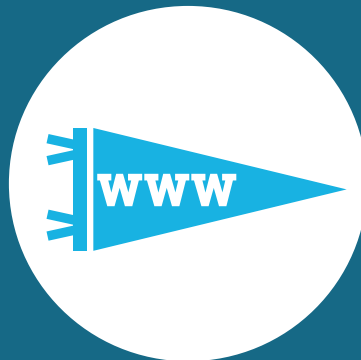


# 7 ADMISSION MARKETING TRENDS

2013 – 2014



## Today's college-bound students have more information at their fingertips than last year's high school grads.

**They are an empowered bunch**, with mobile devices close at hand, internet wherever they go and a vast variety of places both online and off to find out about colleges.

Though technology has made it easier for students to find out about any college faster and in more vivid detail, it has also made it more challenging for them to make decisions about which college to attend.

Stealth applications are flowing in to colleges, and a lingering question for admission departments is: What will your yield look like this year?

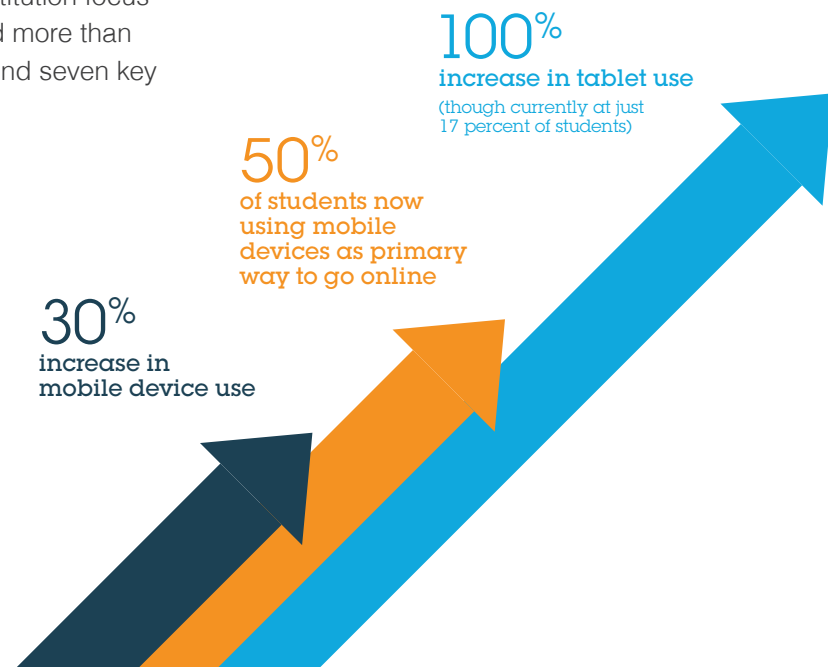
The answer to the yield issue need not focus only on the end of the evolving funnel, but also throughout it. Where should your institution focus admissions marketing? We surveyed more than 500 2014 high school grads and found seven key opportunity areas.

### Opportunity 1: Mobile

For students, engagement with colleges and just about everything else starts with mobile. So, for colleges, having a mobile-friendly site is absolutely crucial.

Compared to that of last year's junior class, mobile device use increased by 30 percent. Now, more than 50 percent of juniors are using mobile devices as their primary way to go online.

Tablet use is increasing at an even faster rate, with 100 percent increase in use vs. last year. Though just 17 percent of 2014s are using tablets as their main way to go online, the trend is only going upward.



What does this mean for colleges? First off, you need to ensure that your site is responsive to different types of devices, and at the very least, mobile-friendly. Should you create an app for admissions marketing? Probably not. More than two-thirds of juniors would prefer to use a mobile version of a college's website over downloading an app and having it appear on their phone. That preference has increased vs. last year's junior class.

Apple is the predominant brand of mobile device used – be it an iPhone or iPod Touch. Android devices are a close second. Regardless, your site should accommodate a variety of devices, including tablets.

### Opportunity 2: Texting

Nearly two-thirds of 2014s said, “A college could contact me via text, even if I have not contacted them” – a 20 percent increase from last year's junior

class. Even more, 77 percent of students said, “If a college has a message that is relevant to me, I want to know about it any time.”

