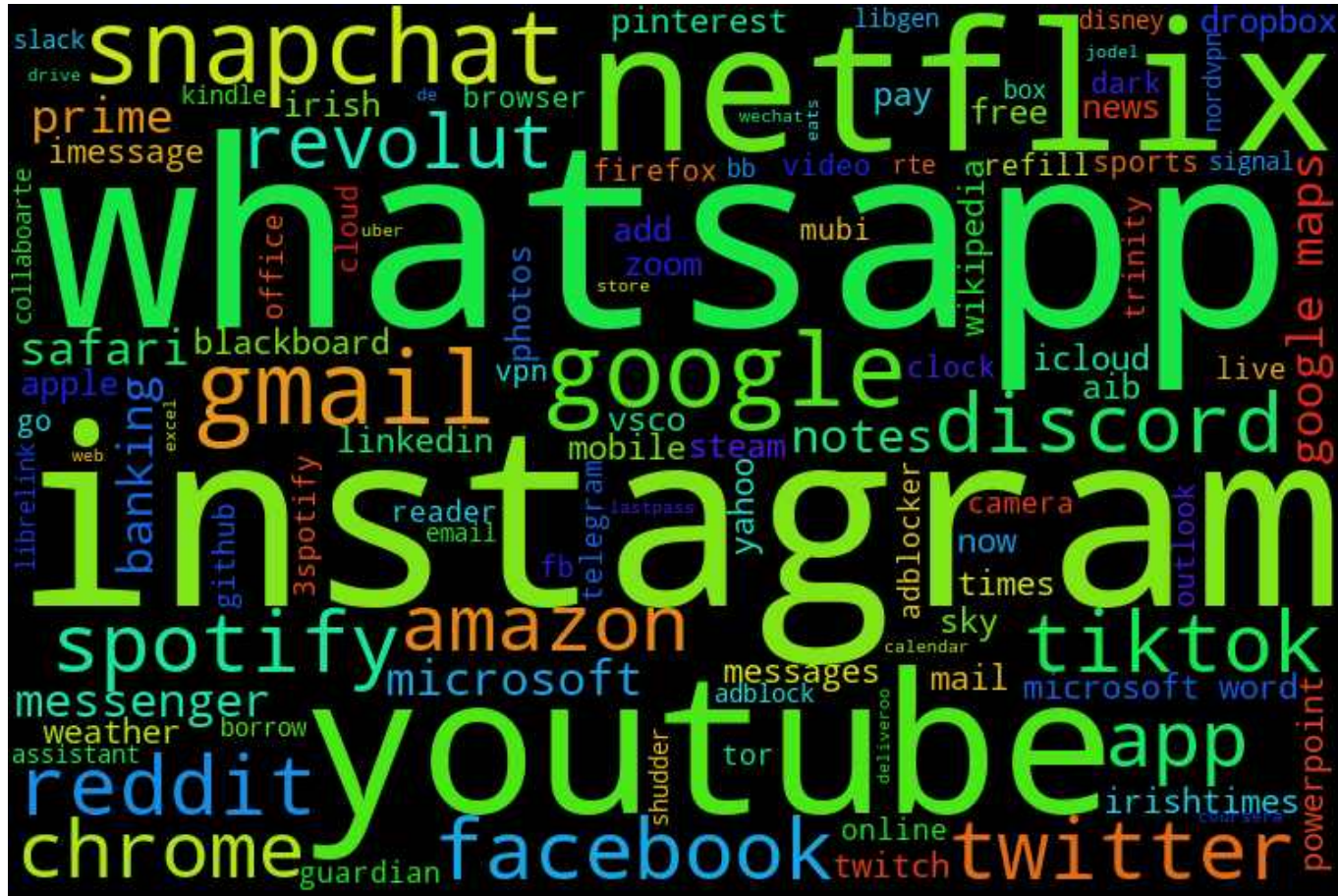


*That's kind of as-expected  
and (IMO) a bit sad.*

*Questions:*

- *What do you think about that?*
- *What would you do about that if you were ruler of the universe?*
- *What should societies do about that?*

Q2: 2021: Please provide a list of the top-10 (or so) apps/tools and services that are most important to you (e.g. whatsapp, netflix etc.).



