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Collegeboard.org UX/IA  
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Table of Contents

**Table of Contents**

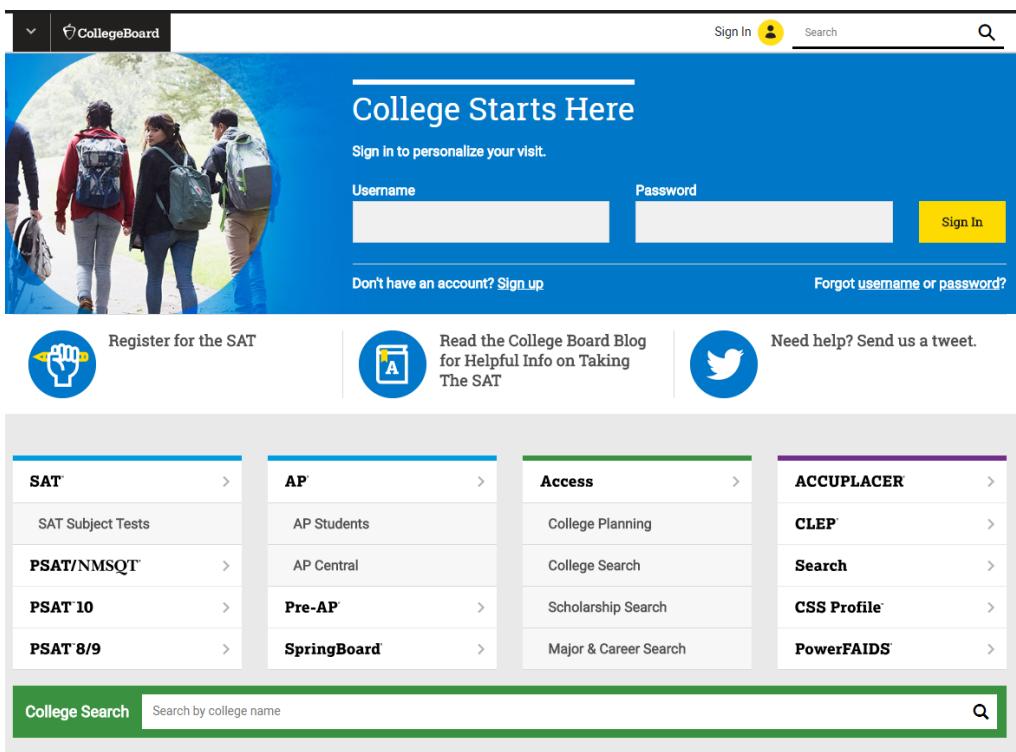
Table of Contents.....	1
------------------------	---

Website Review – collegeboard.org .....	5
BUSINESS INTENT / CONTENT.....	6
USER'S INTENT .....	6
Students .....	6
Parents .....	7
Educational Professionals .....	7
Public.....	7
Personas.....	7
Galchobar Rice .....	7
Rena Allaire .....	8
Flap Nicarumbo.....	9
Competitive Analysis.....	10
Name / URL.....	10
College Board .....	10
McGraw Hill.....	11
Pearson .....	11
Goal / Purpose .....	11
Findings .....	12
Overview of Products / Services .....	12
Screenshot - McGraw Hill's Digital Integration.....	13
Screenshot - Pearson's Professional Services.....	13
Screenshot - College Board's Scholarship Search .....	13
Findings .....	14
Traffic and Demographics <sup>2</sup> .....	14
College Board Demographics:.....	15
McGraw Hill Demographics: .....	15
Pearson Demographics: .....	16
Findings .....	16
Organization.....	17
Findings .....	17
Labeling.....	17
Navigation.....	18
Search.....	18

Findings .....	19
Site Map.....	19
Tree Assessment .....	20
Findings .....	22
Navigation Stress Test.....	23
Test Results .....	23
Findings .....	27
Wireframes .....	28
Home Page.....	28
SAT Suite of Assessments Landing Page .....	29
Big Future Landing Page.....	30
Generic Article .....	31
Search Results .....	32
Heuristic Evaluation .....	33
Heuristics and Process .....	33
Results of Evaluation.....	33
3 – Help and Documentation .....	33
2- Match between system and real world .....	33
2 – Help and Documentation .....	34
2 – Consistency and Standards .....	34
2 – Error Prevention, Consistency and standards.....	34
1 – Consistency and Standards .....	35
1 - Consistency and Standards .....	36
1 – Error prevention, Visibility of System Status .....	37
2 - Error Prevention.....	38
1 - Error Prevention.....	38
1 - Flexibility and Ease of Use.....	38
0 – Recognition Rather than Recall.....	39
High Level Site Map.....	40
Introduction .....	40
Reorganization – Home Page.....	40
Header.....	41
Section Navigation .....	42

Secondary Navigation .....	42
Footer.....	43
Reorganization –SAT Suite of Assessments .....	44
SAT Suite of Assessments Main Menu.....	44
Changes – Search .....	45
Labeling Recommendations.....	45
Introduction .....	45
Results.....	45
Conclusion.....	46
Revised Wireframes .....	46
Home Page .....	47
Access/Big Future/College Planning .....	48
Search.....	49
Appendix A.....	50
Changelog .....	50
Footnotes .....	50
Appendix B .....	50
Tree Testing – A Lesson in Paying Attention.....	50
Test A Results .....	51
Findings .....	51
Test Result Issues .....	52
Appendix C .....	52
Visibility of system status.....	52
Match between system and the real world.....	52
User control and freedom.....	52
Consistency and standards .....	52
Error prevention.....	53
Recognition rather than recall .....	53
Flexibility and efficiency of use .....	53
Aesthetic and minimalist design .....	53
Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors.....	53
Help and documentation .....	53

## Website Review – [collegeboard.org](https://collegeboard.org)



The screenshot shows the homepage of collegeboard.org. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a dropdown menu, the CollegeBoard logo, a "Sign In" button with a user icon, a search bar, and a magnifying glass icon.

The main header features a large blue banner with the text "College Starts Here" and a photo of three students walking. Below the banner, there is a "Sign in to personalize your visit." link, two input fields for "Username" and "Password", and a yellow "Sign In" button.

Below the sign-in area, there are links for "Don't have an account? Sign up" and "Forgot username or password?".

On the left side, there are three calls-to-action: "Register for the SAT" with a hand icon, "Read the College Board Blog for Helpful Info on Taking The SAT" with a blog icon, and "Need help? Send us a tweet." with a Twitter icon.

The main content area contains four columns of links:

- SAT** > SAT Subject Tests, PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT 10, PSAT 8/9
- AP** > AP Students, AP Central, Pre-AP, SpringBoard®
- Access** > College Planning, College Search, Scholarship Search, Major & Career Search
- ACCUPLACER** > CLEP®, Search, CSS Profile®, PowerFAIDS®

At the bottom, there is a green footer bar with a "College Search" button, a search input field "Search by college name", and a magnifying glass icon.

## BUSINESS INTENT / CONTENT

"The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity."<sup>1</sup>

The focus of the College Board's website is to act as a support platform for their tests and classes, and provide students with information about how to obtain their secondary education goals. This content includes but is not limited to:

- Information and materials relating to tests and classes supported or administered by the College Board (SAT/AP)
- Resources and information pertaining to colleges, careers, and scholarships
- A personalized portal for students to plan for and learn about college, review their tests/classes, and access general information catered to their interests relating to higher education

The secondary purpose of the website is to provide information about the non-profit, and showcase the findings from tests and classes. This content includes but is not limited to:

- General information about the College Board (practices, mission, news)
- College Board social / public presence (careers, events, membership)
- Reports and findings from research conducted by the College Board and its partners
- Promote College Board programs and materials, such as SpringBoard

## USER'S INTENT

Users fall into four categories:

1. Students
2. Parents
3. Educational Professionals
4. General Public

### Students

My assessment is students would make up the largest portion of visitors to this site. The site appears to be catered to the student, with interests relating to the College Board at the top and front and center of the website. A student may have any number of reasons for accessing the site:

- Learn about planning for college
  - How to apply for college
  - How to pick a career or college
  - How to pay for college
- Register for a test (SAT/PSAT)
- Access or purchase study materials for testing
- Learn about advanced placement classes
- Access their scores on tests and in AP classes
- Set up and access a personal portal to manage the previous items

## **Parents**

Parents of prospective college students and AP students also be a large group of visitors to this site. Parents use this site to assess their child's advancement and status in tests and classes, as well as learn about the College Board, what they do, and how they influence their child throughout their education. Parents may also access this site with their child, helping them to work through financial aid forms, or simply learn about college and career options alongside their children.

## **Educational Professionals**

Research findings would be of interest to this group. Practice materials available to purchase and sample practice materials would also be of interest depending on their level of involvement with helping students prepare for the tests. AP teachers would be interested in this site for the same reasons. General curiosity would also be a driving force in why this group would visit this site, to see any changes or news regarding tests and classes from the news room. Events would also be an area of interest, in case of any learning or informative sessions being hosted by the College Board. Lastly, careers would be a highlight in case an educator would like to become part of the College Board's influence over education.

## **Public**

The general public's interest in this site I believe would be more of a curiosity driven visit than the practical reasons for the other three groups. Visitors are interested in why the College Board exists, who they are, where they came from and how they have so much influence over American education. The about, news, careers and events sections I believe would be most visited by this group. This set of visitors would have the most organic experience on this site, letting their thoughts and findings drive their navigation and experience rather than practical or specific informational needs.

## Personas

### **Galchobar Rice**

Male High School Student; Hutchinson, KS; Age 16



#### **About:**

- Plays sports – varsity baseball and winter track
- Active in the student government
- Likes: Pizza, playing pick-up hockey with his friends, horror movies
- Dislikes: Sushi, chemistry, listening to his younger sister practice tuba

#### **Currently:**

- Needs to take his SATs but doesn't know when or how to start
- Already thinking about college – has an idea of where he wants to go, but
- Hoping for a baseball sports scholarship which will most likely determine where he ends up
- Wants to go into sports medicine or some kind of sports related field
- Parents and teachers both can help him make decisions and navigate the experience
- Computer savvy (as most young people are)

**Would use the website to:**

- Procure study materials
- Look up careers in sports medicine

**Quote:**

"I don't know man, fitting studying for the SATs while baseball season is in full swing is going to end up killing me. No, I'm not being dramatic, it will literally kill me."

