

UT IHEM + MIGHTY CITIZEN

# Marketing to Digital Natives: An Agency Perspective

MIGHTY



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## Branding and digital transformation for mission-driven organizations

- Nonprofits
  - Associations
  - Government
  - Universities and colleges
- 
- Research
  - Branding
  - Marketing
  - Design



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- Multi-year “buying cycle”
- Must sell to distinct audiences who (often) have competing values
- Must sell both *online* and *offline*
- You must “plan today for the next generation” of customers
- Customer data is tracked across multiple systems of varying quality
- Organization’s internal structure is decentralized
- Stakeholders have different levels of engagement and autonomy
- The stakes are all-or-nothing
- The final decision is made under extreme stress

Name that sector!



**Higher education marketing  
is the hardest marketing.**



- Multi-year “buying cycle”

**Start thinking about college early**

- Must sell to distinct audiences who (often) have competing values

**Selling to kids and their parents**

- Must sell both *online* and *offline*

**And the experience must feel consistent, with no friction**

- Organization’s internal structure is decentralized

**Leading to content governance and brand consistency challenges**

- The stakes are all-or-nothing

**Second place doesn’t get any of the ROI**

- The final decision is made under extreme stress

**Your job is to lower the stress as much as possible**



# What we know about digital natives

- Every kid you recruit from now on is a “digital native”
- Want to pursue something bigger than just profit
- Can spot advertising a mile away—and they’re suspicious
- Understand and respect diversity
- Respect financial security
- The most optimistic generation



**Digital natives understand  
digital marketing  
better than you do.**



# The blind spots we'll discuss today:

1. User Research
2. SEO and Content Structure
3. Messages
4. Visual Design



# User Research

Mike Steckel - Director of User Experience  
Austin College



**Know who you are,  
who you're not,  
and who you need to reach.**



Picture a university website.



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# Did it look like this?

- Multiple rows of navigation at the top
- Huge image of campus with unusually happy, unusually good-looking kids sitting by a tree with a stately building in the background
- Non-specific message about “the future” in large font
- ‘News’ and ‘Events’ listed further down the page



Most university websites look  
the same.



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News

[View more news](#)



[IUPUI, IU Bloomington ranked among best colleges for student voting](#)



[Themester 2018 explores the relationship between humans and nonhuman animals](#)



[Guest filmmakers and directors including Michael Schultz are highlights of IU Cinema's fall season](#)





ORIENTATION WEEK

## Welcome Class of '22

[INFORMATION](#), [ACTIVITIES](#), [SCHEDULE](#)



### At the Athenaeum

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17  
5:30PM



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18  
5:30PM



### News

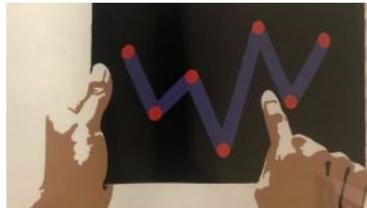




## A hearty Maine hello

Returning Black Bears greet new students and their families for Fall Welcome Weekend

### News



First-of-its-kind learning platform could give



New study finds zoning ineffective for deer

### Events

- AUG 30 | Football vs University of New Hampshire
- AUG 31 | Fall Welcome Weekend
- AUG 31 | Women's Cross Country vs Army West Point

[More](#)



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## WELCOME, LONGHORNS!

Get involved, get connected & get your Horns Up at #LonghornWelcome!

[View schedule >](#)

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## What starts here changes the world.

The University of Texas at Austin provides public access to a first-class education and the tools of discovery. This has resulted in a culture of ambition and leadership, where physical scale is matched by bold goals and achievements.



What is your school's unique value proposition?

If I'm a student, how do I pick when all schools seem the same?



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# Identify *your* “best and brightest”

- Defining “best and brightest” for your school depends on your unique circumstances.
  - Different schools have different definitions.
- When an employer reads your university’s name on a resume, what does it signify about the applicant?
- This helps you recruit the right people to talk to.



# Research kills opinions.

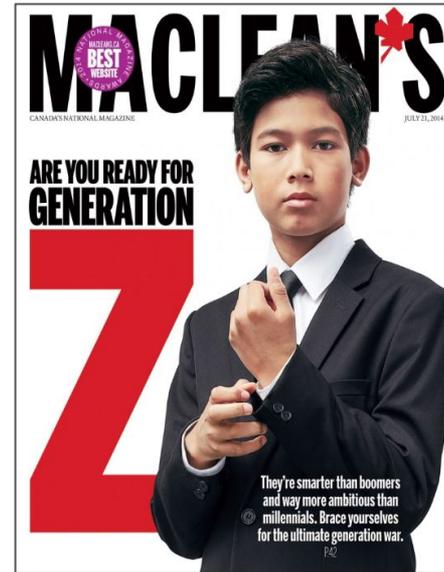
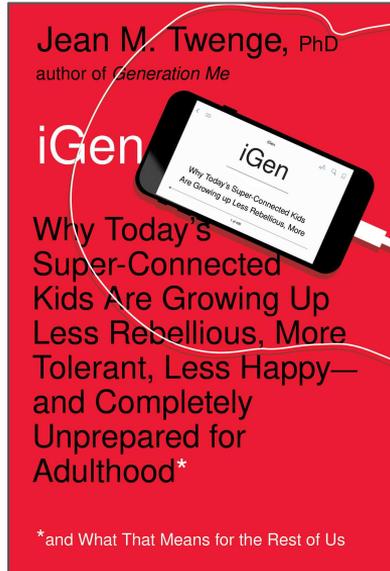
- Research lets you discover things you don't know you don't know.
  - Guessing is reckless and expensive.
- Research finds the right questions to ask.
- You are not going to discover the right questions by arguing in a conference room.



**Don't confuse Gen Z generalities  
for your target audience.**



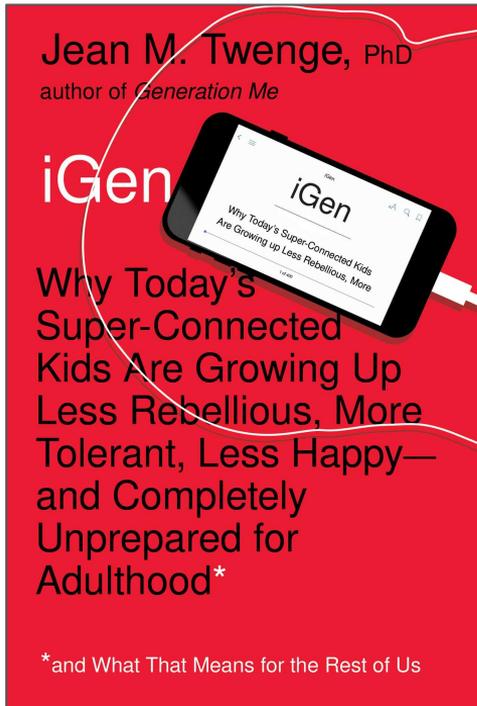
# Lots of books and articles about Gen Z



# Gen Z is not your target audience

- Your target audience is unique to your value proposition.
  - These books are averages.
- Use these resources as back-up and secondary research.
  - Good inputs and bouncing off points. Offer high-level comparisons with other generations.
- But don't mistake them for your target audience.





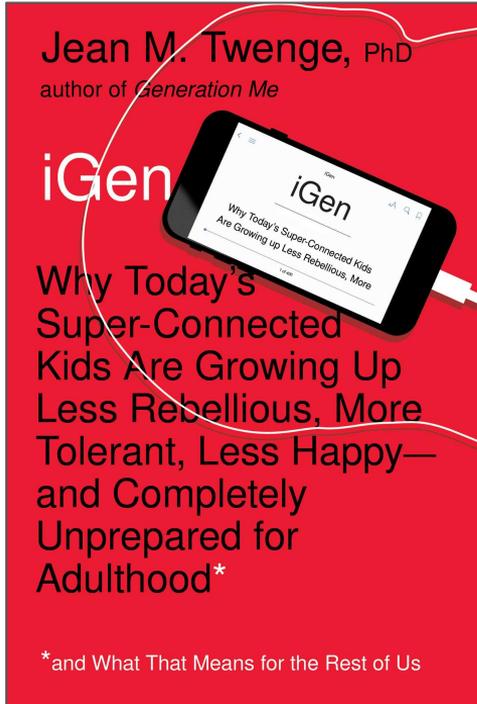
## Quote from the book:

“iGen’ers’ drumbeats of growing up slowly, individualism, and safety all manifest themselves in their exceedingly cautious attitude toward relationships.”

– iGen



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## Quote from the book:

“iGen’ers’ drumbeats of growing up slowly, individualism, and **safety** all manifest themselves in their **exceedingly cautious attitude** toward relationships.”

– iGen

**This may not be true of the people who are looking for a business degree focused on entrepreneurship.**



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# Research process is the same

- The process and methods of research are the same whether Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, etc.
- Focus on understanding your targets':
  - Behavior (especially online)
  - Attitudes (about higher ed and branding in general)
  - Motivations (what makes them pick school A over school B)



# The goal is also the same

- Learn how to see your website and marketing materials from the outside in.
- How do you see yourself as others see you?



**Use multiple research methods.**



# Large scale, long-term research

- Usability Testing
  - Sit and talk with students and parents as they use your website.

