

‘Wazzup?’ The impact of trying to communicate effectively through new technologies with US study abroad students here in NZ.

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Recent years have shown significant change in the way US study abroad students in New Zealand prefer to communicate with programme support staff. In 2005 all our US study abroad students studying in New Zealand had land lines and no one bothered with a cell phone. By 2007, nearly every student was buying a cell phone on arrival. In 2010, we set up a new website that we could update constantly and also began interacting through Facebook while maintaining usual communication lines of email, texting, phoning cell phones, and face-to-face coffee meetings. By the beginning of this year we realised staff were stretched trying to communicate everything in three or four different media. To better understand where students go for different information and their preferred methods of communication, we carried out focus group research with all our students across NZ. In this session we share our findings which are a snapshot of communication preferences in a constantly changing environment of communication technologies and some of the challenges for support staff of keeping up with those preferences.

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Key Words

Study abroad, communication, new technologies