**Rena Allaire**

Single mother of two daughters – 11 and 15; Age 43; New York, NY



**About:**

- Works two jobs, doesn't have much free time
- Volunteers at her daughters' schools when she can
- Dedicates as much time as she can to spend with her daughters
- Father has daughters every other weekend
- Likes: Blues, bicycling, camping
- Dislikes: Subways, Midtown Manhattan, chain restaurants

**Currently:**

- Daughter is interested in taking AP history
- Wants to help her get a leg up and start studying
- Daughter doesn't know what she wants to do when she graduates
- Needs assistance helping pay for her daughter's college
- Computer savvy but doesn't have a lot of time to spend looking for resources
- Wants to help her daughter but can't handle everything, wants to show her and let her handle it

**Would use the website to:**

- Find financial aid options
- Find study materials
- Check up on her daughter's grades

**Quote:**

"I am really proud of how self-sufficient my daughters are, but I can't say I don't feel a bit guilty for being there for them more."

## Flap Nicarumbo

Age 45; AP Biology Teacher; Costa Mesa, California



**About:**

- Spends holidays and summer lecturing on education
- Has won several awards for teaching
- Attends as many conferences and events as he can
- Very active in trying to shape the future of education
- Likes: Ping pong, Kung Fu, Cats
- Dislikes: Hot weather, soda, lizards

**Currently:**

- Gets study materials from the website to give to his students
- Helps his students navigate through the website and advocates for its use
- Goes to conferences the College Board holds and talks or listens at them
- Reads their research to help shape his opinions and talks
- Uses the research to advise on school policy, education, and social issues
- Informs his fellow teachers on his findings and advises them

**Uses the site to:**

- Keep up on the latest research trends
- Keep up on the latest conferences to plan schedules around
- Get news about what the College Board is up to

**Quote:**

"These kids never cease to amaze me. One day they're staring at me like I am the devil, then once they learn critical thinking skills they teach ME how to solve problems."

## Competitive Analysis

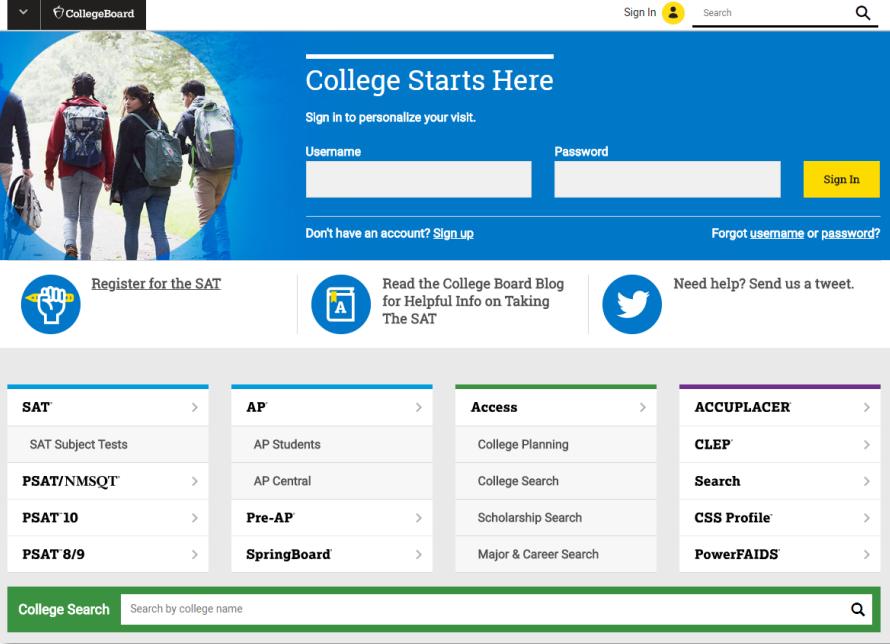
A competitive analysis is used to investigate how sites that provide similar information or are in the same industry compare to the site you are analyzing in categories such as delivery of information, labeling, categorization, traffic, and user experience. I used McGraw Hill and Pearson as sites to compare to the College Board site due to the similarities in information and their relation to each other in the educational field. I used my own observations and alexa.com's tools to analyze the previously mentioned aspects between the three sites.

### Name / URL

The College Board	McGraw Hill	Pearson
-------------------	-------------	---------

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)      [www.mheducation.com](http://www.mheducation.com)      [www.pearson.com](http://www.pearson.com)

### College Board



The screenshot shows the homepage of the College Board website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "SAT", "AP", "Access", "ACCUPLACER", "CLEP", "Search", "CSS Profile", and "PowerFAIDS". Below the navigation bar, there is a search bar with the placeholder text "Search by college name". The main content area features a large blue banner with the text "College Starts Here" and a "Sign in" button. There are also links for "Register for the SAT", "Read the College Board Blog", and "Need help? Send us a tweet". The footer contains links for "SAT Subject Tests", "AP Students", "College Planning", "College Search", "Scholarship Search", "Major & Career Search", and "SpringBoard".

## McGraw Hill

The McGraw Hill website features a prominent banner at the top with the company logo and navigation links for Support & Contact, Sign In, and Cart (0). Below the banner is a large image of a young boy in a field, holding a kite string, symbolizing the potential of learning. The main headline reads "Unlock the Potential". Subtext below the headline states: "Learning creates endless possibilities. We empower educators & students to achieve their goals. Because Learning Changes Everything." Below the banner, there are four main service categories: PreK-12, Higher Ed, Professional, and Global Sites, each with a brief description and icon.

Support & Contact | Sign In | Cart (0)

PreK-12   Higher Ed   About

Search by ISBN, Title, Author, Keyword

# Unlock the Potential

Learning creates endless possibilities.  
We empower educators & students to achieve  
their goals.  
Because Learning Changes Everything.®

PreK-12 Creating a lifelong love of learning for every child. >

Higher Ed Education matters. The future starts with one student. >

Professional Transformative training & insights for today's workplace. >

Global Sites Innovative tools & solutions for learners worldwide. >

Where the **science of learning** meets the **art of teaching**.

## Pearson

The Pearson website has a dark blue header bar with a "United States" dropdown, "Sign In", "Contact Us", and a "Bookbag" icon showing one item. The main navigation includes "Pearson", "PreK-12 Education", "Higher Education", "Industry & Professional", "About Us", and a search bar. The main content area features a photograph of a student in a school hallway using a tablet. Below the photo, the headline "Learning without limits" is displayed, followed by a quote: "Learning is a never-ending road of discovery, and it must meet each person where they are, when they want it." A secondary quote states: "Our educational and assessment tools, content, products, and services are designed to help people make progress in their lives. Because wherever learning flourishes, so do people."

United States

Sign In Contact Us Bookbag 1

Pearson PreK-12 Education Higher Education Industry & Professional | About Us Search

## Learning without limits

Learning is a never-ending road of discovery, and it must meet each person where they are, when they want it.

Our educational and assessment tools, content, products, and services are designed to help people make progress in their lives. Because wherever learning flourishes, so do people.

## Goal / Purpose

The College Board

McGraw Hill

Pearson

- act as a support platform for their tests and classes, and provide students with information about how to obtain their secondary education goals
- provide information about the non-profit, and showcase the findings from tests and classes.
- Promote and sell their products (books, online programs, educational materials) to educators
- Showcase articles about education relating to their company
- Provide research findings
- Promote and sell their products (books, online programs, educational materials) to educators
- Showcase articles about education relating to their company
- Provide research findings

## Findings

All three website's main purpose is to sell and promote their learning materials. However, College Board is different from the other two in that they also provide information about continuing education and finance, and provide resources for parents. McGraw Hill and Pearson's main purpose is to sell and promote their materials without the extra effort of providing resources outside of their product lines.

## Overview of Products / Services

The College Board	McGraw Hill	Pearson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College Prep Tests</li> <li>• Advanced Placement Courses (AP)</li> <li>• College/Career information</li> <li>• Study Materials for tests and courses</li> <li>• Financial Aid Information</li> <li>• Research Information</li> </ul>	<p><i>From their annual report:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Learning Solutions</li> <li>• Custom and Traditional publishing</li> <li>• Core k-12 learning programs</li> <li>• Digital subscription services</li> </ul> <p><i>Also:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research findings</li> <li>• Technical support for clients</li> <li>• Covers K-12, Higher Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Content and platforms</li> <li>• Published learning materials</li> <li>• Assessments such as PARCC</li> <li>• Computer-based testing</li> <li>• Research findings</li> <li>• Educator training and education</li> <li>• Educator assessments and development</li> </ul>

## Screenshot - McGraw Hill's Digital Integration

The screenshot shows a landing page for 'Integration Services'. At the top left is a graphic of three interlocking gears in red, orange, and teal. To the right of the gear icon, the text 'Integration Services' is displayed. Below this, a paragraph of text reads: 'To ease the integration of McGraw-Hill Education digital content into your district's digital ecosystem, we now offer a suite of flexible services designed to ensure end-user access.' At the bottom left of the main content area is a red button with white text that says 'CONTACT YOUR SOLUTION ARCHITECT'. In the background, there is a blurred photograph of a smiling man wearing a plaid shirt.

## Screenshot - Pearson's Professional Services

### Products & Services

#### Assessment

Solutions designed to help organizations measure and make improvements to ensure the success of employees and learners

#### Custom Content & Curriculum Development

Personalized, instructionally sound content and curriculum for any learning environment

#### Custom Training Courseware

Professional development and training resources tailored to your organization's needs

## Screenshot - College Board's Scholarship Search

[Home](#) / [Pay for College](#) / [Grants & Scholarships](#) / [Scholarship Finder](#)

# Scholarship Search

## Welcome

### Personal Information

### Academic Information

### Type Of Award

### Affiliation Information

### Search Results

## Welcome to the College Board's Scholarship Search!

Find scholarships, other financial aid and internships from more than 2,200 programs, totaling nearly **\$6 billion**.

Enter as much information as possible to find the most matches.

Scholarship information is based on the College Board's Annual Survey of Financial Aid Programs.

[Start](#)

### Search for scholarships:

Search by name or keyword [Go](#)

### Browse by sponsor name:

A B C D E F G H I

J K L M N O P Q R

S T U V W X Y Z #

[FOR SCHOLARSHIP](#)

## Findings

The core of their products is the same – educational materials (publications) and assessments. McGraw and Pearson's inventories are a lot larger and broader, covering lower and middle education levels as well as material for educators. They also have a much larger digital presence, offering online learning and technological solutions. College Board only covers secondary and higher education. They also provide online and digital materials, however nowhere near as broad or comprehensive as the other two.

