

→ Fast Facts



Faculty attitudes on online education

According to one study, a majority of faculty members with online teaching experience say those courses produce results inferior to in-person courses. They say most online courses lack meaningful student-teacher interaction. “Only about one-quarter of faculty respondents (26 percent) say online courses can produce results equal to in-person courses.”

Carl Straumsheim, “Online Ed Skepticism and Self-Sufficiency: Survey of Faculty Views on Technology,” *Inside Higher Ed*, October 29, 2014, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/survey/online-ed-skepticism-and-self-sufficiency-survey-faculty-views-technology> (retrieved September 1, 2015).



Book sales figures

Book sales of traditionally published books in the United States fell by almost 6 percent in the first five months of this year, compared to the same period the year before, according to the Association of American Publishers. “Sales for professional publishing, which includes business, medical, law, scientific and technical books and journals, are up 5.9 percent for the year so far compared to 2014, but university presses are down 4 percent.”

Sarah Shaffi, “U.S. book sales fall in first five months of 2015,” *The Bookseller*, September 1, 2015, www.thebookseller.com/news/us-book-sales-fall-first-five-months-2015-310228 (retrieved September 9, 2015).



Colleges in the USA

There are 4,605 colleges, universities, and professional schools in the United States (as of 2013). There are 1,006 junior colleges. Fifteen percent of college and graduate school students are 35 and older. Forty percent of 18- to 24-year-olds were enrolled in college or graduate school in 2013.

“FFF: Back to School: 2015-2016,” September 02, 2015, release number CB15-FF.17, <http://census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2015/cb15-ff17.html> (retrieved September 3, 2015).



Wikipedia and scientific accuracy

On Wikipedia, scientific topics considered politically controversial experienced more frequent edits with more words changed per day than scientific topics considered noncontroversial. For example, “the global warming page was edited on average 1.9 times resulting in 110.9 words changed per day, while the standard model in physics was only edited 0.2 times resulting in 9.4 words changed per day. The high rate of change observed in these pages makes it difficult for experts to monitor accuracy and contribute time-consuming corrections, to the possible detriment of scientific accuracy.”

Adam M. Wilson and Gene E. Likens, “Content Volatility of Scientific Topics in Wikipedia: A Cautionary Tale,” *PLoS ONE* 10(8): e0134454, August 14, 2015, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0134454 (retrieved September 9, 2015).



News sources: Twitter and Facebook

“The share of Americans for whom Twitter and Facebook serve as a source of news is continuing to rise.” A new study finds that 63 percent of users on both services say they are a source for news about events and issues outside the realm of friends and family. That share is up significantly from previous years. “The rise in the share of social media users getting news on Facebook or Twitter cuts across nearly every demographic group.”

Michael Barthel, Elisa Shearer, Jeffrey Gottfried, and Amy Mitchell, “The Evolving Role of News on Twitter and Facebook,” Pew Research Center, July 14, 2015, www.journalism.org/2015/07/14/the-evolving-role-of-news-on-twitter-and-facebook (retrieved September 2, 2015).

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