Remotely Accessing Learning Resources

Survey. Summary

Marden

Enterprise IT Update Interim Meeting – 29 May 2020

EITU Agenda
29 May 2020

- Welcome – Interim meeting
- Summary of Remotely Accessing U of T Learning Resources
- Roundtable Sharing
  - How departments are faring
    - Issues to raise/share
    - Good things you've seen
    - Questions you have
- Business from the Ether
- Adjournment
  - Next meeting 24 June

WHY A SURVEY?*

As the University pivoted to Online Learning, we wanted to get a better understanding of student experiences with our core applications -- and to be better informed about technology improvements we might have to make before Fall 2020.

We asked questions about

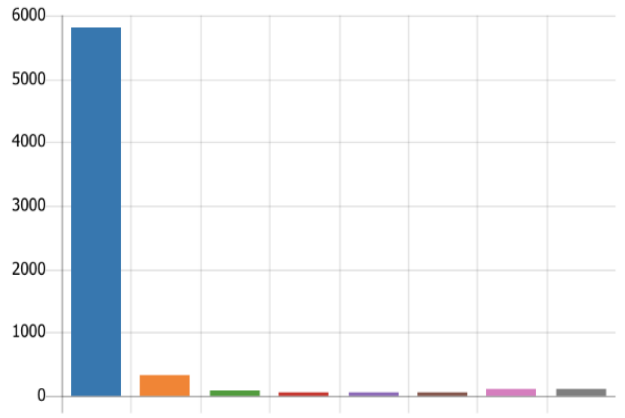
- High-speed Internet access availability and stability
- Familiarity with our core teaching and learning applications
  - Quercus, Collaborate, Turnitin, Teams, OneDrive, ProctorU, VPN
- Problems encountered when using the core applications
- What students would find helpful to support of their online learning experience
- Where the students were located*

LOCATION

7. From which country or region will you be taking courses?

More Details

Canada	5822
China	317
Asia (Other)	95
Europe	51
India	51
Middle East	47
United States	97
Other	105



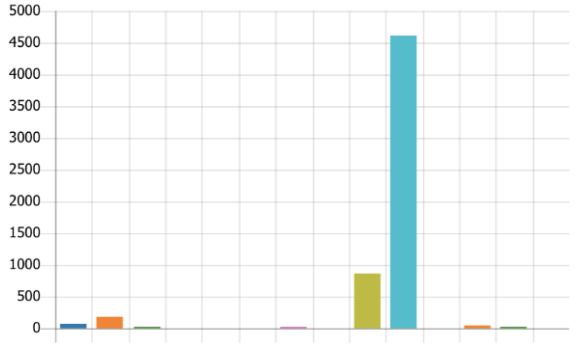
Canada: 5,822

Int'l: 763

are you studying?

More Details

Alberta	66
British Columbia	190
Manitoba	12
Newfoundland and Labrador	5
New Brunswick	5
Northwest Terrotories	1
Nova Scotia	16
Nunavut	1
Ontario, Outside of the Greate...	855
Ontario, Greater Toronto Area	4612
Prince Edward Island	3
Quebec	42
Saskatchewan	14
Yukon	0



Screenshot

Connectivity

1. Do you have access to a high-speed Internet connection at home?

More Details

Yes	5718
No	860

Connectivity

2. How often do you experience Internet connectivity issues from your location?

More Details

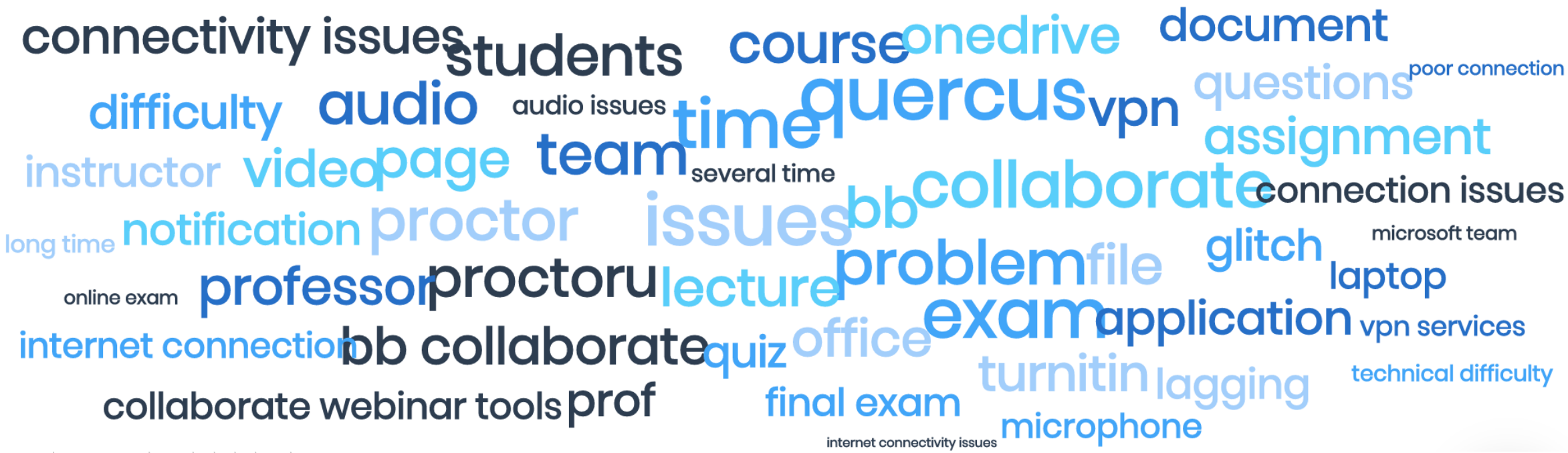
Rarely	1923
Occasionally	3238
Frequently	1074
Very Frequently	337

