How do Studyclix.ie users differ from the average student?

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What is Studyclix.ie?

"Studyclix was founded in 2009 in Sligo by secondary school teacher, Luke Saunders, and award winning software engineer, Keith Wright. Together, they had the simple idea to create an online resource for secondary level students and teachers in Ireland that would make exams easier, a resource that was hard to find, and so Studyclix began!". Alongside being an organised resource for past state examinations it hosts it's own forum-like discussion pages for each subject. They are commonly used for students to share their notes, ask questions about course material and chat about anything and everything in between.

What was the inspiration behind this project?

I thought it would be interesting to compare the statistics of an average student (in the 2018 Leaving and Junior Certificate Examination) to that of the average user on Studyclix. Although grades can't be verified or compiled from Studyclix users there are other statistics that can. My main interest was to see if the most common subjects of a Studyclix user align with the most common subjects of a regular student.
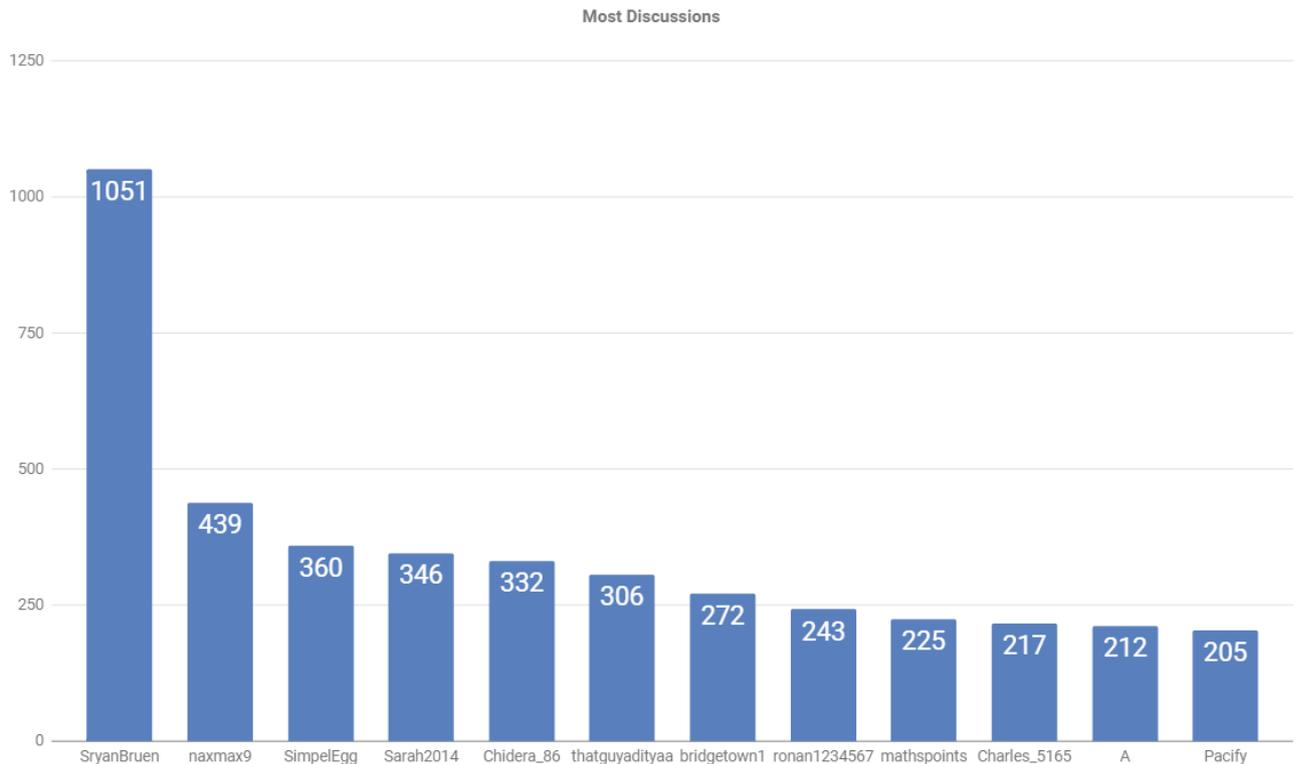
How was this data collected?

All of the statistics for the Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations can be found on the official SEC[1] website. The statistics for Studyclix users is all publicly available on their website, although it is not compiled in any fashion.

