

SchoolFinder Group Canadian Student Survey 2011





SchoolFinder Group

About EDge / SchoolFinder Group

Edge Interactive was started by Chris Wilkins in 1995. Chris returned to Canada from the UK where he did his MBA at the London Business School and distinguished himself by leading a team that won European Business Plan of the Year (he's still pretty proud of this!). Part of his motivation in starting EDge was his frustration in finding the right business school for his needs. Now he just wants to change the world through better access to education – in his eyes everyone should be educated – go figure!

We're a Canadian, privately owned company, based in Toronto, but we work with students, educators, and organizations around the world. We are what would be called an Internet media company with our SchoolFinder Group of websites, AND we are an Internet technology business with our ezRecruit™ Customer Relationship Management (CRM) products.

We have about 25 people working full-time. During the summer months the business almost doubles with part-time students who help update the information on the sites and do some development work with us. True to our beliefs we hire a lot of students. We also hire a lot of people who come from outside Canada; in fact right now our staff includes people from China, India, Malaysia, Romania, Russia, Mexico and the USA – this is also true to our belief.



SchoolFinder Group

The EDGe Mission

**“Helping students find schools and
schools find students...
because our survival and prosperity
depends on an educated planet”**



SchoolFinder Group

Introduction

This is a survey of Canadian students in high school and post-secondary school (college and university). The purpose of the survey is to better understand what information they find important in looking for and applying to a post-secondary school, what sources they find important and what technology they use. We asked college and university students about their experiences in selecting their undergraduate institution.

The survey was fielded in March 2011. More than 1,000 students completed the survey. The incentive to complete the survey was the chance to win one of five \$50 cash prizes. The names originated in the SchoolFinder Group database of which we randomly selected 45,000 of 400,000.

A Cross Section of Canadian Students – Demographics

Gender	Female	75%
	Male	25%
Age	17 and under	39.2%
	18 to 21	49.5%
	22 to 25	11.3%

Gender – the responses were skewed to females which reflects to some degree the general skew in post-secondary education and also the tendency for females to participate in surveys.

Age – we had responses across all age brackets.

Location (Province)	British Columbia	16.6%
	Alberta	12.1%
	Saskatchewan	2.1%
	Manitoba	2.3%
	Ontario	60.6%
	Quebec	1.5%
	New Brunswick	1.3%
	Nova Scotia	2.5%
	PEI	0.6%
	Newfoundland & Labrador	0.5%
Location (Community)	Large city (>1 million)	27.6%
	Medium size city (250,001–1million)	29.8%
	Smaller town (<250,000)	30.1%
	In the country	12.5%

Location – we had responses from every province, with most students coming from Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta.

Community – it was an even split from small town to large city.

A Cross Section of Canadian Students – Education

Type of Student (All students)	High School	62.8%
	College or University	35.4%
	Recent Graduate	1.7%
College and University Students – Year of Study	Undergrad – 1 st year	33.2%
	Undergrad – 2 nd year	22.6%
	Undergrad – 3 rd year	14.9%
	Undergrad – 4 th year	9.0%
	Undergrad – recent graduate	2.7%
	College – 1 st year	10.4%
	College – 2 nd year	3.2%
	College – recent graduate	0.3%
	Postgrad – Master	2.9%
	Postgrad – recent graduate	0.8%

GPA	Percentage (College/University)	Percentage (High School)
95+	5.59 %	7.59 %
90 – 95	15.43 %	20.12 %
85 – 90	23.67%	29.57%
80 – 85	22.07 %	24.15 %
75 – 80	14.89 %	10.22 %
70 – 75	11.44 %	5.42 %
Below 70	4.26 %	2.32 %
Not applicable	2.66 %	0.62%

We had high school, college and university students (across different years) represented. 644 high school students and 376 college or university students completed the survey.

In terms of the incoming cohort of students i.e. high school, 80% have GPAs of 80% or above. The previous cohort i.e. college and university, have 70% with GPAs of 80% or above.



Application Process

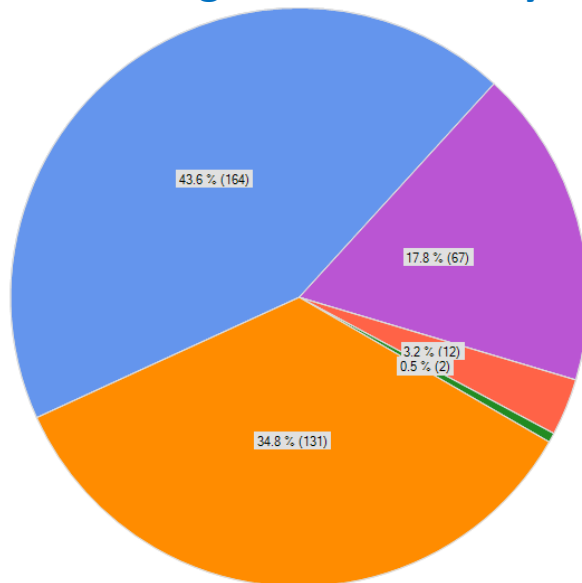
Number of Schools Applied to – The More the Merrier

We asked students how many schools they applied to, as well as the location of these schools.

