Digital, Social, Mobile: The 2014 Social Admissions Report

#SocAdm14
Methodology

**Background:** Objective is to get greater insights into high school students’ use of social media, in general, and in selecting a college or university

**Methodology:** Survey invitations were emailed to Zinch and CollegeProwler high schools students

**Survey Dates:** October - November 2013
- 2012 Social Admissions Report was fielded in Fall 2012
- Spring 2013 wave fielded January – February 2013
- Trends are highlighted throughout the presentation.

**High School Students:**
- Nearly 1,800 surveys completed
- 40% graduating 2012 or 2013
- 60% graduating 2014 or 2015

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Digital
### Sites most used to review college information is impactful but fragmented

Online resources used to review college information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Usage Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zinch</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College website (i.e. <a href="http://www.school.edu">www.school.edu</a>)</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CollegeProwler</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships.com</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cappex</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CollegeWeekLive</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fastweb.com</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MyCollegeOptions</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US News and World Report</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Confidential</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CollegeView</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q28. Please tell us which of the following online resources you used to review college information? (select all that apply) 

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Online Resources Used

College review and ranking sites are very useful to students during their search

Use of Social Media

- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Site</th>
<th>Extremely Useful</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Somewhat Useful</th>
<th>Not Very Useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College/university sites</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College reviews and scholarships sites (e.g., zinch, collegeprowler, US)</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranking sites (e.g., US News and World Report)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media sites</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q30. How useful are the following types of sites in helping you throughout the college application and decision process??

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Content searched for

Students search these sites for information on scholarships, tuition, and admissions

Q29. What types of content did you look for on these sites?

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Insights on Digital Outreach

**Content Aggregators like Zinch, College Prowler, and US News** are considered useful by students. Over 3/4 of them rated these sites as very or extremely useful.

**Nearly 90% of students** report using one of the sites in **the Zinch Cloud** Network for their research. These sites are oftentimes the first and last stop on a student’s college search.

**Scholarships are at top of mind** as students research college information. General campus information like tuition and majors are also hot topics.

Partnering with (or at least monitoring) these sites is **paramount to connecting with interested students**. Students use these sites while they are actively researching and interested in college information.

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Social Media
Shifts in social media usage

Most platforms see increased use; Facebook usage trending downward (slightly)

Use of social media (2013 vs. 2012)

- Facebook: 88% (2012), 87% (Q1 2013), 85% (Q4 2013)
- Twitter: 43% (2012), 47% (Q1 2013), 54% (Q4 2013)
- Instagram: 30% (2012), 24% (Q1 2013), 39% (Q4 2013)
- Pinterest: 24% (2012), 30% (Q1 2013), 34% (Q4 2013)
- Tumblr: 53% (2012), 40% (Q1 2013), 40% (Q4 2013)

Visual & Mobile-First Networks Continue to Outpace the Competition

- Instagram: +26%
- Twitter: +15%

Q4. How often do you use the following different social media websites?

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Interesting shifts from 2012-2013 in social media use

Use of Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Multiple times a day</th>
<th>Once a day</th>
<th>Once a week</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>Every once in a while</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Daily or more often Y/Y change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>+139%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>+23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumblr</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>+40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>+50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Q4. How often do you use the following different social media websites?
This is a tweet of a Vine of an Instagram of a Tumblr post of a Facebook post of a tweet:
vine.co/v/bYmxJXuIbAb
Nearly two-thirds use social media to research colleges, nearly 3/4 find it influential

Use of social media to research college
Overall use as same as 2012 levels

- No: 32%
- Yes: 68%

NEARLY 70% MODERATE TO EXTREME INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Q2. Have you used social media to research college/universities?
Q3. How influential was social media to your college/university search?

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Nearly three-quarters think colleges should have a presence on social media to reach students

It helps students or possible future students to learn about the college and get a feel of the environment. Plus students can hear the truth from people their own age, compare and contrast different views, and even keep in touch with friends on campus.