Hypothesis

From browsing Studyclix as a student I always felt like there were a disproportionate amount of students who took accounting and applied maths. As for under represented subjects I have no idea as there as so many it is hard to single out a few which aren't common. I'd also estimate that the most popular foreign language (french, spanish or german) is french. I realise that my interpretation might be skewed due to the fact that french is regarded as a tough language to learn and could therefore mean that more students doing the language use Studyclix to get help with it.
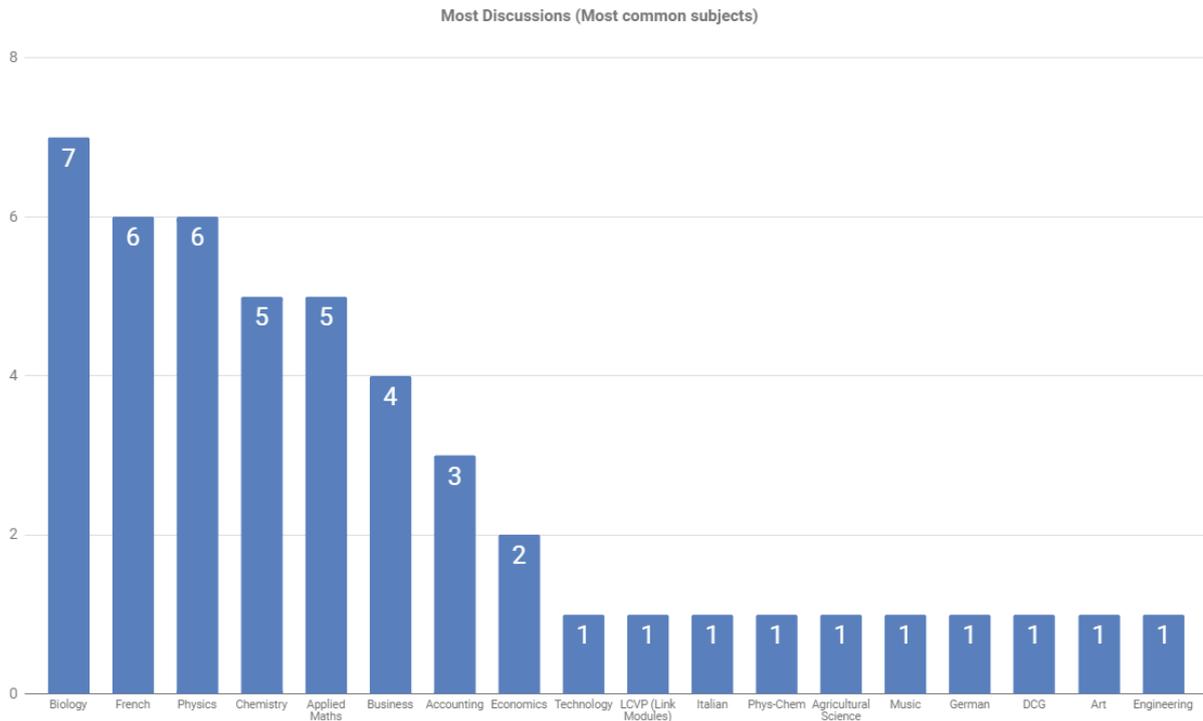
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[1]https://www.examinations.ie/