*That's kind of as-expected  
and (IMO) a bit sad.*

Questions:

- *What do you think about that?*
- *What would you do about that if you were ruler of the universe?*
- *What should societies do about that?*



### Q3: How would you characterise your overall impression of how you interact with the Internet?

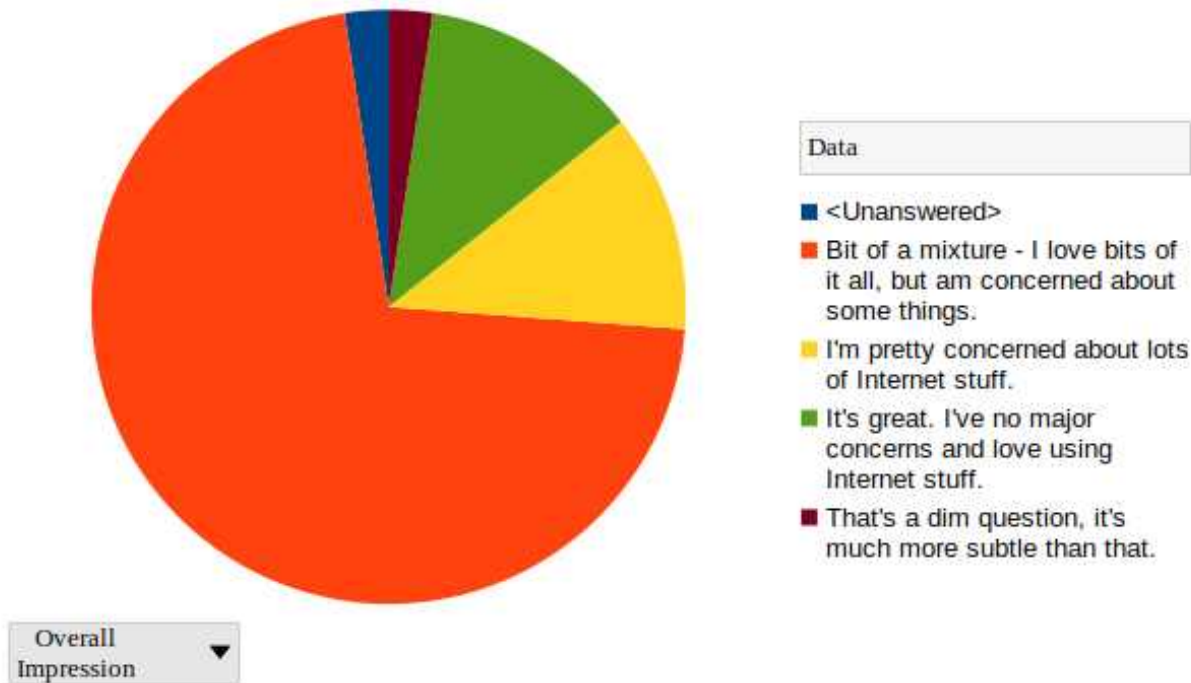
It's great. I've no major concerns and love using Internet stuff - 12%

Bit of a mixture - I love bits of it all, but am concerned about some things. - 71%

I'm pretty concerned about lots of Internet stuff - 12%

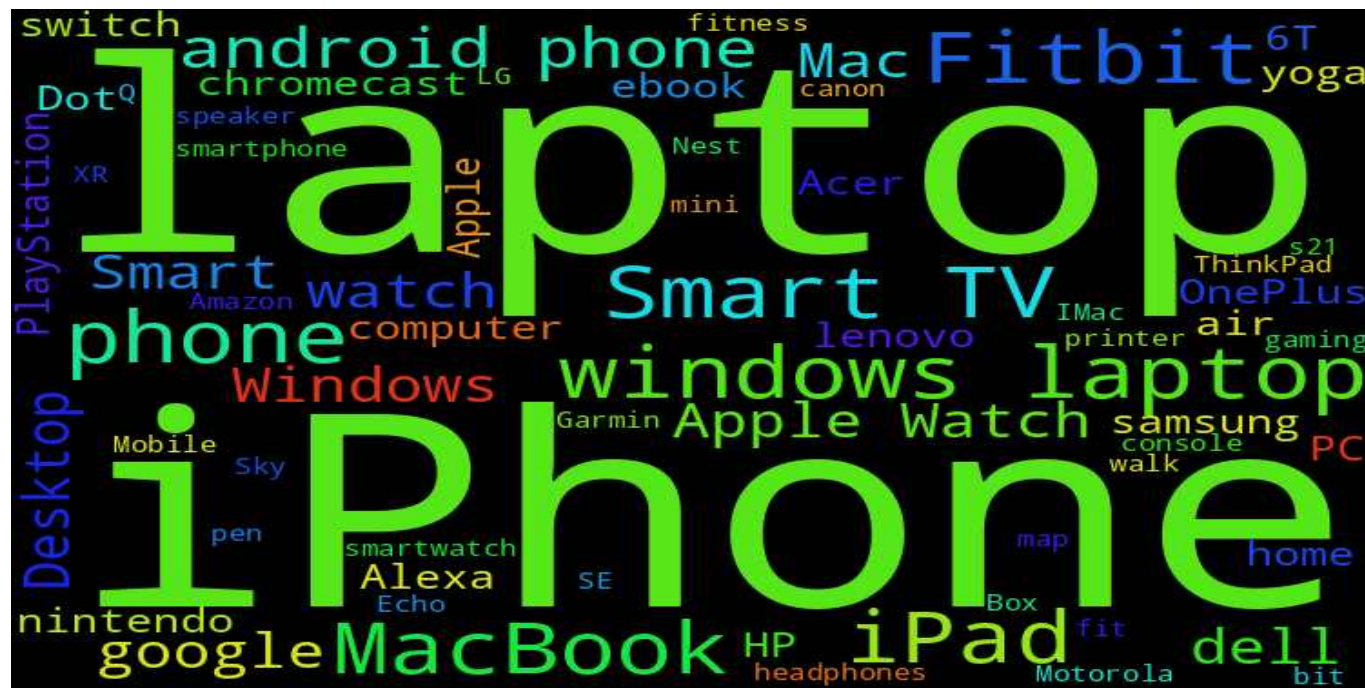
That's a dim question, it's much more subtle than that – 2%

