*student*POLL

Use of the Internet by prospective students to gather information about colleges has risen substantially in only one year, presaging the emergence of computer technologies as a critical factor in college choice.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

A little more than a year ago, when we reported the results of what was arguably the first reliable survey of the use of on-line communications technologies by prospective college students, we wrote, "While no one can dismiss the promise of technology's impact on the admissions process and recruitment communications, there is little reason to believe that a revolution is imminent. Only a small fraction of the prospective student market is taking advantage of these new communications technologies, and a lack of computer expertise and sufficient hardware present major barriers to access."

At the same time, we recognized the volatility of the market and promised that *student*POLL would, on a periodic basis, measure and evaluate key trends and suggest appropriate institutional strategies and tactics.

What a difference a year makes! Last year, as we suggested then, was an appropriate time for colleges and universities to put a toe in the technological waters, experimenting with Web sites, e-mail, and other forms of new communications technologies in recruitment communications until a sufficient share of the market of prospective students acquired the hardware and software necessary to use these technologies.

The time has now come for a full technological immersion. This issue of *student*POLL documents a host of compelling reasons why colleges must now move quickly to adapt to the changes these new technologies are bringing. The trends reported indicate clearly that on-line communications technologies will redefine fundamental aspects of the admissions process. For example, more than half of the students we surveyed would prefer to file their college applications electronically, either on-line or by disk. Clearly the paper application is doomed.

Even more important, the quality and availability of computer facilities is now a significant factor in college choice. The consequences of this fact could be momentous for institutions that are moving slowly, for example, to provide network connections in residence halls (two-thirds of the students we surveyed plan to bring their own computers to college) or to provide an adequate number of workstations around the campus.

In addition to learning about the dramatic changes that have taken place in the market since we last reported on this topic, in this issue of *student*POLL you will also be privy to information not previously explored but equally enticing.

While the future is always difficult to predict, we have tried to make sense of the patterns our data reveal and suggest their implications for institutional policy. One prediction, however, is easy to make: The magnitude and speed of the change we have reported will leave flatfooted institutions dead in their tracks.

Richard A. Hesel
Publisher

1. An overwhelming majority of students own or use machines with the hardware needed to access on-line communications.

Only one year ago, *student*POLL reported that nearly all high school seniors owned or had access to computers at home and at school, but only two in five had the hardware necessary to use on-line and other new communications technologies. Among the students surveyed this year, more than two-thirds have the hardware to access on-line communications.

IBM/PC-compatible computers continue to increase their dominance of the market. The proportion of students using PC-compatibles jumped by over 15 percentage points, with nearly 80 percent now using PCs. Moreover, there has been a dramatic shift in the hardware configurations of these machines.

Last year, more than 20 percent of students used PCs equipped with processors of marginal power. This year, a much higher percentage of students use machines equipped with Pentium or 586 processors. In fact, one-third use computers with Pentium or 586 processors, and only 7 percent use computers equipped with slower-running 286 or 386 processors. (Table 1)

In addition, roughly three-quarters of students indicated that the computer they use most often has a CD-ROM and/or a modem, nearly a 25 percentage point increase over the same finding reported in our 1996 technology issue. (Table 2) More revealing, however, is the fact that a much higher percentage of these students are using computers with faster modems. A year ago, some 41 percent of the students with modems (23 percent of all students surveyed) had modems with a baud rating of 14,400 or higher — the modem speed now accepted as the bare minimum to use on-line technologies. By comparison, this year nearly 60 percent of those with modems (or 42 percent overall) have modems with a baud rate of 14,400 or higher; 38 percent (or 27 percent overall) have 28,800 or higher modems. These data, and other findings in this issue, provide compelling evidence that the hardware barriers evident in the market last year are rapidly disappearing.

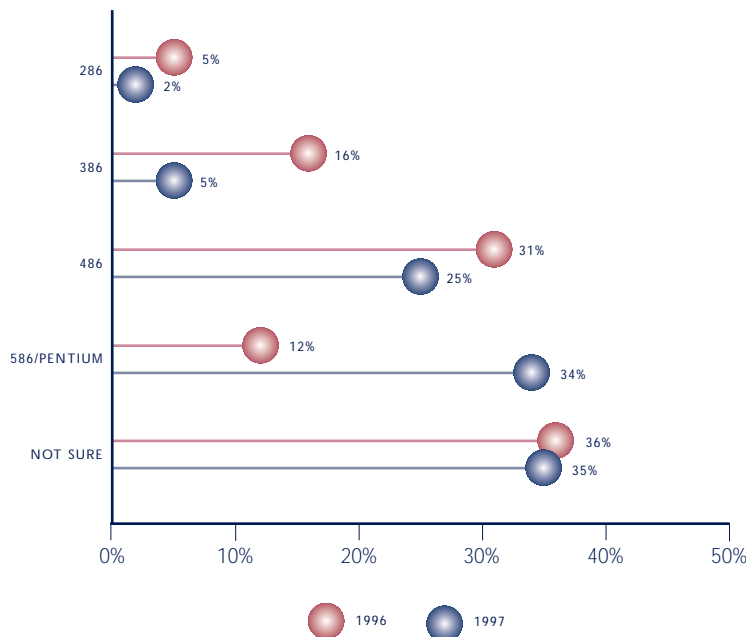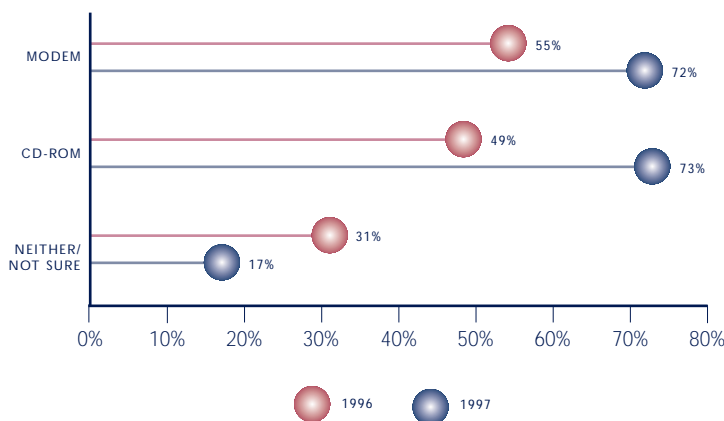### Table 1.
CPU on IBM-compatibles owned or used most frequently

CPU	1996	1997
286	5%	2%
386	16%	5%
486	31%	25%
586/PENTIUM	12%	34%
NOT SURE	36%	35%

1996   1997

Table 2.
Pecentage of computers owned or used most frequently that have modems or CD-ROMs

	1996	1997
MODEM	55%	72%
CD-ROM	49%	73%
NEITHER/ NOT SURE	31%	17%

1996   1997

2. Self-rated computer proficiency has risen substantially.

The findings reveal that computer proficiency is on the rise. In 1996, *student*POLL found that only 32 percent of the students surveyed had computer proficiency beyond word processing. This year, that proportion jumped to 45 percent. In addition, another 45 percent of respondents indicated that they have some knowledge of word processing and/or other software programs. Similarly, the percentage rating themselves "a beginner" decreased from 17 to 10 percent. (Table 3)

