# HOW IS TECHNOLOGY ADDRESSING THE COLLEGE ACCESS CHALLENGE?

A REVIEW OF THE LANDSCAPE, OPPORTUNITIES, AND GAPS

A report by Pullias Center for Higher Education & Get Schooled

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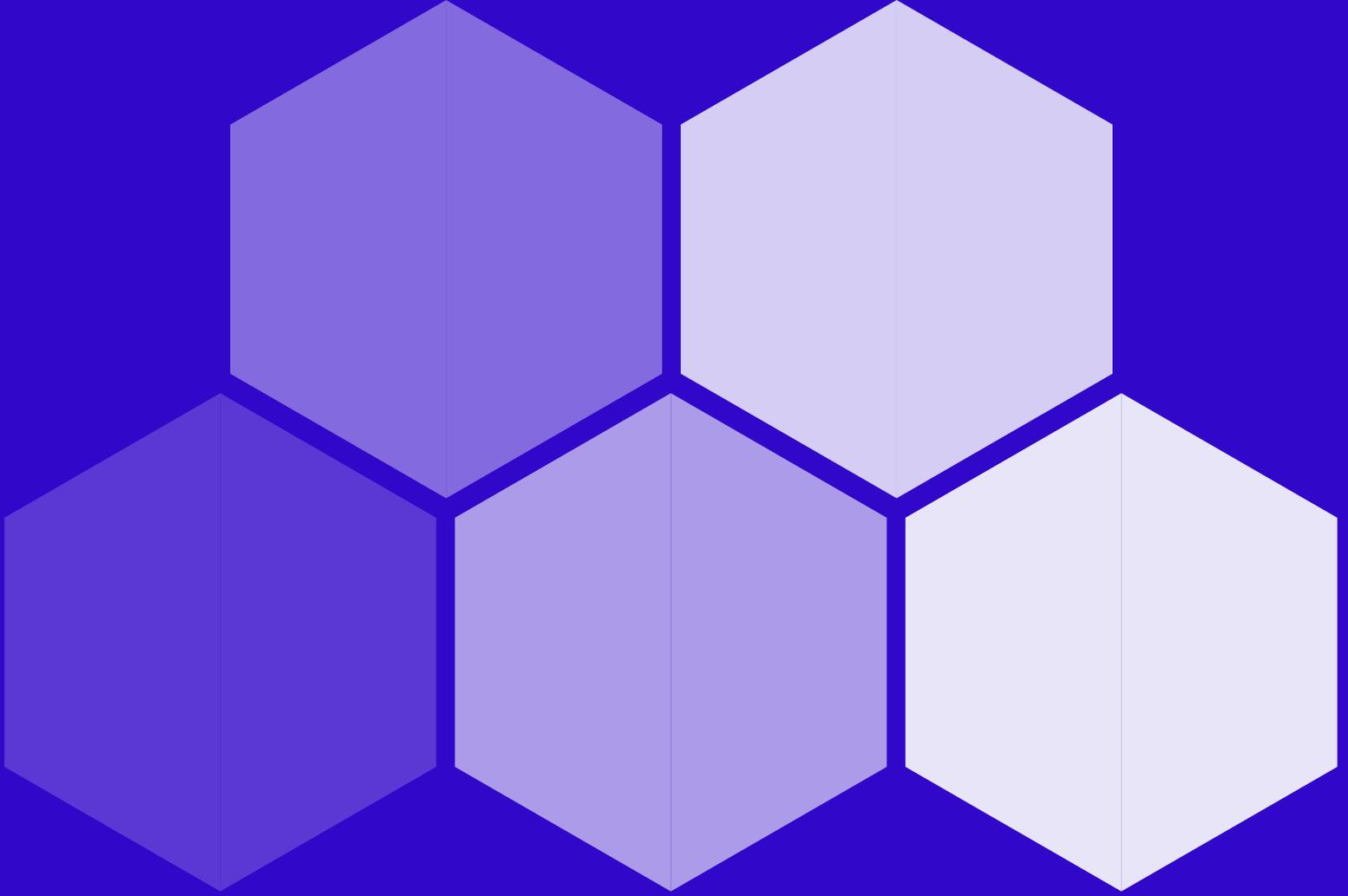
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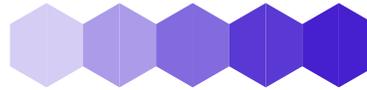
Higher education has long been viewed as a social elevator. The path to a higher education credential, however, is complicated for students from low-income and/or minoritized communities. Get Schooled and USC's Pullias Center for Higher Education have come together to consider technology's potential to improve access to college resources.

This report builds on a 2013 Get Schooled report and provides an up-to-date snapshot of digital tools designed to help students with college exploration, college admissions, and financial planning. To set the context for our analysis of digital tools, we first discuss: 1) the contemporary higher education and knowledge economy landscape; 2) the gap between college attainment and workforce needs; and 3) how low-income and historically marginalized students are challenged by a lack of human and physical resources that could help them navigate various aspects of the college-going process. A deeper consideration of the needs of low-income students in the development of digital tools is vital to meeting national workforce goals and achieving greater educational, digital, and social equity.

Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy

Many countries are grappling with the pressures of globalization and the fluctuating labor demands of our contemporary, twenty-first century knowledge economy. The United States, in particular, needs more postsecondary graduates with a wide range of credentials, including certificates and shortened postsecondary degrees. According to the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, approximately 55 million new jobs will be available in the American economy through 2020, largely due to the retirements of baby boomers.[1] The most in-demand competencies for these jobs will be judgment and decision-making abilities, communication skills, analytical prowess, and administrative capabilities.[2] There is also a demonstrated need for workers who are proficient with technology and trained to think critically, in particular with critically conscious cultural awareness.[3]

As a result, politicians, policymakers, and researchers have consistently emphasized the need for improved degree completion rates in American colleges and universities.

"The Lumina Foundation contends that 60% to 65% of all jobs in the United States in the near future will require some postsecondary education."[4]

Data indicate that the completion of a four-year undergraduate degree not only facilitates greater lifetime income for individuals,[5] but also improved societal outcomes relating to crime, health, and welfare reliance.[6] Moreover, researchers from Columbia University have demonstrated that attendance at two-year institutions is correlated with significant private earning gains over the course of a lifetime.[7] In short, the disparity has never been greater between individuals who hold some form of higher education credential and those who do not.

Yet according to the most recent census data, only 32% of the U.S. population aged 25 years of age and older holds a bachelor's degree or higher.[8] Due to decreased state funding for higher education, the cost of college has risen sharply in recent years while capacity has become strained in all but a handful of state colleges and universities. Students are increasingly compelled to juggle part-time and full-time employment, childcare, and other personal and family responsibilities while undertaking demanding course loads.[9]

The Disparity in College Access for Low-Income Students

Research also indicates that college-ready students who attend high schools in low-income areas are at a severe disadvantage in terms of college counseling and advising. On average, the student to counselor ratio in American public high schools is 477 to 1. In some states with large numbers of low-income students, such as California, the ratio is as high as 945 to 1.[10] This

extreme disparity affects students' abilities to access essential information and support for the college application process and presents a major hurdle in facilitating college access for millions of low-income students, frequently the first in their families to consider attending college.

Perhaps most distressingly, since the 1990's, nearly two-thirds of the selective colleges and universities that have the greatest potential to facilitate economic opportunities have reduced their proportion of enrolled low-income student. Disparities are most prevalent at Ivy League institutions, where a student from a family in the top 1% of the nation's income scale is 77 times more likely to attend an Ivy League university than a student from the bottom quintile. At the nation's most prestigious public universities, students from families in the bottom 20% of the income scale only constitute 6% of the total enrollment.[11]

The Role of Technology in College Access

One possible approach to improving college access involves the increased use of digital technology by young people.

"Online digital tools have the potential to assist students in planning for college, applying for much-needed financial aid, and making informed choices about the varied types of American higher education institutions."

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We do not suggest that digital tools are a panacea for ensuring that low-income students receive adequate college guidance. Rather, this report examines existing digital tools from a critical lens with attention to how tools might be implemented in communities without robust digital infrastructures.

In 2013, Get Schooled reviewed the landscape of college access oriented digital tools to assess whether they were meaningfully contributing to closing the opportunity gap. This study updates that work using a set of criteria that measures the utility of each tool for low-income students. Our assertion is that, to be useful for low-income and historically marginalized student populations (such as first generation college goers), digital tools should be measured against the four criteria that comprise our Value Framework:

Cost: The tools should be inexpensive, if not free, so that students from a broad array of backgrounds can benefit;

Accessibility: The tools should be available on a variety of devices (including computers, tablets, and cell phones) and operating systems (including Apple iOS, Google Android, and Microsoft Windows, among others)

Relevance: The tools should offer relevant content to a clearly-established target audience;

Credibility: The tools should have a track record of success, up-to-date information and a business model mindful of the needs of the audience.

[1] Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2014). Recovery: Job growth and education requirements through 2020. Washington, DC: Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown Public Policy Institute.

[2] Frey, C. B., & Osborne, M. A. (2017). The future of employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerization? Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 114, 254-280.

[3] Tierney, W. G., & Lanford, M. (2016). Creativity and innovation in the twenty-first century university. In J. M. Case & J. Huisman (Eds.), Researching higher education: International perspectives on theory, policy, and practice (pp. 61-79). New York, NY: Routledge.

[4] Lumina Foundation. (n.d.). Goal 2025. Retrieved from http://strategylabs.luminafoundation.org/goal-2025/

[5] Gould, E. (2017). The state of American wages 2016. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from http://www.epi.org/files/pdf/122078.pdf

[6] Carnevale, A. P., Rose, S. J., & Cheah, B. (2013). The college payoff: Education, occupations, lifetime earnings. Washington, DC: Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown Public Policy Institute. Trostel, P., & Chase, M. (2015). It's not just the money: The benefits of college education to individuals and to society. Indianapolis, IN: Lumina Foundation.

[7] Belfield, C., & Bailey, T. (2017). The labor market returns to sub-baccalaureate college: A review. New York: Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment, Columbia University.

[8] Ryan, C. L., & Bauman, K. (2016). Educational attainment in the United States: 2015. Washington, DC: U. S. Census Bureau.

