Fast Facts

Distance education

"In fall 2018, about 6.9 million college students enrolled in distance education courses, or 35 percent of the total fall enrollment population (19.6 million). Between fall 2012 and 2018, DE course enrollment increased 29 percent, while total fall enrollment declined by 5 percent. The number of students enrolled in a mix of DE and face-to-face courses increased by 33 percent (from 2.8 to 3.7 million) between fall 2012 and 2018. The number of students enrolled in only DE courses also increased, but at a slower rate of 24 percent (from 2.6 to 3.3 million)."

Roman Ruiz and Jie Sun, "NCES Blog | Distance Education in College: What Do We Know From IPEDS?" February 17, 2021, https://nces.ed.gov/blogs/nces/post/distance-education-in-college-what-do-we-know-from-ipeds (retrieved March 29, 2021).

Digestible news

"The average word count for news articles (online) has fallen from about 449 in September 2019 to about 380 in February 2020, according to data from Chartbeat."

Sara Fischer, "Newsrooms Get Creative about Presenting Long-Form Journalism in the Internet Era," Axios, https://www.axios.com/journalism-podcasts-longreads-phones-word-count-1d446e9d-433f-4bbc-94da-a7d18e1a2f5c.html (retrieved March 29, 2021).

Book publishing industry 2020

Due largely to the COVID-19 pandemic, sales of K-12 instructional materials fell 19.6 percent in 2020 compared to 2019. Sales of higher educational course materials declined 4.3 percent. But two major trade categories, adult books and children's and YA, had gains of 12 percent and 6.4 percent, respectively, offsetting the losses in education sales. Total sales in 2020 versus 2019 were up 0.1 percent for the year.

"Trade Shines in Flat Year: AAP's StatShot report found that trade gains offset declines in education in 2020," Publishers Weekly, March 1, 2021 (Vol. 268, Issue 9), Gale Literature Resource Center (retrieved March 29, 2021).

Top education apps

The five most downloaded education apps in 2020 in the United States were Google Classroom (21 million), Duolingo (12.4 million), Photomath (11.9 million), Remind 10 million), and PictureThis (7.3 million).

Adam Blacker, "Worldwide & US Download Leaders 2020," Apptopia, January 7, 2021, https://blog.apptopia.com/worldwide-us-download-leaders-2020 (retrieved March 29, 2021).

Handwriting helps learning

"Whenever self-generated movements are included as a learning strategy, more of the brain gets stimulated. It also appears that the movements related to keyboard typing do not activate these networks the same way that drawing and handwriting do. The present findings suggest that the delicate and precisely controlled movements involved in handwriting contribute to the brain's activation patterns related to learning. We found no evidence of such activation patterns when using a keyboard."

Eva Ose Askvik, F. R. (Ruud) van der Weel, and Audrey L. H. van der Meer, "The Importance of Cursive Handwriting Over Typewriting for Learning in the Classroom: A High-Density EEG Study of 12-Year-Old Children and Young Adults," Frontiers in Psychology 11 (2020), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01810 (retrieved March 29, 2021).

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