A finding that remained constant is that male respondents were much more likely to give themselves a higher rating for computer proficiency compared to female respondents. For example, 27 percent of female students rated themselves highly experienced in using a variety of software programs compared to 47 percent for their male counterparts. (Table 4)

Table 3.
Self-rated computer proficiency

	1996	1997
NO KNOWLEDGE	1%	1%
A BEGINNER	17%	10%
SOME KNOWLEDGE OF WORD PROCESSING	51%	45%
EXPERIENCED	28%	38%
HIGH PROFICIENCY	4%	7%
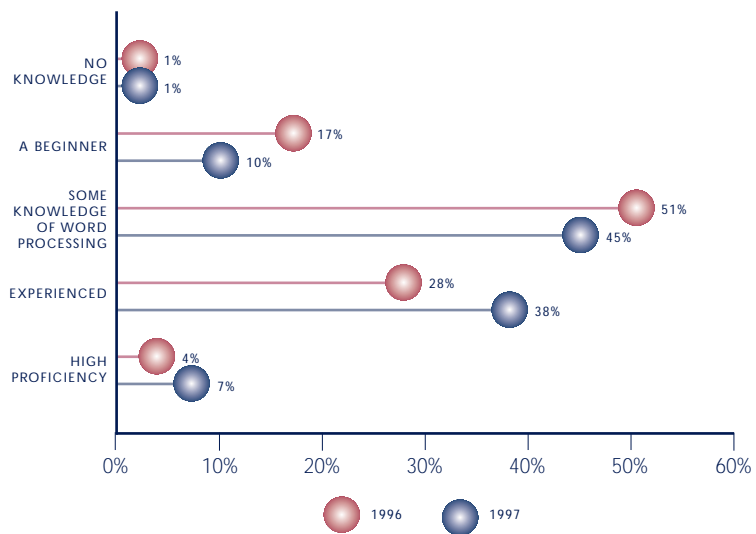
Table 4.
Self-rated computer proficiency by gender

1996

	Female	Male
NO KNOWLEDGE	1%	1%
A BEGINNER	21%	11%
SOME KNOWLEDGE OF WORD PROCESSING	56%	43%
EXPERIENCED	18%	41%
HIGH PROFICIENCY	3%	5%

1997

	Female	Male
NO KNOWLEDGE	1%	0%
A BEGINNER	14%	6%
SOME KNOWLEDGE OF WORD PROCESSING	57%	34%
EXPERIENCED	27%	47%
HIGH PROFICIENCY	1%	13%
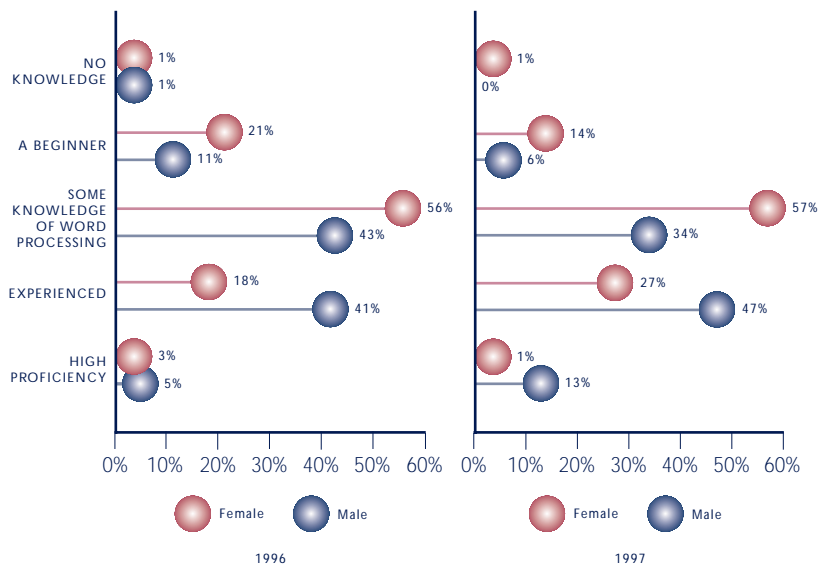
3. Student access to and use of the Internet and World Wide Web has soared. Conversely, use of commercial on-line services has declined or remained stagnant.

Last year, we suggested that the Internet would become students' preferred on-line information network, while commercial services such as America Online, Prodigy, and CompuServe would diminish in importance over time. This year's findings confirm the prescience of that statement. A year ago, only 31 percent of the market had access to the Internet and another 38 percent expected to have access within the year. Strikingly, this year, 72 percent of students report having access to the Internet and another 22 percent expect to have access in the next year.

Our findings also suggest that the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) have become virtually synonymous, not surprising given the high visibility and public use of the WWW, which only last year was in its infancy. A year ago, only 14 percent of respondents reported having access to the WWW while that figure has climbed to 68 percent — virtually equal to the percentage of the market claiming Internet access.
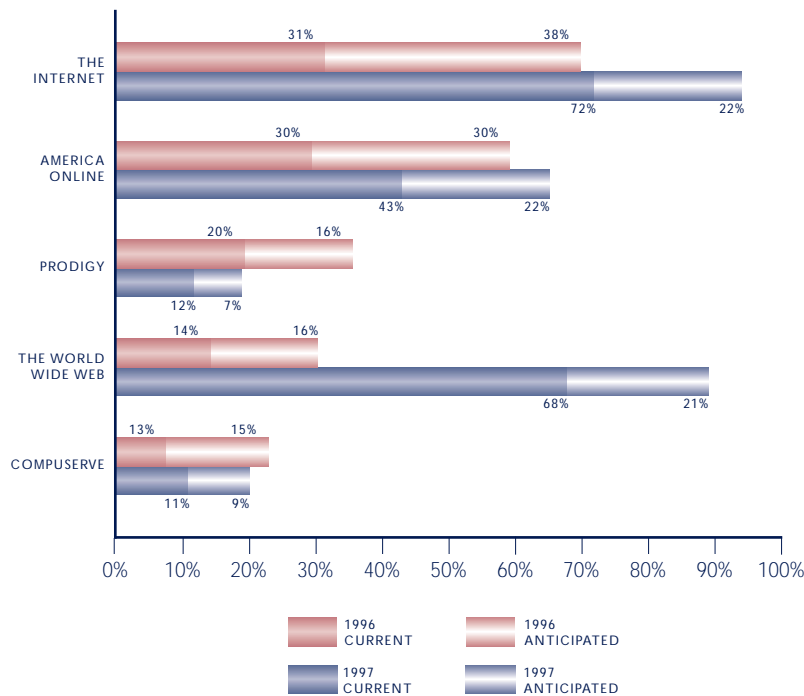
While students are still using commercial on-line services, presumably as a gateway to the Internet, in most cases market use has fallen off or shown no appreciable gains over the last year. For example, CompuServe and Prodigy have experienced a decline in student use with only a small fraction of the market currently using or anticipating use of these services in the next year. Despite the recent, highly publicized problems with America On-line, access to this service has grown, but not to the same degree as access to the Internet or WWW. Forty-three percent of students currently have access to AOL and another 22 percent expect to have access in the next year. However, in comparison to the Internet and the WWW, and the proliferation of other Internet providers, the future for AOL and other commercial on-line services, at least for the prospective student market, appears shaky at best. (Table 5)

While students accessing the Internet are presumably paying an Internet provider for this service, when asked if they would be willing to pay a fee to access information about colleges on-line, only 10 percent indicated a willingness to do so.

