

A background image showing a person's hands typing on a silver laptop keyboard. To the right of the laptop is a cup of coffee with a latte art design. Further right is a smartphone lying on a white surface. The image is slightly blurred and has a warm, soft light overlay.

HIGHER ED

2017 social media engagement report

PRESENTED BY



A few thousand tweets, snaps, and posts later, another school year is in the books. High fives all around! You reached new heights of engagement and creativity and told your stories with flair & class.

Up&Up and Rival IQ partnered again this year to look at the most engaging universities on social media during the school year.

Where did you rank in 2016-17?

Who was the “most improved”?

And what can we all learn from it?



methodology

We used the same methodology as last year's report. Here's a review:

- Rival IQ's analytics software was used to look at data from 338 Division 1 institutions.
- We analyzed university-level account posts from August 2016-May 2017.
- The cross-channel ranking is determined by engagement on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- "Engagement" is defined as measurable interaction on social media posts, including likes, comments, favorites, retweets, shares, and reactions.
- Rankings were computed using a weighted score of audience, activity, and engagement (with a strong bias toward engagement). There's a fancy formula behind it all, but you can trust us—we have calculators.
- Using this data and weighted formula, Rival IQ generated an overall engagement ranking for each school. The highest ranking universities have high engagement rates with average or better audience size and posting volumes.

Let's see who brought home the top rankings this year.

But first... the “Back to Back” Award goes to... **Northern Arizona University!**



We have to give a shout-out to Northern Arizona University for going “Back to Back” and being the most “engaging” school on social media two years in a row! It’s good to be a Lumberjack!



industry benchmarks

Higher education institutions bring in high levels of engagement across the board, often higher than other industries. For example, according to the Rival IQ 2017 Social Media Benchmark Report, higher education institutions:



3.5% average engagement on Instagram



1.66% average across all industries



0.33% average engagement on Facebook



0.17% average across all industries

[VIEW BENCHMARK REPORT](#)



The background image is a dark, semi-transparent overlay on a photograph. The photograph shows a person's hands holding a smartphone, with the screen facing away from the camera. Below the hands, there is a magazine titled 'UPPERCASE MAGAZINE' with a large circular graphic on its cover. To the right of the magazine, there are two white coffee cups on a wooden tray. The entire scene is set on a dark wooden table.

OVERALL

top 10 schools

OVERALL

top 10 schools

school	facebook rank	twitter rank	instagram rank
1. Northern Arizona University.....	2.....	7.....	1
2. University of South Carolina.....	11.....	1.....	42
3. James Madison University.....	8.....	18.....	22
4. University of Dayton.....	22.....	22.....	9
5. U.S. Military Academy.....	20.....	6.....	29
6. U.S. Naval Academy.....	99.....	10.....	3
7. Gonzaga University.....	7.....	31.....	40
8. Brigham Young University.....	70.....	5.....	12
9. Xavier University.....	27.....	11.....	32
10. East Carolina University.....	24.....	12.....	46



OVERALL

most improved
most consistent

MOST IMPROVED

climbing the ladder

Here are the top 20 schools that had the biggest improvement in engagement from 2016 and 2017, and were in the Top 50 in 2017.

OVERALL MOST IMPROVED

climbing the ladder

school	2017 rank	2016 rank	overall change
1. Mount St. Mary's University.....	33.....	244.....	+211
2. The Citadel.....	30.....	233.....	+203
3. Marist College.....	29.....	196.....	+167
4. Costal Carolina University.....	49.....	191.....	+142
5. University of South Carolina.....	2.....	115.....	+113
6. Stephen F. Austin State University.....	45.....	119.....	+74
7. University of South Dakota.....	43.....	100.....	+57
8. East Carolina University.....	10.....	61.....	+51
9. University of Toledo.....	14.....	63.....	+49
10. Longwood University.....	35.....	81.....	+46
11. Iowa State University.....	23.....	68.....	+45
12. Lafayette College.....	44.....	85.....	+41
13. Belmont University.....	19.....	49.....	+30
14. Wagner College.....	36.....	62.....	+26
15. Monmouth University.....	34.....	59.....	+25
16. California Polytechnic State University.....	12.....	33.....	+21
17. Butler University.....	25.....	45.....	+20
18. Gonzaga University.....	7.....	26.....	+19
19. Saint Francis University.....	32.....	51.....	+19
20. Campbell University.....	13.....	30.....	+17

MOST IMPROVED **welcome to the top 10**

Here are the schools that improved the most from 2016 to 2017 and came into the top 10 for the first time in 2017.

