



Questions We'll Be Answering

- How are prospective students using AI Chatbots?
- How do AI Chatbots generate answers?
- How should marketers be thinking about AI Chatbots?
- What data do we have to demonstrate how AI Chatbots work and can they be influenced?
- As a marketer, how should I adapt my content and web strategies?
- What steps can I take immediately to prepare for increased use of AI Chatbots?



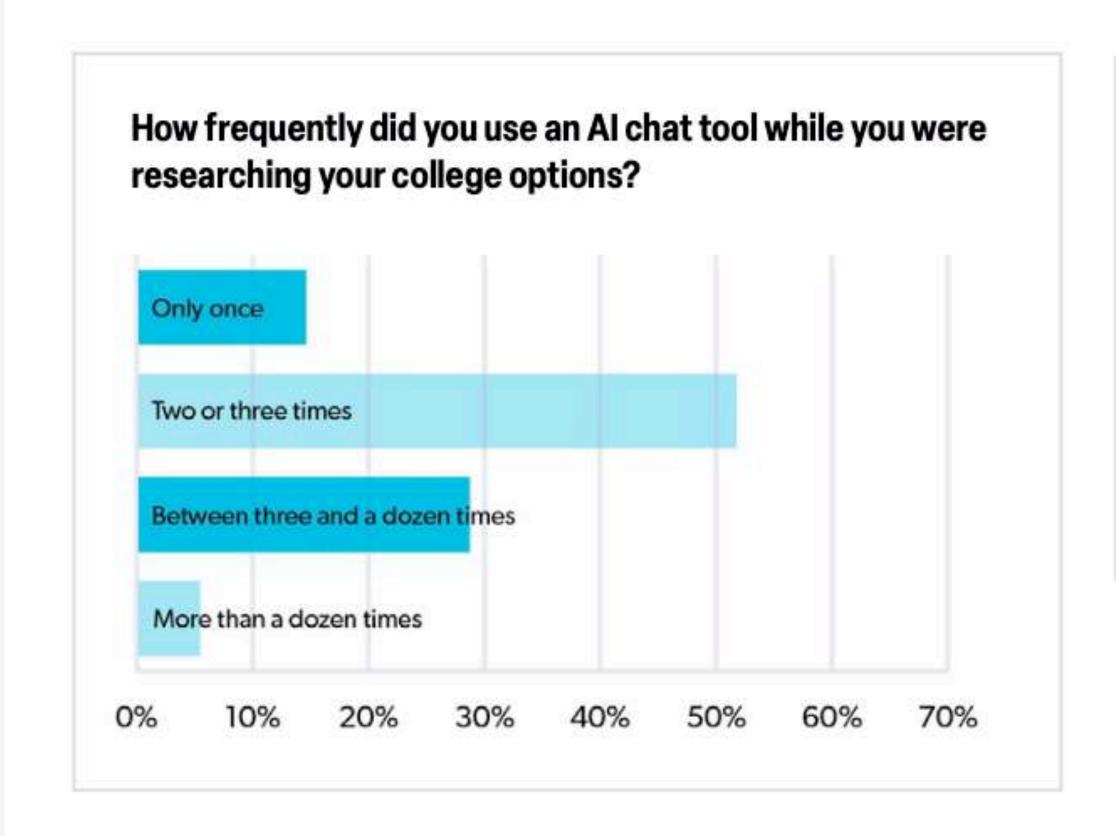
What Got Us Thinking

30% of respondents reported using chatbots for help with researching college options — up from 17% in 2023.

From OHO 2025 Research Report "Al and the College Search"

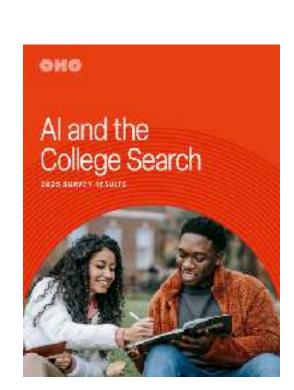


Al Chatbots are Used By Prospects in Research; a Smaller Portion Cite Al as Decision Maker



Advice from friends or family	45.80%	Television commercials	11.30%
Schools' websites	35.60%	College search platforms (Naviance, Niche, etc.)	8.40%
Social media	35.40%	Brochures	7.90%
Online discussion boards	28.20%	Al chat tools (chatbots)	7.90%
Emails advertising schools	28.00%	Reviews & rankings from orgs such as US News	6.30%
High school guidance counselor	19.90%	College faculty member	6.30%
Student testimonials	17.60%	Blogs	5.20%
Advice from colleague	16.70%	Online ads	5.00%
School tours	16.70%	Press/media coverage	4.80%
Search engines	15.10%	Contact from a coach or scout	4.60%
College admissions counselor	14.60%	Radio commercials	4.40%
College fairs	13.40%	Podcasts	4.20%

From OHO 2025 Research Report "Al and the College Search"





Core Questions

What sources does ChatGPT use to generate answers about schools?

How can we influence these responses?

