



College Connections



College Online Chats

One way to explore a college or university is through an online chat. Many colleges are using chats, along with blogs, pages on Facebook, Twitter feeds, and other online tools, to reach out to students. Chatting with an admissions officer or current student can be both informative and reassuring during the busy college admissions process. Chats can also offer a sense of the social, cultural, and academic life on campus. Can you see yourself at this college? Admissions chats can help answer this all-important question.

Advice on how to get the most out of a college fair or what to expect during an interview applies to online chats as well:

- Research the college, and find out basic facts about its history, course offerings, faculty, and requirements.
- Make a list of questions you'd like to ask before logging on for the chat.
- Ask questions that can't be answered easily elsewhere.
- Be on your best online behavior when chatting with an admissions officer, or a student at the college, don't use the kinds of expressions and abbreviations you might use with good friends.

A Selection of Online Chats at Independent Colleges and Universities in New York

At Adelphi University's site, go <http://groupchat02.askadmissions.net/01/landingpage.aspx?clientName=adelphi>

Clarkson University offers prospective students an opportunity to chat with a Clarkson student at <http://www.clarkson.edu/clarksonchat/>

Colgate University schedules chats throughout the year. For more information, go to <http://www.colgate.edu/DesktopDefault1.aspx?tabid=1025>

Cornell University's College of Engineering offers at least three chat sessions a year for prospective students. Find out more at <http://www.engineering.cornell.edu/prospective/undergraduate/contact-us.cfm>

The Culinary Institute of America hosts a number of chats during the year. To register for a chat, go to <http://groupchat02.askadmissions.net/01/landingpage.aspx?clientName=ciachef>

Find out general information about D'Youville College by registering for a chat at <http://groupchat02.askadmissions.net/01/landingpage.aspx?clientName=dyc>

Hofstra University offers occasional live video chats at http://www.hofstra.edu/Admission/adm_chat.html

Manhattanville College conducts online undergraduate open houses throughout the year. Learn more at <http://www.manhattanville.edu/AdmissionsandFinancialAid/Visiting/OpenHouses/OnlineUndergraduateOpenHouses.aspx>

Students can use live chat to ask questions of a Nazareth College admissions counselor. Go to <http://admissions.naz.edu/get-started/ask-your-questions/> and click on "Chat With/Contact a Counselor."

Pace University offers online chats for prospective students; all chats begin at 8:00 pm EST. To participate in a scheduled chat, go to <http://www.pace.edu/pace/prospectivestudents/international-students/undergraduate/online-chats/>

Students interested in applying to Polytechnic University of NYU can find a schedule for live chats at <http://www.poly.edu/live>

A schedule of live online chats with current students at St. Lawrence University can be found at <http://www.stlawu.edu/admis/chat.html>.

At the University of Rochester Web site, prospective students can go to <http://www.enrollment.rochester.edu/admissions/contact.shtm#im>

Vassar College hosts two chats a year, one for prospective students in December and another for admitted students in April. To find out more, visit http://admissions.vassar.edu/contact_chat.html

Information about online chats with Wagner College admissions counselors is available at <http://www.wagner.edu/admissions/chat/>

Sources: "Online Admissions Chats," http://mycollegeguide.org/articles/6/94/online_admission_chat; New York's Private Colleges and Universities, <http://www.nycolleges.org/>.

College-Bound Students and Social Networking Sites

A 2008 survey of a random national sample of college-bound high school seniors registered for the SAT revealed widespread use of social networking sites.* Of the 960 students who completed the survey, 89% indicated that they had recently visited social networking sites, and 84% had a profile or personal page at one or more such sites.

Use of social networking sites in the college search process:

- Only 18% used such sites to gather information on colleges. Of that 18%, more than half used these sites to see if they knew anybody at colleges that interested them (67%); to look at comments by students at specific colleges (55%); to search for social, athletic, or academic-focused groups at colleges that interested them (55%); and to look at photos of students on specific campuses (54%).
- About 20% of the students in the survey checked to see if institutions that interested them had a Facebook, MySpace, or other social network site page.

Concerns about privacy:

- About half (48%) said that everything on their profile is private.
- 38% "strongly agreed" and 35% "somewhat agreed" with the statement "I'm careful about what I put on my profile because I know it's possible that my parents or other adults might have access to it."
- Almost 33% were concerned that their profiles, if accessed by colleges, might affect their chances for admission.

Limits on use of social networking sites to research colleges:

- Only 5% of students stated that they became much more interested in specific colleges through such sites.
- 72% became much more interested in colleges they were considering through campus visits.
- 47% became much more interested in a particular college through its Web site; 31% because of advice from a high school counselor; and 27% through brochures mailed by colleges.

Social networking sites have limited influence on college choice at the present time, but the impact of this relatively new technology, given its growing use by college-bound students, seems likely to increase.

Source: "StudentPOLL: Social Networking Sites and College-Bound Students," <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/data-reports-research/trends/studentpoll/social-networking>.
*Survey conducted by College Board and the Art and Science Group, LLC

In Your Face...book: Social Networking Dos and Don'ts

Most students know that social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, or other social networking sites are public spaces where what you post - images and text - can be seen by anyone including parents, teachers, school administrators, or prospective employers.

