



Findings from the Noel-Levitz E-Expectations Research

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Noel-Levitz®

E-Expectations 2010

Focusing Your E-Recruitment Efforts to Meet the Expectations of College-Bound Students

With every passing school year, the online demands of prospective college students seem to grow and evolve. In the past decade, e-recruitment has gone from relatively simple Web sites and e-mails to complex, multifaceted electronic campaigns with video, interactive Web features, and now social networking. It is a challenge for even the most e-savvy campus to stay ahead of the technological curve.

Because there is such a wide array of electronic methods for communicating with students, it's more important than ever for colleges and universities to understand what prospective students expect, so that campuses can focus on areas that will produce the greatest enrollment results.

Early in 2010, the E-Expectations research group surveyed more than 1,000 college-bound high school students, polling them on their online behaviors and expectations, as well as other key enrollment-related topics.

Highlights of the study include:

- 1 in 4 students reported removing a school from their prospective list because of a bad experience on that school's Web site.
- 92 percent said that they would be disappointed with a school or remove it entirely from their lists if they didn't find the information they needed on the school's Web site.
- 76 percent of students said they use Facebook, while 33 percent reported using MySpace.
- 76 percent of students supported schools creating their own private social networks for prospective students.
- 52 percent of students said they have viewed videos about colleges, while only 10 percent reported watching them on YouTube.
- 46 percent claimed that the current economic crisis had caused them to reconsider the schools they would apply to or attend—an increase from 34 percent just last year.
- 23 percent of respondents reported searching college sites from their smart phones.

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www.nrccua.org

Higher Ed Benchmarks

Noel-Levitz Report on Undergraduate Enrollment Trends

2010 E-Recruiting Practices and Trends at Four-Year and Two-Year Institutions

Is your Web site ready for today's "secret shoppers"?

This report documents the upward trend in "secret shopping" among today's prospective student Web users, along with the latest changes in electronic communications technologies used by college and university admissions offices. The report is based on a survey of college and university enrollment and admissions officers across the U.S. in March 2010. For context, trend data from similar polls conducted in 2008 and 2006 are also included in this study, along with findings from a 2010 report on prospective students' perceptions and behaviors.

Among the highlights:

- "Secret shoppers" are becoming more prevalent in higher education, as now fully one-third of students applying to public institutions are waiting until they apply to make themselves known to the institution. In addition, one-quarter of applicants to private institutions are doing so.
- Many colleges and universities are offering links to social media resources like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, but prospective students believe even more institutions should be getting on board with social media.
- Colleges and universities are now using the Web, cell phones, and e-mail more regularly to communicate with students and parents.
- Text messaging has become more popular at private institutions but less popular at public institutions.
- Budgets for maintaining admissions-specific Web content are increasing at private institutions, while budgets at public institutions are generally being kept in check.



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Survey administered by phone in Feb-Mar '10

1,069 completed surveys

95% confidence interval +/- 3% margin of error

1

Participants

2

Online Habits

3

Web Content

4

Rules of Engagement

1

Participants



Demographics

Gender:

- Male 48.7%
- Female 51.3%

Ethnicity:

- American Indian: 1.3%
- Asian: 6.4%
- African-American: 10.5%
- Hispanic 9.3%
- Middle Eastern: 0.4%
- White: 52.4%
- Other/Multi-Racial: 10.9%
- Refused: 8.8%

Stage:

- Prospect 6%
- Inquiry 11%
- Applied 22%
- Accepted 40%
- Deposited 5%
- Enrolled 15%

Region:

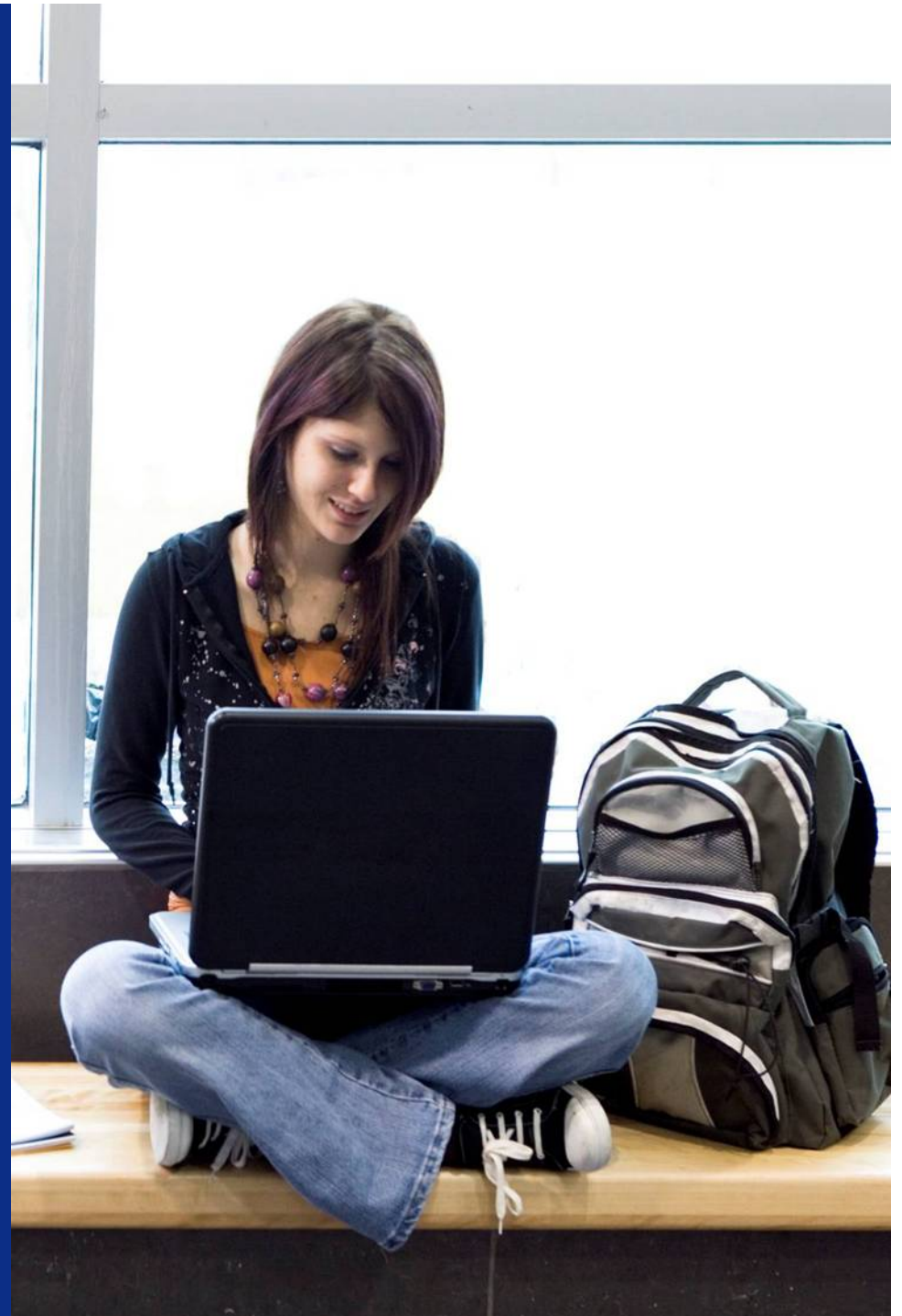
- Midwest 23.4%
- Northeast 25.3%
- South 27.5%
- West 23.3%

Grades:

A	50.1%
B	41.5%
C	7.6%
<C	0.8%

College choice:

State, 4-year	89.8%
Private, 4-year	36.9%
Community	13.5%
Vocational	6.4%
Online	4.5%

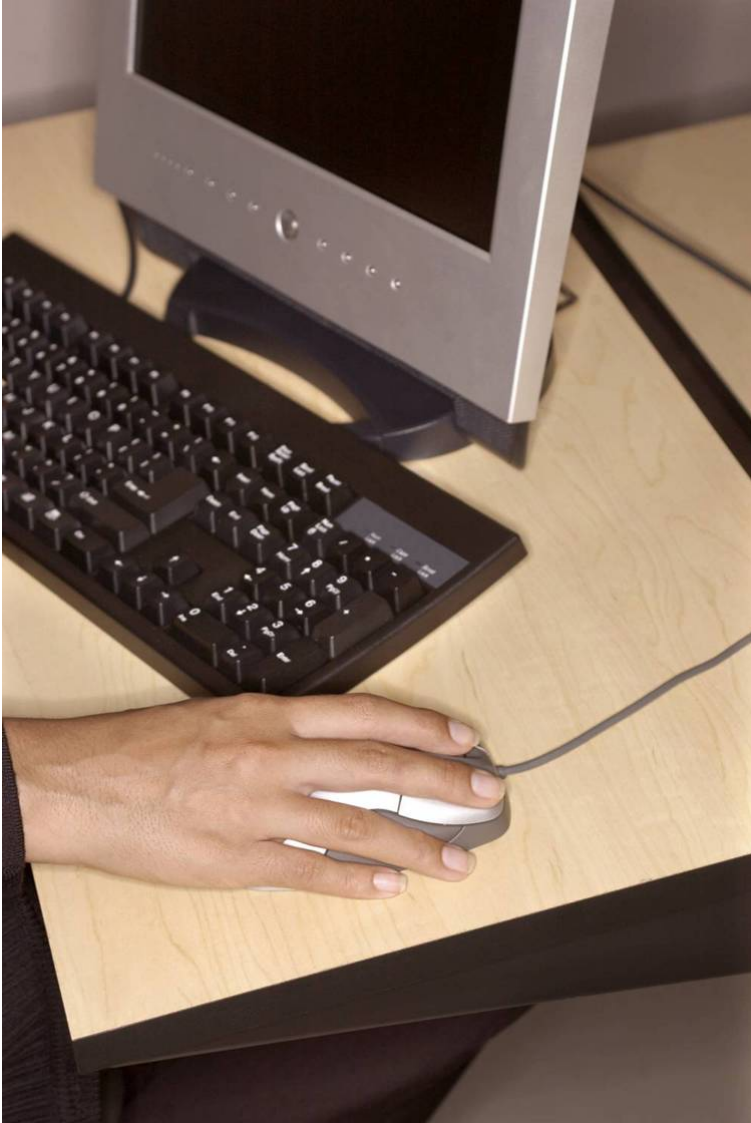


2

Online Habits



How often do you visit college and university Web sites?



Every day	8%
A few times a week	48%
A few times a month	38%
A few times a year	6%

Where do they view college Web sites? Are you preparing your site for smart phones?

