

NICHE® 

Insights From the 2021 Niche Higher Ed Website Benchmarks



How are you feeling
about your inbound
website traffic right
now?



FAQs



Add questions in the console
(usually loads on the right side
of your screen)

Today's Discussion

The recording will be posted on
the Enrollment Insights Blog
and you'll receive a link that
includes the recording and
podcast version of our webinar.

2021

Higher Ed

**Education
Website
Benchmarks**



Some Background

- > 3rd annual report
- > Traffic to the site in the 2021 calendar year
- > 442 colleges and universities
- > 87% are Niche partners
- > Segmented by control and enrollment

Today:

- > Overall site traffic
- > Social media traffic to sites
- > Digital marketing insights



Overall Site Traffic

Key Insights

- > Traffic decreased in 2021
- > Bounce rates were up
- > New sessions increased across every segment
- > Page load times held steady

	2019	2020	2021
Search	1,409,910	988,351	921,450
Social	69,588	54,795	41,110
Paid	8,822	14,602	15,053
Direct and referral	1,091,609	830,744	814,278

Share of International Users

2-year public: 4% (highest at small)

2-year private: 26%

2-year for profit: 12% (highest at small)

4-year public: 10% (highest at large)

4-year private: 15% (highest at small)

4-year for profit: 13% (highest at small)

Graduate only: 25%

What set apart the top performers?

- > Simple, clean design
- > Above the fold content loads quickly before loading all assets
- > Avoided the trendy video backgrounds
- > Much more likely to use infinite scrolls
- > Focused on increasing First Contentful Paint (FCP)

Common Issues

- > Large unused JavaScript files and CSS
- > Large image files, uncompressed images
- > Chat widgets and other elements not lazy loading
- > Header tags improperly used
- > Images below the fold not lazy loading
- > Facebook and Twitter feeds can slow pages and block loads

Social Media



What is your top
priority for social
media?



Key Insights

- > As enrollment increases social volume increases, BUT is a smaller share of site traffic
- > Facebook still drives the most traffic
- > YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram bring the most engaged users
- > TikTok and Facebook traffic was the least engaged

Tik Tok



- > Biggest impact on traffic to 2-year colleges, it was the second-highest social source behind Facebook.
- > Fourth-largest source for 4-year colleges behind Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
- > In both cases, however, it was poor at bringing an engaged audience.
- > It was the largest social traffic source with for-profit colleges.

	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pageviews/Session	Sessions/User
Facebook	27,351	68%	1.7	1.2
Twitter	5,030	58%	2.2	1.6
LinkedIn	3,974	62%	1.4	2.0
Instagram	1,959	55%	2.2	1.4
TikTok	1,551	68%	1.8	1.2
YouTube	623	51%	2.8	1.8

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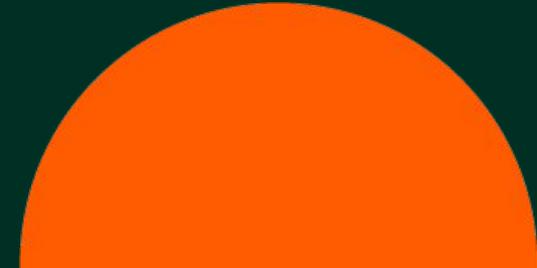
You don't have to be
everywhere.

You have to be good where you
are.

Considerations

- > What is your goal?
- > How are you tracking the contribution of social to institutional goals?
- > Don't make your news or press releases a dead end!
- > Consider your user experience when they come to your site: do you keep the promise?

Digital Marketing



How have you
changed your
digital marketing
budgets?



Key Insights

- > Average Google Ads spending increased \$240k
- > On average, public colleges spent the least (\$104k) and for profits spent the most (\$1.4million) on Google
- > Average CPC increased \$0.68 to \$3.23
- > Paid traffic increased 61%

Institution Type	Median / Average 2021 Google Ads Spend
2-year public	\$94,782 / \$94,716
2-year for profit	\$360,879 / \$789,125
4-year public	\$82,244 / \$112,466
4-year private	\$100,201 / \$253,053
4-year for profit	\$800,604 / \$1,977,953

How to decrease cost and increase ROI

- > Better targeting
- > Better landing pages
- > Better ad copy and visuals
- > Adjust time and location spends
- > Don't buy your own name!
- > Use remarketing

CPC
CPM
CPA

CPC - Cost per click, used when the goal is to bring users back to a landing page or your website

CPM - Cost per thousand impressions, used when the goal is to build awareness and brand recognition and value

CPA - Cost per acquisition, used when the goal is to drive a conversion action

Submit Questions in Your Chat Window



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 more than **2,400 partners** to build genuine connections that nurture interest into visits, applications, and enrollment.