Unanswered – 2%



*Thank you to the person who said "dim" – I was hoping for more of those tbh as it is a bit of a dim question! Why?*

# Q5 Devices



- Pretty much as expected?

# Q4 Concerns

- Question: “Write a sentence or two about things that concern you related to the Internet. For example you might be worried about some privacy or security or misinformation issue. If you can be more specific, that's great but there's no need to reveal anything about yourself, so generic concerns are fine too”
- I did formatting (and a bit of a spellcheck:-) on the answers to make one bullet per sentence, randomised the order and then **bolded** a few common/key terms



# Q4 Answers (1)

- What **cookies** really are - what information is given away
- It generally often feels like people nowadays have both no internet privacy and no way to **gain back control** of their data privacy
- There is a lot of **misinformation** on the internet which tends to lead to people being confused on certain topics. I think its most prominent on Facebook. News pages will post misleading article titles or just plain wrong information, and many people will fall for the false information without going to further research and investigate.
- Worried about **scams** and how realistic they've become - worried about accidentally falling for one or missing out on opportunities because i think they might be a scam.
- Concerned over **becoming too reliant** on the internet for information and concerned about how my data is used
- The ease of spread of **misinformation** is scary. Very few people online actually fact-check their sources. Moreover, ads and content are targeted and keep you in your bubble of beliefs which can lead even more people down rabbit holes and conspiracies.
- The prevalence of **scams** and phishing everywhere online is equally worrying

# Q4 Answers (2)

- Apart from **advertising** or catering content, how can companies use the data they collect from me
- **Government control**, the end of **anonymity**.
- Lack of security against **bots** on sites made by billion+ euro businesses (ie. twitter is roughly 80% bot activity).
- Lack of **decentralisation** and silencing of information/code due to centralised nature of 99% of sites and power of gov vs open source code (ie. us sanctioning a protocol and then github taking down their code) tradeoff between decentralisation and usability has to be made but not to the extent that it is currently.
- Biggest concern would be about security- worried about **hacking** or **bank details** being taken
- My biggest concern is how good they've gotten at firstly collecting data about users, but also at how good the analysis of the data has gotten to allow them to know **things they haven't technically observed**.
- Don't know **where my information goes**/ how it is stored/ where it is stored and for how long it is stored. Where is the cloud really and how safe is the security? What happens when I click okay for **cookies** and what difference does it make?
- Access to **card details**

# Q4 Answers (3)

- Mostly concerned the most about privacy and security.
- I dislike **hidden features** that aren't showcased such as phones using listening devices and selling that data to advertisers.
- Have had that happen when planning to go on holiday and am then given suggestions based on **audio from my house**.
- I'm also in general concerned about safety of **passwords** since I don't create a wholly unique password for everything.
- There are a few concerns to me on one level its privacy rights which i value but on the other its more so the **behavioural effects** it has which concerns me also
- I am mainly worried about my privacy and that (or rather to what extend) companies **sell my data**. I would also like to know what companies do with my personal information and why they need them.
- I also don't trust Apps like Instagram claiming that they don't use our **microphones** to listen what we are saying.
- I'm concerned what I view on the internet will be **used against me**.
- i am concerned with how much information i am **unwillingly exposing** when on the internet. sometimes it feels like i think about something and I'm suddenly seeing ads for it on every social media platform and it makes me uncomfortable.
- I love using the internet but I know there are dangers and concerns regarding the internet that I am not fully aware of.

# Q4 Answers (4)

- A **profile** being made about me.
- I am worried about the large amounts of blatant **misinformation** available on the internet that people readily consume, as it does nought but drive people apart and fill them with hate.
- I also hate **cryptocurrency**
- Very easy to get **access about a certain person** like you can type in someone's name and a lot can come up about them
- It is very easy to **give out more information than you think**. It's not as safe or private as we may be led to believe.
- What my data is being used for. **Who has access** to the data.
- **Who has access** to my data, can things actually be deleted or will it always be there
- How easy it is for **underage children** to access content that is not necessarily suitable for them.
- Anonymous **cyberbullying**
- **Mental health** - what spending so much time online does to the brain and how we feel