Q6. Do you think colleges should have a social media presence? Please explain why you feel that way. (among those graduating in 2013 and later)
Examples of great interaction

Jessica Molina ➔ Beth White
I was wondering if you knew how the direct admit process works for health science majors who wanted to go into physical therapy

Beth White
Yes. Students who are admitted to Health Science as a freshmen are eligible for the direct admit track for doctoral program (DPT). Candidates have to hit several benchmarks during the undergraduate program: 3.4 freshman year, 3.5 sophomore year and a 3.6 going into senior year. Provided that you meet these requirements, you are accepted into the DPT ahead of all external applicants.

Elizabeth Jansen @lizardoretardo
I swear if Bradley university emails me one more time

Bradley University @bradleyu
@lizardoretardo You’ll love us even more?!

Elizabeth Jansen @lizardoretardo
@bradleyu that made my day, but no, sorry, I don’t think it’ll work out. But it’s not you, it’s me

Bradley University @bradleyu
@lizardoretardo Worth a try, buy to help, simply click "unsubscribe" at the bottom of the emails. It'll make our break-up official. *sigh*

Elizabeth Jansen @lizardoretardo
@bradleyu you’re taking this very well

Bradley University @bradleyu
@lizardoretardo The pint of @benandjerry helped...

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4 in 10 students find information posted on school’s social media sites relevant

Q13. How valuable/relevant do you find the information posted on school's social media sites?

(Among those who use social media to research colleges)

ONLY 44% POSTS ARE RELEVANT
THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

13% = not at all relevant
5% = 2
13% = 3
31% = 4
38% = extremely relevant

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Q15. What information was not relevant/useful for you?

Information students found least useful on school’s social media sites

Stories/student testimonies:

“Every article debunks this reporter’s view on school’s typical play.” prepared them for their future, doesn't really prove anything.”

“Upperclassmen deadlines and events, things that do not relate anymore” “useless stuff.”

“Information about pictures of the school’s campus from those in that a dorm like environment and the school’s typical mood...”

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Q14. What information was valuable for you from schools’ social media sites?
Students First
Q5. How much did (or will) each of the following influence where you decide to enroll?
Mobile and Visual-first are gaining

Facebook ranks 1st among social media sites visited for college information followed by YouTube and Twitter.

Frequency of viewing social media for colleges considered attending

- **Facebook**:
  - Multiple times a day: 10%
  - Once a day: 9%
  - Once a week: 14%
  - Once a month: 7%
  - Every once in a while: 20%

- **YouTube**:
  - Multiple times a day: 5%
  - Once a day: 5%
  - Once a week: 10%
  - Once a month: 9%
  - Every once in a while: 20%

- **Twitter**:
  - Multiple times a day: 5%
  - Once a day: 5%
  - Once a week: 7%
  - Once a month: 4%
  - Every once in a while: 10%

- **Google+**:
  - Multiple times a day: 7%
  - Once a day: 5%
  - Once a week: 6%
  - Once a month: 2%
  - Every once in a while: 8%

- **Instagram**:
  - Multiple times a day: 6%
  - Once a day: 4%
  - Once a week: 6%
  - Once a month: 3%
  - Every once in a while: 9%

- **Tumblr**:
  - Multiple times a day: 1%
  - Once a day: 2%
  - Once a week: 2%
  - Once a month: 6%

- **Pinterest**:
  - Multiple times a day: 3%
  - Once a day: 3%
  - Once a week: 1%
  - Once a month: 1%
  - Every once in a while: 6%

**Dishonorable Mentions:**

- **LinkedIn**: 5% have used
- **Snapchat**: 9% have used
- **Vine**: 11% have used

Q9. How often do you view the following social media sites for college/universities you have considered attending?

Q10. Did you (or will you) search for specific hashtags related to your college search (or use specific hashtags yourself)?
31% of Students search for specific #hashtags related to their college search
Happy Black History Month! #BRADLEYU #GreatProgram

@lauraCneustadt1: With all this snow we’ve been getting I can’t wait for summer. #bradleyu #gofargobradley

@IllinoisCentral: We’re visiting @IllinoisCentral today! Come visit us next to the bookstore. #gofargobradley #bradleyu

@AliceEddington1: #bustaysup #bradleyutd #stjude #bradleyu spirit! instagram.com/p/j3mh4yt13/

@kristen_busch: @matt esche: #3 All-Time at #BradleyU

@sumayya: Geisert breakfast always hits the spot #BradleyU
There is still a positive affinity to joining social networks/groups for admitted students

Q16. Did your college/university provide a Facebook page or group for admitted students?

