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HOW THE INTERNET HAS IMPACTED COLLEGE RECRUITMENT AND  
ADMISSIONS.

by  
Maureen Constantino

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
Of  
The Graduate School  
At  
Rowan University  
June 20, 2002

Approved by  
Professor

Date Approved 6-20-02

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## ABSTRACT

Maureen Constantino

How the Internet has Impacted College Recruitment and Admissions.

2002

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Donald Bagin

Master of Arts in Public Relations

This study provides advice to college admissions and public relations professionals so they can make their college web sites more user friendly.

The author surveyed 275 juniors and seniors from six randomly selected Catholic and public New Jersey high schools. There were 261 viable responses.

The author found that the family is the most influential factor in the student's college search. Participants indicated that the Internet plays a role in most of their searches. The students rely on direct mail and guidance counselors in their search as well.

Participants were interested in visiting college web sites that were easily navigated. The students also value the opportunity to apply on-line. Students also said that waiving the fees for on-line applications would be helpful to many of them.

The research shows that to draw traffic to their web site, they should consider subscribing to a metasearch engine or varying their method of advertising. Most of the participants have visited metasearch engines. Because the Internet is a new medium that appeals to younger demographics, it may be a more effective way for colleges and universities to get their message out and people to their site.

MINI ABSTRACT

Maureen Constantino

How the Internet has Impacted College Recruitment and Admissions.

2002

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Donald Bagin

Master of Arts in Public Relations

This study provides advice to college admissions and public relations professionals about how to make their college's web site more user friendly.

A survey of high school juniors and seniors, a related literature search and interviews with admissions professionals were the basis for the tips provided in chapter five.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those individuals who have given me the motivation and inspiration I needed to complete my master's degree and thesis.

To my wonderful parents, Teresa and Robert Constantino—Thank you for always being right beside me throughout my accomplishments and failures. Thank you for always supporting me in everything I do.

To Chris and Sissy--Without your love, guidance and support I would have never made it this far. Make room for me—I'm coming home!

To the Ducks, Rebecca, Dot, Meri and Mary--You are the best friends a girl could have. Thanks for always listening to me complain and cheering me up whenever I was down. You're the best.

And finally to fabulous boyfriend, Brian McMorrow—Thank you for your support, persistence (often on the verge of nagging), and exquisite knowledge of Microsoft word and excel. Without you I would have never finished it. Thanks for everything. Love you.

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## Chapter One

### Background

In the mid 1990's the public began realizing the potential of the Internet. What started out as a private on-line community was growing into a part of popular culture. Before this growth spurt, most general uses of the Internet seemed to be related to transferring information, communication and some research.

Then in the early 1990's the technology began to change rapidly, allowing more people access to this once restricted "on-line world." Companies began increasing technology efforts and offered access to the Internet. Schools began to join the electronic age and private citizens who used the technology at work and school wanted to have access to it at home. It was a cycle. Computers and technology were more available, therefore more companies were putting themselves on the Internet. And because there were now so many resources on the Internet, more people desired the technology to access it. Its increasing popularity drove the cost down. Therefore, it was constantly growing. It seems like almost every company/school/home has been impacted by the change in technology—especially by the growth of the Internet. The study, "A Nation Online: How Americans are Expanding Their Use of the Internet," found that 143 million Americans used the Internet in September 2001.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CyberAtlas, INT Media Group, Inc., <http://cyberatlas.internet.com>, web site, April 28, 2002.

The growing trend of technology in our everyday lives has changed our world. And has made growing up a whole new experience. The Y generation, who are growing up during this technology explosion, seem to be adjusting most quickly to all of the changes in society. They were raised on technology and to them it is the norm. They don't know any other way of life.

The Internet has changed how many people get their information. People today often go to the Internet first when they are researching something. It is much faster and easier than traditional methods. This is particularly true for generation Y. According to a study the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 71 percent<sup>2</sup> of teens said the Internet was their primary source of information. These students use the Internet for everything like getting homework assignments, chatting with friends, reading current events or researching their English term paper. Getting their information about colleges/universities is no exception to this trend.

In the "old days," typically when students were looking for a college or university they would lug out the huge college guidebooks, look for schools that seemed to fit their criteria and request that the schools send them information in the mail. Students received traditional recruitment literature like viewbooks and brochures. Then if their interests were peaked enough they could schedule a tour of the campus. The tours often gave the students an actual feel for the campus.

While all of these recruitment items are still typically used with prospective students, the Internet has changed how most high school students and parents research institutions of higher learning. It is a key marketing tool that is only supplemented by the traditional print recruitment information.

These sites can directly market the schools to prospective students. Often they are linked to the college/university's main page that students and faculty use. Therefore, it can seem like a more valid research tool since it has a working purpose, not just marketing the school. Adding to the ease of the application process is the on-line application. According to *ON Magazine*, 95 percent of all colleges accept some form of electronic application.<sup>3</sup> With this option students have the opportunity to type in their personal information and send it to the schools at the click of a button. Some schools have a form that you download, print and mail back to them. This option saves money for the schools and time for both schools and students.

College websites have made shopping for a college an easier experience for students and parents alike. All of the information needed is there at the touch of a button. Students no longer have to wait weeks before finding out about these institutions. Entire portions of the sites are usually dedicated to admissions/prospective students. There, students can typically request all of the information they used to receive by mail or look it up directly on the site. Additionally, some colleges have tried to make it easier for visitors to find out important information about going to college. They often include links to other departments in the school and financial aid information sites.

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<sup>2</sup> Nua Internet surveys, <http://www.nua.com>, web site, December 9, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Jillian Neiberg, "Applying Yourself," *ON Magazine*, September 2001, p. 35.

### Need for the study

Websites for schools develop at their own pace. Each school has its own criteria for adding elements to the site. What one school feels is important to the students its trying to attract may not be important to another school. However, when students are looking for a college/university, what a school has on its website (or if it has a website at all) can play a key role in their decision process. This study was an attempt to identify which elements students valued most when searching college websites. It was also an attempt to collect information about Rowan's website and those of competing schools. The author wanted to identify what these schools needed to do to their sites to make them more user friendly. In essence, this study's results will help the author create a guide for these institutions on how to use the marketing power of their website to the best of their ability. The need for a study like this one was emphasized by the author's inability to find recent material on creating effective college websites in the search for related materials.

## Purpose

Because of the growth of immediate response technology, colleges and universities have had to adjust the way they dispense information about their institution. The Internet has changed the college search/application process. Schools are learning to change their recruitment methods to meet the needs of the technology-savvy prospective students. Information needs to be available right away, all day and all night.

Because of its growing prevalence in the everyday lives of today's youth, schools are realizing the importance of their college website as a powerful marketing tool. One of the main purposes of this study is to find out how important the Internet is to admissions at Rowan University and the schools that they find themselves competing with for students. Schools often survey incoming freshman to find out what played key roles in their college decision and what plans they may have for the future. Comparing what students value can offer insight as to what they can do to make their school more appealing.

A secondary purpose of this study was to examine what students are looking for on college websites. Students were asked to rate the importance of *typical* aspects of a college site. In combination with that the author will explore these college sites to determine how easily navigable they are for prospective students. Overall suggestions for making the site easy to navigate can be developed from these evaluations.

Another purpose of the study is to find out how many students use college metasites as part of their college research. This information will identify the importance/unimportance of subscribing to these services to draw more traffic to the website.

## The Problem

This study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What role does the Internet play as a marketing tool for incoming freshman at Rowan University and competing schools?
2. What elements do prospective students value on a college website?
3. How easy is it to navigate the websites of Rowan University and the competing schools?
4. How important are college metasites to the search process for prospective students?

## Procedures

The procedures for this study were:

1. The author gathered related research about this topic from searches of the Rowan University database (VALE-ABI inform, EBSCO, Lexis-Nexis) using terms such as “college admissions and the Internet,” “college searches,” “college recruitment,” and “on-line admissions.”
2. The author gathered related research about this topic from Internet metasites including mamma.com, dogpile.com, and webcrawler.com. Information was also gathered from Internet search engines such as excite.com, yahoo.com and lycos.com. The author used terms such as “college admissions and the Internet,” “college searches,” “college recruitment,” and “on-line admissions.”
3. The author created a survey based on related research and personal experience. The survey was pre-tested by members of Dr. Bagin’s graduate public relations seminar. It was distributed to high school juniors and seniors at public, private and parochial schools in New Jersey.
4. The author gathered data collected from student surveys given to incoming freshmen by Rowan University and competing schools regarding college decisions from The Rowan Report and The American Freshman maintained by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA.
5. The author conducted in-depth interviews admissions professionals at Villanova University and University of Pennsylvania. These interviews helped identify elements they deem important for an effective college website.

