



# The Student College Search Experience: 2020-21



# Today's Presenter



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## Sources

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### > 2021 Survey of Juniors

- 7,129 responses
- 441 from your region (WPA)

### > 2021 Senior Enrollment Survey

- 19,277 responses
- 1,152 from WPA

[niche.bz/research](https://niche.bz/research)

## — Some Key Themes



1. Misinformation about test-optional and test-blind is hurting students
2. Students are starting their search early and casting a wider net now, but less so in your region.
3. Campus visits are declining rapidly
4. The rubber band is snapping - students want to go farther from home
5. High published costs are closing doors to students

# Insight #1



Misinformation about test-optional and test-blind is hurting students.

# — What it means



- > More than 2/3 of colleges are test-optional/blind
- > 78% of students in WPA (75% nationally) believe that not submitting will hurt them
- > 78% took a standardized test
  - > 39% submitted to all colleges
  - > 11% to most colleges
  - > 12% to just a few colleges
- > Survey of IECs - majority still encouraging students to take a test

## Insight #2



Students are starting their search early and casting a wider net now than before, but less so in your region.

## What it means



### Beginning Active Research Timeline

	WPA	US
Before Junior Year	20%	18%
During Junior Year	54%	53%
Fall of Senior Year	21%	22%
Spring of Senior Year	5%	6%

# — What it means



## Applications Submitted

	WPA	US
1	13%	11%
2	11%	10%
3	12%	11%
4	10%	9%
5+	53%	59%
10+	19%	25%

# Insight #3



Campus visits are declining rapidly

# What it means



## Visits Taken

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
0	28%	15%	7%	6%	5%
1	21%	18%	15%	15%	14%
2	19%	20%	20%	20%	19%
3	13%	16%	19%	20%	20%
4	6%	9%	11%	12%	12%
5+	12%	22%	27%	27%	30%

# — What it means



- > (Early Results from our fall senior survey)
- > 84% of WPA seniors say they're comfortable with in-person events and visits
  - > 77% for US
- > 42% of WPA seniors have never visited a campus and 82% say they will visit a campus this year
  - > Half have US have never visited a campus and only 71% say they will visit a campus this year

# Insight #4



The rubber band is snapping - students want to go  
farther from home

## — What it means



- > The desire to enroll within an hour from home has decreased
- > 34% want to enroll 2-4 hours from home, and 21% want to enroll 4+ hours away
- > Can't only own your backyard, back to 2 pronged recruiting

# Insight #5



High published costs are closing doors to students

## — What it means



- > 75% of WPA students eliminated colleges based on the total published cost
  - 73% of US students did
- > Half of students in WPA would only consider applying to colleges under \$40,000 per year
- > Higher tolerance than the US as a whole
  - 50% consideration is at \$30,000 per year



# Communicating With Students

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# ~ Email's influence



- > 47% of WPA students said that their enrollment was influenced by emails from colleges
  - > 51% for the US
- > 99% said that email is the preferred outreach method
  - > 85% find even weekly email acceptable



**BUT...**

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**17%**



reported that the emails felt very personalized and relevant.

# — What is important to talk about

- > Scholarships (93%)
- > Ranking (63%)
- > Distance from home (50%)
- > Intercultural services (35%)
- > Fine and performing arts (34%)
- > Alumni network (34%)
- > LGBTQ services (31%)
- > Athletics (21%)
- > Religious affiliation (14%)

