

Digital transformation accelerating within higher education as outmoded accommodations struggle in blended learning

Digital transformation accelerating in higher education institutions as outmoded accommodations struggle in new blended learning environments, research finds

MANCHESTER, UNITED KINGDOM, May 25, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- According to research released today, the majority of higher education institutions say digital transformation is a priority for their school, as traditional classroom solutions no longer solve the challenges of learning in the post-covid online/offline hybrid world.



Educational [technology](#) experts [Glean](#) conducted a survey of accommodations professionals at 95 higher education institutions across North America to understand the impact of the pandemic on note taking and learning.

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Katherine Hamilton

The study showed that there is a clear appetite and enthusiasm to move towards a tech-first approach to accessibility, with 67% of respondents wanting to increase their use of assistive technologies (AT) within the next five years.

Looking at note taking specifically, which is regulated by

the ADA, the research found that 72% of respondents currently use peer notes within their accessibility toolkit. The archaic peer note taking system is notoriously difficult to manage, with a huge administrative burden placed on disability services departments in order to recruit and manage note takers, who are then often unreliable and provide notes of varying quality. It's clear that institutions also see this as a legacy system, with less than 9% looking to increase their use

in the future.

A similar study by Glean in 2019 found that 43% of institutions used peer notes as their primary accommodation, compared to just 25% of those involved in the 2021 research, again highlighting how digital transformation is remodelling this outmoded support model. In addition, just under half of respondents (44%) said that it has been difficult to provide peer notes during blended learning.

It therefore comes as no surprise that in August 2020 alone there were 35 institutions facing federal lawsuits, partly due to the influx of online classes and remote learning. These lawsuits centered on accessibility, increased delays in provision, and the issues for students struggling to navigate asynchronous and synchronous classes.

Currently, departments offering an assistive technology as their primary note taking accommodation were more likely to believe that they could support students well during blended learning, and more likely to be confident in their compliance efforts.

Confidence in ADA compliance was significantly higher for institutions using AT than those relying heavily on peer notetakers, with 85% of respondents confirming that they were confident that their AT enabled them to meet regulation during blended learning, compared to just 39% confidence that peer notes would meet with compliance.

Katherine Hamilton, Brand Manager at Glean, said: “The sudden shift towards blended learning caught many institutions off guard, as legacy accommodations struggled to support students working in a new online/offline hybrid environment.

“It’s refreshing to see that despite the suspension of some in-person services, and the personal and institutional pressures faced by many, optimism and a will to improve student experience shone through in this research. It’s also clear that digital transformation within the accessibility sector is fundamental to the future of successful learning outcomes, meaning institutions need to act now to preserve the interests of their students, and the institutions themselves.”

Despite the ambitions of survey respondents to increase AT provision and reduce dependence on peer notes, the percentage of institutions still widely using peer notes is high. The two most cited barriers to change are student requests for peer notes (27.3%) and difficulties with budget sign-off (13.6%). Other answers include note taking support not being a priority, or general shortfalls in budget.

In light of the research, Glean has launched its Glean for Education full service package to transform the way higher education institutions support learning in a post-Covid world. The innovative technology sees a move to proactive support for a diverse range of students by equipping them with a state-of-the-art note taking and learning solution that offers compliance without complication, helping institutions to streamline administration while avoiding costly

lawsuits.

Hamilton added: "Technology first is an approach we believe will benefit all colleges and students alike. Our new program, Glean for Education, is a full-service solution designed specifically to digitally transform note taking support to improve learning outcomes and, in turn, to increase student satisfaction and retention."

To download the full whitepaper, please visit: [Glean.co](https://glean.co)

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Notes to editor

Glean surveyed disability support professionals from 95 institutions across NAM, asking about the effect of the pandemic on note taking accommodations. Respondents were split roughly - 33% Directors, 33% Coordinators, 33% AT Specialists.

The full whitepaper can be accessed here: https://go.glean.co/content/covid-blended-learning-and-digital-transformation/?utm_source=fv&utm_campaign=gfe

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