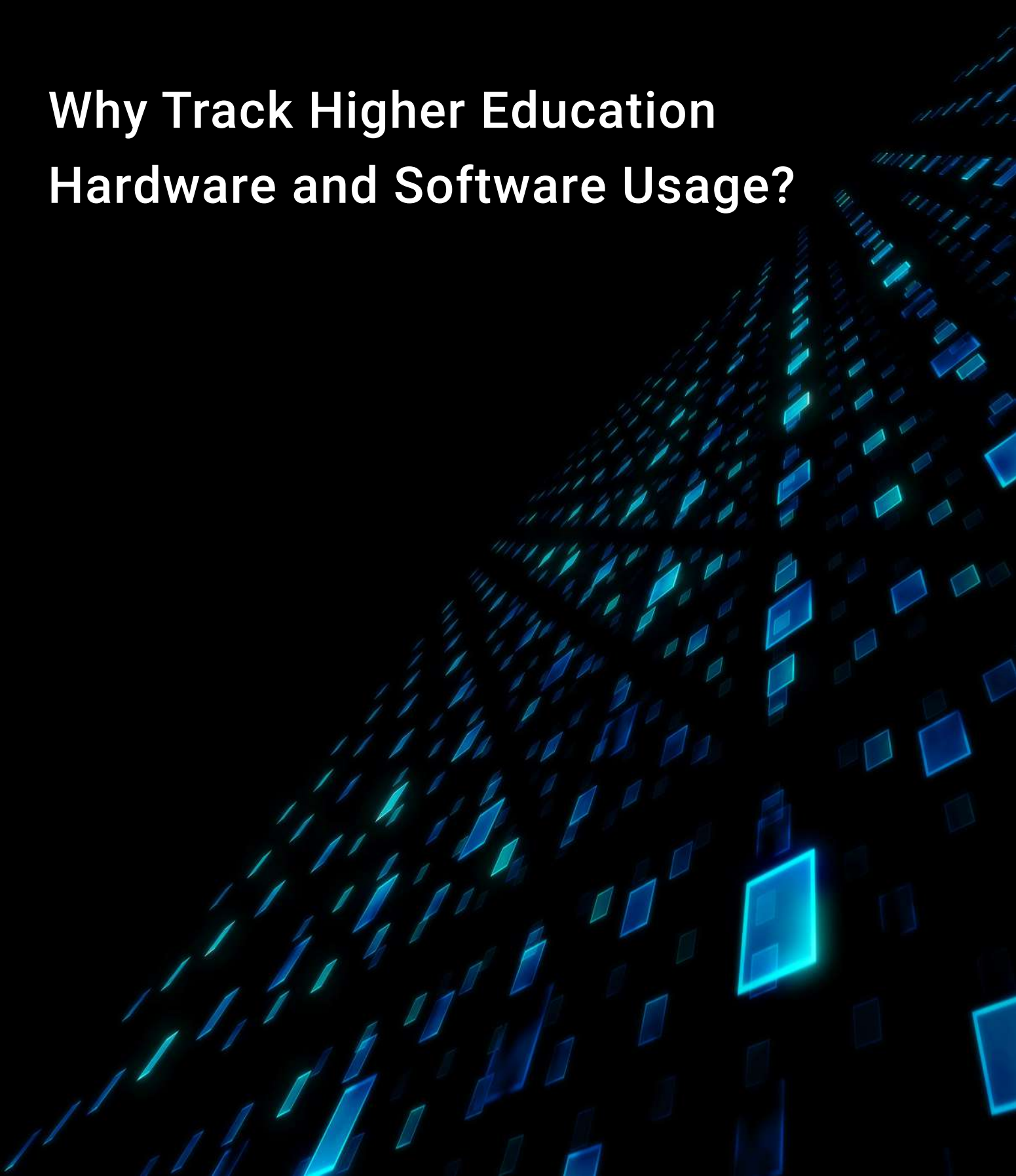


# Why Track Higher Education Hardware and Software Usage?





## Why track and understand IT asset usage?

Understanding the use of IT assets on campus is increasingly critical as part of your overall higher education data strategy. You must go beyond knowing what's being used, and reach an understanding of how it relates to your campus- or system-wide goals, some of which may not appear related to hardware or software usage management.

- Budget efficiency
- Security enforcement
- Grant writing
- Regulatory compliance
- Hardware and software inventory balance
- Customer service (students, faculty and staff)
- Student success (enrollment, GPA, graduation)
- Institutional rankings
- Faculty effectiveness
- Emerging education and learning trends
- Tool necessity and proximity / location maximization



## What should be tracked?

Once you understand the “why,” the next step is to uncover what needs to be tracked:



**Hardware** - Computers across your IT ecosystem. These include computer lab machines, staff and faculty computers, loaner laptops, kiosks, and more.



**Peripherals** - Printers, scanners, and other shared devices users need to keep their assignments moving forward.



**Software** - All applications loaded on any devices listed above, including paid licenses (seat and site), free and shared applications, and high-power / high-cost software used in STEM education, or important research activities.



**Spaces** (aka ‘groups’) - Spaces are changing with the landscape of education. Flexible spaces are increasingly critical to student success. Space is the most costly asset institutions with physical campuses manage. Collaboration spaces are critical to the growing population of students bringing their own devices. They need a place to plug in and work, alone or with others..