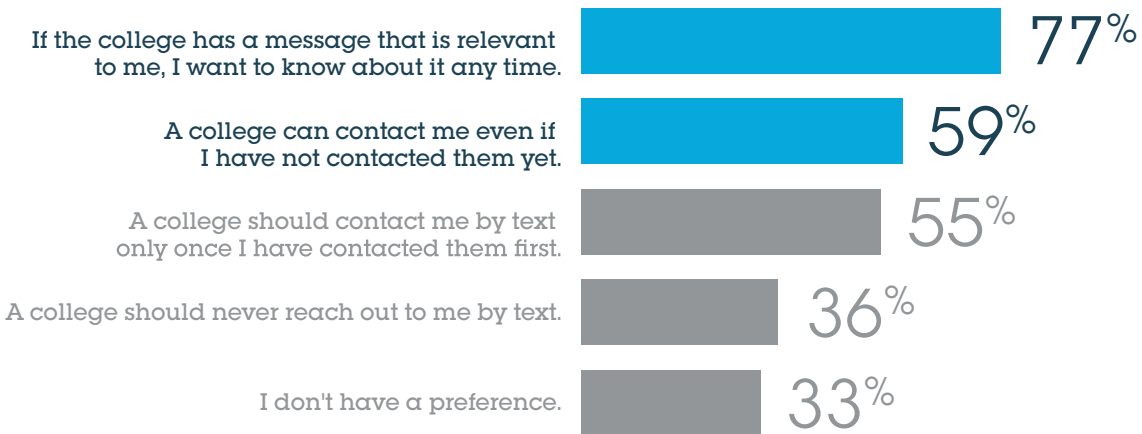
Does that mean that colleges can blast text ads to prospects? Likely not. What it does mean is if you have a personally relevant message for a student, it is OK to reach out by text. And that text should come from an official person, not just from “admissions.”

### Opportunity 3: Student Videos

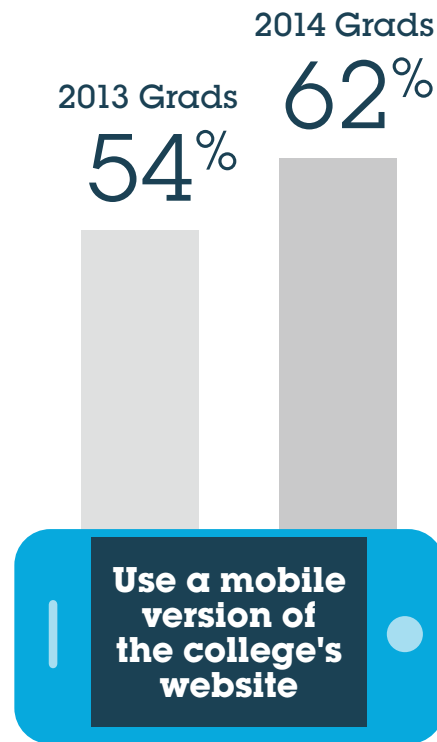
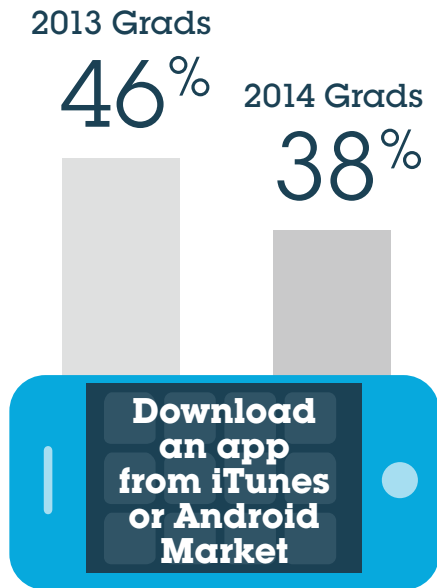
Students want to get the authentic campus experience, even if they aren't in a position to travel to your campus. So they can't get enough peer-to-peer video.

To illustrate that point, 64 percent of 2014s said they would be interested in viewing vlogs (video blogs).

### Texting Preferences



## Preferences for accessing a college website using a mobile device



Whereas interest in text blogs seems to be fading, based on previous research, more engaging vlogs can really show an inside look at your campus.

Additionally, 50 percent of juniors say that student videos (of campus) in general are of equal importance to professionally produced videos from a college.

### Opportunity 4: Campus Tours

To round out the authentic experience, students want to be able to tour campus while doing their investigating. About 51 percent say it is important or extremely important for a college to have a virtual tour. Though, when on campus, students still want the live human perspective; just one-third of 2014s say that a GPS-enabled app could actually replace a student-led tour.

### Opportunity 5: Your Institution's Website

Even though there are so many fragmented sources of college information available, students still consider colleges' websites centrally crucial to get the official and peer-to-peer perspective and research key areas. Nearly 82 percent of juniors reported that colleges' websites are influential or very influential.

Key pages cited by 2014s include: Academics and Majors (96 percent), Admission Facts (89 percent), Scholarship Estimators (88 percent), Application Pages (80 percent) and Campus Life (76 percent).

