College Students, Technology, and Time

or “always fast and never crashes”

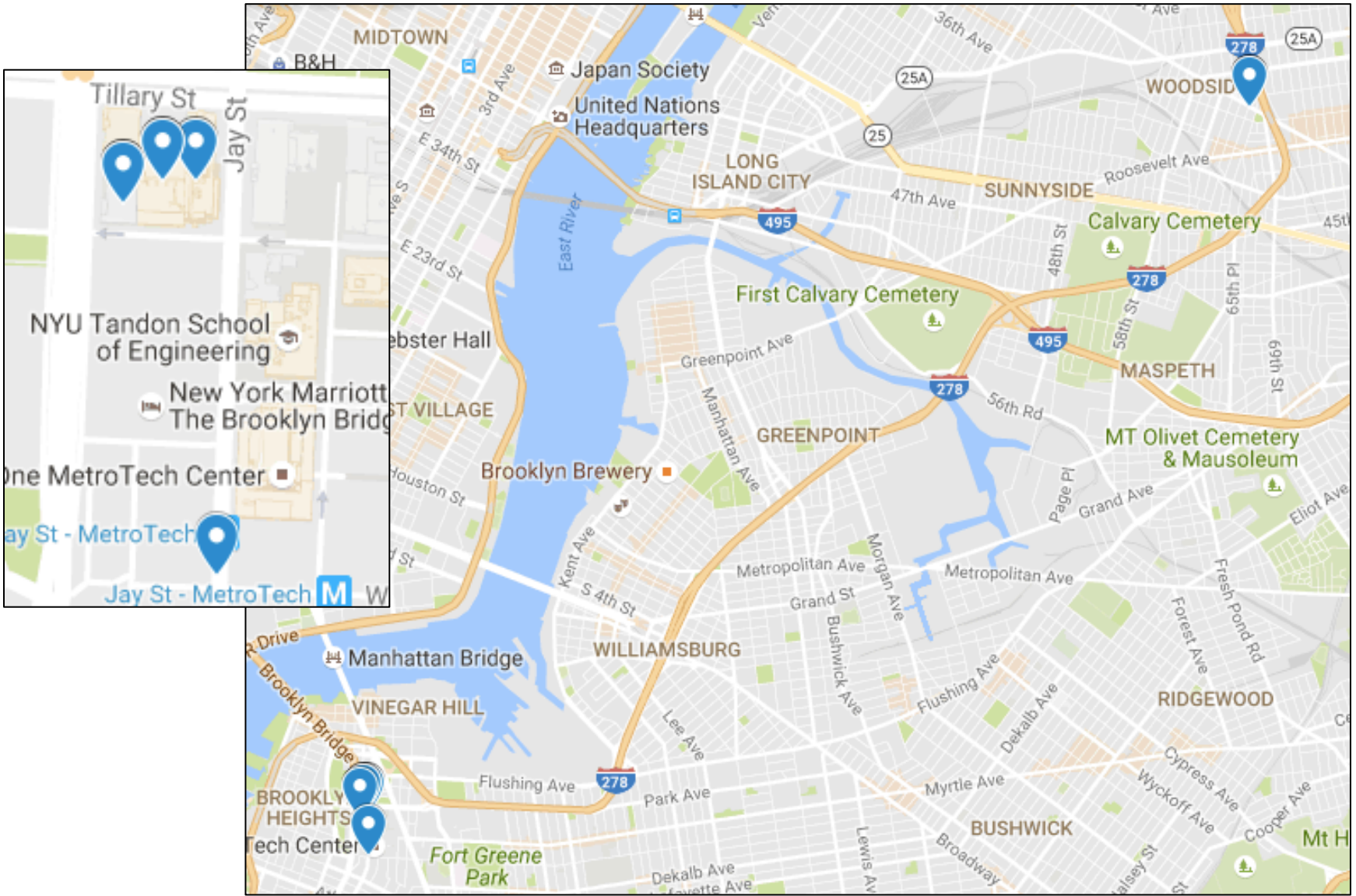
Mariana Regalado, Brooklyn College
Maura A. Smale, City Tech

CUNY IT Conference
December 2, 2016

Many thanks to

- the CUNY students and faculty we interviewed for the project
- our research assistants (CUNY graduate students) Christopher Baum, Jay Blair, Rachel Daniell, and Brenna McCaffrey
- our CUNY library faculty colleagues, especially Jean Amaral (BMCC)

A City Tech Student's Day



Trope of the Digital Native

"If your university philosophy is grounded in assumptions around digital natives, education and technology, you're presupposing you don't have to teach the students how to use tech for their education."