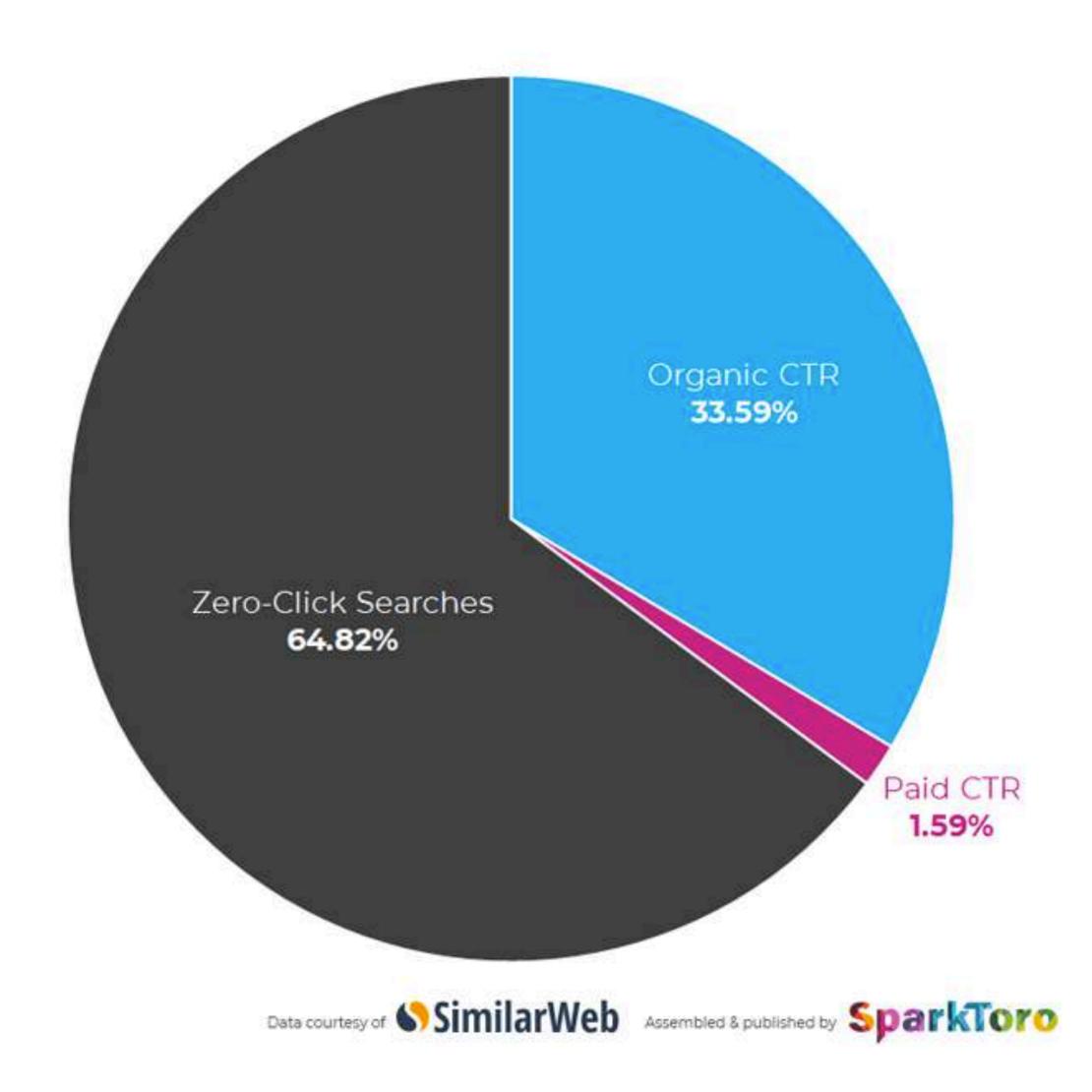


We Are Thinking About Al Visibility The Same Way We Think About SEO

We don't want to *just* have *more* organic traffic to the website. We want to optimize website content to attract the *right* organic traffic – usually prospective students.

If prospects are moving towards just using AI (and not the website), we don't *just* want to know if AI is citing a *school* we want to know if AI is using *school sources* to answer questions for prospective students.

Al Chatbots are an Extension of a Existing Problem for Marketers: The Zero Click Search





Why is Al Optimization Harder than SEO

OG Search	Feature/Function	AI
Only Google	Product or Platform	Multiple – Claude, ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and more
Mainly One	Models or Algorithms	Multiple Per Platform
4 Core Updates in 2024	Updates Frequency	Approximately 2-4x per year
Somewhat	Context Window	Ever Expanding
Yes	Geoaware	Yes
Ranking	Outcome	Visibility



Al Visibility Benchmark Reports



Al Visibility Benchmark Report

Measuring the sources that ChatGPT is using to answer questions across 8 categories:

- 1. Academics majors, programs, quality
- 2. Admission and Aid- deadlines, processes
- 3. Athletics sports, intramural, facilities
- 4. Community & Inclusion safety, diversity
- 5. College Outcomes jobs, salaries, testing
- 6. Reputation safety, rigor, outcomes
- 7. Student Life campus life, vibe
- 8. Tuition tuition, fees, process, credits

The questions we ask come from 10 years of research with prospective students – 80,000 surveys and over 2,000 one-on-one interviews



R2 Schools Benchmark 131 Schools 200,000 Queries



Benchmark Report ChatGPT & Undergraduate

School .edu Academics 82.3%		Other .edu	National Media	Higher Ed Aggregator	Social/User Generated	Other
		5.3%	0.3%	5.4%	0.6%	5.6%
	edu and allomains	fr	urated list of requently cited rebsites		Mostly Wikipedia and Reddit	
		Any other URL with a .edu		Site such as U.S.News, Princeton Review, and Nice	che	



R2 Benchmark Report ChatGPT & Undergraduate

	School .edu	Other .edu	National Media	Higher Ed Aggregator	Social/User Generated	Other
Academics	82.3%	5.3%	0.3%	5.4%	0.6%	5.6%
Admissions & Aid	84.1%	4.5%	0.3%	5.2% 0.7%		5.2%
Athletics	61.3%	4.1%	0.2%	1.1% 3.4%		29.9%
Community & Inclusion	75.4%	3.6%	1.1%	7.5% 0.9%		11.5%
College Outcomes	73.0%	3.6%	1.5%	12.2%	0.2%	7.5%
Reputation	60.5%	2.6%	4.8%	22.2%	1.6%	8.3%
Student Life	78.3%	3.0%	0.2%	2.0% 2.0%		14.6%
Tuition	80.8%	5.7%	1.0%	6.9%	0%	5.7%



R2 Benchmark Report ChatGPT & Undergraduate

	School .edu	Other .edu	National Media	Higher Ed Aggregator	Social/User Generated	Other
Academics	82.3%	5.3%	0.3%	5.4%	0.6%	5.6%
Admissions & Aid	84.1%	4.5%	0.3%	0.3% 5.2% 0.7%		5.2%
Athletics	61.3%	4.1%	0.2%	0.2% 1.1% 3.4%		29.9%
Community & Inclusion	75.4%	3.6%	1.1%	7.5%	0.9%	11.5%
College Outcomes	73.0%	3.6%	1.5%	12.2%	0.2%	7.5%
Reputation	60.5%	2.6%	4.8%	22.2%	1.6%	8.3%
Student Life	78.3%	3.0%	0.2%	2.0%	2.0%	14.6%
Tuition	80.8%	5.7%	1.0%	6.9%	0%	5.7%



R2 Benchmark Report ChatGPT & Undergraduate

	School .edu	Other .edu	National Media	Higher Ed Aggregator	Social/User Generated	Other
Academics	82.3%	5.3%	0.3%	0.3% 5.4% 0.6%		5.6%
Admissions & Aid	84.1%	4.5%	0.3% 5.2% 0.7%		5.2%	
Athletics	61.3%	4.1%	0.2%	0.2% 1.1% 3.4%		29.9%
Community & Inclusion	75.4%	3.6%	1.1%	1.1% 7.5% 0.9%		11.5%
College Outcomes	73.0%	3.6%	1.5%	12.2%	0.2%	7.5%
Reputation	60.5%	2.6%	4.8%	22.2% 1.6%		8.3%
Student Life	78.3%	3.0%	0.2%	0.2% 2.0% 2.0%		14.6%
Tuition	80.8%	5.7%	1.0%	6.9%	0%	5.7%



Small Elite Benchmark 30 Schools 4,100 Queries



SE Benchmark Report ChatGPT & Undergraduate

	School .edu	Other .edu	National Media	Higher Ed Aggregator	Social/User Generated	Other	
Academics	86.1%	2.0%	0.3%	5.2%	0.2%	6.1%	
Admissions & Aid	72.4%	2.4%	2.5%			9.0%	
Athletics	56.9%	2.1%	0.1%	0.4% 2.0%		38.5%	
Community & Inclusion	82.6%	2.8%	0.9%	3.1% 0.5%		10.2%	
College Outcomes	77.7%	2.0%	2.0%	12.6%	0.3%	5.5%	
Reputation	37.5%	2.6%	8.7%	24.0%	11.5%	15.7%	
Student Life	78.4%	3.1%	0.3%	6 2.2% 1.7%		14.2%	
Tuition	82.2%	2.3%	0.8%	0.8% 7.8% 0.0%		6.9%	



