Summary of Student Survey and Focus Groups
Computer Usage, Attitudes and Preferences • February 2004

Purpose: Because the School wanted to explore a technology fee per journalism credit hour, the faculty and student committee appointed to investigate its feasibility determined that the first need was to know more about current student use and need.

Method: All students currently taking journalism courses were invited by individual email to participate in an online survey conducted February 12 to 20. Survey respondents totaled 212, including 134 juniors and seniors, 71 freshmen and sophomores and 7 graduate students. Twenty students participated in five focus groups, held February 16-18 and included 14 undergraduate and 6 graduate students. The School had a 29 percent rate of participation in its research.

Findings:
How students use computers: The top four computer uses are writing, communication, information-gathering and entertainment. All students use a computer for these reasons. But journalism students also use computers for: 1) presentation, using PowerPoint, 2) page design, using Quark, Photoshop and InDesign, 3) video production, using iMovie and Final Cut Pro, 4) data management, using Excel and SPSS, and 5) web design, using Dream Weaver. Most journalism students don’t own these software programs, but they’d like to at student rates. To run these programs, most students will need to replace their present computers with faster machines.

How students rate their software skills: All journalism students would like training in how to use the software programs listed above. Although most consider their skills adequate or strong in writing, communicating and using the internet to gather information, they feel weak in web design, page design, video production, presentation and working with data in Excel or SPSS. In each of these areas, however, there are some students who feel their skills are strong enough to teach. This suggests opportunities for peer-to-peer training, especially in J-School labs.

Where and when Journalism students do computing: “Where I live” and “8 to 5” were the most common answers. During the day, as well as evenings and weekends, the J-School is a “second home,” where students find computers with the software they need. Other campus labs do not have this software (Budig, Union, libraries) and ranked third. Because multiple survey responses were permitted, it’s evident that journalism students do their computing in more than one place. The J-School supplements computing needs. It does not replace them.

Attitudes on Equipment, Access and Assistance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. J-School computer labs need longer hours</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. J-School video editing labs need longer hours</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Experienced lab assistants are there to answer questions</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. J-School needs more publicly available computers</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When I need equipment, there’s always plenty available</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the focus groups, students said they’d like to learn in the J-School labs with the help of trained assistants. Computer access is especially important during daytime hours: in public areas (e.g. the Reading Room), in unoccupied computer labs, and with loaner laptops, as in the library.

Equipment that students use: The inkjet printer ranked as the most commonly used device. Digital cameras ranked second and scanners third. Because “where I live” was mentioned first in

Technology Fee Committee Summary • 1
each category, this suggests that many students already own digital cameras, scanners and printers. A few indicated that they already have wireless internet access.

**How students transfer files:** Email is the primary method, followed by floppy disks. CDs now rank third, ahead of Zipdisks. Memory sticks (flash memory) have not yet caught on. Using a file server is relatively new in the J-School. A few “early adopters” (Mac users in particular) use an iPod with Firewire or burn DVD disks to transfer files.

**Suggestions**
About half of the 212 students participating in the online survey replied when asked to list “three technological improvements that would help you as a J-School student. These suggestions, along with input received in focus groups, fall into three broad categories.

**Tools** accounted for the most suggestions, including:
- Newer computers: able to run the latest versions of software.
- More software: more computers equipped with software students need.
- Hardware: more printers and scanners, plus some loaner laptops.
- PCs: so PC users can work on computers they already understand.
- Video equipment: more cameras, mikes and lights, available for longer use.
- Wireless networking: for easier storage and file transfer.

**Training** received the second-most suggestions, including:
- Learning opportunities for students, such as special courses or workshops.
- Training for lab assistants so that they can help answer students’ questions in the labs.

**Timely Access** received the third-most suggestions, including:
- More access to computer labs, especially during daytime hours.
- More access to editing labs, especially during peak periods when projects are due.
- More public computers at workstations in the Reading Room and elsewhere.
- Loaner laptops, especially for students working in groups who need to meet and talk.

