The Nature and Extent of Desktop Graffiti Among U.S. College Students: An Exploratory Study

By

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Abstract

This study investigates classroom graffiti by U.S. college students. The data analyzed were collected in nine classrooms randomly selected from two buildings at a major land grant university. In all, 1,758 examples of identifiable pieces of graffiti were collected and analyzed from 419 desktops. Using data supplied by the University Registrar, the types of students who attended classes in these classrooms by major, gender, and class composition are correlated with the quantity and quality of desktop graffiti found. These graffiti are analyzed in order to gauge what some of the pressing issues are for students, and are useful in informing the university of what issues are most important to those students who engage in this activity. The findings suggest a strong interest in four main areas: sex, the University, drugs, and Greek organizations. One pattern that stands out is the large amount of sexual graffiti an anti-homosexual nature. A larger amount of graffiti appears in the liberal arts building compared to the engineering building. Student major and gender, as well as professor's gender, do not appear to be correlated with either amount or content of the graffiti studied. Instead, it is suggested that the course being taught and the room in which the class is held may be more strongly correlated with the amount and content of the graffiti found on classroom desktops. Notable in its absence is virtually any student graffiti of a racist nature.

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