SE Benchmark Report ChatGPT & Undergraduate

	School .edu	Other .edu	National Media	Higher Ed Aggregator	Social/User Generated	Other
Academics	86.1%	2.0%	0.3%	3% 5.2% 0.2%		6.1%
Admissions & Aid	72.4%	2.4%	2.5%	12.8% 1.0%		9.0%
Athletics	56.9%	2.1%	0.1%	0.4% 2.0%		38.5%
Community & Inclusion	82.6%	2.8%	0.9%	3.1%	3.1% 0.5%	
College Outcomes	77.7%	2.0%	2.0%	12.6%	0.3%	5.5%
Reputation	37.5%	2.6%	8.7%	24.0%	11.5%	15.7%
Student Life	78.4%	3.1%	0.3%	2.2% 1.7%		14.2%
Tuition	82.2%	2.3%	0.8%	7.8% 0.0%		6.9%

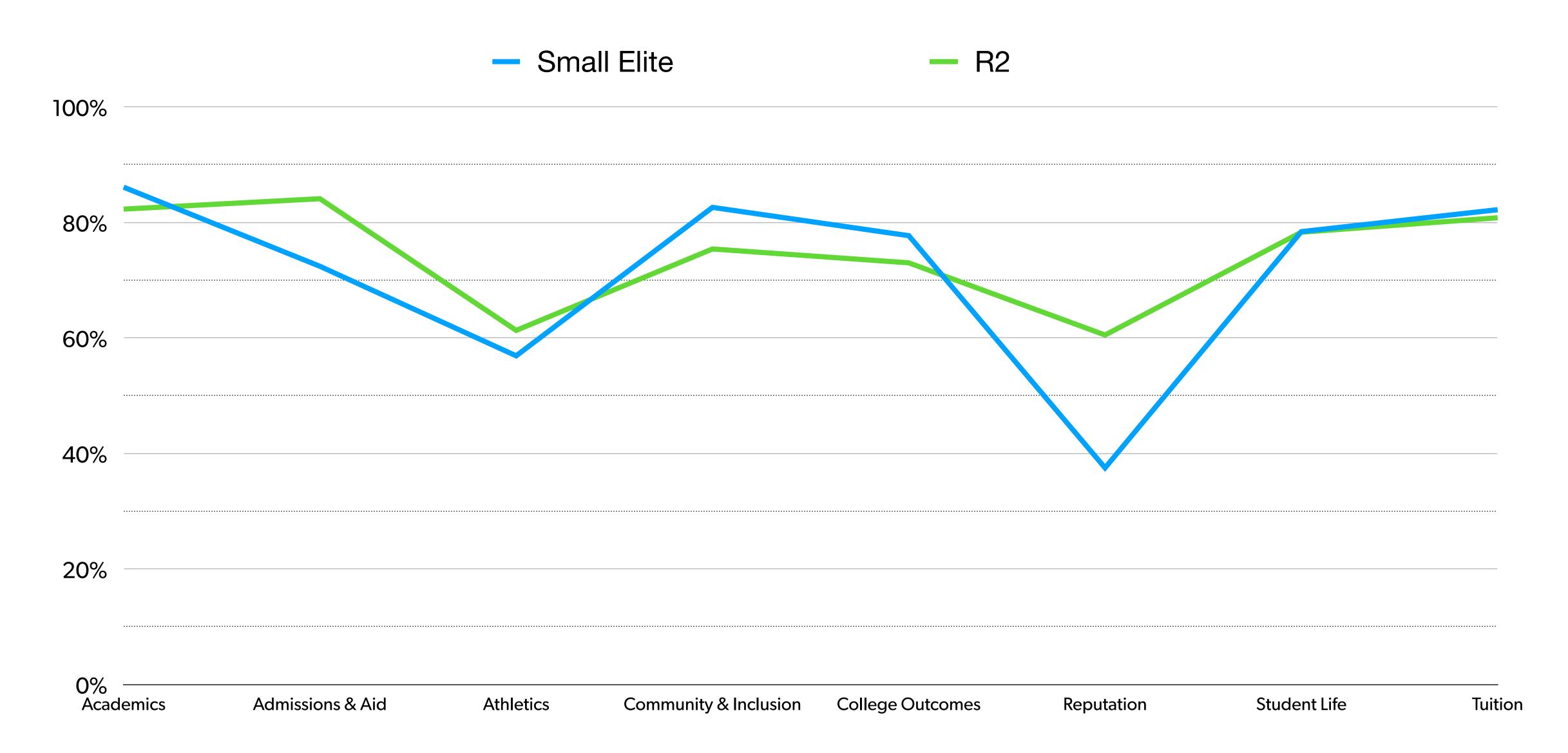


SE Benchmark Report ChatGPT & Undergraduate

	School .edu	Other .edu	National Media	Higher Ed Aggregator	Social/User Generated	Other
Academics	86.1%	2.0%	0.3%	0.3% 5.2%		6.1%
Admissions & Aid	72.4%	2.4%	2.5% 12.8% 1.0%		9.0%	
Athletics	56.9%	2.1%	0.1%	% 0.4% 2.0%		38.5%
Community & Inclusion	82.6%	2.8%	0.9%	3.1% 0.5%		10.2%
College Outcomes	77.7%	2.0%	2.0%	12.6%	0.3%	5.5%
Reputation	37.5%	2.6%	8.7%	24.0% 11.5%		15.7%
Student Life	78.4%	3.1%	0.3%	2.2% 1.7%		14.2%
Tuition	82.2%	2.3%	0.8%	7.8%	0.0%	6.9%



"School Website" as an Al Source





Key Insight

The vast majority of ChatGPT responses are being sourced from vour school's website.



Key Takeaway

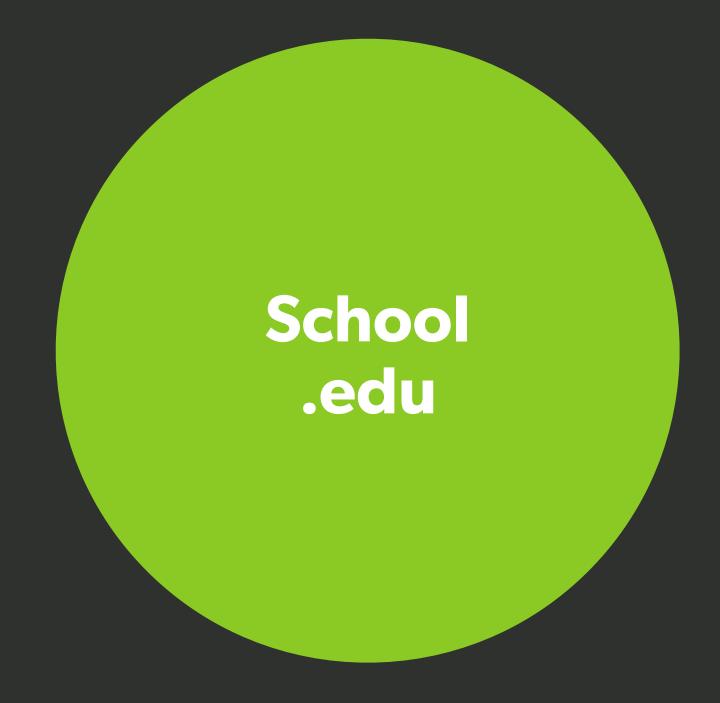
That's good news. It means you own the source content going into ChatGPT



Next Step

Now, you need to make sure the content going in is good.





