ORANGE NOTES

Selfies, SnapChat, So What? The 2015 Social Admissions Report

A comprehensive look at students' use of digital tools, mobile technology and social media throughout their college research experience.

Published in partnership between Chegg Enrollment Services and Uversity
Every year higher education and college admissions marketing teams are challenged to attract and engage their future students, especially in the face of advancing technologies and millennials’ changing perceptions. What worked five years ago, or even one year ago, does not necessarily work today. Yet so many enrollment managers find themselves having to choose between doing the same old thing or becoming an early adopter without a true understanding of what works.

The Social Admissions Report, in its fifth installment, is a comprehensive study that dives into three main trends with respect to technology in college recruitment, admissions marketing, and student engagement. These categories include:

» **Digital platforms**: We use Travelocity to find deals in a new city and Yelp to find restaurant recommendations. Students use digital services in much the same way, but it just so happens that the college search involves more decision-making than where to eat on that weekend getaway to Toledo. This section will show you what sites and resources students use, including which are most impactful, and what content students look for on these sites.

» **Mobile technology**: While not new, many institutions still struggle with creating a solid mobile strategy to serve their prospective students. This section will help you understand what features and tools to build to engage and yield your class.

» **Social media**: Every year there is a shiny new toy which leads to questions such as “Is Facebook really dead?” or “What’s your Snapchat strategy?”. This section will showcase usage trends across social platforms, in general, and during different phases of the admissions process. You will learn the difference between social networking for the sake of socializing versus, social networking for information gathering to avoid intruding on students where they may not want to hear from you.

Although we share results of the study in sections, it is important to remember that many strategies are linked. You cannot have a solid mobile strategy without thinking about social apps, and you cannot consider digital tools without distinguishing between content that is informative and content that is social.

We hope you get a lot out of this report. If you have any questions or feedback, please don’t hesitate to reach us at our contact information below.

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**Background**: We conducted a 15 minute online survey in order to gain insights into high school student’s use of social media in general, and how they use these social platforms in researching and selecting a college or university.

**Methodology**: Survey invitations were emailed to Chegg high school seniors.

**Survey Dates**: October 27-November 17, 2014

Past *Social Admissions Report* Fielded:

- Q2 2014, Q4 2013, Q1 2013, & Q3 2012
- Trends are highlighted throughout the presentation

**High School Students**:

- 1,611 surveys completed
- Weighted data to reflect the current undergraduate population: 42% male, 58% female
RESPONDENT BREAKDOWN

ETHNIC BREAKDOWN

- WHITE 56%
- HISPANIC 19%
- AFRICAN AMERICAN 18%
- ASIAN 7%
- TWO OR MORE RACES 9%
- OTHER/PREFER NOT TO ANSWER 9%

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS APPLIED TO

- 1-3: 33%
- 4-6: 39%
- 7-10: 20%
- 10+: 8%

TOP STATES OF RESIDENCE

- CA 13%
- TX 10%
- FL 5%
- GA 4%
- PA 4%
- MI 5%
- NY 5%
When building your enrollment strategy, it is important to remember that the students you are starting to recruit were born when Google began and in grade school when Facebook took off. They are accustomed to finding information online, particularly on mobile devices that fit in their pockets. We are no longer in a world where you can simply buy your search list, send out your search piece and wait for your class to come to you.

The iGeneration, also known as Digital Natives, are experienced researchers and savvy consumers that expect near immediate and personalized response from the institutions they are interested in.

**USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS**

When asked, “After you contact a college representative, how soon do you expect to hear a response?”

62% of students said they expected to hear back within 24 hours or less. Yet, many institutions still rely on business reply postcards or note cards at college fairs to collect student information.