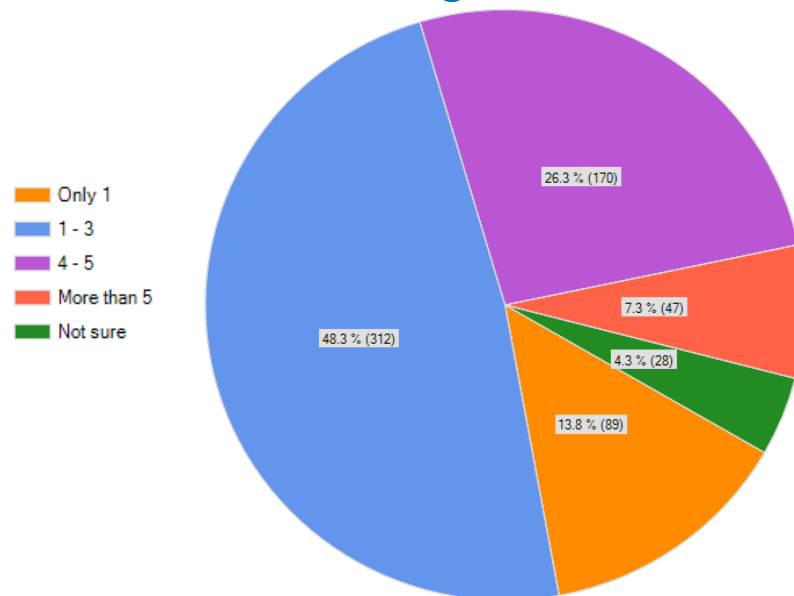
The majority of students applied to between 1 to 3 schools.

→ High school students are applying to more schools so the market is becoming more competitive.

College and University



High School



Location of Schools Applied to – Not Only in my Backyard

The high school cohort are applying to more schools out of province.

Location of School	Percentage (College/University)	Percentage (High School)
Within province	91.2%	93.5%
Outside of province	21.3%	25.9%
Outside of Country	4.5%	8.4%

34.3% of high school students are applying outside of their province and/or country.

25.8% of college/university students applied to schools outside of their province and/or country.

→ Cast a wider net to include students outside of your province as part of your recruitment initiatives.

Key Factors – Program, Program, Program

Program remained the most popular option across both cohorts.

It was also the most highly ranked choice.

- Of the high school students that chose program, 57% ranked it as number 1.
- Of the college/university students that chose program, 60.8% ranked it as 1.

→ Keep your program information up to date and distribute it as widely as possible (online, mobile, print, third party websites).

→ Target market your programs.

Rank (College/University)		Rank (High School)		Factor
1	66.5%	1	62.9%	Program
4	31.6%	2	39.4%	Academics
2	57.2%	3	36.8%	Location
5	19.7%	4	30.1%	Scholarships
3	33.2%	5	29.2%	Cost
6	17.8%	6	18.3%	Community
11	6.9%	7	14.4%	Co-op
10	8.2%	9	12.4%	Job Placement Record
7	15.2%	11	7.9%	School Size

Key Factors – Leveling the Playing Field

With the high school cohort there is a more even distribution of overall students between academics, location, scholarships and costs.

- For high school the range is between 39.4% to 29.2%.
- For college/university, it ranged from 57.2% to 19.7%.

Academics – its rank increased from 4 to 2 and overall percentage from 31.6% to 39.4%.

Location – its rank only fell from 2 to 3 but overall percentage dropped from 57.2% to 36.8%.

Scholarships – increased in rank from 5 to 4, but percentage wise from 19.7% to 30.1%.

Rank (College/University)		Rank (High School)		Factor
1	66.5%	1	62.9%	Program
4	31.6%	2	39.4%	Academics
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→ Concentrate on these factors evenly.

→ Scholarships are more important and location is not as crucial.

Key Factors – Career Help Counts

The high school cohort is more interested in co-op and job opportunities than the college and university was.

Co-op – jumped up in rank from 11 to 7 and 6.9% to 14.4% overall.

Job Placement Record – moved from 10 to 9 and up from 8.2% to 12.4%.

→ Focus on helping students with their long term goals.

→ It's not just about their academic plans but their future career paths.

Rank (College/University)		Rank (High School)		Factor
1	66.5%	1	62.9%	Program
4	31.6%	2	39.4%	Academics
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School Size is not as important for high school students – only 7.9% selected it.

→ Career-related factors have taken over school size in terms of importance.

School Sources of Information – Your High-Tech & High-Touch

Website is the most important and frequently used information source.

→ Keep your information up to date, make it easy to navigate.

Students are more interested in face-to-face time with someone at the school.

- Campus tour and student at the school both increased in rank and percentage.

→ Use current students in your recruitment strategy (testimonials, fairs, campus tours, call campaigns).