### Limitations

1. Although computers are typically more available for students today, some might not have equal access to them. This may have affected how students conducted their college search. Lack of access and therefore Internet savvy may add to the reliance on traditional forms of college searches.
2. The author faced some opposition from high school administrators regarding conducting research (surveying students) at their school. Many schools contacted were unable to assist in the collection of data.
3. There was confusion on the second question of the survey. The wording of the question was poor, so about 40 surveys had to be thrown out because respondents did not answer in an appropriate fashion.

## Definition of Terms

**College website-** The website designed by the college or university. They are typically divided into sections for: prospective students/undergraduates/graduate students/alumni/faculty and staff.

**On-line application-** It is often an application form filed electronically. Prospective students type in their information and send it directly to the schools via the Internet. Some schools do not have the technology to process this kind of information. They have a form available on their website that students can download/print and send in via mail.

**Common application-** A generic form created to simplify the application process. It is accepted by hundreds of different schools; therefore, students do not have to duplicate their application efforts. Students can print copies and mail it or submit it electronically.

**College metasites-** Websites that offer college preparatory resources in one spot. They often contain links to college websites. Not all of them list all colleges/universities; only the ones that pay for the services of their site are listed

**Traditional forms of recruitment-** Typically print pieces that were mailed to students upon request, containing information about the specific school. Examples are the college viewbook, department brochures and fact sheets.

## Chapter Two

### Basic History of the Internet

Kenneth Hartman explains that the United States Pentagon developed the Internet in the late 1950's. It was intended to be used as a communication link in case of nuclear attack. During the 1970's research universities took the Internet concept and improved it. They made it operate quicker and easier. It was used to share research and scholarly information. But because personal computers were so expensive, very few people knew of its potential.

By the 1980's the National Science Foundation realized the potential of the network and worked to expand it. The Internet changed in the 1990s when the World Wide Web was developed. The World Wide Web (WWW) uses HTML (Hypertext Mark-Up Language) to access files, a programming language that everyone (not just computer programmers) can use. This way everyone can browse through the Internet and even create web pages.<sup>4</sup>

The decreasing cost and complexity of personal computers and the Internet has changed the way people use technology. A study by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration called "A Nation Online: How Americans are expanding Their Use of the Internet," says that 174 million Americans use computers. Another study in the article "US Internet Population Continues to Grow," found in the CyberAtlas, says that Internet use is growing at a rate of two million new users each month.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hartman, Kenneth, *Internet Guide for College-Bound Students*, College Entrance Examination Board, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> CyberAtlas Ibid.

## Changing Use of Computers and the Internet

Computers are not just for the office anymore. When we think back to the earliest uses of computers, they are associated with adults in the workplace. According to the study by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, children and teenagers are most likely to use computers and the Internet. The study shows that 90 percent of children between ages five and 17 use computers.<sup>6</sup>

Today's high school students are more technology savvy than those of past years. They have more opportunities to access information technologically than students even five years ago. In addition to the number of computers in the home, students have access to computers and the Internet at school. According to the website, "Computer Almanac," 95 percent of schools had Internet access.<sup>7</sup>

The Internet is replacing the library as a research tool. A survey of 12 to 15 year olds by the Pew Internet and American Life Project said that 71 percent of teens polled use the Internet as their primary source of information for schoolwork. More and more teens are using the Internet for research.<sup>8</sup>

The developments in technology and changes in society are encouraging college/universities to make themselves available in a way that their target audiences can find them through-the computer. College websites began developing around 1993. Since then they have been evolving into powerful marketing tools.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> CyberAtlas, Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Computer Almanac, Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> NUA Internet Survey. <http://www.nua.com>, web site, December 9, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Lucille Renwick, "College Search Often Begins at Home Page," *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 1996, p.1.

A study done by StatMats Communications in Cedar Rapids, Iowa showed that 80 percent of college bound seniors in 1999 used the web in their college search. This number was up from 57 percent in 1996.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Rachel Hartigan, "Surfing for the Right School," *U.S. News & World Reports*, September 11, 2000, p.91.

## Freshman Studies

Because the number of Internet users is growing (especially those relying on the Internet for information), many organizations nationwide and internal departments of higher education institutes have begun to study the use by potential college students and more importantly potential students of *their* institution.

The American Council on Education (ACE) and the University of California at Los Angeles annually collect information from freshman students about higher education. The Cooperative Institutional Research Program is a national study started in 1996 by the American Council on Education. The study is now administered and maintained by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA.<sup>11</sup>

Questions on the survey include demographic information, personal interests and qualities they look for in a school. Participating institutions receive a detailed profile of the entering freshman class and national normative data for students in similar types of institutions. The data are also published annually in The American Freshman, which is also maintained by HERI.

In fall 2000, over 404,000 students completed the freshman survey at 717 institutions. Those results were then adjusted to represent the nation's population of about 1.64 million first-time, full-time freshman.

The survey question of relevance to the author's study asked the students to rank reasons that might have influenced their decision to attend college. They were asked to identify how important each reason was in their decision to go to the college they chose.

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<sup>11</sup> UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu>, web site, April 1, 2002.

Examples of some of the possible responses to this question were:

- My relatives wanted me to come here.
- This college has a very good academic reputation.
- I was offered financial assistance.
- Rankings in a national magazine.
- Information from a website.

The weighted national norms for all freshman in fall 2000 says of all students surveyed from participating Baccalaureate institutions, 6.8 percent rated information from a website as very important in deciding to go to college.<sup>12</sup> Weighted national norms for all freshman surveyed in fall 2001 from participating Baccalaureate institutions say that 8.5 percent rated information from a website as very important in deciding to go to college.<sup>13</sup> These statistics reflect the trends of typical freshman across the nation.

For the past 13 years, Rowan University has been conducting a similar survey of their freshmen to determine why they chose Rowan. This year all 949 freshmen that attended summer orientation sessions responded. They said that the most helpful resources for students in the decision to attend Rowan were parents (59 percent), Rowan students (38 percent), the Rowan website (34 percent) and friends or relatives (33 percent).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *The American Freshman*, UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> *The American Freshman*, UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> *The Rowan Report*, University Relations Rowan University, December 15, 2001.

### Basic College Searches and Metasearch Engines

Students are using the Internet in a variety of ways for their college searches. They are going directly to sites of schools they are familiar with. Schools draw traffic to their websites by putting the address on all of their traditional recruitment/print materials. Because using the Internet as a marketing tool is a relatively new concept for colleges and universities and because not everyone has universal access to it, most do not rely on it 100 percent to recruit potential students. It is often used as a supplement to their traditional means of recruitment. But with the convenience it offers, the Internet has the potential to become the sole source of promotional literature for colleges and universities.<sup>15</sup>

College websites are not the only resource on the Internet for those researching. Many private companies have made it easier for students to research higher education by developing metasearch sites (that are often commercial). Typically, these sites are places where the students can access information about different schools, programs, financial aid, etc. For example on a college search site a student types in the criteria of schools s/he is looking for and a list of results matching the criteria appears.<sup>16</sup>

Often these sites claim they are “comprehensive” college search tools. However, what most students do not realize is that often schools may be included/excluded on the site according to whether or not they paid to be a part of it.

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<sup>15</sup> James Hannah, “Applying online-the new way to go,” *Community College Week*, June 1, 1998, p.27.

<sup>16</sup> Lisa Guernsey, “Admissions in Cyberspace: Web Sites Bring Complications for Colleges,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 9, 1998, p.a27.

The author of the article, Lisa Guernsey compared using the metasearches to bargain hunting consumer shopping on the Internet. “Plug in the price and features you want, compare different products instantaneously, browse third party reviews and file an ‘on-line order form’ or admissions application.”<sup>17</sup>

Because the search engines browse through a long list of schools they offer students the opportunity to explore school they would not normally consider. Colleges and universities are seeing the benefit. They are receiving requests for information from students in geographical areas they hadn’t before.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Guernsey, Ibid., p.a28

<sup>18</sup> Hartigan, Ibid., p.92

### Unofficial Information

Students, parents and researchers are using the Internet to its full potential when searching for college information. Just like college viewbooks and other recruitment literature, students are realizing that college websites offer a skewed view of the institution. Therefore, they've turned to less obvious sources of information, what Kenneth Hartman refers to as "unofficial information" sources, to find out more about their college choices.

In his book, "Internet guide for College Bound Students," Hartman explores the ability of students and parents to use unofficial information to uncover the "truth" about colleges and universities. The Internet makes facts, statistics and opinions available that would not necessarily be included as part of the official information.<sup>19</sup>

Students are moving further into the schools' websites, past the admissions page. They are browsing student sites, looking over course syllabi and reading the college newspaper. Links to professor and student e-mail addresses make it easier to interact with members of the campus community. High School students are even interacting in real time with college students via chat rooms.

For the most part schools cannot control what these sites and e-mails reveal to the students about their institution. And although the Internet it may be beneficial to them by drawing attention to their institution, we must consider, what kind of impression are they making? All opinions, negative *and* positive can be expressed freely to potential students. The schools have less say in an area that used to be one where they had strict control.

