



Analysis report on DEANZ Communications

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Summary

An online survey about DEANZ communications was carried out in February 2009. A summary of the findings is as follows:

- 29.6% DEANZ members participated in the survey
- Most DEANZ members said that belonging to DEANZ benefitted their work
- Most benefits were in developing professional relationships through networking and access to professional and up-to-date information
- Email is the most popular communication tool now, and at least half of members use the website and the Journal of Distance Learning
- Many members thought that email was the best communication tool because information was 'pushed out' to their desktop without personal effort, with links to new articles/information on website e.g. event, blog, forum
- A wide range of information relating to distance education was identified and is categorised into topics of distance education resources, delivery-dependent, inclusion-dependent information, and professional development.

Introduction

DEANZ wished to find out how effective DEANZ is in communicating information to its members about the organisation and distance education.

In February 2009, DEANZ carried out an online survey for members on their ideas of:

- Information they would like from DEANZ
- Best accessibility and/or distribution of this information to them.

The following is an analysis of the findings of the survey.

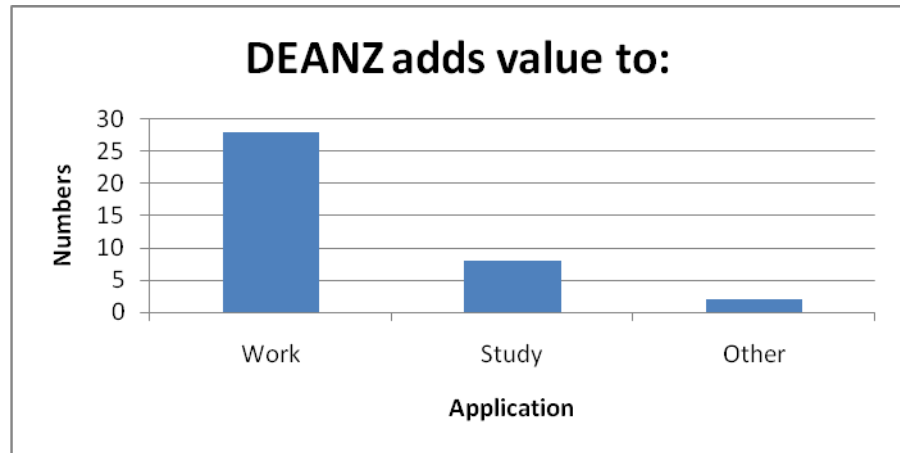
Survey population:

DEANZ has 115 members. Thirty-seven people participated in the survey; however, there were only 34 eligible responses. Consequently the survey had 29.6% member participation.

Does DEANZ add value to work, study or other?

Twenty eight members say that DEANZ adds value to their work, 8 members say adds value to their study and two responses felt DEANZ benefited them in 'other' ways.

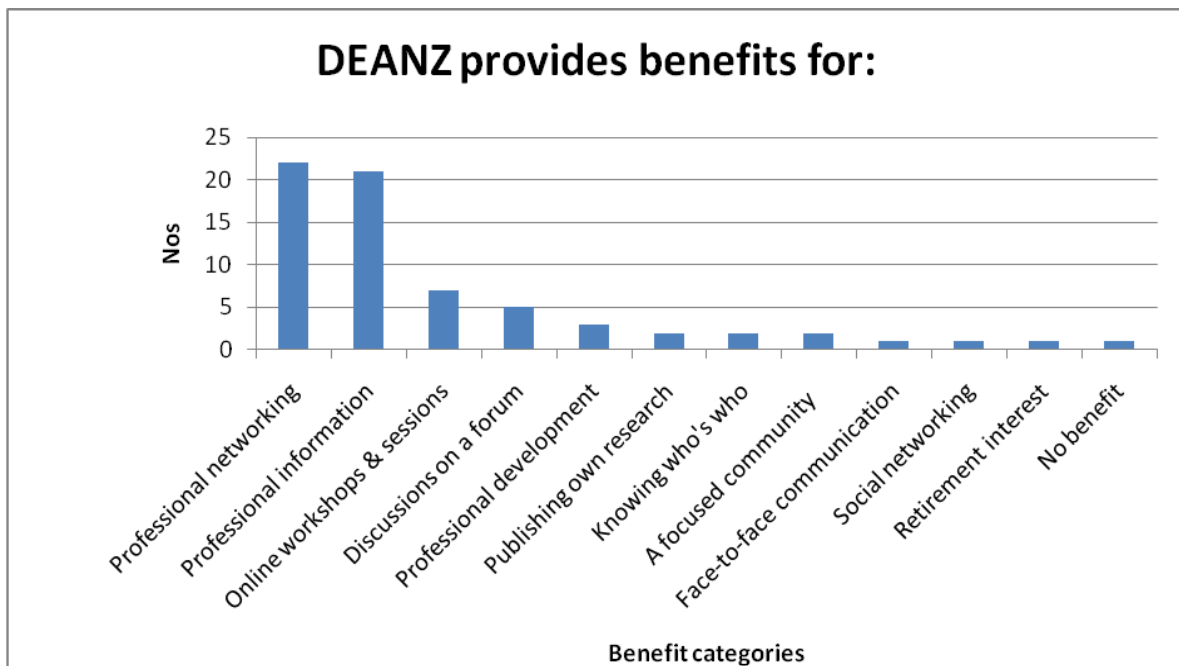
Data	
Application	Nos
Work	28
Study	8
Other	2