[9] Goldrick-Rab, S. (2016). Paying the price. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[10] California Department of Education. (2017). Research on school counseling effectiveness. Retrieved from https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/rh/counseffective.asp

[11] Burd, S. (2017). Moving on up? Washington, DC: New America.
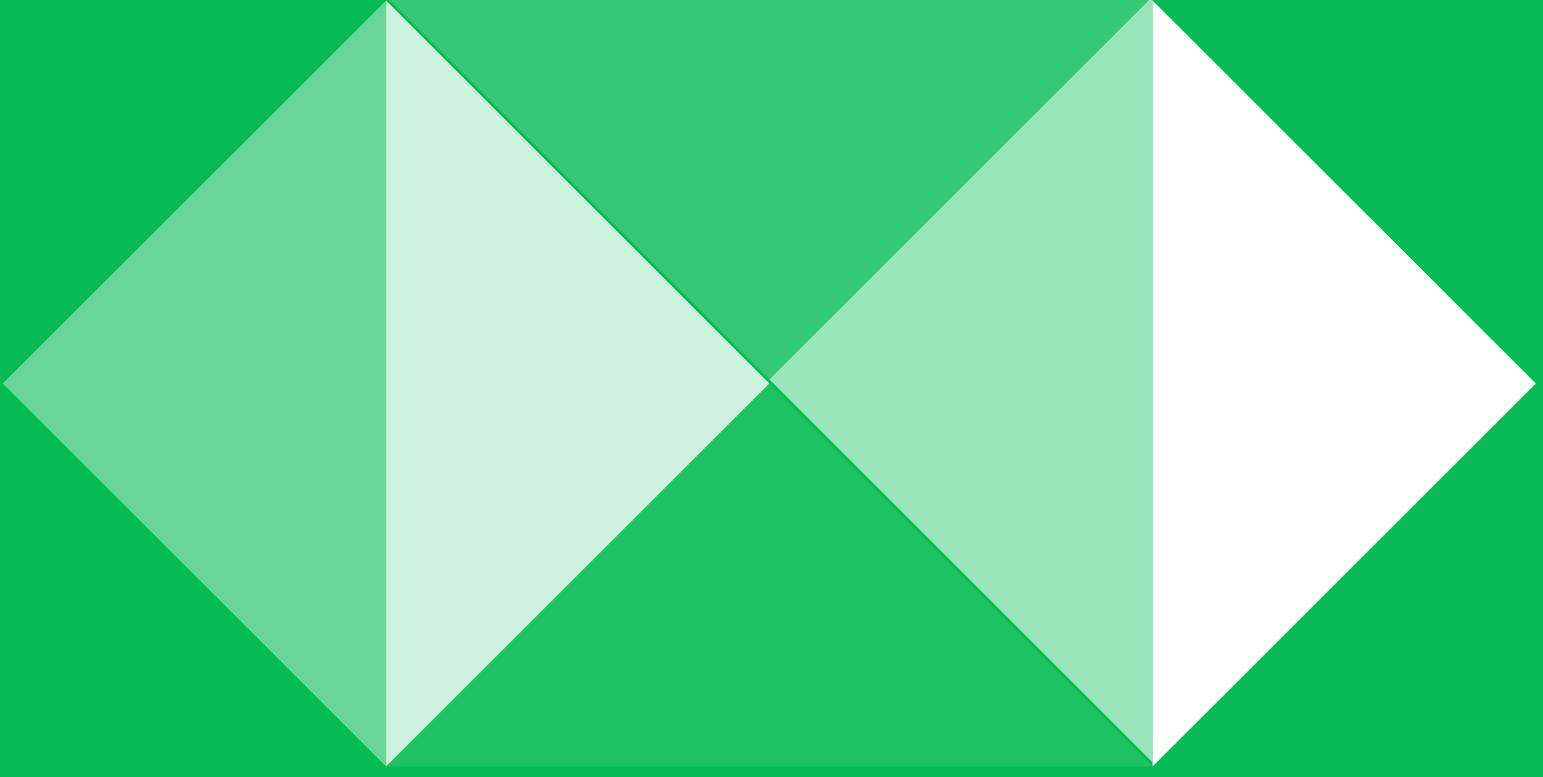
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Utilizing the four-characteristic value framework as a guide, this report provides a review of web-based tools available in 2018 that are designed to help students navigate the college preparation, college and financial aid application, and college choice processes.[12] Although we have tried to make this report as comprehensive as possible, new applications and programs emerge every day. As a result, this report is a snapshot of the current but ever-evolving education technology landscape.

The digital college access space is crowded – and not all tools are effective. With limited time, school leaders, teachers, and administrators must identify and evaluate which tools make best sense for use inside and outside of classrooms. Our intention below is to categorize available digital tools so that practitioners, students, and families can easily identify the most appropriate tools based on students' particular needs. To that end, this is a guide of these tools, not a quality assesment of them. The digital tools in this report have been grouped into four categories:

▶ **General Overview:** While many of the tools cross several areas, these tools, whether because of their mission or business model, attempt to offer students comprehensive guidance on how to get to college.

▶ **Application:** These tools largely support key pieces of the actual application process, including tracking the components, writing a compelling personal statement or sending transcripts to schools.

▶ **Exploration:** These tools help students search for colleges that may be a good fit for them and in some cases may serve them well.

▶ **Coaching/Mentoring:** A new cateogry this year, these tools offer 1:1 assistance to prospective college students and their famlies through text, video chat, e-mail, etc.