Most comments posted on discussion boards

Most Discussions

When I first saw this graph I immediately thought that something was wrong with my data but it is in fact correct. I can't know if these users signed up while they were still doing their Junior Cert's but I can say that they all are either in 5th or 6th year at the moment aside from user 'bridgetown1' who is the only teacher on this list.
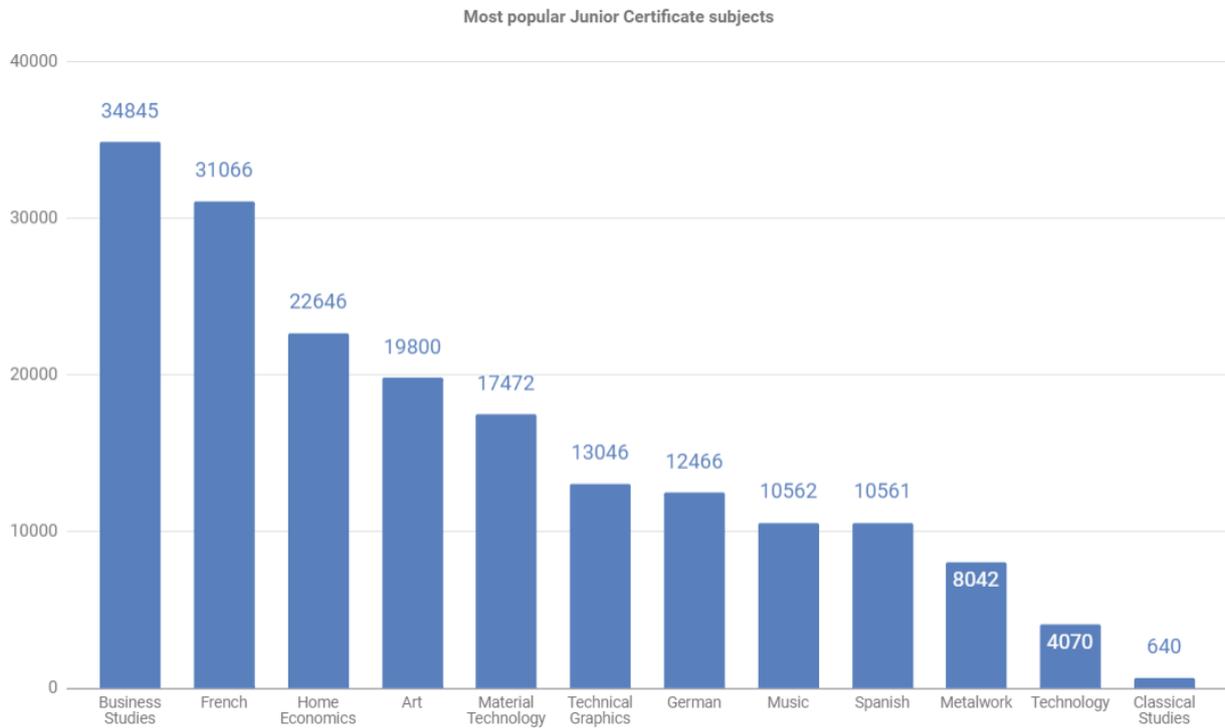
This makes logical sense as students in these years have a much more important and strenuous workload, I wouldn't expect a Junior Cert. student to spend half as much time on this site as a Leaving Cert. student would.

What subjects do these top posters have in common?

Most Discussions (Most common subjects)

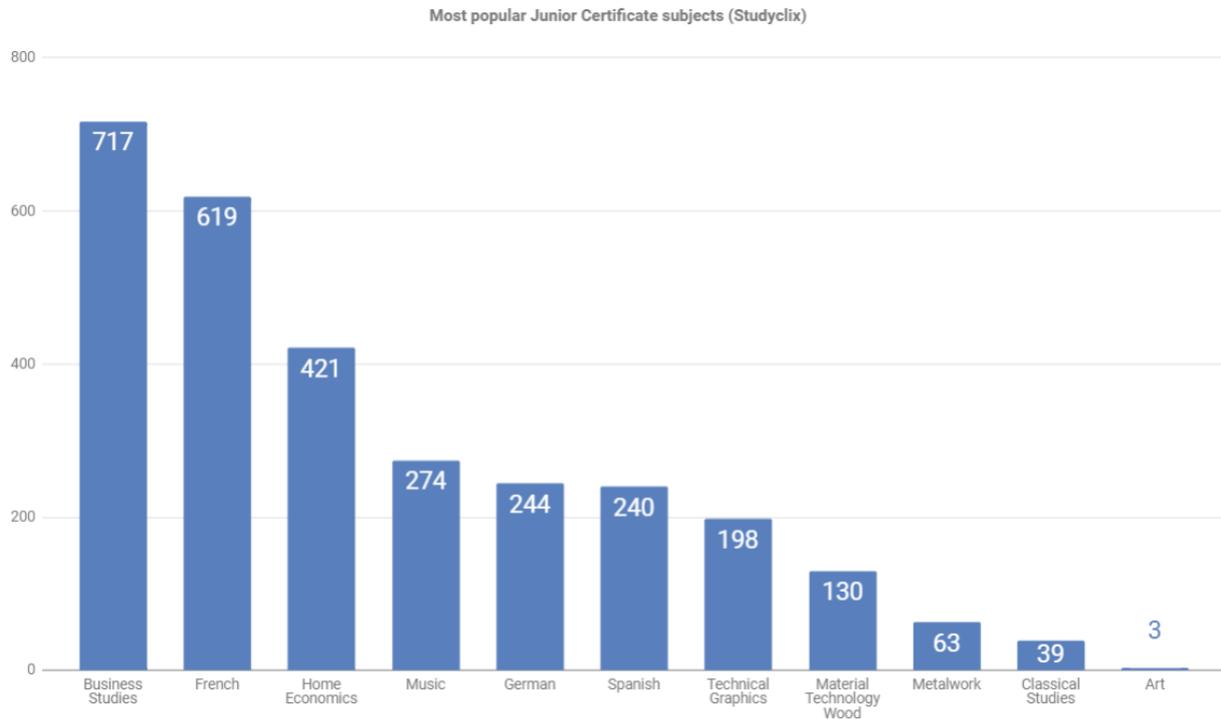| Subject	Count
Biology	7
French	6
Physics	6
Chemistry	5
Applied Maths	5
Business	4
Accounting	3
Economics	2
Technology	1
LCVP (Link Modules)	1
Italian	1
Phys-Chem	1
Agricultural Science	1
Music	1
German	1
DCG	1
Art	1
Engineering	1