# Q4 Answers (5)

- **Relationships** built online with people you don't know
- Private information security
- The fact that almost **everyone and anyone has access** to the internet
- Do the pros outweigh the cons?
- Pretty concerned about **AI** and the things it can do. Also concerned about how if I'm talking to my friends about swimming for example, I'll start to get adds for swimming on my phone. **Is my phone listening to me???**
- Data protection is a concern when it comes to corporations based in **foreign countries** obtaining personal information.
- Also the hacking of my software and the effectiveness of **internet security packages** in preventing such incidents.
- The only concern I have is about **where my personal data is stored** and **who has access to it**.
- Concerned about **location** and **bank account** privacy
- I'm worried that the information I consume is very **biased** towards my views and that I don't get a well rounded view of the world. I only see what I want to see



# Q4 Answers (6)

- I am concerned about what **cookies** even are. I feel like I click accept all too easily. I also feel like the internet has all my data.
- It is concerning when I feel as though I have been **discussing a topic and it suddenly appears** on my screen as an advert. It is like it is listening. I would just like to see how this is the case.
- **Psychological issues** - particularly related to 'scrolling' algorithms that encourage **addiction**, and exposure to graphic/existential content
- Privacy issues - that personal files and apps like the **camera** are accessible and controllable by others
- I am concerned about the **data retention**
- **Cookies** and **digital footprint**
- **Selling of data**
- Spread of **misinformation/** conspiracy theories
- I'm not too sure **how my data is used** so I'd like to know about that.

# Q4 Answers (7)

- **Access** to information and **contact details**
- I'm worried about my **digital footprint**... how available is my online presence to potential employers, academic institutes, etc? Do companies sell this information, are we safer under GDPR, etc..
- I love using the internet and i think it is is a fantastic tool but its always in the back of my mind how badly it is affecting my life in terms of **over reliance**, **sleep interruption** and **loss of human contact**
- The problem of **online banking** and credit card scammers, the spreading of **false and potentially harmful information**, accepting '**cookies**' and websites and apps policies/terms and conditions without necessarily knowing what they contain.
- I'd very much be worried about privacy on the internet and how much access service/app providers have of your own PC, accounts etc. For many apps, I'd be worried about how many **permissions** they ask for or what they get from you that they don't ask for and how much of what I do is logged, saved and used and for what purpose (an example would be an alexa I use with the concern of since it is **always recording** how much of what it hears, be it using the prompt to use it for or otherwise, being stored or used somewhere). While definitely a generic concern, It's a pretty prevalent one in my opinion as so many websites and apps log info now
- I have heard that **cyber security is in fact a myth** and anything can be accessed if needed, is this true

# (My tentative) Conclusions

- Target diversity is a good, but takes work, maybe too much work
- As a group our concerns seem to have a fair bit in common (but we are self-selecting!)
- Payments, mis/dis-information and social impacts maybe of more concern this year
- Perhaps this group are a bit more confident in your opinions than last year's? (But last year, people were stuck doing this from home still, which may have affected their answers.)

# What our 2021 folk thought...

- All the slides from 2021 below here for comparison

# Context/numbers

- 49 registered students for 2021 TEU00311 module
- 39 responses (thanks!) to blackboard survey (announced twice) over 4 days in Sep 2021
- Respondents more or less haven't met
- Everyone responded to all questions (thanks moar!)