Problems of Positivity

"Clearly, digital technology is the fabric of nearly everything associated with teaching and learning."

Our Research

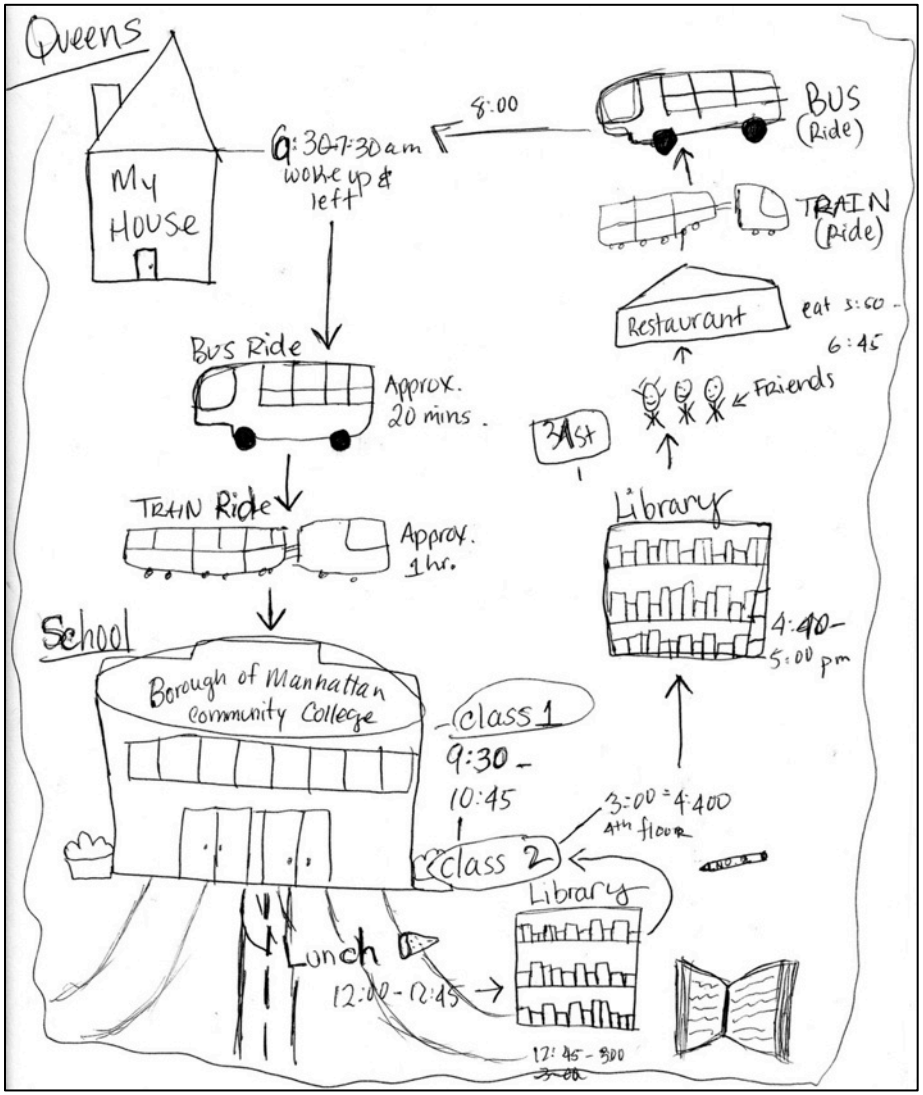
2009-2011 (all six colleges)

- Students: photo surveys, mapping diaries, research process
- Faculty: semi-structured interviews

2015-2016 (Brooklyn, City Tech, BMCC)