Connectivity-Related Insights

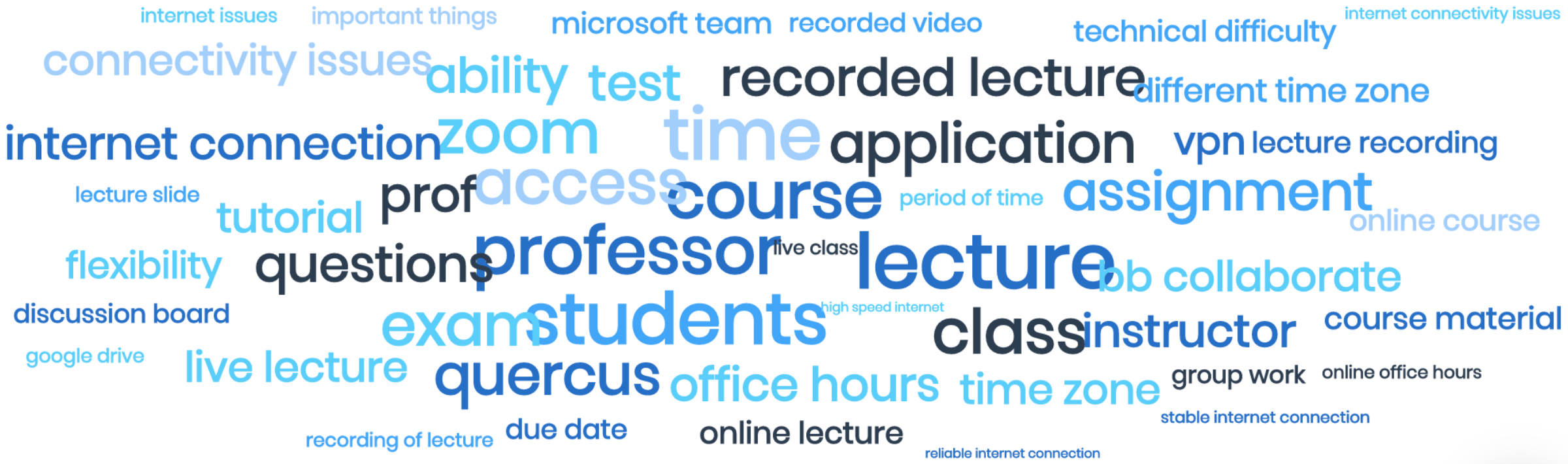
- 87% have high-speed Internet connections at home
- 21% experience frequent Internet connection issues
  - About 29% with Canada excluded
  - Important to consider relative to synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction
  - Not all connection issues are Internet-related
  - Not all application issues are connection-related
- Qualitative responses show a need to provide simple guidance for issues experienced, for example:
  - What to do when a crash occurs mid-lecture or exam
  - Coping with glitches in AV during a lecture
  - Dealing with upload or download problems to apps
  - When to use UTORvpn and when it will degrade a service's performance

- There were 6,585 responses and and 5,000 qualitative comments about learning experiences and technologies – issues and suggestions for improvements.
- The next few slides, organised by theme, highlight common themes

