Who is Campus Sonar?

We’re a social listening agency dedicated to higher education.

We find and analyze online conversation, providing insights that you can use to better understand your brand, audience, or a topic of conversation.

So that you can manage your reputation, build meaningful relationships, and work more strategically.
Who we are

Liz
World traveling (currently grounded), live tweeting, vegetable gardening, higher ed enthusiast

Steve
Donut loving, Seinfeld gif tweeting, social listening evangelist. Can often be found running (to burn off the donuts.)
How did we get here?

- **Sunday, March 8:** Campus Sonar Research Manager Amber Sandall suggests we could be helping the industry understand the coronavirus impact.

- **Tuesday, March 10:** Amber runs a first draft of a Boolean query. It pulls in roughly 50,000 daily mentions.

- **Wednesday, March 11:** Campus Sonar publishes first briefing, analyzing conversation since January, including more than 500,000 conversations from March 4-10.

- **Thursday, March 12:** Campus Sonar decides to continue publishing briefings twice each week, on Tuesdays and Fridays.

- **Friday, April 3:** Campus Sonar shifts to weekly industry briefings (Tuesdays).
Methodology

- Industry conversation about higher education + coronavirus
- United States, Reddit, YouTube
- Segmentation:
  - Higher Ed-Focused
  - Campus Audiences
We can’t see everything, but we see plenty

Included

● Social platforms, like Twitter and YouTube
● Forums, like Reddit and College Confidential
● Blogs and Tumblr
● News outlets

Not included

● Social platforms, like Linkedin, Facebook, and Instagram, unless auto-shared to Twitter
● TikTok and Snapchat
● Any social platforms marked as private

@campussonar
Beyond your inbox

When you’re dialed into your own conversation—especially in times of chaos—it can feel personally and professionally overwhelming.

There’s value and comfort in understanding the effect of a pandemic on the entire industry.
What can you learn from 6 million conversations about COVID-19?
Weekly COVID-19 & Higher Education Volume

Weekly Conversation By Higher Ed Focus

- March 16
- March 23
- March 30
- April 6
- April 13
- April 20

- All Mentions
- Higher Ed-Focused
Where is this conversation taking place?
Where is this conversation taking place?
How much of the conversation is negative?

Negative Sentiment Percentage by Audience

- Higher Ed-Focused
- Campus Audiences: First-Person

Briefing Date:
- March 13
- March 17
- March 20
- March 24
- March 27
- March 31
- April 3
- April 7
- April 14
- April 21
- April 28
How much of the conversation is positive?

Positive Sentiment Percentage by Audience

- Higher Ed-Focused
- Campus Audiences: First-Person

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<tr>
<th>Briefing Date</th>
<th>March 13</th>
<th>March 17</th>
<th>March 20</th>
<th>March 24</th>
<th>March 27</th>
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Family and Friends Find Moments of Joy

Family and friends expressed joy in 31% of their posts, while 34% expressed sadness.

41% of student mentions expressed anger and 28% express sadness.

Source: April 21 Briefing
Current Students
Sharing in places you may not expect

- Yes, students are on Tumblr
- Reddit is consistently a source, not just in college forums
- Twitter is short snippets and memes
Students are consistently sad and angry.

@campussonar • 17
Finances, mental health, and basic needs are a concern

- Lost student employment or jobs in their campus community
- Lack of access to campus mental health services
- Lost income of family can result in food insecurity
- Not having a safe place to live
Personal stories resonate and drive word-of-mouth
The Online Class Memes Matter

- From March 24–26, 67% of the conversations we identified were about the transition to online learning (n=324,490). (March 28 Briefing)
- The phrase “online classes” appeared in 45% of those conversations (n=144,950).
- Within “online classes” mentions, 6 memes accounted for more than a third of the mentions.
- The March 27 Briefing details the top 6 memes about online classes.
  - I’m only covering two in this presentation, because they’re not all exactly “safe for work.”
Meme, Defined

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Definition of meme

1. : an idea, behavior, style, or usage that spreads from person to person within a culture
2. : an amusing or interesting item (such as a captioned picture or video) or genre of items that is spread widely online, especially through social media

Source: Merriam-Webster
Meme Formats

“Caption This”
An image or video clip posted with “caption this” or “bomboclaat,” then people share a caption putting it into context with their experience or beliefs.

Viral Tweet
While not originally intended to be a meme, some text-only tweets become incredibly popular and go viral, essentially reaching meme status.
A Thousand Emails About Classes

Teachers: *sends a thousand emails about online classes*

Me:

Video: A toddler is already unhappy. She's crying. In an attempt to amuse herself with a nerf gun, she accidentally shoots herself in the face with the foam projectile, increasing her crying. Multiple levels of sadness and angst are expressed in just six seconds.
More Confusing than “Actual School”

Is it me or is online classes more confusing than actual school

1:40 AM · Mar 25, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

46.4K Retweets  210.3K Likes
Admitted Students
Anxiety and sadness reign supreme

Thanks to COVID-19, an already stressful experience has become even more so.