One of the biggest challenges enrollment officers face when responding to student interest is being everywhere that a student may consider demonstrating an interest. With over 20 different college search and ranking sites to choose from, it can be difficult for enrollment managers to truly know which sites students use and when. Fortunately, there is a solution.
Understanding that students have a variety of priorities at various stages of their college search (i.e., test prep, scholarships, student reviews, etc.), Chegg has partnered with 18 of the top college search websites and mobile apps to aggregate student data and requests for information, and connect those students to the institutions they request information from.

The Chegg Cloud network reaches 8 out of 10 students actively researching schools online, and connects them to their top choice institutions in time for a near immediate response. Partnered with Chegg Digital Re-Targeting, a college or university can truly engage their interested students within minutes, positively impacting conversions and yield at each phase of the recruitment process.
WHAT ARE THEY LOOKING FOR?

While the college search website industry may be fragmented, there are clear trends in what students are using these content aggregators for. Over 80% of students indicate using college search sites to find scholarships. This is likely fueled in part by the rising costs of higher education (especially considering 62% also indicate searching for financial aid information).

Other top information students are looking for include specific information about the college they are considering like their major (83%), general admissions information (74%), and information about life on campus (56%). Of the choices given, college ratings had the lowest response rate with only about half of students indicating this type of information was what they were looking for on college search sites.

IS IT BIG ENOUGH TO MATTER?

It is easy to dismiss online search sites when so many exist, often alternating in popularity. The reality is that students not only use them as their first source for college information, but they also find the information on the sites valuable and impactful when deciding where to apply and where to ultimately enroll.

Nearly three-fourths of students perceive the information they find on college review and scholarship sites as very useful when researching colleges as compared to less than 25% of students who indicate social media sites as very useful at this phase. Institutions that develop a strong social media engagement plan but choose not to engage students who are actively researching them on a college search site are only building half of their plan. Implementing an amazing strategy for yielding your class via social and mobile tools in the post-admit phase is one thing, but imagine how much easier it would be to enroll your class if you were filling your funnel with students who actively indicated an interest in your school at the height of their interest?

Pro Tip: Student engagement is a multi-channel, multi-phase process. For best results focus on reaching students using digital tools at the inquiry phase, and social media at the admit and yield phases.

DIGITAL VS. SOCIAL

It is important for enrollment managers to distinguish between “digital tools” and “social media”. While many admissions offices may task the same person that runs their Facebook and Twitter presence with managing their relationship with Chegg or Princeton Review, the reality is that students view these tools very differently, and that digital tools (like the sites in the Chegg Cloud) are heavily influential at the discovery phase of a student’s college search.

Pro Tip: There is a difference between running a social channel and managing your online identity. Managing relationships with these portals should be of the highest priority, and should be the responsibility of a more senior-level member of your team.
If you think your college website is important, you are right. Your .edu is not going anywhere anytime soon. In fact, nearly 90% of students said that schools’ websites were very useful when doing their college research. With that said, the information provided meets their needs but can be greatly improved. Nearly 75% of students rated their experience on college websites as, at most, adequate when viewing them on a mobile device.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING ON MOBILE?

Did you know that 4 out of 5 students visit college websites on a mobile device, with one-third of those students submitting a college application? If you aren’t pulling up your website and application on your phone right now to see what it looks like, we recommend you pause and do so before reading any further.

Pro Tip: Your institution’s website is first and foremost a marketing tool for attracting and engaging prospective students. Mobile browsing is an expectation during the discovery phase of college search for these savvy consumers, so ensure that your website is mobile-optimized.

SHOULD I BUILD A MOBILE SITE OR INVEST IN A MOBILE APP?

The answer to this question is the same as it is for most strategy questions—It depends.

Mobile apps improve the student experience and help them move through the funnel by providing faster, easier access to important information and people once students have demonstrated interest in your institution. Unlike your .edu website, mobile apps engage students continuously in a two-way conversation with admissions. However, discovery is not the same thing as interest. Students considering whether to enroll will embrace different communication channels than students in the early stages of research.

It is best to understand what you want to accomplish, driving pre-admit applications or moving admits through the funnel, before investing in or building anything.