Audit the content for quality and consistency

Other Sources

Audit the topics that are being covered

Develop new content



Let's Look at Some Examples



Al Visibility Scorecard – 3 Examples

■ Al Final Answer Sources by Category and University Overview

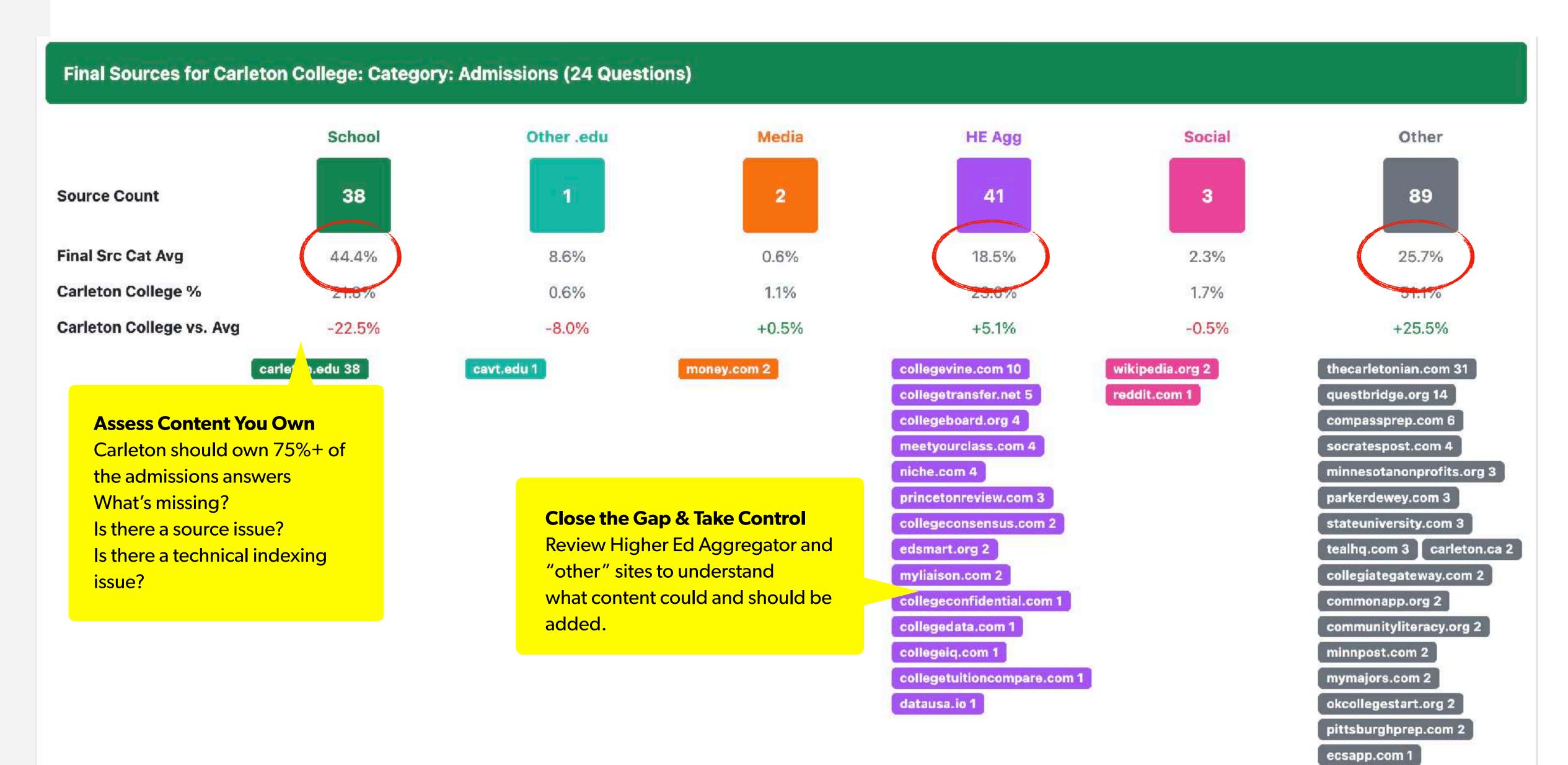
Category: Academics (17 Questions)									
School	Total Sources	School Websites	Other .edu	National Media	Higher Ed Websites	Social/ User Gen	Other Websites	School %	
Carleton College	149	71	1	4	15	2	56	47.7%	
Central Christian College of Kansas	147	92	30	0	21	0	4	62.6%	
University of San Diego	128	76	2	4	21	0	25	59.4% ↑	
	-	56.6%	7.6%	1.9%	13.6%	0.4%	19.9%	56.6%	

Category: Admissions (24 Questions)									
School	Total Sources	School Websites	Other .edu	National Media	Higher Ed Websites	Social/ User Gen	Other Websites	School %	
Carleton College	174	38	1	2	41	3	89	21.8% ↓	
Central Christian College of Kansas	187	121	25	0	39	0	2	64.7%	
University of San Diego	126	57	16	1	10	8	34	45.2%	
	Total Control	43.9%	8.9%	0.6%	17.5%	2.7%	26.4%	43.9%	

Category: Athletics (20 Questions)					



Example 1: Admissions Content Gap





Example 2: Central Christian of Kansas

Category: Academics

Topic: Faculty & Staff

Sources Used: 6

School Website: 2

College Factual: 3

• Univstats.com: 1

School Website (2 citations)

https://www.centralchristian.edu/onlinefaculty/Uni

https://www.centralchristian.edu/academics/division-of-human-service/education/Un

Higher Ed Aggregator Sites (4 citations)

https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/central-christian-college-of-kansas/academi

https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/central-christian-college-of-kansas/academi

https://www.univstats.com/staffs/central-christian-college-of-kansas/HE-Agg

https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/central-christian-college-of-kansas/academi



Example 2: Central Christian of Kansas

Short answer: at Central Christian College of Kansar most instruction is delivered by part-time/adjunct (non-tenure) instructors rather than a large corps of tenured full-time professors.

What I found (most relevant points)

- Public data sources report a low share of full-time instructional faculty about 20–27% full time and roughly 70–80% part-time/adjunct. ([collegefactual.com](https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/central-christian-college-of-kansas/academic-life/faculty-composition/? utm_source=openai))
- Several sources indicate CCCK does not operate a traditional tenure system and classifies most teaching staff as non-tenure (annual/adjunct) instructors. ([collegefactual.com](https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/central-christian-college-of-kansas/academic-life/faculty-composition/?utm_source=openai))
- The college's own pages show many online and adjunct faculty profiles and emphasize adjunct/online instructors teaching courses. ([centralchristian.edu](https://www.centralchristian.edu/onlinefaculty/?utm_source=openai))

What that typically means for students

- You can still get small classes and regular faculty interaction at CCCK (student:faulty ratios reported vary around ~11-17:1), but many courses — especially adjunct/part-time or online sections — are taught by instructors on annual/adjunct contracts rather than tenured professors. ([univstats.com](https://www.univstats.com/staffs/central-christian-college-of-kansas/?utm_source=openai))

If you want to be certain for a specific major or course

- Faculty mix can vary by department (education, nursing, Bible/ministry, etc.). For the most accurate, up-to-date picture for the program you care about, contact the college's admissions or the academic department directly (their faculty directory and program pages list instructors for many courses). The college website contains faculty/program pages you can consult. ([centralchristian.edu](https://www.centralchristian.edu/academics/division-of-human-service/education/?utm_source=openai))