Social Network Don'ts

Facebook recently rolled out a new system for privacy controls. With the new system, users will have more control over what information is shared. For example, you can prevent others you may be friends with from viewing specific pieces of information, like photos from last Saturday night. Or, you can use the settings to select which information to share with which friends. Facebook also limits what information is given out about users when they interact with third-party applications and Web sites.

However, on Facebook certain information is public to everyone, which Facebook refers to as "publicly available information." This includes your Name, Profile Picture, Current City, Gender, Networks, Friends List and Pages. Even if you restrict access to your site, you should consider removing from or avoid posting the following on your pages:

- Photos of yourself drinking or using drugs, or in the company of people who are clearly drunk or high
- Photos in which you are making rude or obscene gestures
- Foul, racist, or offensive language in posts
- Photos showing illegal activity
- Photos that might make an admissions officer or future employer doubt your character or judgment, such as photos of you engaged in reckless or obnoxious behavior

- Posts about wild partying, unsafe driving, or other irresponsible activity
- Posts trashing a particular college or university
- Links to any biased or bigoted groups, or groups that promote illegal activity
- Your street address, phone number, personal information (birthday, social security number, ect.) or an unprofessional e-mail address such as "partyhearty.com" or "sexndrugs.net"

Although you can't control what your friends post on their pages, check regularly to see if they are posting comments about you or photos of you that are embarrassing or in poor taste. If they make a habit of this, you may want to unfriend them.

Social Network Dos

Does this mean you have to keep your Facebook or MySpace pages bland, or avoid anything but the most innocuous posts? Should you go out of your way to create an exaggerated but impressive profile? No - be yourself, but be the best possible version of yourself.

- Use an attractive or professional-looking photo on your profile.
- Use a professional e-mail address that incorporates your name.
- Among your favorite activities, list books you've actually read and enjoyed, music you actively enjoy or play, athletic accomplishments, community service projects, or artistic pursuits.
- In photo albums, post photos of yourself engaged in constructive activities, such as working on a school project, mentoring younger kids, training for a sport, playing an instrument, rehearsing a play, or working on the school paper.

- Link to articles or videos connected to your favorite causes, hobbies, or academic interests.
- If you've traveled to any interesting places, post comments or photos that depict your experiences, and include any college campuses you have recently visited.
- Join online communities engaged in positive activities, such as cultural groups or organizations working for constructive causes and goals.
- If colleges that interest you have MySpace or Facebook pages, use their pages to ask questions and find out more about those institutions.
- Connect with students at colleges you want to attend; they can be one of your best sources of information.
- After making your final college choice, connect with other members of your college freshman class before your arrival on campus.

Get as much out of social networking sites as possible by using them to help explore colleges and manage the transition from high school to college.

Sources: "Your Face is Out There: Facebook & College Admission," http://mycollegeguide.org/articles/6/85/facebook_and_college_admission; Allen Grove, "Facebook, MySpace and College Admissions," <http://collegeapps.about.com/od/heartofgettingaccepted/a/Facebook.htm>; Lindsay Anderson, "To friend or not to friend? College admissions in the age of Facebook," USA Today, September 16, 2009, http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-09-16-facebook-admissions_N.htm; "Using Social Networking Sites to Your Advantage," <http://www.theivycoach.com/the-ivy-coach-newsletter-about-college-admissions/using-social-networking-sites-to-your-advantage.html>.

Resources: Social Networking Sites and College Admissions

"Five Easy Steps to Stay Safe (and Private!) on Facebook"

<http://www.nytimes.com/external/readwriteweb/2009/09/16/16readwriteweb-5-easy-steps-to-stay-safe-and-private-on-fac-6393.html?em>

This informative article offers advice to non-computer geeks about how to guard their privacy on Facebook. The subjects covered include:

- How to make "friend" lists
- How to control who can see what on a profile page
- How to keep a posted address and phone number accessible only to certain people
- How to use search privacy settings
- How to stop sharing personal information with unknown applications

"Networking Your Way Into College"

<http://www.careersandcolleges.com/tp2/cnc/articles/view.do?cat=cnc.aa.improving-your-chances&article=networking-your-way-college2>

This article discusses online social media, such as www.cappex.com, www.edsoup.com, and www.zinch.com, that are specifically devoted to college admissions, how students can use such tools in a college search, and how admissions staff might use them to recruit students.

"Parents' Guide to Social Networking Websites"

<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/internet-safety/social-networking-websites>

This article by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), informs parents about the risks their children may face on social networking sites and how to protect them from those dangers.

"Reaching the Wired Generation: How Social Media is Changing College Admission"

- <http://www.campuscompare.com/college-resources/admissions/teens-use-social-media-sites-to-choose-a-college/>
- <http://chronicle.com/blogPost/Social-Media-in-Admissions-No/4655/>

These articles discuss the increasing use of Internet search engines and online social networks by college admissions offices and college-bound students. Among the findings in this report:

- 25% of colleges surveyed use social networking to get information about prospective students.
- 88% of admissions office staff say that social networking media are either "somewhat" or "very" important to future recruiting efforts.