The college campus, long a place of scholarship and frontiers of new technology, is being transformed into a new age of electronics by a fleet of laptops, smart phones and connectivity 24 hours a day.

On a typical modern-day campus, where every building and most outdoor common are as offer wireless Internet access, one student takes her laptop everywhere. In class, she takes notes with it, sometimes instant-messaging or emailing friends if the professor is less than interesting. In her dorm, she instant-messages her roommate sitting just a few feet away. She is tied to her smartphone, which she even uses to text a friend who lives one floor above her, and which supplies music for walks between classes.

Welcome to college life in the 21stcentury, where students on campus are electronically linked to each other, to professors and to their classwork 24 / 7 in an ever-flowing river of information and communication. With many schools offering wireless Internet access anywhere on campus, colleges as a group have become the most Internet accessible spots in the world.

Students say they really value their fingertip-access to the boundless amount of information online, and the ability to email professors at 2 a.m. and receive responses the next morning. "I always feel like I have a means of communication – in class and out of class, "says one engineering major.

Many are using smartphones, not only to create their own dialects when texting, but also to do more serious work, such as practicing foreign languages and analyzing scripts from their theater classes. In a university class on the history of American radio, students use smartphones to record their own radio shows. The course instructor said, "It's adding to students' sense of excitement about the subject. "Professors have been encouraged to tape their lectures and post them online. "We realized there might be some potential for a device that could get attention and encourage sophisticated thinking," says one leading university director.

For most undergraduates, non-stop Internet connectivity is the fuel of college life. More than just toys, these instruments are powerful tools for the storage and management of virtually every kind of information. And as more people around the world adopt these instruments, they are becoming indispensable. So, students should use the wonders of the Internet to do homework, review lecture outlines, take part in class discussions and network online with their friends. But in doing so, students must remember to regulate and balance their time. Too much time online can mean too little time in real-life studying or exercising or visiting with friends. Students should not let the Internet world on their computer screens take them away from the real world outside.

Colleges began embracing Internet accessing the mid-1990s, when many began wiring dorms with high-speed connections. in the past few years, schools have taken the lead by turning their campuses into bubbles of Wi-Fi networks. In fact, a recent study in the US found that information technology accounted for 5% to 8% of college budgets, up from an estimated 2% to 3% in the mid-1980s.

On one campus, students use Wi-Fi to fire off instant messages, review their homework assignments, and check their bank balances. Just nine miles down the highway, another university had been feeling a bit of a technology inferiority complex. To compensate, it spent tens of thousands of dollars to give every one of its incoming freshmen a free Apple iPad.

Some universities even require that all students own or lease a laptop. Some say the focus on technology prepares students for a wired world. "You have to keep up with the rest of the world. Students expect high-bandwidth information, and if you can't deliver it, you're at a competitive disadvantage," states a university president.

Other colleges are straining to standout from their peers. The race to attract students with the most modern networks and the hottest systems has reached fever pitch. Some business majors are receiving free portable computers. In an always-connected mode, they can get information anytime and anywhere they need. One university is even giving its freshmen new smartphones to enrich the student experience and prepare them for success in a rapidly changing world.

For those who prefer to travel laptop-free, colleges supply several computer labs. And for students who study late into the night, many have set up 24-hour repair shops where students can get their laptops fixed by the next day and receive a loaner in the meantime.

Colleges around the world have been replacing their computer systems for the past decade, in large part to provide students with the most advanced free system. The anywhere-anytime access has already yielded amazing benefits in education. With the widespread application of computer technologies, we are going to produce a generation of problem-solvers and intelligent thinkers, which is indispensable for the future of the world.