About Niche

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
 - > 32 data points for students
 - > Partnership with NSC is showing how much more likely Niche users are to enroll

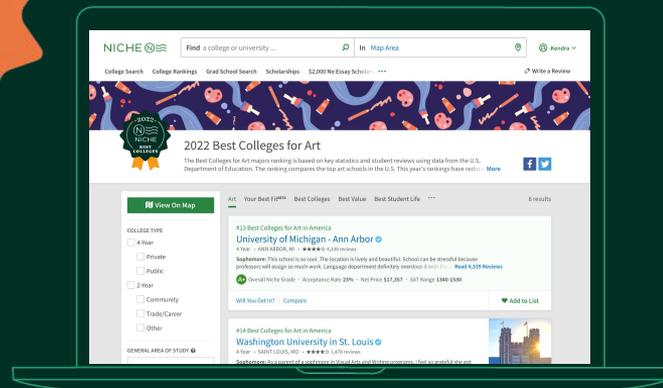


Market Where the Students Are

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

Partnering with Niche

Claim Your Profile



Additional Resources & Research
Enrollment Insights Blog niche.bz/insights



Submitted Questions

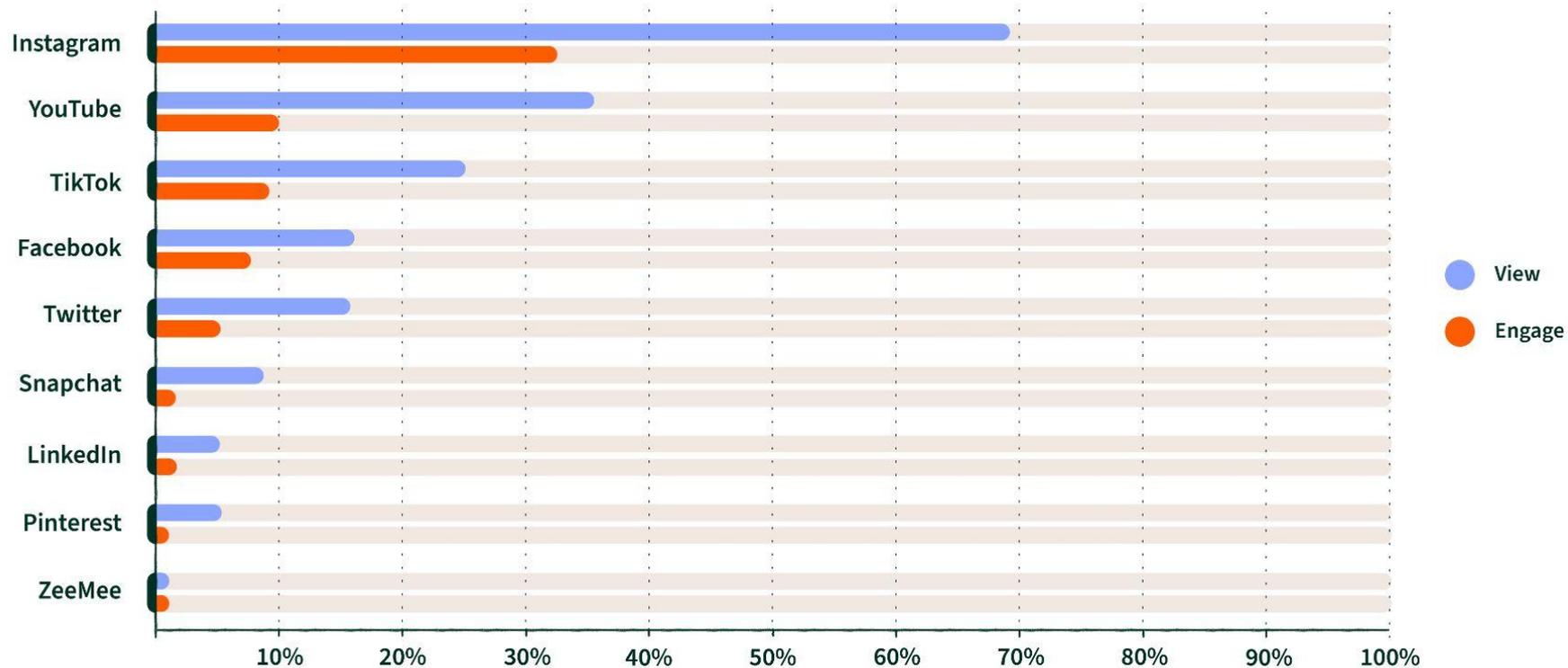
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How would you rank the top social media platforms in terms of a student's interaction with higher education institutions?

*

What social media platform provides the greatest engagement or ROI for traditional first-year students?

Social media usage for college search so far



	Viewed Colleges	Engaged with Colleges
Instagram		
TikTok		
YouTube		
Twitter		
Facebook		
Snapchat		
LinkedIn		
Pinterest		
ZeeMee		

**You'll have
to wait!**

“

How do we know social media ads work? How do we compare views, clicks, impressions to an average when we share with departments?

For example:

If an enrollment is worth \$20,000

And 10% of applicants enroll

An application is worth \$2,000

If you spend \$50,000 to generate 100 applications, you essentially spent \$50,000 to generate \$200,000 and the campaign was a success

“

What should the top priority be for improving website performance?

Q&A



Benchmarks and more:
niche.bz/benchmarks



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