

# Ferris State University

## Computer Sophistication Survey

### *Summary of Findings*

**Computers as Internet**— Even young people who feel they have strong computer skills may need additional training in key business applications, as many seem to regard computer and Internet use as synonymous. More than 90 percent of young people claim to be pretty handy with a computer, but when asked about particular applications, the only specific usages that approached that level of confidence involved email and the Web. Students identify a broad range of uses for computers, but are least likely to describe computers as business or word-processing tools, and more likely to see them as entertainment, communication or information tools.

**Know Your Limits**—Many young people are confident in their computing abilities, but it doesn't appear to be the same sort of confidence shown in past surveys, in which students reported well above average teamwork abilities, leadership skills, etc. These young people recognize limits in their abilities to troubleshoot computers, do Web design, etc.—but by and large, they feel good about their abilities.

**Judgment Call**—The young people surveyed are quite often making judgments on the quality of information found online. How good these judgments are remains to be seen, but most recognize the need to view the Internet with some skepticism—a finding that may surprise some educators.

**Flying Solo**—Most students claim to learn about computers on their own. *Interestingly, when the need help, they report going to parents or teachers before.*

**Math/Science Perspectives**—Last year, the Partnership for Career Decision-Making reported that 33 percent of young people rated the avoidance of math or science courses as important in choosing a career field. This survey confirms a love-hate relationship between students and math and science courses—we see a total of 53 percent of respondents calling math or science their least favorite subject, and 50 percent calling one or the other their favorite subject.