Knowing the actual most common subjects of all Leaving Cert. students this graph is not much of a surprise. The 4 most common subjects overall are present in the subjects of the top posters and in more or less the same order. From this I can assume that the people who spend the most time on Studyclix don't differ too much from the average student in terms of subject choice although the same cannot be said for their level of dedication and possibly average result.

What subjects are most common for Junior Certificate students?

Most popular Junior Certificate subjects

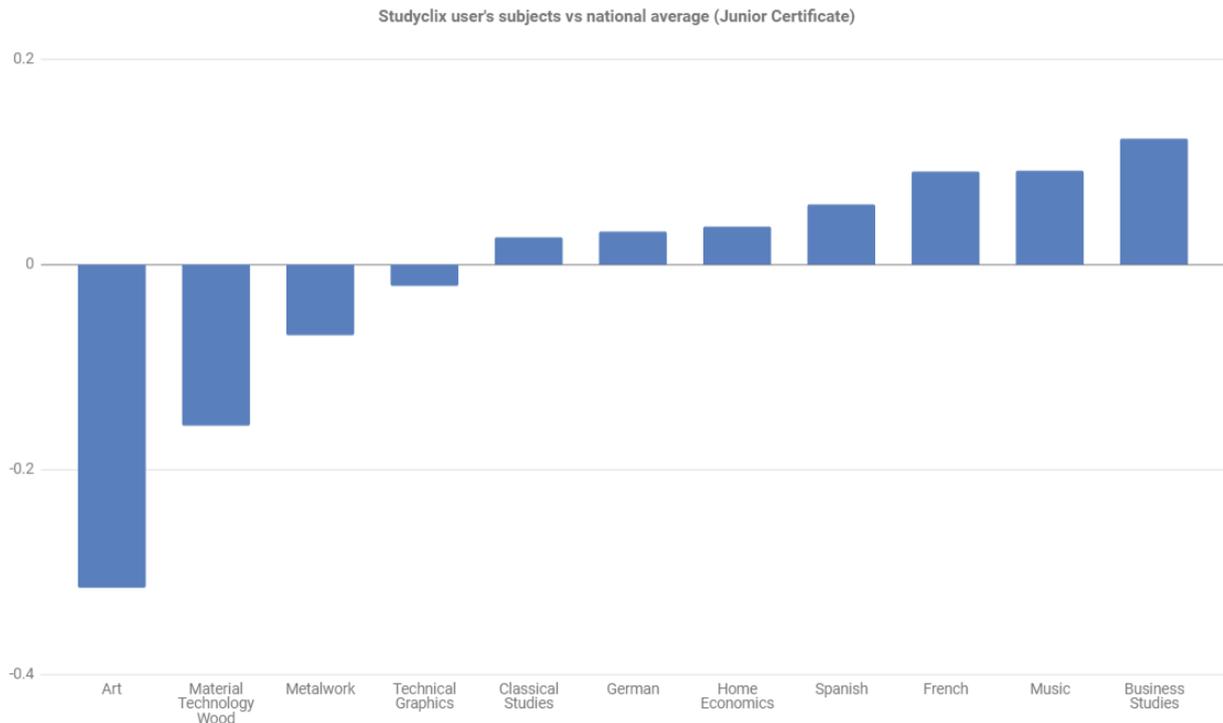| Subject	Value
Business Studies	34845
French	31066
Home Economics	22646
Art	19800
Material Technology	17472
Technical Graphics	13046
German	12466
Music	10562
Spanish	10561
Metalwork	8042
Technology	4070
Classical Studies	640