## Traffic and Demographics<sup>2</sup>

The College Board	McGraw Hill	Pearson
Global Rank	Global Rank	Global Rank
1,843	2,061	2,825
Rank in United States	Rank in United States	Rank in United States
537	591	1,196
<i>Bounce Rate</i> 36.80%	<i>Bounce Rate</i> 28.40%	<i>Bounce Rate</i> 48.20%
<i>Daily Pageviews per Visitor</i> 5.05	<i>Daily Pageviews per Visitor</i> 4.67	<i>Daily Pageviews per Visitor</i> 2.85
<i>Daily Time on Site</i> 5:49	<i>Daily Time on Site</i> 6:52	<i>Daily Time on Site</i> 4:32
Load time:	Load time:	Load time:
Fast (1.483 Seconds), 66% of sites are slower.	Fast (1.456 Seconds), 67% of sites are slower.	Slow (2.423 Seconds), 62% of sites are faster.

## College Board Demographics:

### Gender



### Education



### Browsing Location



## McGraw Hill Demographics:

### Gender



### Education



### Browsing Location



### Pearson Demographics:

#### Gender



#### Education



#### Browsing Location



### Findings

College Board is the most visited and fastest of all of the sites, but has a higher bounce rate. All three sites are visited more by female than male. McGraw Hill has a much higher percentage of people visiting the site at work than the others.

## Organization

The College Board	McGraw Hill	Pearson
Top Down	Top Down	Top Down
Combinations of alphabetical and ambiguous topics	Combinations of alphabetical and ambiguous topics	Combinations of alphabetical and ambiguous topics
Content by	Products by	Products by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Test/Class</li> <li>- Target Audience</li> <li>- Product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subject</li> <li>- Type (digital/print)</li> <li>- Student/teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subject</li> <li>- Type (digital/print)</li> <li>- Student/teacher</li> </ul>
Some Geographical	Some Geographical	Some Geographical
-Topical	-Topical	-Topical
Actionable	Actionable	Actionable

## Findings

Only major difference is how they categorize each section, sites are generally organized in the same way, with alphabetical structures in their navigation and landing pages for each chunk.

## Labeling

The College Board	McGraw Hill	Pearson
Topics	Topics	Topics
Links	Links	Links
Hypertext	Hypertext	Hypertext
-tests	-level of education	-level of education
-classes	-type	-type
-type of information (headers)	-subject	-subject

## Navigation

The College Board	McGraw Hill	Pearson
Main content has four sections with specific topics	Top navigation has three main sections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dropdown chunked</li> <li>- Selection boxes for more custom navigation</li> <li>- Search</li> </ul>	Four sections in head menu Three main sections in body of content Footer Navigation Additional navigation as main topics are entered
Navigation in header as a dropdown		
Footer navigation		
Additional navigation as main topics are entered	Footer Navigation  Additional navigation as main topics are entered	

## Search

The College Board	McGraw Hill	Pearson
Search bar at top and bottom of the page	Search bar at the top	Search bar at the top
Top – site search	Auto-suggest drop down from search suggests topics and other words	Only provides typeahead
Typeahead		Results returned in five categories
Results can be filtered by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audience</li> <li>• Type (file)</li> <li>• Category (product / class)</li> </ul>	Results can be narrowed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All</li> <li>• PreK and adult ed</li> <li>• higher ed</li> <li>• topics and ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">PreK-12 Education</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Higher Education</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Industry &amp; Professional</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">News &amp; Events</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Other Results</a></li> </ul>
Appear to sort by relevancy	Results can be sorted by relevancy or alphabetical	Additional categories offered once in a category
Bottom – College search	Image displays with link	Results not clear on how sorted
College search functions the same way but only one filter - Colleges		If no results for a category we're sorry appears
		Just text and description

## Findings

The college board has two specific types of searches. Aside from that and the suggestion of topics and words from McGraw Hill, they're all generally the same.

## Site Map

See CollegeBoard\_SiteMap.pdf for full version





## Tree Assessment

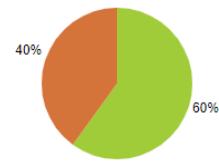
For information regarding the development of the tree test, please see Appendix B: Tree Testing – A Lesson in Paying Attention.

For details of the assessment results – see the attached spreadsheets. Study 1 and 2 are the assessments mentioned in Appendix B. Study 3 is the one referenced here.

Five scenarios were given to five different participants, each designed to target a different aspect of the website. The participants ranged from ages 30-50, with 2 having some familiarity with the website, and 3 having none. Multiple correct answers were available for some questions, as the information could be found in more than one area.

1. Your SAT test is around the corner, and you've studied a LOT. However, you really should practice math some more. Where would you go to do that?

SAT >> Inside the Test >> SAT Study Guide for Students  
 SAT >> Inside the Test >> Math Test  
 SAT >> Practice >> Daily Practice App  
 SAT >> Practice >> SAT Practice Tests  
 SAT >> Subject Tests >> Subjects



Success	Direct	3	3	60%	60%
Fail	Indirect	0	2	0% 40%	40%
Skip	Direct	0	0	0% 0%	0% 0%
	Indirect	0	0		

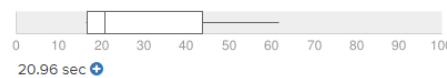
Success



Directness



Time Taken



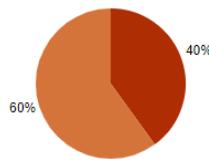
## CORRECT ANSWERS: 3/5

2. You are the parent of a child who does not want to take the SAT, but you want to talk them into it. Where would you go on this website to find something that will help you make your case?

About >> Benefits

SAT >> Taking the Test >> Test Security & Fairness

SAT >> Register for SAT >> College SAT Policies



Success	Direct	0	0	0% 0%	0% 0%
Fail	Indirect	2	5	40% 60%	100%
Skip	Direct	0	0	0% 0%	0% 0%

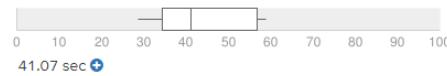
Success



Directness



Time Taken

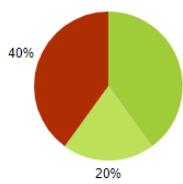


## CORRECT ANSWERS: 0/5

3. You're a high school Junior interested in taking AP Science and would like to know more about it. Where would you go to find more information?

AP >> AP Student Course Index

AP Students >> AP Courses



Success	Direct	2	3	40% 20%	60%
Fail	Indirect	2	2	40% 0%	40%
Skip	Direct	0	0	0% 0%	0% 0%

Success



Directness



Time Taken

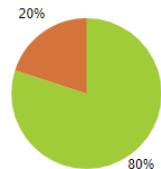


## CORRECT ANSWERS: 3/5

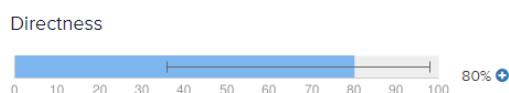
4. You want to know if you can bring your cell phone to your SAT test, because you were planning on using the calculator.

SAT >> Taking the Test >> Phone & Device Policy

SAT >> Taking the Test >> Calculator Policy



	Direct	Indirect	Success	Fail	Skip
Success	4	0	80%	0%	80%
Fail	0	1	0%	20%	20%
Skip	0	0	0%	0%	0%



## CORRECT ANSWERS: 4/5

5. You have no idea how you're going to afford college. Your friend Timmy said you might be able to find some information about financial aid on the College Board website. Where do you look?

CSS Profile >> Before You Apply

CSS Profile >> How to Apply

PowerFAIDS >> About

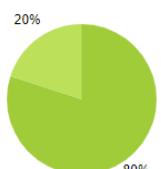
PowerFAIDS >> Holistic Solutions

PowerFAIDS >> Training & Support

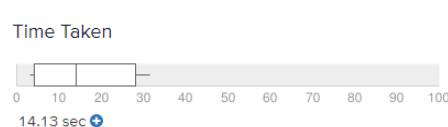
PowerFAIDS >> FAQ

Access / College Planning >> Pay For College

Scholarship Search



	Direct	Indirect	Success	Fail	Skip
Success	4	1	80%	20%	100%
Fail	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Skip	0	0	0%	0%	0%



## CORRECT ANSWERS: 5/5

### Findings

From looking at the paths that the user took, I have two major suggestions for improvements. Multiple users clicked through sections and back again to find specific tasks, even though they were in the correct sections.

Because the website has so many different sections covering almost the same thing but with slightly different nuances, these suggestions could save time, and frustration, and keep users on the site longer.

1. There are multiple areas where almost the same task can be accomplished (studying, financial aid). Consolidating these areas, or reorganizing them from their current structure may help the user find a more particular task or narrow down their choices.
2. Program names are not clear. Sections such as PowerFAIDS and CSS Profile have no information on them up front. Tool tips or small blurbs of text may help users again narrow down what they are looking for and keep them from having to click into multiple areas.

Images courtesy of <https://www.optimalworkshop.com>

## Navigation Stress Test

A navigation stress test, as introduced by Keith Instone, is a test to determine how well users can find their way through the deeper levels of a website. He explains:

*"The idea behind my navigation stress test is to ask some really hard questions about your web site navigation to see if it can 'pass'. It is called a "stress test" because most pages will not pass.*

*The failures may be serious, or they may not matter at all, but at least by performing the test you will have discussed the navigation issues and made conscious design decisions."<sup>3</sup>*

To separate myself as far as possible from the results of the test, I asked a friend to find two sections of the website that were three or more clicks in, and send me screenshots of them. I then set the pages to greyscale to eliminate major clues to links or information that would be noticeable by color, and began the assessment. I chose two different pages due to the vast differences between sections of collegeboard.org; while some sections have similar layouts and structures in place, other sections seem to follow an almost separate design. Choosing two areas gave a broader glimpse at navigability.

## Test Results

I used the legend suggested by Keith to mark each page:

What is this page about?	Draw a rectangle around the title of the page
What site is this?	Circle the site name
What are the major sections of this site?	X

<b>What major section is this page in?</b>	Triangle around X
<b>What is "up" 1 level from here?</b>	U
<b>How do I get to the home page of this site?</b>	H
<b>How do I get to the top of this section of the site?</b>	T
<b>What does each group of links represent?</b>	D: More details, sub-pages of this one N: Nearby pages, within same section as this page S: Pages on same site, but not as near O: Off-site pages

**Page A: Trends in Higher Education**

**Trends in Higher Education**

**U Home N Trends in College Pricing Trends in Student Aid N Education Pays**

**Trends in Student Aid**

**Trends in Student Aid Report**

**Trends in Student Aid, an annual College Board publication since 1995, is a compilation of detailed, up-to-date information on the funding trends available to help students pay for college. This report documents grant aid from federal and state governments, colleges and universities, employers, and other private sources, as well as costs, aid benefits, and Tuition-Wage Decay Analysis. It examines changes in funding levels over time, reports on the distribution of all financial aid to students with different incomes and attending different types of institutions, and tracks the debt student loans as they pursue their educational opportunities.**

**Report findings are organized into the following categories:**

- D  State Aid
- D  Federal Aid
- D  Grants
- D  Loans
- D  Education Tax Benefits and College Savings Plans
- D  Inflation Adjustment

**Download Reports**

Download the full report, data or publications for trends in **SECRETIVE 2017**.

