

E-Recruiting Practices Report

Summary of findings at two-year and four-year institutions

In March of 2006, Noel-Levitz utilized a Web-based platform to poll non-profit, degree-granting U.S. institutions on their e-recruiting and admissions Web practices. A total of 231 institutions responded.

Among the findings:

- Fewer than one in three institutions have adopted cutting-edge recruiting tools such as blogging space, chat rooms, RSS/XML syndication, or podcasting.
- More than half of prospective students at four-year institutions are now using electronic applications.
- A significant number of prospective students who use electronic applications had made no previous contact with the institution.
- Most campuses appear to have a way to go to catch up with the electronic habits and perspectives of college-bound high school students, such as students' heavy usage of instant messaging and their openness to being contacted through that medium. (See related Noel-Levitz research, E-Expectations, at www.noellevitz.com/expectations.)

About the study

This study established new benchmarks for e-recruiting and admissions Web usage by asking respondents a series of questions about their admissions operation. Included were questions about...

- e-mail list purchases
- frequency of bulk/blast e-mail contacts
- cell/mobile number usage
- Web page usage
- use of emerging e-recruiting tools
- percentage of electronic applications
- percentage of electronic applications from students who had made no prior contact with the institution
- cost of Web site maintenance for admissions-specific content and services

Beyond Web pages and e-mail, this study found that e-recruiting is still relatively uncommon on college campuses.

Respondent profile

	2-year public	4-year public	4-year private
% of Respondents	19%	24%	55%

Of the 231 institutions that participated in the poll, 19 percent were two-year publics, 24 percent were four-year publics, and 55 percent were four-year privates.

Findings

Eight key findings of this study are highlighted below.

1. Purchasing students' e-mail addresses is common among four-year institutions (nearly 80% follow this practice) but not at two-year institutions (11%)

When asked if they purchase e-mail addresses for prospective students, four-year institutions indicated they were the most likely to purchase e-mail addresses, as shown in the table below. Over three-quarters of public and private four-year institutions engage in this practice. By comparison, only about one in nine two-year institutions (11%) indicated they follow this practice.

Does your admissions office purchase lists of e-mail addresses for prospective students?

	2-year public	4-year public	4-year private	Overall
Yes	11.1%	83.6%	77.1%	65.8%
No	88.9%	16.4%	22.9%	34.2%

For institutions that purchased e-mail addresses for prospective students, the median number of scheduled e-mail contacts was eight.

Among the institutions that indicated they purchased e-mail addresses, the **median number of bulk/blast scheduled e-mail contacts was eight over the course of a recruitment cycle**, with four-year privates indicating a median of ten contacts, four-year publics indicating a median of six contacts, and two-year institutions indicating a median of eight contacts.

Looking beyond the median, half of all respondents across all institutions indicated a range of five to ten contacts while 25 percent of respondents indicated fewer than five, and the remaining 25 percent indicated more than ten.

2. Collecting e-mail addresses from parents is less common, with just 30 percent of institutions following this practice

Relatively few respondents (30%) indicated that they collect parent e-mail addresses. The practice is nearly non-existent among the two-year institutions (6.7%), but is slightly more common among public and private four-year institutions.

Does your admissions office collect e-mail addresses for parents?

	2-year public	4-year public	4-year private	Overall
Yes	6.7%	30.9%	38.0%	30.0%
No	93.3%	69.1%	62.0%	70.0%

Reasons for collecting cell phone numbers varied.

Among the institutions that indicated they collected e-mail addresses from parents, the **median number of scheduled contacts was three**, with private institutions indicating slightly more correspondence with parents than public institutions.

Looking beyond the median, three-quarters of all parent-targeting respondents across all institutions scheduled between one and five parent contacts.

3. Just over 40 percent of institutions collect applicants' cell/mobile numbers

Slightly more than 40 percent of institutions indicated they collect cell/mobile numbers from applicants, with the most likely sector to collect them being four-year public institutions at 51 percent.

Do you collect cell/mobile numbers from your applicants?

	2-year public	4-year public	4-year private	Overall
Yes	46.7%	50.9%	34.4%	40.7%
No	53.3%	49.1%	65.6%	59.3%

Among institutions that indicated they collected their applicants' cell/mobile numbers, **uses for the numbers varied**. As you can see below, the most common use is for "notifications of impending deadlines, events, acceptance decisions, etc." (57 percent across all institutions), though many institutions also use the numbers for telecounseling. Interestingly, four-year private institutions are the only sector that use the numbers for instant messaging, with only one in ten campuses doing so.