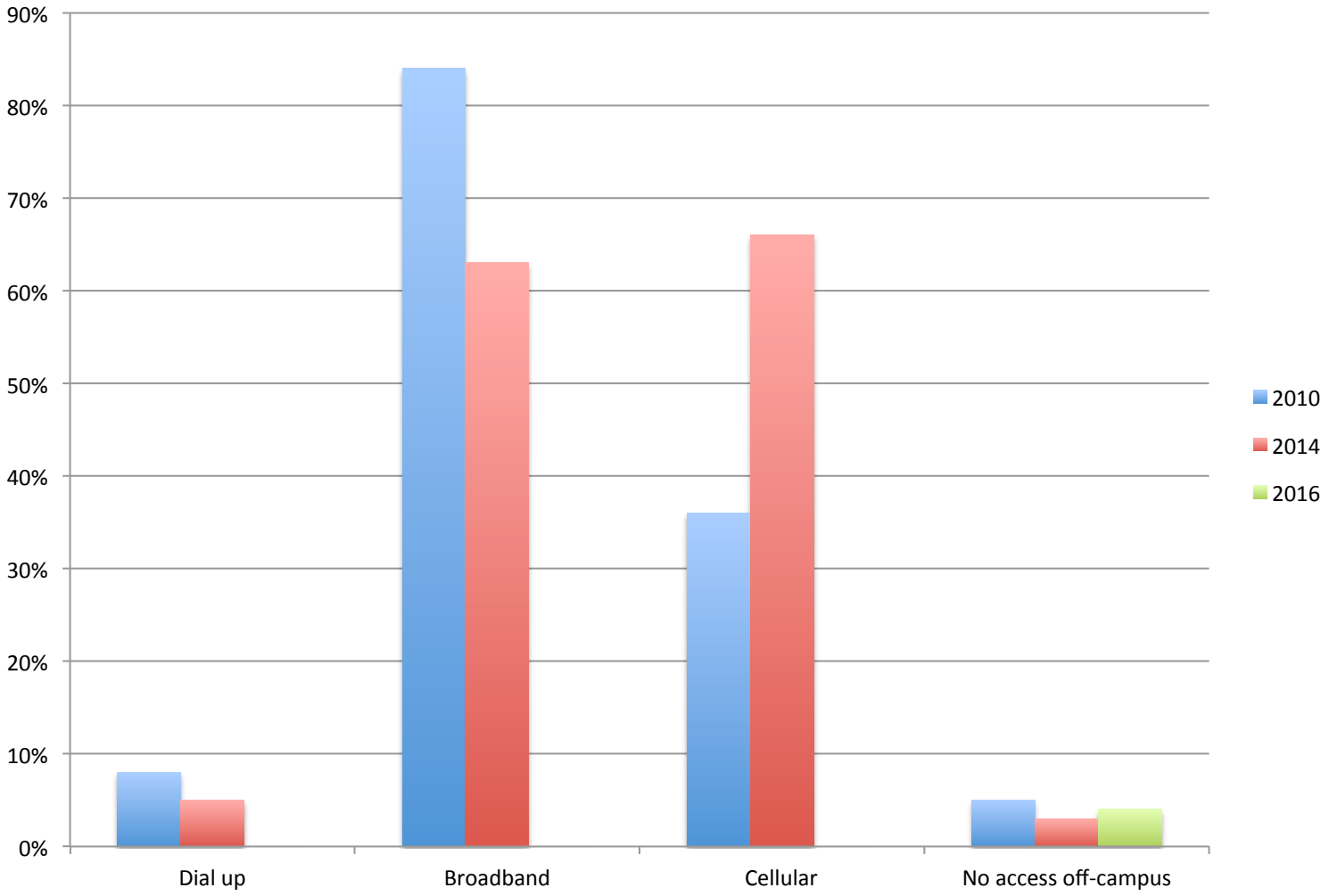
- Students: SMS mapping, brief tech interviews, hybrid/online questionnaire
- Faculty: hybrid/online questionnaire

Taskscapes


Queens
My House
6:30-7:30 am
woke up & left
8:00
BUS (Ride)
TRAIN (Ride)
Restaurant
eat 5:00 - 6:45
Friends
Bus Ride
Approx. 20 mins.
TRAIN Ride
Approx. 1 hr.
Library
4:40 - 5:00 pm
School
Borough of Manhattan Community College
Class 1
9:30 - 10:45
Class 2
3:00 - 4:40
4th floor
Library
Lunch
12:00 - 12:45
12:45 - 3:00

What digital technologies do students use?

