

BENCHEIT — Benchmarking Higher Education IT

An Update on the BM2020 Survey of the EUNIS BencHEIT Task Force

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Keywords

benchmarking, BencHEIT, CIO, IT management, costs, data-driven decision-making

1. SUMMARY

BencHEIT is a free of charge yearly survey with the aim of establishing a comprehensive knowledge of how cost efficiently IT works in European universities and universities of applied sciences. The BencHEIT Task Force gathers the data and generates an analysis for the CIOs to use in comparing the organization's IT costs and volumes to their peer's numbers. It also provides them with tools to start more detailed discussions on how to improve the performance of institute's IT services. Analysis gives some perspectives to common developments within the higher education IT.

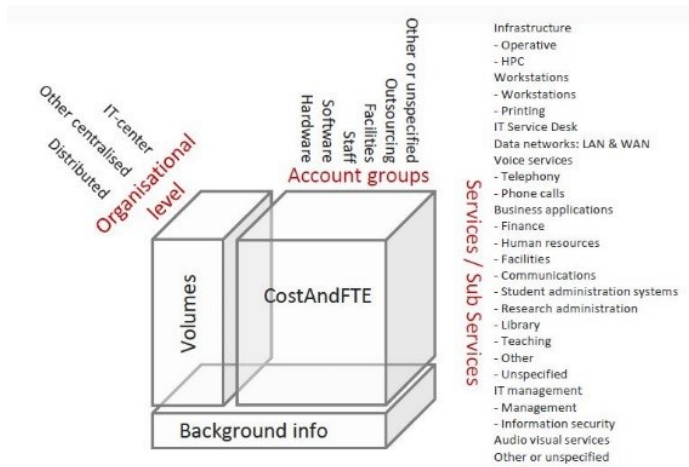
The survey is a quantitative study, where we ask the participating organisations to gather the costs and volumes from IT and divide it into services, account groups and organizational level. For the centralized IT it is usually fairly easy, but when we dig into the other centralized (not the centralized IT, but serving the whole HEI), and also the distributed IT; in smaller departments and faculties, it is much harder to find all the data needed. However, all participants have said that this is truly valuable information, eventhough it is hard to find. Those who have participated several times, cannot really think back on the times when they had no clue whatsoever of what IT was costing them.

The advantage of BencHEIT is that we are a tight and fairly small group. This year we are 60 participating HEIs, but we have webinars where everyone has a chance to discuss and ask questions. Many of our participants have been with us for many years, and that also gives a sense of togetherness. Also in terms of survey statistics, being part of the survey for many years create valuable historical development information. Also one of the advantages of BencHEIT is that we share all information among the participating HEIs; participants can see, not only the analysis, but all the data of all participating organisations.

As last year was the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, we find it particularly interesting to see how the results differ, or doesn't differ from previous results. In the survey BM2020 we have included some questions regarding IT's preparation for a situation like the one at hand. It will be

very interesting to see if the costs are divided differently, and how the IT budgets have reacted to the situation.

We collect data in three dimensions:



1. Organizational level: centralized IT, other centralized units, distributed units e.g. faculties and research centers. This way participating organization can see how (de)centralized their IT is in comparison to others.
2. Account level: financial data is divided in hardware, software, staff, facilities, outsourcing and other costs.
3. Services: all costs and also some of the volume data is collected within different IT services e.g. infrastructure, workstations, business applications.

Figure 1. Dimensions of the survey

The initiative was started as a country-wide Finnish project, and from 2012 onwards it was opened to all European HEIs that were interested. The number of participating HEIs have been increasing, but also varying from year to year. In the last round, BM2019, we had 44 participating organisations from 9 countries.

For the past nine years, the Task Force has hosted workshops together with EUNIS for participating organizations and those wishing to get to know more about the Task Force. At the workshop, the participants discuss proposed improvements for the next year’s benchmarking analysis and the feasibility of the data gathered during the process. The BencHEIT survey is thus iterative in nature but still aims to preserve comparability with earlier year’s analysis results in order to construct a longitudinal analysis of the data. The participants also share information about their national benchmarking initiatives and other trends in the field. Our last workshop was online due to travelling restrictions, but we hope to be able to meet physically in the end of this year.

BencHEIT is one of the official EUNIS task forces. This presentation aims to be both a short summary of what the BencHEIT’s aims and benefits are, but it also aims to give a glimpse of what new results have been obtained during the latest benchmarking round during January–April 2021 and what new features have been included in this year survey as opposed to earlier years.

In our presentation we will first outline the project and its benchmarking process. As the analysis of this year’s data will be ready in late May 2021, the EUNIS Congress is the first occasion to reveal some of the results and key findings from the last round. We will also show historical development of a few indicators during last five years of benchmarking process. The participants who have taken part in the survey during previous years will see their historical data already when filling in the survey.

The BencHEIT survey analysis provides its participants an option to compare themselves with their peer institutions and with their sector’s latest development. When filling in the survey, you can also choose the currency you want to report your costs in. The currency can also be converted when looking at the results of other participants and comparing them to your own.

Participating HEIs year 2021:

Medical University of Innsbruck
Vienna University of Economics
and Business
Ghent University
Free University Brussels
Aarhus University
Technical University of Denmark
University of Copenhagen
University College Lillebælt
Aalto University
Åbo Akademi University
University of Applied Sciences
Haaga-Helia University of Applied
Sciences
Häme University of Applied
Sciences
Humak University of Applied
Sciences

Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences
Kajaani University of Applied Sciences
Karelia University of Applied Sciences
Lapland University of Applied Sciences
Laurea University of Applied Sciences
LUT Universities
Metropolia University of Applied Sciences
Oulu University of Applied Sciences
Satakunta University of Applied Sciences
Savonia University of Applied Sciences
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Tampere University
Turku University of Applied Sciences
University of Helsinki
University of Lapland
Vaasa University of Applied Sciences
South-Eastern Finland University of
Applied Sciences

University of Bayreuth
Heinrich-Heine University
University of Münster
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Reykjavik University
University of Latvia
Norwegian Business School BI
Norwegian University of Life Sciences
Norwegian University of Science and
Technology
Oslo Metropolitan University
University of Bergen
University of Oslo
UiT The Arctic University of Norway
University of Evora
Politehnica University of Timisoara
Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
Rovira i Virgili University

Karolinska Institutet
Royal Institute of Technology
Linköping University
Luleå University of Technology
Uppsala University
ETH Zurich
University of St.Gallen
University of Bern
University of Geneva
University of Lausanne
University of Zürich
Nottingham Trent University

2. AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES



Teemu Seesto has M. Sc. in economics from Turku School of Economics. He has been a teacher of information systems science for twenty years. Seesto was the CIO of Turku School of Economics during 2006-2010. He is currently the IT general secretary of FUCIO, the Network of Finnish universities' CIOs. Teemu is a member of the BencHEIT steering group.



Yvonne Kivi is an IT Specialist at the University of Helsinki and the project manager of BencHEIT. She holds an BA degree from Arcada UAS. Yvonne is the key contact person for most of the institutions that participate in the BencHEIT work.



Ilkka Siissalo is the CIO of University of Helsinki, EUNIS Vice President and chairman of the BencHEIT steering group. Ilkka holds an M. Sc degree in biochemical sciences as well as a bachelor level degree in marketing. Ilkka has acted as the IT leader in various research related institutions both within the private sector and academia for over 25 years.