At home	93%
At high school	66%
At a place with WiFi	25%
At a public library	25%
On a smart phone	23%



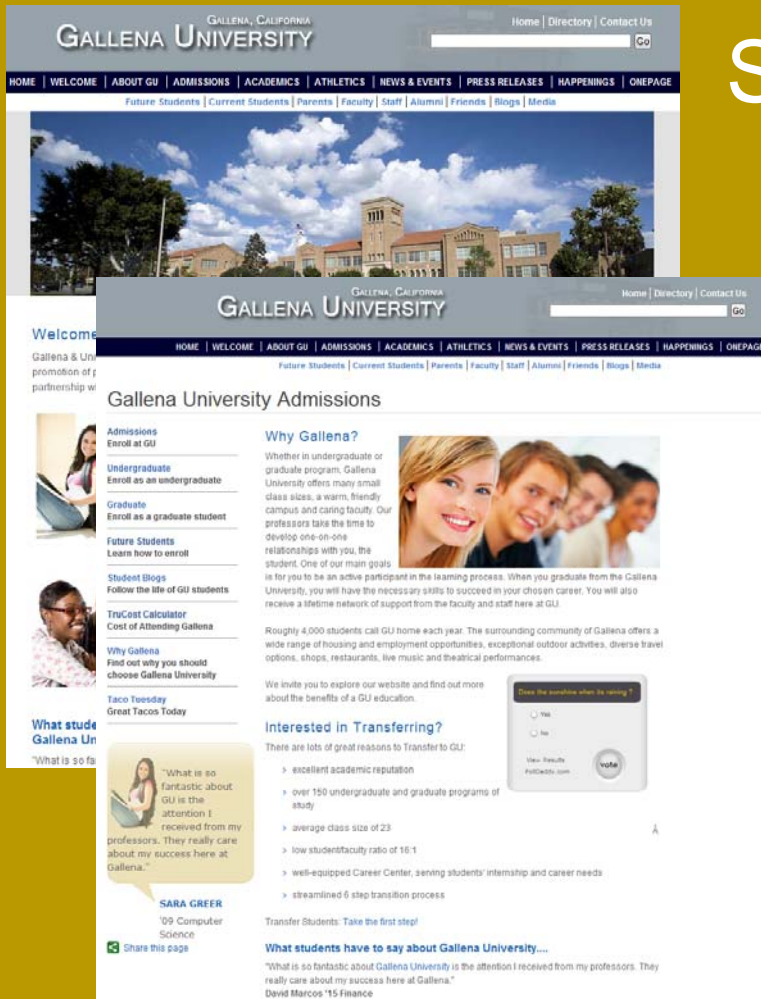
Where do they “land” on the Web site?

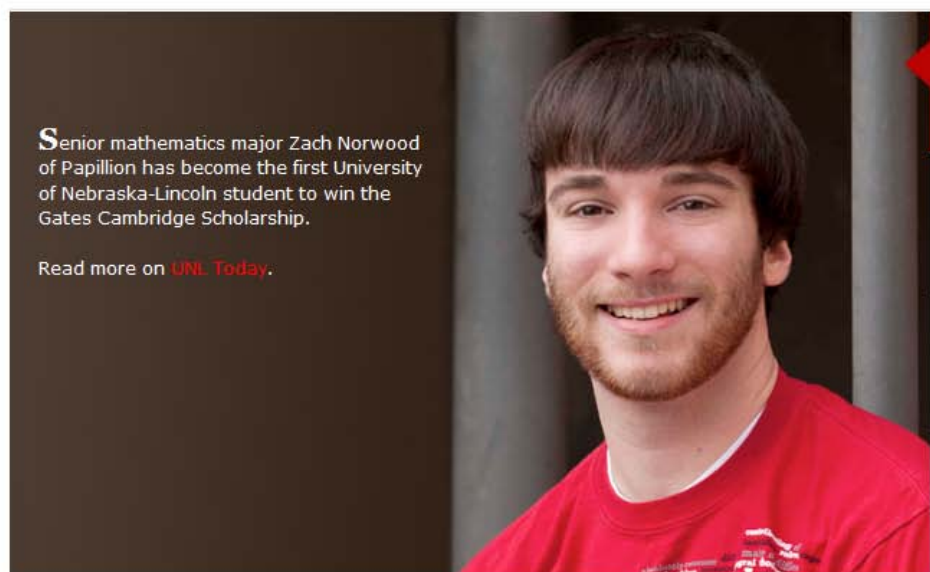
Students find themselves on...

Home page 65%

Specific page 27%

Random page 8%





Senior mathematics major Zach Norwood of Papillion has become the first University of Nebraska-Lincoln student to win the Gates Cambridge Scholarship.

Read more on [UNL Today](#).

UNL Today
Your source for what's happening on campus. [Go to UNL Today](#).

Nebraska Innovation Campus
Explore the site for a more detailed overview and vision of Nebraska Innovation Campus.

N The Know
Patrice McMahon, an associate professor of political science, shares her views on the ongoing situation in Egypt. [Watch more N The Know](#).

Dairy Store Products Online
Build your own cheese gift box and get exclusive Dairy Store apparel online at the [UNL Marketplace](#).

Audience-centric navigation →

Upcoming Events

See all UNL events

FEB 15 9:00AM	Nebraska No-Till Conference Agricultural Research & Development Center, near Mead
FEB 15 9:00AM	Center Pivot Water Conservation Project Meeting Adams County Fairgrounds

Latest News

See all UNL news

UNL Extension Offers Crop Scout Training in March
Release date: Feb 14

Register Now for West Central Cropping System and Beef Production Practicum
Release date: Feb 14

Collaboration leads to discovery,




UNL Marketplace

Give a gift of cheese.

