

Use of Questionmark Perception during the period of the e-learning Pathfinder project (2007-8)

John Dermo, June 2008

One of the anticipated outcomes from the CAA Pathfinder project as specified in the project plan is “*Expanded use of both formative and summative computer-assisted assessment*”.

The following data is taken from Enterprise Manager, Questionmark Perception Servers, University of Bradford, and shows how much QMP has been used since it was first purchased in 2003, with especial focus on the academic year 2007-8, which coincides with the period of the pathfinder project. The data and analysis are intended to demonstrate the overall increased use of the software during the duration of the Pathfinder project.

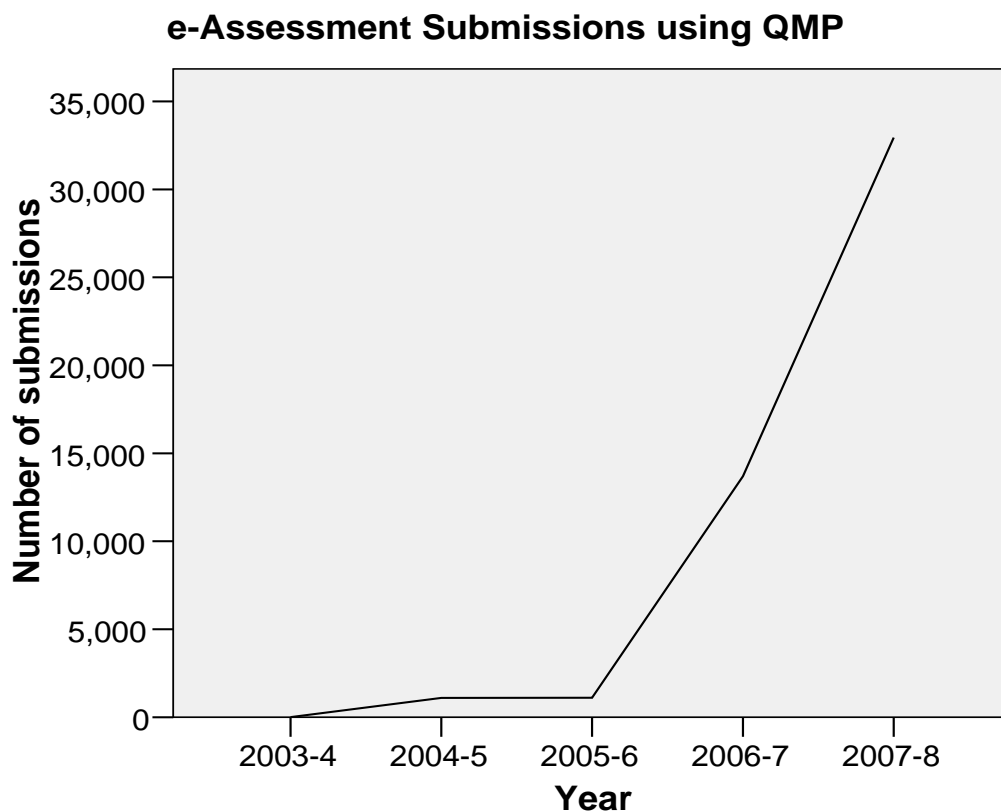


Figure 1: Line Graph showing number of e-assessment submissions 2003-8

Figure 1 sets the current use of QMP in the context of the baseline information gathered at the start of the project. In the course of this academic year, students submitted almost 32 thousand assessments, which is an increase of more than 140 per cent on the 2006-7 figures. The line chart also indicates that the use of QMP for assessment has increased from year to year, especially since special attention was paid to QMP as part of the

University's e-strategy in 2005-6 (with the upgrade to QMP version 4), then with the support offered by Pathfinder this year.

Table 1 shows the increase in number of assessments and submissions since 2003, and figure 2 shows the corresponding increase in the number of assessments in line graph format.