## Q1: How familiar would you say you are with how the Internet works?

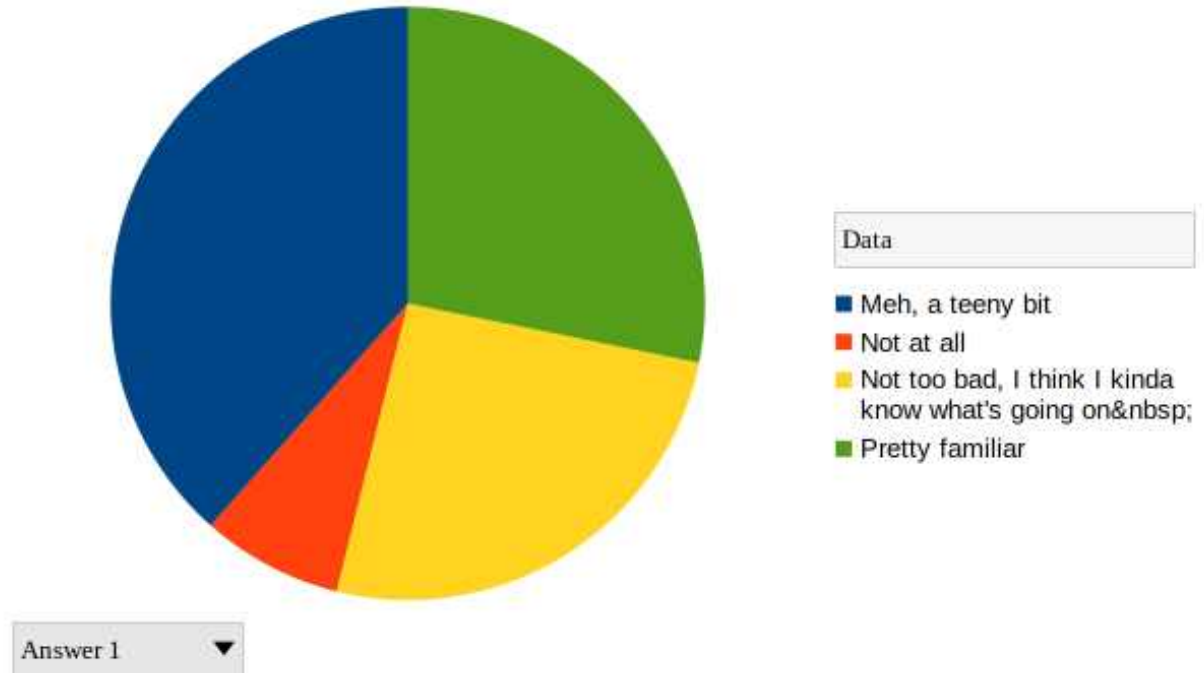
Not at all - 7.692%

Meh, a teeny bit - 38.461%

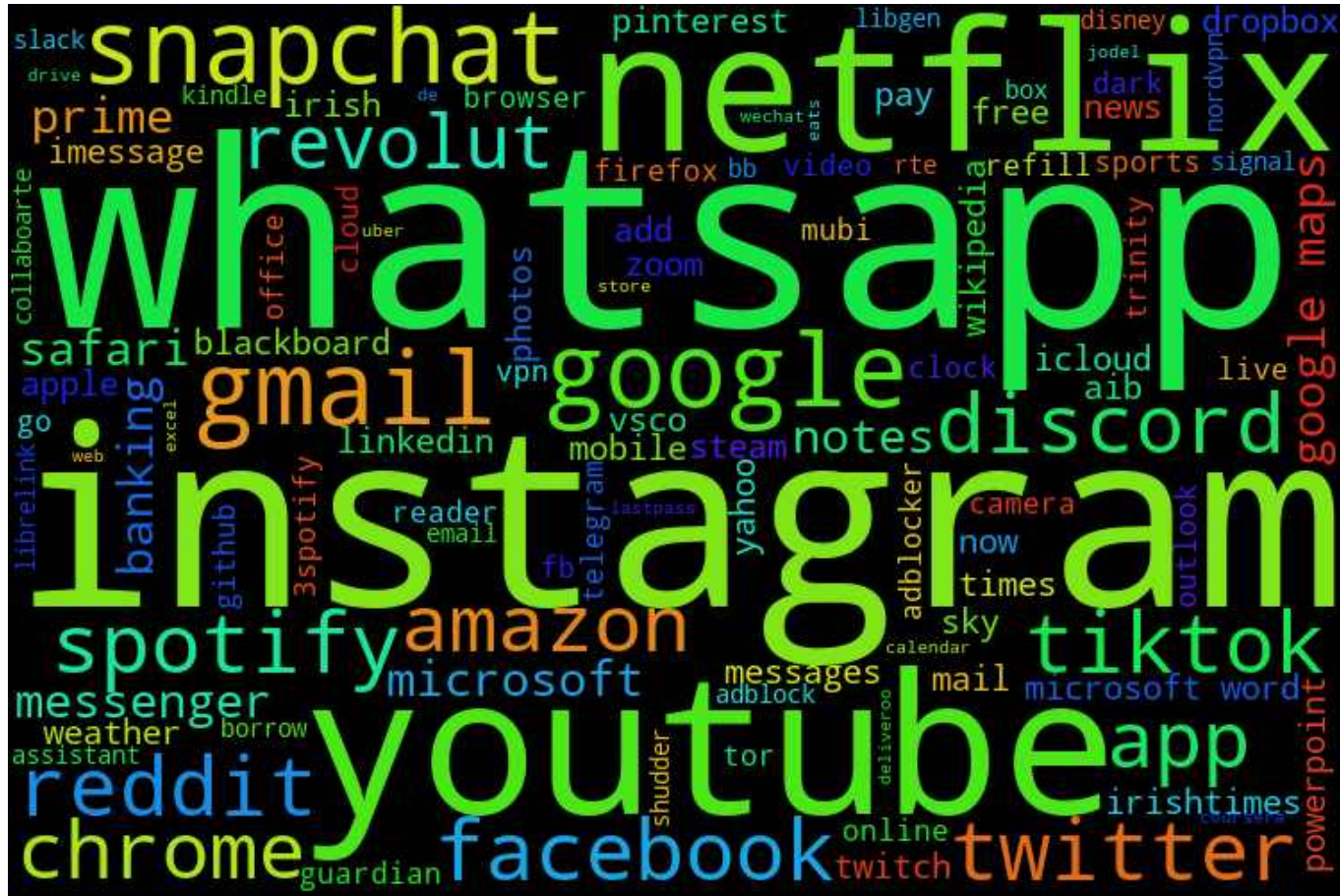
Not too bad, I think I kinda  
know what's going on -  
25.641%

Pretty familiar – 28.205%

*I expected more “meh.” I  
might ask a form of this  
question again at the end  
of the module!  
(please remind me:-)*



Q2: Please provide a list of the top-10 (or so) apps/tools and services that are most important to you (e.g. whatsapp, netflix etc.).