Nonetheless, this study reveals a strong market preference for accessing on-line information about colleges from home. Specifically, we asked

Table 5.
Current and anticipated access to on-line networks and services

THE INTERNET — 31% / 38% / 72% / 22%
AMERICA ONLINE — 30% / 30% / 43% / 22%
PRODIGY — 20% / 16% / 12% / 7%
THE WORLD WIDE WEB — 14% / 16% / 68% / 21%
COMPUSERVE — 13% / 15% / 11% / 9%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

1996 CURRENT   1996 ANTICIPATED
1997 CURRENT   1997 ANTICIPATED

students if they could communicate with colleges and obtain information about them on the Internet or another on-line information network, where would they prefer to have this access. Only a year ago, 51 percent of the market indicated a preference to access on-line information from home and 32 percent preferred access at school. By comparison, today, three-quarters of students prefer having on-line access at home while only 13 percent prefer school-based access. (Table 6).

Table 6.
Preferred place of access for on-line college information
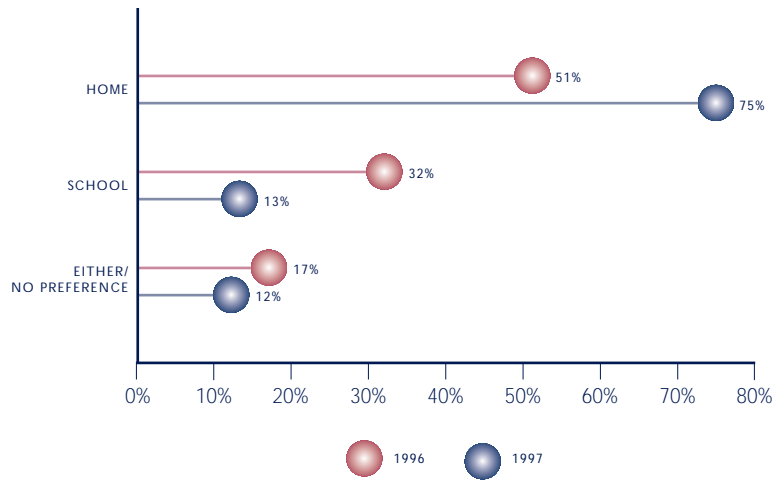
4. Student awareness and use of on-line college information services remain extremely low. However, awareness and use of individual college web sites have risen dramatically.

Last year, *student*POLL tested student awareness and usage of a variety of on-line college information services including College Explorer, Peterson's Education and Career Center, College View, and the College Board's ExPAN, among others. Since then, many new services have been launched and the findings reflect this.

Although college information networks and sites have proliferated, none has yet established a dominant position. Aside from the general category of "individual college home pages," College Board Online, which links to ExPAN, achieved the highest unaided awareness for any single on-line service, yet only 4 percent of the market was aware of this service on an unaided basis (without any prompting from the interviewer).

Respondents who did not indicate an awareness of specific on-line services on an unaided basis were then asked to recall their awareness of specific on-line college services on an aided basis (the interviewer read a list of specific on-line services and asked the respondents which ones they recognized). Aided recall of these services reveals a somewhat different pattern. College Board Online was the best known network, with 35 percent of the market aware of this service on an aided basis; 22 percent were aware of Peterson's Education and Career Center; and 20 percent were aware of US News' Colleges and Career Center. While combined aided and unaided awareness was highest for College Board Online with 39 percent indicating any awareness of this service, it was dwarfed by the high percentage of

students indicating awareness of individual college home pages. Combined aided and unaided awareness of the individual web sites of colleges and universities totaled 77 percent. (Table 7A)

Only a very small fraction of the market has used on-line college network services. In fact, College Board Online has the highest reported usage with only 16 percent of students indicating that they had used it. By comparison, 58 percent of those surveyed have used individual college web sites on the Internet, a more than 13-fold increase over the 4 percent using college home pages last year. (Table 7B) The message is loud and clear: students have a strong preference for and are accessing the individual web sites of colleges with greater and greater frequency. This suggests that in the not-too-distant

future, market use of individual college web sites probably will be universal.

Among those who logged on to individual college sites, 18 percent visited 1 to 2 sites, 34 percent contacted 3 to 5 sites; 20 percent 6 to 10 sites; and 22 percent 11 or more sites. (Table 8)

The growth in web site access in the market over the last year suggests that this trend is likely to continue, making home pages an increasingly important recruitment marketing tool for institutions.

Table 7A.
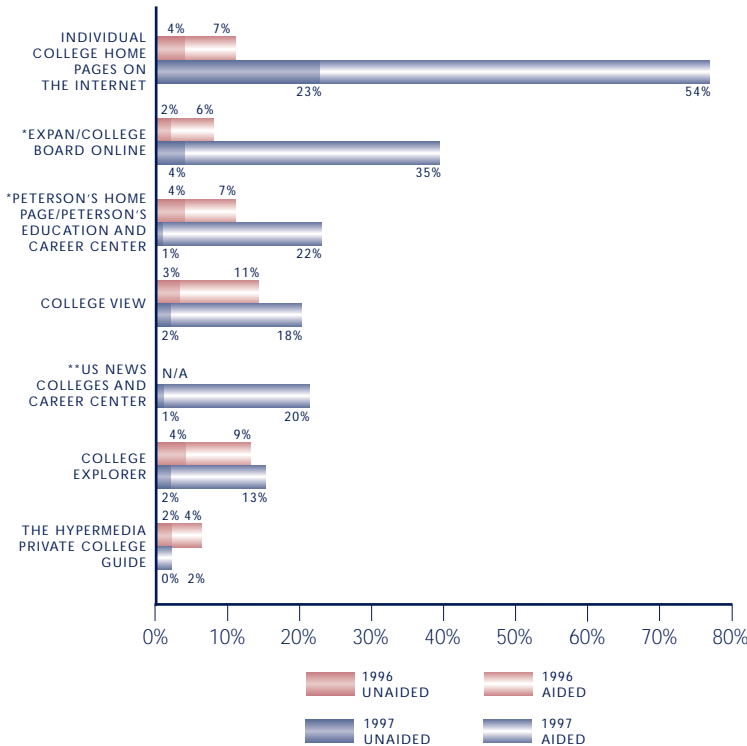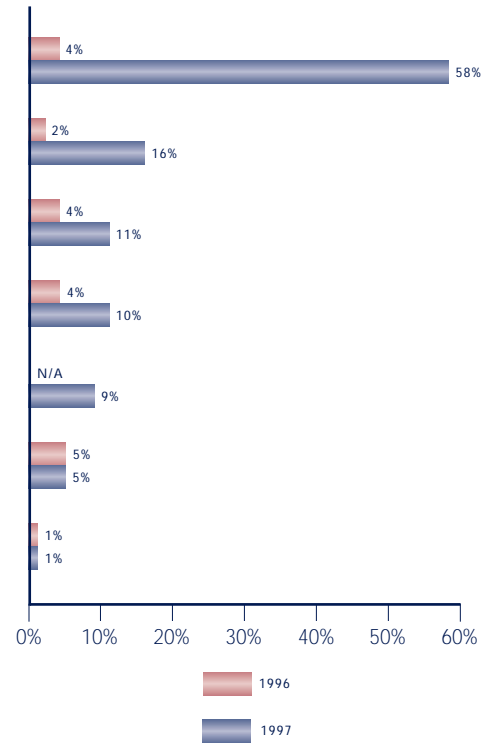### Awareness of on-line college information sources