Year	Assessments	Submissions
2003-4	1	7
2004-5	14	1094
2005-6	32	1101
2006-7	75	13697
2007-8	120	31882

Table 1:QMP use 2003 to 2008

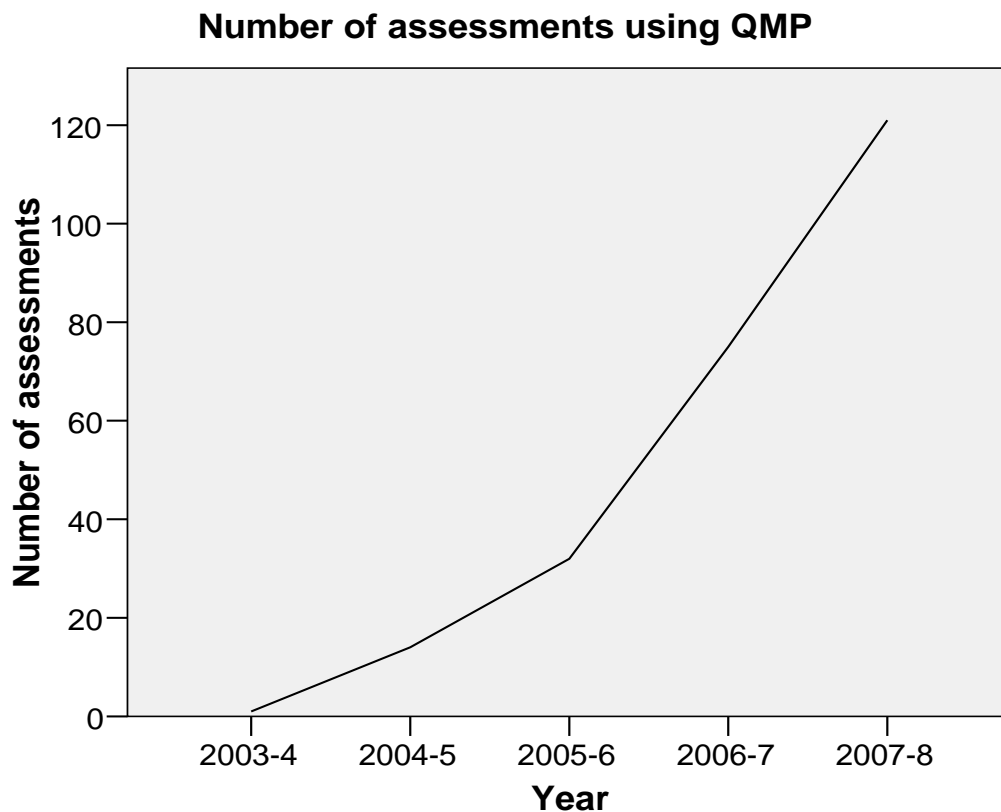


Figure 2: QMP use 2003-2008

During 2007-8, about three quarters of online assessment was formative, and about one quarter was summative. As was indicated in table 1, there were 120 online assessments in 2007-8: recognising that there is not always a clear cut distinction between formative and summative assessments, it has been possible to classify these, and the breakdown is 89 formative (74.2%) and 31 summative (25.8%) see figure 3 for a pie chart representing this breakdown. This breakdown is reflected in the number of submissions (see figure 4), with 6919 summative submissions (21.7 %) and 24,963 formative submissions (78.3%).

