

# Early evaluation of KIS: User experiences

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# About us

- **iCeGS** – International Centre for Guidance Studies is an applied research centre based within the Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences at the University of Derby with particular interests in career development and employability.
- **CRAC** - The Career Development Organisation, an independent, national organisation dedicated to supporting career development and active, career-related learning.

# Our approach

The evaluation was conceived as formative and conducted in the first three months after the re-launch of the Unistats site.

The evaluation was organised over five phases

- inception and planning
- analysis of analytics data
- online survey – 619 respondents
- usability testing fieldwork – 294 users
- reporting.

Carried out across all four nations and in English and Welsh language

# Contributors

- Sixth Form students
- Teachers
- Parents
- HE Students
- HE Students with disabilities
- HE Staff
- Widening participation practitioners
- Widening participation learners
- Advanced Apprentices
- Adult Advanced Apprentices
- Work Based Learning Staff
- UnionLearn Learning Reps
- Adult learners in a mental health setting
- FE Learners – Sixth formers
- FE Learners - vocational
- FE Staff
- Careers Advisers
- HE Career Advisers
- Trainee Career Practitioners

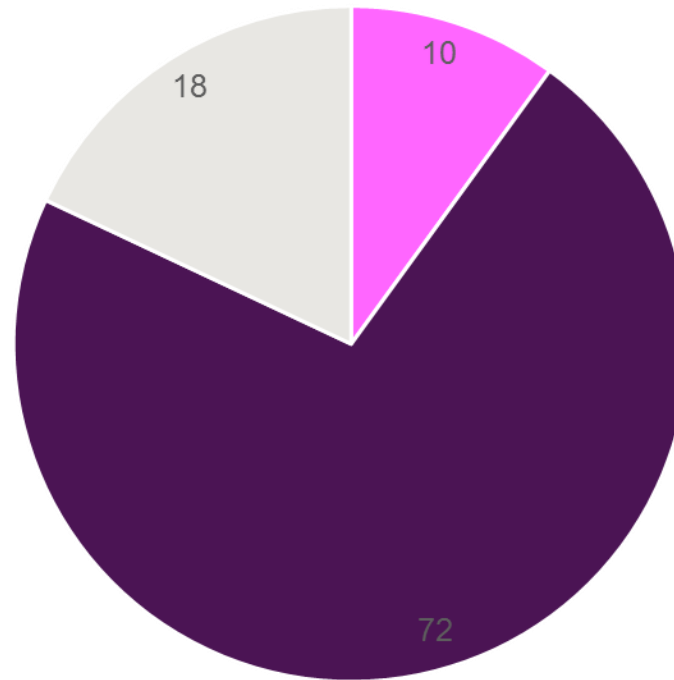
# Usability testing

- Conducted in ICT laboratories in the fieldwork locations.
- Participants were issued with workbooks which introduced the site to them and asked them to explore the site for 30 minutes.
- During their exploration they were asked to record key pieces of information, along with issues and concerns in their workbooks.
- They were also observed by researchers who asked users to clarify issues that they raised and kept them on task.
- Following the half hour exercise participants were asked to contribute to a discussion about the resource that they have just used and how it contributes to their exploration of HE course information.
- Each fieldwork session resulted in a series of workbooks that were then transcribed and entered into a database and a set of researcher notes on observations and group discussions.

## What we found

- In general participants in the research were positive about Unistats and understood its purpose.
- In general end users (prospective students, current students and parents) were more positive about the site than professional users (careers advisers, teachers, HE staff) and more likely to describe the site as “useful” and “easy to get around”.
- Six Key Decisions the site’s stakeholders should consider in the future development of the site.
- 21 recommendations designed to inform the future development of the site.

# How are people finding the site?



■ Referrals

■ Directly typing in the URL

■ Search engine



## Who is using the site?

- prospective HE students In sixth form and FE
- current HE students
- parents
- careers advisers teachers
- HE staff



- Over 60% of those using a search engine searched for the term “Unistats”.
- 68% of referrals to the site have been from the widgets on HEI websites, though these were not always as clear as users would like.

*The Unistats website link is often buried away and not easy to find.*

**Parent**

*Standard position of the widget would help*

**Parent**

## How do people respond to the site?

In general participants in the research were positive about Unistats and understood its purpose. The main user groups (prospective students, parents/carers and teachers and careers advisers) all understood the value of a comparison site for higher education and felt that Unistats delivered an effective and useful tool.