CUNY Students' Internet Access



Personal Computers

“I have a computer at home, it’s annoying though because sometimes my computer will be broken a little bit and I have to send it to Geek Squad and then I don’t really have a computer for a week or two which is very stressful because my major is in computers, so I’m just like, great, I can’t do programming.”

Printing

“I can’t look at electronics, it’s always paper.”

Laptops

“[I bring my laptop] maybe once a week. Because it's heavy. Plus my books. It's heavy. It kills my back. Because I'm in school from 11:00 until 8:30.”

Smartphones

“I personally don't use a smartphone or tablet for schoolwork but have been present numerous times while my friends’ work was deleted or would not upload from one of these devices.”

Where do students use digital technology?

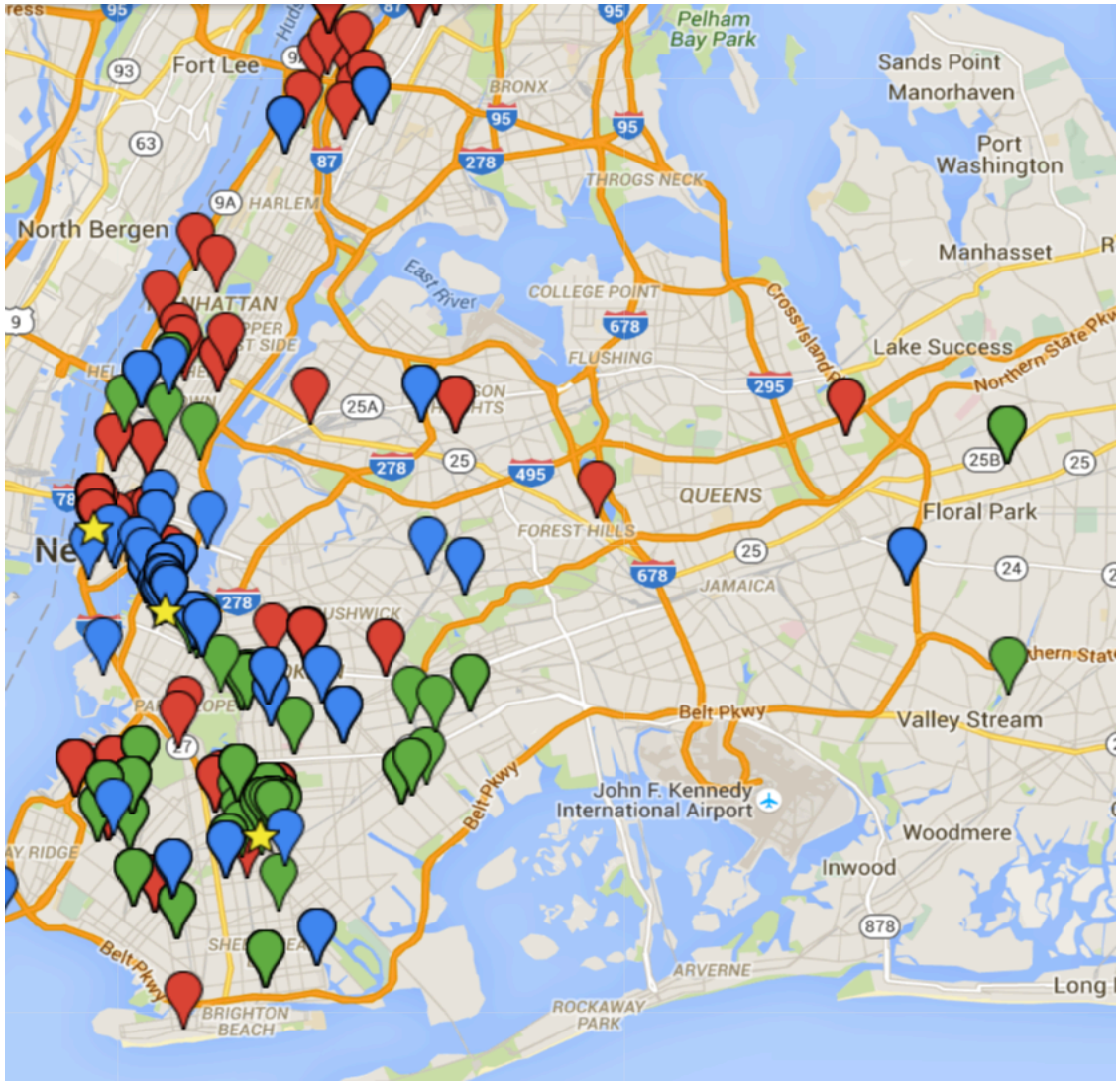
At Home

“My house is very noisy, it’s a lot of noise, and the thing about it is if I can’t study on campus, I would go home and sit in this little corner [. . .] everybody knows that while I’m in the living room and I’m studying, they can’t come in and watch TV.”

On Campus

“My first year, I didn’t have the Microsoft Word application so I couldn’t type essays. So I would spend HOURS on hours sitting here and trying to focus while people are chewing gum and talking on the phone and arguing and hitting each other. It says it’s a ‘Learning Resource Center’ but in actuality it’s a ‘Hang Out With Your Friends and Look at Your Cousin’s Wedding Pictures Center’ . . . ‘on Facebook.’”

On the Commute



Other Locations