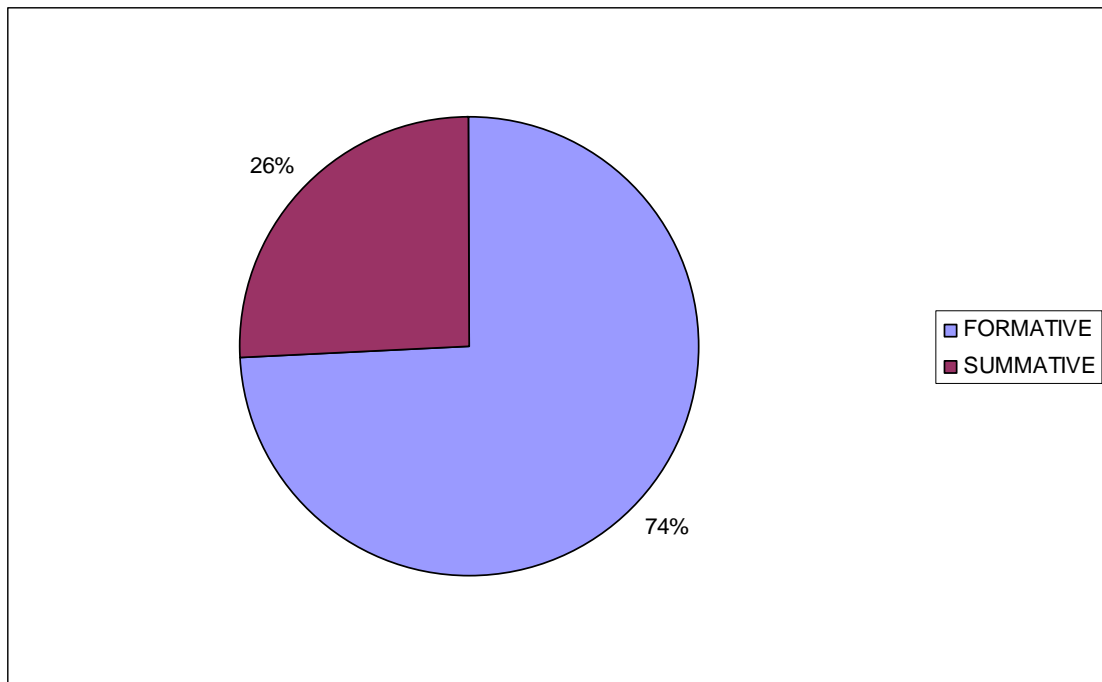


Figure 3: Pie chart showing formative and summative online assessments

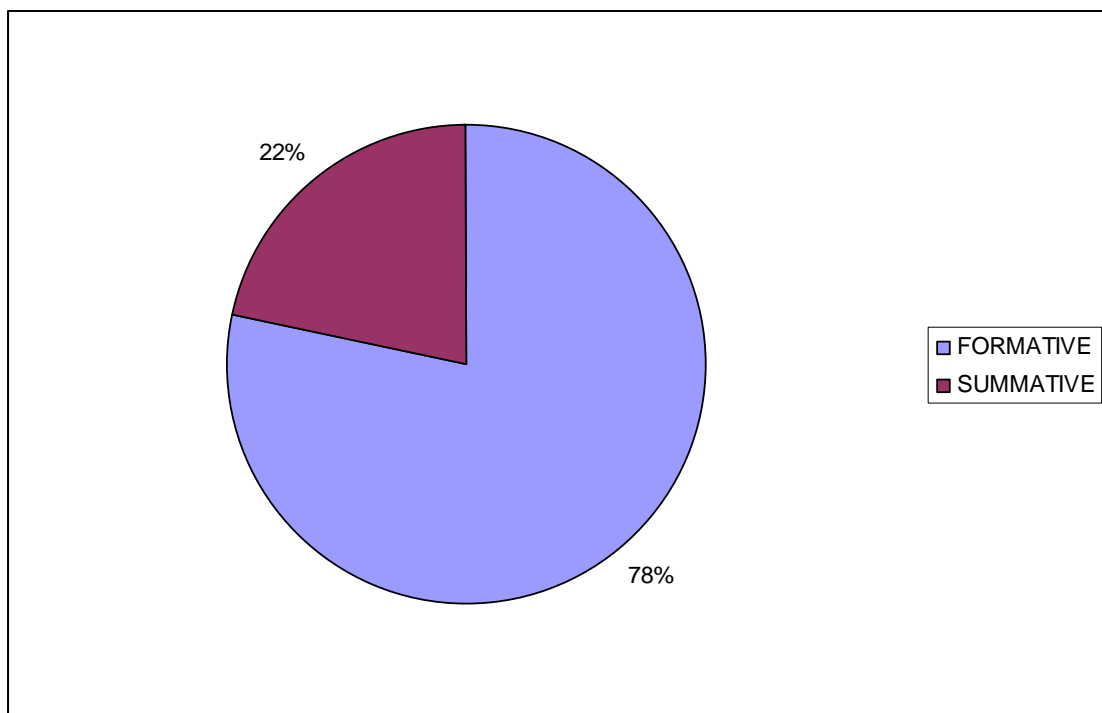


Figure 4: Pie chart showing submissions on Formative and Summative assessments

Although three quarters of online assessments were formative, this is to be expected, because one student may take several weekly formative assessments, but only one summative assessment at the end of the course, so one would expect to see more formative assessments overall.