	1996 UNAIDED	1996 AIDED	1997 UNAIDED	1997 AIDED
INDIVIDUAL COLLEGE HOME PAGES ON THE INTERNET	4%	7%	23%	54%
*EXPAN/COLLEGE BOARD ONLINE	2%	6%		35%
*PETERSON'S HOME PAGE/PETERSON'S EDUCATION AND CAREER CENTER	4% 4%	7%	1%	22%
COLLEGE VIEW	3%	11%	2%	18%
**US NEWS COLLEGES AND CAREER CENTER	N/A		1%	20%
COLLEGE EXPLORER	4%	9%	2%	13%
THE HYPERMEDIA PRIVATE COLLEGE GUIDE	2%	4%	0%	2%

Table 7B.
Use of on-line college information sources

	1996	1997
INDIVIDUAL COLLEGE HOME PAGES ON THE INTERNET	4%	58%
*EXPAN/COLLEGE BOARD ONLINE	2%	16%
*PETERSON'S HOME PAGE/PETERSON'S EDUCATION AND CAREER CENTER	4%	11%
COLLEGE VIEW	4%	10%
**US NEWS COLLEGES AND CAREER CENTER	N/A	9%
COLLEGE EXPLORER	5%	5%
THE HYPERMEDIA PRIVATE COLLEGE GUIDE	1%	1%

*Asked differently in 1997 **Additional on-line services since first reported

Table 8.
Total sites contacted for information on colleges
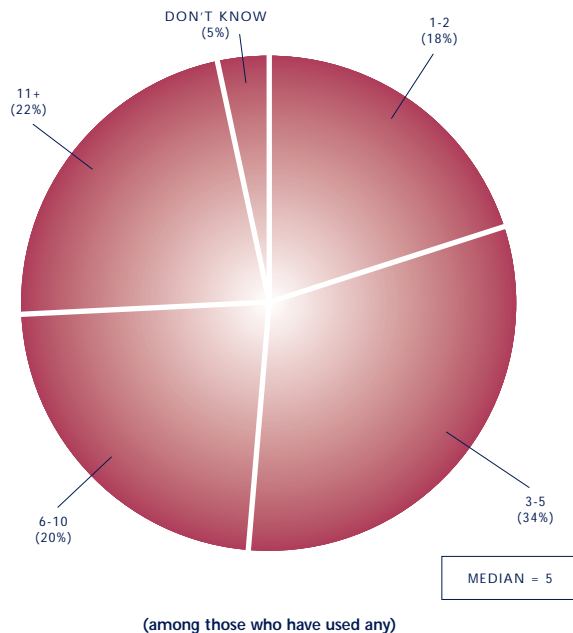
DON'T KNOW (5%)

1-2 (18%)

11+ (22%)

3-5 (34%)

6-10 (20%)

MEDIAN = 5

(among those who have used any)

5. *More than half the market prefers using computer technologies to file a college application, and the proportion of those interested in using an on-line application has tripled.*

Institutions now seriously evaluating or working out the technical requirements of establishing an on-line application will find their efforts well received by the market. Only a year ago, three-quarters of the high school seniors surveyed preferred to file a traditional paper application. Now, less than half prefer using a paper application. The most significant change is in the proportion of students interested in using an on-line application: student preference for filing an on-line college application has jumped from 11 to 34 percent. Market preference for using a computer disk that is then mailed back to the college has remained virtually unchanged. This and other findings suggest that student preference for on-line applications will continue to grow, becoming the preferred application method for an overwhelming majority of the prospective student market. (Table 9)

This preference for on-line applications is particularly true for male students compared to their female counterparts.

Despite market receptivity to on-line applications, few are willing to pay a higher application fee for this service. Of those who expressed a preference for either on-line applications or using a computer disk, 54 percent said they would not be willing to pay a higher application fee for this type of service.

While colleges may want to pass development and maintenance costs along to students, it may very well be that an on-line application could save institutions considerable time and money by allowing them to easily transfer and code student applicant information into their admissions database.
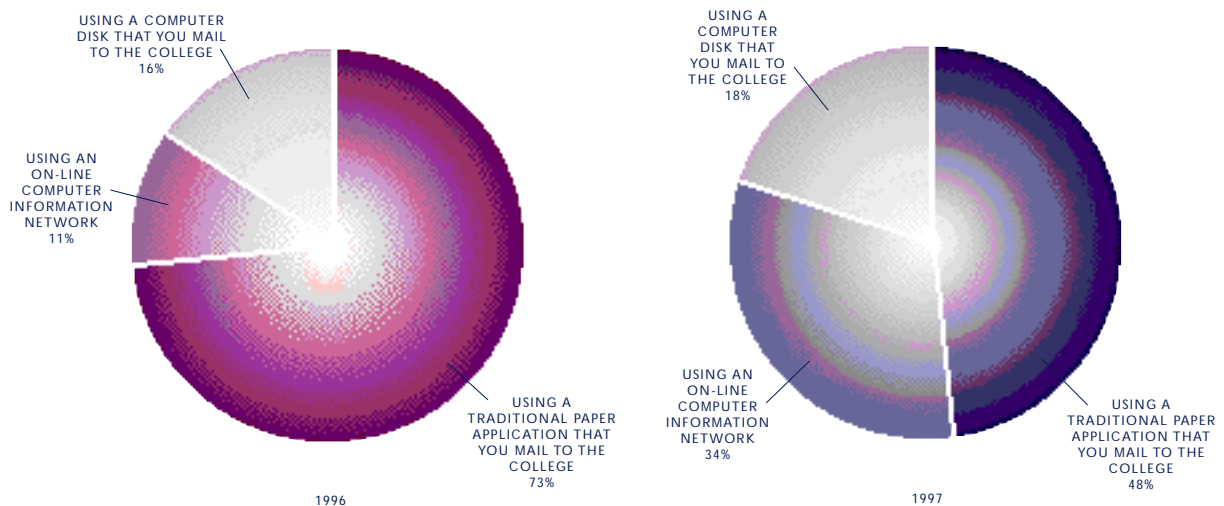

ADVISORY

MOVE QUICKLY TO PROVIDE AN ON-LINE APPLICATION OPTION.

More than one-third of the market prefers an on-line application and that proportion is virtually certain to increase over time.

The excuses for not doing so — security of data transmission, processing of data, and others — are now nothing more than signs of institutional ossification.