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<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Hartman, The Internet and College Admissions, *Change*, March/April 1998 p.54.

### Applying On-Line

The Internet has changed the face of college admissions. A study done by the National Center for Education Statistics found that the number of college applicants jumped 15 percent during the nineties to more than 6.5 million applications annually.<sup>20</sup> This may be because it is becoming easier to apply via computers. In the past, it was a long arduous, dreaded task for most high school seniors. Sending away for applications, waiting for them to arrive and diligently typing/hand writing the forms, being careful not to make mistakes. Those days are almost behind us with the advent of different on-line application techniques.

A survey of 400 admissions offices in 1999 by the National Association for College Admission Counseling found that about 77 percent of colleges provide on-line applications. Different schools offer different ways to use the Internet to apply. More advanced applications can be filled out on the web and submitted directly to the institutions. Some schools have an application form posted on their site that you can download and print or save to a disk. The latter choice allows for you to type in your responses without the hassles of using a typewriter.<sup>21</sup>

Another Internet option is the Common Application. According to information found on Embark.com, "The Common Application is a college application form which looks like most others. It is sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School

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<sup>20</sup> Eileen Ogintz, "Families using vacations to tour college campuses," *The Plain Dealer*, June 10, 2001, p.1-2.

<sup>21</sup> Lisa Guernsey, "Spam Your Way to a Good Education; Online Application Forms Add to College Admissions Frenzy," *The New York Times*, December 23, 1999, p.1.

Principals.” The Common Application has been available for 25 years, but recently the process was simplified even further, by putting it on the web.<sup>22</sup>

The form does not come from one specific institution, but once it is filled out, it can be photocopied and mailed to about 227 colleges around the country. Some schools still require students to send additional personal information, but with this form the students can escape the tedious work associated with filling out the traditional application.

Information about the Common Application, as well as the downloadable format (which can be sent electronically once filled out), is available at the website [commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).<sup>23</sup>

Today’s high school students are turning toward on-line application options for a number of reasons. The applications are available immediately and can be returned to the schools sooner. This convenience can make or break students when it comes to deadlines. With the Common Application, students spend less time on duplicating efforts when they only have to fill out one form. It can also affect last-minute changes in decision-making. The students do not have to wait for new forms to arrive.

To meet the demand of students, schools are more open to using Internet format applications. However, it is not just easier for students. It is easier for colleges and universities as well. In past years many schools took on the costly initiative of typing information from every application into the computer.<sup>24</sup> Applications sent electronically take away that extra cost. Some schools feel so strongly about this shift in technology that

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<sup>22</sup> Embark.com Info on the Common Application, <http://www.embark.com>, web site, May 12, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> The Common Application, Inc., <http://www.commonapp.org>, web site, May 12, 2002.

<sup>24</sup> Lisa Guernsey, “Admissions in Cyberspace: Web Sites Bring Complications for Colleges,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 9, 1998, p. a30.

they will only accept on-line applications. Other colleges will waive the application fee for students who apply on-line.

An example of this is the University of Dayton. To encourage students to apply via the web, the school waives the application fee. In 1998, the university had 6,500 applicants; 30 percent applied via the Internet.

Some admissions experts feel that technology is the wave of the future. Chris Munoz, the University of Dayton's Associate Provost for Enrollment Management said, "I predict in five years there will be no paper. Everybody will apply over the web."<sup>25</sup>

Although schools are still accepting traditional applications, the number of applications submitted on-line has grown tremendously. For the fall 2001 application period it grew from 67,535 to 114,900. These numbers show that our nation is moving toward a completely web-based application process.<sup>26</sup> An admissions professional at Villanova University in Pennsylvania said that for last year's admissions period, 18 percent of applications were received via the Internet.

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<sup>25</sup> Hannah, *Ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>26</sup> Neiberg, *Ibid.*, p.35.

## Virtual Tours

Although it cannot replace first hand information or the feeling you get from actually being on the campus, students and recruitment professionals feel that a virtual tour of a college campus is the next best thing to being there in person.

The availability of this resource helps students who just started their college search to narrow their choices. It also "...helps those students who cannot afford the expense of visiting campuses far from home."<sup>27</sup> A site called [www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com) provides virtual tours of many major campuses. Users can type in the name of the school or the state. The site shows if virtual tours/photo galleries or even live web cam pictures of campus life are available.<sup>28</sup> The founder of campus tours, Chris Carson "... believes that virtual tours have a 'galvanic capacity' to make a campus resonate in a perspective student's mind."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Renwick, *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>28</sup> Frances Katz, "Net Watch; Aids to college admission include rankings, tours," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, p.4.

<sup>29</sup> Andrea Jarrell, "Virtual Campus Tours," *CURRENTS*, March 1999.

## Chapter Three

### Procedures

The researcher used four sources for this thesis: 1) a search of on-line databases through the library at Rowan University; 2) a search through public search engines on the Internet; 3) a print survey; 4) e-mail interviews.

#### Literature Review

Searching the library databases at Rowan University was where the researcher began for this thesis. The Virtual Academic Library (VALE) including Lexis-Nexis, EBSCO Host, ABI inform and WebSpirs were searched for related topics. The key words used for this search were: “college admissions,” “college admissions and the Internet,” “college searches,” “college recruitment,” and “on-line college admissions.” This search produced more than 50 related articles.

The researcher used Internet search engines including excite.com, yahoo.com and lycos.com. The researcher used metasearch engines including mamma.com, dogpile.com and webcrawler.com. The key words “college admissions,” “college admissions and the Internet,” “college searches,” “college recruitment,” and “on-line college admissions” were used again. This search produced several hundred websites geared toward students and parents researching higher education.

The researcher contacted admissions departments at Rowan University and the competing schools to identify if these institutions had surveys that they distributed to freshman regarding what made them chose their institution. The researcher was directed

to The Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA for statistics in *The American Freshman*.

### Primary Research

A survey was conducted to discover what prospective students deem important to a college website. Surveys were distributed to high school juniors and seniors at public, private and parochial schools.

Based on the results of the survey, a series of interview questions were asked to admissions professionals at Villanova University and the University of Pennsylvania.

The results of the survey, interviews and the website evaluations appear in chapter four.

After collecting and comparing the results the researcher compiled information and tactics into a guide for college admissions and PR professionals to use when developing/updating their college's website.

## Chapter 4

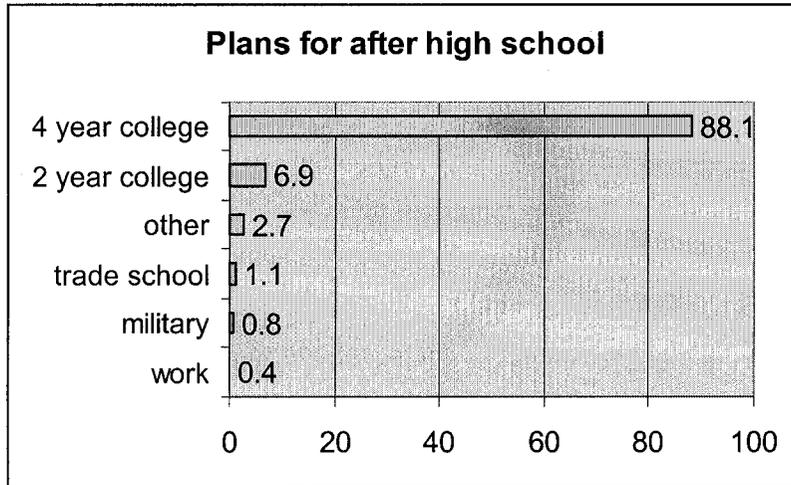
For primary research the author surveyed high school juniors and seniors of New Jersey schools. The survey used questions designed to determine the students “preferred” method of collecting data about colleges, what they deemed important on a college website and if they used other resources to research schools.