What are the benefits for work, study or 'other'?

Twelve categories were identified. Most members found being a member of DEANZ benefited their work. Responses were 53 benefits for work, 13 benefits for study and two benefits for 'other' application.

They identified that being a member of DEANZ provided the most benefits in developing professional relationships through networking and access to professional and up-to-date information. The graph and data below shows the benefit categories and the numbers of responses.



Data	
Benefit categories	Total Nos
Professional networking	22
Professional information	21
Online workshops & sessions	7
Discussions on a forum	5
Professional development	3
Publishing own research	2
Knowing who's who	2
A focused community	2
Face-to-face communication	1
Social networking	1
Retirement interest	1
No benefit	1

Two responses described benefits that were not for work or study. These included the feeling of being part of a social community of people who have the same field of research, teaching and interest. Another enjoyed the continued interest about distance education and connections to people in their retirement.

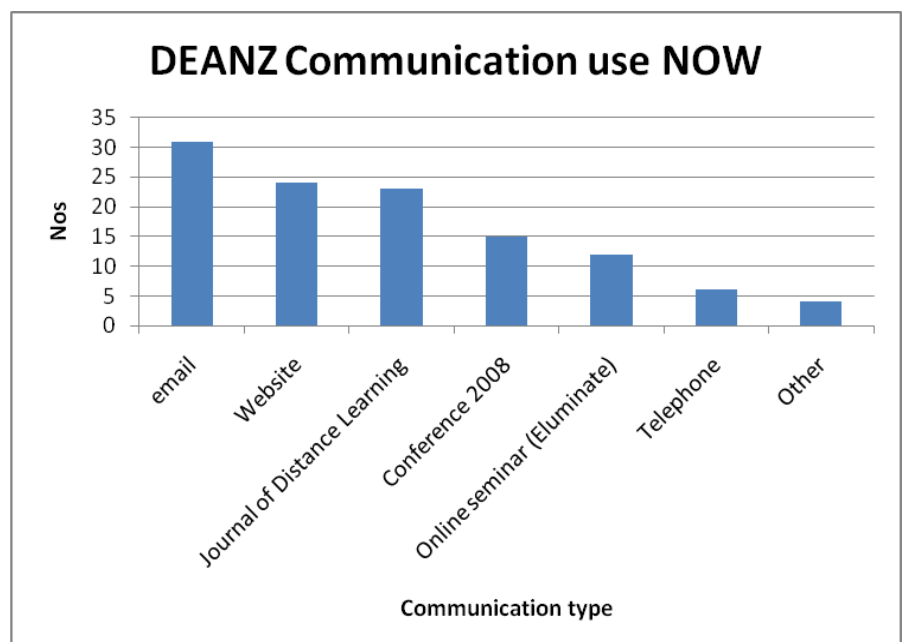
One person felt that they got no benefits at all for their study.

What DEANZ communication have you used in the last 6 months?

This question focused on how members are communicating with DEANZ now.