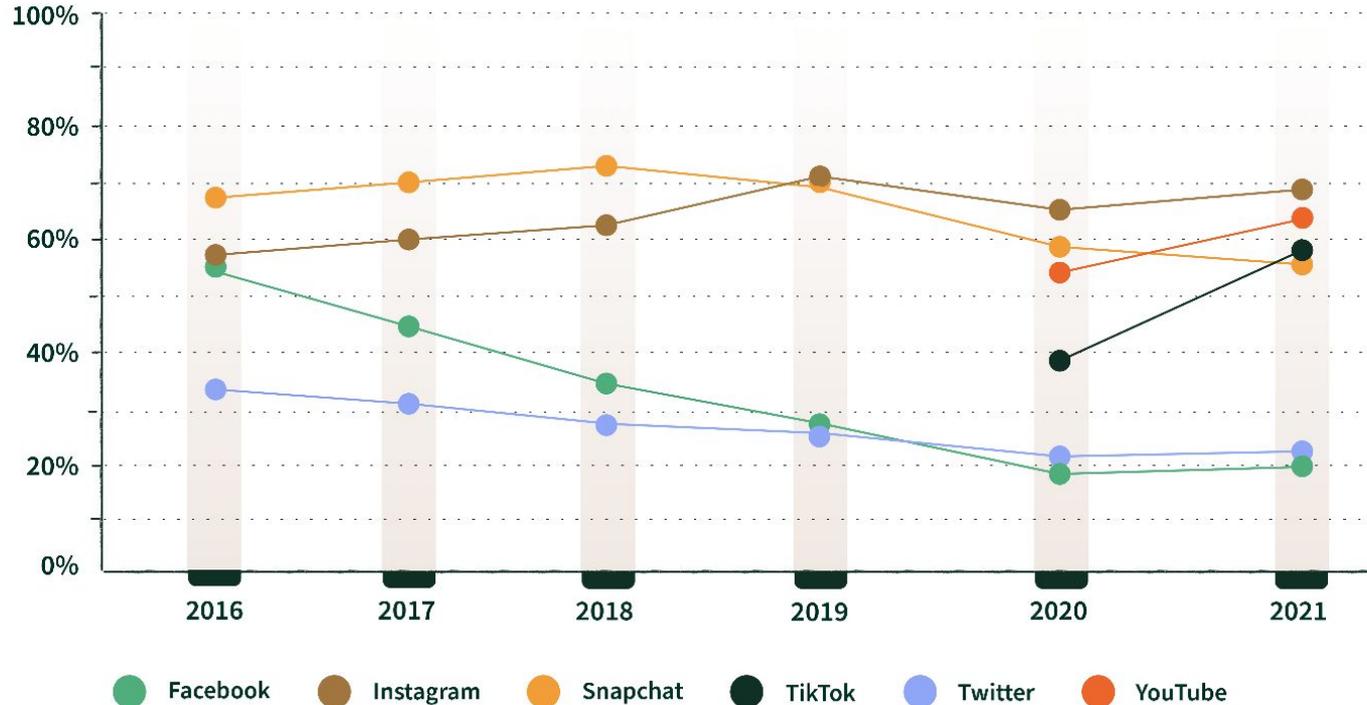


## — How influential were other channels?

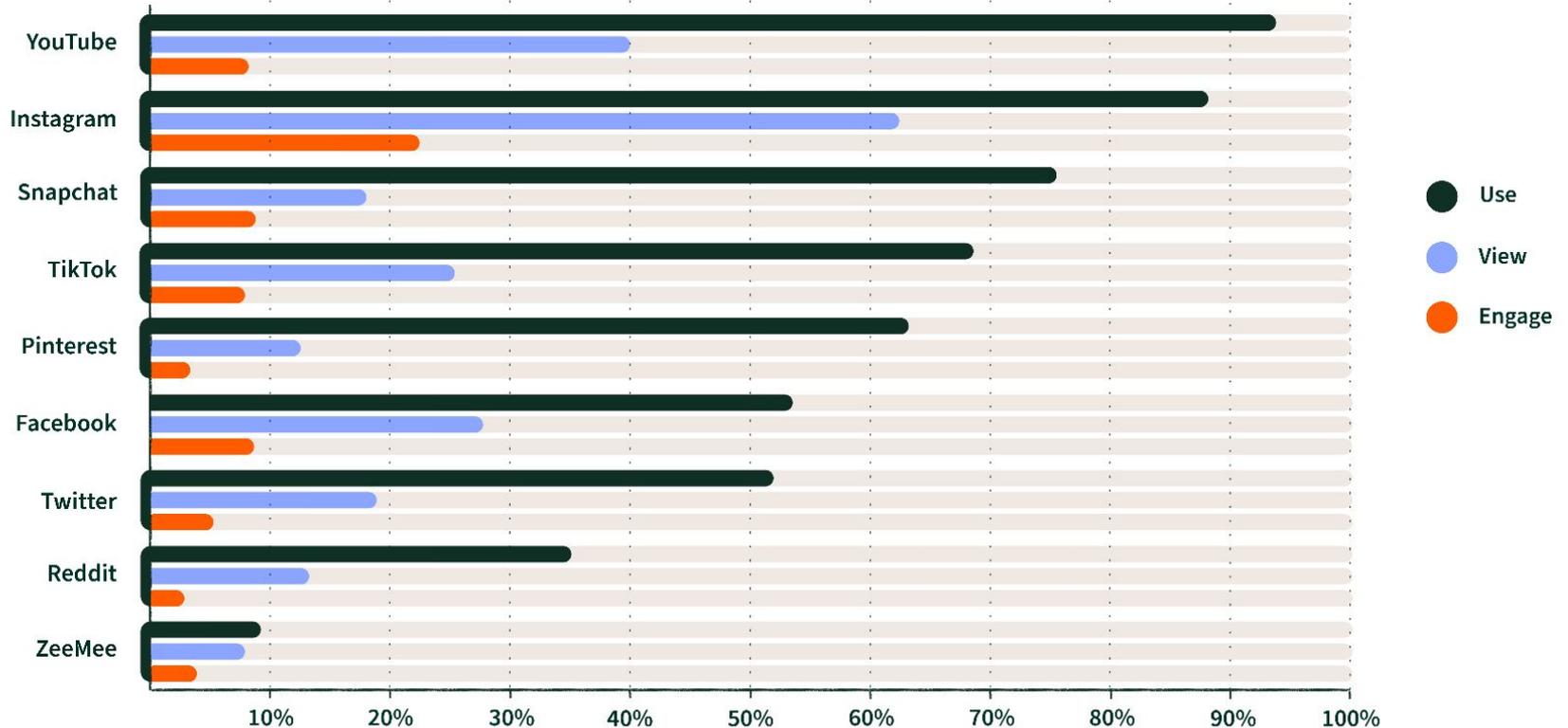


- > Mail - 44% found it influential (43% US)
- > Video chats - 33% (34% US)
- > Texts - 24% (25% US)
- > Phone calls - 23% (23% US)
  