- D Download PDF
- D Download Data in Excel
- D Download Presentation

**Trends in Student Aid Report, Archive**

Download reports (with links to previous years).

Select Active Year:

**Download**

**Related Sites**

> Refining Student Aid D

---

**Programs**

- SAT®
- PSAT/NMSQT®
- PSAT™ 10
- PSAT™ 8/9
- springboard®
- Pre-AP®
- AP®
- AP Capstone®
- AP Capstone® AP Capstone®
- CLEP®
- CSS Profile™
- Search
- PowerFAFSA®

---

**The College Board**

- About Us
- Careers
- Membership
- Newsroom
- Research
- Services for Students with Disabilities

---

**Help**

- Contact Us
- More

**Social Media**

**Business**

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## Page B: How to Get The Best Estimate of Your College Costs

See Treetest-PageA.pdf and Treetest-PageB.pdf for full size assessments

Lastly, attempt to determine how a user would navigate to this page:

How might you get to this page from the site home page?	Write the set of selections as: Choice 1 > Choice 2 > .... Connect the visual elements on the page that tell you this.
---	--

### **Page A: Trends in Higher Education**

**Guess:** Home > Research > Trends in Higher Education > Trends in Student Aid

**Actual:** Home > Research > Trends in Higher Education > Learn More About Trends in Higher Education > Trends in Student Aid

### **Page B: How to Get the Best Estimate of Your College Costs**

**Guess:** Home > Access > Big Future > Pay for College > College Costs > How to Get the Best Estimate of Your College Costs

**Actual:** Home > Home > Access > Pay for College > College Costs > How to Get the Best Estimate of Your College Costs

## **Findings**

All of my guesses were correct aside from determining how to get to the sections from the home page, by way of missing or adding one link step. I had the most issue with the second page, most likely due to the amount of links present – though it was not hard to determine where these links would live after reading each one and taking into consideration the section of the website. I had the following issue with the last part of the assessment in the second page:

1. Page B: What is one level “up” from here?
  - a. At first – unknown, determined it could be three different sections – then noticed breadcrumbs. Breadcrumbs only show you from home, but what “home” is isn’t clear – I know that you cannot get to “Pay for College” from the home page of collegeboard.org.

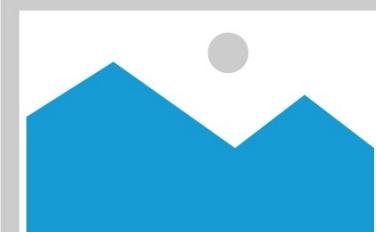
In conclusion, I believe once a user is inside of a major section of the site it is not difficult to find one’s way around. However, there are an incredibly large amount of links and information in each section, and I recommend looking at these sections and seeing if information is duplicated or repeated in order to consolidate areas and lessen the amount of effort on the user’s part to read and discover this information.

# Wireframes

## Home Page

College Board ▾

Sign In Search



**Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet**  
Curabitur tincidunt, libero ut elementum dapibus

Username  Password  Sign In

Forgot Username or password

Sign up for an account

Mauris in urna interdum 

Suspendisse cursus lacus et velit iaculis dignissim.  
Quisque lacus enim. 

Maecenas in lacus a tortor  
scelerisque interdum quis  
quis turpis 

**SAT**  
• SAT Subject Tests  
• PSAT/NMSQT  
• PSAT 10  
• PSAT 8/9

**AP**  
• AP Students  
• AP Central  
• Pre-AP  
• SpringBoard

**Access**  
• College Planning  
• College Search  
• Scholarship Search  
• Major/Career Search

**Accuplacer**  
• CLEP  
• Search  
• CSS Profile  
• PowerFAIDS

College Search  Search

**About the College Board**

**About Us**  
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Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet. Proin gravida dolor

**Membership**  
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Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet. Proin gravida dolor

**Newsroom**  
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.  
Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet. Proin gravida dolor

**Research**  
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**Events**  
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**Careers**  
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Social Media Link Icons

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Programs	The College Board	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SAT®</li><li>• PSAT/NMSQT®</li><li>• PSAT™ 10</li><li>• PSAT™ 8/9</li><li>• SpringBoard®</li><li>• Pre-AP®</li><li>• AP®</li><li>• Access</li><li>• ACCUPLACER®</li><li>• CLEP®</li><li>• CSS Profile™</li><li>• Search</li><li>• PowerFAIDS®</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• About Us</li><li>• Careers</li><li>• Membership</li><li>• Newsroom</li><li>• Research</li><li>• Services for Students with Disabilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help</li><li>• Contact Us</li><li>• More</li></ul>
Social Media Link Icons		Social Media Link Icons
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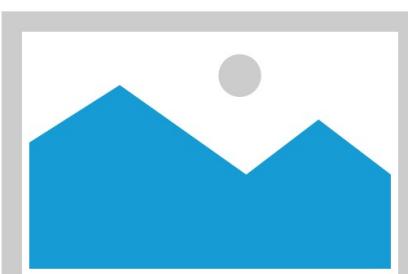
# SAT Suite of Assessments Landing Page

College Board

Sign In  Search

Special Notification Box

SAT Suite of Assessments



**Sed consectetur vel mi a sodales.**  
Pellentesque eros ipsum, dignissim sed finibus id

 Mauris in urna interdum

 Suspendisse cursus lacus et velit iaculis dignissim. Quisque lacus enim,

 Maecenas in lacus a tortor scelerisque interdum quis quis turpis

**Upcoming Events**

1/1/2018 Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, ..

1/1/2018 Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, ..

1/1/2018 Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, ..

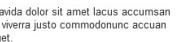
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**Featured Articles**

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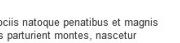
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 Sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus.

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**Section Topics**

<a href="#">Inside the Test</a> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet.	<a href="#">Practice</a> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet.	<a href="#">Taking the Test</a> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet.
<a href="#">Register for SAT</a> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet.	<a href="#">Scores</a> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet.	<a href="#">K-12 Educators</a> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet.

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**Resources**

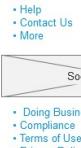
<a href="#">Resource 1</a> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet	<a href="#">Resource 2</a> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet	<a href="#">Resource 3</a> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet	<a href="#">Resource 4</a> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet
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Programs



- SAT®
- PSAT/NMSQT®
- PSAT™ 10
- PSAT™ 8/9
- SpringBoard®
- Pre-AP®
- AP®
- Access
- ACCUPLACER®
- CLEP®
- CSS Profile™
- Search
- PowerFAIDS®



- Help
- Contact Us
- More





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# Big Future Landing Page

College Board 

Sign In Search

**Username** **Password** **Sign In** [Sign up for an account](#) [Forgot Username or password](#)

**Big Future** [Get Started](#) [Find Colleges](#) [Explore Careers](#) [Pay For Colleges](#) [Get In](#) [Plan](#)

**Case Study Link** **Case Study Rotator**

**find colleges** [Search by college](#) [Go](#) [open search button](#)

**pay for college** [Financial aid slide](#) [Information Link](#)

**make a plan** [Grade Picker](#)

**Inside SAT** [Link](#)

**For Educators** [Link](#)

**Case Study Video Link**

**Was this Page Helpful?**

Yes  No [Submit](#)

[SAT®](#)  
[PSAT/NMSQT®](#)  
[PSAT™ 10](#)  
[PSAT™ 8/9](#)  
[SpringBoard®](#)  
[Pre-AP®](#)  
[AP®](#)  
[Access](#)  
[ACCUPLACER®](#)  
[CLEP®](#)  
[CSS Profile™](#)  
[Search](#)  
[PowerFAIDS®](#)

[About Us](#)  
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[Membership](#)  
[Newsroom](#)  
[Research](#)  
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[Help](#)  
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[Privacy Logo](#)

[Sign Up](#) [Sign In](#) [Me](#) [My Colleges](#) [My Plan](#)

# Generic Article

The screenshot shows a web page with a header, a main content area, and a footer.

**Header:**

- College Board dropdown menu
- Sign In button
- Search input field
- Special Notification Box (represented by a large gray rectangle)

**SAT Suite of Assessments navigation:**

- SAT dropdown
- PSAT NMSQT PSAT 10 dropdown
- PSAT 8/9 dropdown
- About dropdown
- For Educators dropdown
- Important Dates link
- More dropdown

**Main Content Area:**

## TITLE OF ARTICLE

Home / Breadcrumb 1 / Breadcrumb 2 / Breadcrumb 3

**SAT**

- Inside the Test
- Practice
- Taking the Test**
- Test Day Checklist*
- What to Expect on Test Day
- ID Requirements
- Calculator Policy
- Phone and Electronic Device Policy
- Test Security and Fairness
- New Security Measures
- Register for the SAT
- Scores
- K-12 Educators

**Article Subheader:**

Special Information or Call Out (represented by a large gray rectangle)

**Article Text:**

Article Text (represented by a large gray rectangle)

**Feedback Section:**

Was this Page Helpful?

Yes       No

Submit button

**Footer:**

SAT®  
PSAT/NMSQT®  
PSAT™ 10  
PSAT™ 8/9  
SpringBoard®  
Pre-AP®  
AP®  
Access  
ACCUPLACER®  
CLEP®  
CSS Profile™  
Search  
PowerAIDS®

About Us  
Careers  
Membership  
Newsroom  
Research  
Services for Students with Disabilities

Help  
Contact Us  
More

Social Media Link Icons (represented by a large gray rectangle)

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Privacy Logo (represented by a small gray rectangle)

# Search Results

College Board ▾

Sign In

Search

## Filters

### Audience

Students & Parents (8,999)  
International (4,898)  
Professionals (3,599)

### Type

PDF (308)  
Microsoft Powerpoint (1)

### Category

ACCUPLACER (23)  
AP (2,304)  
CLEP (341)  
College Board Organization (197)  
College Planning (8,121)  
Enrollment (79)  
Events & Conferences (154)  
Financial Aid (2,521)  
PSAT 10 (108)  
PSAT 8-9 (106)  
PSAT/NMSQT (114)  
Pre-AP (29)  
Professional Development (330)  
Research Reports (72)  
SAT (322)  
SAT Subject Test (84)  
SpringBoard (44)

## Search Results

Search

### Displaying X of X results

#### Name of Result

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet. Proin gravida dolor sit amet lacus accumsan et viverra justo commodo  
<http://www.resultlocation.com>

#### Name of Result

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<http://www.resultlocation.com>

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<http://www.resultlocation.com>

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 [Next](#) [Last](#)

Was this Page Helpful?