Example 2: Central Christian of Kansas

Category: Academics

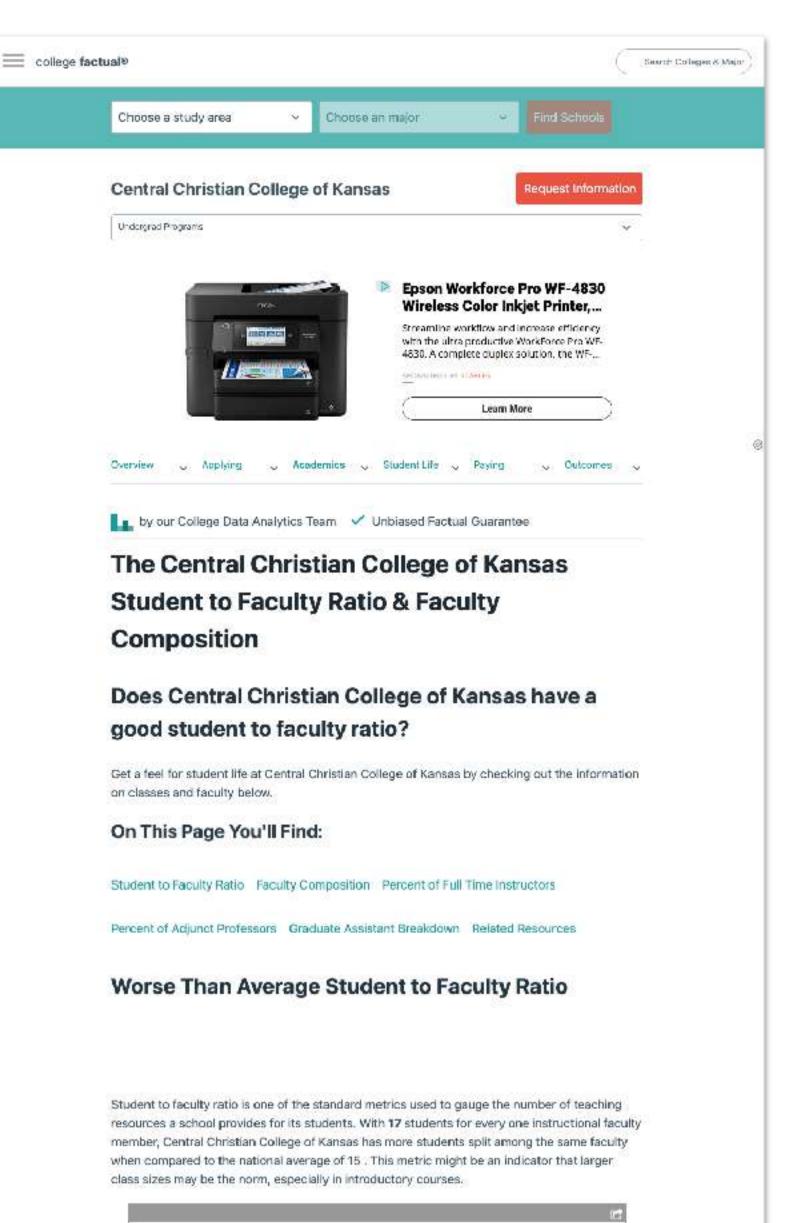
Topic: Faculty & Staff

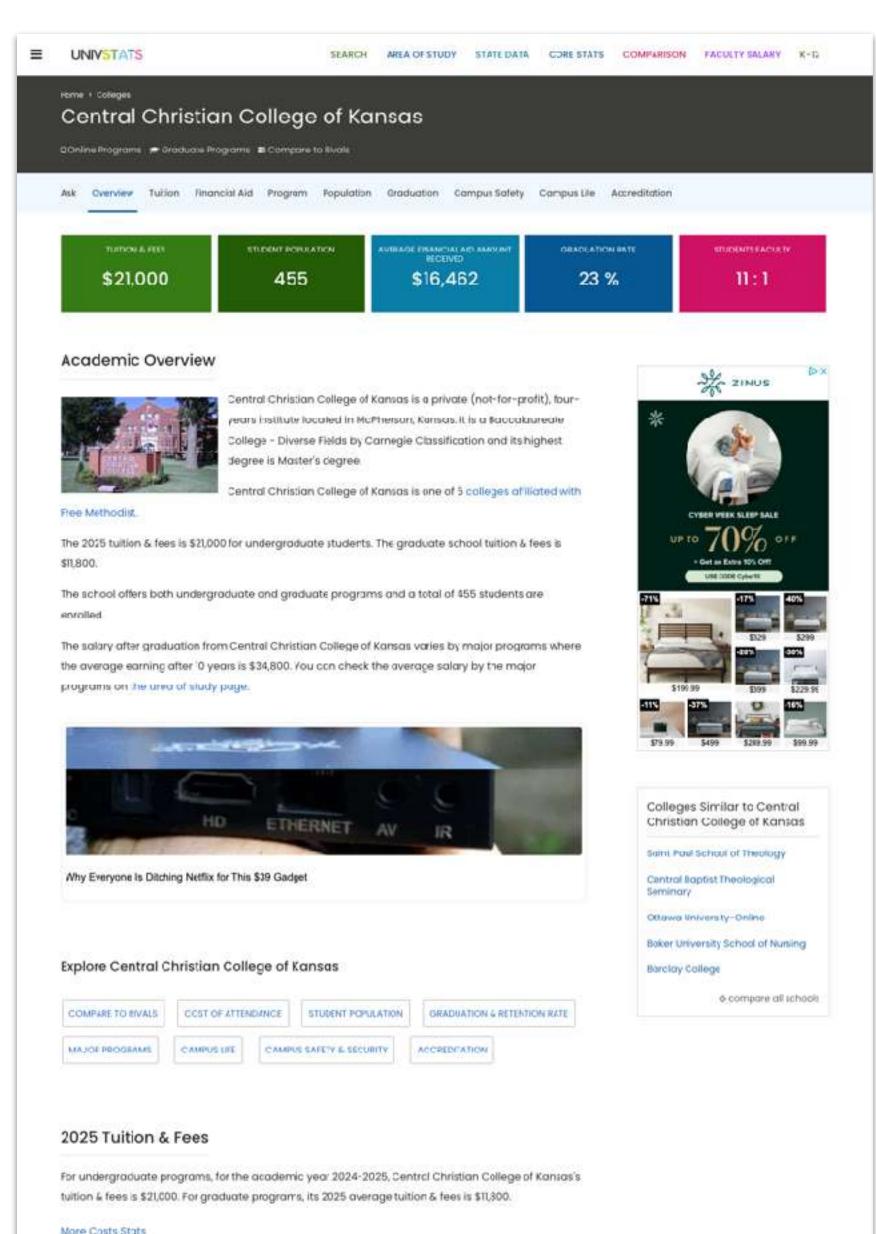
Sources Used: 6

School Website: 2

• College Factual: 3

• Univstats.com: 1







A Few Insights on Other Sources



ChatGPT Looks for Credible Sources

As part of the ChatGPT reasoning, it looks for "credible" sources – it will occasionally list these out specifically in internal reasoning prompts:

- US News
- Times Higher Ed
- Univstats
- Thecollegemonk
- Timesofindia
- Collegedroid
- gary-app.datausa.io
- testbook.com
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education



ChatGPT Is Not Using Social Media

ChatGPT has access to:

- Reddit
- LinkedIn (company pages or public content)
- Wikipedia

ChatGPT does not have access to:

- No Facebook
- No TikTok
- No Snapchat
- No YouTube
- No Instagram in one response ChatGPT suggests a user look at Instagram/Facebook
 - "Check recent photos or short video clips from the athletic department or the college X's social media pages (Instagram/Facebook) and look for posts around homecoming or rivalry games X those give the best real-time sense of turnout and student spirit."