Rank (College/University)		Rank (High School)		School sources of information
1	94.7%	1	96.0%	Website
3	83.2%	2	87.6%	Campus Tour
4	79.8%	3	82.5%	Student at the School
2	83.4%	4	80.6%	Printed Material
5	66.5%	5	61.3%	Staff Member
6	27.1%	6	31.1%	Facebook Page
7	10.4%	7	16.6%	School's Blog
8	7.4%	8	11.2%	YouTube Page
9	4.5%	9	6.2%	Podcasts
11	2.1%	10	5.4%	Mobile App
10	2.4%	11	3.1%	Twitter Page

School Sources of Information – Think Readers Digest, Not Encyclopedia Britannica

Printed Material is also important but the overall percentage has dropped from 83.4% to 80.6%.

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10	2.4%	11	3.1%	Twitter Page

School Sources of Information – Social Media

Social media has increased in overall popularity but even combined, it does not carry as much weight as the other factors.

A recent Forrester study found “that only 6% of 12-17 year olds think brands should even have a social media presence and only 12% of 18-24 year olds would actually ‘make friends’ with them.”¹

¹<http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/7495.aspx>

Rank (College/University)		Rank (High School)		School sources of information
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4	79.8%	3	82.5%	Student at the School
6 - 11	53.9%	6-11	73.6%	SOCIAL MEDIA FACTORS

Rank (College/University)		Rank (High School)		School sources of information
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11	2.1%	10	5.4%	Mobile App
10	2.4%	11	3.1%	Twitter Page



twitter



Group Influence – Family Matters, F.R.I.E.N.D.S

Parents, Friends and Family are the most influential groups in both cohorts.

→ Provide information for parents on your website and printed material.

→ Include families in campus tours.

Rank (College/University)		Rank (High School)		Group Influence
1	69.7%	1	65.4%	Parents
2	61.7%	2	59.8%	Friends
3	56.9%	3	57.0%	Family
6	22.9%	4	34.5%	Guidance Counselors
4	41.0%	5	33.5%	Teachers
5	26.1%	6	26.4%	Current Students (in the school)
8	9.6%	7	12.9%	Professional Consultants
7	12.2%	8	11.5%	Alumni (of the school)
9	8.2%	9	5.6%	Other

At the initial stages, contacts at the school are not as important in making a short list for both cohorts.

Group Influence – Counselors are doing more Counseling

High school students are seeking or relying on “professional” advice more than college or university students did.

Guidance counselors – 34.5% of high school students use them versus 22.9% of college and university students.

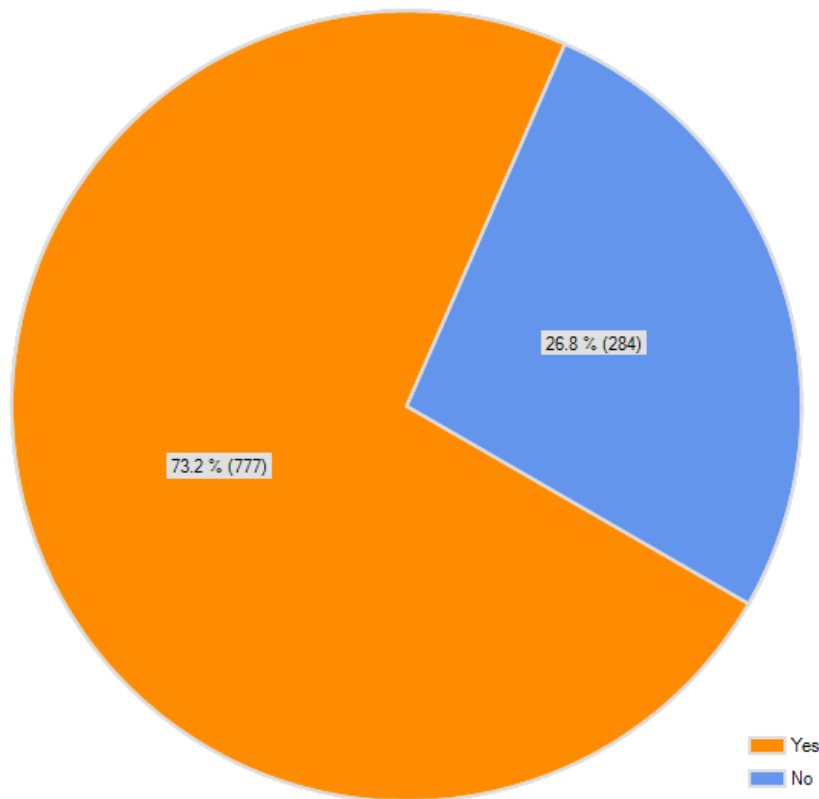
Professional consultant – 12.9% of high school students use them compared to 9.6% of college and university students.

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7	12.2%	8	11.5%	Alumni (of the school)
9	8.2%	9	5.6%	Other

It is also interesting to see how counselors and consultants factor in depending students’ parents’ personal university or college experience.

Parents Experience – 1 in 4 are First Generation Students

Did either of your parents or guardians attend college or university?



Students whose parents didn't attend school are more likely to rely on professional help.

If their parents had no experience:

- 59% of high school students and 56.3% of college and university students relied on professional consultants and/or guidance counselors.

- Only 53% of high School and 56.3% of college and university students relied on their parents.