# Large scale, long-term research

- Content Governance (Internal, In-house Research)
  - Research staff where you work.
  - Includes an overview of :
    - How your university produces content
    - What it means to produce effective content
    - How decisions about content are made.

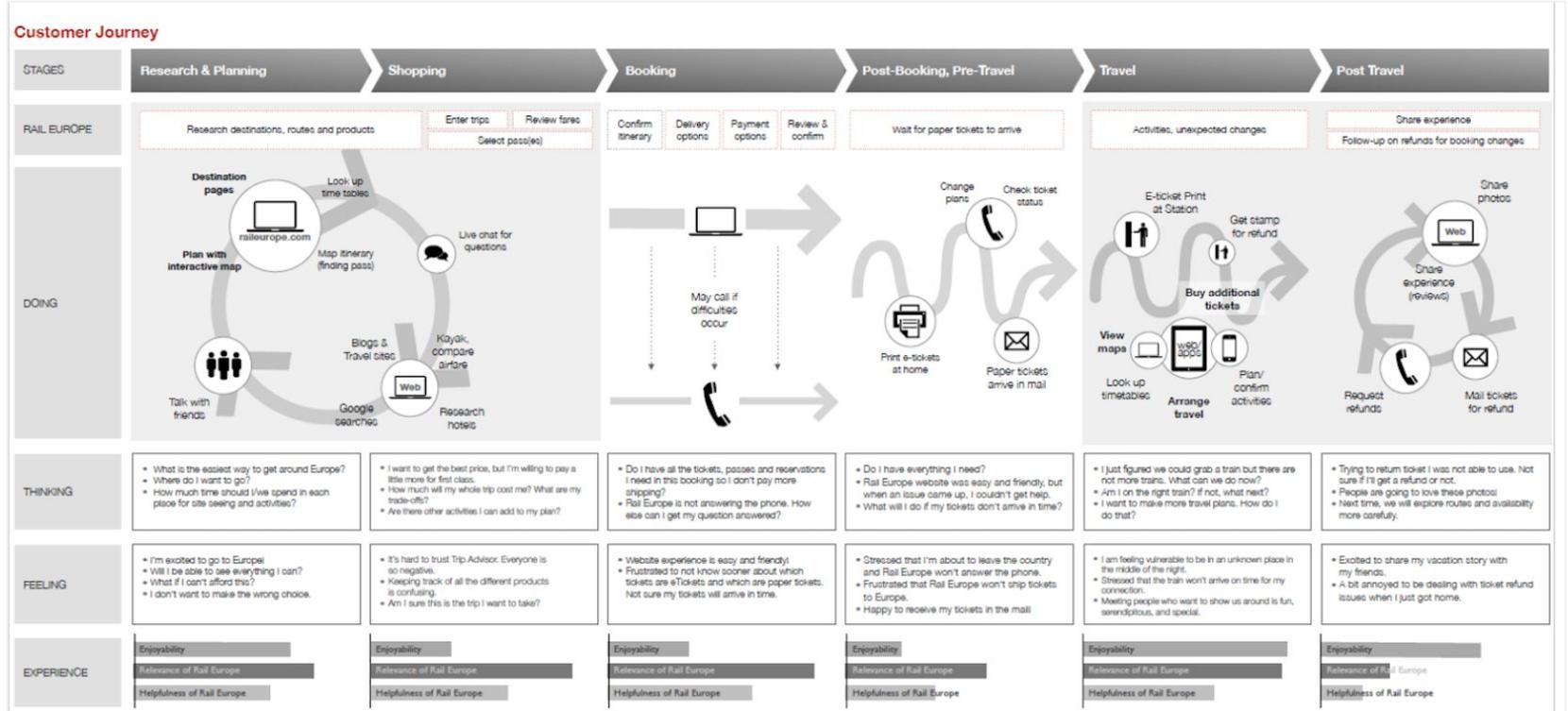


# Large scale, long-term research

- User Journey Mapping
  - What are the steps a student takes?
    - From awareness to enrollment?
    - What are they thinking, feeling, and doing at each step?
    - How do you support them?



# Example User Journey



# Small, short-term research

- Interviews and Surveys
  - These work well together—mixing a deep, narrow view with a shallow, broad view
- Card Sorting
  - Members of your target audience organize different tasks into their own categories. These become navigation structures.
- “5-Second Test”



# Exercise: The 5-Second Test

You are a UT-Austin alum.

You click on the “UT alumni” link from the home page and see this...



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[Home](#) > [Alumni Resources](#)

## Alumni Resources



Photo by Marsha Miller

### Quick Links

[Request a Transcript >](#)[Career Resources >](#)[Texas Exes >](#)[Extended Campus >](#)[Athletics Schedule >](#)[Subscribe to @Texas >](#)[Give to UT Austin >](#)[Join HornShare >](#)[Donate now >](#)

### Connect with Your College

[Cockrell School of Engineering >](#)[College of Education >](#)[College of Fine Arts >](#)[College of Liberal Arts >](#)

### Texas Exes

Texas Exes, UT Austin's official alumni association, is one of the largest, most renowned alumni networks in the world.

[Texas Exes Home >](#)[Join Texas Exes >](#)[The Alcalde >](#)[The Hook >](#)[Show Your Longhorn Pride](#)

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# What did you notice?

- What can you do here?
- Anything you expected to see but didn't see?
- Did anything surprise you?
- How would you describe the tone of the page?
- How does this school want to be perceived?
- Do the answers align with your intent for the page?



# How to run your own 5-second test

1. Choose a page on your website.
2. Cover the screen so the user can't see it.
3. Reveal the screen for 5 seconds, then cover the screen again.
4. Have them write down everything they remember.



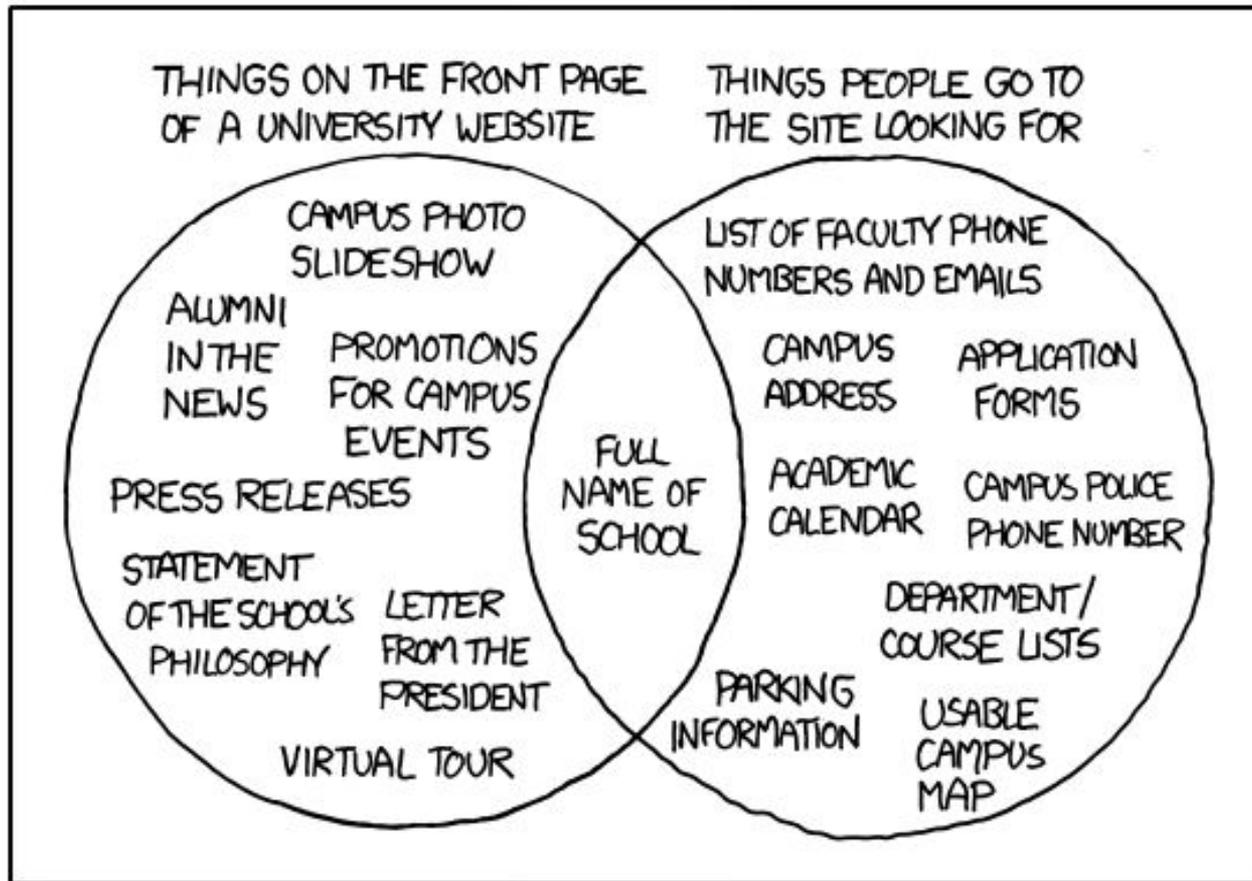
# How to run your own 5-second test

- In reviewing the responses: Is the page communicating what you want it to communicate?
- When people describe their reactions to the page, how close do they get to describing your unique value proposition?



