The UNION

Technology Focus Group

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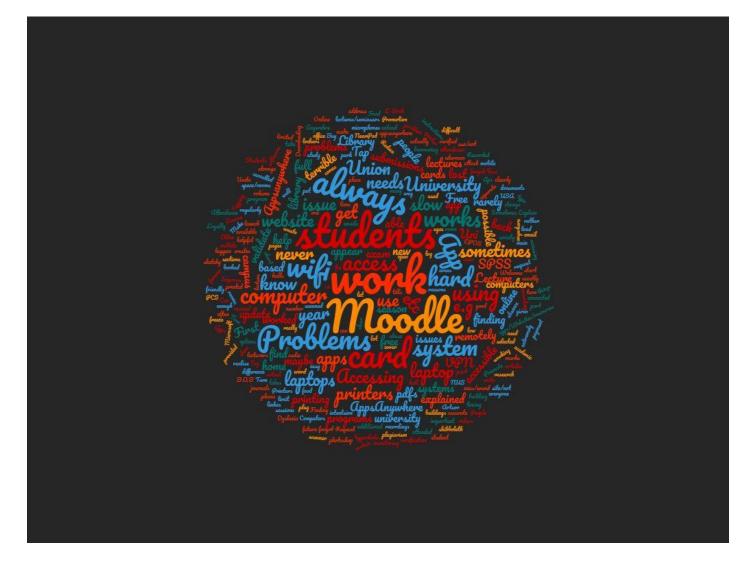- Task 3 – What can the Union do to help?

Executive Summary

- Two separate focus groups were carried out to assess the future technology needs of the Union to help support students now and in the future.

- The focus group was split into three tasks to assess the possible problems, answers that students have already been able to find and finally suggestions on how the Union could support students with their technological needs in the future.

Task 1 – Think about possible problems you have faced in your time at the University (focusing on technology). – Major Themes
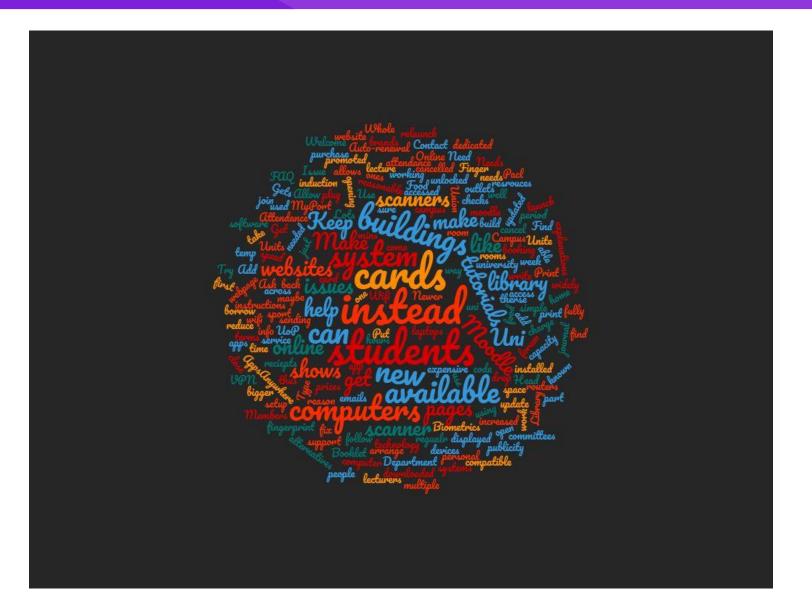
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Some of the major themes that were noticed through the data, in terms of problems faced by students were as follows;

1. AppsAnywhere either being very slow or not working correctly

2. Minimal information on how to use services such as VPNs, Moodle, how to remote access documents or software

3. Having access to computers or technology, especially at the library or at incredibly busy times.

4. Problems with slow Wi-Fi or access to Eduroam

5. The Attendance Monitoring System not working as effectively as it could – problems such as logging absence, lectures being cancelled, lost cards etc.

6. Free printers not working effectively

Task 2 – Now you have some of the problems you or others have faced, try to come up with possible solutions.
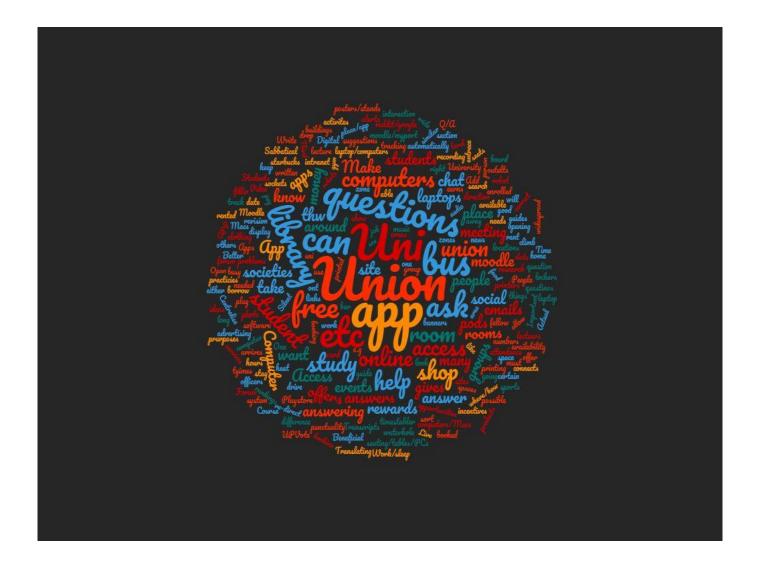
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Below are some of the solutions offered by the students to try and help with the problems they have faced or others have encountered;

1. Have an online system to see room bookings, laptop/computer availability so that time is not wasted walking from building to building

2. Print temporary student cards to use if you lose yours (similar to the library)

3. Biometric scanners rather than Student ID card scanners for Attendance Monitoring system

4. A better induction program and information on how to use your ID card for Food on Campus, Moodle, opening hours of buildings, Attendance Monitoring – An online FAQ page on the University or Union website for using different services

5. Greater investment in MACs, laptops, routers etc.

The final section of the focus group was asking students what they would like to see the Union do to help meet their technological needs. Below are the major themes that can from this question;

1. A Union App (see the next slide for more details)

2. A Union forum – This would be an area where students would post questions that would be answered by students. It would work on a loyalty scheme (similar to reddit/Google Guides) whereby those who answer more often and most effectively move up a leader board and then are given incentives and rewards. Sabbatical officers must maintain a certain level as they are supposed to be 'looking out for students'

3. AI – An artificial intelligence, particularly when a person is not available e.g. out of hours, to help answer questions and suggest possible places to have your question answered

4. Work/sleep pods to help students concentrate

5. Free printers that work effectively

6. More study spaces with computers and laptops so students can have space to revise, especially during busy periods

Below is a breakdown of what students wanted to see in the Union app;

1. Live bus updated – Rather than using a timetable that doesn't always work, a live tracker to see where the bus is would be useful. This should also include how full the bus is so alternative arrangements can be made if required.

2. Advertisements to possible events/activities that the Union are hosting. More information about what the Union can offer and if a student wants to sign up they can do it through the App. Another area to this would be sports/societies news

3. The app has links, support, how to guides etc. to all the apps that the University use (e.g. Moodle, G Drive, Emails etc.). If these could be incorporated into the Union app that would be better. An example given was 'Playstore'.

4. Alerts to show what rooms and technology is free across the University.

5. An ideas section to suggest any possible ways to improve the Union.

6. Research and job opportunities section.

7. Digital library for societies to enrol into which means you can stay up to date when you are away and know when timetables practices are.