Table 9.
Application preference

USING A COMPUTER DISK THAT YOU MAIL TO THE COLLEGE
16%

USING AN ON-LINE COMPUTER INFORMATION NETWORK
11%

USING A TRADITIONAL PAPER APPLICATION THAT YOU MAIL TO THE COLLEGE
73%

1996

USING A COMPUTER DISK THAT YOU MAIL TO THE COLLEGE
18%

USING AN ON-LINE COMPUTER INFORMATION NETWORK
34%

USING A TRADITIONAL PAPER APPLICATION THAT YOU MAIL TO THE COLLEGE
48%

1997

6. A majority of students think they need a high level of computer proficiency to do the academic work expected of them in college. Yet a high percentage believe colleges have not adequately explained the level of computer proficiency expected.
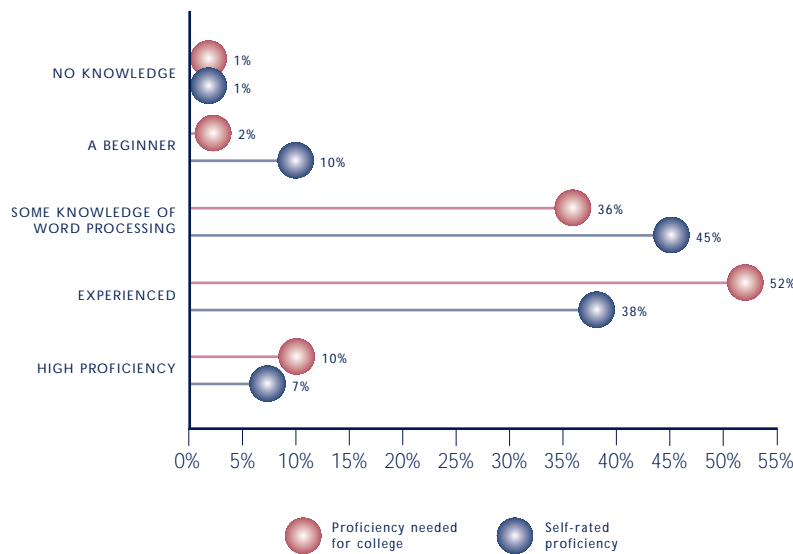
This year, we asked students the level of computer proficiency they think they will need to do the academic work expected of them in college. Virtually all students surveyed said they will need to be somewhat or highly proficient with computers: 52 percent believe they will need to be experienced with a variety of software programs while 36 percent think they will need some knowledge of word-processing and other software programs. In addition, 10 percent think they will need to be highly proficient and able to write their own software programs. (Table 10) The findings reveal that while students expect much of themselves in terms of the level of computer proficiency they will need in college, they also expect much of colleges and universities. An overwhelming majority of students surveyed believe institutions should explain the level of computer proficiency they expect of students. Yet when asked if their first-choice college had explained to their satisfaction the level of computer proficiency expected of them, some 61 percent said no. (Table 11)

We also asked students how they expected to develop the computer skills they would need in college. Multiple responses were accepted.

Forty-four percent of respondents indicated they expected to teach themselves; 44 percent expected to learn what they needed to know from friends; 40 percent expected to take courses offered by the college; and 33 percent expected to be taught what they needed to know as part of a course. (Table 12) Interestingly, students from more affluent families were more inclined to want to assume responsibility for their own computer training compared to students from lower income families. Forty percent of those from families with incomes of $50,000 or less indicated they expected to teach themselves compared to 57 percent for those from families with incomes of $100,000 or more.

Table 10.
Actual proficiency vs. perceived proficiency needed

|	Proficiency needed for college	Self-rated proficiency
NO KNOWLEDGE	1%	1%
A BEGINNER	2%	10%
SOME KNOWLEDGE OF WORD PROCESSING	36%	45%
EXPERIENCED	52%	38%
HIGH PROFICIENCY	10%	7%

Student interest in taking responsibility for their own computer training also varied by SAT score, with half of those with SAT scores of 1300 plus indicating they expect to teach themselves computer skills in college. In additio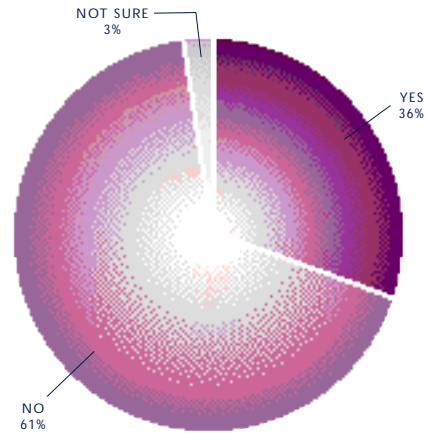n, a higher percentage of male students expect to teach themselves while a higher percentage of female students expect to learn these skills from friends.
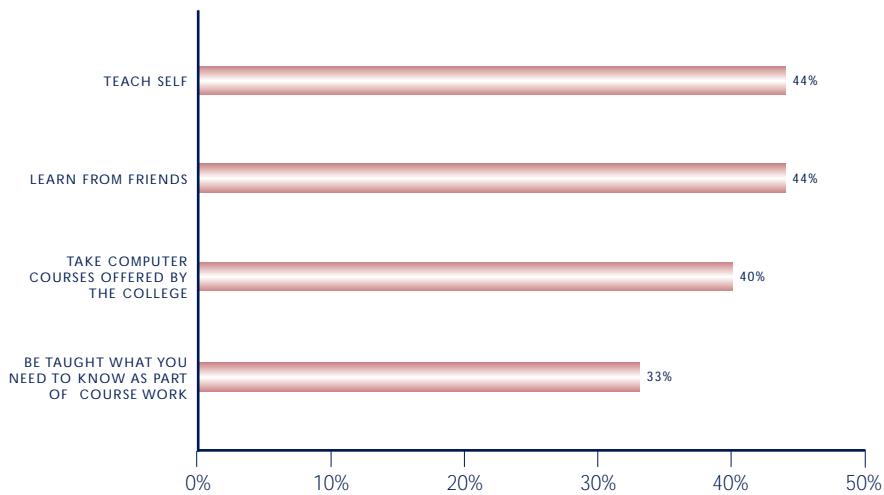
Table 11.

Should colleges explain proficiency needed

NOT SURE
2%

NO
17%

YES
82%
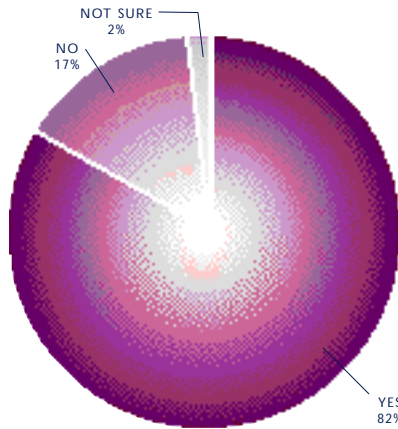
Has preferred school explained to your satisfaction

NOT SURE
3%

YES
36%

NO
61%

(among those who have a first choice school and think colleges should explain proficiency needed)