*I liked the clear layout of the site and how easily you can get around it, I think the shortlist and comparison button are very clever and useful rather than having 5 windows open and having to click back and forth to compare statistics*

**Sixth Form Student**

*It is very user friendly. There is a lot of information collected. The type of information available is useful and relevant. It is very interesting to be able to compare courses that have similar names.*

## **Career Practitioner**

*Gives a lot of valuable information without changing site. Helps make choices easier as comparisons are on one page. Saves time making up your own comparison table.*

## **Parent**

*I love the idea of comparing the universities as when I looked I used UCAS and spent forever looking through lists and lists of universities that may do the course I am now on. When the uni/course is selected you are able to add your own set of measures - "Brilliant"*

## **HE Student**

Useful

Difficult to get around

Dull Confusing

Easy to get around

Official

Unattractive

Interesting

Appealing

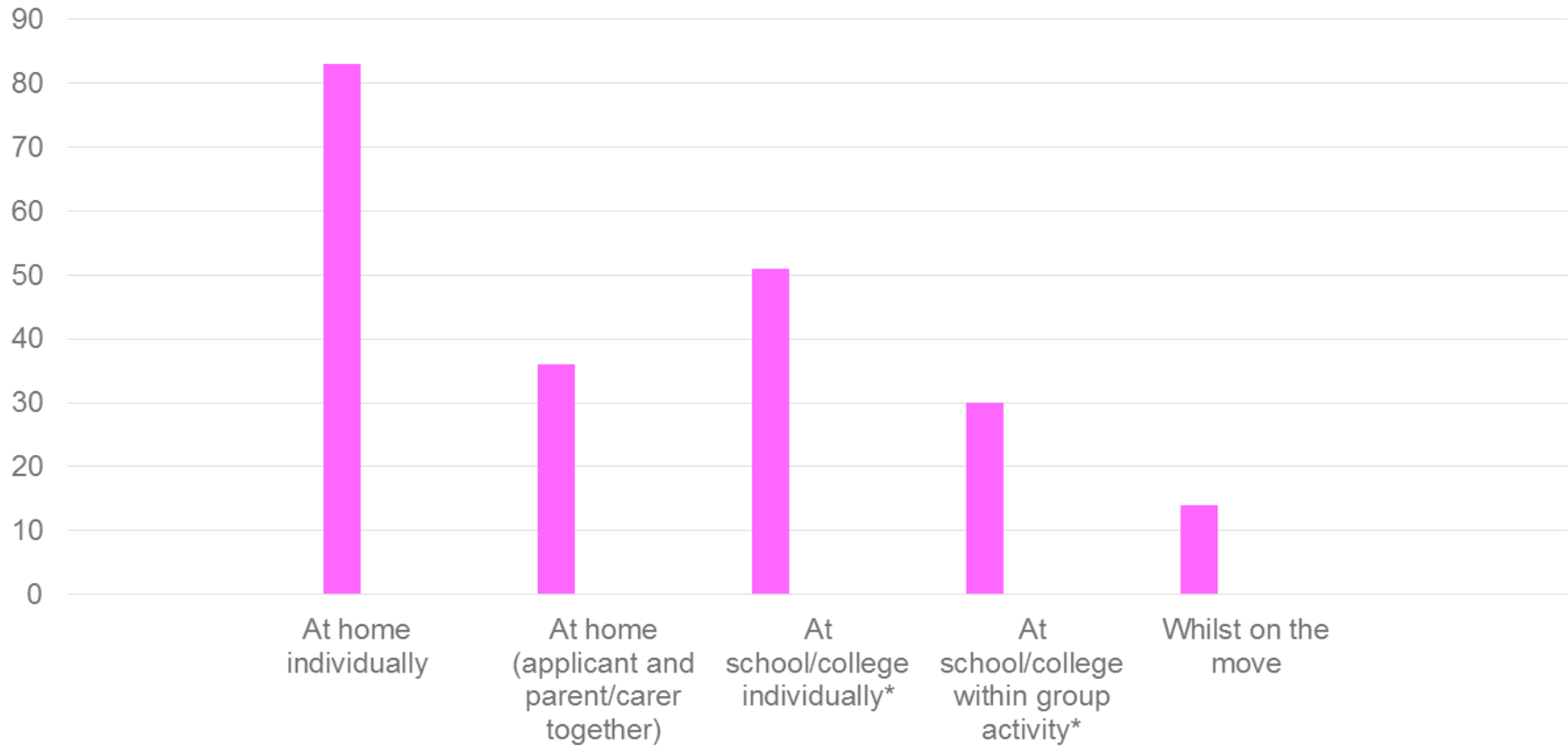
Disorganised

Independent

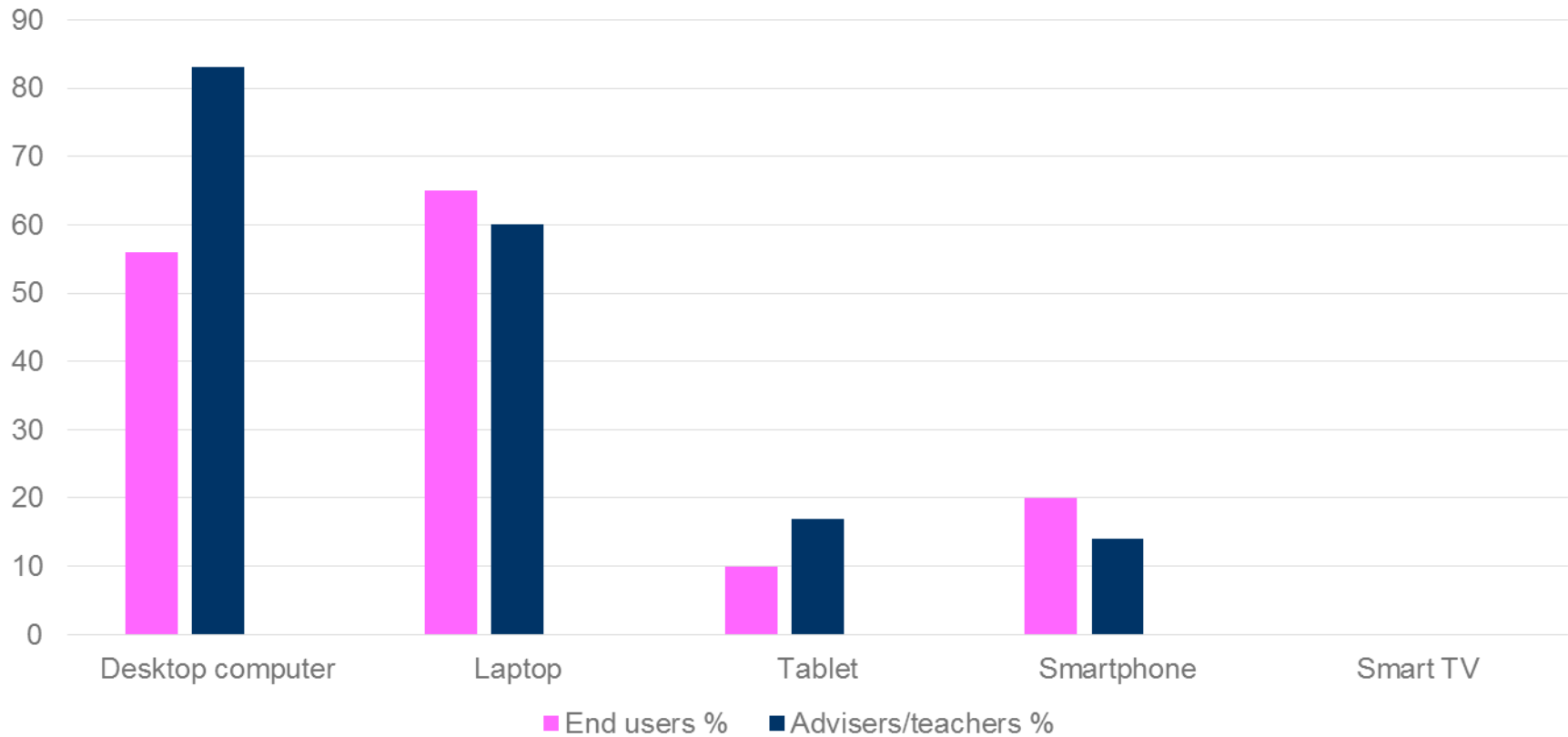
Organised

Unreliable

# Where do people use the site ?



# How do people use the site ?



# Searches

- Users tended to input subject rather than course titles in searches
- Some users found that search functions and menus based around JACs codes were not always intuitive and difficult to use.
- Users expressed interest in being able to search using criteria such as UCAS tariffs or typical entry requirements
- Users expressed interest in being able to search geographically

# Comparisons

Most users liked the comparison feature on the site and found it easy to use and to compare courses.

*Comparison page is very easy to read. Shortlist option is useful*

## **Sixth Form Student**

*The process was quick. Statistics broken down in an easy to view way*

## **Trainee Career Adviser**

*Allows information to be processed and compared in a common format*