In terms of student numbers, the balance of use of QMP for online formative and summative assessment was more even, and in fact rather more students were involved in summative assessment. In 2007-8, 1762 students took an online assessment of some kind. Of these, 74.9% took summative assessments and 63.7% took formative assessments – consequently 38.6% of the students took part in both formative and summative assessments (in line with best practice).

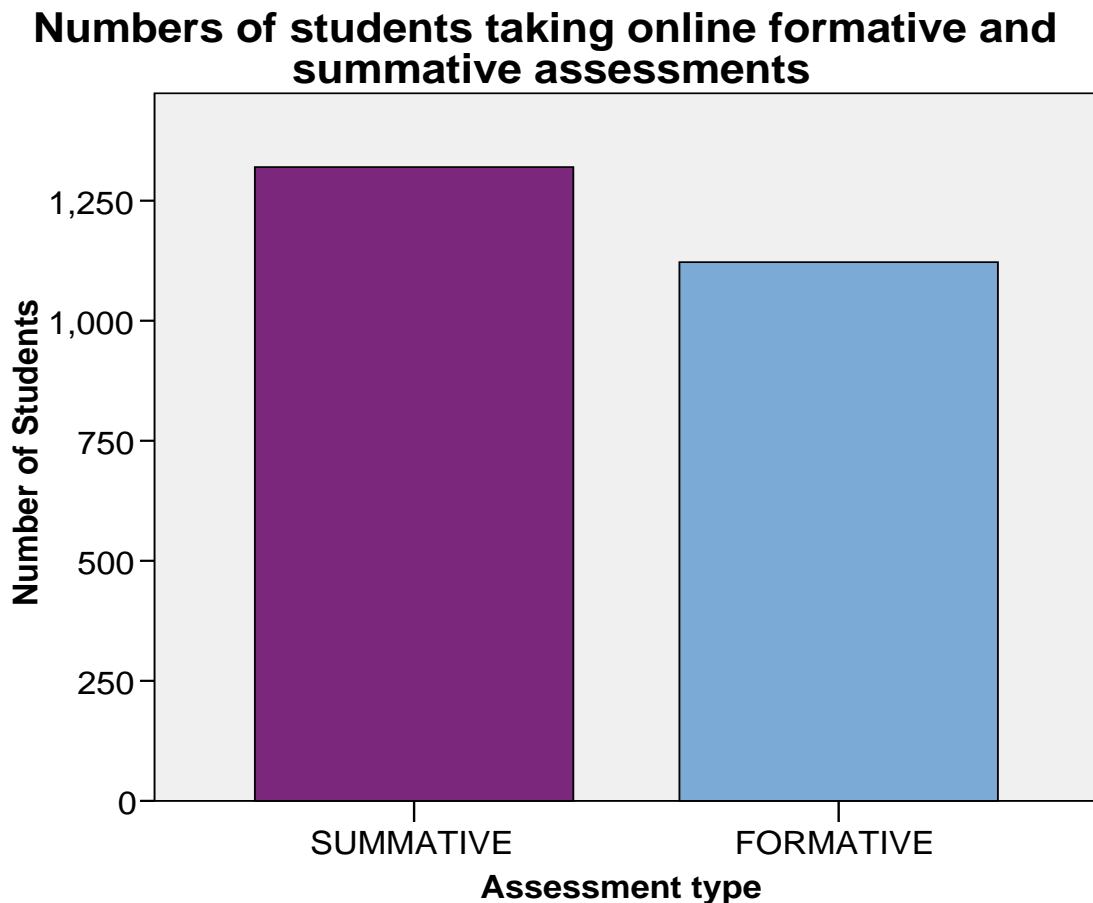


Figure 5: Bar chart showing numbers of students taking different online assessment types

Figure 6 shows the number of new staff users that have started using QMP during this year. This is as a result of training sessions, F2F support, in response to requests, and after pro-active efforts to contact departments. In total 56 new users started using Questionmark perception; there are new users from all 7 academic schools, as well as central services and learner support services. It is clear from fig. 6 that some schools are more represented than others, but it is perhaps not surprising that some more vocational and scientific subjects (eg health studies, management and life sciences) are better represented than education and the social sciences, where the potential of objective testing may be less obvious.