▶ **Financial Aid/Scholarships:** These tools offer students help figuring out the cost of college, accessing grants and schoolarships and managing loans and debt.

We only included tools in this guide that reached a minimum level of quality. Beyond that we assessed the tools based on our Value Framework:

▶ **Cost:** Costs associated with the tool, ranging from free, requires payment for access to specific features, or has a free trial period followed by expectations of payment.

▶ **Accessibility:** Resources needed to access the tools, specifically acknowledging barriers disproportionately affecting low-income students: whether or not an account is necessary; the need for continuous internet access; and whether it is mobile-enabled.

▶ **Relevance:** Historically marginalized students need content designed for their specific needs. This may include clear representation within the tool, deliberate strategies to guide them away from potentially poor college choices (high cost, low performing colleges), etc.

▶ **Credibility:** The most difficult criteria to measure against, we used two proxies: (1) business model and (2) user volume based on Alexa site metrics.

KEY FINDINGS

As with the first college access and technology report published by Get Schooled in 2013, the process of compiling and analyzing available tools was extensive. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the challenges pertaining to limited scope and reach that were profiled in the original report remain today. This report both reiterates and expands on those findings below:

1 **Decentralized resources:** Few, if any, tools addresses each of the content areas related to the college-going process in an all-inclusive manner. Most interesting has been the shift in areas of focus in the last five years. Due to improved technologies, there are now a number of tools focused on coaching and mentoring, an area of work that was largely non-existent five years ago. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of college exploration tools in part because there is a viable business model: colleges are struggling to market their product to students and are willing to pay to 'match' student and college. In the last year, there has also been growth in the financial information space - this has been driven in part by consumer demand given the increasing frustration around the growth and unpredictability of college costs.

2 **Overly broad target audience:** Many tools, because they are for-profit, cast a wide

net and are therefore not intended to address the needs and information-gaps of a low-income audience. Those that do target low-income students tend to focus on high achieving low-income students, attempting to solve the 'undermatching' problem. Few sites target "average" low-income students who aspire for college.

3 **Lack of access to information:** While the digital tools in this report provide useful information, some of the most valuable information remains behind paywalls. Similarly, personalized services often require fees that are prohibitive to the families who need information the most. A major concern here is that the most up-to-date information may remain inaccessible to students who do not have the financial resources to "unlock" special features.

4 **Lack of transparency in financial aid tool:** Most financial aid tools continue to focus on profiling students and guiding them towards specific scholarships for which they may qualify. It is unclear how much these websites are motivated by the potential for mining data and profiting from student demographic information.

5 **Passive dissemination of information:** Too few online tools take advantage of technology to provide an interactive experience for participants. Instead, the tools simply replicate and passively present information that could be just as easily found at a local

bookstore or library. For a student struggling to make sense of college, the lack of engaging content makes it unlikely that the information will foster positive action.

6 **Reliance on school-based champion:** Some of the more effective tools require a willing and able counselor to implement them effectively – thereby not actually solving a core issue of too few counselors in schools to equally support all students.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Although digital tools have the potential to ameliorate barriers between low-income students and college access, significant progress is still needed in the digital space. As with the original report,

> *"…underserved students seemingly remain an afterthought during the production and implementation of many digital tools."*

Effective digital tools consider the ways in which under-resourced students access technology and the kinds of information they need to be successful in college.

GOVERNMENTS AND PHILANTHROPIES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ENSURING THAT TOOLS DESIGNED FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE MARKETPLACE: State and local governments would be well-served by becoming more actively involved in supporting the use of relevant digital tools about college – and ensuring that students have access to computers and robust internet connections. Government agencies are well-positioned to provide supplemental academic support that is aligned with curricular goals, updated information about admissions requirements to state institutions, and assistance to teachers and advisors who are interested in improving student engagement. By taking a more active role in the development of web-based tools, they can also encourage collaboration between the public and private sectors. And yet, almost all of the digital tools reviewed in this report come from private entities and organizations, some of which are motivated primarily by the potential for financial gain. If too much of the digital space becomes dominated by profit-oriented entities, and the most useful information remains proprietary, the digital space is likely to be inundated with the same educational inequities that already limit college access.

THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF THE COLLEGE-GOING PROCESS, THE CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE, AND THE ORGANIZATIONS SPONSORING DIGITAL TOOLS PRESENT MAJOR CHALLENGES TO FUTURE ASSESSMENTS OF THIS KIND: As an example, many tools profiled in the first report are no longer supported and/or

available. Additionally, it remains to be seen how much recent executive orders and fiscal policies will affect DACA students and related financial aid applications across the United States. The ability of digital, online tools to quickly adjust their information in response to such changes may determine their usefulness and impact in future months: a particularly difficult challenge for sponsoring organizations with limited resources. The rapid degree of market churn in the college access space makes it challenging for counselors and teachers to "trust" new tools and figure out meaningful ways to sustain their use.

MORE ATTENTION NEEDS TO BE PAID TO THE SOCIAL NETWORKING COMPONENTS OF COLLEGE ACCESS DIGITAL TOOLS:

While there is an abundance of information available online about college applications and financial aid, there seems to be little innovation concerning the ways in which that information is presented and shared. An effective social networking platform could be transformative for students who need up-to-date and relevant information in real time because of its potential to unlock valuable social capital.

