

# Facebook Checking is No Longer Uncharted Territory in College Admissions: Percentage of Admissions Officers Who Visited An Applicant's Profile On the Rise

## Kaplan Test Prep Survey Finds Growing Acceptance in the Practice of Exploring Applicants' Digital Trails

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Russell Schaffer, [russell.schaffer@kaplan.com](mailto:russell.schaffer@kaplan.com), 212.453.7538

Carina Wong, [carina.wong@kaplan.com](mailto:carina.wong@kaplan.com), 212.453.7571

New York, NY (September 21, 2011) – According to Kaplan Test Prep's 2011 survey of college admissions officers\*, nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents from the schools surveyed have gone to an applicant's Facebook or other social networking page to learn more about them, while 20% have Googled them. When Kaplan first began tracking the issue in 2008, only 10% of schools reported checking applicants' social networking pages. In fact, survey responses indicate the prevalence of social media vetting is likely higher, since several respondents noted that while they had not personally visited an applicant's page, other colleagues in their office had.

Of the admissions officers who did tap into these online tools to learn more about prospective students, 12% said that what they found negatively impacted the applicant's admissions chances. Offenses cited included essay plagiarism, vulgarities in blogs, alcohol consumption in photos and "illegal activities."

"There's definitely a growing acceptance by college admissions officers in the practice of checking applicants' digital footprints, but for context, these checks are not routine and tend to happen because of a specific trigger in a particular situation, like an anonymous tip or a posting on an online forum," said Jeff Olson, vice president of research, Kaplan Test Prep. "That said, college applicants need to be particularly mindful of what they post, and may even want to search online to make sure their digital footprint is clean."

More prevalent is the use of social media for outreach purposes. Kaplan Test Prep's survey also finds that Facebook and YouTube are increasingly important recruiting tools for colleges – 85% use Facebook (up from 82% in the 2010 survey) and 66% use YouTube (up from 52% in the 2010 survey) to vie for the interest of prospective students.

"The growing role of social media in the college admissions process poses potential pitfalls, but also many pluses for applicants," said Olson. "For example, a college's official admissions page on Facebook allows it to reach prospective students in an environment in which teens are comfortable or expert. They can take virtual campus tours, learn about academic programs and find out important admissions statistics like the average SAT or ACT scores for accepted students."

<http://press.kaptest.com/press-releases/facebook-checking-is-no-longer-unchartered-territory-in-college-admissions-percentage-of-admissions-officers-who-visited-an-applicant%E2%80%99s-profile-on-the-rise>