OVERALL MOST IMPROVED

welcome to the top 10

school	2017 rank	2016 rank	overall change
1. University of South Carolina.....	2.....	115.....	+113
2. East Carolina University.....	10.....	61.....	+51
3. Gonzaga University.....	7.....	26.....	+19
4. Brigham Young University.....	8.....	20.....	+12
5. Xavier University.....	9.....	13.....	+4

MOST CONSISTENT

steadily engaging

And here are the schools that stayed in the Top 40 Overall in both 2016 and 2017.

OVERALL MOST CONSISTENT

steadily engaging

school	2017 rank	2016 rank	overall change
1. Northern Arizona University.....	1.....	1.....	0
2. James Madison University.....	3.....	7.....	+4
3. University of Dayton.....	4.....	4.....	0
4. U.S. Military Academy.....	5.....	8.....	+3
5. U.S. Naval Academy.....	6.....	3.....	-3
6. Gonzaga University.....	7.....	26.....	+19
7. Brigham Young University.....	8.....	20.....	+12
8. Xavier University.....	9.....	13.....	+4
9. Virginia Military Institute.....	11.....	25.....	+14
10. California Polytechnic State University.....	12.....	33.....	+21
11. Campbell University.....	13.....	30.....	+17
12. Quinnipiac University.....	15.....	28.....	+13
13. Georgia Institute of Technology.....	16.....	9.....	-7
14. Clemson University.....	17.....	2.....	-15
15. Southern Utah University.....	18.....	21.....	+3
16. Holy Cross.....	20.....	29.....	+9
17. Elon University.....	21.....	27.....	+6
18. Colorado State University.....	22.....	23.....	+1
19. Oregon State University.....	24.....	19.....	-5
20. Duquesne University.....	26.....	14.....	-12
21. Villanova University.....	27.....	12.....	-15
22. William & Mary.....	28.....	24.....	-4
23. University of Iowa.....	31.....	6.....	-25
24. Texas State University.....	37.....	18.....	-19
25. Texas A&M University.....	38.....	10.....	-28



FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT **top 10 schools**

top 10 schools

school	page likes	posts	total number of engagements
1. Colorado State University.....	139,943.....	476.....	733,427
2. Northern Arizona University.....	62,323.....	497.....	395,635
3. Georgia Institute of Technology.....	136,022.....	289.....	656,128
4. Clemson University.....	200,221.....	1,252.....	1,677,290
5. Grambling State University.....	23,684.....	1,328.....	287,281
6. Coastal Carolina University.....	47,287.....	1,058.....	427,601
7. Gonzaga University.....	62,614.....	551.....	303,436
8. James Madison University.....	84,273.....	552.....	398,947
9. The Citadel.....	29,465.....	756.....	223,596
10. Western Michigan University.....	94,245.....	552.....	414,199



FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT

best practices from top performers

FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT

best practices from top performers



**JAMES MADISON
UNIVERSITY**

#8

ON FACEBOOK

#3

OVERALL



James Madison University

March 14 · 🌐

President Alger, Dr. Warner and a car full of #JMUGivingDay spirit! Join the fun and make YOUR gift at givingday.jmu.edu!



James Madison University ranked #8 on Facebook and #3 overall. Here's a great example of why: they're willing to not take themselves too seriously. Like that moment when your President and the Senior VP of Student Affairs are willing to hop in a car and have some fun to promote your Giving Day...