**Higher-ed websites should  
balance top-down messaging with  
bottom-up task completion.**





**Without research,  
you get input from your  
coworkers but not from  
your target audience.**



# Selling Up



# Sell the value of research to executives

1. **Increase revenue** (make money)
2. **Decrease operating costs** (save money)
3. **Increase new business** (new prospects)
4. **Increase existing business** (more from existing customers)
5. **Increase shareholder value** (longer term sustainability)



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*From Jared Spool, UX Strategy Means Business*

# “With our research we will...”

1. **Increase revenue** by increasing enrollment, tuition, fees, etc.
2. **Decrease operating costs** by using the website to save money
3. **Increase new business** by tuition from new programs
4. **Increase existing business** by increasing tuition from existing programs, increasing alumni donations
5. **Increase shareholder value** by increasing endowments



# SEO & Content Structure

Patrick Wicker, Senior Digital Marketing Manager  
Southwestern University



# Why SEO?

## Competition

- Many universities in U.S., and possibly your state and city
- Most university websites have poor optimization
- Many education resource sites have excellent optimization



### Political Science

Ranked in 2017

Political science is a discipline that combines history, current events and analysis. Graduate students are often able to specialize in a certain area of politics. These are the best political science programs. Each school's score reflects its average rating on a scale from 1 (marginal) to 5 (outstanding), based on a survey of academics at peer institutions.

**BEST GRAD SCHOOLS**  
**USNews**  
RANKINGS

[READ THE METHODOLOGY »](#)

[f](#) [t](#) [...](#)

120 schools [Political Science Schools X](#) [CLEAR ALL](#) **SORT BY:** Rank (high to low) ▾

PROGRAM RANKINGS	NAME/RANK
Social Sciences ▾	Harvard University
Political Science ▾	

# Why SEO?

## **Better optimization leads to...**

- Better visibility on Google for more/all of your programs
- Better visibility on Google to searchers outside your city
- More *free* traffic to your academic programs pages
- More Request Info form completions
- (Hopefully) better user experience



# What Google Wants

## Links

- From quality sites
- Internal links

## Content

- Pages about search
- High-quality
- Headlines with metadata

## Engagement

Reputation & number of shares on social media

## Location

Proximity to searcher

## Accessibility

- Easily crawlable
- Mobile-accessible
- Don't bury the good stuff



What content should you have on your website to attract more search traffic from Gen Z?



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# Create Pages About These Topics

People want to know about...	So they search for...
Degree programs	“Kinesiology degree programs”
Careers	“Accredited athletic training programs”
Specific Degrees	“BA in English,” “History masters programs”
Majors	“Criminal justice major”
Transitions	“RN to BSN degree,” “Pre-med programs”
Classes	“Theater classes near me,” “Spanish classes in Omaha”

Your website architecture impacts the visibility of your academic program pages on search engines.



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# College of Liberal Arts & Behavioral Sciences



[Home](#) >> [Academics](#) >> [Colleges and Schools](#) >> [COLABS](#) >> [History/Geography/General Studies](#) >> [Undergraduate-History](#)

[COLABS Home](#)

[Home](#)

[Message from the Chair](#)

[Undergraduate History Program](#)

[Graduate History Program](#)

[Geography Program](#)

[General Studies Program](#)

[Minor Program](#)



## Undergraduate Major in History

Pursue your special place in History. In pursuing the Bachelor of Arts in History through this instructional unit, students (as first-time degree seekers) are required to declare a minor in a second academic discipline. In contrast, students pursuing the Bachelor of Arts in General Studies (as first-time degree seekers) are NOT required to declare a minor in a second

The best performing university websites link to top-level degree program pages within 2 clicks of the homepage.

**So how do you do that?**



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# What Many Schools Do: The Long Page

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

### DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

- Interdisciplinary Studies - Education - BAIS
- Interdisciplinary Studies - Education - BAIS
- Interdisciplinary Studies Education - BSIS
- Accelerated Online Ed Curriculum & Instruction - MEd Mathematics
- Accelerated Online Ed Curriculum & Instruction - MEd Science
- Accelerated Online Ed Curriculum & Instruction - MEd Triple Literacy
- Ed Curriculum & Instruction - MEd
- Ed Curriculum & Instruction, Mathematics - MEd
- Ed Curriculum & Instruction, Science - MEd
- Ed Curriculum & Instruction, Writing Focus - MEd
- Mind, Brain and Education - MEd
- Reading Specialist - MEd
- Teaching - Early Childhood - MEdT
- Teaching - Middle Level - MEdT

- Gen Z isn't searching complex, highly specific degree names
- What page should a searcher find for your teaching degrees?
- Do prospects need to choose between a BAIS or BSIS degree?



# Do This Instead:

Create a top-level page for each academic discipline.  
From there:

- Link to degree-specific or major-specific pages
- Link to career-specific pages

# Better Idea #1

School/College



**School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences**

Academic Discipline  
(link to overview page)



Applied Sociology		MS	
Criminology	BA	MS	PhD
Economics	BA, BS	MS	PhD
Geospatial Information Sciences	BS	MS	PhD
International Political Economy	BA, BS	MS	
Justice Administration and Leadership		MS	
Political Science	BA	MA	PhD
Political Science - Constitutional Law Studies		MA	
Political Science - Legislative Studies		MA	
Public Affairs	BS	MPA	PhD
Public Policy	BS	MPP	

Specific Degrees  
(link to degree page(s))



# Better Idea #2

UNDERGRADUATE

GRADUATE

ONLINE

PHD



## We Offer More Than 40 Undergraduate Degree Programs

- Accounting BBA
- Applied Arts and Sciences BAAS
- Art BA
- Art BFA
- Biology BS
- Chemistry BS (ACS Certified)
- Civil Engineering BSCE
- Computer Information Systems BS
- Computer Science BS
- Construction Management BS
- Criminal Justice BS
- Economics BA/BS
- Electrical Engineering BSEE
- English BA
- Finance BBA
- General Business BS
- Health Studies BS
- History BA/BS
- Human Resource Development BS
- Industrial Technology - Surveying & Mapping BS
- Industrial Technology BS
- Information Technology BS
- Interdisciplinary Studies BS
- Kinesiology Athletic Training BS
- Kinesiology BS
- Management BBA
- Marketing BBA
- Mass Communication BA/BS
- Mathematics BS
- Mechanical Engineering BSME
- Music BA
- Music BM
- Nursing BSN
- Nursing BSN - Accelerated
- Political Science BA/BS
- Psychology BA/BS
- Social Sciences BA/BS
- Spanish BA
- Speech Communication BA/BS
- Wellness BA

[Learn More >>](#)

# Better Idea #3

Campus Majors	Admission	Tuition & Financial Aid	Student Experience
<b>Degree Level</b>	<b>Campus Major Categories</b>		
Undergraduate	Accounting	Engineering	
Graduate	Aeronautics & Aviation	Finance	
Associate	Art & Design	Information Technology	
Certificates	Business	Liberal Arts	
Doctoral	Criminal Justice	Math & Science	
	Education	Psychology & Counseling	
	<a href="#">View all degrees</a>	<a href="#">View All Degrees</a>	

Top programs appear in navigation



What should a university's primary call-to-action be?



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It isn't "Apply."



# Why “Apply” isn’t a good CTA

1. Most students who come to your site won’t apply immediately.
  - a. You don’t obtain email/ mailing address if “Apply” is your primary CTA.
  - b. You can’t tell if your SEO or digital ads are working.
2. Marketers often can’t track how marketing affects applications.
  - a. Students complete application on centralized sites—e.g., ApplyToTexas
  - b. Students leave college website and apply on main university system site

**Your primary website CTA  
should be “Request Info.”**



# Why “Request Info” is a good CTA

## Benefits

- Capture student email and mailing address for follow-up
- Student can select multiple options (email, mail, campus tour...)
- Learn effectiveness of marketing campaigns

## Challenges

- Will the student receive materials relevant to desired program?
- Who will respond to student questions?



# Messages

Andrew Buck - Content Strategist  
UT-Austin

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Nora Ephron



Kenneth L. Peters, principal of Beverly Hills High School, announced today that the entire school faculty will travel to Sacramento next Thursday for a colloquium in new teaching methods. **“There will be no school next Thursday.”** Among the speakers will be anthropologist Margaret Mead, college president Dr. Robert Maynard Hutchins, and California governor Pat Brown.