**Demographic Information**
**Where Students Live:** Among the juniors, seniors and graduate students in the J-School, 3 out of 4 live in apartments or houses. Of the remainder, 1 out of 6 lives in a Greek house, 1 out of 30 lives in a scholarship hall and 1 out of 30 commutes. Dorms are home to a high percentage of freshmen, but more pre-journalism sophomores live in apartments than anywhere else.

**Computer Ownership:** Of the 212 students surveyed, 92% own a computer. Ownership is higher among freshmen and sophomores than juniors and seniors, who are more likely to use a roommate’s computer. A majority of freshmen (5 out of 8) own laptops, compared to 1 out of 8 seniors. Increased laptop ownership will increase the need for a mobile computing environment.

**Age of Students’ Computers:**
Seniors and juniors are more likely to own computers more than four years old. They have kept their PCs from high school. In the focus groups, students already in the J-School suggested advising incoming freshmen that their computing needs will change when they enter the School. Some freshmen may postpone purchasing a new computer until then. Others may buy a basic new computer (probably a laptop) and upgrade when they are juniors or seniors.
Survey of Journalism Students' Computer Usage & Attitudes

The School of Journalism needs to improve its technology and the technological expertise of students and faculty. This survey will help members of the School's Technology Committee develop a plan that reflects student needs and priorities. By completing this questionnaire, you indicate that you are willing to participate and consent to the use of the information you provide.

This data will be combined with all other responses so that the individuals will not be identified. If it's OK for the Technology Committee to contact you for more information, you have the option of providing your email address. If you'd like to remain anonymous, just click "Submit" without providing your email address. Thanks for participating!

About You:

1. What is your year at KU?
   - a. Freshman
   - b. Sophomore
   - c. Junior
   - d. Senior
   - e. Graduate Student

2. Which track are you in?
   - a. News/Information
   - b. Strategic Communications
   - c. Undecided

3. Where do you live?
   - a. Dorm
   - b. Greek House
   - c. Scholarship Hall
   - d. Apartment / House
   - e. Commute

About Your Computer Use:

4. Where do you use a computer (check all that apply)?
5. If you use a computer where you live, please check the equipment you use: (check all that apply)
   □ a. Inkjet Printer
   □ b. Laser Printer
   □ c. Wireless Printing
   □ d. Wireless Internet Access
   □ e. Scanner
   □ f. Digital Camera (photos)
   □ g. Digital Camera (videos)

6. When do you use a computer on campus (check all that apply)?
   □ a. During the school day (8:00am to 5:00pm)
   □ b. After School (5:00pm - 7:00pm)
   □ c. Early Evening (7:00pm - 10:00pm)
   □ d. Late Evening (After 10:00pm)
   □ e. Saturday
   □ f. Sunday

7. Which type of computer do you prefer to use (check on)?
   O a. PC/Windows Computer
   O b. Apple Macintosh/OS X
   O c. Either PC or Mac is OK

8. When you transfer files, do you use (check all that apply):
   □ a. Floppy Disk
   □ b. Zip Disk
   □ c. CD
   □ d. DVD
   □ e. Ipod or Firewire Drive
   □ f. Memory Stick (Flash Media)
   □ g. Email attachments
   □ h. Server