Table 12.
How students expect to develop computer skills in college

TEACH SELF	44%
LEARN FROM FRIENDS	44%
TAKE COMPUTER COURSES OFFERED BY THE COLLEGE	40%
BE TAUGHT WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AS PART OF COURSE WORK	33%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%
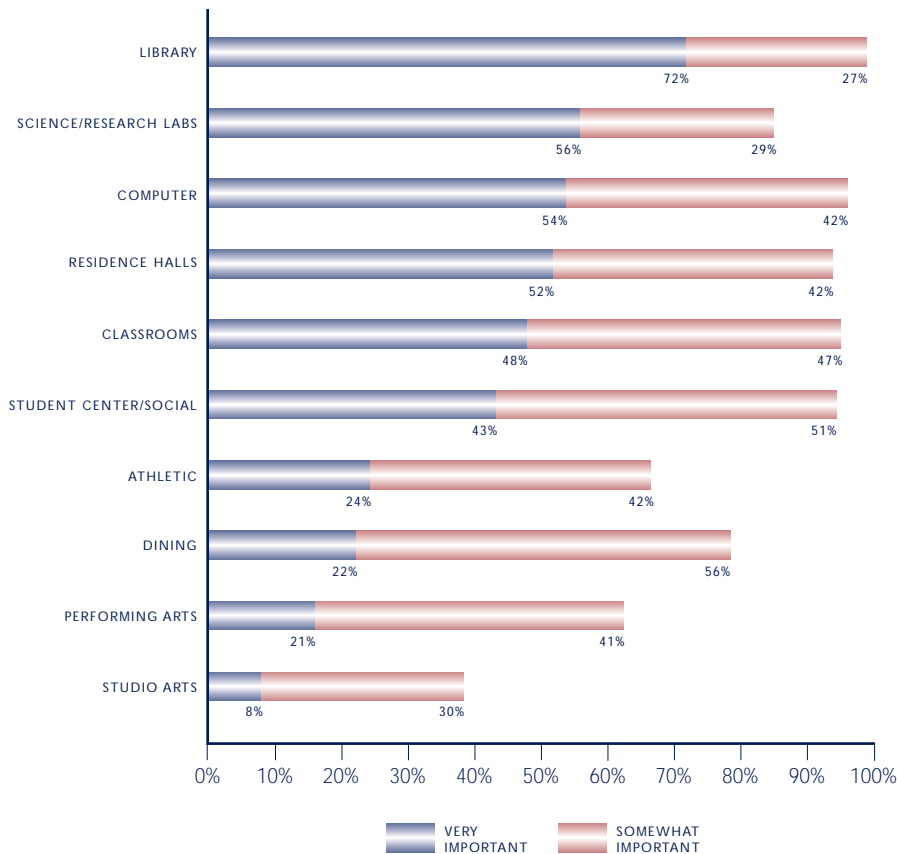
Note: Multiple responses accepted

7. *A majority of the market rates the quality of a college's computer facilities as very important in college choice — equal in importance to a college's science and research laboratories.*

We asked students to rate the importance of the quality of various facilities in college choice. In previously published studies, science and research laboratories, libraries, and student life facilities have been among the most important facilities in college consideration. In this study, computer facilities claimed a position of importance with 54 percent rating them as "very important." A majority of the market also ranked the quality of an institution's computer facilities. Only the library received higher "very important" ratings. When we combine the "very" and "somewhat" important ratings, computer and library facilities score a virtual dead heat, at 96 and 99 percent respectively. It should also be noted that a considerably smaller percentage of students rated athletic facilities as very important in evaluating the quality of a college. (Table 13)

Table 13.
Importance of college facilities

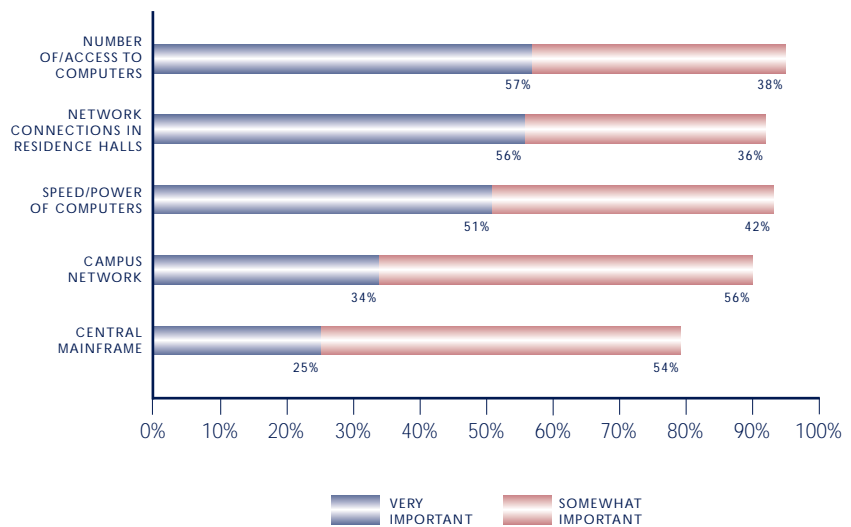| Facility	Very Important	Somewhat Important
LIBRARY	72%	27%
SCIENCE/RESEARCH LABS	56%	29%
COMPUTER	54%	42%
RESIDENCE HALLS	52%	42%
CLASSROOMS	48%	47%
STUDENT CENTER/SOCIAL	43%	51%
ATHLETIC	24%	42%
DINING	22%	56%
PERFORMING ARTS	21%	41%
STUDIO ARTS	8%	30%

VERY IMPORTANT SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT

8. Access to computers is most important to students in determining the quality of a college's computer facilities. Network connections in residence halls and faster, more powerful machines are critical factors too.

Students were asked to rate the importance of various aspects of a college's computer facilities in determining their quality. The findings reveal that access to computers is important. Related to this is the desire for network connections in residence halls, having computers with the necessary amount of speed and power, as well as having a campus-wide network. More than 90 percent of students rated the computer resources mentioned above as very or somewhat important. (Table 14)

Given the growing percentage of prospective students who own or use more powerful computers and their rising computer proficiency, institutions need to prepare themselves for technologically savvy students who will expect the college they attend to have the most advanced computer capabilities and resources.

Table 14.
Importance of aspects of computer facilities

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
NUMBER OF/ACCESS TO COMPUTERS	57%	38%
NETWORK CONNECTIONS IN RESIDENCE HALLS	56%	36%
SPEED/POWER OF COMPUTERS	51%	42%
CAMPUS NETWORK	34%	56%
CENTRAL MAINFRAME	25%	54%

ADVISORY

IN PLANNING FACILITIES INVESTMENTS, GIVE A HIGH PRIORITY TO INSTALLING CAMPUS-WIDE NETWORK CONNECTIONS THAT PROVIDE STUDENTS ACCESS TO LIBRARY AND RESEARCH INFORMATION, E-MAIL AND THE INTERNET FROM RESIDENCE HALLS, STUDY HALLS AND LOUNGES, AND OTHER LOCATIONS ON CAMPUS.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The findings reported in this issue of *student*POLL are based on in-depth telephone interviews with a random national sample of 400 high school seniors who plan to enroll in four-year colleges in the fall of 1997 compared to students preparing to enter a four-year college in the fall of 1995.
To qualify for an interview, the student must have achieved a combined, re-centered SAT score of 1050 or higher. The study sample was drawn to represent the national distribution of students with qualifying SAT scores by geography, gender, intended major, and income. Questions about survey methods, findings, and other matters should be addressed to Art & Science Group, Inc.

9. More than two-thirds of the students surveyed plan to bring a computer to college. Among those who won't, nearly all are confident that their computer needs will be met.