*That's kind of as-expected and (IMO) a bit sad.*

*Questions:*

- *What do you think about that?*
- *What would you do about that if you were ruler of the universe?*
- *What should societies do about that?*

### Q3: How would you characterise your overall impression of how you interact with the Internet?

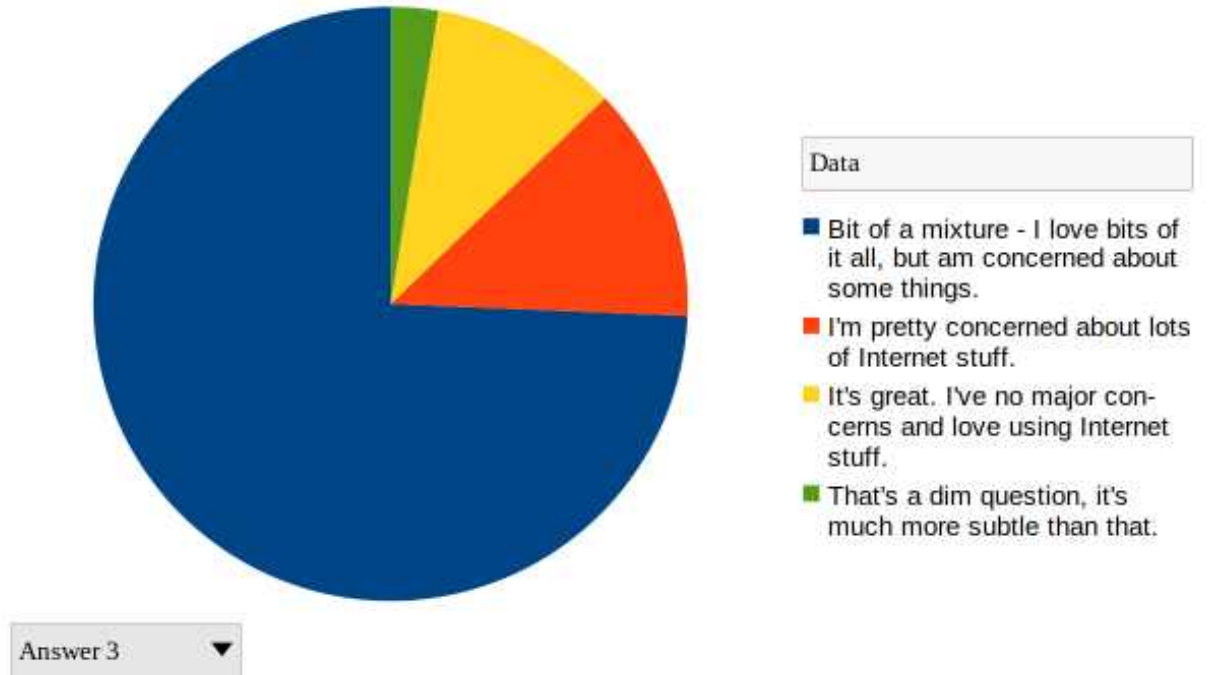
It's great. I've no major concerns and love using Internet stuff - 10.256%

Bit of a mixture - I love bits of it all, but am concerned about some things. - 74.358%

I'm pretty concerned about lots of Internet stuff - 12.82%

That's a dim question, it's much more subtle than that- 2.564%

*Thank you to the person who said "dim" – I was hoping for more of those tbh as it is a bit of a dim question! It could even be used as a sneaky question. Why?*



Q4: Write a sentence or two about things that concern you related to the Internet. For example you might be worried about some privacy or security or misinformation issue. If you can be more specific, that's great but there's no need to reveal anything about yourself, so generic concerns are fine too.

# Q4: Answers

- It is the driving force behind societal changes that strike me as deeply concerning - Overemphasis on information technology leading to greater polarisation and a growing inability to collectively solve problems. However, the genie is out of the bottle so it's worth trying to fix.
- The only real concern I have with the internet is data leaks which could compromise my passwords to mobile banking or my email.
- I am a bit concerned about how much of my data is spread around the internet. Whenever I get ads that are targeted towards me with things I've been interested in recently, I get a bit worried about my privacy over the internet.
- I am concerned about how much access the general public has to fake news. I am also concerned about my privacy, or lack thereof whilst using the internet.
- I am concerned about how companies track what websites I have visited and use that information to display relevant ads.
- I suppose the vagueness surrounding the legality of what an individual and companies can and can't do on the internet leaves the door easily open for bad faith actors to exploit others.
- I worry slightly about the security and safety of the internet, especially with its young, vulnerable, and impressionable users.
- When going into a new web page, it always makes me select to accept all cookies or just partial cookies.
- Sometimes I become weary when entering credit card details into certain websites in certain scenarios. When using smaller, lesser known websites, this can be a problem.
- Where my personal information ends up, passwords, cookies, personal information/photos from social media's.
- The ever-present surveillance by the government - frequent data breaches leading to invasion of privacy.
- I am sometimes concerned regarding my security and privacy. I get worried about hackers leaking my personal details.
- The usage and extrapolation of my personal data - my right to be forgotten.