# Challenges in Messaging to Gen Z

1. Competition for attention is growing fiercer
2. Inauthenticity is easy to spot—and easy to dislike
3. Tradition is no fun, and having options is



Challenge #1:  
**Competition for Gen Zer's  
attention is fierce.**



# Every 60 seconds online...



**204 million emails** sent



**4 million searches** performed on Google



**2.4 million content shares** on Facebook



**571 websites** created



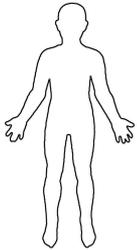
**18,000 hours of video** uploaded to YouTube



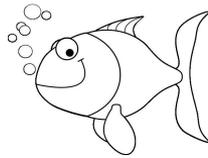
**217 new people** begin using the mobile Web



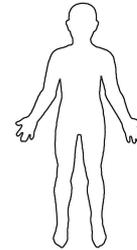
# Attention Span



Humans  
in 2000



Goldfish



Humans  
in 2013

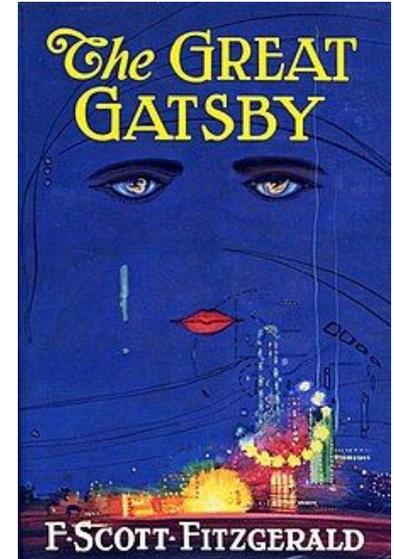
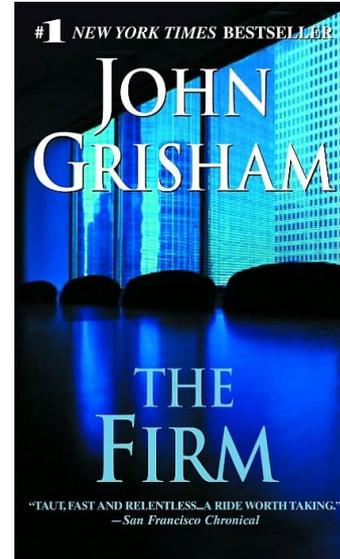


Pop Quiz:

**The average 24-year-old  
reads at which grade  
level?**



# 8th grade



# Areas of Study

The depth and breadth in fields of study at The University of Texas at Austin can be dizzying, but it's our size that will give you the room to challenge yourself as a scholar, artist, teacher, leader and researcher. Through our many degree programs, you'll have the opportunity to pursue your own path of learning while studying just about any subject you can think of.

# 15th grade



# How do digital natives read on screens?



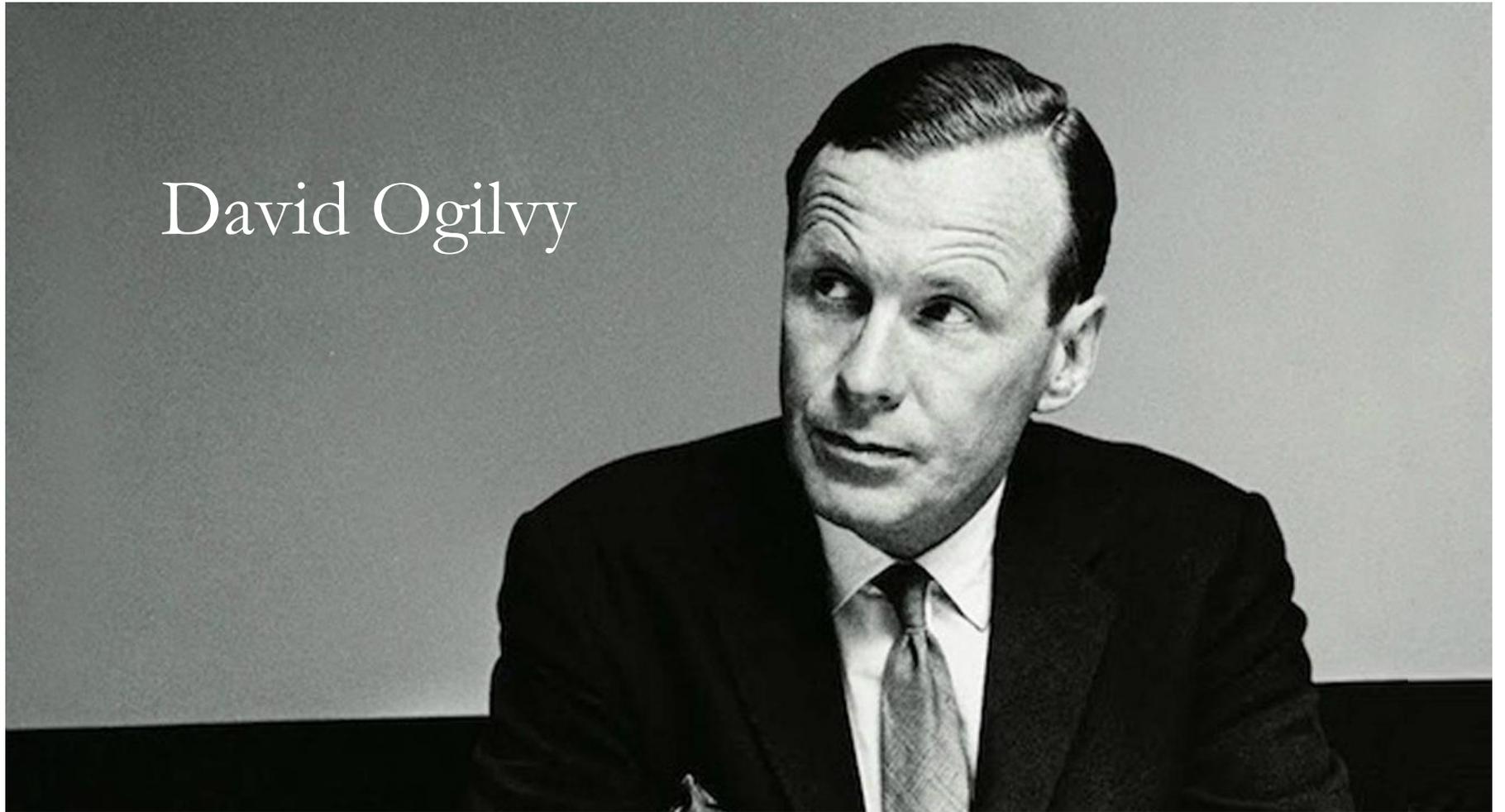
**They don't.**  
**They scan, browse,**  
**and multi-task.**



The Solution:  
**Go concise, concrete, and  
authentic.**



David Ogilvy





It is spring  
and  
I am blind.



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# Charlie Strong's Core Values



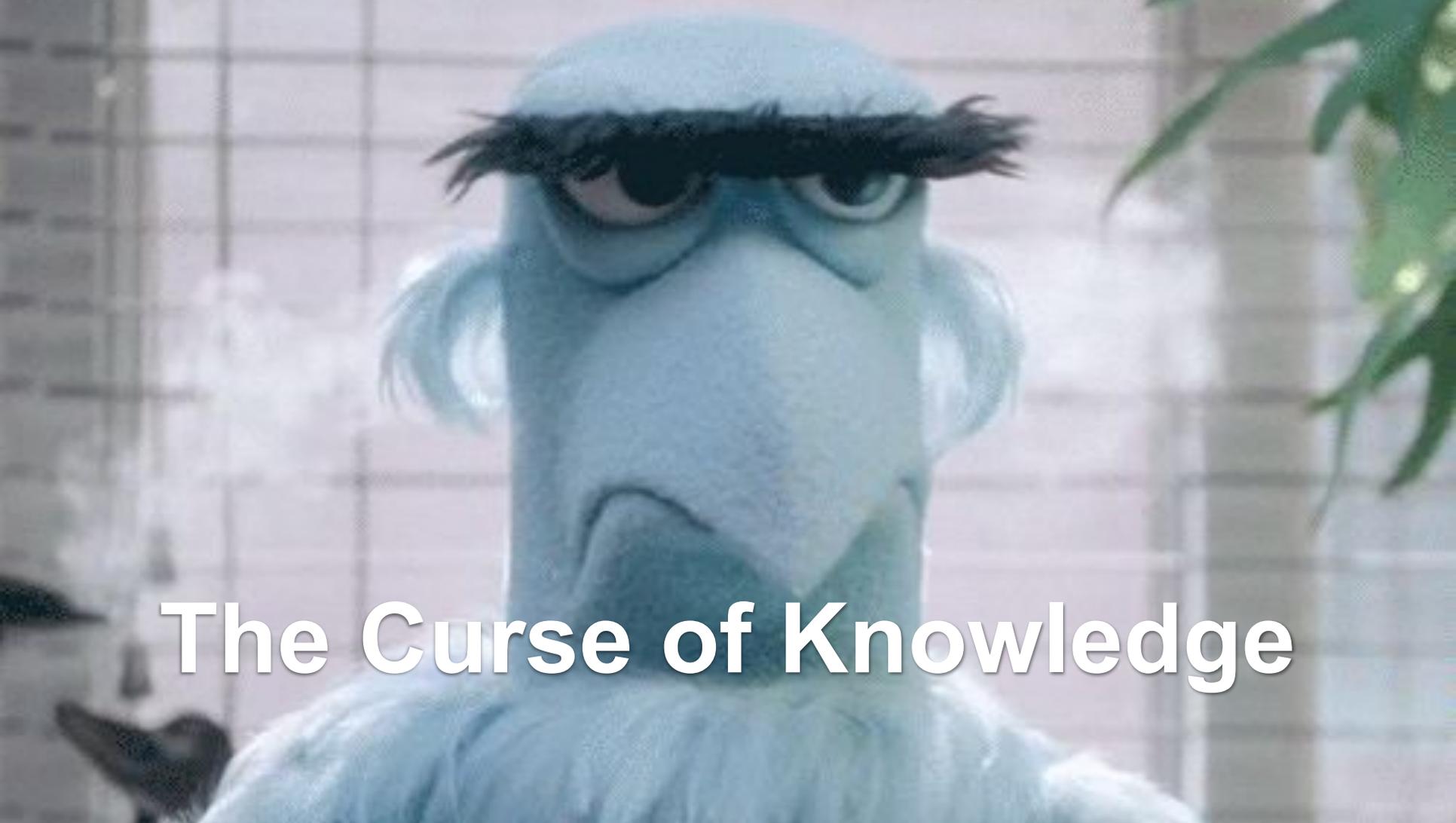
# Charlie Strong's Core Values

1. No drugs
2. No guns
3. No stealing
4. No earrings
5. Attend class
6. Treat women with respect



Challenge #2:  
**Gen Z hates  
inauthenticity—and they  
can spot it a mile away.**





# The Curse of Knowledge



**Hillary Clinton** ✓

@HillaryClinton



How does your student loan debt make you feel?  
Tell us in 3 emojis or less.



