Student Information Portal Assessment

The “SIPA” Project

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Purpose of the Project

SIPA is designed to study state, regional and national level student information portals promoting college access. The overarching goal is to collect information about these portals; to define, document, and categorize the findings; to evaluate the effectiveness of state, regional and selected national portals; and to offer recommendations from these findings for the future development and support of portals.
Portal Selection Criteria

- Site must pertain to multiple institutions (for example site contains information on all institutions in state, or all public institutions, etc.)
- Site must focus on college access (can include focus on traditional high school/college student, graduate student and/or adult learner/degree completion)
- Site must provide at least one service beyond general information on going to college (such as online applications or high school course planning)
- Institutional sites linked from SHEEO agencies or state sites simply were excluded
- Sites could not be commercial (such as www.u101.com or www.CollegeBound.net)
Our Portal “N” = 124

- 87 statewide sites (can include all institutions, statewide public, statewide private, statewide, two year, etc.)
  - 19 states that have more than one statewide site
- 30 private/independent college association sites
- 7 national sites (Methodist, Baptist, Historically Black Universities, etc.)
- Portals were not found for Idaho, Wyoming and Washington, D.C.
Portal Categories

- Portals were reviewed and mined for information themes and categories.
- 10 categories were established and then further divided into sub-categories if necessary.
- Each category or sub-category was then organized into appropriate variables according to the information available on the site.

125 Variables we are studying
Portal Categories

Categories include:

- Portal Administration
- Middle Grades and High School Planning
- College Pre-planning
- College Admission
- Career Planning
- Financial Aid
Portal Categories Continued

- In-College Services
- Graduate Students
- Non-traditional Student Populations
- Distance/Online Learning
- Other (includes any other information that does not relate directly to other categories)
Portal Administration

- **Demographic Data** (7 variables)
  - Institutional Representation
  - Administering Agency
  - Year Initiated
  - Third Party Provider

- **Portal Configuration Data** (8 variables)
  - Account Creation
  - Other Language Translations
  - Technical FAQ
Middle Grades and High School Planning Variables

- 14 variables
  - Career Information for Middle Grades Students
  - College Aspirations for Middle Grades
  - Personalized Academic Planner
  - College Planning Timeline
  - Information on Dual Enrollment
  - Events/College Fairs
  - Add Your Advisor or Counselor
College Pre-Planning Variables

- 23 variables that apply directly to college admissions (as compared to planning)
  - College Admissions Test Preparation
  - Going to College Overview
  - College Profiles
  - College Criteria Search
  - College Cost Information
  - First Year Transition
  - Student Life
College Admission Variables

- **8 Variables**
  - General Application Procedures
  - Online Applications (link to the institution’s website application)
  - Online Applications (one application that can be submitted to many institutions)
  - Third Party Application Service
  - High School Transcript Service
  - Application Submission Confirmation
  - Application Tracking
  - Application Fee Payment Transmittal
Career Planning Variables

- 14 variables
  - General Career Information
  - Career Lists
  - Career Information for Parents
  - Career Self-Assessment Tools
  - State Level Career Data
  - Information on State-Designated “High Need” Careers
  - Resume Tools
Financial Aid Variables

- 16 variables
  - Financial Aid Overview
  - Federal Financial Aid Information (loans, grants, scholarships)
  - State Financial Aid Information (loans, grants, scholarships)
  - Scholarship Search
  - College Savings Plans
  - Financial Aid/Loan Calculators
  - Link to FAFSA
  - FAFSA Data Transfer (Transfers applicable data from portal profile to FAFSA Application)
In-College Services Variables

- 6 variables
  - Transfer Planning/Articulation Tools
  - General Transfer Student Information
  - Links to Other State Sites/Tools on Transfer Credit
  - College-to-College Transcript Services
  - Developmental/Remediation Services
Graduate Students Variables

- 4 variables
  - Graduate School Only Search
  - General Admissions Requirements
  - Graduate School Online Application
  - Graduate Program Listings
Non-Traditional Student Populations Variables

- 8 variables
  - High School Diploma/GED Seekers
  - Adult Learners
  - Non-traditional Students
  - Career Changers
  - DegreeCompleters
  - Information for Ethnic Minorities
  - Credit Assessment for Prior Learning
  - Financial Aid for Non-Traditional Students
Distance/Online Learning Variables

• 2 Variables
  • Distance/E-Learning
  • Online Course or Program Catalog
Other Variables

• 14 Variables
  • Information for School Counselors
  • Information for Other Audiences
  • Multi-Media Information
  • Information Saving Toolkit (etc. email, saved college listings, saved applications, etc.)
  • Workforce Development Information
  • News or “What’s New” Feature
  • Post-college Information
  • Web 2.0 Technologies (Blogs, Chats, etc.)
  • Statistical Data
Next Steps

- Identifying appropriate contacts for survey
- In-depth survey for portal administrators for review and evaluation of data
  - “validate” our findings
  - Respond to series of questions
- Telephone follow-up discussions
- “User” survey (parents/students)
- One state “case study”
- Preliminary report detailing findings
- National conference with WICHE in 2010
- Release of final report