# Q4: Answers

- One issue would probably be the tendencies that allow people to continue to be exposed to a sort of echo chamber. The kind where platforms would tend to send the same kind of content or information which further strengthens a user's views and beliefs without challenging them. Algorithms playing a massive role. This would be one of the factors which contribute to the groups of people who end up having more extreme/radical variations of beliefs and opinions. Another is the general privacy concerns anyone would have when it comes to sharing information.
- My only real concern is about data leaks, where I may have saved login details to a particular website and these details were then part of a leak as I have been informed in the past.
- I believe that one of the biggest issues concerning the internet is the problem over misinformation, which can be seen in so many aspects of our daily lives, particularly in relation to misinformation spread about the COVID-19 pandemic. The fact that anyone, without the need for qualifications or fact-checks, can write anything about anything and everything is extremely worrying. As a result of this misinformation crisis in this 'information age', I believe that it is becoming harder to find the truth among all the lies. If this problem continues to escalate, the truth may never be discerned again.
- I'm worried about how algorithms can push people into rabbit holes of misinformation and radicalisation
- I do not like cookies and how data is collected about your internet behaviour, I would rather be anonymous.
- I do not like how addicting it is. My screen time averages at >30 hours a week which means I spend at least >50 days a year on my phone. This is not time well spent
- I do not like how everyone believes everything they see on social media. This causes misinformation to spread. No one checks sources of people's information ever. This is especially common in the younger generation when certain political campaigns things trend on social media.

# Q4: Answers

- Different apps collecting data about me and my interests to then use for targeted advertisement.
- Lots of personal data leaks are happening, lots of misinformation being spread on social media platforms daily and the dark web.
- How traceable I am through various accounts I made when I was younger
- I don't like the prevalence and implied necessity of all the tracking and data collection. I would rather that stuff worked without having to have such an online presence
- being overmarketed to By seeing the same content all the time my idea of the world is becoming too reinforced - for example I only see the videos or news articles that reinforce my own political ideology. Therefore I think that I'm right and become inflexible to other viewpoints. I also may think that the world is like what I see on my phone all the time when all I'm actually seeing is a one sided viewpoint.
- Identity theft based on the information I leave on the internet through social media and shopping. Profits made from our interactions with websites and apps are not transparent.
- I really like the internet, but I am a bit afraid of how easy it is to spread misinformation on there. Also I do not like the idea, that my internet activities could be used to track what I do or even my location.
- The amount of data being collected and where and how it is being stored.
- Privacy and security are generally the main concern regarding the Internet. What I have always found daunting is the fact that, once you upload something/ put something up on the internet, it's always there, in some form or the other. One cannot do anything to take it down. Therefore one should always be vigilant about what they're putting up on the internet.

## Q5: How enthusiastic are you to get back to face-to-face sessions in the first half of this semester?

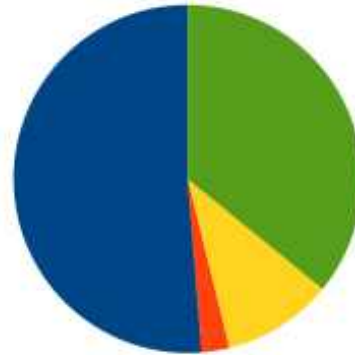
I can't wait. I'm really keen to get back to campus so would like to attend all sessions I can - 51.282%

I'd be happy to get to some face-to-face sessions in the next few weeks, but maybe not all - 35.897%

I'd be a bit concerned about attending in person in the next few weeks, so online suits me better, for now - 10.256%

I have real logistical (e.g. no Dublin accommodation) or health reasons why I mostly or completely can't be there in person for the next few weeks, so even if I'd like to be there, it's not possible right now. (But I can do online.) - 2.564%

*I've asked if we can get a room for Thursdays. I don't know if or how soon we might. I'll keep you up to date. I hope we get one. We won't forget still-remote people if so.*



Data

- I can't wait. I'm really keen to get back to campus so would like to attend all sessions I can.
- I have real logistical (e.g. no Dublin accommodation) or health reasons why I mostly or completely can't be there in person for the next few weeks, so even if I'd like to be there, it's not possible right now. (But I can do online.)
- I'd be a bit concerned about attending in person in the next few weeks, so online suits me better, for now.
- I'd be happy to get to some face-to-face sessions in the next few weeks, but maybe not all.