2011 Big Red Road

Find more of UNL on:



Affiliates

- Alumni
- Husker Athletics

How do they learn about schools?

- 89% information received in the mail
- 80% parents, family, friends
- 79% e-mail messages
- 77% high school teachers or counselor
- 75% finding the school's Web site
- 65% online search (Google, Yahoo, etc.)
- 62% offline resource library/counselor's office
- 61% college fair
- 45% online college planning site
- 41% Web site advertisements for schools
- 35% School-specific radio or TV advertisements
- 34% Sporting events/athletic programs
- 32% planning site sponsored by my high school
- 31% camp, program or competition at a school
- 21% billboards



- 44% Use Google or other search engines to find school names they've heard of from parents or friends
- 30% Use a site that matches them with schools that fit their profile
- 20% Enter words or phrases in a search engine that describe the programs they are interested in
- 3% Guess at the URL until they get it
- 3% Use NCAA or other similar sites
- 1% research on social media sites

What social media resources do they use?

- 76% Facebook
- 59% YouTube
- 33% MySpace
- 9% NONE
- 8% Twitter
- 2% Gaia Online™
- 1% High Five



33% have searched for schools on these sites

74% think schools should have a presence on social media sites

- 80% are looking for both official and unofficial content
- 67% say it is ok for an admissions counselor they've been working with to connect with them through social media

76% say schools should create their own private social networks

3

Web Content



What's the Impact?

24%

will REALLY take your school off their list because of a bad Web experience

51% said it was because they couldn't find what they wanted



What's the Impact?

65%

will become more interested because of a positive experience on your site



31% said it was because they found what they wanted

21% said it was because the site worked well

14% said it was because the content was helpful

Content Matters!

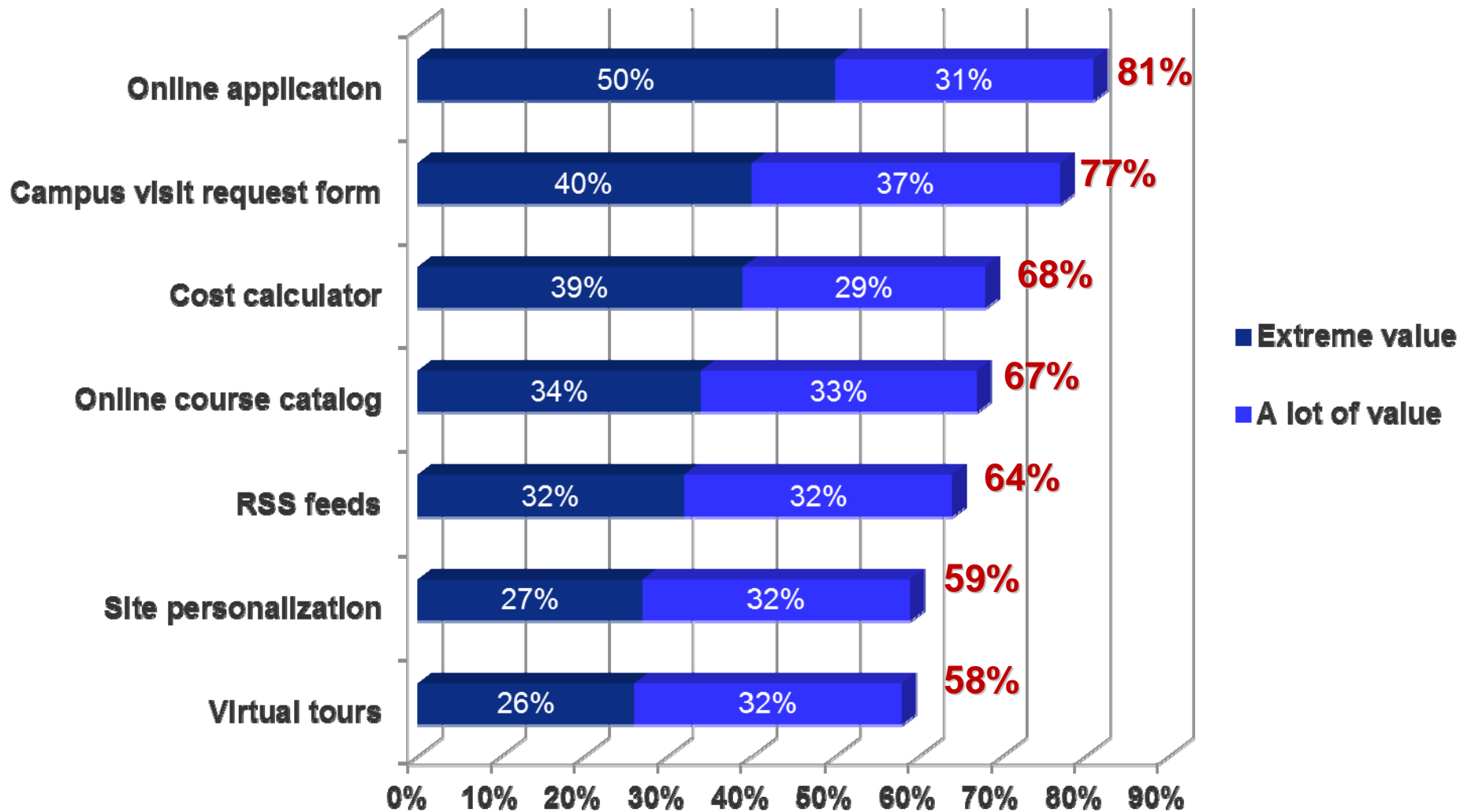
92%

- 16% If I don't find what I need on the Web site, I'll probably **drop** it from my list.
- 76% I'll be **disappointed** if a Web site isn't helpful to me, but I will find other ways to get information.
- 8% The Web site isn't really an important information resource.

