

Report on Member Survey Indigo U3A 2020 Executive Summary

This survey

This survey, the third in three years, was emailed to members in August 2020. The focus was on internet usage and, in particular, the use of zoom as a communication tool during this highly unusual period of a pandemic.

65 members completed the survey, of whom a third were new participants (slightly higher than previously, the majority being new members).

With a response rate of 55%, this is commensurate with surveys in general, allowing generalization across the entire membership. For this we thank all members for their participation and trust that this report offers some interesting insights into Indigo U3A members' views and preferences.

Members and the internet

Members listed a range of devices and purposes for the internet. Asked what *primary* device is used,

- the majority (54%) said laptop or PC,
- a third (34%) use an iPad or Android and
- only 11% use a smart phone.

In response to 'what do you use the internet for?' with a list of sixteen options, members recorded an average of nine uses.

- The single most important use was for email (95%) and
- second most common, for banking (85%). Then followed
- weather, general browsing, YouTube, videoconferencing, U3A (79%) and online shopping.
- Less commonly noted were government sites such as MyGov, MyAgedCare, health and transport. Podcasts, news, streaming services, holidays and YouTube were followed by social media.

When asked which newsletters are read,

- 95% read U3A's newsletter,
- 62% read Indigo Shire (News) and
- 25% read Ageing Well Connect.

Information on the use of videoconferencing tools was a particular focus. The results showed that

- 80% of members use Zoom,
- nearly 30% use Facetime, followed by WhatsApp and Skype.

In response to the question 'what do you use these applications for?'

- an average of nearly two uses per person were noted with family contacts and U3A high on the list (both 63.1% and 31% for general social contacts).

In depth questioning of views on the value of videoconferencing for U3A followed.

- A quarter of members (26%) said they were not attending U3A at present because of Zoom only sessions, but
- the majority (74%) are happy with Zoom.

Reasons for dissatisfaction with Zoom were wide ranging with no clear trends. On further examination,

- the majority of members (52%), said they would, if given the choice, prefer face-to-face only.
- 31% said they would accept either, with
- a significant albeit small number (17%) preferring Zoom.

Of the last group, three are in high risk categories due to ill health and prefer to attend remotely at any time.

Members who preferred personal attendance affirmed the importance of face-to-face sessions, describing it as the "business of being a human being."

- Choice was a word used often, with the desire to mix with friends and to establish, build on or maintain relationships.
- New members especially saw that they had had little time to build their relationships within the Group.
- Many (49%) said they would still want access to video conference sessions even if other options became available again.

Of the 65 members who participated, only five had difficulty using Zoom. There were also five instances in which members knew of another member was having problems accessing the internet.

Member activity preferences

The next section focussed on actual activities, rather than the mode of delivery.

- Attendance at courses showed that an average of 2-4 courses was the most common but this data was clearly compromised by Covid 19 restrictions and may not reflect the usual state of affairs.
- The majority (78.5%) considered that they did not need any assistance at sessions
- but 13.8% needed hearing assistance. The new hearing assistive system (the Phonak Roger) was appreciated.

Three broadly-based questions including reasons for joining U3A, what is most enjoyed and what is needed to sustain interest elicited repeated common threads.

- Members said they joined for intellectual stimulation, social interaction and often a combination of those at the same time, for example, meeting like-minded people while learning.
- Several members requested sessions which took them “out of my comfort zone”.
- Some expressed the desire for novel and stimulating topics and included multiple suggestions which have been forwarded to the Program Planning Committee.

The most popular course types were

- history and current affairs (International Affairs with Gerry Engwerda was notable), followed by
- arts and cultural studies,
- geography and environmental science,
- philosophy and ethics,
- health and wellbeing,
- leisure and learning,
- science,
- skills buildings,
- computers and technology, and
- languages.

The most popular activities included walks, cycling, tastes events and games. All of these showed that wide range of activities are appreciated and several ‘take home messages’ included suggestions for improvements in how sessions might be run.

- Firstly, members wanted more of those things which they enjoyed and saw that that would not only bring them enjoyment but would sustain their interest.
- Secondly, introducing a protocol for handling group discussions, and for taking into account clashes in activities within the Program were suggested.

Finally, the survey asked members to express their views on how Indigo U3A and its Committee of Management has handled the ongoing pandemic issues. An overwhelming number of participants was congratulatory in the extreme.

A final suggestion was that Committee of Management positions and other voluntary roles within the Group be subject to succession planning. This would mean that key roles such as President and Vice president roles have understudies and immediate past positions. This is to be taken to the CoM for discussion.

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