Top reasons for downloading an app from a college include:

» Update on admissions information like deadlines and orientation (68%)
» Learn about types of programs offered or college-specific information (57%)
» Submit college application (48%)
» Communicate with college representatives (43%)
» Take a virtual campus tour (42%)

Pro Tip: Focus on building a mobile-friendly website with a responsive design that highlights general information as part of your prospective student recruitment strategy. To manage yield and engagement, provide easier access to important information and two-way communication through specialized mobile apps.
HOW CAN MOBILE INFLUENCE YIELD?

As outlined earlier, the categories of digital, mobile, and social cannot be compartmentalized. Mobile technology has a huge influence on social media, and that impacts how and when students engage with your institution. More importantly, mobile impacts how other students regard your institution.

Private messaging apps continue to gain ground with over half of students using a service like WhatsApp or GroupMe to communicate with their peers, while 21% of students have used the geography-based service Yik Yak. However, just because students are using these services does not mean they find it appropriate to engage with college representatives through these platforms. Less than 1 in 4 students used Snapchat when researching college information.

It is important to understand that there is a difference between mixed-use and specialized mobile channels. Mixed-use refers to channels for peer-to-peer (P2P) and family communication, such as text messaging or the private messaging app, WhatsApp. Only 9% of students would prefer to communicate with admissions through text message. Specialized channels, including mobile apps, create a dedicated space for peer-to-school interactions (P2S) related to admissions and admissions staff.

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<tr>
<th>P2P Communication is:</th>
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<tr>
<td>» Conversational</td>
<td>» Admissions Updates</td>
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<td>» With a trusted source</td>
<td>» Financial aid driven</td>
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<td>» Authentic</td>
<td>» College-Specific</td>
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<td>» Off-Viewbook Scoop</td>
<td>» Transactional</td>
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**Pro Tip:** Educate your team about student privacy restrictions and preferences, so you can adequately leverage the right mobile channels at the right times during yield. Text messaging is a viable channel among peers or close acquaintances, but may be too informal and invasive an experience for recent admits.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Is your team prepared to best serve your prospective students? Over 60% of students expect a response within 24 hours after asking a question to their college representative. College and university teams need to be cognizant of how influential a quick and personalized response can be, especially during yield.
Your greatest admissions’ asset is your people. Technology won’t change that, but technology can help your team to work smarter, not harder, to hit your enrollment targets. Uversity’s school-branded, mobile apps for prospective and admitted students enable your institution to engage students continuously during the admissions cycle. Increase reach and engagement with polls, private messaging and targeted communication channels.

Uversity partner institutions see improved enrollment outcomes through the ability to measure each interaction with students during the admissions process. These data power our real-time predictive enrollment model, Enrollment Intelligence, to deliver one powerful source for enrollment analytics as early as February.

This year’s class is different. Uversity can help.

**MOBILE ENGAGEMENT TOOLS**
Engage students continuously during the admissions cycle on their mobile devices with polls, private messages, targeted announcements and roommate matching.

**PERSONALIZATION**
Target and nurture specific pockets of students with personalized messaging to increase touchpoints with students.

**REAL-TIME IMPACT**
Easy access to advanced, customizable analytics with actionable student data. Measure engagement and maximize your yield strategies.

Contact us: bd@uversity.com
It seems like every year there is a new shiny toy for social media pros to play with. In higher education, there is a balance between being an “early adopter” and also being focused on ROI. Just because MySpace has seen a resurgence in web traffic, thanks to #ThrowBackThursday, doesn’t mean it’s a viable option for reaching your prospective students.

With that said, about 2/3 of students reported that conversations they had on social media influenced where they enrolled, with the top two most important groups to interact with being other admitted students and admissions counselors. This means it is critical to understand what platforms students use, and who they interact with, at each phase of their college search.

In this section we’ll go beyond simply showcasing which social networking tools students use overall, and focus on what tools they use for finding information about college and making their college choices, specifically.