How do you use cell/mobile numbers?

	2-year public	4-year public	4-year private	Overall
Notifications of Deadlines/Acceptance Decisions	58.3%	55.5%	57.0%	56.9%
Telecounseling	25.0%	48.1%	36.0%	36.5%
Instant Messaging	0.0%	0.0%	11.6%	7.3%

4. Most institutions are using the Web in a variety of ways

When asked about their use of Web-based electronic forms and communications, virtually all respondents indicated that their institutions offer electronic applications and catalogs via the Web. In addition, most respondents indicated that their institutions offer electronic forms for inquiries, financial aid, and campus visits. Public institutions were more likely to offer online course registration. In addition, **in every category, public four-year institutions were further along** than the other two sectors.

Can your prospective students or families submit or view any of the following over the Web?

Public four-year institutions appear to be using Web pages the most.

	2-year public	4-year public	4-year private	Overall
Inquiry Forms	64.4%	90.9%	90.0%	84.8%
Electronic Application	88.9%	100.0%	95.4%	95.2%
Electronic Catalog	91.1%	100.0%	91.5%	93.1%
Housing Application	22.2%	61.8%	50.8%	47.6%
Financial Aid Forms	57.8%	85.5%	73.1%	72.7%
Campus Visit Form	53.3%	83.6%	77.7%	74.0%
Course Registration	53.3%	60.0%	34.6%	44.2%
Electronic Confirmation	8.9%	36.4%	14.6%	18.6%

5. Less than one-third of campuses have adopted cutting-edge tools for e-recruitment

Beyond Web pages and e-mail, it is apparent that e-recruiting is still relatively uncommon on college campuses. The most common e-recruiting tool employed by admissions offices is the virtual tour. Most campuses had not yet implemented emerging tools such as blogging space, chat rooms, RSS/XML syndication, or podcasting.

Does your campus use any of the following e-recruiting tools?

	2-year public	4-year public	4-year private	Overall
Personal Portal for Applicants	17.8%	38.2%	17.7%	22.5%
Chat Room	17.8%	36.4%	29.2%	28.6%
Virtual Tour	28.9%	50.9%	47.7%	44.6%
Blogging Space	4.4%	20.0%	22.3%	18.2%
Podcasting	4.4%	7.3%	4.6%	5.2%
Virtual Financial Aid Estimator	4.4%	29.1%	11.5%	14.3%
RSS/XML	0.0%	7.3%	4.6%	4.3%
Flash	6.7%	27.3%	21.5%	19.9%
Instant Messaging	4.4%	25.5%	27.7%	22.5%

In a major disparity, only 22.5 percent of colleges use instant messaging, while a separate Noel-Levitz study found that 77 percent of students would be receptive to messages in that medium (see study cited at bottom of front cover of this report).

6. More than half of prospective students at four-year institutions use electronic applications

Respondents from all three sectors indicated that prospective students are using electronic applications in increasing numbers. Leading the way in electronic application usage were students at four-year public institutions, where 52.9 percent of institutions indicated that they receive more than 60 percent of applications electronically. Next were four-year private institutions, where 65.3 percent of institutions reported at least 41 percent of their applications are received electronically.

Approximately what percent of applications have come to you in electronic format so far this year ... [compared to] your previous recruitment cycle?

Range	This Year 2-year public	Last Year 2-year public	This Year 4-year public	Last Year 4-year public	This Year 4-year private	Last Year 4-year private	This Year Overall	Last Year Overall
1-20%	29.4%	38.7%	5.9%	7.8%	10.2%	20.3%	12.3%	20.4%
21-40%	41.2%	29.0%	9.8%	27.5%	24.6%	23.7%	24.0%	25.4%
41-60%	8.8%	9.7%	31.4%	31.4%	26.3%	28.8%	24.5%	26.4%
61-80%	14.7%	16.1%	33.3%	19.6%	27.1%	21.2%	26.5%	19.9%
81-100%	5.9%	6.5%	19.6%	13.7%	11.9%	5.9%	12.7%	8.0%

As might be expected, when asked if their institutions accept electronic applications, **most respondents (89.2%) indicated that their institutions do accept electronic applications.** Four-year public institutions were the most likely to follow this practice at 96.4 percent, followed by four-year private institutions at 90.8 percent and two-year institutions at 75.6 percent.