9. What do you use a computer for (check all that apply)?
   □ a. Writing (Microsoft Word, WordPerfect)
   □ b. Design (Quark, Photoshop, Pagemaker, InDesign)
   □ c. Video (iMovie, Final Cut Pro, Windows Movie Maker)
   □ d. Communication (email, ICChat), instant messaging
10. Please rate your skill in the following areas:

a. Word Processing
   □ a. Not Needed
   □ b. Weak -- I'd like to know more
   □ c. Adequate for my current school needs.
   □ d. Strong -- I can teach others

b. Page design and image manipulation
   □ a. Not Needed
   □ b. Weak -- I'd like to know more
   □ c. Adequate for my current school needs.
   □ d. Strong -- I can teach others

c. Video Editing
   □ a. Not Needed
   □ b. Weak -- I'd like to know more
   □ c. Adequate for my current school needs.
   □ d. Strong -- I can teach others

d. Web Design
   □ a. Not Needed
   □ b. Weak -- I'd like to know more
   □ c. Adequate for my current school needs.
   □ d. Strong -- I can teach others

e. Presentation Software
   □ a. Not Needed
   □ b. Weak -- I'd like to know more
   □ c. Adequate for my current school needs.
   □ d. Strong -- I can teach others
f. Spreadsheets and data management
   ○ a. Not Needed
   ○ b. Weak -- I'd like to know more
   ○ c. Adequate for my current school needs.
   ○ d. Strong -- I can teach others

g. Internet Research
   ○ a. Not Needed
   ○ b. Weak -- I'd like to know more
   ○ c. Adequate for my current school needs.
   ○ d. Strong -- I can teach others

h. Communication software
   ○ a. Not Needed
   ○ b. Weak -- I'd like to know more
   ○ c. Adequate for my current school needs.
   ○ d. Strong -- I can teach others

i. Other
   ○ a. Not Needed
   ○ b. Weak -- I'd like to know more
   ○ c. Adequate for my current school needs.
   ○ d. Strong -- I can teach others

About Your Computer Ownership:

11. Do you currently own a Computer?
   ○ a. Yes
   ○ b. No (If No, Please skip to Question 14)

12. If you own a computer, is it a (check all that apply):
   □ a. PC desktop
   □ b. PC laptop
   □ c. Mac desktop
   □ d. Mac laptop
   □ e. Pocket PC/Palm Device

13. Approximately how old is the computer you most often use (check one)?
   ○ a. One year or less
   ○ b. Two or three years old
14. When do you anticipate getting your next computer (check one):
   ☐ a. Within the next year
   ☐ b. In a year or two
   ☐ c. In three or more years

**About Your Opinions:**
On 15-19, please select the one answer that best reflects your opinion.

15. The J-School computing labs need to have longer hours.
   ☐ a. No Opinion
   ☐ b. Strongly disagree
   ☐ c. Mildly disagree
   ☐ d. Neutral
   ☐ e. Mildly Agree
   ☐ f. Strongly Agree

16. The J-School video editing labs in Dole need to have longer hours.
   ☐ a. No Opinion
   ☐ b. Strongly disagree
   ☐ c. Mildly disagree
   ☐ d. Neutral
   ☐ e. Mildly Agree
   ☐ f. Strongly Agree

17. When I'm working in a J-School lab, experienced Lab Assistants are there to help answer my questions.
   ☐ a. No Opinion
   ☐ b. Strongly disagree
   ☐ c. Mildly disagree
   ☐ d. Neutral
   ☐ e. Mildly Agree
   ☐ f. Strongly Agree

18. If it would be helpful to have more "publicly available" areas, such as the Resource Room (which is on the second floor of Stauffer-Flint).
   ☐ a. No Opinion
   ☐ b. Strongly disagree
   ☐ c. Mildly disagree
   ☐ d. Neutral
   ☐ e. Mildly Agree
   ☐ f. Strongly Agree
19. When I need to use J-School equipment (computers, cameras, etc.), they are always available.
   ○ a. No Opinion
   ○ b. Strongly disagree
   ○ c. Mildly disagree
   ○ d. Neutral
   ○ e. Mildly Agree
   ○ f. Strongly Agree

20. Please list up to three technological improvements that would help you as a J-School Student.
   
   a.
   b.
   c.

Thanks for completing this survey. If you'd like to remain anonymous, please click 'Submit' below. If it's OK to contact you for additional information, please enter your email address. Then click 'Submit.'