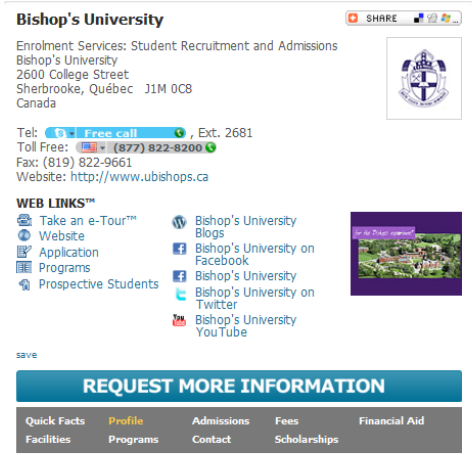
If their parents went to school:

- 67.9% of high school students and 62.8% of college and university relied on their parents for advice.

Third Party Sources of Information – Web is Where It’s At

Online information is the preferred mode of research.

- Educational websites like our sites are used by the more than half of high school students as a trusted source for information.
- Government and general sites are used by less than 1/5th of students.



Bishop's University
 Enrolment Services: Student Recruitment and Admissions
 Bishop's University
 2600 College Street
 Sherbrooke, Québec J1M 0C8
 Canada

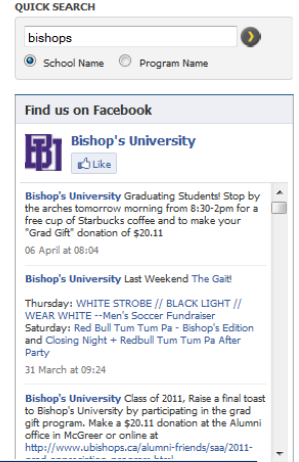
Tel: 888-822-8200 (Free call), Ext. 2681
 Toll Free: (877) 822-8200
 Fax: (819) 822-9661
 Website: <http://www.ubishops.ca>

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- Application
- Programs
- Prospective Students
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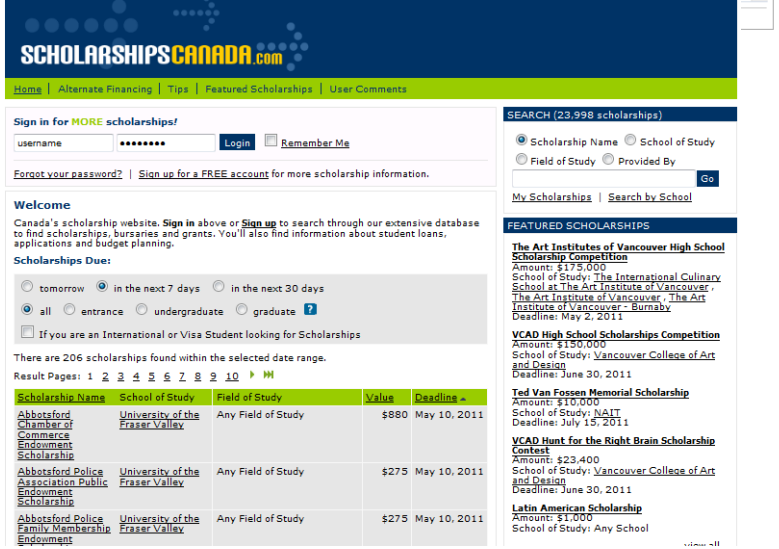
QUICK SEARCH
 bishops
 School Name Program Name

Find us on Facebook
 Bishop's University
 Like

Bishop's University Graduating Students! Stop by the arches tomorrow morning from 8:30-1pm for a free cup of Starbucks coffee and to make your "Grad Gift" donation of \$20.11
 06 April at 08:04

Bishop's University Last Weekend The Gait!
 Thursday: WHITE STROBE // BLACK LIGHT // WEAR WHITE --Men's Soccer Fundraiser
 Saturday: Red Bull Tum Tum Pa - Bishop's Edition and Closing Night + Redbull Tum Tum Pa After Party
 31 March at 09:24

Bishop's University Class of 2011. Raise a final toast to Bishop's University by participating in the grad gift program. Make a \$20.11 donation at the Alumni office in McGreer or online at <http://www.ubishops.ca/alumni-friends/saa/2011>



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Welcome
 Canada's scholarship website. Sign in above or Sign up to search through our extensive database to find scholarships, bursaries and grants. You'll also find information about student loans, applications and budget planning.

Scholarships Due:

tomorrow in the next 7 days in the next 30 days

all entrance undergraduate graduate

If you are an International or Visa Student looking for Scholarships

There are 206 scholarships found within the selected date range.
 Result Pages: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 > >>

Scholarship Name	School of Study	Field of Study	Value	Deadline -
Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce Endowment Scholarship	University of the Fraser Valley	Any Field of Study	\$880	May 10, 2011
Abbotsford Police Association Public Endowment Scholarship	University of the Fraser Valley	Any Field of Study	\$275	May 10, 2011
Abbotsford Police Family Membership Endowment	University of the Fraser Valley	Any Field of Study	\$275	May 10, 2011

SEARCH (23,998 scholarships)
 Scholarship Name School of Study
 Field of Study Provided By
 Go