- > Email was the only outlier for WPA compared to US

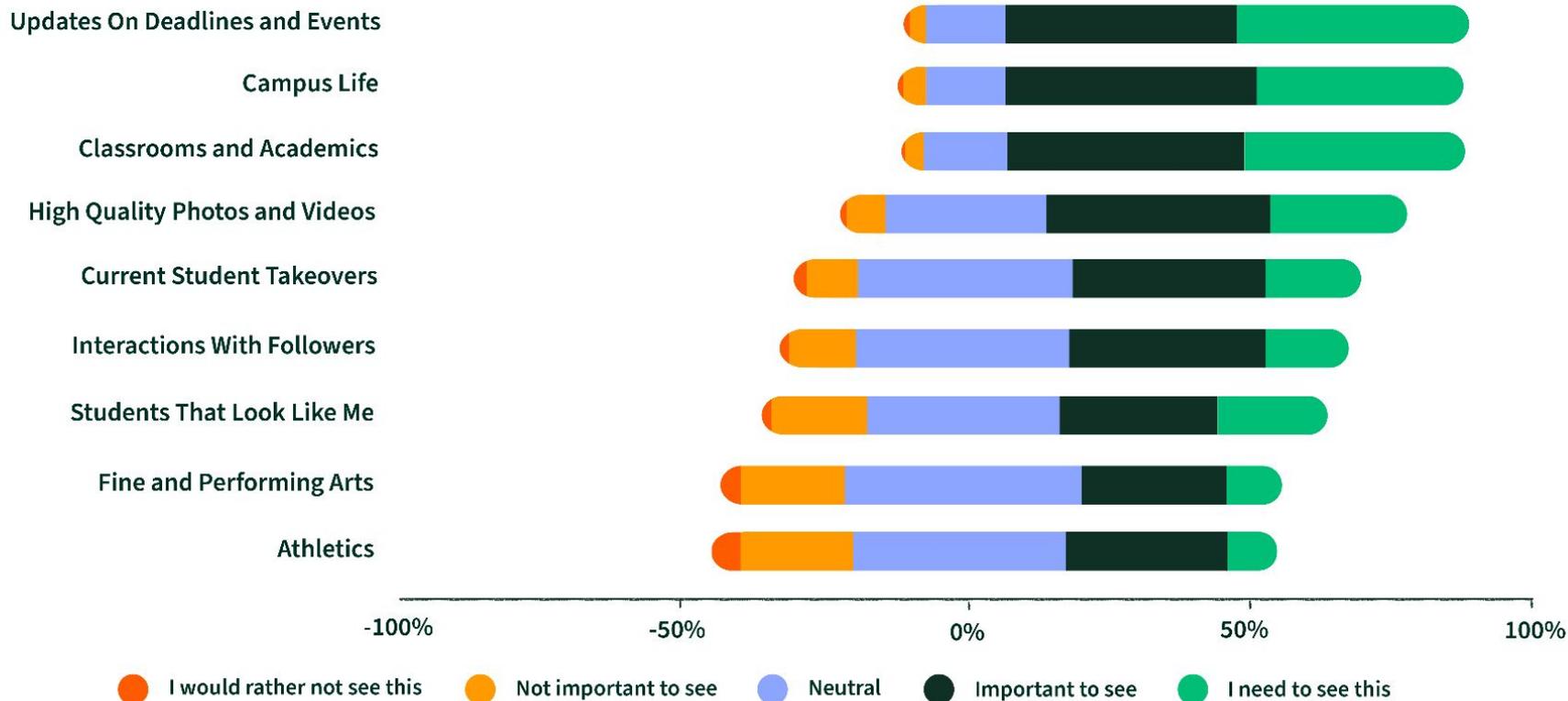
# Daily Social Media Usage Over Time



# Social Media Usage and Likelihood to View or Engage with College Accounts



# What Content Do Students Want to See on Social Media



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# About Niche...

By supporting over **27 million students and families**, Niche is changing how colleges and universities connect with students and build their future classes.

We enable our **1,900+ partners** to build genuine connections that nurture interest into visits, applications, and enrollment.

# Partnering with Niche

## Market Where the Students Are

- > Help students discover your school on the #1 college search platform
- > Highlight what makes your school unique



Claim Your Profile

## Modern Enrollment Marketing

- > **Niche Audience Remarketing**
  - > Reach students who are actively searching on the platforms they use most
  - > Drive traffic from your Niche Profile back to your website
- > **Niche Inquiry & Prospect Solutions**
  - > Connect with Niche for an initial analysis of your inquiries & prospects

## Additional Resources & Research

Enrollment Insights Blog [niche.bz/insights](https://niche.bz/insights)

# Q&A

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Survey results and more:  
[niche.bz/insights](https://niche.bz/insights)



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