“I like to do it at work because I do a lot of multitasking, I have, I split my screen, one for homework, and . . . one is on Blackboard and the other is on the office. So usually I’m doing both things back and forth and still answering the phones.”

How does digital technology impact students' use of time?

Time Challenges

“Sometimes when kids are running around, ‘Aaaaargh!’ I need to find some quiet, so what I do is that I just sit in the hallway. It’s not uncomfortable; it’s pretty cool. You know, I know everyone on my floor, so, they’re like ‘Oh, you’re studying again!’ But they admire me, you know, for putting so much hard work into my schoolwork.”

Making Time

“I use an app I found called PDF and I’ll save the PowerPoints, I’ll convert them to a PDF and then save them to Google Drive and then download them to this app so then I don’t have to worry about using the internet on the train.”

Students' Time Being Wasted

"Technology is great, but it's really time-consuming."

Students' Time Being Wasted

- Infrastructure fails
- Tech fails
- Internet connectivity fails
- Lack of technical support
- Lack of private, unrestricted access to necessary tech

How can we best support students with digital technology?

Recommendations

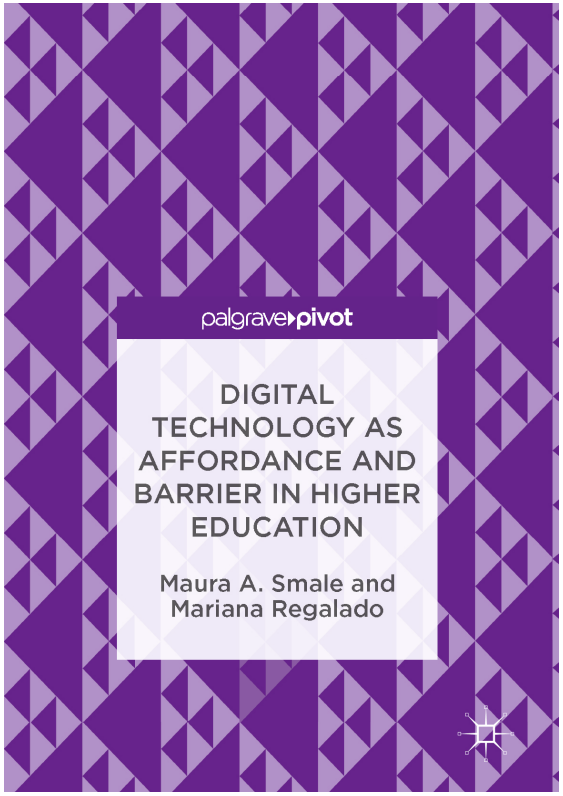
- Understand student realities and constraints
- Invest in campus wifi
- Adjust campus computing accordingly
- Increase cloud access/optimize for mobile
- Support and training
- Faculty use of technology in teaching
- Time management assistance

Questions for us?

What ideas do you have for supporting students in using technology?

Thank you!

Mariana Regalado
regalado@brooklyn.cuny.edu
@modalager

Maura A. Smale
msmale@citytech.cuny.edu
@mauraweb

http://ushep.commons.gc.cuny.edu