Yes       No

Submit

- SAT®
- PSAT/NMSQT®
- PSAT™ 10
- PSAT™ 8/9
- SpringBoard®
- Pre-AP®
- AP®
- Access
- ACCUPLACER®
- CLEP®
- CSS Profile™
- Search
- PowerFAIDS®

- About Us
- Careers
- Membership
- Newsroom
- Research
- Services for Students with Disabilities

- Help
- Contact Us
- More

Social Media Link Icons

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## Heuristic Evaluation

### Heuristics and Process

A heuristic evaluation is an exercise where “usability experts review your site’s interface and compare it against accepted usability principles”<sup>4</sup>. The purpose of this exercise is to identify usability issues within the design and functionality and alleviate them ideally before the product is released to the public, or to improve the usability of an existing product. The principles, or heuristics, are developed as a set of standards applications or products should follow in order to ensure that the user has the best experience possible while using or visiting the product.

I evaluated collegeboard.org against Jacob Nielson’s 10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design (for information about these heuristics, please see Appendix C). I chose this set of heuristics due to the familiarity and popularity of this set throughout the user experience profession. I then assigned a rating of 0-4 to each of the issues I found, 0 being no issue at all (the website successfully executes this heuristic), and 4 being a severe issue that requires immediate attention (designers and developers should address the issue immediately). After 2 hours of perusing the website I discovered 11 issues, assigning each a severity rating and offering a suggestion for improvement for each. They are listed below in order of most to least severe, with the severity rating followed by the relevant heuristic(s).

### Results of Evaluation

#### 3 – Help and Documentation

Help is not located where the help page indicates.

The help page indicates that help is located either in the top corner of the website or in the menu. However, the menu image does not show the location of where the menu help currently is located. It also references a previous design of the website.

The screenshot shows a tooltip for the 'Student Score Reports' link. The tooltip contains a list of popular help topics: Account and Sign-In, SAT, SAT, SAT, AP, Coll, Coll, and Email. The 'Student Score Reports' link is highlighted with a red box. The tooltip has an 'X' button in the top right corner and a close button in the bottom right corner.

**Popular Help Topics**

- Account and Sign-In
- SAT
- SAT
- SAT
- AP
- Coll
- Coll
- Email

**CollegeBoard**

**Student Score Reports**

**Website Help**

Most of our websites have a [help link](#) in either the top right corner or in the [menu](#).

Suggestion: Update the help page to show the correct location of existing help menus.

#### 2- Match between system and real world

Link names represent programs – user may not be familiar with names and not know what they are clicking. “SpringBoard”, “ACCUPLACER” for example.

<b>SAT</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>Access</b>	<b>ACCUPLACER</b>
SAT Subject Tests	AP Students	College Planning	
<b>PSAT/NMSQT®</b>	AP Central	College Search	
<b>PSAT 10</b>	<b>Pre-AP®</b>	Scholarship Search	
<b>PSAT 8/9</b>	<b>SpringBoard®</b>	Major & Career Search	

Suggestion: Add headers to sections to clarify what each label or program is or is related to.

## 2 – Help and Documentation

Help is not available for all sections of the website.

Help link at the bottom of the page takes user to a help page with a limited list of topics. Information about individual help pages on the website is found, but not all sections have help available. Help is not available on the main help page for these sections.

### Website Help

Most of our websites have a [help link](#) in either the [top right corner](#) or in the [menu](#).

### Still have a question?

[Contact Customer Service](#)

Suggestion: Add help documentation to all of the subsections. Add links to help for all sections on the main help page.

## 2 – Consistency and Standards

Some pages open in a new window, and some do not.

From the help page, some sections open in a new window. Links such as “More” and program-specific links open in the same page, but links within the help document and the main header link to the home page open in another window. On all pages, the College Board logo takes the user to the home page, but opens it in a new window.

Suggestion: Have all links open in the same window. Active pop up blockers could prohibit users from seeing pages open in another window.

## 2 – Error Prevention, Consistency and standards

Navigation interaction is not consistent throughout the sub-sections, leading users to visit pages they may not have wanted to.

1. All the sections with top bar navigation except Big Future have menus that must be clicked to see sub menu items.
2. Icons present in Big Future indicate there is more in a drop-down section when there is not.

The screenshot shows the Pre-AP website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home (selected), About Pre-AP, Courses, Professional Learning, Join Pre-AP, and FAQs. Below the navigation is a large blue header image featuring two students. To the right of the image, text reads "Pre-AP Launches in Fall 2018. Be Part of It!" and "Next generation to learn and grow in the classroom and beyond. Participate in the Pre-AP Program beginning fall 2019."

## BigFuture™

Get Started ▾ Find Colleges ▾ Explore Careers ▾ Pay for College ▾ Get In ▾ Make a Plan ▾

*Make a Plan does not have a sub menu*

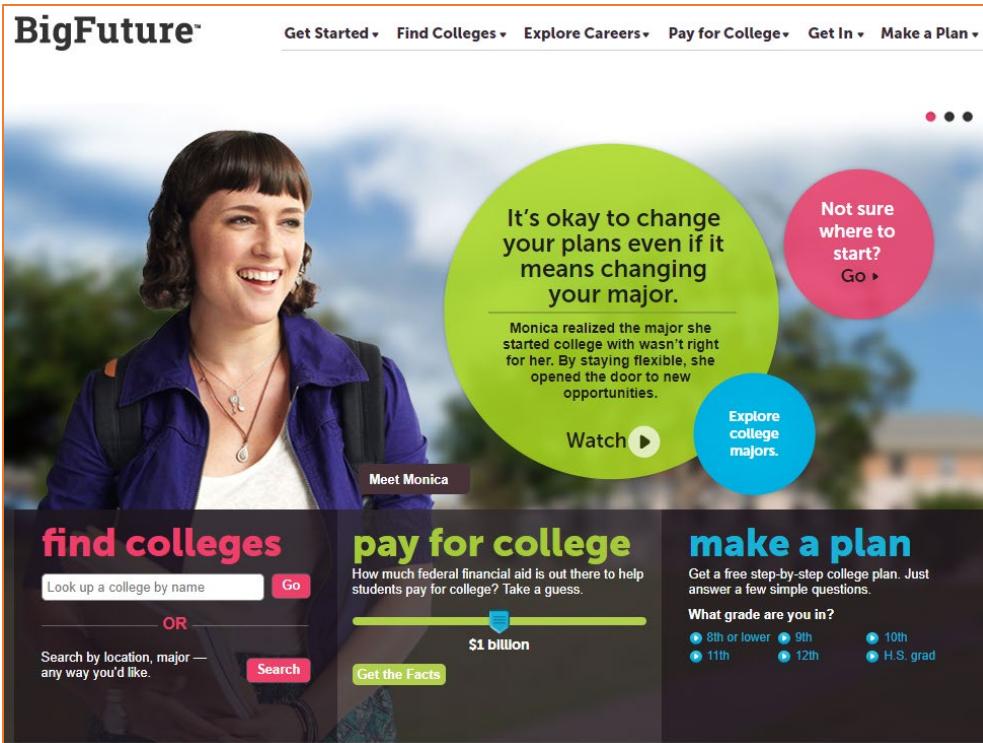
Suggestion: Make Big Future menu consistent with other sections – menu must be clicked to open, menus with no sub sections do not have arrow icon

### 1 – Consistency and Standards

Sections do not follow the same designs.

User may not understand that they are on the same site that they originally were. Access label is in the header of the page, but title of the section is actually “Big Future” – further confusing the situation. Big Future acts much more like an application for finding colleges and learning about careers than the rest of the college board website, which functions mostly as a portal to understanding College Board tests, offerings, and programs.

The screenshot shows the ACCUPLACER website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home (selected), For Students, About ACCUPLACER, Next-Generation ACCUPLACER, and Resources and Support. Below the navigation is a large purple header image featuring a smiling young man. To the right of the image, text reads "Free Practice Materials for Students" and "Get tools and resources to help you prepare for the tests." A yellow button labeled "Practice" is visible. Below the header, there are two sections: "ACCUPLACER National Conference 2018" with a calendar icon and "ACCUPLACER Study App" with a computer monitor icon. At the bottom, there is a section titled "Featured Articles" with four categories: "Inside the Test", "Taking the Test", "Next-Generation ACCUPLACER", and "Professional Resources".



Suggestion: Labeling “Access/Big Future” as a sub site from the college board, or application, may help explain the different designs. Consider changing description on home page as suggested previously with labels.

## 1 - Consistency and Standards

Navigation systems are not consistent throughout the website.

While most of the main sections follow the same navigation style, areas with smaller sections such as Disabilities and Newsroom are quite different. While navigation purpose is slightly different, basic style can be applied consistently.

About Us    Membership    Newsroom    Research    Events    Careers

**Filters**

Access (3)  
AP (18)  
Assessment (3)

**Newsroom**

**Featured** More Students Than Ever Are Participating And Succeeding In Advanced Placement  
02/21/18

**Contact Us**  
Media inquiries should be directed to the College Board's Communications Office. Call 212-

SSD has a left hand side only navigation system, while Newsroom has both.

Suggestion: Be consistent in navigation styles. pick either left or top for smaller sections of the website.

## 1 – Error prevention, Visibility of System Status

When searching for a college, a user can narrow down their search with very specific parameters. However, not all parameters are shown.

There is a very large number of parameters a user can choose when using the college search function. Some of these parameters are shown on the left hand side. However, not all chosen are shown, which can lead to the user not knowing or remembering which parameter was chosen that gives them 0 results, and having to backtrack to discover what changed their results.

