
10 Up and Coming College Websites to Watch in 2012

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America is fascinated with college startups. So much so that the college startup has almost become the new American dream. After hearing captivating stories of how websites like facebook and Google were started, it raises the entrepreneurial spirit inside of all of us.

Here is a young group of websites, nearly all founded by college students, who see a problem or a niche in the world of higher education and are dedicating countless hours to their project. Some of the founders have even decided to forgo college all together to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams.

While not all of these websites may be well known yet, many of them offer useful tools and applications that make college life easier and more productive.

Here's a look at some up and coming college websites to watch in 2012:

CourseKit

Three students at the University of Pennsylvania dropped out of school to start CourseKit, a course management system with emphasis on social networking. The team raised \$1 million in funding for the project, which launched in August 2011. The founders want to make course management better than the standard Blackboard, a system they say is always crashing, terribly laid out, and not very user friendly. Their main objective solves a problem that troubles large universities nationwide: They want a 300 person lecture to feel like a 20 person seminar. Getting students to communicate with each other in the classroom is the key to better learning and CourseKit makes this happen.

InClass

InClass is a free mobile app designed to be a student organizer. Students can download the application at iTunes and use it to manage schedules, notes, and assignments. Notes can be taken within the app by text, audio or video and can also be used to record class lectures. InClass is perfect for students focused on productivity and GTD. The app is used worldwide and is available in multiple languages.

Kno

Kno has been around for a few years so it's hard to call them up and coming. However, they recently launched a new business plan, ditching their dual-screen textbook reader aimed at the college crowd. They have since turned their focus to software, designing applications for viewing/managing eTextbooks on devices like the iPad, picking up an additional \$30 million in funding in the process. In addition to viewing textbooks, students are able to take notes, create and take quizzes, and share materials using the Kno application.

Acceptly

Acceptly is a free college prep and application manager geared toward high school students (and their parents). Acceptly breaks down the college application process into manageable steps, using gaming and social features to keep students engaged, while offering suggestions on how to improve chances of acceptance. Acceptly is a fun, yet serious tool that guides students through one of the biggest decisions they will make in their lifetime.

OneSchool

OneSchool is a mobile application for iPhones, Androids, and Windows Mobile Phones that helps students connect to people, places and things around their campus. Founded in February 2011 at Penn State, the application is currently available at 50 colleges. Some of the features in the app include real-time bus tracking, an interactive map of classroom locations and local eateries, a student and staff directory, and campus news. OneSchool is the one app that every first-year college student should have for getting around and staying informed.

Citelighter

Citelighter is your tool for writing papers more efficiently and keeping research thoroughly organized. Citelighter is a downloaded as a toolbar for your web browser to assist with gathering research and citing sources. You can highlight any text on a webpage relevant to your research and "capture" it. The application will automatically grab the necessary bibliographic info from the source. Capture, organize, and create is the simple three step process to gathering sources and outputting them in multiple bibliographic formats (APA, MLA, Chicago) with Citelighter doing most of the work for you.

Swaapr

Three UCSB students created Swaapr in an effort to help college students get the textbook they need without having to pay for it by swapping with other students on campus. The campus-based marketplace is organized onto a map so you are able to see where the person you want to swap with is located. Students can post the books they have and the books they want and connect through Swaapr. Last spring their business idea took first place at Bay Area Startup Weekend, a competition for tech startups. The startup is yet another example of college kids taking time off of college to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams (like CourseKit above).

Internmatch

Equipped with a beautifully designed website and an additional half million in funding, Internmatch allows both internship seekers and employers to search for a perfect match. The website offers searchable internship listings with tools and guides to help with the internship process. On the employer side, the service focuses on helping startups, small businesses, and non-profits find and connect with highly skilled interns and guarantees to match companies with interns in 60 days or their money back.

Piazza

Piazza is an online Q&A platform designed to connect students, TAs, and professors so students in the class can get questions answered quickly anytime and anywhere. The recent release of their mobile app helps keep classrooms even more connected and engaged. Both students and professors can set up Piazza hubs for their classes. Financing from prominent investors and word of mouth have helped the service quickly expand to many colleges across the nation, with a large user base at Stanford and MIT.

Binksty

Binksty is your one-stop shop for managing student loans. Users can access all of their federal and private loans in one spot making the process and organization of paying back loans simpler. With student debt spiraling out of control, Binksty arrives at a much needed time where (sadly) a tool is needed to manage a burdensome debt that needs to be taken seriously.