Social media profiles and posts are not being used.







Can LLMs Access Social Media?

	OpenAl (ChatGPT)	Google (Gemini / Al Overviews)	Anthropic (Claude)	Meta (Meta Al / Llama)	xAl (Grok)
Social Media					
Facebook / Instagram / Threads	⚠ No public license	! No public license	⚠ No public license	First-party/owned	⚠ No public license
LinkedIn	⚠ No public license	! No public license	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license	No public license
Pinterest	⚠ No public license	1. No public license	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license
Reddit	Licensed	✓ Licensed	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license
Snapchat	⚠ No public license	! No public license	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license	. No public license
TikTok	⚠ No public license	1. No public license	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license
X / Twitter	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license	First-party/owned
YouTube	⚠ No public license	First-party/owned	⚠ No public license	⚠ No public license	. No public license
Other Sources					
News Publishers	▼ Yes	▼ Yes	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted
Academic Publishers	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted
Books/Authors' Works	<u> </u> No	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>.</u> No	<u> </u>
Government Sources	▼ Yes	▼ Yes	▼ Yes	✓ Yes	▼ Yes
Wikipedia	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted
Stack Overflow	✓ Yes	▼ Yes	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted
Stock Media Providers	✓ Yes	Restricted	Restricted	✓ Yes	Restricted
Company Websites	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted

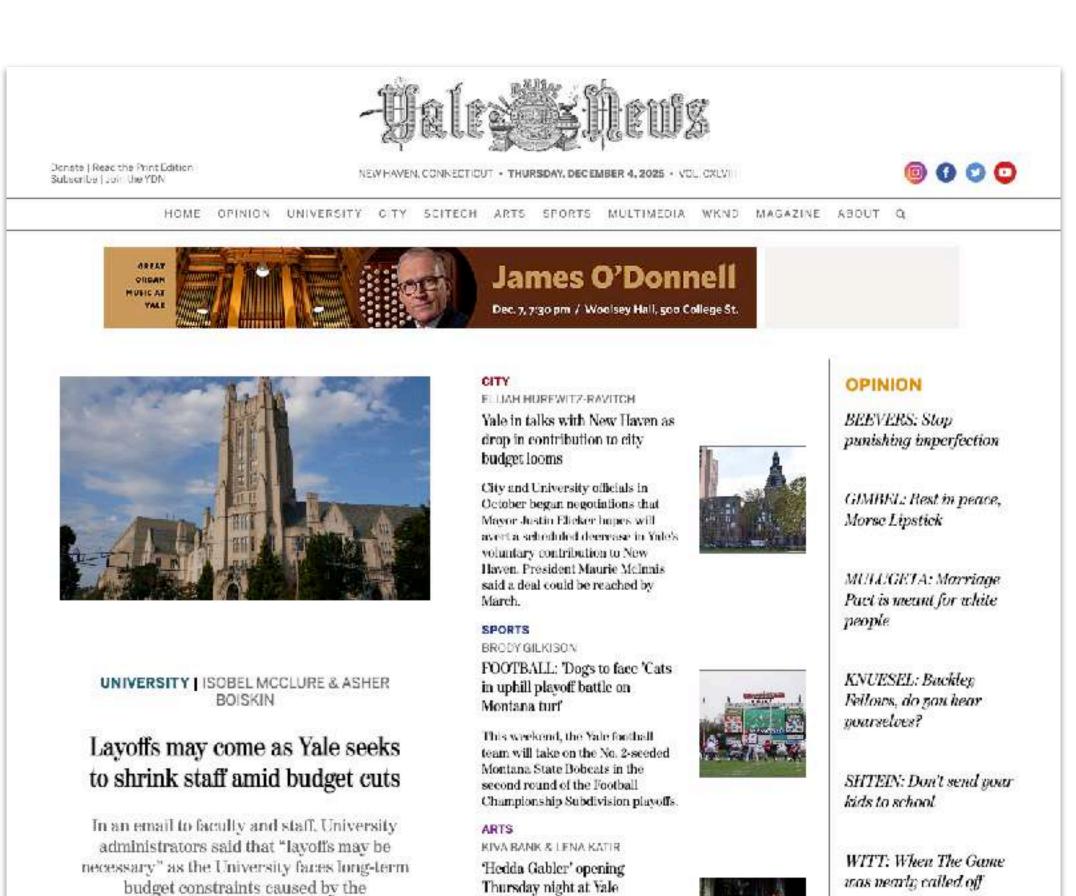


GEORGE: Abandon elite

politics

Campus Newspaper Are Cited

Listed in the "Other" category ChatGPT is aware of the campus or student newspaper and this information is cited as a separate URL quite frequently.



Repertory Theatre

The play will be the last one

directed by James Bundy DRA '95

before he steps down as artistic director of the Yale Reportory Theatre and dean of the David Geffen School of Drama.

endowment tax hike.



Be Found Increase Your AI Visibility



Action Plan: What Can and Should I Do Now?

- 1. Implement SEO best practices for your website
- 2. Develop FAQ content for your website
- 3. Review college outcomes on your website
- 4. Develop reputation content
- 5. Focus on content not schema
- 6. Use insights from AI Visibility Scorecard to identify gaps in your content where ChatGPT is relying on third-party sources
- 7. Audit content on your site to remove out-of-date content and contradictory content



1. SEO Best Practices Are a Good Starting Point

Implement SEO best practices for your website to ensure that content can be found by search and by AI:

- Meaningful URLs
- Solid HTML header structure
- Meta descriptions
- Sitemap.xml
- Direct language for the details: degree name, length of program, cost, etc.

Internal reasoning prompts in ChatGPT are sometimes referencing Google Searches:

"Alternatively, I could try using Google for a broader search."

