Purpose – The purpose of this study was to examine general technology use of Western Illinois University students and all other participants at the Donald S. Spencer Student Recreation Center while participating in physical fitness activities. General technology includes the following: cell phones, music players, fitness bands, and other fitness monitors.

Background – As fitness related apps become more prevalent and accessible such as cell phones, music players, fitness bands, etc., they provide the general public more motivation to engage in physical activity. As shown in studies, music can have positive physiological and mental effects on the individual. Fitness apps can also help increase confidence, due to the fact that an individual is able to obtain instant feedback (i.e. results, calories burned, distance walked) about their data collected from their workouts from day to day. The researchers for this study decided to observe how these effects of technology play a role on a physical activity on the general population of the Donald Spencer Recreation Center.

Introduction – The common misconception of technology is that it leads individuals to live a sedentary lifestyle, when instead technology can be utilized to live a more active lifestyle. Companies like Nike, Apple, and Samsung who have made a wide variety of apps and devices such as MP3 players, fitness bands, step counters and GPS modules that are aimed to make exercise easier, enjoyable, and promote an active lifestyle.

Procedures – During the Spring 2015 semester, each student researcher completed the NIH training course. The following weeks students conducted background research. The research project received IRB approval. The student researchers collected public observational data. Following data collection the student researchers are currently analyzing the data and preparing for the poster presentation.

Data collection was public observation of students at the Donald S. Spencer Recreation Center. The goal was to observe 300 students and faculty. Each student researcher observed people at different times of the day. Researchers had a data collection sheet to record gender; if the person is using technology aid; and what type of technology aid they are using and what physical activity they were engaged in. Investigators observed from a distance of 10-20 feet for less than 15 seconds for each person. Investigators were not in the person’s personal space.

Results - At present the data collection is not completed. However the data collection will be completed, analyzed and reported on the poster for undergraduate research day.

Practical application - Knowledge of what types of technology use with various physical activities could possibly help the Campus Recreation with providing charging stations along with technology checkout. Also Campus Recreation could benefit by providing specific technology aids for specific physical activities to increase participation.