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Tanya M. Custer

University of Nebraska Medical Center, tcuster@unmc.edu

Lisa A. Bartenhagen

University of Nebraska Medical Center, labarten@unmc.edu

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The Use of Portable Electronic Devices as an Evaluation Tool in the Clinical Setting

School of Allied Health Professions, Division of Radiation Science Technology Education

Tanya Custer, MS, R.T.(R)(T), Lisa Bartenhagen, MS, R.T.(R)(T)

Introduction

The Portable Electronic Device (PED) is emerging as an effective tool which can aid in evidence-based practice along with supporting the educational needs of both clinical and classroom training (Honeybourne, 2006; Applegate, 2010). Specific types of PED's may include personal digital assistants, smart phones, iTouch, iPads, laptops and tablets (Figure 1). Research on the use of mobile devices has been conducted in fields such as medicine and nursing; however, there is little research in the field of radiation science. More research is needed to determine how these devices can be used as an instructional aid and competency assessment tool for radiation science students (Applegate, 2010).



Figure 1. Variety of PED's

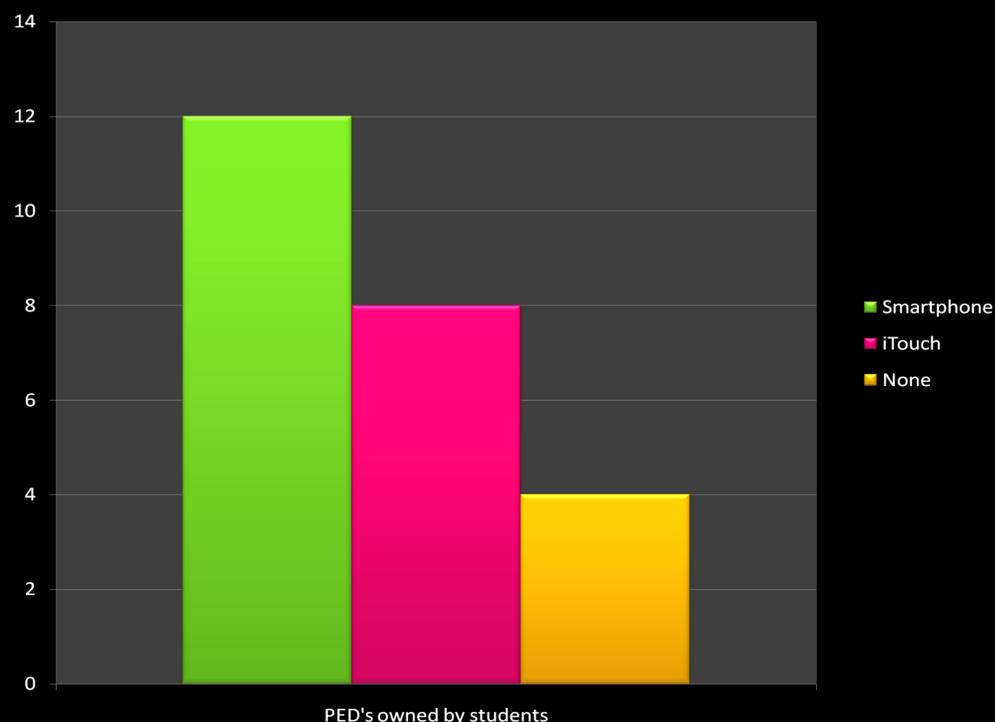


Figure 2

Discussion

An initial survey was conducted to evaluate the use of portable electronic devices by radiation science students enrolled at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Twenty four students completed the survey yielding a response rate of 92%. The survey was administered through Survey Monkey®. Selective data from the survey is highlighted in this exhibit.

Students were first asked about what types of mobile devices they currently owned. Fifty percent of the students stated that they owned some type of smart phone device (Figure 2). Students who owned the devices also stated that they had owned the device for approximately 1 – 3 years and they felt fairly comfortable using the device. Further questioning provided information on how the devices are currently being utilized by students (Figure 3). Texting and sending and receiving phone calls were the highest ranked uses. Over fifty percent of the students also responded that they use their device to access social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

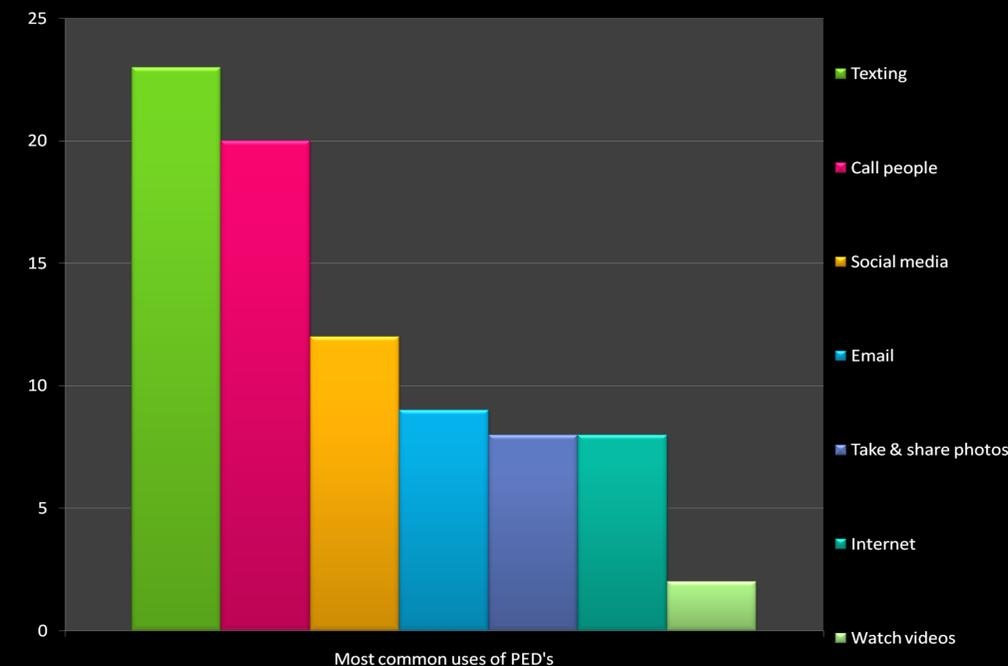


Figure 3

Conclusion

This preliminary study provides a platform for further research on mobile learning and the use of PED's in the education of radiation science students. Current literature notes that students have the knowledge and skills to use the PED's in the clinical setting (Applegate, 2010). Faculty at the University of Nebraska Medical Center have initiated further research to explore the specific roles of PED's in the clinical education of radiation science students and the perceptions of student, faculty, and clinical staff on the use of PED's in the clinical setting.

References

- Applegate J. The Role of Mobile Electronic Devices in Radiographer Education. *Radiologic Technologist*, 2010; 82 (2): 124-131.
- Honeybourne C, Sutton S & Ward L. Knowledge in the Palm of your hands: PDAs in the clinical setting. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, 2006; 23: 51-59.