## What data points can be collected and why are they important?

There are a variety of data points available for collection. It's frequently difficult to know what is needed for your specific setting. Here are several that can and should be collected:



**Logins** - How frequently, or infrequently, a computer is accessed tells a story of need and usage patterns.



**Sessions** - In combination with logins, sessions data gives color to the user story, shedding light on the importance of certain locations to particular user groups. It also reveals demand over time.



**Peak Concurrent Usage** - In the battle to adjust to tighter budgets, or to simply understand how much hardware and software is really needed, this data uncovers how your available resources are being used at any given time. For example, if peak concurrent usage (total number of an asset being used at the same time) never exceeds 30%, you could reduce specific hardware or software spends by 50% and still provide excess availability.



**Zero Usage** - Identifying “low hanging fruit” is typically the first step toward improved efficiency or cost reduction. Zero usage assets are those that have been sitting idle for a time period you designate. Eliminating unused technology gets you the savings needed for those important, but underfunded, projects.



**Software application usage** - This data is critical to your ability to confidently enter software licensing negotiations, or to make decisions on expanding or contracting software spends. This is especially important for high power and high cost software applications that are often mission critical to small user groups, but represent a major portion of your software budget.



**Accessibility** - When properly tagged / identified, usage data for IT assets designed, and located, to meet accessibility needs can uncover under- or over-deployment of units installed to assist users needing accommodation.



**Inventory** - An accurate picture of what hardware and software you own, or have licenses for, is critical for data-informed decision making, and is used for grant reporting and project success measurement.

# What other goals can IT asset tracking help me achieve?

IT asset usage data isn't just about what, where, when, and how. When combined with other data sources in your secure environment, it supports organization-wide goal achievement.



## DEI

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals are center stage in higher education. Ensuring equity of opportunity among student educational experiences and outcomes takes many forms. How does a reduction, elimination, or conversely, an expansion of technology resources help or hinder particular student groups?

These might include:

- First generation students
- Low income students
- Underrepresented populations

Combining demographic data with IT usage data reveals important links between these student groups, typically with less personally owned technology, and the on-campus resources you provide.



## Student Success

Understanding how available technology affects all student groups ensures important and correct strategies are implemented.



## Institutional Rankings

Taking steps to support student success, providing technology accessibility, and enabling equitable opportunities will result in a measurably better student experience, which is key to maintaining and improving institutional rankings.



## Enrollment Support

Improving rankings, and making education more accessible to prospective students via technology resource availability helps meet enrollment goals, improves GPA attainment, and elevates graduation rates.



## Telling the Right Stories

The lifeblood of compelling and confident storytelling is accurate data. This is especially true with strategy development that drives budget, program and project submissions.



## Facility Efficiency

The coming demographic cliff, and the associated drop in enrollment levels, presents a huge challenge especially for campuses with physical facilities.

Smart campus initiatives are just one way to address that challenge. Understanding how and when facilities are utilized is essential to efficiency.



## Security

Cybersecurity is at or near the top of the list of every higher education IT organization. Reboot data, for example, shows when computers have not been rebooted for an extended time, preventing security update executions. Duplicate, old, and unused applications are security risks. Application data reveals where they live, so you can target and eliminate them.



## Funding Accountability

When specific funding or grants are approved, you need data to prove implementation success. Showing how funded resources are being utilized bolsters confidence and ensures further program support.



## Grant Submissions

Many higher education institutions employ full-time staff to develop and submit grant applications, typically requiring data, and stories, to fortify claims of necessity and expected benefit. Fresh and accurate data speeds up the development and approval processes.



## Should I Combine Data to Gain Further Insights?

Yes! Combining IT asset usage data with other data sources, in your secure environment, can reveal rich results and actionable insights. Combine usage data with the data following sources to reveal relationships:



**Student Management Systems** - The relationship between student success and technology usage is evident. The right combination of data supports or refutes assumptions, and can provide enough granularity to get to the core of the relationship between technology resource usage and metrics like GPA and graduation rates.



**Financial Systems** - Have you ever wondered how much each use of a particular software costs you? Underutilized applications, for example, can be very expensive per use, especially if you're paying for site licenses and only using a small percentage of availability, even at peak times.



**Demographics** - There is a huge treasure trove of hidden insights you can uncover when IT usage and demographic data are combined. Examples include:

- The relationship between first-generation student success and technology resource availability.
- Seeing that a particular demographic group utilizes specific resources more than others.
- Understanding how your actions, or planned future actions, affect students.



**Student Financial Aid** (loans and grants) - Similar to demographics, discovering if students with Pell Grants, for example, would suffer if you remove a particular resource from your campus, supports your DEI, graduation rate, and overall student success goals.



## Who can benefit from better understanding of IT asset usage in higher education?

There are more individuals and roles that benefit from a timely and accurate understanding of how IT assets are being used, across departments, campuses and systems, than you might think. They include:

- Chief Information Officers (CIOs)
- Chief Technology Officers (CTOs)
- Chief Data & Analytics Officers (CDAOs)
- Students
- Faculty
- Lab Managers
- Help Desks
- Data Analysts
- Directors of IT, Departments, etc.
- Enrollment Management
- Registrars
- Engineering Management
- Institutional Researchers
- DEI and Accessibility Managers
- Library Services Administrators

Now that you know, it's time to act. Get the data you need, turn the data into insights, and turn the insights into action!

*For a no-pressure consultation about how LabStats can help your institution, [schedule a 15 min call](#) – we'll be happy to help.*