The author generated a list of all public and Catholic secondary schools in New Jersey. From that list 25 schools were randomly selected. Approximately 60 surveys were sent to administrators or distributed to students and six schools. The author received 261 viable responses. Following is a summary of the survey findings:

### *Question 1: What are your plans for after high school?*

This question was asked to determine approximately how many students were continuing their education, and essentially researching institutions of higher education. Respondents were allowed to choose one of the following responses:

- Two-year college
- Four-year college
- Military
- Trade school
- Work
- Other

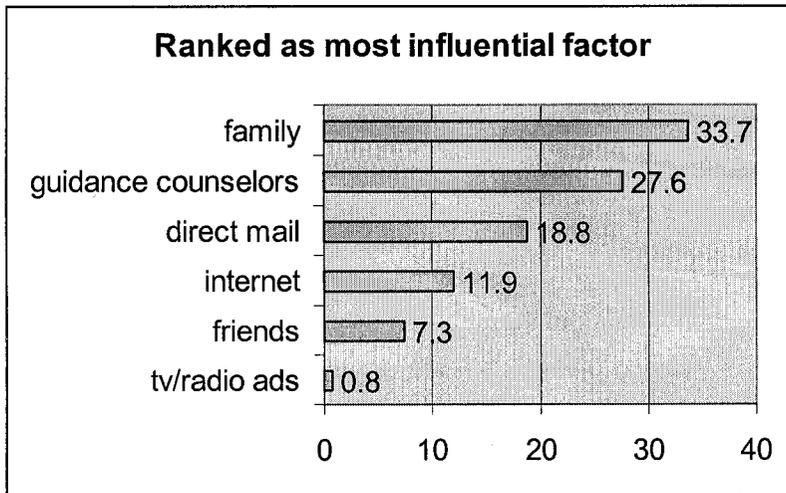


A majority of the respondents, around 88 percent, plan on attending a four-year college after high school. Almost seven percent of respondents plan on attending a two-year college. About three percent, chose other. The rest of the respondents, about two percent, said they would be joining the military, attending trade school or working. In the space provided on the survey for further explanation, most either left it blank or explained special circumstances regarding their education (special degree programs that were longer or shorter than answer choices provided in the survey).

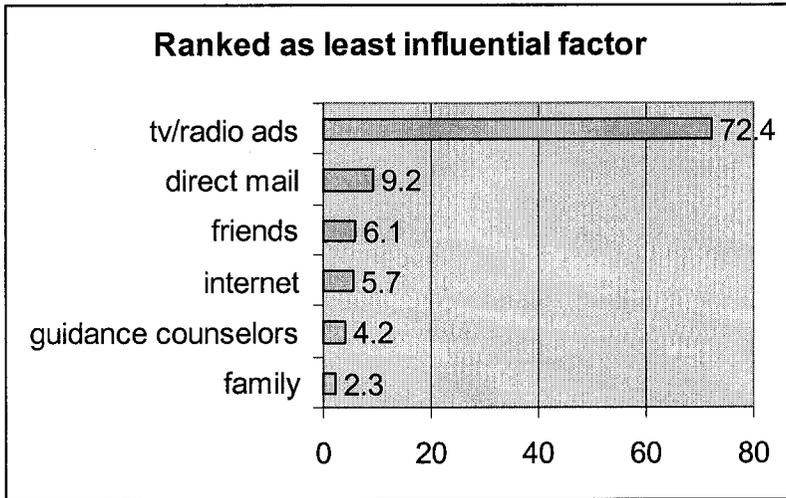
Question 2: Please rank the importance of these factors in your college search. (1=most influential factor, 2=second most influential factor to 6=least influential factor)

The purpose of this question was to determine which resources students relied on most in their college search.

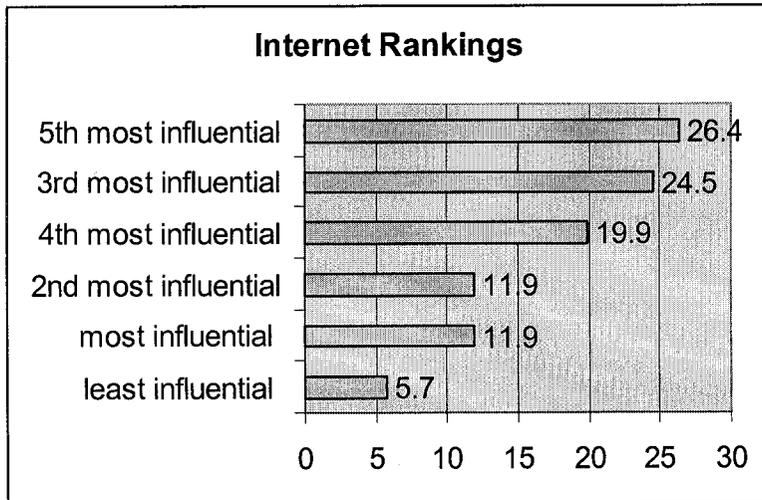
About 34 percent of students surveyed ranked family as the most influential factor in their college search.



A majority of respondents relied on TV/radio advertising the least. About 72 percent (189 of the 261 respondents) said it was the least influential factor in their college search.

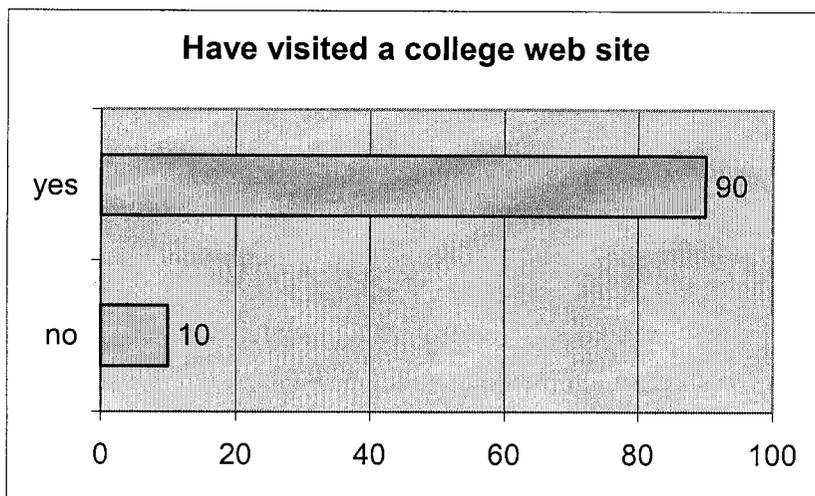


The Internet was ranked in a variety of ways. This chart shows how influential the Internet was to the students' college search.



*Question 3: Have you ever visited a college/university website?*

The purpose of this question was to determine the respondents' familiarity with sites maintained by colleges. According to the results, students were fairly familiar with college websites; 90 percent said they have visited such a site. Only ten percent said they hadn't.



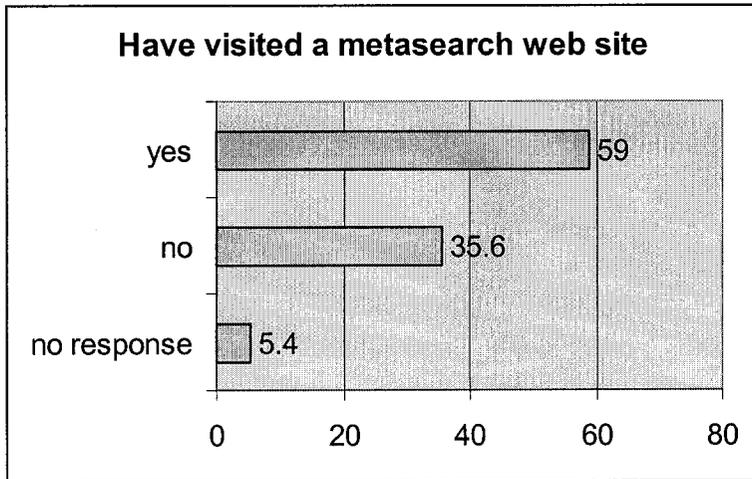
*Question 4: Have you ever used a college metasearch engine when researching college related information?*

*(for example: colleges.com/universities.com/Petersons.com or usnews.com)*

This question was asked to uncover the importance of college related sites. Many of these sites are commercial; therefore colleges and universities have to pay to be a part of them. The responses to this question could be helpful in the college/universities' decision to pay for these services.

Almost 60 percent of respondents said they have visited metasearch sites when researching college related information. About 36 percent\* of the respondents have not visited such a site.

\* For questions four through eight, numbers do not equal 100 percent because those who have not visited college sites (answered "no" to question 3) skipped to the end of the survey as per the author's request.



For question five students were asked to check the response they agreed with most.

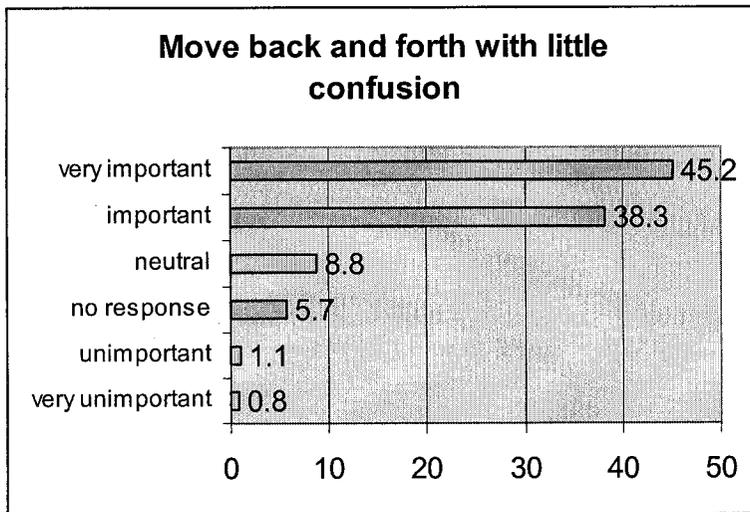
Responses included:

- Very important
- Important
- Neutral
- Unimportant
- Very Unimportant

Question 5: For the following questions please evaluate the importance of these aspects of a college/university website.