When it comes to content, it's all about academics, cost, and admissions requirements

Top 10 Items	%
A list of academic programs or degrees	28%
Cost/tuition/fees	21%
Academic program details	19%
Admissions requirements	9%
Financial aid	5%
Scholarships	4%
Student life	2%
Career options	1%
Student activities	1%
Ways to connect with admissions	1%

Interactive Web Features



For the most part, campuses are keeping-up with the functionality needs of students when it comes to basic business items online

*Can your prospective students or families submit or view any of the following over the Web?
Please check all that apply.*

	2-Year Public			4-Year Public			4-Year Private		
	2010	2008	2006	2010	2008	2006	2010	2008	2006
Inquiry forms	70.0%	75.9%	64.4%	87.5%	94.1%	90.9%	91.3%	92.9%	90.0%
Application forms	96.7%	91.4%	88.9%	98.6%	86.8%	100.0%	96.6%	78.8%	95.4%
Electronic catalog	90.0%	93.1%	91.1%	94.4%	79.4%	100.0%	94.7%	71.2%	91.5%
Financial aid forms	80.0%	84.5%	57.8%	86.1%	72.1%	85.5%	81.2%	56.5%	73.1%
Campus visit request form	53.3%	43.1%	53.3%	88.9%	75.0%	83.6%	87.0%	55.3%	77.7%
Housing application	33.3%	27.6%	22.2%	77.8%	64.7%	61.8%	72.9%	42.9%	50.8%
Course registration forms	63.3%	39.7%	53.3%	76.4%	50.0%	60.0%	40.6%	24.1%	34.6%
Confirmation of acceptance	23.3%	5.2%	NA	63.9%	33.8%	NA	28.5%	9.4%	NA
Deposit forms	13.3%	3.4%	NA	50.0%	16.2%	NA	52.7%	14.1%	NA
Parent contact forms	13.3%	3.4%	NA	9.7%	10.3%	NA	18.8%	7.1%	NA

The story is mixed with respect to other functions

Does your campus use any of the following e-recruiting tools? Please check all that apply.

	2-Year Public			4-Year Public			4-Year Private		
	2010	2008	2006	2010	2008	2006	2010	2008	2006
Virtual tours	3.3%	19.0%	28.9%	26.4%	38.2%	47.7%	16.9%	40.6%	50.9%
Blogging space	0.0%	8.6%	4.4%	22.2%	32.4%	22.3%	21.3%	41.8%	20.0%
Instant messaging	3.3%	6.9%	4.4%	20.8%	33.8%	27.7%	15.0%	39.4%	25.5%
Personal portal for applicants	10.0%	10.3%	17.8%	52.8%	33.8%	17.7%	34.8%	30.6%	38.2%
Social media resources like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn	6.7%	10.3%	NA	38.9%	27.9%	NA	26.1%	32.4%	NA
Chat rooms	6.7%	1.7%	17.8%	40.3%	27.9%	29.2%	27.1%	28.8%	36.4%
Flash/media player pages	3.3%	8.6%	6.7%	33.3%	36.8%	21.5%	18.8%	21.8%	27.3%
Virtual financial aid estimator	0.0%	13.8%	4.4%	9.7%	14.7%	11.5%	7.7%	21.2%	29.1%
Tuition calculator	3.3%	12.1%	NA	23.6%	22.1%	NA	7.7%	14.7%	NA
Podcasting	0.0%	5.2%	4.4%	11.1%	14.7%	4.6%	6.3%	12.9%	7.3%
Message boards	3.3%	3.4%	NA	13.9%	14.7%	NA	10.1%	7.6%	NA
RSS/XML syndicated feeds for sharing information	3.3%	1.7%	0.0%	12.5%	8.8%	4.6%	7.2%	11.2%	7.3%
Content management system (CMS) to update or edit Web site content	3.3%	NA	NA	22.2%	NA	NA	15.9%	NA	NA
Web site analytics resources such as Google Analytics	3.3%	NA	NA	22.2%	NA	NA	17.4%	NA	NA
Search engine optimization process to improve organic search results	0.0%	NA	NA	13.9%	NA	NA	13.0%	NA	NA
Pay-per-click ads or promotions to improve search engine results	0.0%	NA	NA	4.2%	NA	NA	6.3%	NA	NA



The rest of the list...

Item	“Extreme Value” & “A Lot”
Portal site for admitted students	53%
Way to have information sent by email	51%
Brochures as PDFs on website	47%
Way to have information sent in the mail	46%
Videos	42%
Faculty profiles	40%
Live chat with someone from admissions	43%
Photo galleries	44%
Online chat with people from campus	34%
Info about/connection to private social networks	31%
Athletic recruitment interest form	38%
Connection to Facebook or other social network	33%
Student/faculty blogs	26%
Way to have information sent by text message	22%
Way to have information sent by instant message	13%

More About Cost Calculators

The screenshot shows the Noel-Levitz University cost calculator interface. At the top, it says "NOEL-LEVITZ UNIVERSITY" with a globe icon. Below that, it asks the user to "Answer the questions below to help determine your overall cost of attending Noel-Levitz University". There are three tabs: "SCHOLARSHIP", "FINANCIAL AID", and "NET PRICE", with "SCHOLARSHIP" currently selected. The "Scholarship Eligibility" section contains two questions: "1 What is your high school GPA? (4-point scale)" with a text input field, and "2 Is one of your parents alumni of Noel-Levitz University?" with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No". A "VIEW RESULTS" button is located at the bottom of the form.

