



An E-Expectations Trend Report

The Communication Expectations of College-Bound High School Students

Includes comparisons to parents and guardians

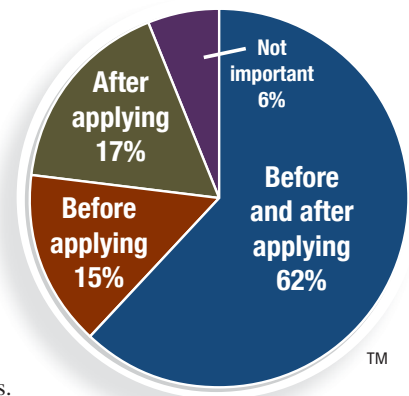
How do prospective college students want to communicate with campuses? When do they want to interact with their target colleges? Which communication methods make them feel most comfortable?

Noel-Levitz, OmniUpdate, CollegeWeekLive, and NRCCUA® (National Research Center for College & University Admissions) conducted a survey of more than 1,300 participants* about communicating with prospective campuses. The study examines the preferred communication methods for students as well as which methods they find the most meaningful and effective.

The majority of students say it is very important to have conversations with campus representatives before and after applying

Ninety-four percent of respondents said it was very important to speak with college representatives during the enrollment process, with the majority of respondents wanting to have conversations before applying *and* after acceptance.

When are live conversations of high importance?



* Of the 1,307 respondents, 58 percent were high school seniors and 14 percent juniors, while 27 percent of the responses came from their parents or guardians. (One percent of participants did not report their status.)

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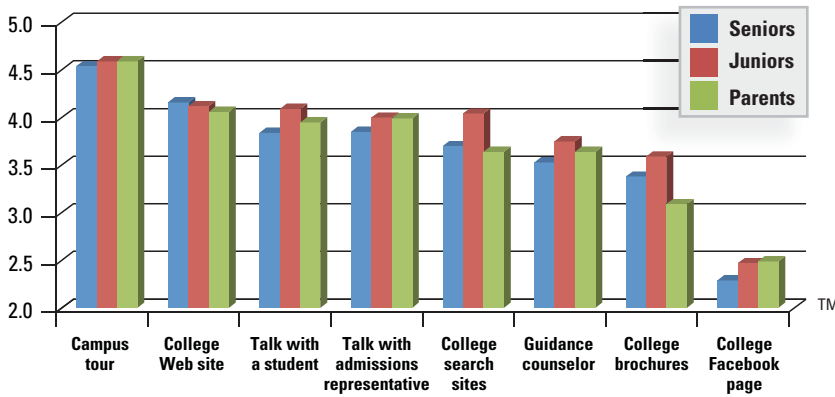
NRCCUA
National Research Center for College & University Admissions

Live conversations with campuses are three of the four most influential activities

Respondents were asked to rate how various recruitment activities influenced their enrollment decisions.

When choosing schools to which you will apply, how influential are the following?

(Responses: 1=not influential, 5=very influential)



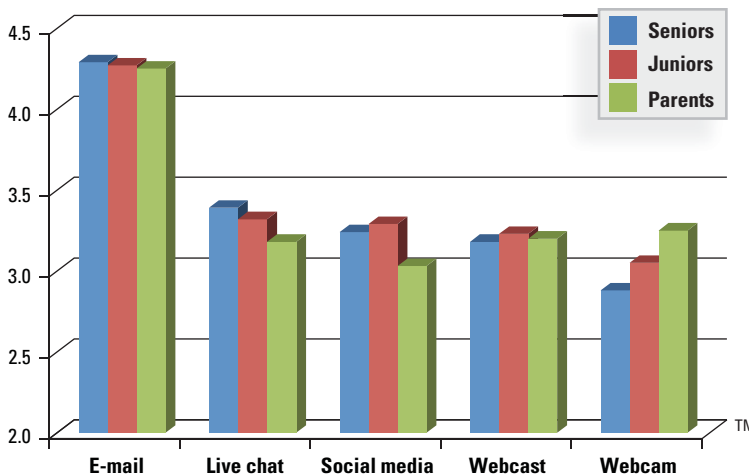
Although campus Web sites and college search sites scored highly, Facebook by far had the least impact with parents and students. In fact, Facebook was not nearly as influential as college brochures, which not only had a fair amount of influence, but also received a higher influence rating from students than from parents.