In another finding, it was evident that **fees for electronic applications range widely by sector.** At two-year institutions, the majority of respondents (71%) indicated they charge “no fee” for electronic applications in an apparent attempt to encourage students to apply online, with only 26.5 percent of institutions in this sector charging the same fee for electronic and paper applications. In contrast, the vast majority of four-year public institutions (88.5 percent) treat prices for paper and electronic applications identically. Four-year private institutions fell in the middle; in that sector, 52.5 percent of respondents indicated that their institutions charge the same fee for paper and online applications, 42.4 percent of respondents indicated they charge no fee, and 4.2 percent indicated they charge a discounted fee.

7. Almost 40 percent of campuses indicate that more than 20 percent of their applicants had made no contact with the institution prior to applying

As most administrators are aware, in the traditional admissions funnel, students inquire first, then they apply. However, this appears to be changing, as many of today's students are submitting applications as their first point of contact with the institution.

As shown below, two-year public institutions were most likely to receive the application as the first form of correspondence, while four-year private institutions were the least likely. This shift has the effect of "flattening" the admissions funnel, and has significant implications for recruiting strategy.

Approximately what proportion of your applicants are currently submitting an application (electronic or otherwise) as their first known point of contact with your institution?

Range	2-year public	4-year public	4-year private	Overall
1-20%	32.3%	55.6%	72.3%	61.7%
21-40%	51.6%	28.9%	21.0%	28.1%
41-60%	9.7%	13.3%	5.9%	8.2%
61-80%	6.5%	2.2%	0.8%	2.0%

In a related finding, **the majority of institutions indicated they track their institution's first known point of contact with applicants.** Four-year institutions led the way in this area, with 92 percent reporting that they follow this practice. The majority of two-year public institutions (69%) reported that they could track source codes as well.

8. The vast majority of institutions (90%) are spending less than \$50K/year to maintain their admissions Web presence

Respondents from four-year private institutions reported that they are spending the most to maintain their admissions Web presence, followed by four-year public institutions. Spending the least were two-year public institutions. These findings were consistent with the findings of the recent Noel-Levitz **Cost of Recruiting Report**, which found that four-year private institutions spend the most for recruiting and two-year public institutions spend the least.

Private four-year institutions are spending the most to maintain their admissions Web presence.

In round figures, what is the approximate cost for your admissions office to maintain admissions-specific content and services on your institution's Web site (staffing, vendor costs, other direct costs)?

Range	2-year public	4-year public	4-year private	Overall
\$0-\$4,999	61.9%	26.5%	39.5%	40.8%
\$5,000-\$24,999	21.4%	44.9%	30.7%	32.5%
\$25,000-\$49,999	7.1%	14.3%	21.1%	16.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	7.1%	4.1%	4.4%	4.9%
\$75,000-\$99,999	2.4%	6.1%	3.5%	3.9%
\$100,000-\$124,999	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.5%
\$125,000 and higher	0.0%	4.1%	0.0%	1.0%



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Questions? Please contact Noel-Levitz.

We hope you have found this report to be helpful and informative. If you have questions or would like more information about the findings, please contact Jim Mager, jim-mager@noellevitz.com or 1-800-876-1117.

Responding Institutions

Abilene Christian University
 Allegheny College
 Alverno College
 Amarillo College
 Anderson College
 Andrews University
 Anne Arundel Community College
 Appalachian Bible College
 Arkansas State University-Beebe
 Azusa Pacific University
 Baker University
 Baldwin-Wallace College
 Baptist College of Health Sciences
 Bay Path College
 Bay State College
 Baylor University
 Beal College
 Black Hills State University
 Blackburn College
 Blinn College
 Bloomfield College
 Bradley University
 Brescia University
 Cabarrus College of Health Sciences
 California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo
 California State University-Chico
 California State University-Stanislaus
 Campbellsville University
 Canisius College
 Cape Cod Community College
 Carroll College
 Carthage College
 Catawba College
 Central Baptist College
 Central Missouri State University
 Centre College
 Christopher Newport University
 City University
 Clarion University of Pennsylvania
 Clinton Community College
 Coker College
 College Misericordia
 College of Saint Scholastica, The
 College of Santa Fe
 College of the Mainland
 Colorado School of Mines
 Columbia College
 Columbia-Greene Community College
 Concord University
 Cornish College of the Arts
 Creighton University
 Dakota State University
 Dakota Wesleyan University
 Davenport University
 Daytona Beach Community College
 Delaware Valley College
 Delta College
 DePaul University
 Dominican University
 Dutchess Community College
 Eastern Arizona College
 Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell
 Elmira College
 Emporia State University
 Erskine College
 Georgetown College
 Georgian Court University
 God's Bible School and College
 Golden Gate University
 Grace Bible College
 Grand View College
 Harrisburg University of Science and Technology
 Henry Ford Community College
 High Point University
 Houghton College
 Housatonic Community College