My Scholarships | Search by School

FEATURED SCHOLARSHIPS

The Art Institutes of Vancouver High School Scholarship Competition
 Amount: \$175,000
 School of Study: The International Culinary School at The Art Institutes of Vancouver, The Art Institute of Vancouver, The Art Institute of Vancouver - Burnaby
 Deadline: May 2, 2011

VCAD High School Scholarships Competition
 Amount: \$150,000
 School of Study: Vancouver College of Art and Design
 Deadline: June 30, 2011

Ted Van Fossen Memorial Scholarship
 Amount: \$10,000
 School of Study: NAIT
 Deadline: July 15, 2011

VCAD Hunt for the Right Brain Scholarship Contest
 Amount: \$23,400
 School of Study: Vancouver College of Art and Design
 Deadline: June 30, 2011

Latin American Scholarship
 Amount: \$1,000
 School of Study: Any School

Percentage (College/University)	Percentage (High School)	Third party sources of information
48.9%	62.4%	ScholarshipsCanada.com
43.9%	61.3%	StudentAwards.com
40.7%	49.1%	SchoolFinder.com
26.9%	28.6%	Magazine
19.9%	19.7%	Wikipedia
18.4%	19.2%	Government Websites
15.4%	13.5%	Newspapers
7.7%	10.1%	Radio/Television

Third Party Sources of Information – Stop the Press

Magazine, Newspapers + TV are not as relevant.

They are much less relevant in terms of finding information or advertising about schools.

- For college and university students, only 26.9%, 15.4% and 7.7% use magazines, newspapers and radio/television respectively, for information on schools.

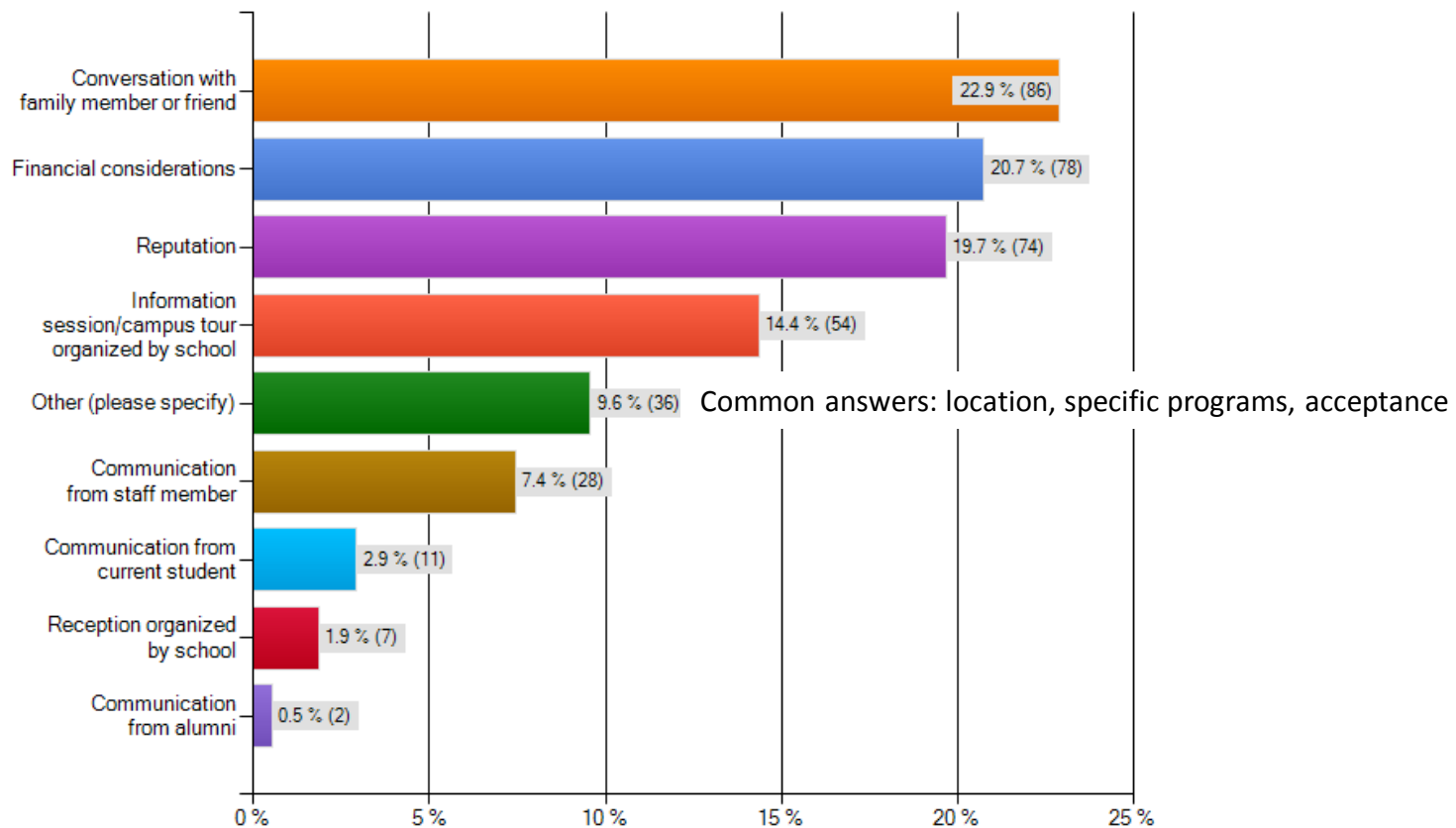
- For high school students, it is similar with 28.6%, 13.5% and 10.1% respectively.