6,879



5,786



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**HEY BAE INTERN! <3**

Hi! I am Kim, a Microsoft University Recruiter. My crew is coming down from our HQ in Seattle to hang with you and the crowd of bay area interns at [Internapalooza](#) on 7/11.

**BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY**, we're throwing an exclusive after party the night of the event at our San Francisco office and you're invited! There will be hella noms, lots of dranks, the best beats and just like last year, we're breaking out the Yammer beer pong tables!

**HELL YES TO GETTING LIT ON A MONDAY NIGHT.**



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The Solution:  
**Talk to Gen Z seriously—  
and let them talk to  
each other.**





**truth  
initiative**

INSPIRING  
TOBACCO-FREE  
LIVES

About 440,000 Americans die each year from diseases related to smoking.  
90% of them started as teen smokers.



**truth**  
THE TRUTH.COM



PHILIP MORRIS  
INTERNATIONAL



-66%

+36%

**Gen Z'ers are confident  
and optimistic—and they  
trust their peers.**





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# Leverage User-Generated Content

#acgatorgram

3,863 posts

TOP POSTS



Challenge #3:  
**Gen Z doesn't love  
tradition.**





ABOUT

ADMISSIONS

ACADEMICS

RESEARCH

HOOSIER LIFE

CAREER PREP

ALUMNI & GIVING

NEWS & EVENTS



News

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[IUPUI, IU Bloomington ranked among best colleges for student voting](#)



[Themester 2018 explores the relationship between humans and nonhuman animals](#)



[Guest filmmakers and directors including Michael Schultz are highlights of IU Cinema's fall season](#)





I am a prospective student ∨ interested in exploring information about admission ∨ and majors & minors ∨ at Southwestern.

CUSTOMIZE THIS PAGE

The Solution:  
**Be unexpected and  
bold—and tell stories.**





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**Unexpected messages work  
only if they're surprising  
*and* interesting.**



Pop Quiz:

# Who is the hero of the stories your school tells?



# 3 Plots that Gen Z Love



## David v. Goliath

Your hero faces an impossible challenge —and defeats it.



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# 3 Plots that Gen Z Love

## Odd Couples

Your hero develops a relationship that spans a boundary—e.g., race, gender, class, etc.—to achieve something great.



# 3 Plots that Gen Z Love



## The MacGyver

Your hero uses ingenuity or innovation to develop a novel solution.

# Visual Design

Gardiner Rhoderick, Creative Director  
UT-Austin

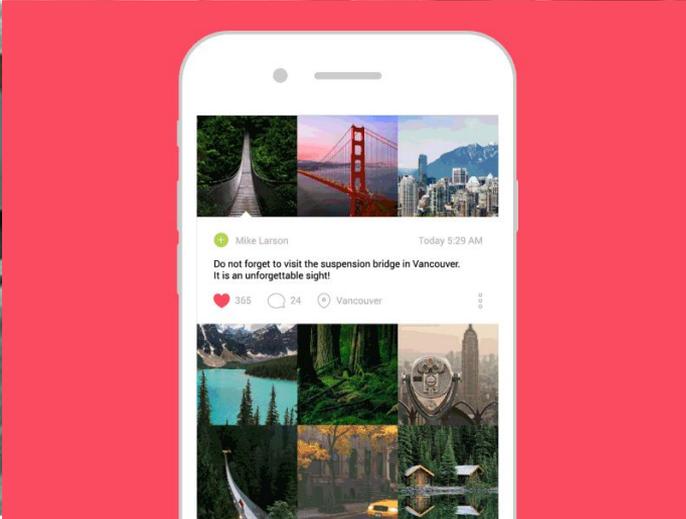
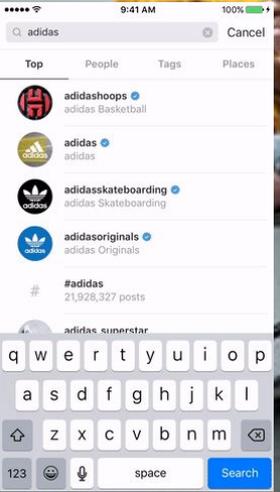
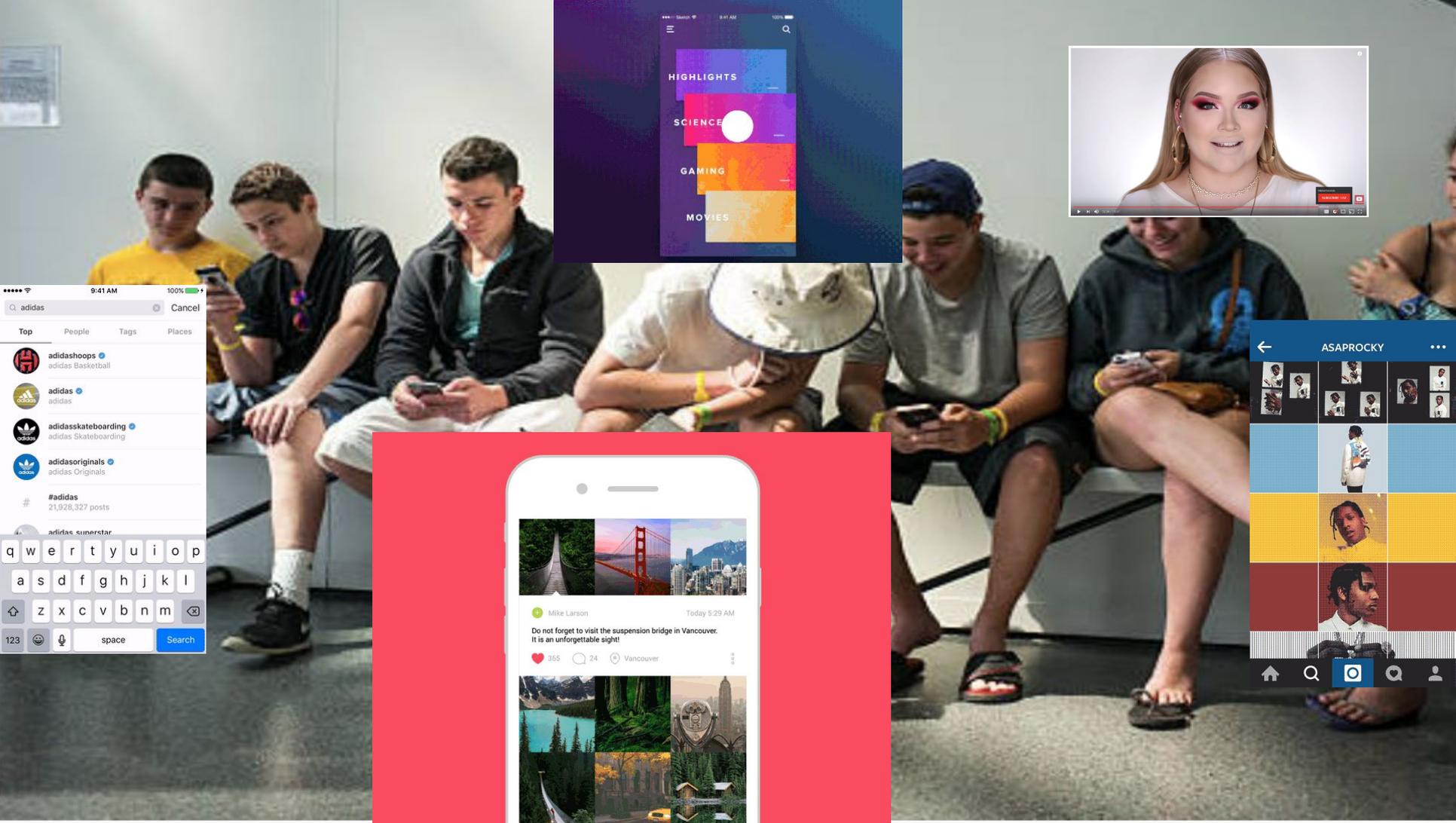
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# What Today Looks Like for a 15 Year-Old