Have you ever used a calculator that you found on a school's site that helped you estimate your cost to attend?

Yes	34%
No	66%

How did that experience affect your interest in attending that school?

Increased	31%
Same	64%
Decreased	5%

Scholarship information

Have students answer quick and straightforward questions related to their scholarship eligibility.

The screenshot shows a web interface for Noel-Levitz University. At the top, the university's logo and name are displayed. Below this, a heading asks the user to answer questions to determine their overall cost of attending. A navigation bar contains three tabs: 'SCHOLARSHIP', 'FINANCIAL AID', and 'NET PRICE', with 'SCHOLARSHIP' being the active tab. The main content area is titled 'Scholarship Eligibility' and contains two questions. Question 1 asks for the high school GPA on a 4-point scale, with a text input field. Question 2 asks if a parent is an alumni, with radio button options for 'Yes' and 'No'. A 'VIEW RESULTS' button is located at the bottom of the form.

NOEL-LEVITZ UNIVERSITY

Answer the questions below to help determine your overall cost of attending Noel-Levitz University

SCHOLARSHIP FINANCIAL AID NET PRICE

Scholarship Eligibility


1 What is your high school GPA? (4-point scale) ?

2 Is one of your parents alumni of Noel-Levitz University? ? Yes No

VIEW RESULTS

The @TrueCost Calculator is a product of Noel-Levitz, Inc. Noel-Levitz University has explicit permission to use this tool for their financial aid calculation requirements.

Scholarship results


NOEL-LEVITZ UNIVERSITY

Answer the questions below to help determine your overall cost of attending Noel-Levitz University

SCHOLARSHIP **FINANCIAL AID** **NET PRICE**

Scholarship Results

Congratulations!
Based on the information you have entered, you qualify for the:

Randi Levitz Scholarship	\$1,000 - \$2,000
Lee Noel Scholarship	\$4,000 - \$7,000
Alumni Legacy Grant	\$500 - \$1,500

Please keep in mind that the scholarships listed above are estimates of what you may qualify given your academic information. Please continue to calculate your other financial aid needs. You may qualify for substantially greater aid.

[Recalculate scholarship information.](#)

Please keep in mind that all the scholarship information provided above are estimates. Noel-Levitz University will be able to further clarify your qualifications for these scholarships once you have submitted a formal application for enrollment.

• BACK CALCULATE FINANCIAL AID •

Before students see the net cost, show them the kinds of aid they will receive specific to your institution.

Financial aid information

After seeing scholarship information, have students answer questions to determine their financial aid eligibility.

The screenshot shows the Noel-Levitz University Financial Aid calculator interface. At the top, the university logo and name are displayed. Below the logo, the text reads: "Answer the questions below to help determine your overall cost of attending Noel-Levitz University". A navigation bar contains three tabs: "SCHOLARSHIP", "FINANCIAL AID" (which is selected), and "NET PRICE". The main content area is titled "Financial Aid" and contains the instruction: "We need to begin with four simple questions about the student." There are four numbered questions:

- 1 How old are you? (AGE IN YEARS) [18]
- 2 Are you married? (Yes/No) [No]
- 3 Do you have children? (Yes/No) [No]
- 4 Are you a U.S. veteran or active duty military? (Yes/No) [No]

At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "BACK" and "CONTINUE".

The iTrueCost Calculator is a product of Noel-Levitz, Inc. Noel-Levitz University has explicit permission to use this tool for their financial aid calculation requirements.

Net price

Your results page should display a breakdown of costs, lists scholarships they are eligible for, their estimated gift aid, estimated aid from other sources, and their estimated out-of-pocket expense.


NOEL-LEVITZ UNIVERSITY

SCHOLARSHIP **FINANCIAL AID** **NET PRICE**

Estimated Cost of Attendance	
Tuition & Fees	\$17,400
Room & Board	\$7,440
Books & Supplies	\$1,300
Other (personal, transportation...)	\$2,100
Total Estimated Cost	\$28,240

Estimated Scholarship	
Randi Levitz Scholarship	\$1,000 - \$2,000
Lee Noel Scholarship	\$4,000 - \$7,000
Alumni Legacy Grant	\$500 - \$1,500
Total Estimated Scholarship	\$5,500 - \$10,500

Estimated Scholarship & Gift Aid
Total Estimated Gift Aid **\$16,800**

Estimated Net Price: **\$11,440**

Estimated Other Aid	
Total Estimated Loans &/or Work Study	\$7,000

Estimated Net Price after Loans &/or Work Study: **\$4,440**

• BACK **• START OVER**

If you would like your results E-mailed to you, please fill out all the information to the right. Optimally, we would like to be able to contact you to assist you with your interest in Noel-Levitz University. Please indicate your desire for us to contact you by clicking the **Contact Me** option before having your results sent.

First Name

Last Name

Email

Please contact me about my financial options.