5a. That you can move back and forth through the site with little confusion.

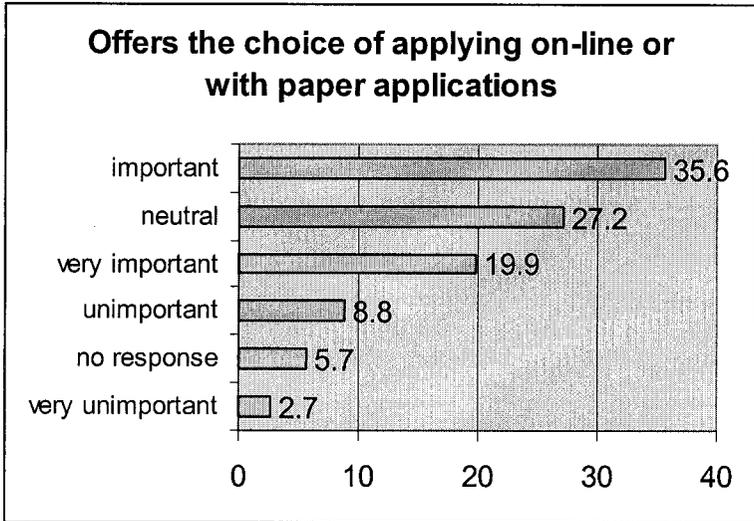
The majority of students, about 85 percent said it was a “very important” or “important” aspect of the site. About nine percent of the respondents were neutral about the importance of moving back and forth through the site. Only two percent said it was an “unimportant” or “very unimportant” aspect of the site.



5b. That the school offers the choice of applying on-line or with paper applications.

This question was asked because related research shows a trend toward applying on-line. The author wanted to discover if the students surveyed agreed with what seems to be a growing national trend.

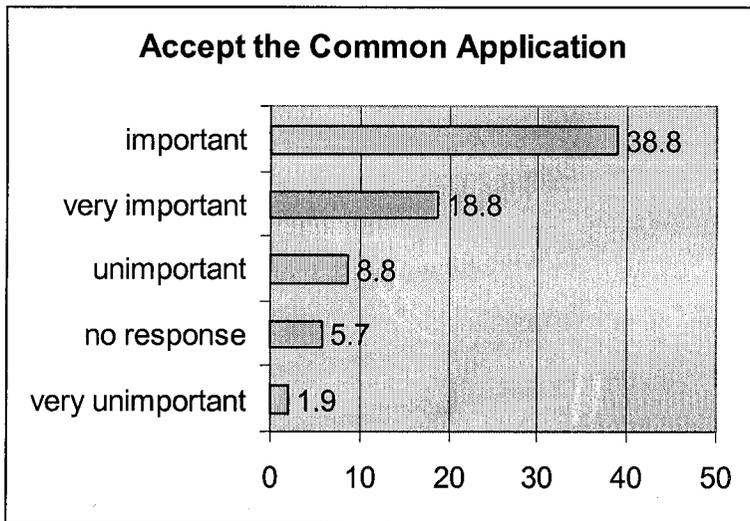
About 36 percent of respondents said it was a “very important” aspect of the site. About 27 percent of the respondents were neutral about the importance of application choice. About 20 percent of respondents said it was an “important” aspect of the site. Around 12 percent said it was an “unimportant” or “very unimportant” aspect of the site.



5c. That the school accepts the Common Application.

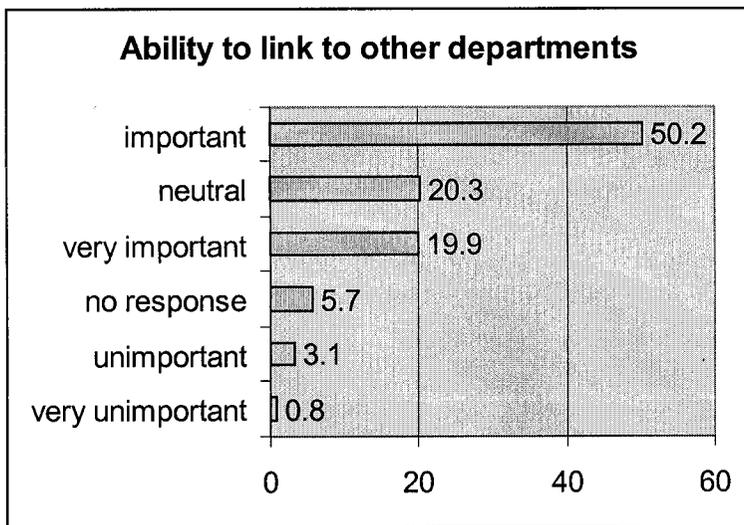
This question was asked to determine the importance of use of the Common Application by colleges. The response could be helpful to schools in determining if they should move toward this format.

About 60 percent of respondents said it was a “very important” or “important” aspect of the site. Around 9 percents said it was “unimportant” that the school accept the Common Application. About 27 percent of the respondents were neutral about the importance of use of the Common Application. Around 2 percent said it was “very unimportant” that the school accept the Common Application.



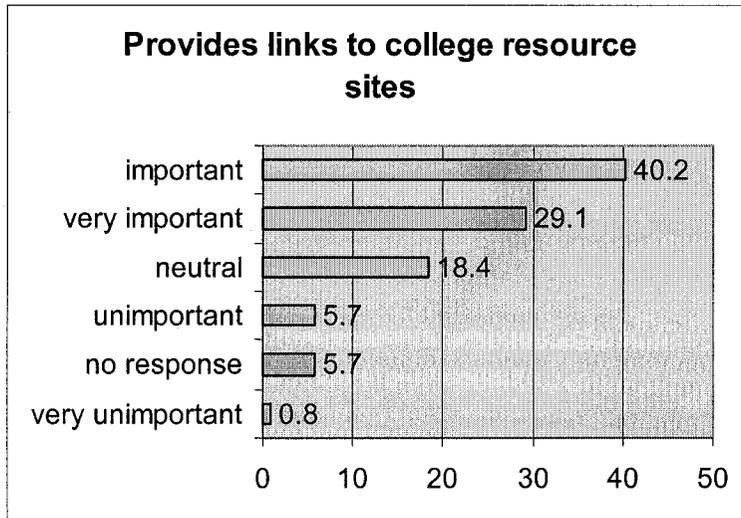
5d. That the site offers users the ability to link to other departments.

A majority of students, about 50 percent of respondents, said it was a “very important” aspect of the site. About 20 percent of the respondents were neutral about the importance of links. About 20 percent of respondents, said it was an “important” aspect of the site. Around four percent said it was an “unimportant” or “very unimportant” that the links to other departments were offered.



5e. That the site provides links to college resource sites (finaid.org/scholarship sites/etc.)

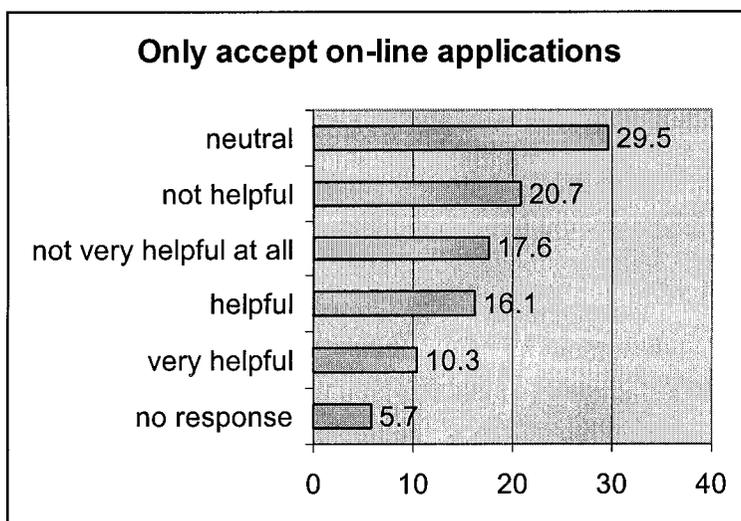
About 70 percent of respondents said it was a “very important” or “important” aspect of the site. About 18 percent were neutral about the importance of the links. Around seven percent said it was “unimportant” or “very unimportant” that the links to resource sites were offered.



*Question 6: How helpful is it if college/universities accept only on-line applications?*

This question was asked to determine students' proclivity toward applying on-line if it were the only means offered.

