

In December 2008, ISDA sent out a survey to more than 2,000 MIT faculty, class instructors, TAs and administrators of Stellar course sites. The survey solicited feedback on the use and implementation of Stellar and its various features. Approximately 16% of the recipients completed the survey. It consisted of twenty-two questions about the use of Stellar, and yielded the following information:

### **General Information about Respondents**

- 308 faculty, instructors, TAs and site administrators responded
- 32% of respondents were from the School of Engineering; 22% from the School of Science
- 40% of respondents were TAs, 34% were Instructors, 15% were Site Administrators
- 44% of respondents are responsible for requesting new Stellar sites, 53% are responsible for populating Stellar Sites
- 60% responded that the Professor/Instructor of the class managed the Stellar site
- Materials (80%) and Homework (54%) were the most regularly used tools among the respondents
- The most commonly cited reason for not using a Stellar feature was “No Need” (64%)

### **Materials**

- 80% of faculty use the Materials page
- The two most commonly used features are “Add Assignment” (63%) and “Add Document” (75%)

### **Issues:**

- The “Add Assignments” feature, which is linked to the Gradebook, is inconvenient since each assignment is listed on a separate page, therefore cannot be downloaded

### **Positive Feedback:**

- Respondents stated that the Materials page was useful for posting assigned readings and other recommended materials

### **Recommendation / Improvements:**

- Add ability to change the order arbitrarily of materials posted
- Display materials in multiple columns
- Add an option to drag-and-drop sections
- Ability to set own defaults
- Ability to publish wiki pages to students on the materials page

### **Gradebook**

- *84% of respondents use the Gradebook*

### **Issues:**

- *Faculty commented that Gradebook is slow*
- Respondents noted that when updating grades on assignments, the Gradebook sometimes throws an exception and crashes, and all of the updates become lost

### **Positive Feedback:**

- Very convenient way for students to ensure their scores are the scores they actually receive on their homework
- Like the export feature – will use this feature in the future

### **Recommendations/Improvements:**

- Add repeating assignments – I hate typing similar things over and over again
- Faculty have to enter “fake” grades for students who have left the class but not officially dropped it in order to “save changes”

### **Calendar**

#### **Issues:**

- Those respondents that said they did not use the calendar stated it was because they did not know it existed or that it was too complicated and clunky

#### **Recommendations/Improvements:**

- *The “Show Academic Calendar” and “Show Documents” settings should be sticky*
- “Show Documents” should not reset to “no” every time you visit the Calendar
- Adding assignments should affect the Calendar

#### **Wikis**

##### **Issues:**

- *A common issue mentioned with the wikis was that they were “complicated” and that class wikis should be integrated with departmental wikis*

##### **Survey**

- The majority of faculty that said they did not use the survey tool stated they had not tried it yet or did not know that it existed

##### **Recommendations / Improvements:**

- Faculty would to be able to upload files and export the data in a spreadsheet

#### **Forum**

##### **Recommendations / Improvements:**

- *Faculty would like better tools to monitor and respond to posts (e.g., email notifications)*
- Better integration with assignments
- Forums should have RSS and Email archiving options