The results show that conversations with campus representatives can be the most influential experience for many students and parents. While campus tours would be conducted in person, students and parents simply expressed a desire to have a “live conversation” which does not necessarily have to be face to face.

After e-mail, students and parents will respond to a wide range of online channels

How comfortable are you with the following online conversations with campuses?

(Responses: 1=not comfortable, 5=very comfortable)



E-mail was preferred considerably more than other forms of electronic communication. Perhaps the most surprising result was live chats (instant messaging) finishing slightly ahead of social media. This preference is likely related to the real-time response and more private forum that is not found in social media.

According to the 2010 Noel-Levitz report on e-recruitment practices, campuses have been reducing their use of live chats in recent years. In light of this communication data from students and parents, they may want to make sure they add live chat to their communication strategies.

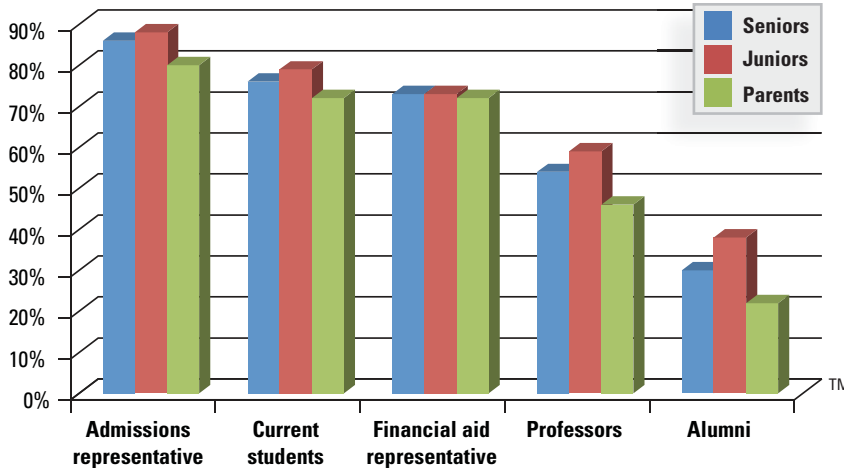
College e-recruitment practices	Two-year public			Four-year public			Four-year private		
	2010	2008	2006	2010	2008	2006	2010	2008	2006
Instant messaging	3.3%	6.9%	4.4%	20.8%	33.8%	27.7%	15.0%	39.4%	25.5%
Social media resources such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn	6.7%	10.3%	NA	38.9%	27.9%	NA	26.1%	32.4%	NA

Source: 2010 E-recruiting trends and practices at four-year and two-year institutions. Available at www.noellevitz.com.

Who do they want to talk to during an online presentation, and how do they want to be invited?

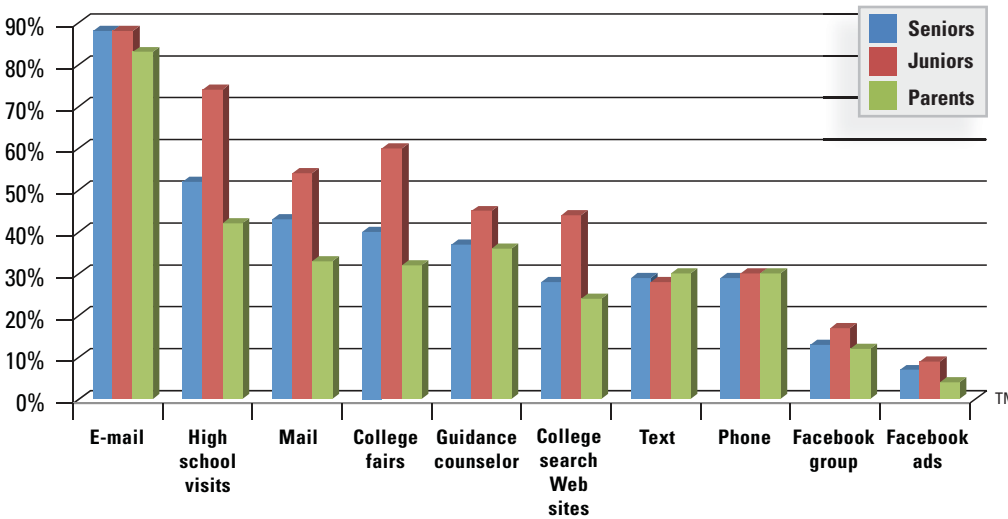
Sixty-nine percent of students and 72 percent of parents said they have had online video conversations using a Webcam. In addition, both groups showed fair interest in communicating with campuses via Webcasts, but who would they want to talk to?

