

College Exploration on the Internet

Introduction



High school students planning to go to college cite the Internet as the second most important resource available to them, after their guidance counselors, according to a survey by the Art & Science Group.

The Internet has had a profound effect on the way we do business, gather information, and communicate with one other. Consider the Web's groundbreaking impact on college exploration. Less than 15 years ago, high school students had to research and plan for college via snail mail, telephone calls to college officials, or through costly and time-consuming campus visits.

Today, students can use the Internet to find information about almost any college-related topic imaginable. They can

use the Web to help choose a major; research admissions requirements; apply for scholarships; and tour colleges via online videos, photographs, and audio recordings. There are websites that feature student reviews of professors and schools that are brutally honest in their assessment. Students can even use the Web to apply to college! In short, there are literally thousands of college-related websites on the Web.

Unfortunately, quantity doesn't always mean quality. Many "college websites" are merely advertisements for fee-based services or offer information that is outdated or too vague to be of use to students and educators.

To provide you with the most useful college resources on the Web, we have visited more than 2,000 websites to create *College Exploration on the Internet: A Student and Counselor's Guide to More Than 685 Websites*.

Using this book will help you save time, money, and avoid dated or incorrect information. The 685+ Web resources presented in *College Exploration*

on the Internet are the most useful websites available today. They provide information on:

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| ✓ College admissions | ✓ Internships |
| ✓ Choosing a major | ✓ Study abroad opportunities |
| ✓ Campus visits | ✓ Religious colleges |
| ✓ U.S. and Canadian college search tools | ✓ Graduate school |
| ✓ Scholarships, grants, loans, and other financial aid | ✓ Campus crime, alcohol abuse, and depression |
| ✓ Minority resources | ✓ Professor reviews |
| ✓ Community colleges | ✓ Accreditation |
| ✓ Students with disabilities | ✓ Fraternities and sororities |
| ✓ Women's issues | ✓ Other postsecondary options including apprenticeships and military training |
| ✓ Distance and online education | |

Some of these websites (such as ACT, Peterson's, and The Princeton Review) are household names, but others (such as College is Possible, Making It Count, and Super College) are hidden gems that will provide you with excellent advice and resources.

Use *College Exploration on the Internet* to find useful websites and college-related information, but don't forget that Web research is no substitute for visiting a college campus, talking with a counselor or teacher about your college plans, or discussing your goals with parents and friends.

We hope that *College Exploration on the Internet* becomes a valued and trusted resource as you navigate the challenges of college!

How This Book is Organized

College Exploration on the Internet has two main sections: College Resource Websites and Association Web Resources. The Quick Guide to Resources serves as a type of extended Table of Contents that will help you locate websites and resources on more than 145 college-related topics. This book also features a list of national and state associa-

tions for counselors, a list of state financial aid and college planning associations and websites, a glossary, a list of financial aid abbreviations, and career title and website indexes. The following paragraphs provide more information on the contents of the book.

College Resource Websites

This section features reviews of the best college-related websites on the Internet for students, parents, school and independent counselors, and other education professionals. See page 1 for a detailed overview of this section.

Association Web Resource

This section lists nearly 1,000 online resources and publications relating to college planning, majors, and careers. They are offered by more than 360 professional association and government agencies. See page 120 for a detailed overview of this section.

Counselor Associations on the Internet

This section features a list of the names and websites of national and state counselor associations as an informational resource for counselors.

State Financial Aid and College Planning Associations and Websites

This section features a list of the names and websites of state financial aid and college planning organizations and websites.

Glossary

The Glossary defines more than 170 terms that students and educators will encounter frequently as they research college options on the Web.

Career Title and Website Indexes

We all know that students attend college to expand their knowledge and prepare for a career. To assist high school and community college students who may already have a career interest, we have provided a Career Title Index that students can use to locate further information on the career of their choice.

A Website Index lists all of the websites referenced in this book.

Issues to Remember as You Use This Book:

Website Content Changes Constantly. The Web is constantly changing: section titles get changed, websites are redesigned, new information is added . . . you get the idea. If you have trouble locating any of the websites listed in this book, try shortening the Web address to its

basic address. For example, if you are having trouble finding the Associated Colleges of the Midwest's high school resources website (www.acm.edu/admiss), shortening the address to its most basic format (e.g., www.acm.edu) will usually allow you to access the site and locate the information at the site's home page or by using its search feature.

Keep Up With Technology. While the resources at most websites can be read in basic text or html format, you may need some additional tools to access certain resources. One of the more popular ways to distribute information electronically is the Portable Document Format (PDF). PDF files are compatible with Windows, Macintosh, and Unix-based systems. They retain all the formats of the original version and can be read on screen and printed with nearly any computer and printer. You may already have a copy of this popular software on your computer, but if you don't, you can visit the Adobe Systems Inc. website (www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html) to download a free copy of the software and begin viewing documents.

Other software programs that you might need as you surf the Web for college information include the Macromedia Flash Player (www.adobe.com/shockwave/download/download.cgi), which allows users to view moving or static images on the Web; and the QuickTime Media Player (www.apple.com/quicktime/download) and the RealOnePlayer (www.real.com), which allow users to access video and audio resources on the Web. All three of these programs can be downloaded for free. Installing and using these free resources will make your visits to college-related websites easier and more enjoyable.