**College Search** 1870 results

**Save Selections** [Clear All Selections](#)

**SELECT FILTERS**

**Test Scores & Selectivity**

**Type of School**

**Location**

Location(s)

Don't care    Want    Must have

**Campus & Housing**

Residential campus

Don't care    Want    Must have

All-women dorms

Don't care    Want    Must have

**Majors & Learning Environment**

Honors program

Don't care    Want    Must have

**Sports & Activities**

Activities

Don't care    Want    Must have

**Print results**

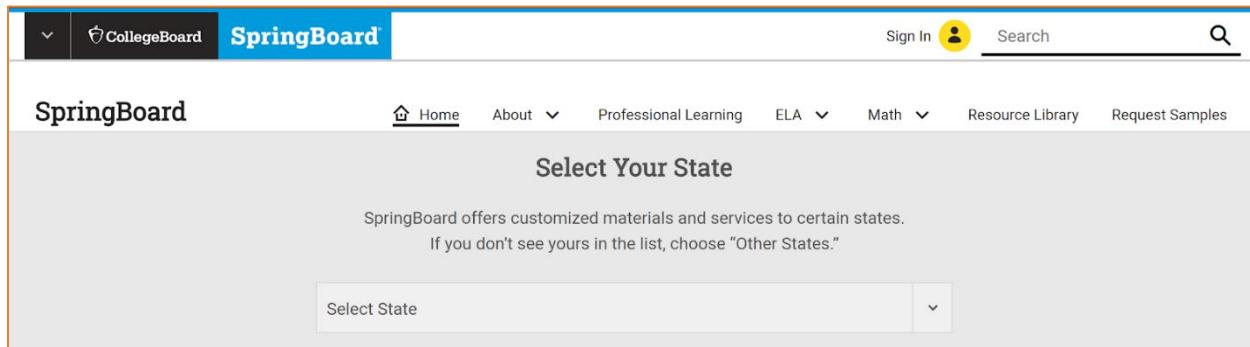
 American International College Springfield, MA ★ College Application Fee Waiver Available	 Appalachian State University Boone, NC ★ College Application Fee Waiver Available	 Assumption College Worcester, MA ★ College Application Fee Waiver Available	 Ave Maria University Ave Maria, FL
 Azusa Pacific University Azusa, CA ★ College Application Fee Waiver Available	 Bellarmine University Louisville, KY ★ College Application Fee Waiver Available	 Biola University La Mirada, CA ★ College Application Fee Waiver Available	 Bluffton University Bluffton, OH ★ College Application Fee Waiver Available
 Boston College	 Boston University	 Brigham Young University Provo, UT	 Bryan College

Suggestion: List the parameters chosen at the top of the screen as done with some advanced searches, and give the user the option to remove that criteria from their list.

## 2 - Error Prevention

User cannot change selected location after choosing one in Springboard section.

Once a user selects “other state” as their location in Springboard, there is no way to change the location if the user made an error without clearing their cache or opening an incognito window. If a user selects the wrong state, they need to go back to the home page and open the Springboard page again to select a new state.



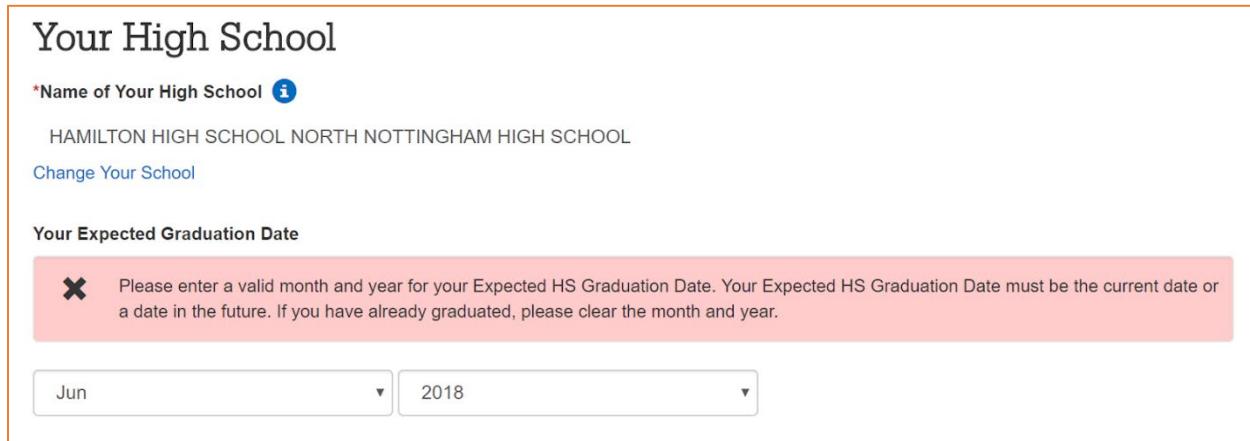
The screenshot shows the SpringBoard website's "Select Your State" page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About, Professional Learning, ELA, Math, Resource Library, and Request Samples. A search bar is also present. The main content area has a heading "Select Your State" and a sub-instruction: "SpringBoard offers customized materials and services to certain states. If you don't see yours in the list, choose 'Other States.'". Below this is a dropdown menu labeled "Select State".

Suggestion: Add a drop down or link at the top of the page so the user may change the location.

## 1 - Error Prevention

Graduation date picker allows you to pick a date in the past.

Users must not select a date that has passed as a high school graduation date in order to register for the SAT. However, past month and year combinations are available to choose.



The screenshot shows the "Your High School" section. It includes fields for entering the name of the high school (with a placeholder "HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL NORTH NOTTINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL") and a link to "Change Your School". Below this is a section for "Your Expected Graduation Date" with a date picker. A red error message box contains the text: "Please enter a valid month and year for your Expected HS Graduation Date. Your Expected HS Graduation Date must be the current date or a date in the future. If you have already graduated, please clear the month and year." The date picker shows "Jun" and "2018".

Suggestion: Change date picker so that previous month/date combinations cannot be selected.

## 1 - Flexibility and Ease of Use

The website does not allow users to save or favorite pages.

There is a lot of content within the College Board website. Students and other users may visit this site for a plethora of reasons, and may want to bookmark where those areas are within the site. Since the website has a profile feature for users, it would benefit the user to be able to save and favorite pages for easy access.

The screenshot shows the CollegeBoard homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a dropdown menu, the CollegeBoard logo, a user profile icon for 'Molly', a search bar, and a magnifying glass icon. The main content area features a blue background with a photo of students and a welcome message: 'Hi, Molly. Welcome to the College Board. We can help you get started on the road to college.' To the right, there is a sidebar with a vertical list of links: 'My SAT', 'PSAT/NMSQT, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9 Scores', 'AP Scores', 'My Plan', 'My Colleges', and 'Account Settings'. Each link is preceded by a small icon.

Suggestion: Once logged in, add a link on each page so that the user may favorite the page, as well as rename and add a comment about the page.

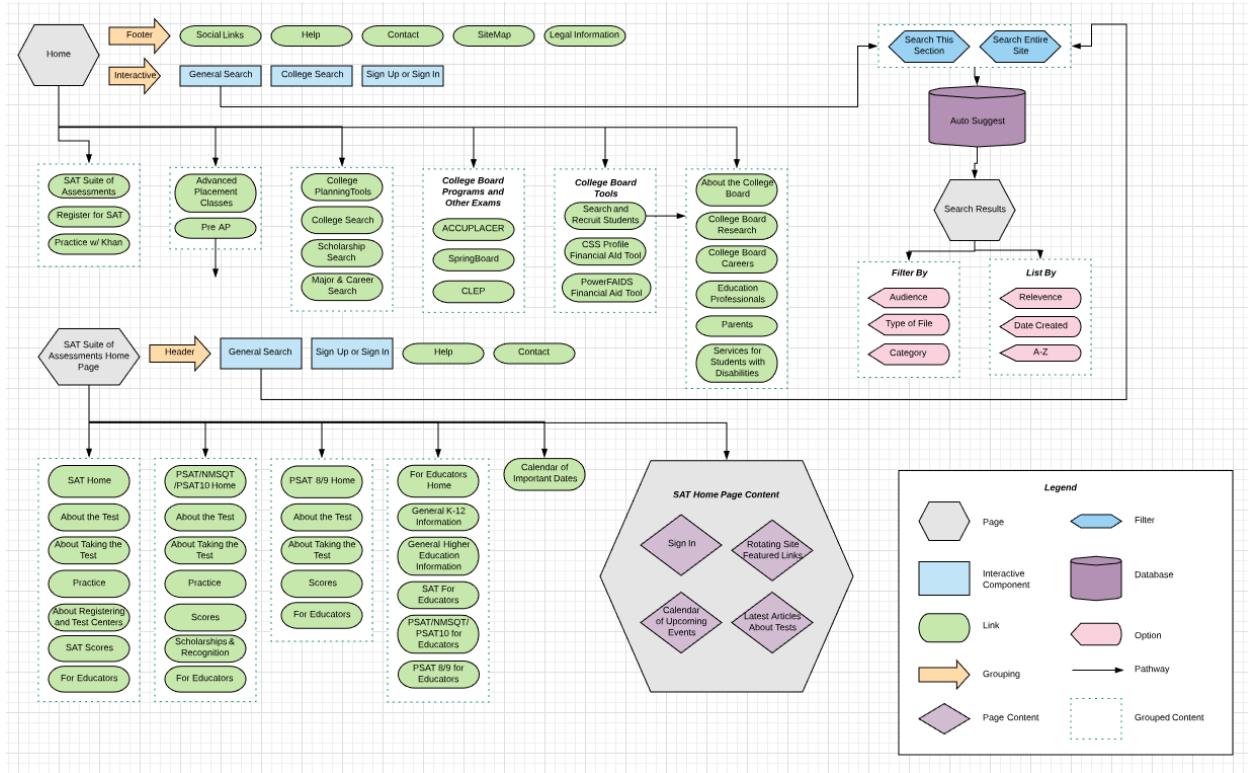
## 0 – Recognition Rather than Recall

Breadcrumbs and Navigation on both the top and left hand side of the page assist users in locating themselves within the website. Left hand navigation also allows users to visually navigate further within a section within context of the sub section without having to employ the top drop down menu, and shows sections deeper in those sub sections.

The screenshot shows the 'SAT Suite of Assessments' website. The top navigation bar includes links for 'SAT', 'PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10', 'PSAT 8/9', 'About', 'For Educators', 'Important Dates', and 'More'. Below this, a large blue header banner says 'Student Score Reports'. The main content area shows a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10 / Scores / Student Score Reports'. On the left, a sidebar menu is open under 'Scores', showing options like 'Getting PSAT/NMSQT Scores', 'Score Structure', 'Student Score Reports' (which is currently selected), 'Understanding Scores', and 'Who Sees Your Scores'. The main content area contains text about what PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10 score reports show, a 'Sign in to get your scores' button, a 'How-To Videos' section, and a thumbnail for a video titled 'Understanding Your PSAT/NMSQT Score Report'.