FINALLY, THE POTENTIAL FOR BLENDING DIGITAL GAMING WITH COLLEGE INFORMATION, AS WELL AS THE INTEGRATION OF DIGITAL TOOLS WITH APPLICATIONS POPULAR WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, IS INTRIGUING: For many traditionally marginalized students, the college application process is overwhelming. And while the long term benefit is clear, the short term

confusion and stress is often so overwhelming that the student simply does not meet key milstones. Addressing this connundrum is critical to closing the opportunity gap. We have seen some positive effects to using gamification strategies to create short term rewards that incentivize actions that will be most beneficial in the long run. However, the mere creation of an engaging game or promising app does not ensure an enthusiastic student audience. Such work requires a long-term vision, substantial investments in technology, and strong partnerships with district and school-level advocates to be successful.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
Better Make Room	A website and social media campaign aimed at providing inspiration and support to first-generation college students and their counselors. Includes videos and messages from peers and educators, links to reputable tools built by the US Department of Education. Also has a texting service. Students are not required to create a profile to consume most of the content.	Free	Non-Profit Philanthropic Support	◔	📱	✔
Big Future/ College Board	An extensive website designed to encourage low-income students to to go college. Features an academic tracker to help students ensure that they meet minimum requirements for applying to their preferred college, and a college search tool that allows students to search for colleges based on location, size, preferred major, etc. Students are not required to create a profile to consume most content. If students create a profile (which many do to enroll in other College Board products like the SAT), they can personalize/save their information.	Free	Non-Profit	⬤	💻	✔
Cappex	A one stop shop for the college-going and decision-making process. Great tool for researching colleges, you can adjust your requirements (tuition, major, distance from home, etc.) and find colleges that match your specifications. The What Are My Chances® Calculator instantly tells you your chances of getting into your favorite schools, and the Cappex College Fit tool can help assess whether or not a college is a good fit for you. The site hosts College Profiles and Reviews for 3,000+ colleges, and also includes a scholarship search. That said, the site requires you to complete an extensive profile to allow for personalization.	Free	For Profit	◕	📱	✘

Key:

🖥 Desktop Website

📱 Mobile Optimized Website

📲 Mobile App

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
Chegg	A comphrehensive college-help site. Includes academic preparation, exam and SAT/ACT study help, college exploration assistance, scholarship search, and then, once you are in college, textbook purchase, rental, and re-sale. Also offers additional services, including college counseling and tutoring, for a fee. Given the sheer number of products available to students and familes, it can be difficult to navigate the site to find exactly what you need. Students are required to create a log-in to consume most content.	Freemeium	For Profit	●	📱	✖
Get Schooled	A website focused specifically on supporting low-income students through high school experience and into a postsecondary option of their choice. Includes texting service, and comprehen-sive FAFSA + financial aid help. The site is completely gamified so students earn points as they learn about the college process and can cash in at the online reward store. No sign-up is required to explore and use most content.	Free	Non-Profit	◕	📱	✔
Know How 2 Go	A website and set of tools designed and launched by the Ad Council, Lumina and ACE and now managed by ACE. While not continuosly updated, it offeres students/veterans a broad understanding of the steps for preparing for and applying for college. Students are not required to create a log-in to consume the content.	Free	Non-Profit Philanthropic Support	◔	💻	✔
Mission Admission	A digital game developed by USC Games and designed to help high school students understand the strategies and skills needed to apply to college. Students have to create a log-in to play the game. The game is played in real time and gives students a first hand simulated experience of the different steps required to apply to college; it requires some time investment to get maximum benefit.	Free	Non-Profit Philanthropic Support	◖	💻	✔

Key:
📷 Desktop Website
📱 Mobile Optimized Website
📱 Mobile App

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
Admitsee	A site that helps students with college application essays. Provides students with access to real application materials - including essays, grades, test scores, extracurriculars, and advice. Allows students to make better decisions about where to apply and how to communicate their own stories. Students must create a log-in and pay a fee to access almost all materials.	Fee - based for students	For Profit	(3/4 pie)	(mobile smile)	✖
All College Application Essays	A site that aggregates all essay prompts across thousands of colleges, along with format and length, along with interview, testing, and recommendation require-ments. The site is updated daily throughout the application cycle and enables users to save favorites and email college information to others. Students are required to log-in and pay a fee to view college's information.	Fee - based for students	Non-Profit	(1/4 pie)	(mobile smile)	✖
Apply 4 Admissions	A website that acts as a clearinghouse of all college search info. Features a map that helps students find colleges with programs they're interested in by state. Also includes tips for applying to college, writing application essays, soliciitng letters of recommendation, etc. No log-in required for students to access any of the information or tools. The site does serve up ads for online colleges and their directory and listing of schools has no filter for quality or outcomes.	Free	For Profit	(1/4 pie)	(desktop website)	✖
College Confidential	A comprehensive site that offers user-generated student information about college admissions and financing, largely through discussion boards. Students can read the discussion boards, but need to create a profile to participate.	Free	For Profit	(full pie)	(mobile smile)	✖

Key:

(icon) Desktop Website

(icon) Mobile Optimized Website

(icon) Mobile App

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
College Application Wizzard	A personalized and comprehensive way to navigate college admission and financial aid applications. The tool gives requirements and deadlines for thousands of colleges. Students can select the colleges they are most interested in applying to and the "Wizard" will then provide a personalized college planning guidance to understand each college's specific requirements. Also sends deadline reminders. Students must sign up and create a profile to make use of the site's college planning features.	Freemeium	For Profit	(pie: quarter)	🖥️ Desktop Website	✖
College Greenlight	A tool designed to benefit college counselors, advisors and mentors along with their students. It has been designed specifically for underrepresented students. It allows high school counselors and community-based organizations to provide support to their students throughout the college search and application process. Features include "best fit" college lists, customized college profiles, and an in depth scholarship database. Service is provided via Cappex. Students need to create a profile to participate.	Fee - based for students	For Profit	(pie: three-quarter)	📱 Mobile Optimized Website	✔
The Common Application	The common app streamlines the application process for more than 750 colleges and universities from around the world. It includes information from partner colleges on the specific application process for that college, as well as the ability to actually apply to one of the partners colleges. In addition, the site has added wrap around resources in recent years including content about college, scholarship exploration tools, FAFSA completion tools and college exploration tools. About 20% of the member colleges are partners public colleges or universities. No sign in is required to explore most of the content, but is required to actually apply to a college.	Freemeium	Not for profit / Member Org.	(pie: full)	📱 Mobile Optimized Website / Mobile App	✖
Edmission	A website that allows students to get their college admission essays, and scholarship application essays reviewed by a professional. Students need to create a profile and pay to access the services.	Fee - based for students	For Profit	(pie: quarter)	📱 Mobile Optimized Website	✖

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Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
Naviance	A comprehensive website, largely purchased by schools or school districts, that helps students and their counselors organize the college application process. It includes college exploration tools as well as reminders for deadlines, letters of recommendation, transcripts, etc. School counselor can assign tasks and communicate through the app. The site allows students to plan high school courses and guides students through the college application process. Students receive a log-in from their school free of charge after the service has been purchased by the school/district.	Fee - based for schools	For Profit	◕	📱 (Coming Fall of 2018)	✖
Parchment	A secure digital transmission of transcripts. Allows students to create electronic transcripts to share their education credentials. Students are required to create a profile to make the most use of the site.	Fee - based for students	For Profit	◔	📱	✖

Key:
- Desktop Website
- Mobile Optimized Website
- Mobile App

COLLEGE EXPLORATION

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
College Data	Helps students explore and apply to college. The site's College Match tool allows you to enter your preferences based on financial aid, academics and campus life and it will match you with a list of schools. Also calculates probabilty of getting in using "good bet", "maybe", or "reach". The tool gives students the chance to add their data about which schools they got into and/or compare their profiles with the database. Students need to create a profile to make use of the College Match Tool.	Free	For Profit	●	📱	✖
College Hunch	A mobile app that helps students research different colleges by inputting their GPA, SAT/ACT scores, extra-curriculars, etc. and comparing it to the average admitted student profile at various colleges. Also gives students the ability to compare colleges side-by-side. Students must download the app and create a profile to utilize the app's college search features.	Free	For Profit	◔	📱	✖
College Interactive	A mobile app that allows students to create a profile that highlights their academic and extracurricular accomplish-ments and proactively connects them with colleges. Allows students to search colleges and create a "favorites" list that lets colleges know they're interested.	Free	For Profit	◔	📱	✖
College Navigator	A searchable database of colleges powered by the National Center for Education Statistics. Can search by location, majors, size, institution type and cost (and many more). Can compare and contrast several colleges at once. No sign-up is needed to use the tool.	Free	Government Agency	●	🖥	✖

Key:
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📱 Mobile Optimized Website
📱 Mobile App

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
College Raptor	A website that helps high school students find college matches. Allows users to do side-by-side comparisons of estimated financial aid packages along with admissions chances. Students create a profile by entering in grades, SAT/ACT scores, etc. and their college preferences and then are matched with colleges.	Free	For Profit	●	📱	✖
College Results	A searchable database of published college data and stats including percentage of applicants admitted, graduation rate, retention rate, average admitted student GPA, SAT/ACT score, and average student Cost of Attendance after financial aid, and more.	Free	Non-Profit/ Philantropic Supported	◗	🖥	✖
College Score Card	A college search tool with a user-friendly interface created by the US Department of Education. Students can search colleges by major/degree, location, size, name, and public or private. Also provides information about paying for college, calculating financial aid, and FAFSA completion. No sign up required for students to make use of the site.	Free	Government Agency		📱	✖
College Week Live	The site is a free online college fair connecting students and parents to admissions representatives from more than 450 colleges. CollegeWeekLive hosts virtual events year round. These include monthly college fairs, topical events such as Study Abroad Day, International Day, STEM/Health Sciences Day, or Transfer Day and events which feature a specific college. Good resource for students not able to visit colleges. Students sign-up to chat with college reps, search for scholarships, and search colleges by their preferences.	Free	For Profit	◕	📱	✔

