

School Survival and the Internet

May 15, 2007

Survival and the Internet

The use of, or avoidance of the Internet now plays a large role in the survival of private and parochial schools. Many schools not using the Internet as a focal point in their recruiting efforts are finding themselves struggling to fill classes, while other often smaller, younger, and less known schools are recruiting hoards of new students on the Internet. Here's why the Internet is becoming the critical medium for K-12 recruiting: The Numbers Numbers don't lie. America finds what it is looking for on the Internet; especially your audience, an inherently younger one since they have school age children. - Annually, more than ten million searches are run on major search engines for private or parochial schools. This includes broad searches such as "private schools", "Catholic schools", "Montessori schools", and very specific, geographically targeted terms like "Christian elementary school in Austin, TX". (Private Schooling Direct, April 2007) - There are over 209 million at home Internet users in the United States. Over 146 million of these users were active in April, 2007. On average, these users visited 64 different websites in the month and spent more than 33 hours in front of their computer. (Nielsen//NetRatings, April 2007) - There are over 64 million at work Internet users in the United States. Over 61 million of these users were active in April, 2007. On average, these users visited 113 different websites in the month and spent more than 80 hours in front of their computer. (Nielsen//NetRatings, April 2007) - In the United States, 83% of 18-29 year olds, 82% of 30-49 year olds, 70% of 50-64 year olds, and 33% of those over 65 years old, use the Internet. (Pew Internet & American Life Project, December 2006) - The average age of a first time mother is 25.2 years old. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005) This means a mother seeking to enroll her four year old child in a private school today graduated from high school in year 1996 and college in the year 2000. This is a new, information generation you are recruiting, one that fully expects to find information about your school online and communicate with you via the Internet.

The Core Concepts These are some rather simple observations that greatly impact your school and its use of the Internet in recruiting both today and in the future. - Nearly all other media leads people to the Internet. Most modern day print, radio, and television advertising directs consumers to website addresses for more information, special discounts, etc. Many businesses even refer incoming phone callers to their website. Even if the advertising does not directly point people to the Internet, the common "next step" for a consumer in their decision making process begins with "www." Simply put, we have reached an era when even if the Internet is not where we start or finish our search for a product or service, it almost always plays a critical role in the process. - If YOU are not using any of the technology when you recruit new enrollments (or worse they experience poor technology use i.e. no information that can be emailed, broken website links, etc.), parents WILL be skeptical of your school's commitment to integrate Internet based technologies into the learning process and teach their children to make efficient use of technology in their lives. - Neighborhoods across America are continuing to lose their sense of community. Conversations with neighbors centering around a child's education don't happen as often as they used to. Word

of mouth matters and will always result in good things for your school (assuming what is said is positive), but more and more schools are finding that it alone no longer is enough to rely on for survival. In closing, I want to again put a statistic stated earlier in front you. In the United States, 83% of 18-29 year olds, 82% of 30-49 year olds, 70% of 50-64 year olds, use the Internet. These are your prospective families. Help them find you the way they want to find you.

 Private School Marketing is a newsletter written for administrators and admissions personnel at Pre-K through 12th grade private, parochial, and Montessori schools throughout the United States. We are actively seeking article contributions and encourage you to send your submission to jjosephson@privateschoolingdirect.com. For advertising information, please email info@privateschoolingdirect.com or call 561-417-7768. Private School Marketing is a publication of Private Schooling Direct LLC.

www.privateschoolingdirect.com

About the Author

Jesse Josephson is Vice President, Marketing for Private Schooling Direct, a nationwide private school admissions marketing company headquartered South Florida.

Source: <http://www.edarticle.com>