**SHIFTS IN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE**

As you can see from the chart below, Facebook continues to see slight declines in overall usage. However, you will notice Instagram (which was purchased by Facebook in 2012) has seen significant adoption. Because Facebook owns Instagram, you could say students are “leaving Facebook for Facebook”.

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**USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA (TRENDED)**

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FACEBOOK IS NOT DEAD

Once again, it’s important to understand that there is a clear distinction between use of social media and messaging apps for personal use versus the college search and decision-making process.

While general Facebook use continues to decline in “active” usership in favor of services like Instagram and private messaging apps, adoption of Facebook for college research has actually increased. In fact, the use of all social channels is trending upward.

The growth of Facebook as a destination for college information is likely related to how colleges and universities have integrated the site into their outreach.

Students know that generally they can go on Facebook and find a college page and use it to connect with other students.

Pro Tip: Consistently remind yourself and your team that there is a difference between casual online activity and specific tasks like college research. A decline in adoption by students of a platform for general use does not necessarily mean they have abandoned it for college research.
SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

When you dig deeper and look at overall usage by activity, you'll see that Facebook continues to suffer in "highly active usership", which we define as once a day or more, declining by over 20% from 2013-2014. This while sites like Instagram and Twitter and even Google+, and Pinterest, saw rapid increases in that same timeframe.

However, it's important to remember that this is only part of the story. The chart above shows overall usage. When we asked students about their college search specifically, the results become more crowded and more complex.

MOBILE AND VISUAL—FIRST ARE GAINING.

Facebook continues to be a key platform specifically when students are using social media when deciding where to enroll, with over one-third of students using the site once a day or more. This is compared to less than 25% of students actively using the site during the research phase of their college search; affirming the point that a social media strategy works better when paired with a strong digital outreach strategy.

Pro Tip: Facebook still isn't dead, but video and visual-first platforms continue to gain ground. This age group is experienced at research and understands intuitively how to filter inauthentic, brand-heavy messaging. Make students your story.
FREQUENCY OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR RESEARCHING COLLEGES

FACEBOOK
- MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY 11%
- ONCE A DAY 13%
- ONCE A WEEK 17%
- ONCE A MONTH 9%

YOUTUBE
- MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY 9%
- ONCE A DAY 8%
- ONCE A WEEK 15%
- ONCE A MONTH 10%

GOOGLE+*
- MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY 18%
- ONCE A DAY 9%
- ONCE A WEEK 8%
- ONCE A MONTH 4%

INSTAGRAM
- MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY 12%
- ONCE A DAY 9%
- ONCE A WEEK 9%
- ONCE A MONTH 5%

TWITTER
- MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY 7%
- ONCE A DAY 9%
- ONCE A WEEK 13%
- ONCE A MONTH 6%

FREQUENCY OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR COLLEGES CONSIDERED ENROLLING

FACEBOOK
- MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY 15%
- ONCE A DAY 16%
- ONCE A WEEK 15%
- ONCE A MONTH 9%

YOUTUBE
- MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY 12%
- ONCE A DAY 10%
- ONCE A WEEK 15%
- ONCE A MONTH 6%

TWITTER
- MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY 8%
- ONCE A DAY 12%
- ONCE A WEEK 12%
- ONCE A MONTH 7%

INSTAGRAM
- MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY 13%
- ONCE A DAY 9%
- ONCE A WEEK 9%
- ONCE A MONTH 7%

GOOGLE+*
- MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY 15%
- ONCE A DAY 7%
- ONCE A WEEK 10%
- ONCE A MONTH 5%

Honorable mentions:
Snapchat, Pinterest, & Tumblr are used by less than 12% of students monthly.

*There is some confusion amongst students about Google+ as a social network.
When building your social media brand you still want to ensure you have an active presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, specifically when focusing on yield. Beyond that you will need to make strategic decisions based on your resources, talent, and institutional identity on whether to incorporate other social networks in your prospective student outreach.

