

# RESEARCH BRIEF: Reaching Higher Education Prospects through Digital Media

## GENERAL DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

“The Internet has changed the way educational institutions recruit students. Specifically, the Internet channel for a higher education institution is a vital medium for reaching prospective students. At work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with a worldwide presence, multiple forms of marketing strategies can successfully be exploited through the Internet”.

- Hezel.com: *Web interFace 101: Making the Most of Your Institutions Web Site*, June 2006

### Online Activities

Ranked by % of US Internet Users

Activity	% of US Internet Users
Send or read email	91%
Use a search engine	91%
Check the weather	78%
Get news	68%
<b>Research for school / training</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Get info about a college, university or school</b>	<b>50%</b>
Send instant messages	37%
Download music	25%
Use online social networking	11%
Create your own blog	8%

- *Pew Internet & American Life Survey, Major Moments Survey, 2005 and 2002*

**42% of Americans** use the web to help them get training and select schools, which was higher than using the internet to find a new place to live or buy a car! This percentage has grown **42%** since 2002.

- *Pew Internet & American Life Survey, Major Moments Survey, 2005 and 2002*

There were **96,492,000 Education Web Users** in February 2008– which amounts to **52%** of the total internet population. In that same month, there were **828,877,000** visits to education web sites.

- *comScore Key Measures Report, February 2008*

The dollars spent annually in promoting Higher Education has shown a drastic increase in recent years.

### US Online Higher Education Spending, 2001 & 2005 (in billions)

2001	\$4.5
2005	\$11.0

Source: ThinkEquity Partners, Eduventures, Inc., 2002

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On GradSchools.com, one of the most highly trafficked content sites by higher education prospects, users spend on average over **6 minutes** per session, visiting **3 pages** per visit, and using the site most often on **Tuesdays at 11am EST**.

- GradSchools.com, March 2008

Aside from education content where display advertising sees great success for brands, career-focused content is important to consider when looking to reach a higher education prospect. Users that are dissatisfied with their jobs may look to career sites where higher education messaging could significantly influence a user to take action.

### Top 10 Career and Education Web Sites among US Internet Users, Ranked by Unique Visitors, March 10-16, 2008 (thousands and % active reach)

	Unique audience	% active reach
1. CareerBuilder Network	5,099	3.57%
2. Monster.com Network	5,040	3.53%
3. Yahoo! HotJobs	3,353	2.34%
4. Merriam-Webster	1,337	0.93%
5. About.com Education	1,214	0.85%
6. USAJobs	1,024	0.72%
7. Family Education Network	938	0.66%
8. Edline.net	916	0.64%
9. US Department of Education	905	0.63%
10. MSN Encarta	903	0.63%

Note: home and work locations

Source: Nielsen Online, "NetView" as cited by The Center for Media Research, April 11, 2008

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## CURRENT TRENDS

Volume for Education sites is **lowest** in June and July, at the beginning of summer vacation, and is **highest in September and October**, at the beginning of the school year.

- *comScore Media Trends Report, March 2008*

The average user viewed **15.8 pages** on education sites per day they visited these sites.

- *comScore Key Measures Report, February 2008*

## CONSIDERATIONS OUTSIDE OF DISPLAY

There are many digital vehicles to consider when intending to reach the newer generations of education prospects, as emerging media's mass audience grows. The most important vehicles include: Search Engine Marketing, Mobile, Video and E-mail.

"The higher education industry has never been so competitive. Today, almost all educational institutions depend on tactical marketing strategies to maintain or better-yet to increase their yearly student enrollment number."  
-- *Hezel.com: Web interFace 101: Making the Most of Your Institutions Web Site, June 2006*

### SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

Search Engine Reach	Education Site visitors, ages 18-24	Education Site visitors, ages 25-34
<b>Google Search</b>	<b>87.1%</b>	<b>82.6%</b>
Yahoo! Search	55.5%	59.9%
MSN Live Search	N/A	44.3%
Ask Network	37.7%	43.1%

Source: comScore, Plan Metrix Key Measures Report, Summer Release 2007

### Search Impressions by Education Sub-Segment Jan-Dec 2007

4,039,729,000	<b>Online Institutions &amp; Distance Learning</b>
3,040,870,000	<b>Training Institutions</b>
2,480,989,000	<b>Trade Schools</b>
2,132,438,000	<b>Brick &amp; Mortar Institutions</b>
573,926,000	<b>Test Prep &amp; Tutoring</b>
469,283,000	<b>Technical Institutions</b>

- *Neilson/NetRatings, December 2007*

### MOBILE

#### Mobile Education Spending Worldwide, 2005 & 2010 (billions)

<b>2005</b>	<b>\$0.827</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>\$6.494</b>

Source: Juniper Research, January 2006

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### VIDEO

"Video as a way to connect with and engage prospects will emerge as an important marketing tool for the higher education industry, and will become more available to institutions as more publishers that circulate education-related content offer this as an advertising opportunity."

— *EDUInsight.com, March 2008*

### E-MAIL

Email has become a very effective online medium for Higher Education Institutions to brand themselves. In December 2007, Wofford delivered over 40,000 emails to alumni and prospective students. With a 20% open rate, this campaign delivered the following results during the two weeks afterwards:

- Visits to site **increased by 26%**
  - Absolute unique visitors **increase by 89%**
  - Average pageviews **increased by 52%**
  - Bounce Rate **decreased by 18%**
  - New Visitors **increased by 24%**
- *Wofford University, January 2008*

Since "Education" is one of the highest researched topics on the internet, with a creative mix, digital advertising is an essential part of reaching new prospects.

### PREMIERE RESOURCES

**BusinessWeek.com Rankings and Profiles**  
[www.businessweek.com/bschools/rankings](http://www.businessweek.com/bschools/rankings)

**GradSchools.com: The most comprehensive online source of graduate school information**  
[www.GradSchools.com](http://www.GradSchools.com)

**About.com: Graduate School**  
[www.gradschool.about.com](http://www.gradschool.about.com)