Key:
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📱 Mobile App

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
My Options	Formerly known as Admitted.ly, MyOptions is a site and moble app that allows you to explore colleges based on preference quizzes and then develops a personalized college list sorted by "reach," "safety", and "best fit" schools. Also offers content that reinforces other aspects of the college application process and suggests consuming this content will help you "improve your chances of being admitted." Students are required to log in to access all features.	Free	For Profit	(quarter filled)	(mobile)	✖
Niche	Formerly known as College Prowler, Niche is a college search tool that offers college reviews by college students for prosepective college students. Allows you to search by type of college, major, location, cost and test scores. No log in is required to explore most of the content on the site.	Free	For Profit	(full filled)	(mobile)	✖
Peer Lift	A recently launched youth-driven non profit, launched The mission is to connect high school students of all backgrounds to a proven selection of opportunities for college. No log in is required. Students can search for a unique set of opportunities to support their college exploration process including College Fly-Ins, Study Abroad programs (for high school students and college students), internships for high school students, and awards. It also has a more standard database of scholarships.	Free	Non-Profit	(small slice)	(mobile)	✔
Petersons	Offers comprehensive information about colleges and grad schools and allows you to filter colleges across a spectrum of preference-based variables. Also offers information about scholarships, a scholarship search tool, and test prep help, and other advice to help you prepare and pay for college. No log in is required to explore most of the content on the site.	Free	For Profit	(partial filled)	(mobile)	✖

Key:
- Desktop Website
- Mobile Optimized Website
- Mobile App

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
Princeton Review	Allows you to search for colleges based on location, majors, size, rankings, tuition and available on-campus activities. Students do not need to log in to utilitze the site's college search features.	Free	For Profit	◕ (full)	📱	✘
Scholar Matcher	The ScholarMatcher was created by ScholarMatch, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that connects underserved students to resources, knowledge, and the community to make college possible. The ScholarMatch College Honor Roll is a list of approximately 300 institutions which offer the most supportive environments for students whose families earn less than $50,000 per year. No log in is required to make use of the tool.	Free	Non-Profit/ Philantropic Supported	◔ (quarter)	📱	✔
The Scoir College Network	Allows students to explore colleges based on a range of variables including cost, major, sizes, location, etc, and also gauge cost of attendance based on personal information and favorite colleges. Also allows counselors to track application progress and coordinate teacher recommendations. Students are provided a log-in for free from their school after the tool has been purchased.	Fee - based for high schools	For Profit	◗ (small)	📱	✘
The TalentED Project	The TalentED Project builds relationships between college admissions and access professionals to help thousands of high achieving, first-generation, lower-income college-goers get recruited by good-fit institutions. The project is a division of Discovery Educaiton. Students, educators, and recruiters alike are prompted to create a profile to make use of the sites resources and tools.	Free	Non-Profit/ Philantropic Supported	◔ (quarter)	📱	✔
Unigo	An online college guide that includes student generated reviews. Also includes other student generated content that answers top questions, etc. The site also has a scholarship database. It does include significant advertising for loans and online colleges. Students must create a profile and enter in personal information to make full use of scholar-ship tool.	Free	For Profit	◕ (full)	📱	✘

Key:
📷 Desktop Website
📱 Mobile Optimized Website
📲 Mobile App

COACHIING & MENTORIING

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
Apply.Me	Provides web-based advice and coaching on all aspects of getting into and paying for college, including admissions help, scholarship matching, etc. Serves US based and international students. Students must pay to access all services. A free consultation is offered.	Fee - based	For Profit	(pie chart)	(mobile icon)	✘
College Point	Offers free college advising. Individual advisors connect with students virtually (text, skype, etc.). To qualify for the service, students must be high achieveing (based on GPA and test scores) and have a family income of $80,000 or less.	Free	Non-Profit/ Philantropic Supported	(pie chart)	(mobile icon)	✔
I Could Be	Provides at risk middle and high school students with an online community of professional mentors, empwering teens to stay in school, plan for future careers, apply to college, etc. All mentoring is virtual.	Free	Non-Profit/ Philantropic Supported	(pie chart)	(mobile icon)	✔
Matriculate	Provides free remote advising from college students to help prospective college students through the college application process. Students connect with their Advising fellow through text, e-mail, phone calls, etc. Students have to apply to get the service (not available on demand). For example, applications for the class of 2019 were due in January 2018.	Free	Non-Profit/ Philantropic Supported	(pie chart)	(mobile icon)	✔
Strive For College	Strive for College includes I'm First, a hub for stories and support for first generation college students as well as mentoring for all students through striveforcollege.org. It also offers a physical book (for a fee) that offers first generation college students a tailored guide to exploring and applying for college. Students are prompted to sign up to access all of Strive For Colleges mentorship and college access resources.	Free	Non-Profit/ Philantropic Supported	(pie chart)	(mobile icon)	✔

Key:
(icon) Desktop Website
(icon) Mobile Optimized Website
(icon) Mobile App

19

FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
College Abacus	Allows you to compare/contrast net-price calculator information from more than 5,000+ colleges before students apply. The tool connects with the net-price calculators of each college to give students the most accurate information on cost currently available. No log-in is required to use the tool.	Free	Non-Profit	◗	📱	✓
College Ahead/ Sallie Mae	A website and mobile app to help students financially prepare for college. It includes a scholarship search and a college planning calculator that helps students create a financial plan to pay for college. Requires a log-in to use most tools.	Free	For Profit	●	📱	✗
College Net	Powered by a company that largely provides technology solutions to higher ed organizations. Has a scholarship search tool that allows you to search by keyword, or if you fill out a profile, by personal preferences. While not an overly sophisticated interface, it does boast a huge number of scholarships. The site also has a low-tech college exploration tool that searches college by keyword. No log in necessary to make use of the tool.	Free	For Profit	●	🖥	✗
DACA Scholars	A mobile app that connects undocumented students with college scholarships as well as offers news about immigratoin policy and tips on applying for scholarships	Free	Non-Profit	◔	📱	✓
DREAMer's Roadmap	A mobile app designed to help DREAMers find and track scholarship opportunities available to them.	Free	Non-Profit	◔	📱	✓