## High Level Site Map

To view the updated site map referenced below in detail, see attachment HighLevelSiteMap.pdf.



## Introduction

My goals when rearranging the site map were to simplify the content as possible by removing links to subsections of the site easily accessible through their parent link, and to organize links by grouping them by similar content. To achieve this, I culled the links for the SAT, Preparing for College, and sections about the College Board. I kept all links that led to separate applications or subsections. I also ended up adding sections to the home page that were not as plainly visible, but contained a lot of content.

I have two major concerns with this approach. One is the general design of the website. Reorganizing the content in the way that I did would require a full redesign of the website, including the landing page and navigational structures of the applications and subsites. While websites are redesigned all the time, the fact that this website is used for educational purposes and for situations with real-life consequences, a lot of time would be needed to put into the user experience and testing.

Secondly, having no knowledge of any previous design, research, or statistics that went into the current design, I wonder if the sections that I removed were purposely added to match the user's needs. Removing these sections from the main page may be detrimental to the website and have an unintended negative impact. I would be very interested to see the rationale or documentation that went into the iterations of this website.

## Reorganization – Home Page

I have broken the home page into four sections below: Header, Section Navigation, Secondary Navigation, and Footer. I have listed each link and interactive element in each section, along with added links. Next to each is the status of that link and for some, clarification as to why the change was made.

## Header

The screenshot shows the CollegeBoard homepage. At the top left is the CollegeBoard logo. To its right are links for "Sign In" (with a user icon) and "Search" (with a magnifying glass icon). Below the header is a large blue banner with the text "College Starts Here" and a sub-instruction "Sign in to personalize your visit." There are input fields for "Username" and "Password" with a yellow "Sign In" button. Below these fields are links for "Don't have an account? Sign up" and "Forgot username or password?". On the left side of the banner is a circular image of three students walking outdoors. Below the banner are three call-to-action boxes: "Register for the August SAT" (with a hand icon), "Get Free Practice for the SAT with Khan Academy®" (with a leaf icon), and "View AP Scores" (with a computer monitor icon).

College Board Logo

Change - Link list

Drop Down to mimic new link organization, every link on home page save for footer and sign in / search repeated. Current drop down has links that are not available on the home page.

Sign in

No change

Search

No Change

Banner Sign in + Links

No Change

Register for SAT

Moved to SAT link cluster

Moved to keep related content together. Important link for visitors, did not want to delete all together.

Study with Khan (external link)

Moved to SAT link cluster

Outside link to partner – kept due to unknown relationship with partner, may be a mandatory link

View AP Scores

Removed

No other test score page is represented, no apparent reason to call out AP. Visitor must first log in to view scores, so page takes user directly to log in if user is not logged in.

## Section Navigation

SAT	Removed / added links	Removed each subsection and changed link to "College Readiness" home, the actual home page for this section. Added Register and Practice w/Khan as links in this section since importance visualized with links in header section
AP	Removed Links	Removed AP sub-sections because they are easily available once entering main AP section. Moved SpringBoard to another section since it is a different program
Access	Removed Links	Changed name of this section to College Tools, removed college planning (duplicate of "Access" link) and kept the searches as they are all involved pages within the college planning section.
Other Links	Changed section	Changed this section to have label College Board Exams and Programs so that links under could be associated with something and users could understand what the context of these links are.
Other Links (2)	Added section	Added section with label College Board Tools so that links under could be associated with something and users could understand what the context of these links are.
College Search	No change	

## Secondary Navigation

### About the College Board

#### About Us

We're a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success.

#### Membership

More than 6,000 member institutions and organizations drive the College Board's mission.

#### Newsroom

Read press releases and announcements to see what's new at the College Board.

#### Research

Our world-class research informs ongoing innovation in our programs.

#### Events

Our events provide professional learning and networking opportunities for educators.

#### Careers

Explore career opportunities at the College Board and join our team.



Don't miss out! Follow us for timely updates.

About Us	No Change	
Research	No Change	Has its own section outside of general “about us” section
Membership	Removed	Sub section of About Us
Events	Changed	Changed this link to “Education Professionals”. Education Professionals is an entire section, with Events being a sub section of that.
Newsroom	Removed	Has its own section outside of general “about us” section
Social Media Link	Removed	Links available in footer. New design to make them more prominent in footer instead of repeating on home page.
Educational Professionals	NEW	Section of website is not represented anywhere other than header dropdown. Add link to home page.
Parents	NEW	Section of website is not represented anywhere other than header dropdown. Add link to home page.
Services for Students with Disabilities	NEW	Section of website is not represented anywhere other than footer. This topic has become much more prevalent and important in the last few years. Should be more visible.

## Footer

**Programs**

---

SAT®  
PSAT/NMSQT®  
PSAT™ 10  
PSAT™ 8/9  
SpringBoard®  
Pre-AP®  
AP®  
Access  
ACCUPLACER®  
CLEP®  
CSS Profile™  
Search  
PowerFAIDS®

**The College Board**

---

About Us  
Careers  
Membership  
Newsroom  
Research  
Services for Students with Disabilities

Help  
Contact Us  
More

Doing Business  
Compliance  
Terms of Use  
Privacy Policy

Programs	Removed	Links already available in header drop down.
College Board	Removed	Links will be available in header drop down
Help	No change	No change
Contact Us	No change	
More	Renamed	Renamed to Site map - that is where link goes currently
Social Links	No change	
Doing Business, Compliance, Terms of Use, Privacy Policy	Renamed	Links all consolidated to legal section that will have menu to access all

### Reorganization –SAT Suite of Assessments

Instead of linking directly to the SAT home page, I have redesigned the site to direct to a page dedicated to an overall view of all of the SAT assessments due to the amount of content that is available in the menu that is related to all assessments. This home page contains the information that is listed in the about and important dates section. I have also reorganized each of the menus to be consistent in the order topics are listed, and edited what is in the menu.

#### SAT Suite of Assessments Main Menu

Sign In	No Change	
Search	Added Options	Added “Search this area / Search whole site” option (see search page)
SAT (menu)	Changed	Renamed labels for each section, reorganized order of links. SAT is no longer page users end up on when clicking on suite of assessments from home page.
PSAT/NMSQT/PSAT10	Changed	Renamed labels for each section
About	Removed	About is now the content on the home page.
For Educators	Changed	Added the links for educators for each of the different tests for better accessibility since there is no indication that each of those sections would have information for educators, and the for educators general section contains additional information.

Important Dates	Changed	Renamed to Calendar of dates, page would be formatted differently to resemble an actual calendar, sortable by test, rather than the list of dates it currently is
More	Removed	Contact us and help, the contents of more, are now links visible from the home page instead of a menu link.

## Changes – Search

I've added two features to the search – an option to search the section you are in or the entire website, and a sorting function to sort the results of your search. This was done due to the vast amount of pages and documents within the site to help the user narrow down their search more successfully.

## Labeling Recommendations

### Introduction

During the tree view test, I discovered that users had a very hard time finding specific information due to the ambiguous labeling used throughout the website, as well as the lack of significant categories for the content. The names of the sections and pages were discovered to not provide enough context to direct the user to the information they were searching for, nor was the website's content broken out into sections that would be easily navigable from the home page. Therefore, renaming of the labels and re-organizing these pages became an important part of this study.

When I created the new site map (previous section) I took it upon myself to identify what the major sections of the site were, break the content down into specific categories, and adjust certain labels. In order to validate my choices, as well as acquire suggestions and feedback from potential users, I performed a card sorting study. I asked participants (a small sample of four) to take the labels I provided them and sort them into categories of their own choice. I did not include the data from one of the users, as the user did not seem to understand the purpose of the exercise and put all of the pages into one category.

### Results

*For a break down of each user's sorting results, see CollegeBoardCardSorting.xml*

In total the participants created 17 unique labels and categories for the 38 cards provided, some with similar names. While SAT/PSAT and AP sections were sorted in a way I was expecting due to the familiarity and slight obviousness of the connections between each label, the way the remaining topics were sorted was slightly different for each participant.

About Us, Other, Site Information, News and Events, About College Board, and College Board Info were all labels used to categorize the many pages that include information pertaining to the College Board, sometimes split between two sections, such as News and Events for two pages, with About College Board containing the rest. I believe that this would be the best way to organize this information. While all of the information could live under a header of "College Board", I believe there should be sub sections that split the pages up as they are suggested by the participants.

One of the major issues that I ran into when redesigning the site map was how to label the programs that are not the flagship tests of the College Board, and not clear to the user as to their purpose by just their acronyms. I believe in the new site map I created I accomplished renaming these labels rather well, as the users did not seem to have problems organizing them into separate categories. The two categories they created, "College Planning" and "Other Programs" would be a good fit to separate these and give the names of the programs context while browsing the site.

## Conclusion

Overall I feel the participants validated my rework of the site's layout, categorization, and labeling of the other programs that the College Board offers. Given more time, I would have the participants do a much higher level of investigation in each section, as all of these sections contain a vast variety of information, which is almost as confusing as the current home page to navigate. I would also like to conduct this test with more participants. Lastly, I believe this exercise should have been done BEFORE the high level site map, in order to put more effort into brainstorming and testing theories before providing a newly recommended site map.

## Revised Wireframes

See CBWireframeRevised.PDF

I revised three sections of the site's wireframes – the home page, college planning, and search. My goal was to simplify the amount of content on each page, to categorize things that were related to each other in context rather than title, and re-label elements to give the visitor more context to what each link would be.

The major changes across all pages were simplifying the footer by removing links that were already repeated in the header of the website and editing the header of the site so that each link section was listed out instead of living in a drop down menu. Each section was also given its own home page (such as about and other programs and tools) to create a centralized location for each – providing more information as to what services were offered before the user needed to explore them individually.

I recreated the "Access/Big Future" college planning page, removing content that was creating a cluttered effect on the page, making the layout more akin to the other sections of the website, and breaking out the main sections of the site into sub links featured on the home page instead of just in the drop down. I also added more text into the labels of each link so the user would be more clear on where they were headed.

Lastly, I improved the search page by adding additional options. I added an advanced search so that users could search specific sections of the site. In the current version users can click on each filter once they have searched. This addition saves the user from having to do that after the search and lets them do it before hand. I added an option for the user to search for colleges and majors, so they do not have to leave this search page and go to the college section in order to do so, saving time and clicks. Lastly, I added a way for the user to sort by date, relevance, or alphabetically, again giving the user more control over what they were seeing on their results page.