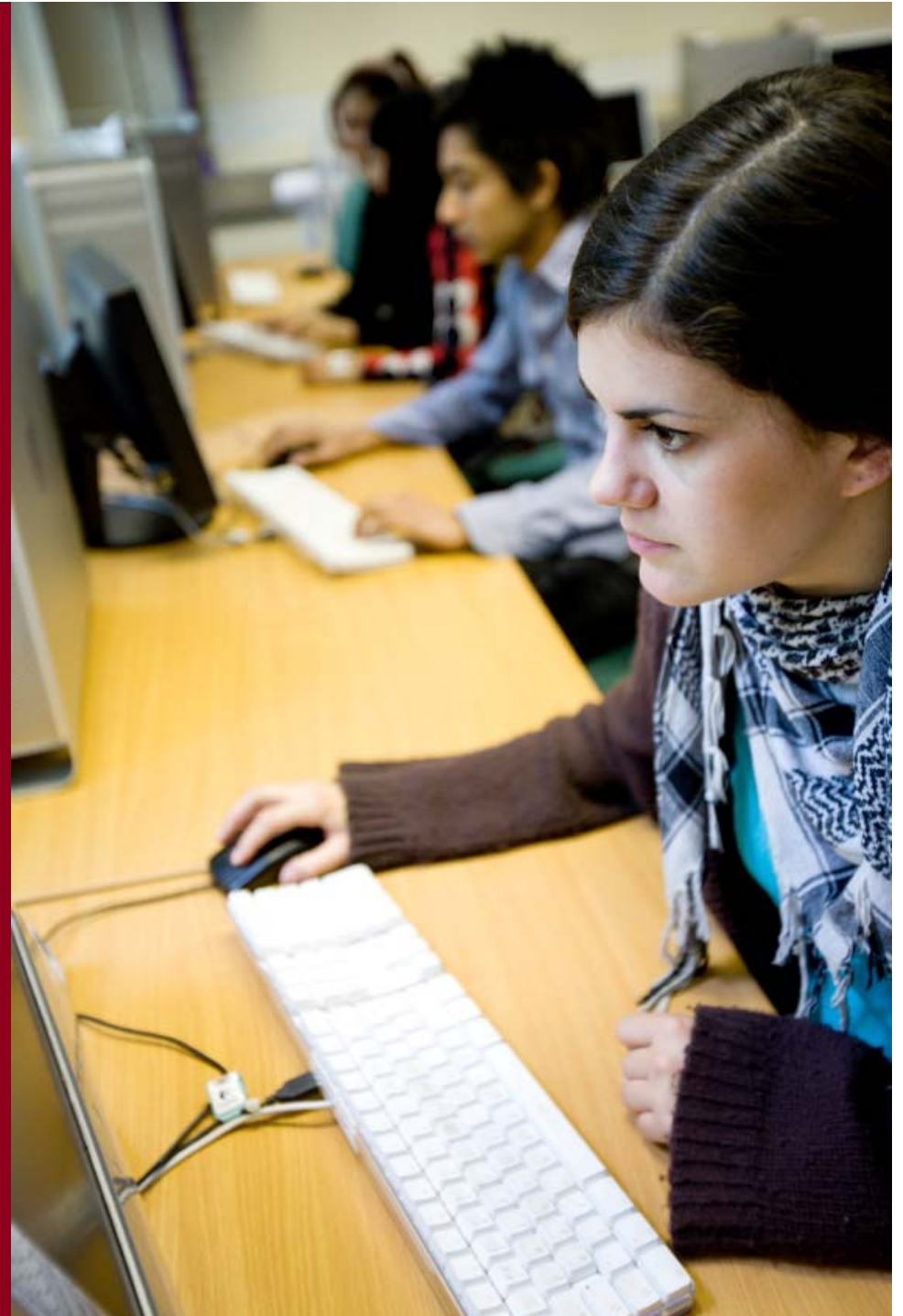
EMAIL MY RESULTS TO ME



- Scholarships
- Gift Aid
- Net Price
- Net Price after Loans &/or Work Study



Rules of Engagement



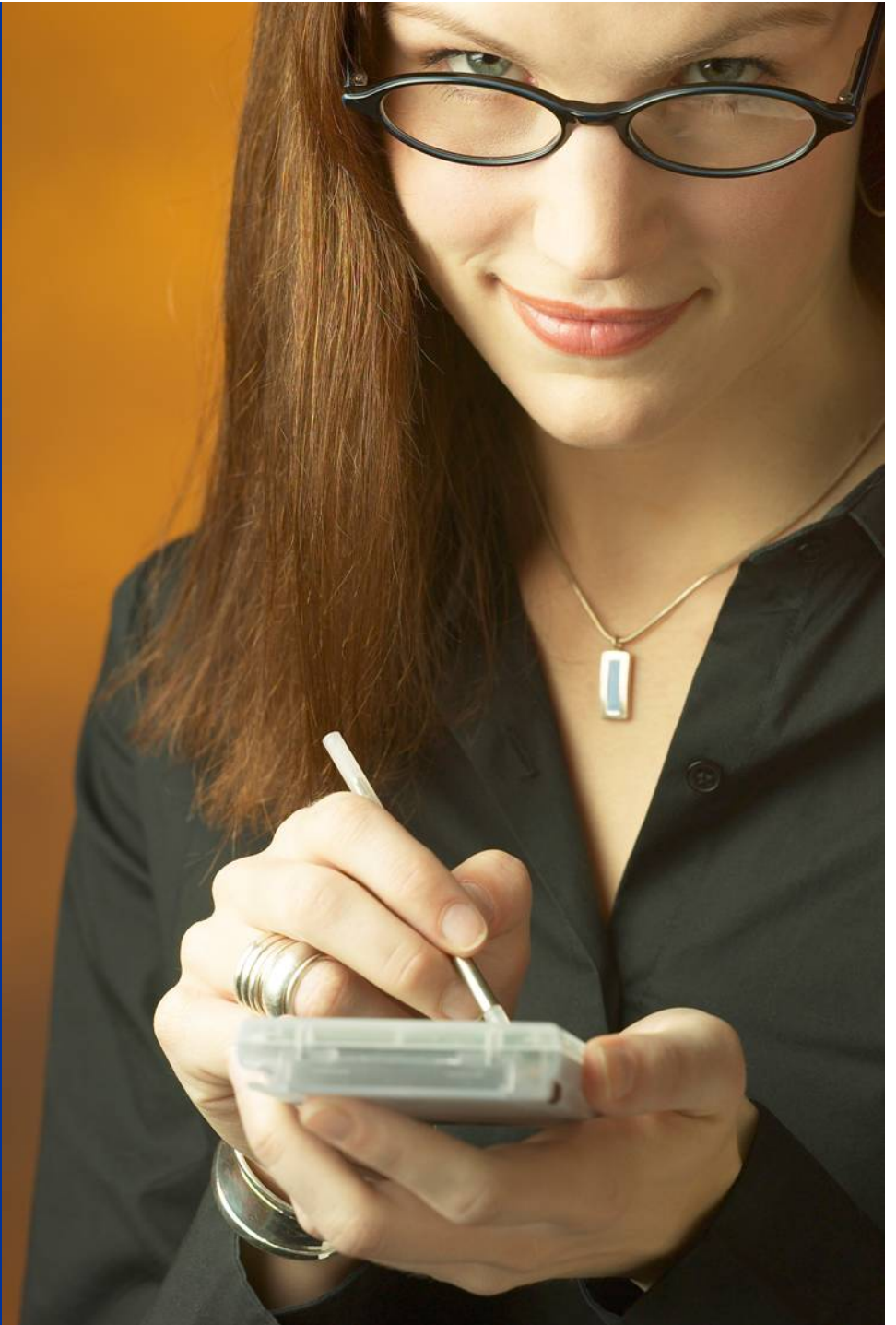
91%

will give you an
e-mail address

70%

claim to be offering
their primary e-mail
account

- 43% at prospect/
inquiry stage
- 36% at application stage
- 13% at acceptance
- 8% at final decision



And colleges are increasing their e-mail presence, but probably not fast enough

About how many bulk/blast e-mails does a typical prospective student receive from your institution over the course of a recruitment cycle?

	2-Year Public			4-Year Public			4-Year Private		
	2010	2008	2006	2010	2008	2006	2010	2008	2006
First quartile of respondents	1	0	NA	7	4	NA	10	5	NA
Median	2	2	8	12	8	6	15	10	10
Third quartile	6	4	NA	20	20	NA	25	17	NA

53% of 4-year publics and 75% of 4-year privates use an external provider to deliver e-mail

Notice the increasing number of colleges collecting parent e-mail

Does your admissions office collect e-mail addresses for parents? Yes or No.

	2-Year Public	4-Year Public	4-Year Private
Yes—2010	10.0%	50.0%	73.4%
Yes—2008	5.2%	36.8%	50.6%
Yes—2006	6.7%	30.9%	38.0%

If Yes (to the question above), when in the recruitment process do you collect the e-mail addresses for parents? Please check all that apply.

	2-Year Public	4-Year Public	4-Year Private
When students inquire	NA	16.7%	20.4%
When students apply	NA	80.6%	85.5%
When students confirm their intent to enroll or send in a deposit	NA	8.3%	18.4%
When students enroll	NA	13.9%	21.7%
On the Web year-round, 24/7	NA	5.6%	15.8%

78% currently send or receive text messages

Would or have they encouraged a college representative to send them a text?