If attending a live, online video presentation, which campus representatives would you be most interested in hearing from?



These results show that campuses should always have an admissions representative at online Webcasts. Campuses should also consider including current students and financial aid representatives in those Webcasts or hosting additional Web presentations featuring those students and staff members.

What is the best way for colleges to invite you to speak with campus representatives online or attend online presentations?



These results are encouraging because they show that campuses have a variety of in-person and online options for connecting with students. For instance, traveling counselors meeting in person with students could invite them to meet with admissions and financial aid representatives online.

Five recommendations for connecting with prospective students (and parents, too)

1. Create opportunities for conversation with students at every stage

Prospective students want to talk to you, so make sure they have ample opportunities to do so. Set up opportunities for live conversations throughout the recruitment process. In particular, make sure your Web site encourages those conversations through calls to action and ample links to contact forms, contact information, and live chats. Keep the communications flowing, too, by reaching students multiple times throughout the funnel.

2. Take a multi-channel approach to communications

Responses from students show they will respond to a broad range of communications—online, print, in person. Creating a multi-channel approach to your student recruitment efforts will maximize your potential to create meaningful contacts.

3. Integrate offline and online activities

After e-mail, students were most interested in learning about online events from the admissions counselors visiting their high schools. By using in-person visits to promote opportunities to meet online, colleges can make current students and financial aid representatives available and address remaining concerns that students may not be comfortable asking in front of their peers.

4. Maintain or add live chats to your communication strategies

Perhaps the most surprising result of this study is that students and parents showed a strong interest in live chats, a format that has seen a decline in use by colleges in recent years. Live chats can be scheduled daily, weekly, monthly, or for specific campaigns, so it should be easy to create a schedule where counselors or student ambassadors are available to chat while doing other work. As with incoming phone calls or e-mails, colleges will need to be available to answer questions via live chat as students search online.

5. Keep social media active but in perspective

There is no question that social networking, especially Facebook, are very popular among high school students. However, while it has value as a student recruitment tool, social networking should be part of a well-balanced e-recruitment portfolio, not a focal point for your efforts.

Questions about this study or optimizing your e-communications strategies?

Please contact Noel-Levitz if you have any questions about this E-Expectations mobile study or want to discuss how you can maximize your communications opportunities with students and parents. Call us toll-free at 1-800-876-1117 or e-mail ContactUs@noellevitz.com.

About the survey sponsors

Noel-Levitz is a recognized leader in higher education consulting and research. For nearly 40 years, they have partnered with more than 2,700 campuses to optimize enrollment management and student success through experienced consultation, advanced analytic tools, and campus assessments.

OmniUpdate is the leading Web content management system (CMS) provider for higher education. Their enterprise-class Web CMS, OU Campus™, empowers institutions to effectively manage and enhance their Web presence and take advantage of the latest Web and mobile technologies.

CollegeWeekLive is the leading channel for live conversations with prospective students. Colleges reach high schools they do not travel to, engage students in an online environment they prefer, and improve results at every stage of the enrollment process.

NRCCUA (National Research Center for College & University Admissions) conducts the nation's largest educational planning survey among high school students. This valuable program facilitates a key link between the individual educational goals and preferences of students and the vast offerings of colleges and universities.

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