The most common Junior Cert. subjects is slightly misleading. Although it is not the case for all schools some students are required to take Business Studies and or Home Economics. French may also be the only foreign language available which doesn't reflect the actual choice of what subjects students willingly chose. I didn't include Religious Education because students can choose to opt out of classes if their parent's choose but in many schools it is seen as a compulsory subject.

How does this compare to Studyclix's user base?

Most popular Junior Certificate subjects (Studyclix)

Just like with Leaving Cert. students the top 3 are shared across both graphs. All of the subjects look to have more or less the same representation apart from Art which has a very large disparity in it's representation. I thought about why this might be and I have come to the conclusion that perhaps user's don't say that their doing the subject because there are not many resources that are available on the website for it. I don't think Studyclix could have much in terms of exam advice like it can for other subjects given the abstract nature of the subject.
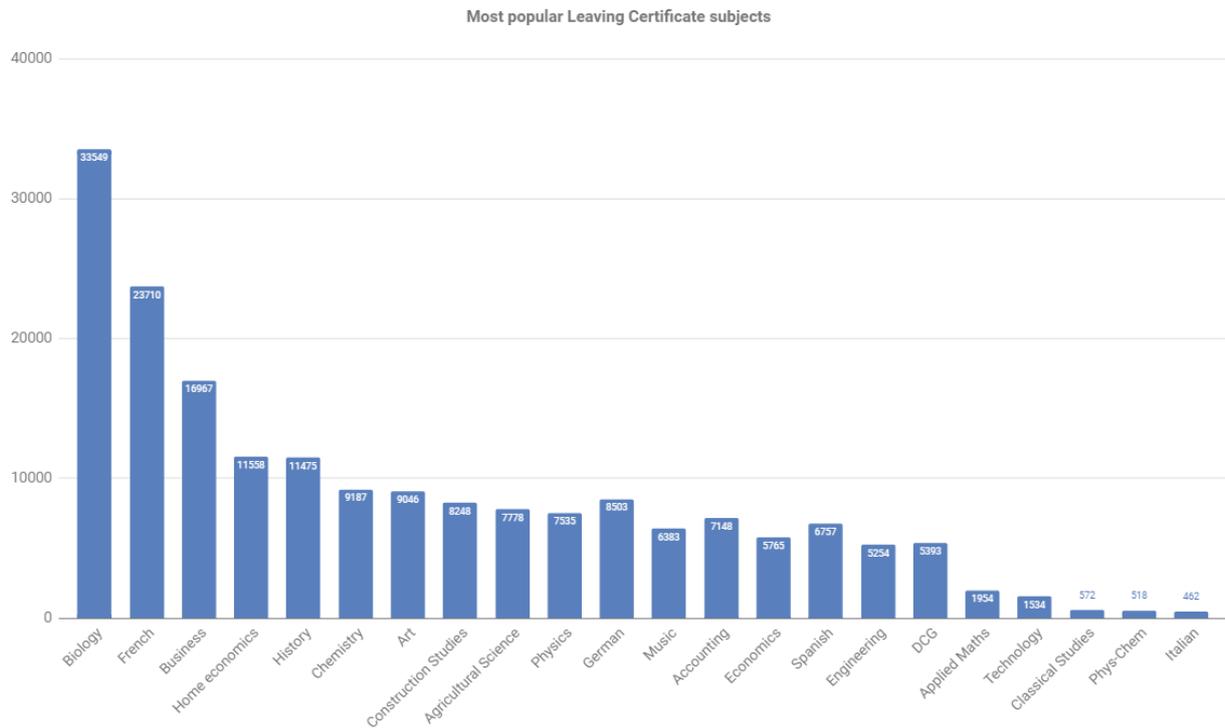
Are all Junior Certificate subjects represented evenly in the user base?

