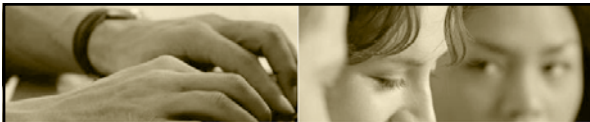


Reducing Social Isolation and Loneliness Through Technological Communication

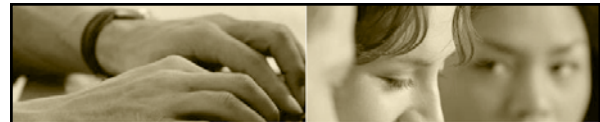


A study conducted at
The University of Newcastle
By
Shannon Weiley
Jason Sommers &
Helen Bryce



Background

- The University of Newcastle international students makes up around 10% of the student population.
- Two campus
 - Rural campus Ourimbah – UG, PG
 - Main campus Callaghan – ELICOS, UG, PG, SA/EX, Research.



The Study

- **Study One**
- A sample of 258 students from the University of Newcastle
- A web-based survey/ questionnaire



- **Study Two**
- Statistics from 100 student users of blackboard system.
- Results gathered over three- month period



Results

- **Study one** indicated 78% (n=258) of students felt that they had suffered social isolation and loneliness
- 87% stated that they looked to institutional social events to alleviate this loneliness and isolation
- 52% claim that they had difficulty meeting and making new friends and social networks





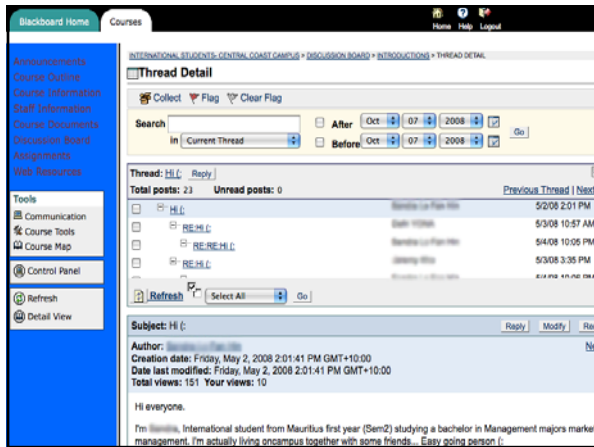
- 100% of students in study one (n=258) stated that they use at least one type of technology daily
- 81% of these students feel that contemporary technology helps to decrease their feelings of isolation and loneliness
- 72% of students stated that they resort to online applications when having feelings of loneliness



Technological applications

Blackboard

- 57% of students (n=100) used the Blackboard site to contribute towards group discussion threads



Online Newsletters

- Received by 100-130 international students at The Central Coast Campus
- Received by over 2500 international students at the Callaghan campus
- Personalised greetings, opens as message not as an attachment
- Web-based allows interactive emailing and web links to external web sites



Some Pictures from the last outing

Dear Smith,

I would like to wish you all the best throughout the examination period and over the end of year break.....

.....This month on December 1st is **World Aids Day**. You will probably find that you notice people with red ribbons, the funds raised through purchasing these ribbons supports research into the prevention and treatment of the virus. For more information click on the following link; **'World Aids Day'**. If you would like to assist in fundraising activities **email** and let me know.

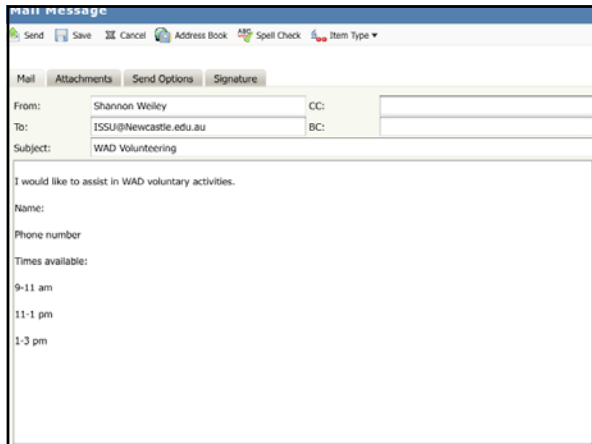
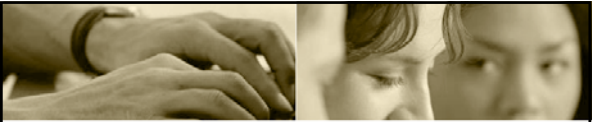
WORLD AIDS DAY
1 December

HOME INFORMATION EVENTS WHERE TO FIND HELP STORIES MEDIA RESOURCES

1 December 2008 marks the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day. In 1988, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the first World AIDS Day in an effort to raise public awareness about HIV/AIDS issues, including the need for support and understanding for people living with HIV/AIDS. The day is also an opportunity to highlight the need for continued development of education and prevention initiatives.


Over the past 20 years, World AIDS Day has been established as one of the world's most successful commemorative days. It is now recognised and observed by millions of people in more than 190 countries around the globe.

December 1
Media education
aids@unsw.edu.au

Social Networking Sites (SNS)

- For example Facebook and My Space
- 67% of students state that they use online social networking sites (SNS) to alleviate social isolation and loneliness




Social Networking Sites (SNS)

In a recent student survey, Facebook was voted the second most popular thing with Undergraduate students – tying with



and only beaten by the iPod.





Podcasts, Blogs and Online Journals

- 67% (n=258) of students felt that sharing other students' experiences helped alleviate their feelings of isolation and loneliness




Conclusion

- Loneliness and social isolation affects a majority of international students
- These affects are felt predominantly during the first 3-6 months of their stay
- Technological applications are used heavily amongst contemporary international student cohorts





Examples of social activities organised at the University of Newcastle

- Orientation excursions
- Welcome party
- City tour
- Cultural Awakening festival
- Clubs and societies dinners
- Karaoke nights
- Pot Luck
- SOS – Mentor program

Orientation

Cultural Awakenings

Pot Luck