[VIEW POST](#)



FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT

best practices from top performers



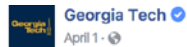
GEORGIA TECH

#3

ON FACEBOOK

#16

OVERALL



April 1 · 🌐
It's far overdue for Georgia Tech to take a stance on this hot button issue. Today, we are.
Read more: <http://c.gatech.edu/2nuD6kQ>

92K Views



One of their most engaging posts was this “official” stance on a hot-button issue (helpful hint: they posted it on April 1.)

VIEW POST



FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT

best practices from top performers



COLORADO STATE
UNIVERSITY

#1

ON FACEBOOK

#22

OVERALL



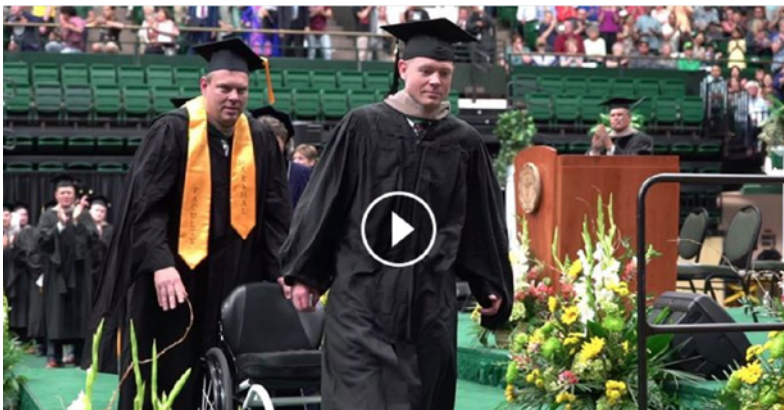
Colorado State University

May 18 at 6:03pm · 🌐

After an accident left Kevin Hoyt paralyzed from the waist down, he was determined to finish his degree online AND walk across the stage to accept his diploma. Congratulations, Kevin 🎓

More about this inspiring Colorado State University Professional MBA Program #RamGrad: <http://col.st/zT2UH>

