

Why do our students enrol in Computing Programmes... ..now!

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1 Background

Anecdotally, it appears that the background of our prospective students has changed. Whereas in the not so distant past, there was a definite personal interest in the computing arena that propelled the student to enrol, now it appears that an increasing number of our new students decided to enrol in the DipICT programme almost by default. In conversations with students it was found some reasons for selecting their programme of study was because:

- there was no spaces left in other programmes or
- they followed their friends or
- that was the brochure they were first handed,
- and so on.

2 Challenge

To identify the reasons our students enrolled in each of our computing programmes (CIC, DipICT and BCS).

- Is there a common theme running through all computing programme enrolments or just a particular programme?
- What impact will this have on our programmes content and delivery?

3 Methodology

- Inspection of enrolment forms from computing programmes from current and previous years, noting initial reasons for enrolment.
- Interviews with current students to identify if their written reason (on the enrolment) conforms to what they now identify as their reason for enrolling.
- Questionnaires to students to further examine their reasons for pursuing higher education, and their first-year experiences.

4 Research Objectives

There is a current downward trend in enrolments in computing programmes nationally and internationally despite the demand for more personnel covering all fields of computing. If a career in computing is not seen in a positive light, then this trend will likely continue.

- What steps can be taken to see a computing career in a positive light. One step that the University of Southern California College of Engineering and Computing has taken was to have a name change. Formerly it was the College of Engineering and Information Technology.
- To identify possible closer links with Secondary schools and prospective students.
- How can we positively identify, and rate highly as the career of choice, with potential students.