It's also important to remember that the iGeneration is very focused on their privacy, and trying to reach them on private messaging apps like Snapchat and WeChat will not yield great results. When students are using these platforms to research college information they are using them to connect with current students at your school and other admitted students.

**Pro Tip:** You are not going to be able to control the conversations happening between your current students and students researching your school on private messaging apps. Rather, you should focus on encouraging students to share their positive experiences via these platforms and provide incentives for positive sharing.

As mentioned earlier, it seems that there is always a new tool or resource available for students to connect with their peers and potentially connect with colleges and universities. This section will breakdown the pros and cons of some of the more buzzworthy names to help you decide which platforms to add or remove from your social media portfolio:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Used For</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
<th>Classification</th>
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| Snapchat     | Allows users to send and receive “self-destructing” photos and videos (called “Snaps”). | » Visual First  
» Highly engaged audience  
» Mobile-optimized (mobile-only) | » Highly personal platform for students  
» Hard to gain a huge following without heavy cross promotion on other channels/platforms  
» Measuring ROI is extremely difficult | Shiny Toy |
| LinkedIn     | The largest professional network. LinkedIn introduced college/university pages in 2014 and has begun showcasing top schools. | » Emphasis on educational outcomes  
» Clear user interface  
» Highly trusted data source | » Not widely used by high school students (11% used it at all for college information)  
» Cannot communicate to a large volume of students  
» No way to collect student info and follow up with your CRM | Shiny Toy/Someone Else's Toy |
| Vine         | A video-sharing site (Twitter-owned) that allows users to share quick videos from your mobile device. | » Easy  
» Authentic  
» Integrates with Twitter, which is widely used | » Not widely used by high school students looking for college information (11%) or when they are deciding where to enroll (16%) | Shiny Toy/Use another tool instead |
| Pinterest    | Web/mobile app that offers a visual discovery, collection, sharing, and storage tool. Users create and share the collections of visual bookmarks (“Boards”) | » Easy to build  
» Easy to manage  
» More and more tools are being created to measure ROI | » Still not a huge piece of the “college search pie” (less than 20% of students use it for college information, about 25% use it when deciding where to enroll) | Has potential. Not worth it if you’re not making the most of key networks. |
| Tumblr       | A microblogging platform. Allows users to post multimedia/other content to a short-form blog. Users can follow other users’ blogs, and/or make their blogs private. | » Very Simple Interface | » Not used widely enough to make an impact on recruitment | Invest your time in the other networks. |
In a time of constant change and fragmentation of available tools, it is important for enrollment managers to find a balance between evaluating outdated approaches, trying something new, and buckling down on what works. Digital marketing goes well beyond understanding which social media platform students use in their daily life. Strategic enrollment managers understand that it is a multi-channel, multi-touch process to attract, engage, and yield their incoming class.

By leveraging online tools like the Chegg network to find qualified students, mobile technology like Uversity mobile apps to engage admitted and highly interested students, and social media to further engage and build your online community, you are more likely to see stronger recruitment outcomes at a higher return on investment.

Have further comments or questions? Join the conversation on the Chegg Enrollment Insights blog at http://edu.chegg.com/insights, or tweet @socialadmission or @Uversityinc
About Uversity
Uversity believes students are more than demographic profiles and personas. Our innovative mobile and data solutions help admissions professionals achieve enrollment success by transforming how colleges and universities engage students during the admissions process. We provide a powerful, data-driven way to measure engagement and maximize yield strategies through our real-time predictive enrollment models.

About Chegg Enrollment Services
Chegg helps students put their best foot forward in the admission process by connecting them to their top choice and best fit schools at the height of their interest. Reaching 80% high school students researching schools online across our network, Chegg can help you save time, save money, and recruit smarter by focusing your efforts on reaching students on the top college search sites and apps being used by students every day.