# Home Page

[College Board Home](#) [SAT Suite of Assessments](#) [AP Central](#) [College Planning](#) [Other Tools & Programs](#) [About Us](#)

[Sign In](#)

[Search Collegeboard.com](#)

**Next Important Date:**  
September 1, 2018  
Registration for SAT - Fall

## Lore ipsum dolor sit amet

Curabitur tincidunt, libero ut elementum dapibus

[Sign up for an account](#)

[Forgot Username or password](#)

### Search Colleges



Search colleges by major, area, sport, basically anything, to tailor to your needs

[Search](#)



[View the College Board Calendar for important Dates for exams and events](#)

[Practice for College Board Exams, such as SAT and others with Khan Academy](#)

### SAT Suite of Assessments



SAT  
Register for SAT  
SAT Subject Tests  
PSAT/NMSQT  
PSAT 8/9

### Advanced Placement (AP)



AP Home  
AP Central  
AP for Teachers  
AP for Students  
Pre-AP

### College Planning



[College Planning Home](#)  
[College Search](#)  
[Major Search & Career Search](#)  
[Scholarship Search](#)  
[FAIDS Scholarship Profile](#)  
[CSS Financial Aid Profile](#)

### Other Tools & Programs



[College Board Tools Home](#)  
[Springboard Custom Materials](#)  
[Accuplacer Placement Tests](#)  
[CLEP College Courses](#)

### Other Important Links

#### About Us

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#### Research

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#### Careers

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#### Educational Professionals

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#### Membership

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#### Newsroom

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#### For Parents

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#### Services for Students with Disabilities

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### Collegeboard.org

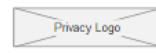
[About Us](#) [Careers](#) [Membership](#) [Newsroom](#) [Research](#) [Educational Professionals](#) [For Parents](#) [Services for Students with Disabilities](#)

[Social Media Link Icons](#)

[Help](#) [Contact Us](#) [SiteMap](#)

[Doing Business](#) [Compliance](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Privacy Policy](#)

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# Access/Big Future/College Planning

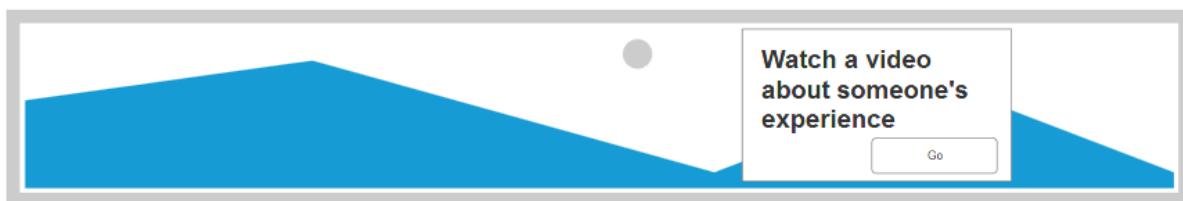
College Board Home SAT Suite of Assessments AP Central College Planning Other Tools & Programs About Us

Sign In

Search Collegeboard.com

## College Planning

Basics of Preparing for College College Information and Searching Explore Careers and Majors Financial Aid & Scholarships Applying for College Create a College Plan



### Search Colleges



Search colleges by major, area, sport, basically anything, to tailor to your needs

Search

### Create a Personalized Plan



Use our step by step guide to create your plan for college

## Paying for College

### Scholarships and Financial Aid

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Basics of Paying for College  
Financial Tools  
Scholarship Searches  
Grants and Other

### FAIDS Scholarship Profile

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FAIDS Home  
What FAIDS is  
How to use it  
Support

### CSS Financial Aid Profile

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CSS Profile Home  
About  
How to Apply  
Fees

### Collegeboard.org

About Us Careers Membership Newsroom Research Educational Professionals For Parents Services for Students with Disabilities

Social Media Link Icons

Help Contact Us SiteMap

Doing Business Compliance Terms of Use Privacy Policy

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Privacy Logo

# Search

[College Board Home](#) [SAT Suite of Assessments](#) [AP Central](#) [College Planning](#) [Other Tools & Programs](#) [About Us](#)

[Sign In](#)

Search Collegeboard.com

## Search Results

### Content Filters

#### Audience

Students & Parents (8,999)  
International (4,898)  
Professionals (3,599)

#### Type

PDF (308)  
Microsoft Powerpoint (1)

#### Category

ACCUPLACER (23)  
AP (2,304)  
CLEP (341)  
College Board Organization (197)  
College Planning (8,121)  
Enrollment (79)  
Events & Conferences (154)  
Financial Aid (2,521)  
PSAT 10 (108)  
PSAT 8-9 (106)  
PSAT/NMSQT (114)  
Pre-AP (29)  
Professional Development (330)  
Research Reports (72)  
SAT (322)  
SAT Subject Test (84)  
SpringBoard (44)

Search

College Board General Search  College Search  Major/Career Search

#### Search by Section:

SAT Suite of Assessments  AP Central  College Planning  Other Tools & Programs  About College Board  Events

#### Sort By:

Relevance  Date Created  A-Z

[Next Page](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [Last](#)

#### Displaying X of X results

##### Name of Result

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet. Proin gravida dolor sit amet lacus accumsan et viverra justo commodo  
<http://www.resultlocation.com>

##### Name of Result

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<http://www.resultlocation.com>

##### Name of Result

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean euismod bibendum laoreet. Proin gravida dolor sit amet lacus accumsan et viverra justo commodo  
<http://www.resultlocation.com>

## Appendix A

### Changelog

- 6/10/2018 – Added screenshot of website

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup><https://www.collegeboard.org/about>

<sup>2</sup>source: <https://www.alexa.com/siteinfo>

<sup>3</sup>Keith Instone: <http://instone.org/navstress>

<sup>4</sup> Usability.gov <https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/heuristic-evaluation.html>

## Appendix B

### Tree Testing – A Lesson in Paying Attention

*The following is the initial write up of the first two tree tests performed. It wasn't until I wrote this up that I realized due to the amount of errors in administering the test it was completely invalid. I included this in the report as a teaching moment for myself to review everything you are preparing thoroughly before beginning research.*

Tree testing was administered in two rounds due to the differentiation between the way I structured the initial layout of the tree. For the first round I placed the SAT products under the branch of the SAT Suite of Assessments. However, a user does not have to pass through this link first to access the others. After observing the results from the first test and noting the lack of successes navigating through that section, I revised the tree, placing the SAT Suite of Assessments page on the same level as the pages for the tests themselves.

Five scenarios were given for the assessment, each designed to target a different aspect of the website. Multiple correct answers were available for some questions, as the information could be found in more than one area. The questions and correct answers were:

- 1. Your SAT test is around the corner, and you've studied a LOT. However, you really should practice math some more. Where would you go to do that?**
  - SAT Suite of Assessments > SAT > Inside the Test > Math Test
  - SAT Suite of Assessments > SAT > Inside the Test > SAT Study Guide for Students
  - SAT Suite of Assessments > SAT > Practice > Daily Practice App
  - SAT Suite of Assessments > SAT > Practice > SAT Practice Tests
- 2. You are the parent of a child who does not want to take the SAT, but you want to talk them into it. Where would you go on this website to find something that will help you make your case?**
  - SAT Suite of Assessments > SAT > Taking the Test > Test Security & Fairness
  - SAT Suite of Assessments > SAT > Register for SAT > College SAT Policies
  - SAT Suite of Assessments > About > Benefits

3. You're pretty excited about graduating high school and you did pretty good on your SATs, but you're not sure where you want to go to college yet. Where would you go to compare colleges?
  - Big Future > Find Colleges
  - Big Future > Pay For College
  - Big Future > Make a Plan
  
4. You want to know if you can bring your cell phone to your SAT test, because you were planning on using the calculator.
  - SAT Suite of Assessments > SAT > Taking the Test > Calculator Policy
  - SAT Suite of Assessments > SAT > Taking the Test > Phone & Device Policy
  
5. You have no idea how you're going to afford college. Your friend Timmy said you might be able to find some information about financial aid on the College Board website. Where do you look?
  - CSS Profile > Before You Apply
  - CSS Profile > How to Apply
  - PowerFAIDS > About
  - PowerFAIDS > Holistic Solutions
  - PowerFAIDS > Training & Support
  - PowerFAIDS > FAQ

## Test A Results

14 participants

Task Focus	Tree Test A – 14 Participants	Tree Test B – 6 Participants
Math Practice Test	1	2
Convincing Parental Information	1	1
College Search	7	3
Calculator Policy	1	4
Affording College	1	0

## Findings

Examining the differences between the paths taken by the two groups it seems that removing the SAT Suite of Exams page did not have a major effect on the participants' abilities to locate the required information, except for the case of the calculator policy. Although more participants in the second group went to the SAT section first, they were still unable to successfully complete the task.

## Test Result Issues

1. Due to not exploring the entire tree view in this test, the results for the first question are not correct. If the full tree view had been available to the user, 10 of 14 participants in the first group, and 4 of 6 participants of the second group would have been successful in finding the correct location of a math practice test.
2. One of the sections of the website was mislabeled in the test. What was labeled as "Big Future" should have been labeled as "Access". Since this question had the highest and second highest percentage of success rate, and the term "Access" could be considered more arbitrary than "Big Future", I believe this question would not have been as successful with the correct term attached to it. However, the website does have a search bar specifically for searching for colleges on their home page, so the usefulness of this question could be reconsidered.
3. Lastly, the final question not only had the incorrect section as part of a popular path users took, but it was also not included as a correct answer, when it should have been. Therefore, the results of this question are completely invalid. The results could have gone either way; users may not have thought "Access" would lead them to information about financial aid and led to no successes, or 9 of 14 and 4 of 6 participants would have been right.

In conclusion, I would highly suggest adjusting the errors made when conducting this test and repeating it with a new set of users for usable test results.

## Appendix C

From: <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/>

### Visibility of system status

The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.

(Read full article on [visibility of system status](#).)

### Match between system and the real world

The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.

(Read full article on the [match between the system and the real world](#).)

### User control and freedom

Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.

### Consistency and standards

Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow [platform conventions](#).

## Error prevention

Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.

(Read full article on [preventing user errors](#).)

## Recognition rather than recall

Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.

(Read full article on [recognition vs. recall in UX](#).)

## Flexibility and efficiency of use

Accelerators — unseen by the novice user — may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.

## Aesthetic and minimalist design

Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.

## Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

[Error messages](#) should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.

## Help and documentation

Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.