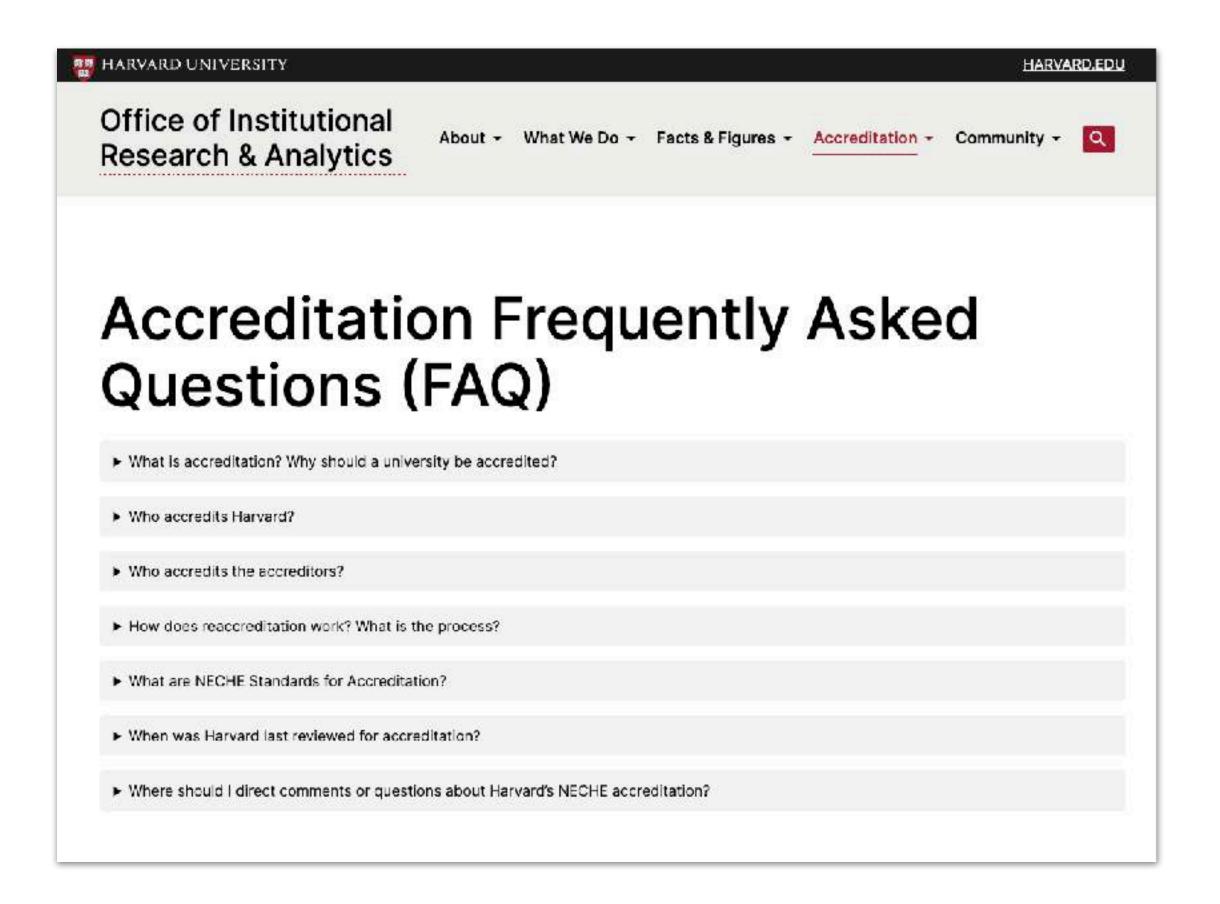


2. Develop FAQs

ChatGPT's internal reasoning prompts are directing it to look for FAQs.

"Maybe I'll explore the Admissions FAQ or Registrar pages"

Here's an example from Harvard that was frequently used. Developing FAQs for key questions seems to be a helpful structure for ChatGPT.





3. College Outcomes

This is consistently low across all of the AI Visibility results that we have analyzed.

Areas for inclusion:

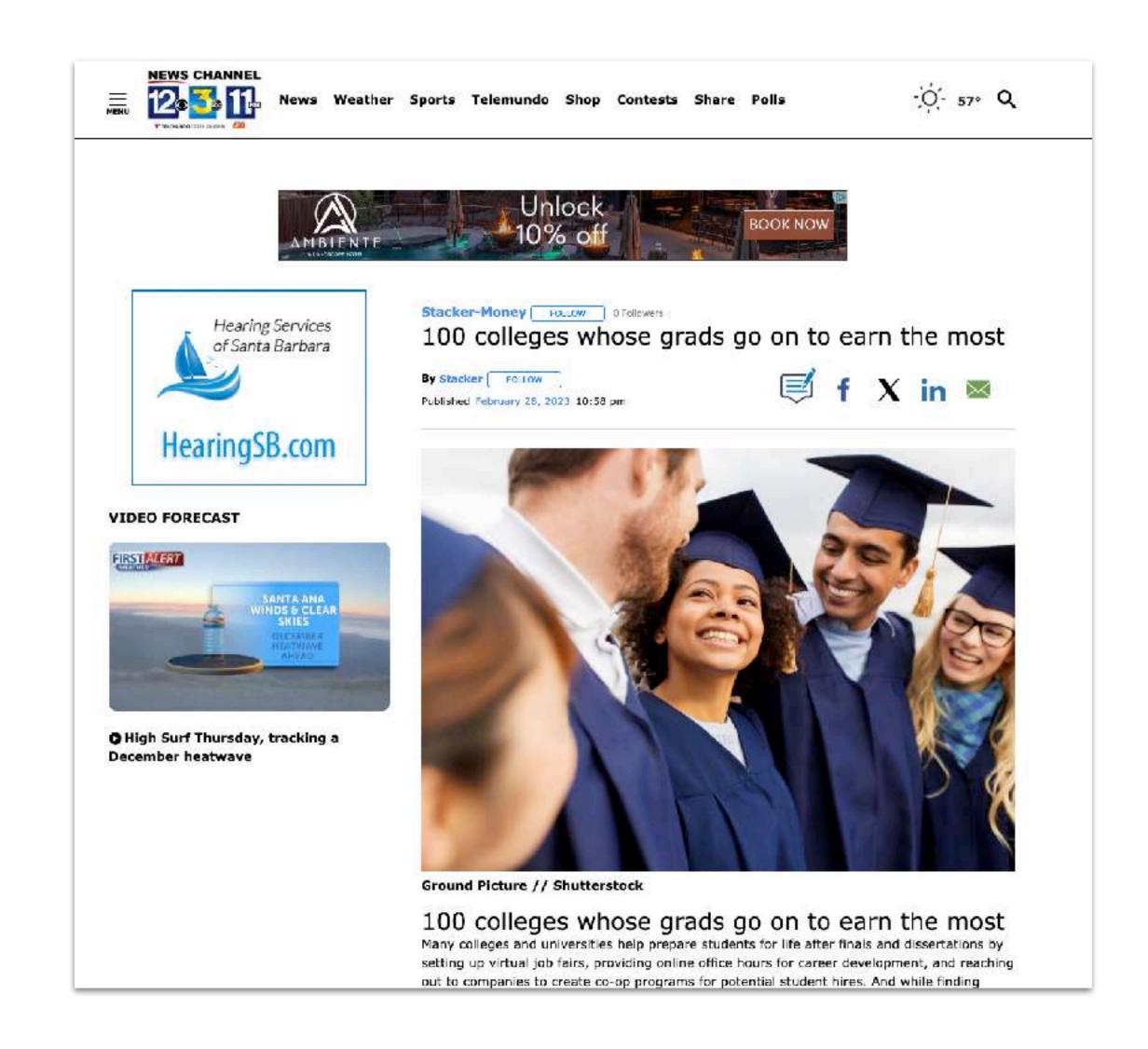
- Career outcomes and graduate school acceptance rates
- Starting salaries for graduates (specific, not general)
- Public and transparent rankings, employer feedback, student satisfaction
- Strength of alumni network in hiring or mentoring
- Graduation rates and time to complete degree



4. Reputation Content

Like outcomes, across the board this is content that frequently not found on the school website. Recommendations include:

- Review and audit at third-party sites, Reddit, and see what issues are being raised.
- Consider a PR or SEO Content Marketing strategy that includes articles in media that cite your reputation.
- Review wikipedia, collegefactual, niche, etc.
- Be sure to update all of the profiles that you own on sites like US New or Niche





5. Focus on Content, Not Schema

Recent testing by our team shows that ChatGPT is not using schema or additional JSON-LD or JSON feeds to add content.