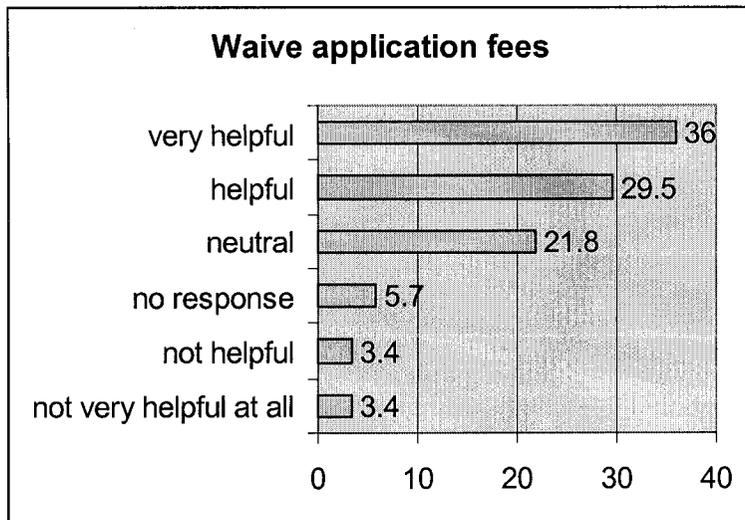
About 30 percent of students were neutral about how helpful it would be. About 39 percent said it would be "not helpful" or "not very helpful at all" if the schools offered the on-line only option. Around 26 percent of respondents said it was a "very helpful" or "helpful" aspect of the site.



Question 7: How helpful is it if colleges/universities waive application fees if you apply on-line?

This question was asked to see if students, opinion about applying on-line would be favorable if the fees were waived. Responses can be helpful in the colleges/universities' decision to take on such a costly endeavor.

About 60 percent of respondents said it was a “very helpful” or “helpful” aspect of the site. About 22 percent of students were neutral about how helpful the fee waiver would be. About seven percent said it would be “not helpful” or “not very helpful at all” if fees were waived for those who applied on-line.

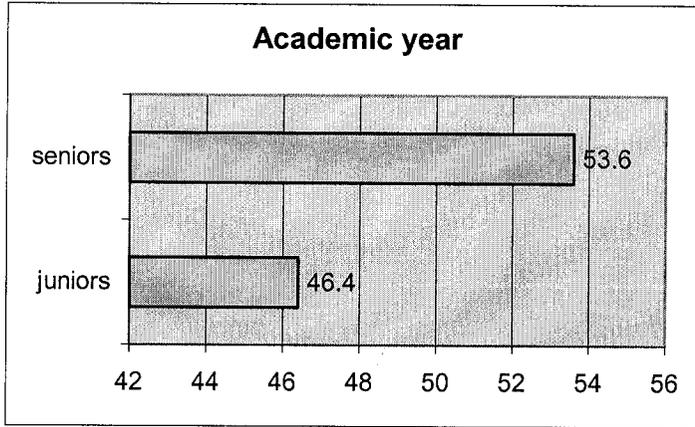


Question 8: If you were designing a college's Web site, what might you include that most don't?

Because this was an open-ended question, many students left it blank. While others said they could not think of changes to be made. Of those who responded 51 percents said they would like to see real life depictions of the school (virtual tours, pictures, chat rooms with current students, and student e-mail addresses so they can ask questions).

*Question 9: What academic year are you?*

Of the 261 respondents, 140 respondents (53. percent were seniors; 121 (46.4 percent) were juniors.



*Question 10: What high school do you attend?*

18.8 percent attend Mater Dei High School (Catholic) in New Monmouth, NJ.

19.2 percent attend Paramus High School (Public) in Paramus, NJ.

12.6 percent attend Shore Regional High School (Public) in Ocean, NJ.

19.2 percent attend Toms River East High School (Public) in Toms River, NJ.

10.7 percent attend Villa Victoria Academy (Catholic) in Ewing, NJ.

19.2 percent attend Williamstown High School (Public) in Williamstown, NJ.

## Chapter Five

### Summary

The purpose of this paper was to determine the impact of the Internet on college recruitment and admissions. The author attempted to discover how its use has changed college admissions, how students research colleges and the impact the Internet will have on the future of college recruitment.

The author conducted related research through Rowan University databases, Internet searches and e-mail interviews. The findings are presented in chapter two. In addition, the author conducted a survey of about 275 high school juniors and seniors from randomly selected public and Catholic schools in New Jersey. These students were surveyed to determine Internet usage patterns for college searches, what they value on a college website, and what they would like to see on college/university sites. The findings of this survey are presented in chapter four.

The author based the following recommendations on these primary data findings and the secondary data found through the literature search.

### Conclusions

The conclusions of the research can be summarized in the following list of tips and suggestions for making college web sites more user friendly. This list is not intended to be comprehensive, but it includes suggestions for drawing traffic to college sites and serving those who use them most—the students.

**Tip #1-Use family as an untapped resource.**

While some schools may already be doing this, the author's research shows that the high school students trust their parents'/families' opinions. They ranked them as the most influential factor in the college search.

Targeting the parents/family members in a portion of the web site or in traditional recruitment pieces will keep them involved. These people have a vested interest in this topic because it will determine their child's future. Keeping them interested and informed may drive students to students to the research the institution based on family recommendation.

**Tip #2- Be careful when choosing methods of advertisement.**

Although television and radio are still effective means of communicating with mass publics, they may not necessarily be suited toward the age group colleges and universities are targeting. According to the author's research, TV/Radio advertising was the least influential factor in the college search. The advent of the technology has given today's youth exposure to computers and different methods of collecting information. So where a few years ago it might have been a wise investment to advertise on TV or radio, today it might be a wiser investment to advertise on media that are highly trafficked by youth. A banner ad on web sites with direct links to the college home page is growing in popularity for colleges and universities. In the age of immediate gratification, simply clicking on this advertisement gives the users opportunity to gather more information. Using banner ads offers colleges the opportunity to target different audiences. They can run separate banners for each audience or even choose or create a flashing banner to target multiple audiences.

**Tip #3-Offer the opportunity to apply on-line.**

If the institution has the information technology capabilities to offer on-line applications, it is a good idea. According to the author's research, students value the opportunity to get an application on-line. It is easier for students and admissions professionals. Students can get the form and fill it out immediately. Sometimes they can even send it back immediately via computer. Because the information is already in the computer, it is easier for admissions to keep track of the information received by applicants. The ease that Internet applications offers has affected some schools enough to waive application fees for students. Although a costly endeavor, the waiver will encourage more students to apply via Internet. If the institution cannot afford this, offering a discount/incentive can promote the Internet application process.

**Tip #4-Consider joining a metasearch engine.**

If the school's site is not drawing much attention, it might be worth the investment to subscribe to a metasearch engine. Researchers type in criteria and schools matching those criteria come up in a list of results. Students who may have never come across the institution or who might not have been targeted by the admissions office can become potential applicants.

**Tip#5-Make the site easy to navigate.**

Students and parents visiting the site must be able to move through the site easily without getting lost. Clearly marked links and the opportunity to move back to the start page can make the travels through the site a more pleasant experience. Negative experiences with the school's site can lead to a negative attitude about the school. The

school's site is the perfect opportunity to make a good first impression on potential students and their families.

The author's research shows that students favor links to other departments. Making it easy for them to get more information about the things that interest them will keep them moving through the school's web site, which offers the school more opportunities to impress the visitors.

**Tip #6-Offer virtual tours.**

If the institution has the information technology capabilities to offer virtual tours it is a good idea. According to the author's research, 51 percent of students surveyed, said they'd like to have access to real school information. They said they would like to see "real" pictures of dorms/facilities and campus life. Virtual tours offer students and parents opportunities to explore the campus further without *actually* having to visit the campus. They can leave a lasting impression in a time when the minds of students are being overwhelmed with college choices.

**Tip #7-Make the most of "unofficial information" on web sites.**

Most students take recruitment pieces (including web sites) for what they are—advertising. They realize that much of them contain information that highlights the schools better qualities and shows things that are "set up." Because of this, the students desire "real information" and "real interaction." Give them what they want and encourage the "real interaction." According to the author's research, some students suggested they would like to see chat sessions with real students as a part of the school's site. If it is not provided for them, they will go find it elsewhere. Setting up chat sessions and providing e-mails of key students and staff can quench their desire for knowledge.

**Tip #8-Don't forget about traditional methods of recruitment.**

Although the Internet has become a powerful marketing tool for colleges and universities, the author's research shows it has not overpowered traditional recruitment methods. Guidance counselors and direct mail still play a large role in the students' college search.

Targeting guidance counselors with informational materials and providing them with resources on the school's site will help draw attention to the institution and generate traffic to the web site.

For years direct mail has been the main means of recruiting students. It works because it gets the school's information into the student's home uninvited. But with the Internet, the students have to go looking for or stumble across the information. Supplementing this method by putting the school's web address on the recruitment literature can drive students to the web site for further research and solidify their decision.

Recommendations for further study

This study only covered a small percentage of New Jersey high school students. Colleges and universities nationwide can benefit from more in-depth research on the topic in general.