- Yes: 73%
- No: 7%
- Unsure: 20%

Q18. Would you (or did you) join a social network created by your college/university specifically for accepted students?

- Yes: 63%
- No: 23%
- Unsure: 14%

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Rachel Keller
2014 Admit · Entry Term: 8/17/2014
Hey everyone! My name is Rachel! I'm a second year student at my current college and I decided to graduate with my associates here and transfer to another college to get my bachelors. I think Bradley might be that place. How exactly do transfer students fit into the campus?

Like · Comment · More · Jan 30th via Schools App for iPhone

Sophie Penn
2014 Admit · Entry Term: 8/17/2014
What's your major? I'm going to be a transfer student this fall.
Like · More · Jan 30th

Rachel Keller
2014 Admit · Entry Term: 8/17/2014
I'm majoring in sociology! Minor in social justice & peace studies! (you?)
Like · More · Jan 30th

Sophie Penn
2014 Admit · Entry Term: 8/17/2014
Health science and minor in psychology!
Like · More · Jan 31st

Alex Lebiedzinski
Hey guys my name is Alex! I'm gonna be majoring in nursing at Bradley. I want to live in University Hall and I plan on rushing. I love to travel, hang out with friends, and bake! I'm looking for a roommate so friend/message me on fb if you're interested!!

Like · Comment · More · Feb 1st via Schools App for iPhone

Kristina Kliver We are going to the same school?!
Like · More · about 12 hours ago

Alex Lebiedzinski Yeah!
Like · More · about 12 hours ago

Write something...
The majority like the experience in the page/group for admitted students

Experience on school’s admitted students page/group

Q18. Please rate your experience on your school’s admitted students page/group. (among those with a group)

Class of 2013 in Q4 2013

- 22% rated their experience as great
- 37% rated their experience as good
- 33% rated their experience as average
- 8% rated their experience as poor
- 0% rated their experience as terrible
## Social media interaction

### Students and counselors are most important to interact with on social media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently enrolled students</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other admitted students</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions Counselors</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Counselors</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Q19. How important was/is it for you to interact with the following people via social media?
Q21. Did you “follow or like” a college you were considering going to on a social media service?

Percent of students who like or follow a considered college on social media increased by 23 points from 2012-2013.

2012 Respondents:
- Yes: 49%
- No: 51%

2013 Respondents:
- Yes: 72%
- No: 28%
Own your school’s #hashtag. Over 30% of students have searched for hashtags related to their college search.

Students are your story! Encourage your campus community to share their story with your prospects.

Facebook is not dead. Students are using a variety of sources for information. It’s time to take a multi-channel approach.

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Mobile
77% students access social media on mobile, up from 70% in Q1

Q24. Do you access social media on your mobile device? (iPhone/Android/Tablet)
Q25. Have you accessed a school's site on your mobile device? (among those who access social media on mobile) – among those who have accessed social media on a mobile device

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Students are not impressed with most mobile offerings

97% of students have visited a school’s website on a mobile browser (smartphone or tablet)

Nearly 2/3 said the experience was “just OK” or “challenging”

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Say “no” to apps

Nearly 3/4 of students said they would not download an app for a school they were researching.

Sidebar: Next time around we’ll ask about virtual campus tour apps, specifically – Our instincts say that’s a different experience and will yield different response.

#SocAdm14
Mobile is not the future. Mobile is now. Nearly all students access your website via a smartphone or tablet.

Responsive design will be key. It shouldn’t matter what type of device a student is using. The experience should be easy, seamless, and consistent.

Nearly 2/3 of students find their experience on college mobile sites simply “OK”, or worse, “challenging”. The “winners” will be those that master ease of content delivery. Like your “traditional” website, your mobile experience should cater to prospective students first.

Focus on mobile browsing over mobile apps. Installing an app is too much of a commitment. A mobile app may be appropriate for your campus community, but not prospective student recruitment.

#SocAdm14
THANK YOU!

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