Studyclix user's subjects vs national average (Junior Certificate)

Key: -0.2 means the difference in the percentage of students who are doing art, e.g 0.40% LC students do art but only 0.20% of Studyclix users do. Higher number means over represented on Studyclix
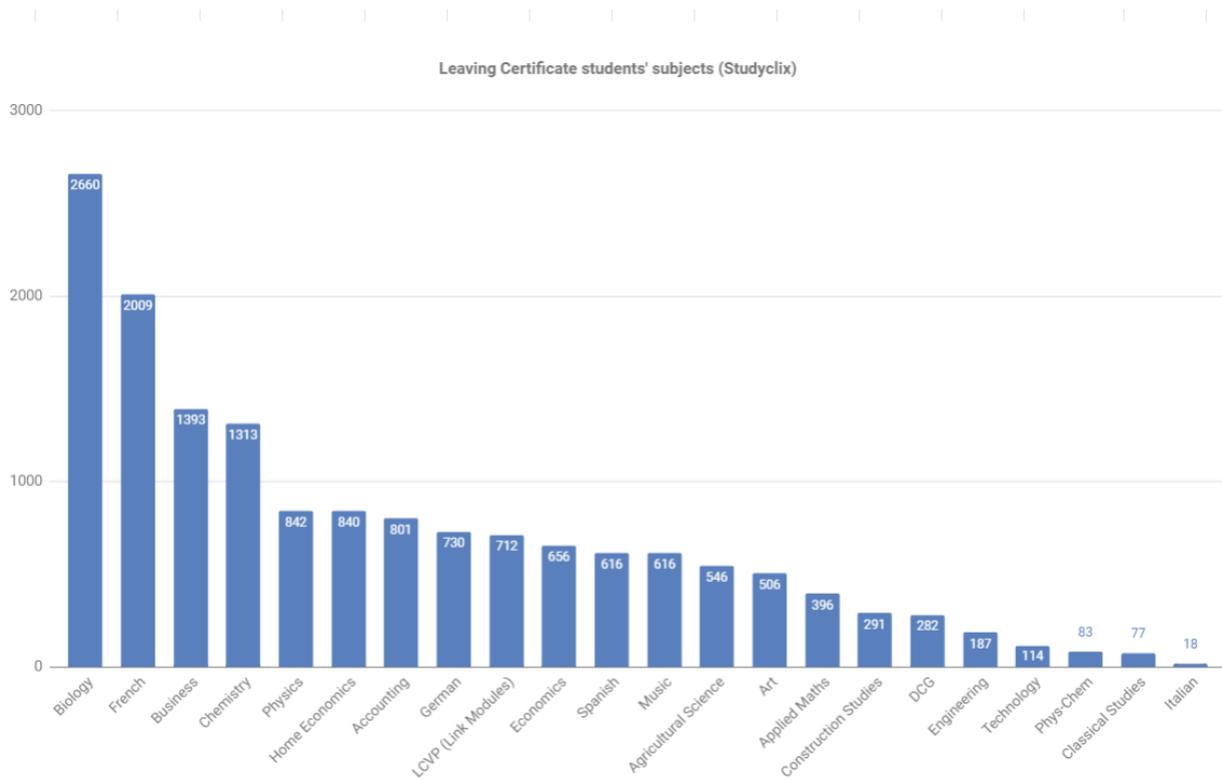
I expected Art to be hugely under-represented from the outset so this outlier doesn't surprise me. As for the rest I would also hypothesise that the distinct lack of students doing Material Technology Wood and Metalwork is roughly that same as for why Art is under-represented. A large portion of MTW is practical work that isn't done in a book and I would guess that the same can be said for Metalwork, hence the lack of students doing the subject on Studyclix. Business Studies is quite popular on Studyclix and I can only guess because of how large the course material is which would lead to more students being drawn to the website to get extra help.