Another topic for research could be a comprehensive survey of all institutions of higher education to see what applications methods they use and determine which ones are more popular.

A study of the most visited metasearch engines and an evaluation of what information they provide can help colleges and universities decide if it is worth the investment to subscribe to their services.

Another study could be examining the number of applications that the schools accepting the Common Application receive. Then comparing those numbers with the number of applications received by schools that use their own form.

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## Appendix

Hi. My name is Maureen Constantino. I am a graduate student at Rowan University, where I am conducting research for my thesis. And I need your help! Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey about your plans after high school. Thank you for your time!

1. What are your plans for after high school? (please choose *one* of the following)  
 4 year college  
 2 year college  
 Trade school  
 Military  
 Work  
 Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
2. Please rank the importance of these factors in your college search. (1=most influential factor, 2=second most influential factor to 6=least influential factor.)  
 Direct mail from the school  
 Guidance counselors/other high school resources  
 Family  
 Friends  
 The Internet  
 TV/Radio Advertising
3. Have you ever visited a college/university Web site? (If no, please skip to question 9)  
 yes  no
4. Have you ever used a college metasearch engine when researching college related information? (for example: colleges.com/universities.com/Petersons.com or usnews.com)  
 yes  no
5. For the following questions please evaluate the importance of these aspects of a college/university Web site. (Check the one you agree with most.)
  - a. That you can move back and forth through the site with little confusion.  
 Very important  
 Important  
 Neutral  
 Unimportant  
 Very unimportant
  - b. That the school offers students the choice of applying on-line or with paper applications.  
 Very important  
 Important  
 Neutral  
 Unimportant  
 Very unimportant
  - c. That the school accepts the Common Application.  
 Very important  
 Important  
 Neutral  
 Unimportant  
 Very unimportant

d. That the site offers users the ability to link to other departments.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Very important
- \_\_\_\_\_ Important
- \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral
- \_\_\_\_\_ Unimportant
- \_\_\_\_\_ Very unimportant

e. That the site provides links to college resource sites (financialaid.org/scholarshipsites/etc)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Very important
- \_\_\_\_\_ Important
- \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral
- \_\_\_\_\_ Unimportant
- \_\_\_\_\_ Very unimportant

6. How helpful is it if colleges/universities only accept on-line applications?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Very helpful
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helpful
- \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral
- \_\_\_\_\_ Not helpful
- \_\_\_\_\_ Not very helpful at all

7. How helpful is it if colleges/universities waive application fees if you apply on-line?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Very helpful
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helpful
- \_\_\_\_\_ Neutral
- \_\_\_\_\_ Not helpful
- \_\_\_\_\_ Not very helpful at all

8. If you were designing a college's web site, what might you include that most don't?

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9. What academic year are you?

\_\_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_\_ Senior

10. What high school do you attend?

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**Maria Rosado**, Geography/Anthropology, along with student Heather Schiffer presented the paper titled "Conservation and Paleopathology of Diaguita Skeletal Remains of Chile's Semiarid North" at the 20th Annual Northeast Conference on Andean Archaeology and Ethnohistory held in Ontario in November.

**Elliot Schreiber**, Emeritus/Psychology, presented "A Study of Violent Children and Their Parents" at the Annual Convention of the Eastern Psychological Association in Washington, D.C. in April. He also had his study "Hypnosis for Fear of Flying" published in the November 2001 issue of the "Australian Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis."

**Marilyn Shontz and Holly Willett**, Secondary Education/Foundations of Education, presented "Performance Evaluation for School Library Media Education Programs" at the convention of the American Association of School Librarians in Indianapolis in November.

**Lori Stephans**, Chemistry and Physics, received a \$38,847 grant for the project "Reconstruction of Fluoroacrylate Surfaces" from the Research Corporation, Cottrell College Science Award. She also received a \$400,200 grant for the project "Acquisition of Funds for NMR Instrumentation to Enhance Undergraduate Research at Two Institutions in South Jersey" from the National Science Foundation, Major Research Instrumentation.

## Study Reveals Why Students Choose Rowan

For 13 years, the University has been surveying incoming freshman to determine why they chose to attend Rowan. This year, all 949 incoming freshman who attended orientation responded. Following are some significant findings.

-- Primary reasons students chose Rowan include: less expensive (69%), major has a good reputation (56%), was the right size (54%) and Rowan has a very good academic reputation (54%).

-- Rowan was the first choice for 66% of freshmen who were accepted.

-- Students selected their major for: quality of the program (33%), better employment opportunities (22%) and a love/like/interest in the subject (13%).

-- Freshmen said the principal reason they decided to pursue a college education was to get a better job (79%), make more money (73%) and to learn more about things that interest them (70%).

-- The most helpful resources for students in the decision to attend Rowan were parents (59%), Rowan students (38%), the Rowan web site (34%) and friends or relatives (33%).

## Rowan Radio Wins Crystal Award of Excellence

Rowan Radio 89.7 WGLS-FM earned the Crystal Award of Excellence for its student-produced documentary "Facing the Facts: The Use and Abuse of Alcohol" in the fifth annual Communicator Awards international audio competition. The station also received honorable mention in the education category for The Rowan Radio Magic Hat Storytime.

WGLS-FM members produced "Facing the Facts" over a 12-week period as part of their requirements for the advan-

The Rowan Radio Magic Hat Storytime is a continuing summertime program encouraging reading among children and families. The program is sponsored by the Rowan University Educational Opportunity Fund/Minority Achievement Program, the College of Communication and the Students for Literacy Club. This is the second year The Rowan Radio Magic Hat Storytime received an award in the competition.

The Communicator Awards is a

# WEIGHTED NATIONAL NORMS FOR ALL FRESHMEN, FALL 2000

	ALL BACC.	ALL 4-YR	ALL UNIV.	ALL BLACK	PUBLIC	FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES				UNIVERSITIES		BLACK COLLEGES	
	INSTE.	COLLEGES	VERSITIES	COLLEGES		ALL PRIV.	NONSECT.	CATHOLIC	OTH. REL.	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
<b>Reasons noted as very important in deciding to go to college</b>													
My parents wanted me to go	35.7	36.9	33.7	49.1	39.1	34.1	31.7	35.6	36.3	34.1	32.5	51.5	44.3
I could not find a job	4.9	5.2	4.3	8.7	6.1	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.6	3.3	10.1	6.1
Wanted to get away from home	21.4	20.9	22.2	29.5	20.7	21.1	21.3	18.9	21.9	22.3	21.8	27.7	32.9
To be able to get a better job	71.6	72.0	70.8	78.3	74.4	68.9	69.1	71.5	67.5	71.9	67.1	79.3	76.2
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	64.5	63.7	65.9	73.3	62.0	65.9	67.7	66.3	63.5	63.7	73.6	73.0	74.1
To improve my reading and study skills	41.1	42.7	38.7	62.4	43.4	41.7	41.1	44.3	41.3	38.2	40.3	64.2	58.9
There was nothing better to do	3.4	3.3	3.6	5.9	3.5	3.1	3.1	2.7	3.2	3.5	3.9	6.8	4.2
To make me a more cultured person	40.5	38.9	43.0	50.5	35.8	43.0	45.1	42.8	40.6	40.0	53.4	47.2	57.1
To be able to make more money	70.0	69.9	70.3	82.9	74.0	64.5	64.2	69.3	62.5	71.9	64.7	84.2	80.5
To learn more about things that interest me	76.6	75.5	78.4	80.0	74.3	77.0	79.2	75.2	75.2	77.1	82.7	79.2	81.6
To prepare myself for graduate or professional school	56.9	54.9	60.0	75.1	54.7	55.3	54.6	59.9	53.9	58.3	65.7	73.8	77.8
A mentor/role model encouraged me to go	13.3	14.5	11.5	25.7	14.8	14.1	12.8	14.2	15.5	11.5	11.5	28.1	21.1
To get training for a specific career	71.8	73.2	69.4	82.0	76.1	69.5	67.5	70.7	71.5	72.1	60.2	82.8	80.4
<b>Reasons noted as very important in influencing student's decision to attend this particular college</b>													
My relatives wanted me to come here	7.8	8.2	7.1	14.1	8.7	7.5	6.2	8.2	8.8	7.1	7.3	15.8	10.8
My teacher advised me	3.6	4.1	2.9	6.4	4.3	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.6	2.7	3.8	7.2	4.7
This college has a very good academic reputation	55.2	51.8	60.8	52.9	45.4	60.1	62.4	60.4	57.2	56.4	75.5	42.4	72.9
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	27.9	25.6	31.7	33.0	24.1	27.5	26.3	29.3	28.0	31.6	31.7	31.8	35.2
I was offered financial assistance	32.0	35.9	25.6	44.8	27.2	47.3	42.3	51.6	51.3	22.4	36.3	49.1	36.6
This college offers special educational programs	21.2	21.9	20.1	31.9	21.5	22.4	23.6	20.6	21.8	19.1	23.6	30.4	34.8
This college has low tuition	20.3	21.3	18.7	27.3	31.8	7.6	6.7	9.1	8.0	22.9	4.3	36.3	9.7
High school counselor advised me	6.1	6.6	5.2	9.9	7.2	5.8	6.2	7.4	4.5	4.9	6.0	11.6	6.5
Private college counselor advised me	2.1	2.4	1.7	4.1	1.7	3.2	2.9	3.5	3.4	1.4	3.1	4.4	3.5
I wanted to live near home	16.9	19.2	13.2	15.5	22.4	14.9	13.0	20.8	14.6	14.0	10.6	18.6	9.6
Not offered aid by first choice	5.5	5.8	5.2	9.7	5.7	5.9	5.4	7.2	5.8	5.3	5.0	10.9	7.6
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	29.7	26.7	34.4	36.8	22.3	32.3	34.3	32.7	29.8	30.2	48.9	27.6	54.2
This college's graduates get good jobs	50.9	48.4	54.8	55.5	44.0	54.2	57.5	56.4	49.1	51.3	66.6	48.8	68.3
I was attracted by the religious affiliation/orientation of this college	7.3	9.3	4.0	9.2	2.6	18.0	10.6	15.1	28.0	2.7	8.1	7.6	12.2
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	35.0	39.3	28.1	31.4	31.5	49.5	46.4	52.8	51.7	24.8	39.3	29.6	34.8
Not accepted anywhere else	3.2	3.3	3.0	4.2	3.7	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.6	3.1	2.8	5.0	2.7
Rankings in national magazines	9.8	7.3	13.6	12.6	5.5	9.7	11.4	7.9	8.6	11.3	22.0	6.5	24.3
Information from a website [2]	6.8	6.6	7.1	11.3	6.0	7.4	8.3	6.1	7.0	6.4	9.7	9.0	15.5
I was admitted through an Early Action or Early Decision program	7.1	6.9	7.3	6.7	5.2	9.2	11.6	7.2	7.2	5.1	15.0	5.8	8.5
My friends are attending [2]	5.8	5.6	6.1	5.8	7.0	3.6	2.7	3.5	4.9	7.1	2.6	7.0	3.4
I was offered: [2]													
an athletic scholarship	4.8	5.9	3.1	8.5	4.0	8.6	5.7	8.8	12.0	2.8	4.0	10.4	5.0
a merit-based scholarship	20.9	23.2	17.1	20.3	14.0	35.2	32.4	38.1	37.1	15.0	24.4	18.3	24.0
a need-based scholarship	11.4	12.5	9.5	12.1	6.7	20.4	19.9	21.5	20.5	6.6	19.3	12.4	11.6