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7.7%	10.1%	Radio/Television

→ Focus on online activities – as we see later, the amount of time students spend reading newspapers and magazines is very limited.

Final Determining Factor – Tipping Point

We asked college and university students to indicate what was the final determining factor that led them to choose their current school.



Final Determining Factor – Funds & Family

Conversation with family/friend

There is involvement right until the end. We see they are important at the initial and final stages of the application process.

Financial consideration

We discover that although it was not one of the top 3 initial factors when making a short list of schools, it becomes very important when making the final decision. Also, it is more important for university (20.3%) than college (17.0%) students.

Final Factor	Percentage (College)	Percentage (University)
Conversation with a family member or friend	22.3%	23.3%
Financial considerations	18.1%	21.4%
Reputation	17.0%	20.3%
Information session/campus tour organized by school	12.8%	15.0%
Other (please specify)	11.7%	9.4%
Communication from staff member	10.6%	5.6%
Communication from current student	5.3%	2.3%
Reception organized by school	1.1%	2.3%
Communication from alumni	1.1%	0.4%

Final Determining Factor – Rep Your Reputation

Reputation

This is a strong third final determining factor.

- Know what is said about you.
- Communicate your brand and build your reputation.

Others

Common answers were location, specific program or the fact that it was the only place that accepted the student. This correlates to the fact that most students only applied to 1-3 schools.

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SchoolFinder Group

Technology & Media Consumption



Online & Media Consumption

Online Activities:

For studies, research, work
- 94% do during the week.

Using Social media

- 75% are engaging for more than 1 hour per week.

Viewing videos

- 65% watch or more than 1 hour per week.

Media Consumption:

Watching television

- Over 78.6% watches more than 1 hour a week.

Public transit

- 45% spend more than 1 hour on transit. This makes sense as most students live in small communities.

Listening to radio

- 48% listen for less than 1 hour a week or never.

Reading newspapers

- 69% never read papers or only read for less than an hour a week.

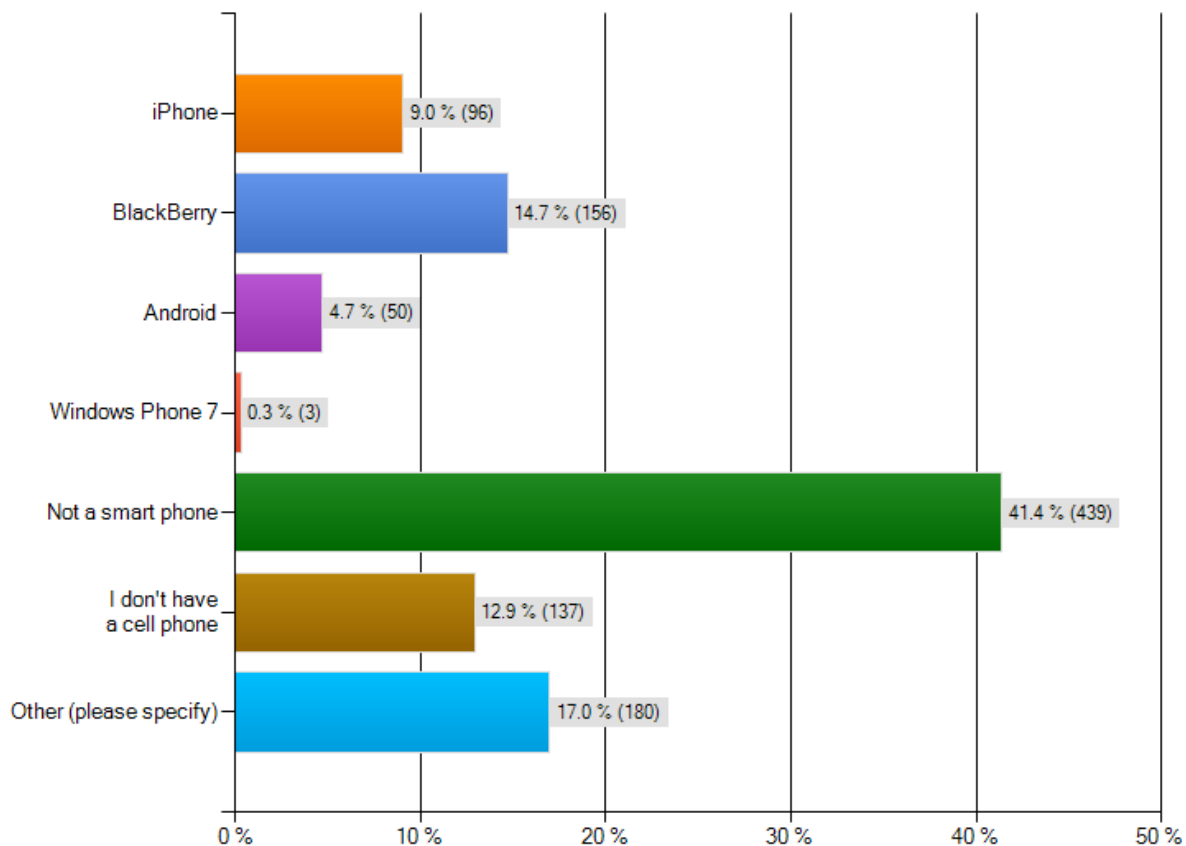
Reading magazines

- 83% never read or only read for less than an hour a week.

