

50,000 University Applicants tell us: What Information Sources Work?

Whether you're allocating the marketing budget for undergraduate recruitment, or considering what messages to emphasize, it is vital to understand who is listening, and what impact it is having on their decision to apply.

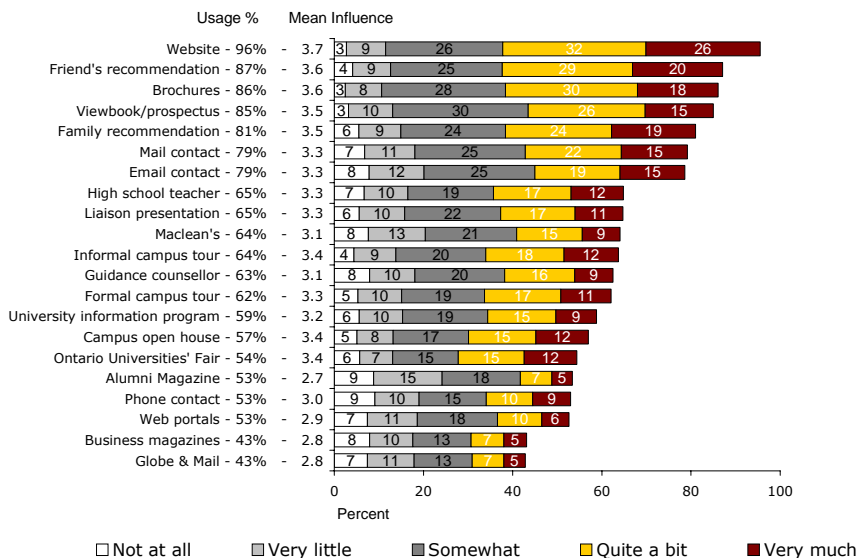
Academica Group's *University Applicant Survey™* (UAS™) has explored the use and influence of marketing channels on Canadian post-secondary consumers for the past 12 years, and devotes an entire chapter of the report to exploring key findings, subtle variations, competitive strengths and weaknesses.

In recent years it has become abundantly clear: **university websites** are the single most used and most influential channel of communication you have with prospective students, no matter what their age, location, or subject of interest. In 2007, 96% of applicants used university websites in making their decision, and for 58% it had substantial influence on their choice of school. For most universities, additional resources invested in the right online recruitment efforts will yield strong returns on investment. The UAS investigates how many sites applicants visited, which were most influential and appealing, which functions applicants were most likely to use, and more.

While the web's lead is increasing, print is certainly not dead: about 85% of applicants made use of **university viewbooks** or **faculty brochures**, and they generally found the latter more influential on their choice of school. Print materials had varying influence on different segments of applicants, and also varied significantly in impact between schools.

Almost 80% of applicants reported receiving **mail** or **email contact** from a university, although the impact it had varied depending upon the originating department and the grade average of the applicant. Just 53% reported receiving telephone contact, but the frequency of such contact has risen in recent years.

In the high schools, **liaison presentations** reach the majority of prospective applicants, but **high school teachers** are more influential, and a good deal more influential than **guidance counsellors**.



Almost two-thirds of Canadian university applicants report using the **Maclean's Guide to Universities** in making their selection, and it was a strong influence for a quarter of them – particularly those with university-educated parents, from higher-income households, and planning to move away from home for their studies. By comparison, 43% of applicants made use of the **Globe & Mail University Report Card**, and 25% reported it influenced their decision.

Prospective students are more likely to **visit your campus** informally than formally, and to visit on average 2.5 campuses. How does your campus visit stack up? The UAS can provide you with precise answers.

More than half of Canadian university applicants report reading at least one **alumni magazine** to gather information about potential post-secondary schools. How many alumni affairs departments take this into account when writing their magazine? Do they know which students are most likely to be reading?

The majority of university applicants are using education-related **web portals** while researching universities, but the UAS finds they make use of some portals much more than others. Which is the best investment of your limited advertising spend?

This Fact Sheet available online: <http://www.academicagroup.com/FactSheet1>

An introductory UCAS video will be posted on our website shortly.

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Participate in the 2008 UCAS™
This Spring, Academica Group will survey 100,000 university and college applicants in the new and expanded UCAS™. Report options are available to suit just about any budget.

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