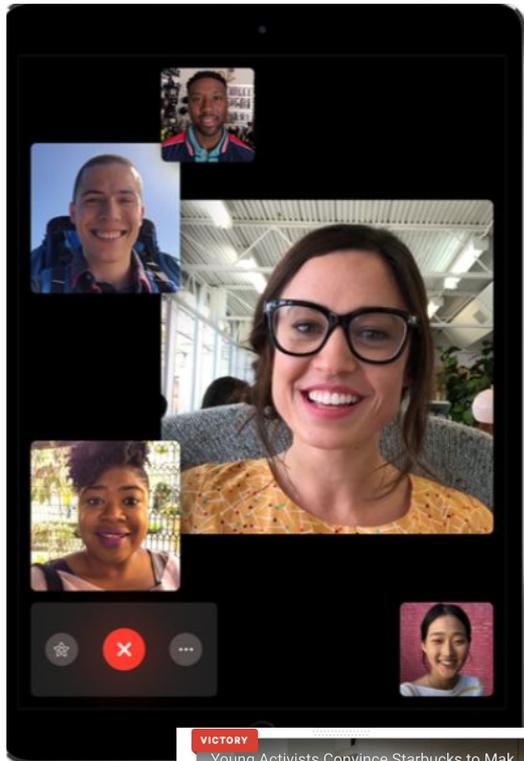


**The internet is not  
an innovation.**

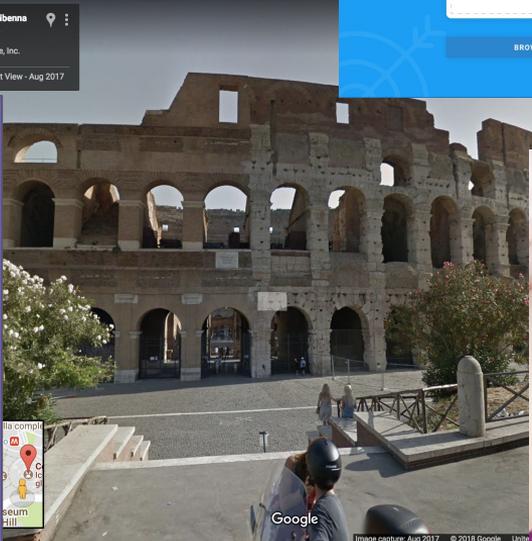
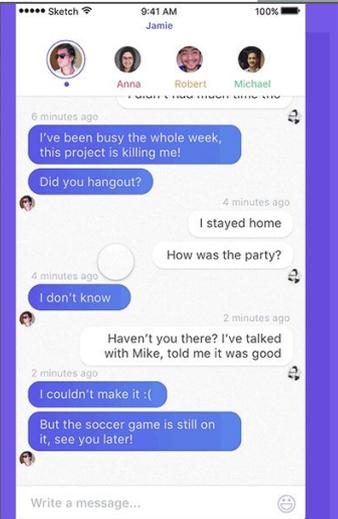
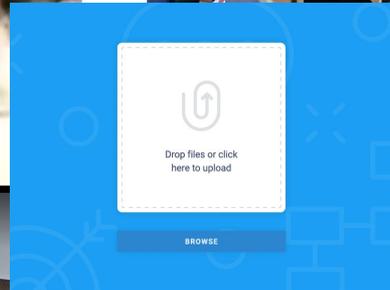




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- reddit r/worldnews
- A groundbreaking new technology, rhino horn and other ill...  
Posted by u/ManiaforBeates 13 hours ago  
207 Comments Share
- The giraffe population is down, but giraffe parts is booming. A new...  
scmp.com/news/w...  
Posted by u/anutensil 14 hours ago  
934 Comments Share
- Get a better look at those lectures. You can now enjoy every minute of campus...  
an additional \$100.  
PROMOTED u/BestBuy\_Official 11 days ago from www.bestbuy.com  
www.bestbuy.com  
Comment Share Save
- Great Barrier Reef headed for 'massive death'  
australia.cnn.com/...  
Posted by u/maxwell...  
529 Comments
- Dalai Lama Tells 'all young people' to...  
Posted by u/7hr0w4...  
171 Comments
- Angela Merkel Tells 'all young people' to...  
theguardian.com/v...  
Posted by u/Maniafor...  
438 Comments



Well made online experiences are now the *minimum* cost of entry for marketing to young audiences.



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**Culture is global and  
socially conscious.**



“

Race, religion, sexuality, gender identity and anything differing from what has so long been deemed normal are all topics we don't write off, with a revolutionary 37 percent and 21 percent not identifying as 100 percent straight or 100 percent one gender, respectively.”



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Elena Quartararo, age 17

56 % consider themselves to be socially conscious, while 50% state knowing a brand is socially conscious influences their purchase decisions.



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#MeToo

I'M WITH HER

**The #conversation  
is constant**



What not to do:



# Gen Z hates advertising

- 82 % skip ads
- Over **HALF** use ad blocking software
- Media savvy and highly skeptical of advertising



# Advertising today, done well:



A screenshot of a tweet from Netflix US (@netflix) dated April 13, 2018. The tweet text reads: "well its on there now if u wanna ruin it for everyone, neil". It features a quote from Neil deGrasse Tyson (@neiltyson) who says: "Was ready to watch the 1998 film Armageddon (in which the laws of physics are optional) but it's nowhere on Netflix or iTunes". The tweet has 22,600 retweets and 118,118 likes. The interface includes a 'Follow' button, a dropdown arrow, and icons for replies, retweets, likes, direct messages, and a shield icon.

**Netflix US** @netflix

well its on there now if u wanna ruin it for everyone, neil

**Neil deGrasse Tyson** @neiltyson  
Was ready to watch the 1998 film Armageddon (in which the laws of physics are optional) but it's nowhere on Netflix or iTunes

5:16 PM - 13 Apr 2018

22,600 Retweets 118,118 Likes

923 23K 118K



Don't Create Ads, Create Value



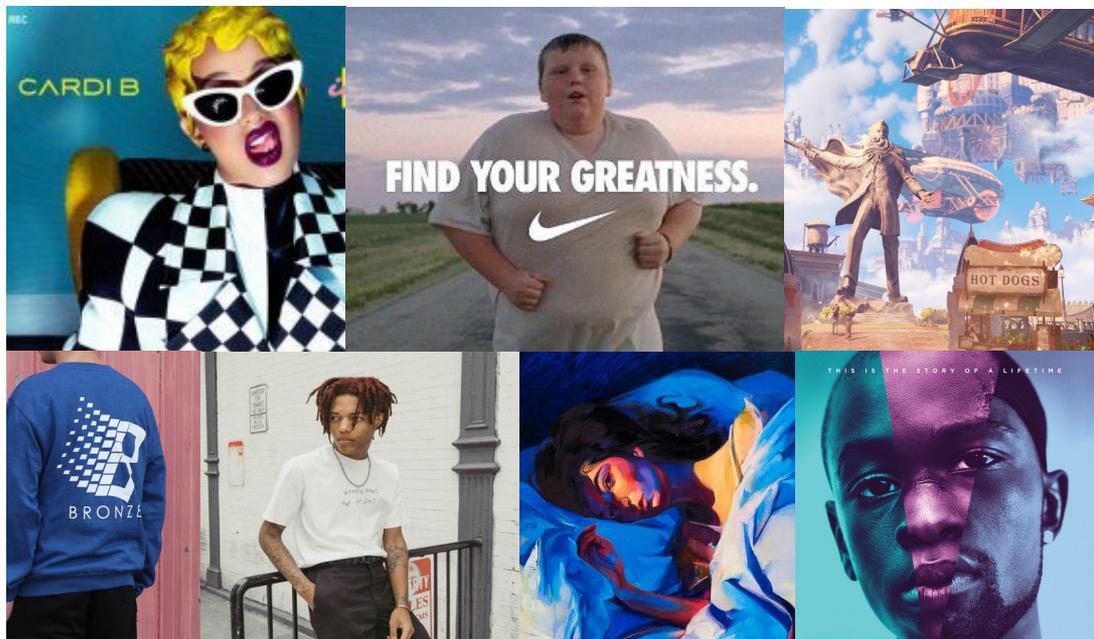
MIGHTY  
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# Visual Trends in Marketing to Gen Z