The data shows that email is the most popular communication tool; thirty one members use this communication tool now. More than half of the responses use the website and the Journal of Distance Learning. Less than half use the conference and online seminars. Telephone and 'other' (DEANZ Google groups site, face-to-face with DEANZ members and DEANZ blogs) are the least used.

Data	
Communication	Nos
email	31
Website	24
Journal of Distance Learning	23
Conference 2008	15
Online seminar (Eluminate)	12
Telephone	6
Other	4



What DEANZ communication works best for you and what does not?

A clear message from responses was summarised by the person who said that "the methods you use are fine; it's just a matter of me being too busy to take them up". Email works best for 75% of members who responded. There was a consistent reason for preferring email over other technology in that without having to do anything information was pushed out to you. This is consistent with the quote above and suggests that DEANZ members are busy people.

The following table summarises the communication type, the response number for what works best and what does not, and the reasons given.

Data			
Communication	Best	Does not	Reason
email	26		'Pushed out' to desktop without personal effort; with links to new articles/information on website e.g. event, blog, forum
Website e.g. blog	5		But need reminding by email message
Online seminar (Eluminate)	6	5	A number of people have experienced issues with technology connections. One member requests advanced warning of date/time
Journal of Distance Learning	3		Two people preferred hard copy, another requested digital copy
Telephone		3	
Conference 2008	5		Likes the face-to-face
Other (includes..)			
Newsletters	1	1	One requests monthly newsletters; One claims that the newsletter is managed badly and has no benefit
RSS feeds	2		
Face-to-face		1	
Discussion 2 week	1		
Teleconference	2		
Regional events	1		
Mail		1	

What information relating to distance education do you want to see more of?

The responses from the survey came from Question 8 which asked "what do you want more of that is part of DEANZ communication now?" and from Question 9 which asked for ideas on additional communication that DEANZ is not doing currently. The table below summarises the findings. The responses have been grouped into categories of information – topics of distance education resources information, delivery-dependent information, inclusion-dependent information, and professional development.

Categories	More of DEANZ	Additional communication
Distance education topics	Evidence-based or research information on distance education (DE), both applied and theoretical, NZ and international, including virtual schooling and assessment. Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real case studies, showing innovation and what worked and what did not • Forum discussions around Journal articles • Further readings and publications • Recent publications on design and delivery of elearning 	
	Current practice in elearning design, development and delivery. Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national and international trends • in NZ organisations • in less-developed Asia-Pacific countries • share member's stories • issues/problems • books • debates, • "I'm very interested in the profile/progress/lack of progress/fate of ODL provider consortia. Some are work, but many have fallen over or quietly fizzled." 	Summaries of DE that is happening in other parts of the world e.g. conferences and DE education news.
	New developments in blended learning Impact of elearning on environment and business	Standard practices - A "State of the Nation" with regard to use of distance and flexible learning.
	Information that ties the research to the practice. "Research says this is good - and this is how you do it"	
	Relationship between DE education learning and application in the workplace. Does business practice inform education?	
	Management decision making including reasons for using different modes, identifying value-added components, and effectiveness measurements. Policy developments	Being smart - managing efficiently the complex and challenging DE with limited budgets and resources
	Opportunities in jobs, events, funding, and research	

	"less policy-speak"	
Delivery	More face-to-face meetings e.g. Small workshops, regional events; more online events	
Delivery technology	RSS feed, seminars, social tools, evaluation of online web based interactive tools.	
	Further development of DEANZ website, including resources such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • links to conference papers • online journal papers 	Website development to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more conference alerts • distance education books • articles or recently published resources with recommendations • online access to back copies of all the journals published in full.
Inclusion	Building of partnership with existing DA groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work alongside other DE associations in NZ and Australia • Those groups engaged in Asia-Pacific work e.g. Pacific Islands Regional Association for Distance Education (PIRADE), Papua New Guinea Association for Distance Education (PNGADE) and Commonwealth of Learning. (COL), and • Ministry of Education Researching the social roles that DE plays	A community and a sense of belonging, not necessarily a group related to DE " there is more to 'communication' than conveying information, esp [especially] information relating to distance education". Links to Commonwealth of Learning, ODLAA and ASCILITE.
Professional development	Professional development, e.g. training available for DE, essential information that is easily accessible for the aspiring DE tutor	

One response related to DEANZ professional attitude and a wish to "return to its grass roots".