Answer 5 ▼

Q6: If you can get to some but not all face-to-face sessions in the next few weeks, what are your priorities for the ones you can attend? For example, you might be more interested in meeting fellow students, or in group discussions, or doing a bit of lab-like work Or you might even yearn for a traditional lecture, who knows:-) Just a couple of sentences here is fine.

# Q6: Answers

- I don't mind, any form of it will do/
- I hope from my in person lectures to get the real college experience. I believe this involves a healthy mix of traditional lectures along with small bits of group work to keep things fresh and give us a shot to get to know each other.
- I would like to attend for sessions that have some sort of lab-like work.
- I am happy to gradually progress into face to face lectures. I am learning how to manage my schedule with college and personal commitments so the next few weeks will be about learning how to adapt.
- A few lectures would be nice here and there
- I have no preference as to what form the in person activity is, I will take anything that is going.
- I hope to meet some fellow classmates since I am an international student and newer to the area.
- I think any activities are fine with me for going into face to face. personally I don't have too many preferences on things to do.

# Q6: Answers

- i like the online lectures as they can be recorded and rewatched, ensuring they are better for when the time comes to study the material. however, the in person lectures stick with me alot more as it is very easy to zone out when the online lecture is in effect
- I would rather not be in person for the next few weeks however if I were to be I would rather meet fellow students in the module for a traditional lecture
- Lab- like work and meeting fellow students would be my priority
- I'm so excited to meet new peiople and get to know them. I also feel like I could engage more in classes as I will have more concentration in face - to - face lectures then online lectures.
- meeting fellow students, as our year has never been into college and we are basically first years with the level of knowledge and participation we have regarding college life i work best when in a classroom surrounded by people, working online provides many distractions that are hard to ignore
- PRESENCE, PRESENCE, PRESENCE. There is no more to say. actually, there is: if I had to decide how to prioritize your 3 topics:  
1. group discussions in presence (and meet fellow students) 2. presence lectures and eventually 3. lab-like word in presence
- i havent been into college once so i am looking forward to everything it has to offer
- I would be happy with all, but for now I would not consider myself knowledgable enough in this area to meaningfully contribute to a discussion on this topic

# Q6: Answers

- I would prioritise F2F sessions that are for group work or other work that emphasises interaction with other students.
- I'd be interested in more or less everything mentioned here. I'd look forward to meeting other students in group scenarios.
- I think meeting students is my main priority, I don't have too much of an issue doing my actual work at home but having regular labs/ tutorials/ group discussions encourages people to come into campus and then we all get to meet each other more and more.
- I would be interested in meeting fellow students and engage in group discussions about the elective. I feel as though I learn best through the inspiration of others and having the ability to bounce ideas off of each other!
- Lab work or interactive work
- Not a traditional lecture anyway, these are actually good to have online so that you can pause or rewind if you don't understand some materials. Probably group discussions or lab work.
- Would actually like to be on campus and feel like a Trinity student again.
- I would love opportunities to work with other students and get to know them. Coming in for some lab work or group work could be really nice and a fun way to get more engaged with the content.
- traditional lecture
- Real interaction with other students and lecturers is the top priority for f2f, so group work is preferred to traditional lectures.
- I would attend all in person sessions, because of meeting fellow students, having the student life on campus, and doing lab-work in person is so much better than online.

# Q6: Answers

- Would like to get to know other students on the module. If this means traditional lectures, labs or group discussions I am prepared to do whatever we can. It is very difficult to get to know anyone on the module via a computer screen which I am sure you can understand.
- A mix of traditional lectures and group discussions will be very interesting. It will be nice to meet fellow students.
- I think attending live lectures is important for me, as it adds to student engagement and participation. Otherwise group work and discussions would be the next priority as meeting people is one of the many joys of going to college. Doing an elective gives me the opportunity to meet people outside of my course, so keeping these interactions online would severely restrict any social engagement.
- A traditional lecture would be great!
- I would really like to meet everyone and maybe do some group activities?
- In the least rude way possible, I genuinely could not care less
- I would attend any and all in person college as I am paying for accomodation up here
- Group discussions sound good!
- Just wishing to see something that's not my screen.
- I would like to meet other students, but only in the case, that we can actually sit next to each other in the classrooms. This could be a great way to get to know new people and create discussions on the topic. However, I think this would be only possible if there are no firm restrictions in place (i.e. leaving 2m distance between students in the room).
- I wouldnt have any priorities, just to go in would be enough for me.
- After spending better part of 2 years learning from home I came to the conclusion that online learning is just not good enough when compared to traditional lectures. I really enjoy interacting with my peers, getting to know everyone's opinions and thought proccesses regarding the subject we are studying, It just feels more natural.



# (My tentative) Conclusions

- It may be some of you are not envisaging the swan's legs thrashing away:-)
- Target diversity is a good, but takes work, maybe too much work.
- As a group our concerns seem to have a fair bit in common (but we are self-selecting!)
- The loss of contact is glaringly apparent.
- We should meet!