- **NO—67%**
- Yes, if it is someone they've been working with—15%
- Yes, if they need a fast answer to a question—9%
- Yes, if they're really interested in learning more about a school—9%



Yet, a growing number of schools are collecting cell phone numbers and delivering text messages

Do you collect cell/mobile numbers from your applicants? Yes or No.

	2-Year Public	4-Year Public	4-Year Private
Yes—2010	73.3%	73.6%	91.7%
Yes—2008	69.0%	67.6%	84.0%
Yes—2006	46.7%	50.9%	34.4%

How do you use cell/mobile numbers? Please check all that apply.

	2-Year Public	4-Year Public	4-Year Private
Calls simply to build a relationship between the caller and the student	50.0%	54.7%*	85.7%
Notifications of impending deadlines, events, acceptance, etc.	31.8%	32.1%	47.1%
Calls from telecounseling call centers	9.1%	43.4%	32.3%
Text messaging	22.7%	9.4%	27.5%

Ten takeaways

1. Go mobile with your Web site
2. Recognize that students utilize multiple communication channels and use them to drive traffic to your site
3. Focus Web content on academics, cost/affordability, and admissions requirements
4. Deploy a net cost calculator that supports your enrollment management efforts

Ten takeaways

5. Build a presence on social networking sites, especially “down funnel” and build your own private social network
6. Aggressively collect and utilize e-mail for both students and parents
7. Make sure your e-mail messaging is focused on your lead recruiting messages and points of difference
8. Be careful with text

Ten takeaways

9. Utilize permission marketing to align your communication strategy to student wants and needs
10. Invest in evaluation of your e-recruitment strategy



Discussion and Questions



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