Table 15.
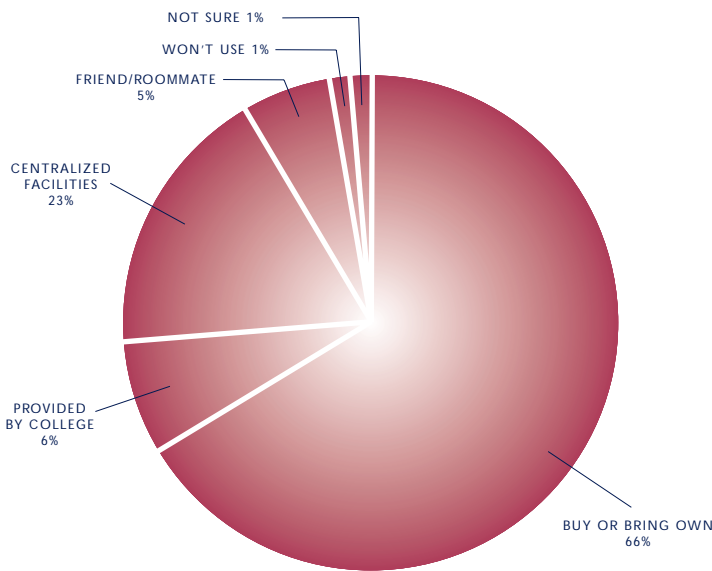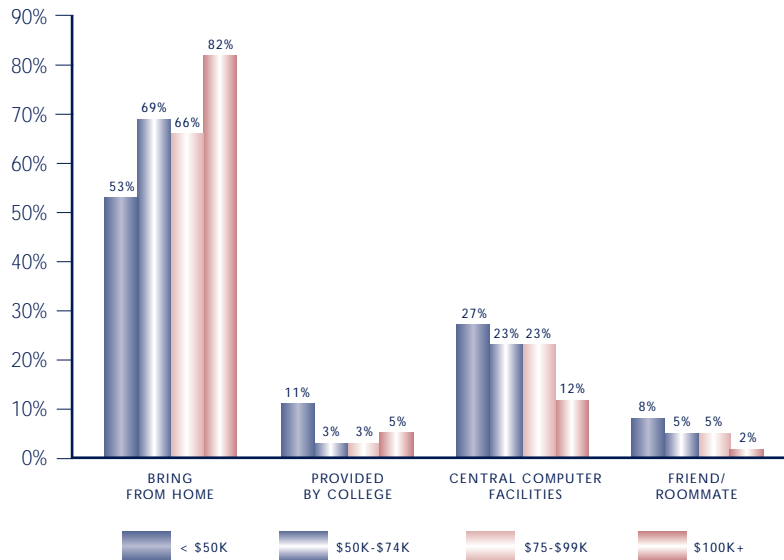### Ownership of a computer in college

NOT SURE 1%

WON'T USE 1%

FRIEND/ROOMMATE
5%

CENTRALIZED
FACILITIES
23%

PROVIDED
BY COLLEGE
6%

BUY OR BRING OWN
66%

Table 16.
Students planning to bring a computer to college by income

| | < $50K | $50K-$74K | $75-$99K | $100K+ |

Sixty-six percent of students plan to bring their own computer to college. Only five percent plan to use a friend or roommate's computer, and 23 percent think they will be able to use a computer available at college. (Table 15)   Of the latter group, 90 percent expect that the number of computers available and the schedule for access will accommodate their needs. Only 7 percent are concerned about access and availability.

Not surprisingly, of those planning to bring their own computer from home, a higher percentage come from more affluent families. Some 82 percent of students from families with incomes of $100,000 or more plan to bring computers, compared to 53 percent for those from families with incomes of $50,000 and under. (Table 16)

10. In the admissions process, the majority of students prefers communicating with faculty, students, and admissions counselors in-person or by phone rather than by e-mail.

While on-line communications are and will continue to be an important tool in student recruitment, a majority of students still prefers personal contact with colleges they are seriously considering.

When asked how they would prefer communicating with students at a college they were considering, nearly half indicated they wanted to do so in person. Roughly one-quarter preferred communicating by e-mail and another quarter by phone. While one might expect students to be more intimidated by the prospect of talking to faculty in person, more than half said they would prefer communicating with faculty in person versus by phone, e-mail, or regular mail.

We also asked students how they would prefer to request information or a catalog from colleges they were con-sidering. Forty-two percent preferred e-mail while another 35 percent preferred requesting information or materials by phone.

To schedule an interview or a college visit, two-thirds preferred the phone.

In addition, more than half preferred having a conversation with an admissions counselor by phone, while another 35 percent preferred to talk to a counselor in person. (Table 17)

Table 17.
Preferences for communication with colleges of interest
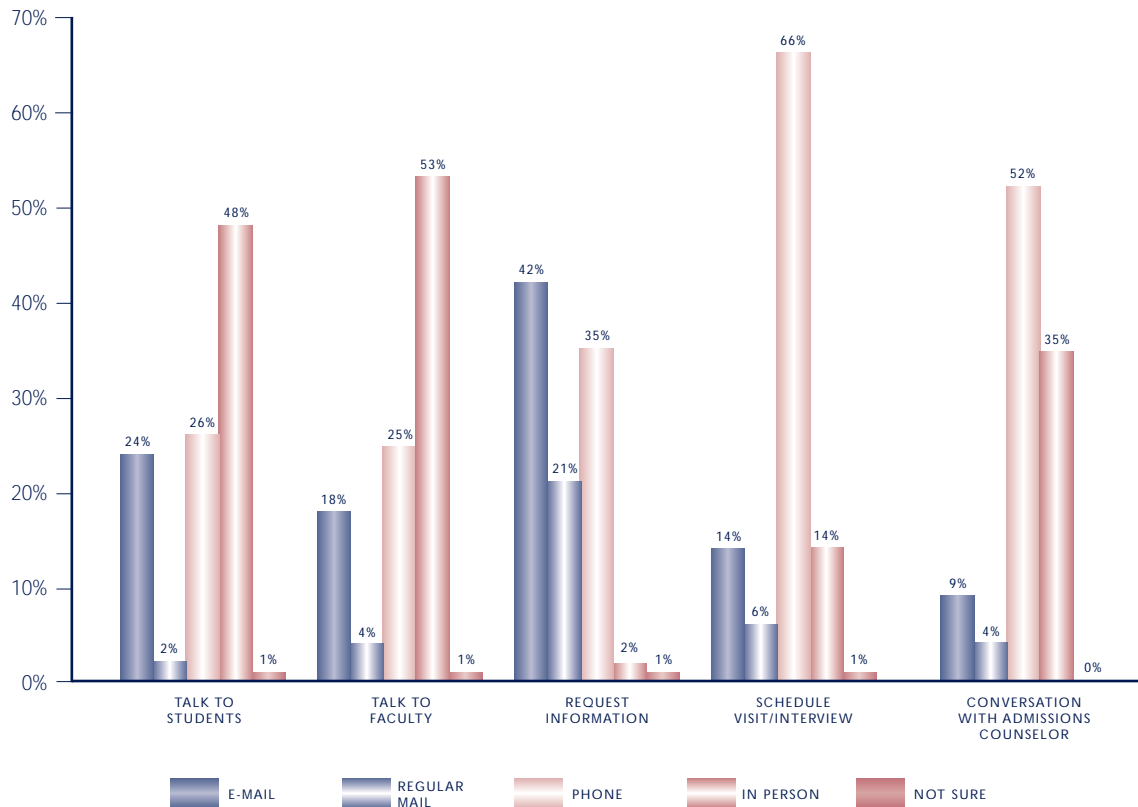
These findings suggest that a significant portion of the market recognizes there is something to be gained through direct, personal contact with admissions personnel and other college faculty and students. While on-line communications in the admissions process are important, they should not be employed at the expense of reducing frequent, personalized contact with prospects.