What subjects are most common in the Leaving Certificate?
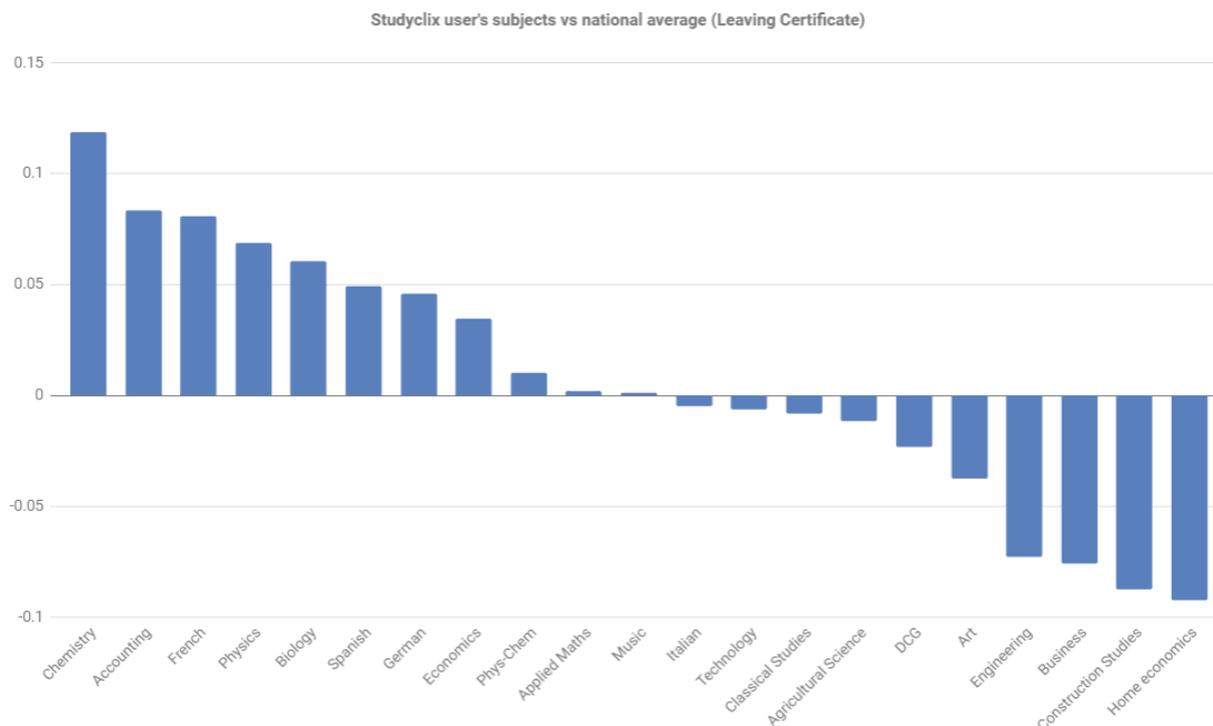
Most popular Leaving Certificate subjects

Biology is by far the most popular choice subject for the Leaving Cert. This is most likely due to the requirement set by most colleges for students to have at least 1 'science' subject (e.g Chemistry, Physics, Applied Maths, Biology or Agricultural Science). From the most popular Junior Cert subjects anyone would already be able to guess that French would be the most popular language because once a student chooses a language in 1st year they are almost definitely going to stick with that language through to their Leaving Cert. Again the popularity of Business and Home Economics carries through to Leaving Cert.

How does this compare to Studyclix's user base?

Leaving Certificate students' subjects (Studyclix)

Just like with the Junior Cert vs Studyclix student these two graphs are very similar overall. The first difference I spotted was the lack of students doing Chemistry and accounting. My hypothesis of 'harder subjects means more representation on Studyclix' falls short at this instance.

Are all Leaving Certificate subjects represented evenly in the user base?

Studyclix user's subjects vs national average (Leaving Certificate)

The difference in representation isn't as drastic as it was for the Junior Cert. Studyclix users but I would chalk this up to a smaller bank of users to take information from leading to less accurate data. There is clearly a large amount of student's taking Chemistry that are on Studyclix compared to any other subject. Falling short comes accounting and French which are known for not being the simplest of subjects. On the other side of the scale is Home Economics which was quite neutral in it's Junior Cert. representation but in the Leaving Cert. it is quite uncommon on Studyclix. Construction Studies is second most under-represented like MTW in the Junior Cert. which again is not surprising given the practical nature of the subject.

Conclusion

In conclusion I believe that the user base on Studyclix represents the whole group of students quite well which is what I originally suspected. I was wrong about applied maths being over represented on Studyclix and I would say that I am slightly biased since I did the subject and maybe thought less students did it overall than what was the case. The results for Junior Certificate students is slightly less reliable due to the distinct lack of students on the website currently. I don't believe that this is going to change anytime soon due as the Junior Certificate isn't really of any major importance.