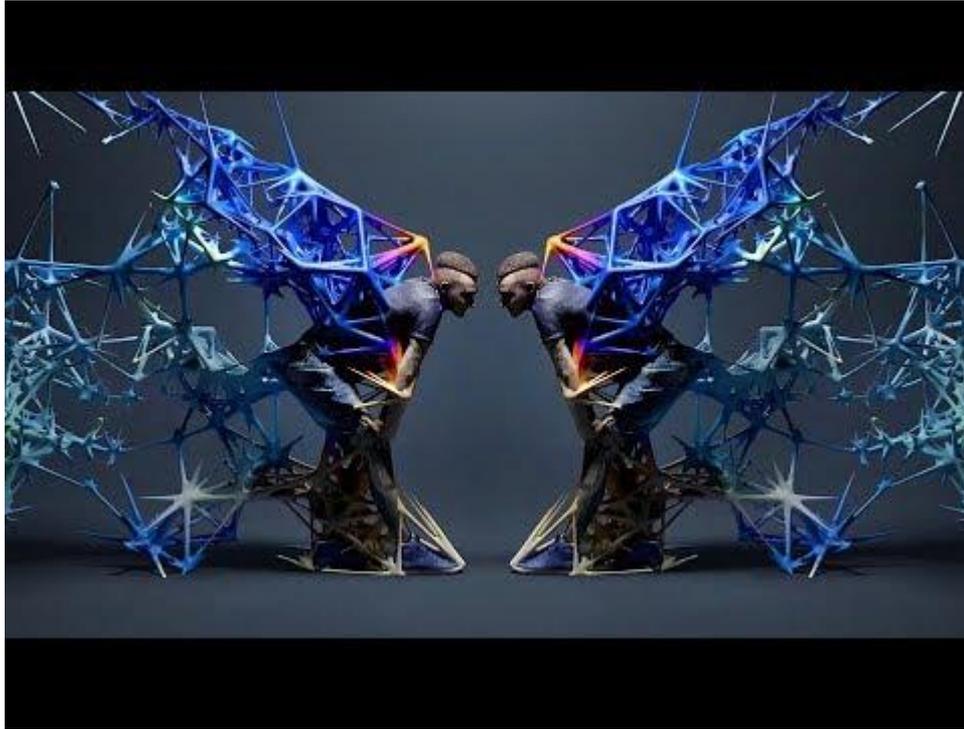


# Watch trends in their favorite spaces:

- Music
- Apparel
- Sport
- Gaming/Film
- Celebrity/YouTube

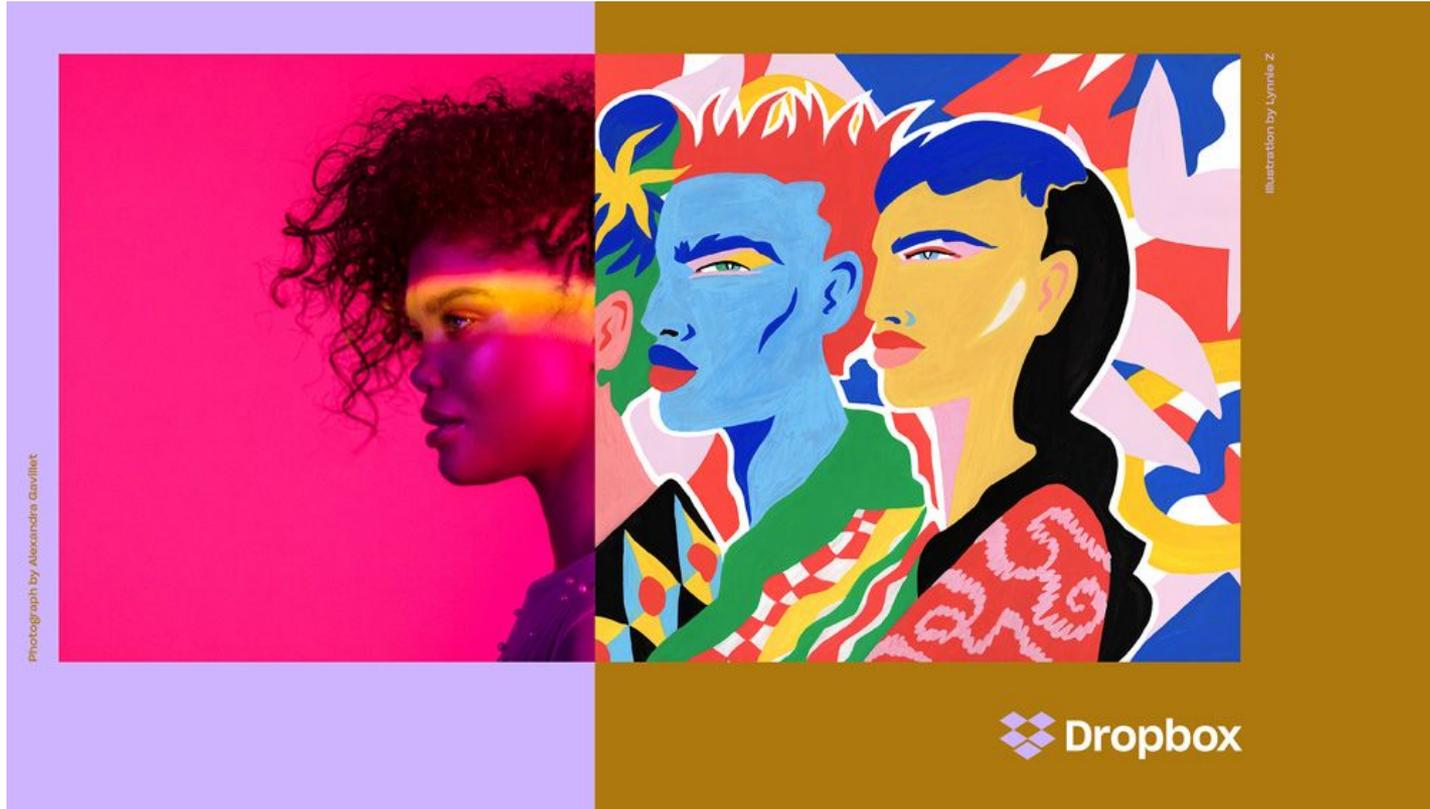


# Dropbox - “Co Creation”

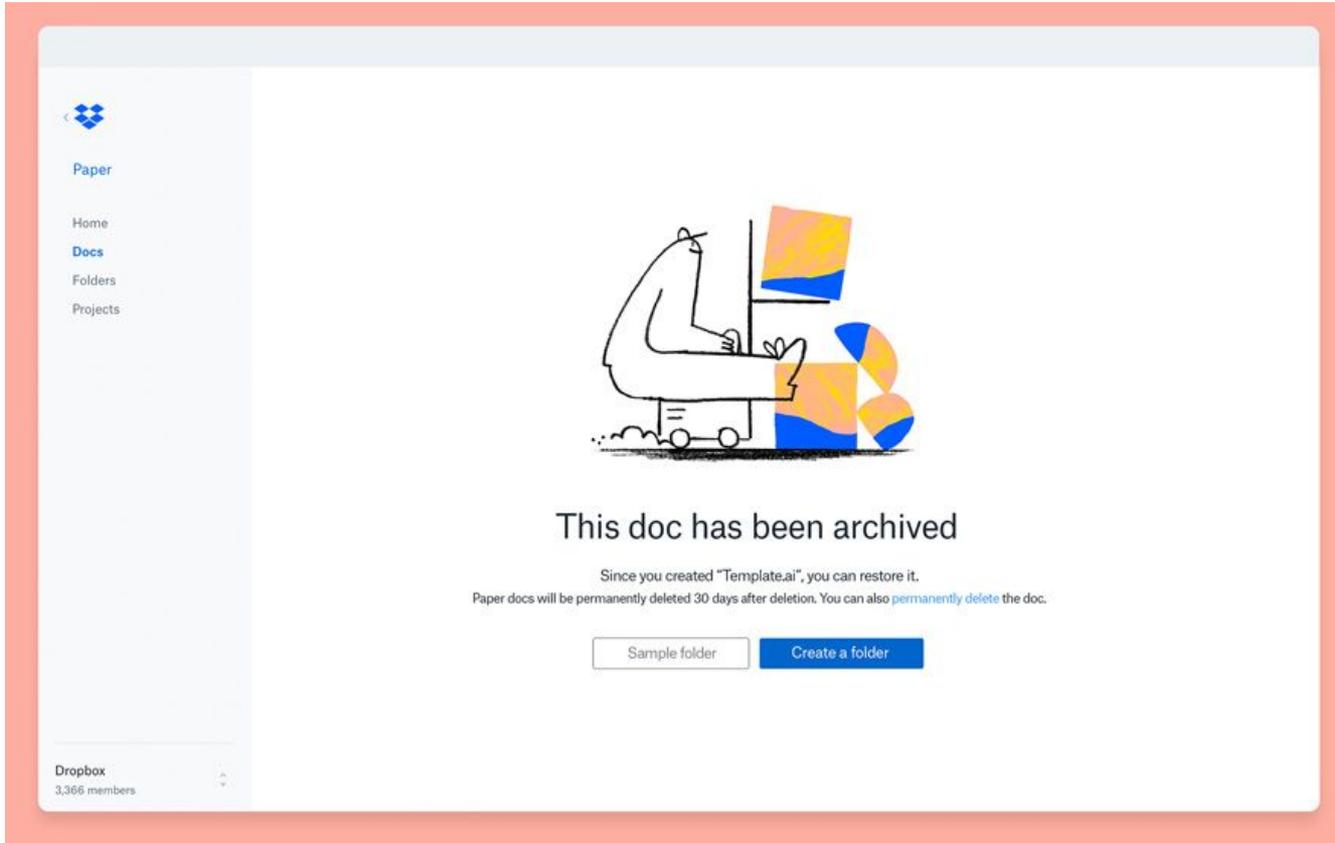


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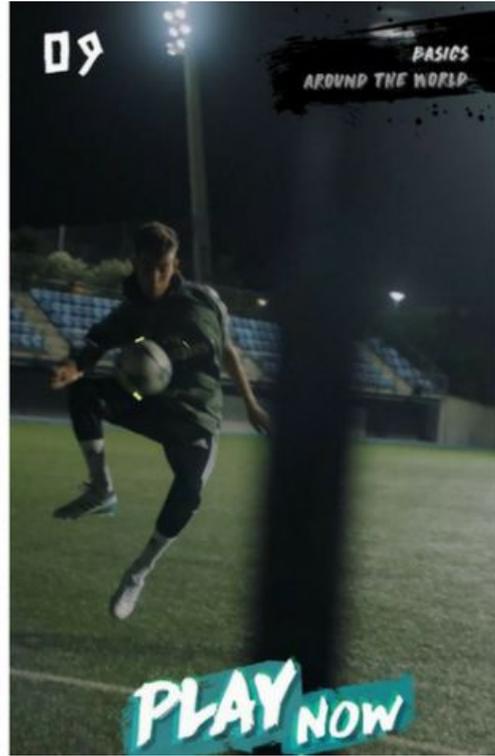
# Dropbox - “Co-Creation”