**WEIGHTED NATIONAL NORMS FOR ALL FRESHMEN, FALL 2001**

REASONS NOTED AS VERY IMPORTANT IN:	ALL BACG.	ALL 4-YR	ALL UN-	ALL BLACK	PUBLIC	FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES					UNIVERSITIES		BLACK COLLEGES	
	INSTS.	COLLEGES	VERSITIES	COLLEGES		ALL PRIV.	NONSECT.	CATHOLIC	OTH REL.	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	
<b>Deciding to go to college</b>														
My parents wanted me to go	33.3	34.7	31.3	45.7	37.2	31.3	29.9	32.1	32.7	31.7	29.5	49.1	38.3	
I could not find a job	4.9	5.3	4.3	7.6	6.1	4.2	4.2	4.5	4.0	4.7	2.9	8.7	5.1	
Wanted to get away from home	20.9	20.7	21.3	26.8	20.8	20.4	20.5	18.7	21.1	21.1	21.9	25.9	28.9	
To be able to get a better job	70.3	70.2	70.4	78.6	72.4	67.3	67.9	69.1	65.7	71.6	66.1	81.3	72.8	
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	65.8	65.0	66.9	72.7	63.4	67.1	68.8	67.2	65.0	64.8	74.4	71.2	75.9	
To improve my reading and study skills	41.7	43.4	38.9	60.7	43.8	42.8	42.3	44.7	42.6	38.6	40.2	62.5	56.9	
There was nothing better to do	3.5	3.5	3.6	5.0	3.7	3.2	3.5	2.6	3.1	3.5	4.1	5.3	4.4	
To make me a more cultured person	42.0	40.5	44.5	49.5	37.3	44.7	46.4	43.9	42.8	41.6	55.1	44.5	60.2	
To be able to make more money	69.8	69.8	69.8	82.0	73.3	65.1	65.9	68.3	62.6	71.4	64.1	84.1	77.4	
To learn more about things that interest me	77.8	76.6	79.8	78.2	75.4	78.2	80.1	76.8	76.4	78.6	83.9	76.1	82.8	
To prepare myself for graduate or professional school	57.4	55.7	60.2	70.4	55.0	56.5	58.4	59.5	55.2	58.4	66.3	64.0	84.4	
A mentor/role model encouraged me to go	13.2	14.5	11.1	24.1	15.1	13.7	11.9	14.6	15.6	11.1	11.1	25.4	21.3	
To get training for a specific career	71.3	72.7	69.0	82.9	76.0	68.4	65.4	71.5	70.8	71.3	60.8	84.0	80.5	
<b>Influencing student's decision to attend this particular college</b>														
My relatives wanted me to come here	7.5	7.9	6.8	12.1	8.5	7.3	6.5	7.3	8.1	6.9	6.6	12.3	11.9	
My teacher advised me	3.9	4.4	3.1	6.7	4.7	4.0	4.2	4.0	3.8	2.9	3.8	7.3	5.4	
This college has a very good academic reputation	56.2	51.2	64.0	55.1	44.5	60.0	62.2	61.0	56.8	60.2	77.5	41.9	82.6	
This college has a good reputation for its social activities	27.9	25.6	31.5	26.8	24.7	26.8	26.5	29.7	25.9	31.2	32.6	22.9	34.9	
I was offered financial assistance	33.2	37.6	26.2	40.2	29.1	49.0	42.8	52.8	55.0	23.4	36.5	40.3	39.9	
This college offers special educational programs	21.6	22.3	20.6	32.7	22.2	22.6	22.4	21.5	23.2	19.9	22.8	29.7	39.1	
This college has low tuition	20.8	21.0	20.5	28.0	31.4	7.1	6.0	8.4	7.7	25.1	3.9	37.4	8.0	
High school counselor advised me	6.4	7.0	5.5	8.2	7.7	6.1	6.8	7.0	4.8	5.3	6.0	8.6	7.4	
Private college counselor advised me	2.1	2.4	1.6	3.1	1.8	3.3	3.0	3.5	3.6	1.3	2.7	2.8	3.6	
I wanted to live near home	16.9	19.0	13.5	18.0	22.0	14.9	13.6	20.3	14.0	14.6	9.9	22.2	9.2	
Not offered aid by first choice	5.8	6.0	5.6	8.8	5.8	6.3	5.8	7.2	6.4	5.9	4.7	9.3	7.8	
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	30.3	26.5	36.2	38.8	21.6	33.0	35.0	32.0	30.8	32.5	49.5	24.3	68.6	
This college's graduates get good jobs	51.0	47.3	58.9	54.3	42.2	54.0	56.6	56.4	49.6	54.2	68.8	43.6	76.3	
I was attracted by the religious affiliation/orientation of the college	6.4	8.0	4.0	7.8	2.5	15.2	8.7	15.3	23.5	2.5	9.4	4.5	14.5	
I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	35.2	39.4	28.6	33.7	31.2	50.2	47.0	53.7	52.7	25.0	41.7	31.3	38.6	
Not accepted anywhere else	3.3	3.4	3.1	4.3	3.8	2.7	3.1	2.4	2.4	3.2	2.6	5.3	2.3	
Rankings in national magazines	11.1	7.8	16.1	15.8	5.8	10.5	12.9	7.7	8.9	14.1	23.5	5.8	35.7	
Information from a website	8.5	8.2	9.0	13.3	7.3	9.3	10.3	7.7	8.8	8.2	11.9	10.1	19.7	
I was admitted through an Early Action or Early Decision program	7.7	7.4	8.1	6.1	4.9	10.6	13.3	7.6	8.4	5.7	16.8	4.1	10.0	
My friends are attending	5.7	5.8	5.6	4.3	7.3	3.8	3.2	3.3	4.7	6.5	2.4	4.3	4.5	
I was offered:														
an athletic scholarship	4.5	5.6	2.9	5.7	4.0	7.8	4.7	8.6	11.5	2.7	3.7	6.9	3.2	
a merit-based scholarship	21.6	24.4	17.3	17.7	14.4	37.7	33.9	40.5	41.3	14.7	26.6	11.7	29.2	
a need-based scholarship	12.3	13.8	10.2	12.6	7.9	21.8	20.5	22.6	23.0	7.5	20.1	12.8	12.1	