ADVISORY

COLLECT E-MAIL ADDRESSES FROM INQUIRERS AND APPLICANTS AND USE E-MAIL AND OTHER ON-LINE CAPABILITIES TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM.

At the same time, be careful to maintain the frequency of and a commitment to highly personal contact with students.

ABOUT ART & SCIENCE GROUP

*student*POLL is published by Art & Science Group, Inc., a national leader in providing market intelligence to higher education and the non-profit sector. The firm provides services in the following areas:

➤ Student recruitment marketing and enrollment management

➤ Tuition pricing, financial aid, and net tuition revenue management

➤ Planning and communications for capital campaigns, other large fundraising efforts, and alumni relations programs

➤ Overall institutional advancement and marketing

Within these broad areas, the firm provides a number of supporting services:

➤ Strategic marketing and communications planning

➤ Quantitative and qualitative market research

➤ Econometric analysis of financial aid awards

➤ Predictive mathematical modeling of student and prospect behavior

➤ Operations assessment and re-engineering

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11. Access to e-mail, the Internet and the software required for academic work in college, among other computer resources, is very important to a high percentage of students.

While students may prefer personal contact in the admissions process, they expect, want, and are prepared to use an array of information technology resources when they come to college.
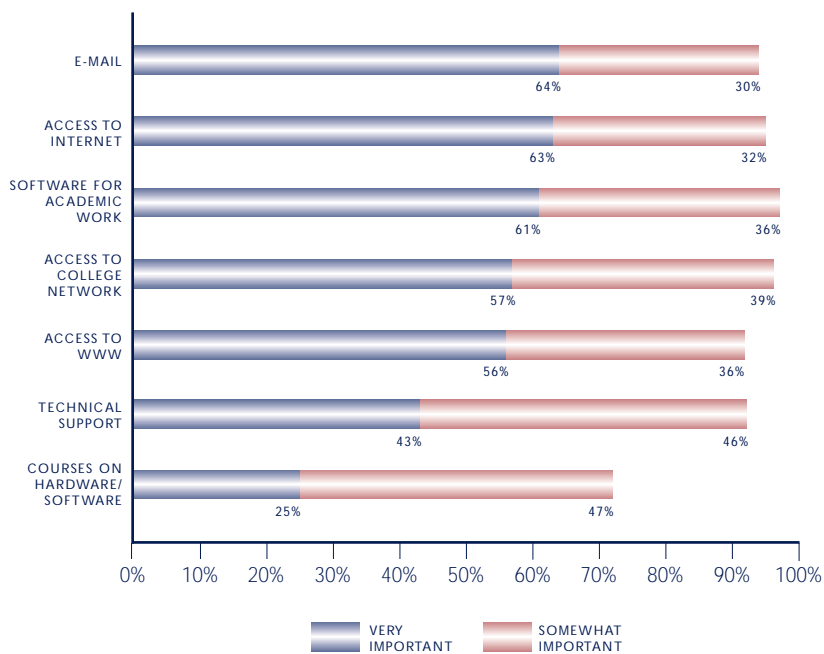
This is certainly reflected in respondents' ratings of the importance of having various computer capabilities when they go to college such as e-mail and access to the Internet.

Roughly two-thirds rated having access to e-mail, the Internet and software needed to do academic work as very important, while slightly more than half rated access to a college's own computer network and access to the World Wide Web as very important. Access to the college's computer network, software for academic work, Internet access and e-mail also received the highest combined importance ratings. For example, 95 percent rated access to the Internet as very or somewhat important, 96 percent gave access to the college's computer network the same combined importance rating, and 97 percent rated having software needed for academic work as very or somewhat important.

Our findings also reveal that students are less concerned about having courses focused on teaching them how to use hardware and software, and receiving technical support for computer problems. These resources, nonetheless, are considered very important to a sizable portion of the market. One-fourth considers courses on the use of hardware and software as very important while 43 percent rate technical support very important. (Table 18) By gender, this finding reflects an important statistical variation. Female students were more likely than their male counterparts to

Table 18.

Importance of having various computer resources and technologies at college

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
E-MAIL	64%	30%
ACCESS TO INTERNET	63%	32%
SOFTWARE FOR ACADEMIC WORK	61%	36%
ACCESS TO COLLEGE NETWORK	57%	39%
ACCESS TO WWW	56%	36%
TECHNICAL SUPPORT	43%	46%
COURSES ON HARDWARE/ SOFTWARE	25%	47%

rate having courses and technical support as very important. Thirty-three percent of female students rated the availability of hardware and software courses as very important compared to 17 percent of male students. Similarly, more than half of the female students indicated that technical support was very important compared to 33 percent of male students.

For institutions that have not developed the capacity to provide every student an e-mail address, the findings of this research should be a wake up call. Sixty-one percent of the market currently uses e-mail (Table 19) and nearly all students are coming to college with the expectation that e-mail and other computer resources and capabilities will be readily available to them.

Table 19.
Currently use e-mail

NO
39%

YES
61%
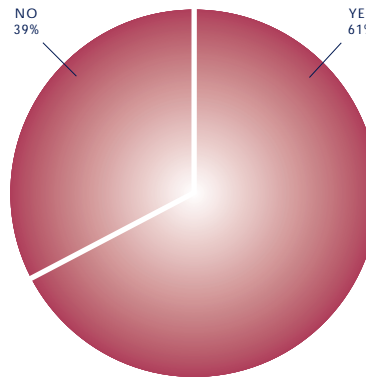
A D V I S O R Y

STUDENTS' HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND "BLIND FAITH" IN THE CAPACITY OF INSTITUTIONS TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO QUALITY COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES MAY QUICKLY TURN INTO ANGER, FRUSTRATION, AND EVEN HIGHER ATTRITION, IF THOSE RESOURCES ARE NOT READILY AVAILABLE AT THE COLLEGES THEY ATTEND.

Plan ahead. Make sure your institution's e-mail, network connections, and the number of computers available on campus can meet student demand.

A B O U T *student*POLL

*student*POLL is an authoritative national survey that measures the opinions, perceptions, and behavior of high-ability, college-bound high school students and their parents. Available only by subscription, it is published quarterly by Art & Science Group, Inc., leading institutional marketing consultants to higher education and the non-profit sector. Information about Art & Science Group and how to order subscriptions to *student*POLL can be found on page 14 of this report.

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H I G H L I G H T S   O F   U P C O M I N G   I S S U E S   O F *student*POLL

Spring 1997: Student Diversity and Internationalism. Multiculturalism has become an article of faith in the marketing of many colleges. This issue will focus on parents' and students' perceptions and attitudes regarding the importance of student diversity and internationalism on college campuses.

Summer 1997: Crime and Safety. We will report on student and parent perceptions and concerns about crime and safety, focusing on the type of information they use to evaluate the safety of a campus and the extent to which parents are concerned about drinking, physical violence, sexual abuse, gender bias, and other risks.

Fall 1997: Parents update on the *US News & World Report* rankings. The premier issue of *student*POLL, published in the Fall of 1995, produced much-discussed findings documenting that newsmagazine rankings do not strongly influence students' college choices. At the time, many in higher education claimed that the rankings have much greater influence on parents. This issue will determine whether the claims are right.