# How Technology Is Reshaping Higher Education

Technology has permanently changed the way information is accessed and processed today—In no industry is this shift more evident than in higher education. By revolutionizing the system and empowering students through the ultimate accessibility of mobile devices, the interactivity of social platforms, and the affordability offered by personal cloud-based learning, technology continues to reshape how college students today approach their education.

## Mobile devices mean students are always connected.

Mobile devices like internet-ready smartphones and tablets have gone from luxury items to collegiate standbys. They're not only used for communicating with friends and family or surfing the web, either. In fact, McGraw Hill's 2015 Digital Trends in Higher Ed report found a substantial 81 percent of students regularly use mobile devices for educational purposes like studying and note taking. Sixty-six percent of respondents said mobile devices were moderately to extremely important to have in order to stay connected and prepared for class and exams. The days of students spending hours in libraries or study halls have been replaced with short bursts of activity whenever it is convenient, thanks to mobile technology.

## Social media builds relationships, interactivity.

Social media is widely used by college students, generating new opportunities for them to share information, communicate with peers, and express themselves digitally. A recent eMarketer report found Facebook to be the most popular social media site for this age group, with over 39 percent of collegiate respondents reportedly spending an hour or less on the platform. The study also found this group frequented sites like Google+, LinkedIn, and Twitter, among others.

## Wearable technology empowers students to track their own progress.

Wearable technologies like fitness trackers, smart watches, or any of a host of other IoT-connected gadgets can empower students to monitor themselves in real-time via constant device feedback. Most commonly today, students are able to gather insights into their physical performance—how many steps they're taking, how long they're sleeping, etc. The wearables of the future, however, have the potential to allow students and educators to track individual learning progress and productivity, paving the way for more individualized lesson plans.

## Cloud technologies make software, services affordable.

In the past, students often needed to purchase or access licensed software to complete some coursework, proving both cumbersome and costly. Today, cloud based software has all but alleviated this problem, making these services and apps not only affordable but almost instantly accessible to students and faculty.

## The Takeaway

In the end, not every shift experienced by the higher education industry is a direct result of a *single* technology. Put them all together, and you've got a change in not only the learning capabilities and processes of students but also in the attitudes with which they approach information. **Today's college students aren't just consumers of information—they're producers of it.** Every blog post, YouTube video, Instagram photo, Snapchat sendoff—all of those interactions with technology are examples of empowered students creating and contributing new content daily.

This simple observation alone is proof that technology is not just reshaping higher education, but it is reshaping how an entire generation interacts with the world.