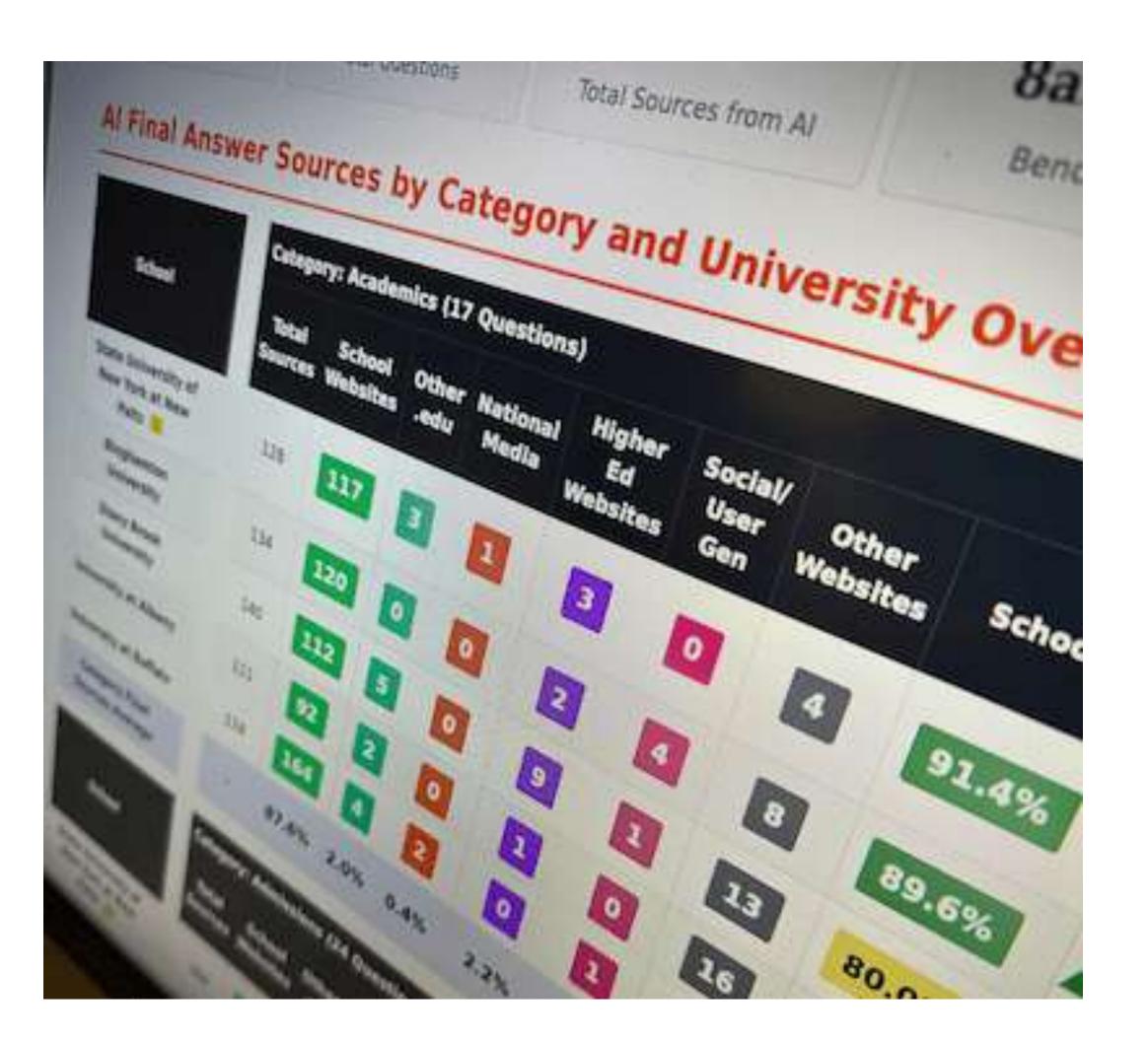
A focus on providing direct, clear and consistent content is best. This means labeling content – cost, degree, dates, cost – and not just using softer marketing language.



6. Al Visibility Scorecard

We're offering high-level AI Visibility scorecards to help you identify the third-party sources that are being used.

This will allow you to understand where to focus your content clean up and production efforts.





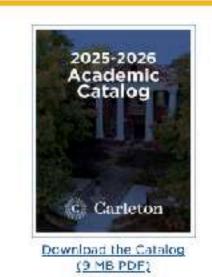
7. Content Hygiene

Search your web ecosystem for duplicate and out-of-date content and look for inconsistencies.

One area to dig into is the use of the program pages vs. the catalog. The online catalog frequently repeats content on the website.

2025-2026 Academic Catalog

Each year the Carleton College Registrar's Office publishes a new edition of our Academic Catalog. This website provides information about all courses offered in the current academic year, along with details on academic regulations, major and minor requirements, and requirements for graduation. For more information on navigating the catalog, see Exploring the Academic Course Catalog.



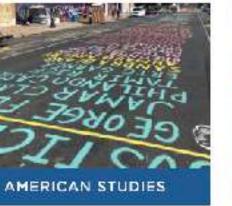
Information about Carleton's approach to the liberal arts, our faculty, academic support resources, and much more can be found on the Carleton Academics website.

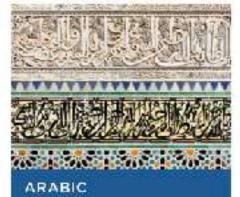
Search for Courses

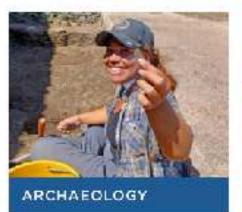
Subject: Find Courses All of 2025-26 ~ More Search Options

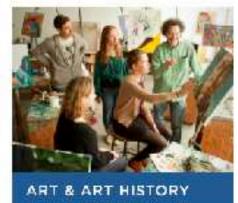
Academic Departments & Programs



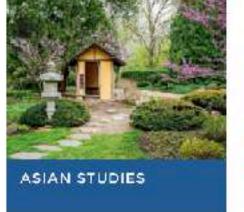


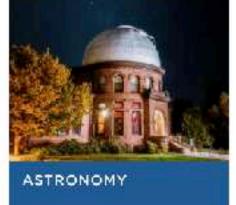






















What's Next?



Product Roadmap

- **Expanding audiences** alumni, graduate, adult learners
- **Custom questions** do you have specific questions or areas to explore – we can run reports
- **New platforms and LLM Models**
 - Gemini is in beta
- Looking at AI across the funnel

Un-Branded AI Queries

Branded AI Queries

Decision Queries

"I am looking for a school with CS. I have 1300 SAT / 3.65

"What are the best small schools in PA for x degree"
"What are the most affordable schools in Texas"

"What is the faculty student ratio at school X?"

"Which degree is more valuable?"

"Compare MBA from X school vs Y school"

"Which school should I go to X vs. Y"
"Is this school worth it? Is it any good?"