- Students are still mourning the loss of their high school milestones.
- Students are struggling to make a college decision without the benefit of campus visits and without understanding the structure of fall semester.
- Students are increasingly pondering the idea of a gap year.
Where do you turn when you can’t turn to campus?

Deciding between UIUC, U-M, GaTech Without Physical Visit Opportunities

Posted by u/ungabungamonkey 20 days ago

Student
Parents have questions too.

My daughter wants to go to Loyola New Orleans. She was accepted. Need input on the area.

I'm a single mother in Southern California, though I am originally from North Carolina coastal (way long ago). I'm wondering what your thoughts on the area around the school are. Easy to get to from airport, decent hotels around? What about nearby apartments? Safety? It's possible I'll look to rent or buy a small place nearby (she's my only and I'm single so I'll probably visit a lot.)

We are planning on visiting hopefully after the Mardi Gras activities. I'm guessing we will spend most of our time at the school and will drive through the main city area but if you have any idea of what we should look for I would appreciate that. I am not into the party life and my daughter doesn't drink though I am aware she has smoked pot on occasion. I welcome PMs too.
Student influence has grown

Maggie 3 days ago
I was accepted but for my second choice major. Would I be able to take the classes required for my first choice major?? Then switch to first choice??

monserrat hinojosa 1 week ago
Can we join the honors college during our sophomore yr or freshman Spring semester? Because I'm planning on entering this fall but I haven't made up my mind about my major, so I'm just wondering.

Leonel Salas 3 weeks ago
How is the Diversity here? I'm planning to transfer here in the Fall? And how's the dining halls (or food)
Increased interest in gap years

Weekly Gap Year Mentions

Week Of
- Gap Year
Increased interest in gap years

Discussion: Do I go to school next year or do a gap year?

r/ApplyingToCollege • Posted by u/zbeast300 HS Senior 5 days ago

College Questions: How will gap years/gap year requests work this year?

r/ApplyingToCollege • Posted by u/Oooooontz 5 days ago

Discussion: What are your thoughts on taking a gap year because of this pandemic?

r/ApplyingToCollege • Posted by u/thegoatss 1 day ago

Discussion: Is anyone here thinking about taking a gap year? What can I do during a gap year?

r/ApplyingToCollege • Posted by u/happysupersushi HS Senior 19 hours ago
But moments of joy still exist

As students and parents recover from the shock of the pandemic, they’re finding moments of joy (and appreciation) in the admissions process.

- Students and parents continue to celebrate their accomplishments.
- Mirror their excitement. There’s power in your community.
As shock wears off, moments of joy emerge

I got accepted to the University of Hawaii at Manoa!!! :D

Margarita Engle @margaritapoet · Mar 20
What was the highlight of your day? I listened to a mockingbird serenade. #birdsongs #SocialDistanacing #mindfulness

Gaby @thegreatgabsie
Replying to @margaritapoet
My son was accepted to his dream college, the University of Notre Dame!

4 Likes
Go where your admits are

Schools are increasingly turning to digital communities during this pandemic.

But prospects, admitted, and enrolled students are building their own communities organically, beyond the ecosystems you’re building.

Don’t be afraid to go where your students are.
Marketing is a team sport. Build your bench.
What does this mean for you?
The TL;DR of this presentation

The Students are Not All Right

- Your current students are consistently angry and sad.
  - The source of that anger may not necessarily be you.
- Students often communicate their frustrations through memes.
- Accepted students (and their parents) are struggling with how to proceed as deposit deadlines approach.
- Students are still finding moments of joy. Mirroring their excitement is low hanging fruit. (*I hate myself for typing that phrase.*)
You Can Do This Yourself

(Sort Of)
Try it yourself!

Twitter: 
“Campus Name” AND (visit OR apply OR applied)

Or

(“Campus Name” AND “online classes”)

Reddit, Tik Tok, and YouTube:

Search for your campus name or keywords of interest

Don’t ignore the comments
Free Software Options to Get Started

- Twitter search (advanced)
- Tweetdeck
- Hootsuite free
- Instagram search
- Follower Wonk
- Mention
- Social Mention
- IFTTT

We’ve got blog posts for that:

- Social Listening on a Budget
- 5 Free Social Listening Tools for Higher Ed
- Common Questions Students Ask on Reddit and How to Respond
Thank you!

Stay in touch

@campussonar

Liz Gross
@LizGross144

Steve App
@StephenApp

lgross@campussonar.com
sapp@campussonar.com

campussonar.com