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**INTRODUCTION**

**Digital Divide**

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**1st Degree**

- Limited access to technology
- Bandwidth

**2nd Degree**

- Digital Skills
- Technical Knowledge

Factors adding to the complexity of the divide in the classroom include:

- Social stereotypes surrounding gender and technology;
- Economic disparity; and
- Social capital disparity.

**Regional Schools**

Regional and remote schools face unique challenges in closing the divide resulting from geographical isolation, including:

- Single retail outlets to purchase computers or data plans;
- Little to no influx of new teachers;
- Limited access to tech related professional learning opportunities for teachers; and
- Parents’ negative views regarding device use in classrooms.2

**Research**

Our aims are to understand the perceived digital competency of students transitioning from high school into university and to identify the gaps in key digital skills.

**Method**

Over two weeks, the Widening Participation Unit recruited Macquarie University students who graduated high school in NSW to complete an online survey on the use of digital technologies for learning.

81 students completed the survey. 12 were excluded because they completed HSC prior to 2012. We analysed data of 69 students, nine graduating from regional high schools and 60 from metro area high schools in NSW.

**Findings**

“High School prepared me for the digital technology requirements of university.”

**Further Debate**

What role do universities play in bridging the digital divide?

Universities invest heavily in building robust, technology-rich courses. High schools simply do not have the time or scale to do so.

- What support is need to ensure a smooth transition from high school to the digital learning environment of university?
- Is this digital transition a key factor in student success and retention?

**Our Program**

To learn more about our program, LEAP-Links (Digital Literacy), contact us. Rebecca Turnbow, Project Coordinator (02) 9850 7335
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**References**