Issues Experienced



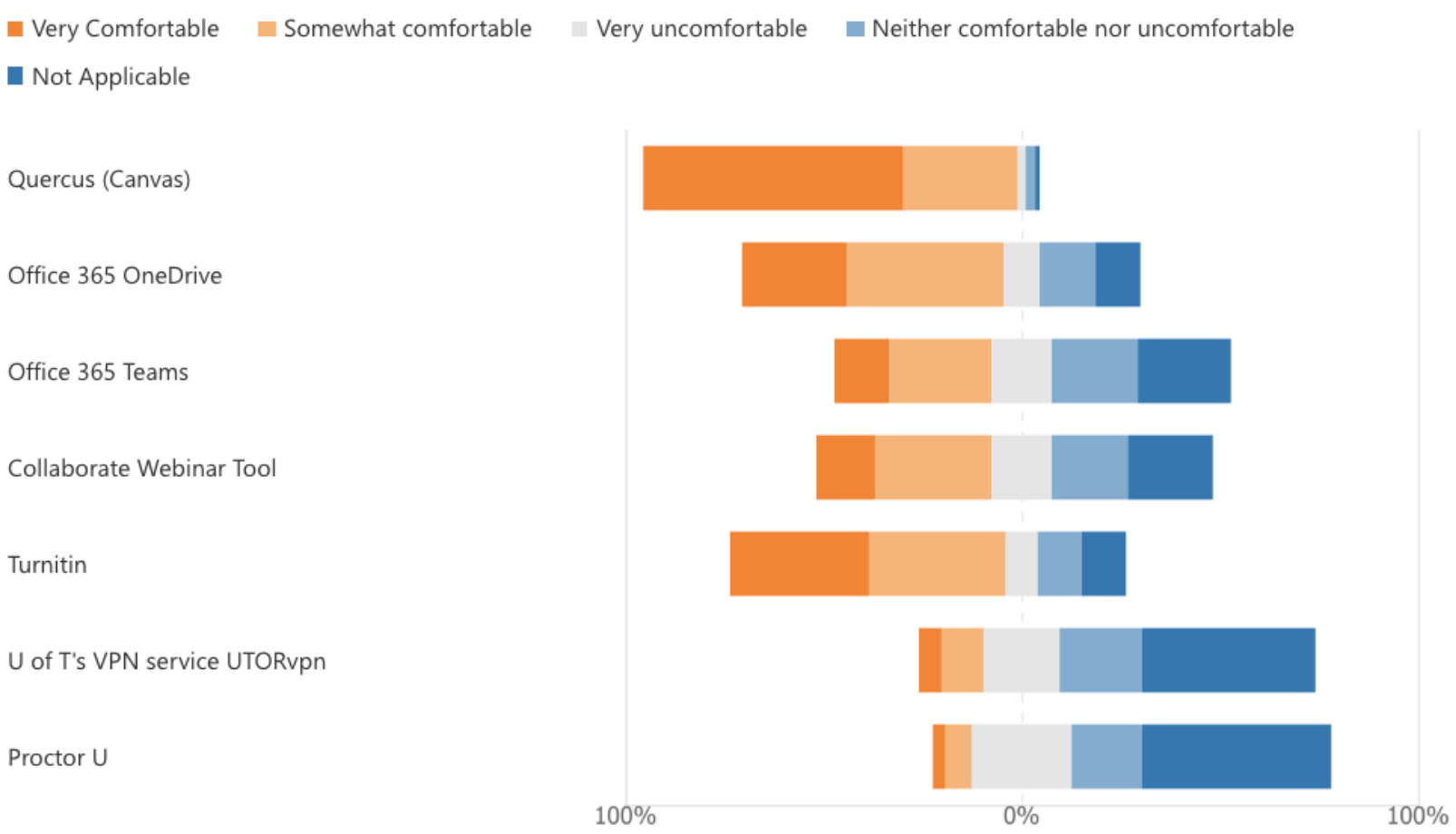
Suggestions



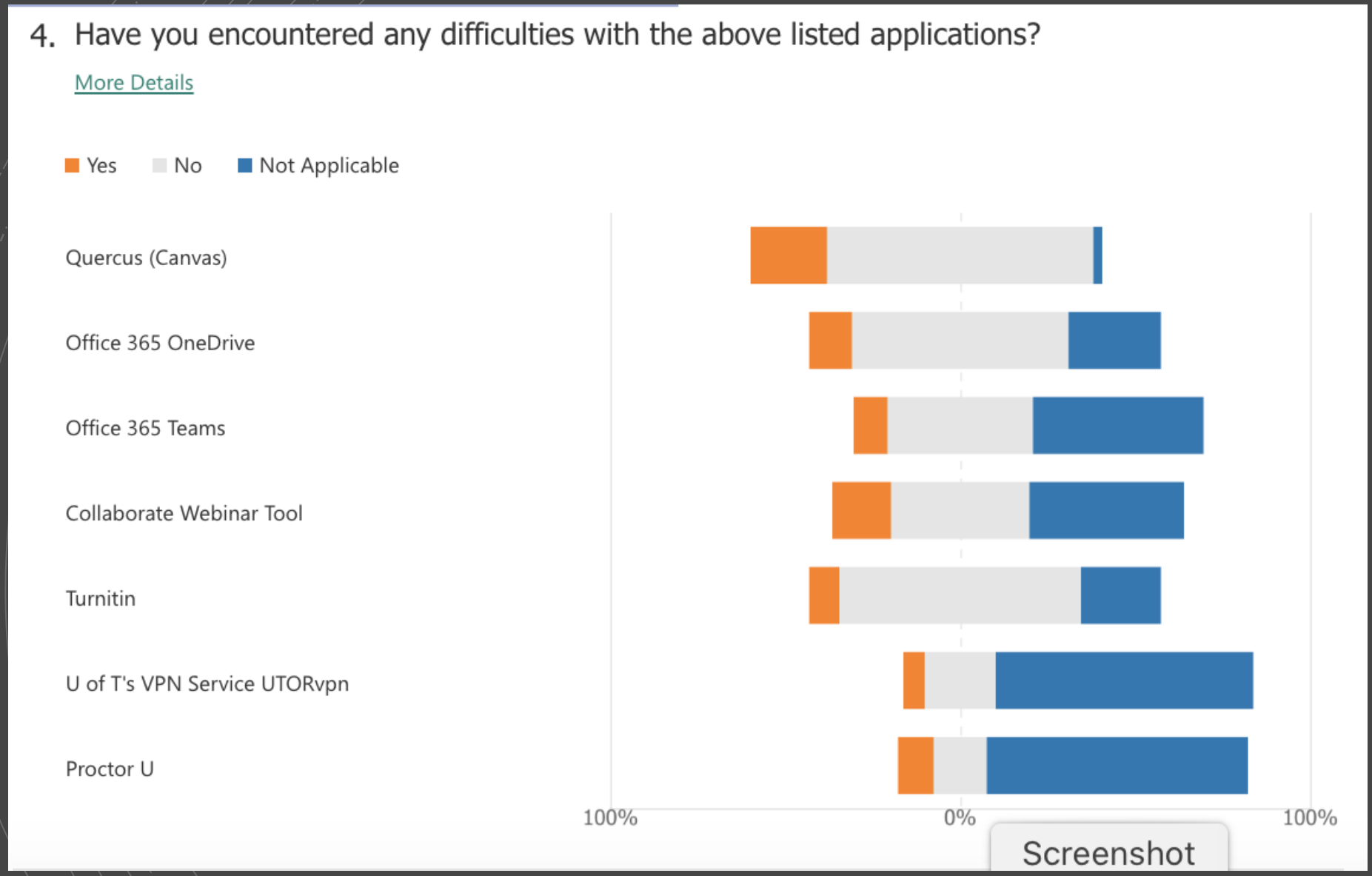
Applications

3. The University provides a number of core learning and collaboration applications. Please advise on your comfort level with these applications and services.

More Details



Applications



Key Points from Student Perspective

- Flexibility / understanding from instructor:
  - Longer times to complete tests, assignment submission deadlines; respond to online quizzes
- Everything to be recorded for asynchronous replay to address glitchy connections, app issues, accessibility, time zone differences
  - Reminders to instructors that some students will have difficulties due to above and to consider how to accommodate in course structure
- More opportunities for direct contact with faculty, varied office hours

Common Comments about Technology

Glitches happen

- AV/connection lag during lectures, breakout sessions, interactive responses
- Participation limited by mic or speaker problems
- Accessibility of online options -- when synchronous only
- VPN slowing down applications
- Lack of right computing equipment / study space to work
- Desire for limited set of applications being used
- Real-time help desk support if glitches occur during lectures or exams/tests
- Determine if intermittent connectivity issues in China may be mitigated with alternate Internet routing – the Alibaba experiment

Support Perspectives

- More instruction for students on how and when to use our tools
- Real-time support lines in case of glitches such as application freezes mid-lecture or exam, file upload uncertainties
- Advise faculty on applications that may not work everywhere*
- Continued adoption and promotion of best practices for online instruction
- Add to instructional design support capacity across University

Lessons

1. *With all the great information and supports for using our learning technologies there are still opportunities to improve technical fluency.*
2. *People and Process changes are necessary to improve learning experiences too.*
3. *There are multiple factors that determine the quality of remote learning experiences – and there is no single “fix” that will work for every issue for everyone all the time.*

Summary of Quantitative Results

- Here's the link to the Summary Report
- I can provide access to the qualitative responses in a spreadsheet.

Questions and Observations?