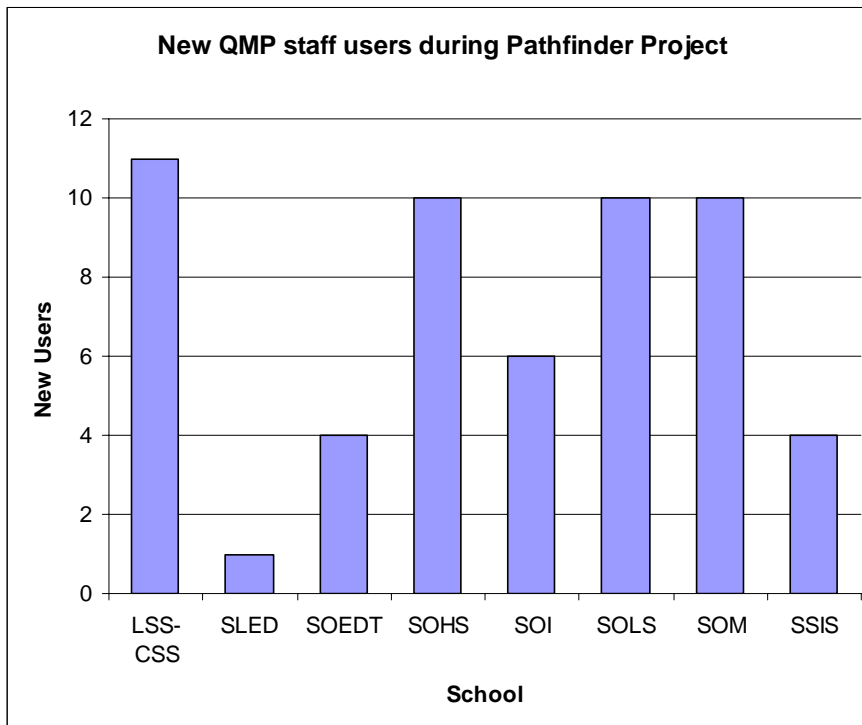


Figure 6: New QMP users during the project.

One useful by-product of the Pathfinder project has been a certain amount of interest in using QMP as an online questionnaire tool. This is not the only option for such online research, and it is not necessarily always the best option recommended to staff, but there has been an increase in use over the years (see fig. 7). Whilst the priority is and should always be using QMP for assessment rather than surveys, staff are still supported in using the software if they express an interest. The scalability of this remains to be established, however.

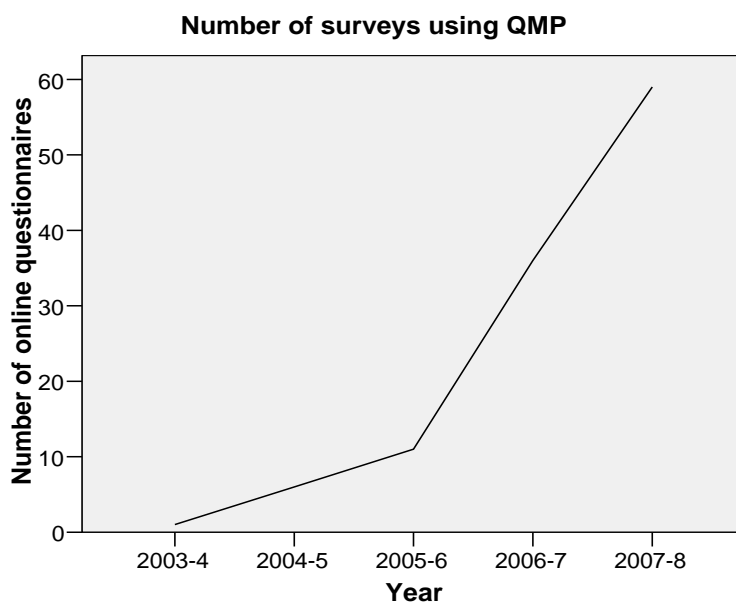


Figure 7: Use of QMP for surveys 2003-8