→ Students are consuming less newspapers and magazines.

Phone Type – To Smart Phone or Not to Smart Phone

What cell phone do you use?



46% use some sort of smart phone.

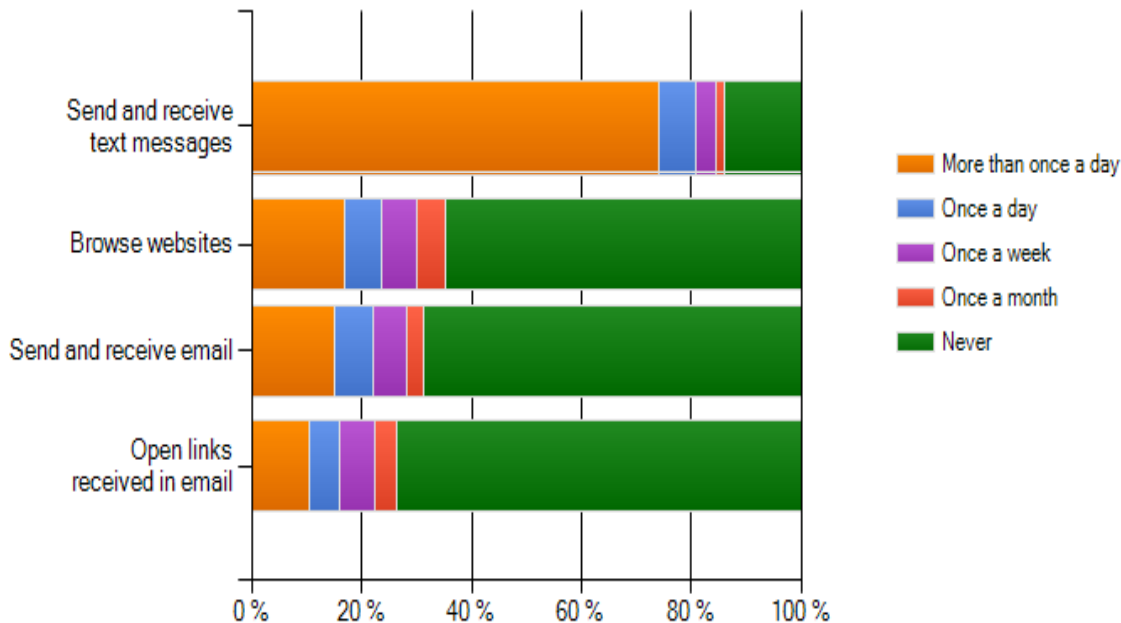
12.9% do not use a cell phone.

On ScholarshipsCanada.com the number of mobile visits increased by 4 times between April 2010 and April 2011.

- It now accounts for over 4.3% of the overall traffic.

Phone Usage – Thumbs of Lightning

How often do you use your phone to:



Text messaging is the main use.
- Over 85% of students text during week.

BUT students may be adverse to text messages from you.

- Only 25.1% would find it useful to receive text messages from schools and would prefer alerts about scholarships.

- 56% of students think text messages from companies would not be useful at all.

Phone Usage – Mobile Web vs. Growing APPetite

Mobile Web Usage:

Smart phone users are using their phone to check e- mail.

Percentage of smart phone users browsing websites at least once a day:

- iPhone: 72.9%
- Android: 62%
- Blackberry: 45.2%

App Usage:

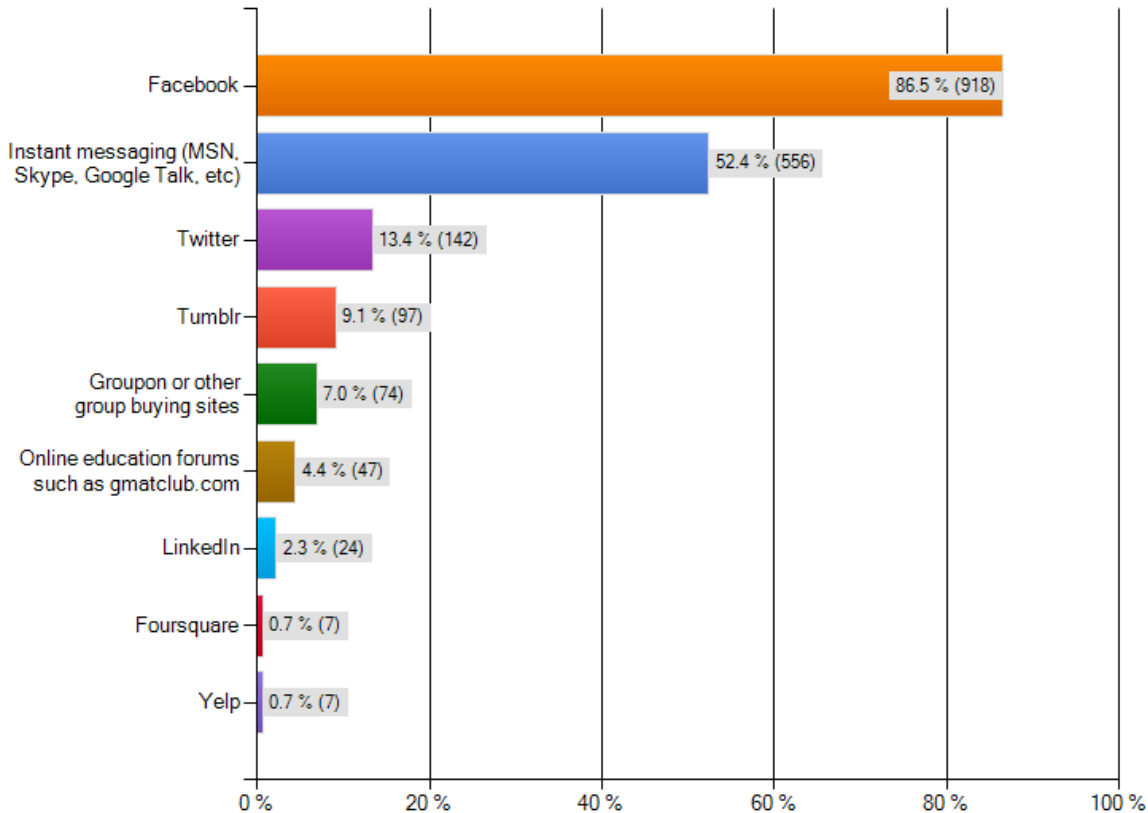
There is a high degree of app usage from iPhone and Android users.

- 63.2% of iPhone and 48% of Android users download an app once a week or more.
- 15.6% of iPhone and 18% of Android users search for apps made by a school they are interested in.

→ Develop a mobile version of your school website.

Social Media Websites – Like 😊 RT@ #Social Media

Which of these websites or online services do you use more than once a week?



As expected, Facebook is the most popular site.

Instant messaging is also popular across the board.

Twitter is used by both high school & college/university students.

Online Features & Tools

We asked students about various online features they may like to see or use as part of their application process.

We wanted to gauge the demand for features we want to develop in the future and identify if there are any gaps right now.

Features:

- 1) Online scholarship application
- 2) Tools to calculate cost of education (net as well as comparing schools/locations)
- 3) Ability to connect with someone at school outside of your network
- 4) Searchable FAQs of school or scholarships of interest
- 5) Summary of official rankings
- 6) Online ratings and reviews from students
- 7) Ability to search for schools on a map near a location
- 8) Summary of social media information
- 9) Updates through text messaging

Online Features & Tools – Love It

Online Scholarship Applications – 95.8% want it!

Students are interested in tools to help them calculate their checks and balances.

- 87.6% would find a **calculator tool** to compare + add costs very useful.

Connecting with students at a school of interest but outside their personal network is important.

- 86.3% think a tool to help them reach to these students would be useful.

→ Consider blogs, chat-rooms, call-campaigns, groups, panels or forums which allow prospects to connect with current students.

Students are interested in **summaries of rankings and ratings.**

- 84.7% of students think a summary of official ranking would be useful.
- 84.3% would like to read online ratings and reviews from current students.



Online Features & Tools – Like It

69% of students would find a tool allowing them to **search schools** based on current **location** to be useful.

Summaries of **social media conversations** and activities would be useful to 49.9% of students.

Key Observations

Key Factors - Top 3 = Programs, Academics, Location

Key Influencers - Top 3 = Parents, Friends, Family;
Honourable Mention = **Guidance Counsellors**

Key Sources – School - Top 3 = School Website, Campus Tour, Student at School;
Honourable Mention = **School Printed Material**

Key Sources – Third-party- Top 3 = ScholarshipsCanada.com, StudentAwards.com,
SchoolFinder.com

Key Final Determining Factors- Top 3 = Conversation with family/friend, Financial
Consideration, Reputation;
Honourable Mention = Information session



Key Observations

Technology

- 46% use a smart phone (9% iPhone, 14.7% Blackberry)
- Texting main use of phone

Online Features

- High demand = online scholarship application, tools to calculate cost of education, ability to connect with someone at school
- High interest = summary of official rankings, online rating + reviews from students
- Low interest = ability to search for schools on map, summary of social media information, text messages for updates



SchoolFinder Group

Thank You

EDge Interactive
67 Mowat Ave., Suite 533
Toronto, ON M1W 2S7

1-800-211-5577
info@edgeip.com

You can contact us directly at:

Chris Wilkins - cwilkins@edgeip.com
Faeza Afzal - faeza.afzal@edgeip.com
Ian Ray Barcarse – ian.barcarse@edgeip.com