1.6M Views

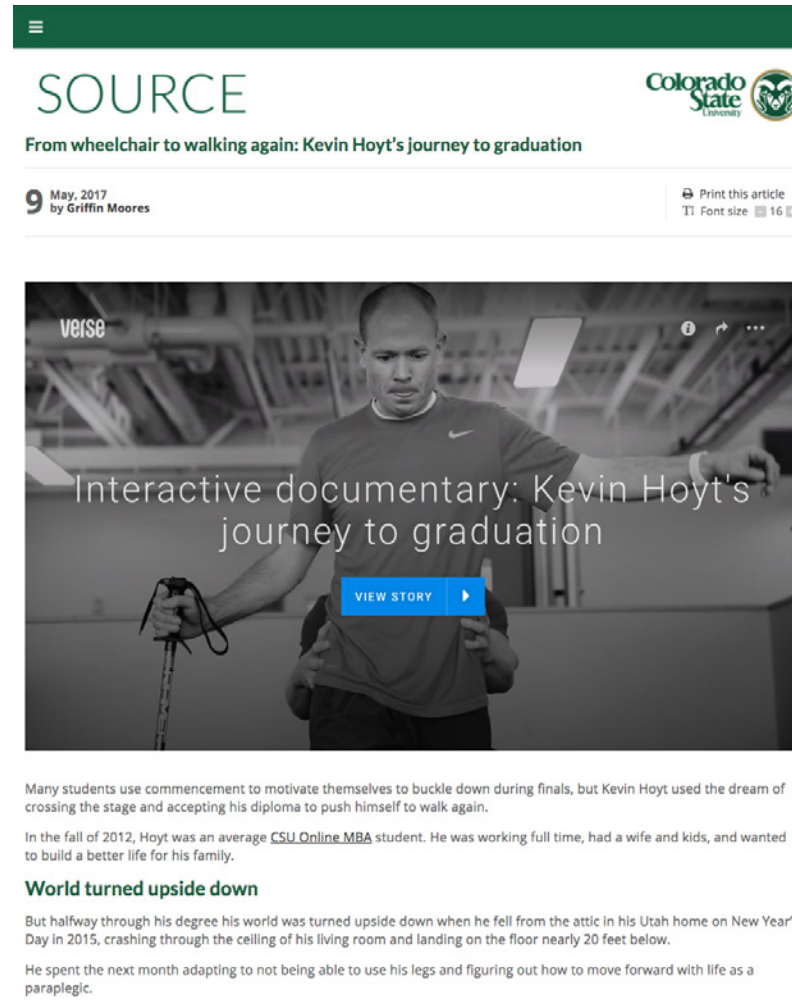


A big part of Colorado State's success on Facebook is likely due to "Kevin's Story." This moving video that tells the story of Kevin Hoyt, an MBA graduate who vowed that he'd walk across the stage even after becoming a paraplegic after an accident. As of early June, this video had 1.6 million views.

VIEW POST



best practices from top performers



The screenshot shows a web page from 'SOURCE' by Colorado State University. The article is titled 'From wheelchair to walking again: Kevin Hoyt's journey to graduation' and is dated May 2017 by Griffin Moores. It features a large video player with a black and white image of Kevin Hoyt, a man with a cane, and the text 'Interactive documentary: Kevin Hoyt's journey to graduation'. Below the video player, there is a 'VIEW STORY' button. The article text begins with 'Many students use commencement to motivate themselves to buckle down during finals, but Kevin Hoyt used the dream of crossing the stage and accepting his diploma to push himself to walk again.' and continues with details about his fall in 2015 and his journey to graduation.

9 May, 2017
by Griffin Moores

Print this article
T1 Font size 16

verse

Interactive documentary: Kevin Hoyt's journey to graduation

VIEW STORY

Many students use commencement to motivate themselves to buckle down during finals, but Kevin Hoyt used the dream of crossing the stage and accepting his diploma to push himself to walk again.

In the fall of 2012, Hoyt was an average [CSU Online MBA](#) student. He was working full time, had a wife and kids, and wanted to build a better life for his family.

World turned upside down

But halfway through his degree his world was turned upside down when he fell from the attic in his Utah home on New Year's Day in 2015, crashing through the ceiling of his living room and landing on the floor nearly 20 feet below.

He spent the next month adapting to not being able to use his legs and figuring out how to move forward with life as a paraplegic.

CSU did a great job of adapting the story into an interactive documentary for an in-depth look.

VIEW STORY





TWITTER ENGAGEMENT

top 10 schools

top 10 schools

school	followers	tweets	replies
1. University of South Carolina.....	144,870.....	781.....	471
2. Oregon State University.....	55,732.....	281.....	1,063
3. Coastal Carolina University.....	13,369.....	2,010.....	99
4. Grambling State University.....	6,816.....	813.....	223
5. Brigham Young University.....	51,231.....	587.....	444
6. U.S. Military Academy.....	57,763.....	293.....	15
7. Northern Arizona University.....	30,721.....	3,087.....	510
8. University of Toledo.....	53,631.....	451.....	489
9. Southern Utah University.....	3,470.....	755.....	224
10. U.S. Naval Academy.....	42,033.....	300.....	54

A person wearing a white jacket is holding a smartphone. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent orange overlay. The text is positioned in the center-left area of the image.

TWITTER ENGAGEMENT

best practices from top performers



best practices from top performers



**OREGON STATE
UNIVERSITY**

#2

ON TWITTER

#24

OVERALL

A big part of Oregon State's success on Twitter is their friendly, conversational tone. They talk like a real person, engaging with students & friends with humor and authenticity.



[VIEW PAGE](#)



best practices from top performers



They also seized the moment recently to support the OSU institutional re-brand.

VIEW POST





best practices from top performers



XAVIER UNIVERSITY

#11

ON TWITTER

#9

OVERALL



When Xavier & Gonzaga played each other in the Elite Eight of the 2017 NCAA Tournament, a friendly bet came together between the colleges, and Xavier made good on it when Gonzaga prevailed in the game. Friendly interaction with other colleges can be a blast, especially around tourney time.

