

2020 PK-12 Education Website Benchmarks

Summary

- ☑ Total website traffic dropped by 17% in 2020. Search traffic declined, but traffic from social media and digital marketing both increased.
- ☑ There was very little difference in performance between public and private institutions, they're much more alike than often considered.
- ☑ While social media traffic increased, the quality of traffic declined. Referral traffic continues to be the most valuable source of users to PK-12 websites.
- ☑ The volume of paid traffic increased 72% in 2020; however, digital marketing could be significantly improved. Campaigns had high bounce rates, low pageviews, and low session duration. Google Ads performed slightly better than digital ads as a whole and private schools did a better job than public schools.

Results

A tactical difference is highlighted in the quality of referral traffic versus social or paid traffic. People who come to your site from referral sites, such as Niche and other school search platforms, are more likely to stay on your site as well as spend more time on the site and look at more pages. They also come back more often than people who come to your site through social media or digital marketing. Driven by a change in Google Ads, Niche now drives all digital marketing traffic through the platform first; essentially prequalifying and further improving the quality of referrals.



Site Metrics

Benchmarking Type	2020 Sessions	New Sessions	Average Session Duration (s)	Sessions per User	Bounce Rate	Pageviews per Session	Average Page Load (s)
School network/Diocese	427,186	53%	107	1.9	52%	2.0	6
Private: Pre-K	181,457	52%	117	1.9	52%	2.2	4
Private: Primary school	54,845	62%	118	1.6	53%	2.4	4
Private: Secondary school	157,711	53%	123	1.8	53%	2.3	4
School district	1,528,327	33%	126	3.0	52%	2.0	4
Public: Pre-K	456,910	51%	118	1.9	56%	1.9	4
Public: Primary school	55,119	53%	116	1.9	54%	2.3	3
Public: Secondary school	375,479	50%	118	1.9	58%	2.2	5
Medians	195,640	54%	118	1.8	53%	2.3	4



Social Media

Social Network	2020 Sessions	New Sessions	Average Session Duration (s)	Sessions per User	Bounce Rate	Pageviews per Session
Facebook	5,904	70%	66	1.3	71%	1.7
Instagram	200	67%	79	1.3	50%	2.2
Instagram Stories	33	94%	28	1.0	60%	1.7
LinkedIn	128	77%	59	1.1	56%	1.9
Pinterest	53	100%	12	1.0	72%	1.3
Reddit	14	100%	1	1.0	90%	1.1
Tumblr	1	100%	0	1.0	100%	1.0
Twitter	748	50%	84	1.5	56%	2.0
YouTube	68	48%	90	1.4	50%	2.2
Medians	1,182	73%	59	1.2	60%	1.9



Search Sources

Search Source	2020 Sessions	New Sessions	Average Session Duration (s)	Sessions per User	Bounce Rate	Pageviews per Session
ask	26	62%	110	1.4	33%	2.6
baidu	250	94%	36	1.0	83%	1.4
bing	3,414	48%	148	1.9	38%	2.9
duckduckgo	342	64%	144	1.5	41%	2.8
ecosia.org	134	48%	123	1.8	38%	2.7
google	74,052	52%	136	1.8	44%	2.6
naver	23	100%	58	1.0	50%	2.3
so.com	6	80%	42	1.0	57%	1.8
sogou	48	100%	0	1.0	99%	1.0
yahoo	1,790	50%	152	1.8	38%	2.9
yandex	5	100%	8	1.0	67%	1.4
Medians	9,503	62%	127	1.5	45%	2.5



Paid Traffic

	2020 Sessions	New Sessions	Average Session Duration (s)	Sessions per User	Bounce Rate	Pageviews per Session
School network/Diocese	4,682	80%	28	1.2	61%	1.6
Private: Pre-K	6,911	83%	27	1.1	77%	1.4
Private: Primary school	2,385	83%	39	1.2	72%	1.6
Private: Secondary school	4,333	83%	28	1.1	75%	1.5
School district	5,231	83%	34	1.2	76%	1.4
Public: Pre-K	18,266	55%	33	1.1	68%	1.6
Public: Primary school	4,834	87%	11	1.1	74%	1.7
Public: Secondary school	11,283	74%	29	1.3	77%	1.6
Medians	5,809	82%	30	1.1	75%	1.5



Google Ads Traffic

	2020 Spend	CPC	Clicks	New Sessions	Average Session Duration (s)	Bounce Rate	Pageviews per Session
School network/Diocese	\$36,126	\$1.04	29,022	60%	59	45%	2.0
Private: Pre-K	\$9,475	\$0.91	12,847	68%	65	64%	1.7
Private: Primary school	\$2,996	\$1.22	3,327	74%	70	65%	1.9
Private: Secondary school	\$5,083	\$1.06	5,884	73%	57	70%	1.7
School district	\$6,617	\$0.17	38,938	30%	80	20%	1.5
Public: Pre-K	\$109,507	\$1.88	58,126	71%	48	75%	1.5
Public: Primary school	\$53,224	\$3.81	13,960	82%	36	45%	2.6
Public: Secondary school	\$6,115	\$1.19	10,390	71%	31	77%	1.7
Medians	\$6,115	\$1.05	6,236	72%	60	66%	1.8

Methodology

These benchmarks are based upon website traffic data for the 2020 calendar year aggregated across 598 PK-12 schools. All institutions included use Google Analytics to track and report on their website traffic, and all granted Niche read-only access to their Google Analytics. In order to calculate industry benchmarks for key traffic metrics, the data across all institutions was pulled via the Google Analytics API and the median value among all institutions was calculated for each metric.

The key traffic metrics benchmarked are:

- Total Sessions
- Percent New Sessions
- Bounce Rate
- Average Session Duration
- Pageviews per Session
- Sessions per User
- Average Page Load Time

Benchmarks were determined for traffic on a site-wide level, as well as for traffic across various search engines, social networks, and paid sources. Not all institutions had traffic from every source. The benchmark for traffic from a specific source is the median among all schools with traffic from that source.

Additionally, for those with Google Ads connected Niche benchmarked:

- 2020 Ad spend
- CPC
- Clicks