Key:
🖥 Desktop Website
📱 Mobile Optimized Website
📱 Mobile App

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
Edmit	Launched in 2017, it offers students and their families a custom estimate of likely finanancial aid offers before the student applies. Students build a profile, search across 2,000 colleges and get a personalized estimate about the cost of each college based on an estimate of that college's typical financial aid offers. It also offers fee-for-service products including a 1:1 coach that helps families understand when and how to petition for more aid.	Freemeium	For Profit	◔	📱	✖
FAFSA4 Caster	Developed by the US Department of Education, this tool helps students understand their options for paying for college. Students provide some basic information and they will estimate your eligibility for federal student aid. Your estimate will be shown in the "College Cost Worksheet" where you can also provide estimated amounts of other student aid and savings that can go towards your college education.	Free	Government Agency	●	💻	✖
FastWeb	One of the largest scholarship search providers and a division of Monster. It offfers members information on financial aid, jobs and internships, student life. Students have to fill out a fairly extensive profile to get started, Fast Web uses the data in part to match the student with scholarships.	Free	For Profit	●	📱	✖
Frank	Offers assistance throughout the financial aid process including FAFSA completion help, basics on how to get aid, overview of the types of aid available and help students renegotiate their aid package. Students are prompted to log in to make use of the site's resources and services.	Freemeium	Non-Profit	◕	📱	✔
Graduate Strike Force	A strategic action computer game about understanding the basics of financial aid and how to select the best college to attend.	Free	Non-Profit	◔	💻	✔

Key:
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📱 Mobile Optimized Website
📱 Mobile App

Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
Mapping Your Future	Provides information about how to manage the cost of college and debt repayment. Ideal for prospective college students, current college students, and recent grads. Includes many financial tools including a student loan replayment calculator, budget calculator and a savings calculator. Also offers online counseling to fulfill entrance and exit loan requirements.	Free	Non-Profit	◕	📱🙂	✖
My College Dollars	A scholarship search site provided by Get Schooled. Available at no cost to all students. Also available through the National Honor Society were students can tailor the scholarship by NHS pillars. By signing in, students can further filter scholarships.	Free	Non-Profit/ Philantropic Supported	◕	📱🙂	✖
My Intuition	Developed by professors at Wellesley College, My Intuition requires students to complete a six-question student profile and then predicts the likely financial aid award at its partner colleges (a small but growing list). Allows students to understand the potential cost of college beyond the sticker price.	Free	Non-Profit	◔	📱🙂	✖
Raise.Me	An innovative site that allows students to 'earn' money from partner colleges for reaching certain academic and college prep milestones. Students can choose colleges they are most interested in attending, but can earn grants only from those colleges that Raise.Me has partnership agreements with.	Free	For Profit	◔	📱🙂	✖
SALT	SALT offers guidance on the best ways to pay for school. Includes personalized student loan help to sort through where and how much to borrow as well as repayment options. It also offers general money management advice and straightforward budgeting assistance. Need to create a profile to access most of the tools and resources available.	Free	Non-Profit	◕	📱🙂	✖

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Name	Tool Description	Cost	Business Model	User Volume	Accessibility	Tailored To Low-Income Students
SCHOLARSHIPS.COM	The site boasts an extensive, frequently updated database of scholarships. The site's search engine is driven by an algorithim designed to tee up the scholarships that best fit a student's profile and rates the relevancy of each listed scholarship. Also includes information about financial aid and college search tools.	Free	For Profit	● (full)	📱 Mobile Optimized	✘
SCHOLARSHIPS JUNKIES	Launched by a group of college students, Scholarship Junkies provides feedback on scholarship application essays and resumes (for a job or as part of a college application). It also offers high-need high schools in-person scholarship workshops for juniors and seniors.	Free	Non-Profit	◔ (quarter)	📱 Mobile Optimized	✔
SCHOLLY	Launched through Shark Tank, this scholarship search tool helps to find scholarships for high school seniors, current undergraduates, and graduate students. Designed to ease the scholarship search process, Scholly's adaptive matching engine promises to deliver smarter, targeted lists of scholarships. Requires you to create a profile page to search scholarships.	Free	For Profit	◕ (three-quarter)	📱 Mobile Optimized	✘
TUITION TRACKER	Developed by journalists, tuition tracker offers an easy way for students to see the cost of college based on their family's income. The interface requires students to read a line graph that predicts the price of college based on a range of incomes. Students and families are not required to build a profile to use the site.	Free	Non-Profit	◔ (quarter)	💻 Desktop Website	✘
YESU	The site boasts an extensive, frequently updated database of scholarships. The site's search engine is driven by an algorithim designed to tee up the scholarships that best fit a student's profile and rates the relevancy of each listed scholarship.	Free	For Profit		📱 Mobile App	✔

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