# Dropbox - “Co-Creation”



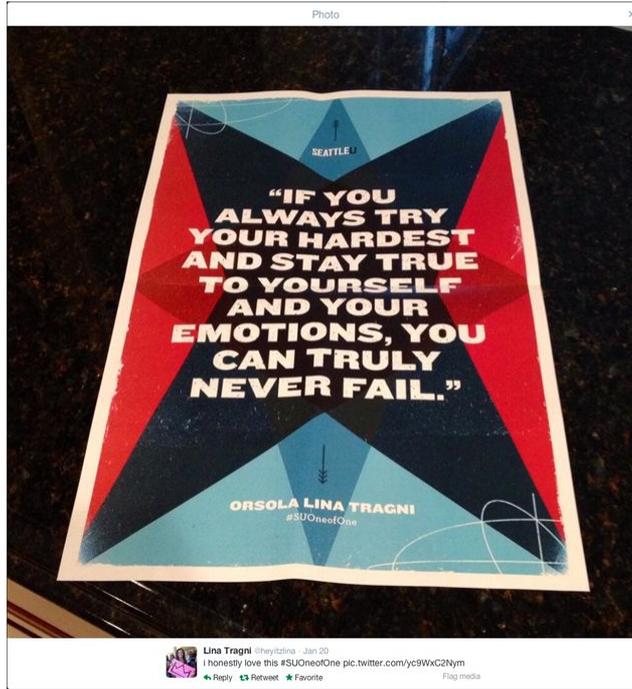
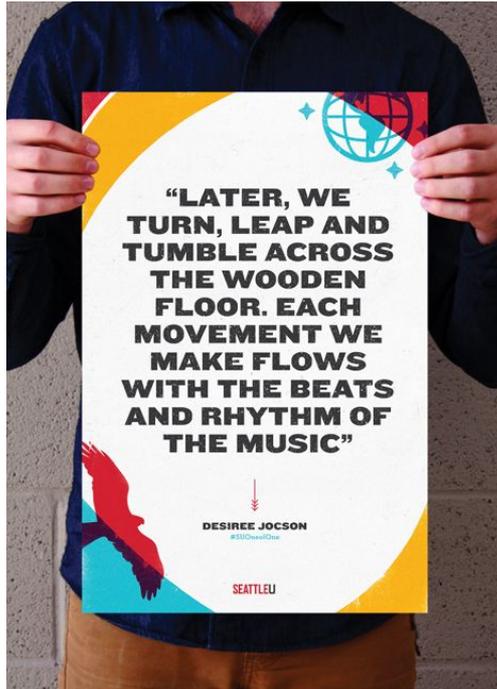
# Adidas - Snapchat Stories, Ad game



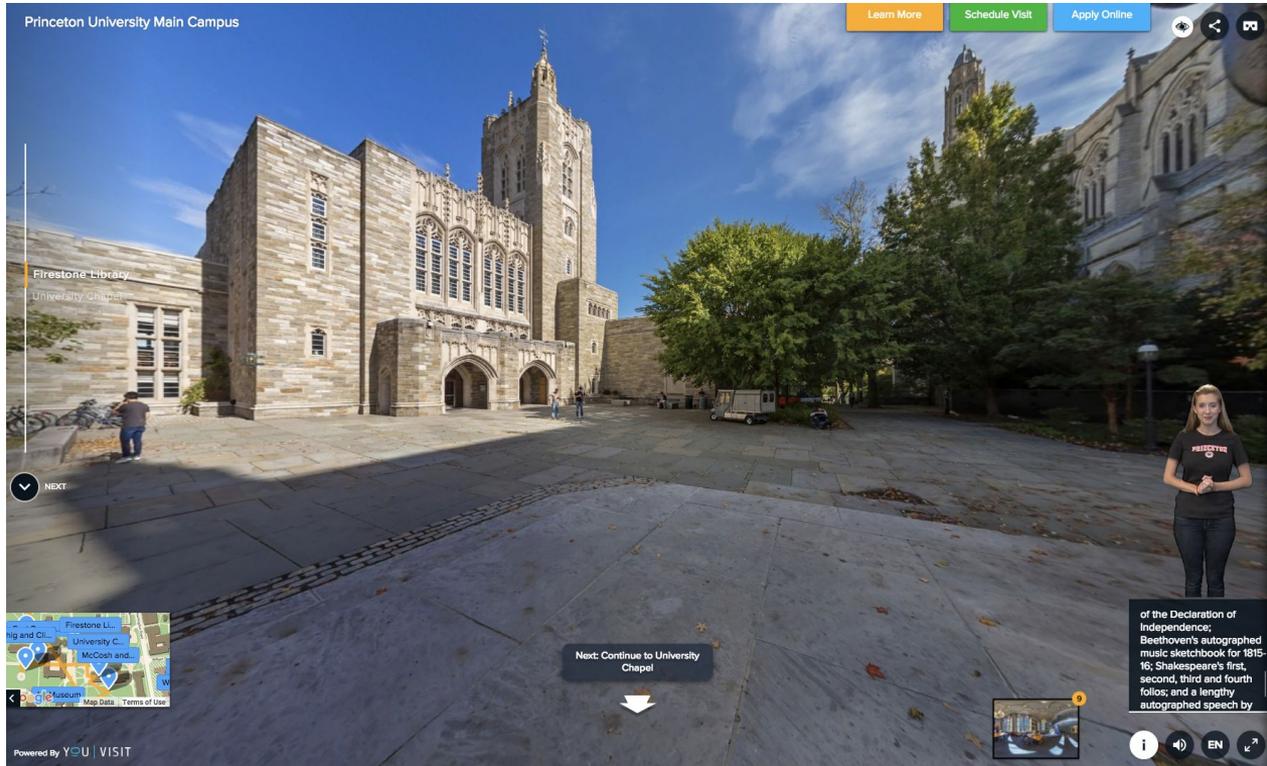
# What does this look like for universities?



# SeattleU – Acceptance Letters

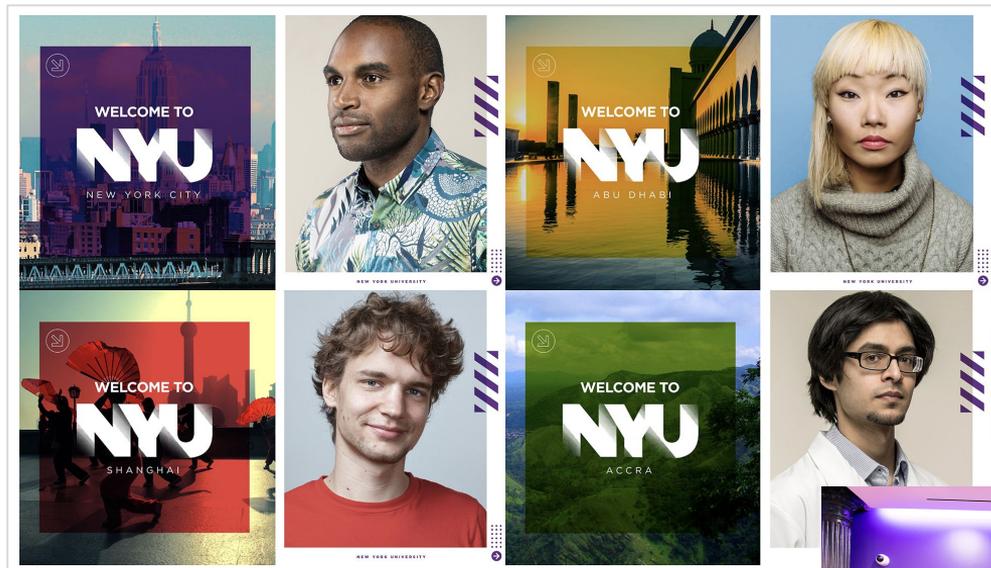


# VR Tours



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# NYU 2018 Admissions Campaign



# Summing it Up



# In Summary

## **User Research**

Bake research into your culture and build user journeys

## **SEO & Content Structure**

To get found by more prospective students, elevate your academic pages in your site hierarchy

## **Messaging**

Simplify, emphasize consistency, and be bold (but not gimmicky)

## **Visual Design**

Great design isn't a luxury for Gen Z; it's the cost of admission



# 3 Final Takeaways



#1:

Higher-ed marketing is going to get more expensive to perform at a high level. Which means that your investment *now* will pay dividends later (when your competitors are trying in vain to catch up).



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#2:

Websites will continue to matter.  
But their design, modularity, mobile-friendliness,  
and findability will matter *even more*.



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#3:

Digital natives aren't *that* different from millennials. But they're different in ways that make them a great audience for digital technology.



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# Thank You!

Get the Slides:

**[mightycitizen.com/ihem](https://mightycitizen.com/ihem)**

Bonus tools and templates including:

- Website Evaluation Kit
- Request for Proposals Template

**[mightycitizen.com/tools](https://mightycitizen.com/tools)**

# Thank You!

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All that said...

We recommend *not* making radical transformations to your core identity to cater to digital natives.

Because it's *very hard* to predict the future.



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