Houston Baptist University
 Indiana State University
 Indiana University Southeast
 Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
 Kansas City Art Institute
 Kentucky State University
 Kettering University
 Keystone College
 Kilgore College
 Knox College
 Laboratory Institute of Merchandising
 LaGrange College
 Lake Washington Technical College
 Lakeland College
 Lee University
 Lewis and Clark Community College
 Lincoln College
 Louisiana Technical College Gulf Area Campus
 Lycoming College
 Lynchburg College
 Madisonville Community College
 Madonna University
 Marian College
 Marion Technical College
 Marlboro College
 Mars Hill College
 Martin University
 Marymount College
 Marywood University
 Massachusetts Bay Community College
 Mayland Community College
 Mercy College of Northwest Ohio
 Mercyhurst College
 Meredith College
 Messiah College
 Michigan State University
 Middle Tennessee State University
 Midway College
 Milwaukee School of Engineering
 Missouri State University
 Missouri Tech
 Missouri Western State University
 Monmouth College
 Moody Bible Institute
 Moravian College
 Morningside College
 Mount Ida College
 Mount Mercy College
 Mount Olive College
 Multnomah Bible College and Biblical Seminary
 Navarro College
 North Carolina School of the Arts
 North Dakota State College of Science
 North Iowa Area Community College
 North Park University
 Northeast Alabama Community College
 Northeastern Illinois University
 Northland Baptist Bible College
 Northrop Grumman Newport News Apprentice School
 Northwest Missouri State University
 Northwestern College
 Notre Dame de Namur University
 Ohio University Main Campus
 Okefenokee Technical College
 Oklahoma Wesleyan University
 Oregon College of Art and Craft
 Otis College of Art and Design
 Ottawa University
 Ozarka College
 Pacific University
 Palm Beach Atlantic University
 Philadelphia Biblical University
 Piedmont Community College
 Potomac State College of West Virginia University
 Prairie View A & M University
 Pratt Institute

Purdue University Main Campus
 Quinnipiac University
 Reading Area Community College
 Rhode Island College
 Robert Morris College
 Rochester Institute of Technology
 Rockford Business College
 Rockhurst University
 Rogue Community College
 Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing
 Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
 Saint Vincent College
 Salem College
 Salve Regina University
 San Juan College
 Santa Clara University
 School for Film and Television, The
 Schreiner University
 Seattle Central Community College
 Seton Hall University
 Shorter College
 Silver Lake College
 South Central College
 Southeast Missouri State University
 Southeastern Louisiana University
 Southern New Hampshire University
 Southern Utah University
 Southwestern Illinois College
 Spalding University
 Spring Hill College
 St. Catharine College
 St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center School of Nursing
 St. Mary's University
 State University of New York at Binghamton
 State University of New York College at Brockport
 Sterling College
 Tennessee Temple University
 Terra State Community College
 Texas Tech University
 Thomas Aquinas College
 Troy University
 Tulane University
 University at Buffalo, The State University of New York
 University of Alabama, The
 University of Baltimore
 University of Cincinnati Main Campus
 University of Kansas Main Campus
 University of Louisiana at Lafayette
 University of Missouri-Rolla
 University of Missouri-Saint Louis
 University of North Carolina at Pembroke
 University of North Texas
 University of Northern Iowa
 University of Notre Dame
 University of Oklahoma Norman Campus
 University of Oregon
 University of San Francisco
 University of South Carolina-Aiken
 University of Texas at Austin
 University of the Arts
 University of the South, The
 University of Toledo
 University of Virginia's College at Wise, The
 University of Wisconsin-River Falls
 University of Wisconsin-Superior
 Valdosta State University
 Villa Maria College of Buffalo
 Virginia College at Pensacola
 Viterbo University
 Washington Bible College/Capital Bible Seminary
 Wesleyan College
 West Chester University of Pennsylvania
 Western Kentucky University
 Western New England College
 Western Oklahoma State College
 Westminster College
 Wilkes University
 Wilson College