It may be fairly obvious that you should make those pages and tools easy to find from your main admissions page, though what might not be as obvious is that those pages need to be easy to call up when viewing them on a mobile device. Note that only 32 percent of 2014s said it is easy or very easy to view college sites on a mobile device.

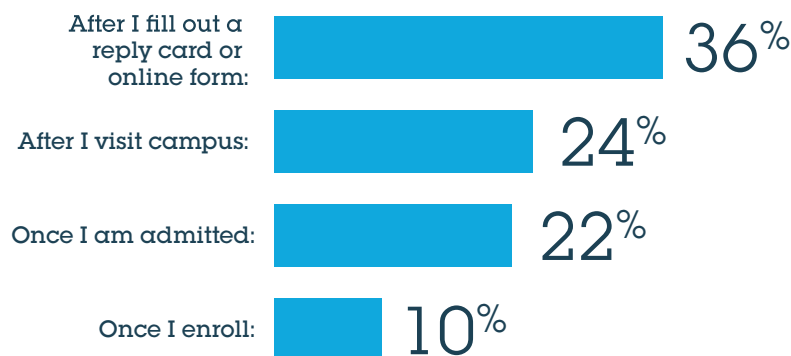
64%

of students are OK with providing their parents' names to a college they are considering.

76%

of students say e-mail is the best way to communicate with their parents.

### When is the best time to collect parent data?



#### Opportunity 6: Your Reps

Even though students are doing much of their investigative work online and want peer-to-peer communications, they also want to receive the official word from your admissions team.

Nearly 68 percent of 2014s say college admission officers are influential or very influential, and 41 percent say college fairs are useful or extremely useful. Additionally, calls to cell phones from official admission representatives, as opposed to enrolled students, are seen as acceptable if not welcome.

"I would be able to converse and ask questions about my plans for the future," said one student survey responder. "It would mean a lot and help me decide if I'd like to attend that college."

#### Opportunity 7: Parents

This generation of students is closer to their parents than previous generations. Thus, 2014s generally welcome colleges communicating with their parents.

Keep in mind that 2014s are empowered and in control of the process, so it's important to honor their preferences.

Sixty four percent of students are OK with providing their parents' names to a college they are considering, and they say the best time to collect parent data is: after I fill out a reply card or online form (36 percent), after I visit campus (24 percent) and once I am admitted (22 percent).

Email is still a primary way students want to communicate with colleges, and 76 percent of 2014s say that email is also the best way to communicate with their parents.

## Impact on Stealth Applicants

So, given all of these touch points, why are so many students still stealth, and what can be done about the stealth issue?

In previous Cappex research, stealth applicant behavior prior to application includes: visiting a college's website (74 percent), receiving a viewbook or letter from a college (more than 42 percent), visiting campus (33 percent) and attending an information session hosted by a college (22 percent).

To elaborate, 2014s said if they could not visit campus, to get a feel for a campus they would use college search sites (64 percent), attend college fairs at their school (55 percent) and also visit online college fairs (36 percent).

An important question is: What are you doing with those touch points to capture student contact information and interest in your institution? To start, are you taking every opportunity to capture the

email addresses/contact information of students who visit your website? Are your email messages providing a way to get students to subscribe to ongoing communications?

Additionally, how can you make it a priority to capture the email addresses and basic contact information from all students who attend a virtual tour or campus visit? One way is to direct students to a landing page to sign up for updates to student vlogs, events, information sessions, local visits or even departmental information.

By encouraging two-way communication and collecting contact information, especially email addresses, at key engagement points, you may find that stealth students may not be so stealth anymore.



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### Additional Information About Cappex

We welcome your comments and feedback on this study. Please contact **Chris Long**, president of Cappex at [clong@cappex.com](mailto:clong@cappex.com).

Cappex is dedicated to connecting students and colleges. Since our founding in 2006, we've helped nearly 5 million students achieve their college dreams, and more than 750 higher education clients with recruiting and enrollment business solutions. Every day, more than 50,000 high school students access one of Cappex's platforms.

We offer several solutions to colleges and universities that allow them to reach and connect with students in Cappex communities, and help them yield more enrollments by staying engaged with their applicants. We also help higher education institutions and foundations simplify their scholarship process so they can maximize the impact of the scholarships they award.

With nearly 5 million student community members, Cappex is a highly effective way to connect with students as they are actively discovering and researching colleges online.

To learn more about Cappex, visit [cappex.com/solutions](http://cappex.com/solutions).

Founded in 2006, Cappex is based in Chicago.