[VIEW PAGE](#)



TWITTER ENGAGEMENT

best practices from top performers



#9
ON TWITTER


#18
OVERALL



These two posts are great examples of the types of posts that always engage: Presidents being human (my apologies, Presidents) and what we like to call "Pictures of Adorable Dogs: Always a Good Idea."

[VIEW PAGE](#)





INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT **top 10 schools**

top 10 schools

school	followers	posts	avg. engagement rate per post
1. Northern Arizona University.....	28,343.....	440.....	7.19%
2. California Polytechnic State University.....	28,774.....	286.....	7.98%
3. U.S. Naval Academy.....	72,947.....	282.....	7.25%
4. University of Vermont.....	21,112.....	241.....	7.86%
5. The George Washington University.....	21,179.....	179.....	8.75%
6. Virginia Military Institute.....	9,254.....	249.....	10.65%
7. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.....	69,123.....	255.....	6.39%
8. Wake Forest University.....	21,824.....	387.....	6.34%
9. University of Dayton.....	19,159.....	185.....	7.89%
10. Elon University.....	18,904.....	148.....	9.11%

A woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a plaid jacket and large hoop earrings, is holding a smartphone up to take a photo of a textured wall. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey filter.

INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT

best practices from top performers

INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT

best practices from top performers



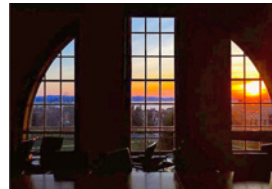
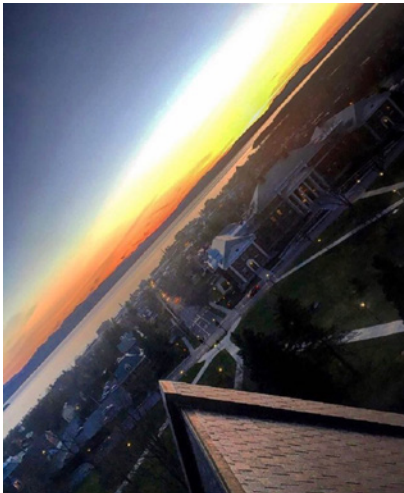
UNIVERSITY OF
VERMONT

#4

ON INSTAGRAM

#55

OVERALL



This sample of user-submitted images for Instagram posts shows an example of why they're doing so well. They've empowered their students to capture beautiful images of campus, and high engagement follows.

[VIEW PAGE](#)



INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT

best practices from top performers



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY

#8

ON INSTAGRAM

#47

OVERALL



One way Wake excels at driving engagement is interacting with & welcoming their incoming class as they're accepted and visit campus. Engagement grows exponentially as more people join the conversation, especially around the joy of getting accepted and starting a new chapter in life.

[VIEW PAGE](#)



INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT

best practices from top performers



UNIVERSITY of



DAYTON

THE UNIVERSITY
OF DAYTON

#9

ON INSTAGRAM

#4

OVERALL



Staying connected with students over the summer is a solid way to build engagement and show that your school provides opportunities all year long.

[VIEW PAGE](#)



where do you rank?

Curious where you ranked this time around?

[VIEW THE FULL REPORT >](#)



about Up&Up

Up&Up is a higher education marketing agency in Greenville, SC. We create brand experiences, marketing strategies, and creative to lift colleges & universities above the noise. Our work helps the perfect student find you, engages alumni like never before, and drives giving to new heights. We believe connecting the right student to the right school not only provides a perfect college experience, it makes them fans for life. This isn't marketing for the next four years, it's marketing for the next forty.

Learn more at upandup.agency

about Rival IQ

Rival IQ delivers digital marketing analytics with a competitive and comparative context. Our goal is to equip you with a toolkit so you can uncover new opportunities, identify trends, and track results across all major social channels and the web. The insights in our reports help you set tangible benchmarks, make data-driven marketing decisions, improve results, and better understand competitors.

Learn more at rivaliq.com

A background image showing a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. To the right of the laptop is a cup of coffee with a heart-shaped latte art. Further right, a smartphone is lying on a surface. The image is dimmed to serve as a background for the text.

HIGHER ED

2017 social media engagement report

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