## **Career Adviser**

*For someone who doesn't go to comparison sites, I was very impressed at how easy it was to access the information I needed.*

## **HE Staff Member**



# What data users were most interested in

Participants were most interested in data focusing on:

- entry requirements
- course content
- the quality of the student experience
- Graduate employability / employment destinations.

*Entry requirements and more information about the university itself*

**Sixth Form Student**

*Entry requirements. Course description. Employment / Job options on graduation. How the degree will help me in the future*

**Sixth Form Student**

*You can see the differences in the levels of employment after the course which is useful in decision which course to pick. I also like how you can know how different courses are taught in different ways*

### **Sixth form student**

*What would be needed to be able to get into the university*

### **School Teacher**

*Entrance criteria. Tuition fees. Employment prospects following graduation.  
Success rate of students taking course. Support services available at university*

### **Parent**

*Likelihood of employment at end. Types of Career that would follow. Course content/Teaching/Assessment strategies. Costs Duration/Locations  
Comments/views of past students. Independent assessments / comments / ratings*

**Parent**

*Employability, satisfaction rates*

**Parent**

*It would be useful to see where students were working and more information on job prospects.*

**HE Staff Member**

## Additional data

- Users identified areas of additional data in which they were interested included: contextual information about the nature of the course itself
- contextual information about the institutions
- the location of the institution
- wider aspects of the student experience
- 'drop-out rates' (in their words)
- entry requirements information
- entry competition ratios (i.e. offers or acceptances to applications).

*If you don't know details of courses then you could be looking at a course that is not actually what you want.*

**Prospective Mature Student**