



Information Architecture Tree Testing

June 2021





Highlights

Total Participants

16

Average Time
Spent

4:28

Average Success Rate

66%

Average Directness

75%



High Success Rate Tasks

100%

2. You are researching financial aid for postsecondary education, and need help filling out the FAFSA. Where would you go?

88%

3. You are a high school student trying to decide if going to college is for you. Where would you go?

94%

7. You are searching for colleges and schools close to your home. Where would you go?



Average Success Rate Tasks

63%

4. This is your first time on the website and you would like to find information about the website owner, the information provided, and how to contact the creators. Where would you go?

69%

9. You would like to know how to apply for college. Where would you go?

69%

6. You are trying to figure out the cost of attending the college of your choice. Where would you find that information?

63%

10. You are a high school student who wants to take the next step in the college application process. Where would you go to learn about this process?



Lowest Success Rate Tasks

50%

1. You are a parent trying to understand how you can support your child as they prepare to attend college. Where would you go to learn about this?

31%

5. You are a student who would like to go to college but has not decided what to study yet. Where do you start?

38%

8. You would like access to grants. How would you customize your profile?

Analysis & Recommendations

Low & Average Success Rate Tasks





Average Success Rate Tasks

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Average Success Rate Tasks: Findings & Analysis

- Questions 9 & 10 both asked the user to find information regarding the application process, and in both cases, the majority of people who took the wrong first step went to 'Plan to Complete' first
 - ◆ Indicates that people are unsure what to expect in 'Plan to Complete'
- When asked to find information about the site owner (#4), almost everyone went to 'About' (*the right answer*), but most people kept digging from there. If they actually saw the 'About' landing page, they'd see the site owner and look no further.
 - ◆ We've since added a 'Contact' option to the main navigation menu
- When asked about the cost of attending college (#6), all participants took the correct first step, and 4 of the 5 incorrect answers selected the 'Net Price Calculator,' which could've been considered a wrong answer

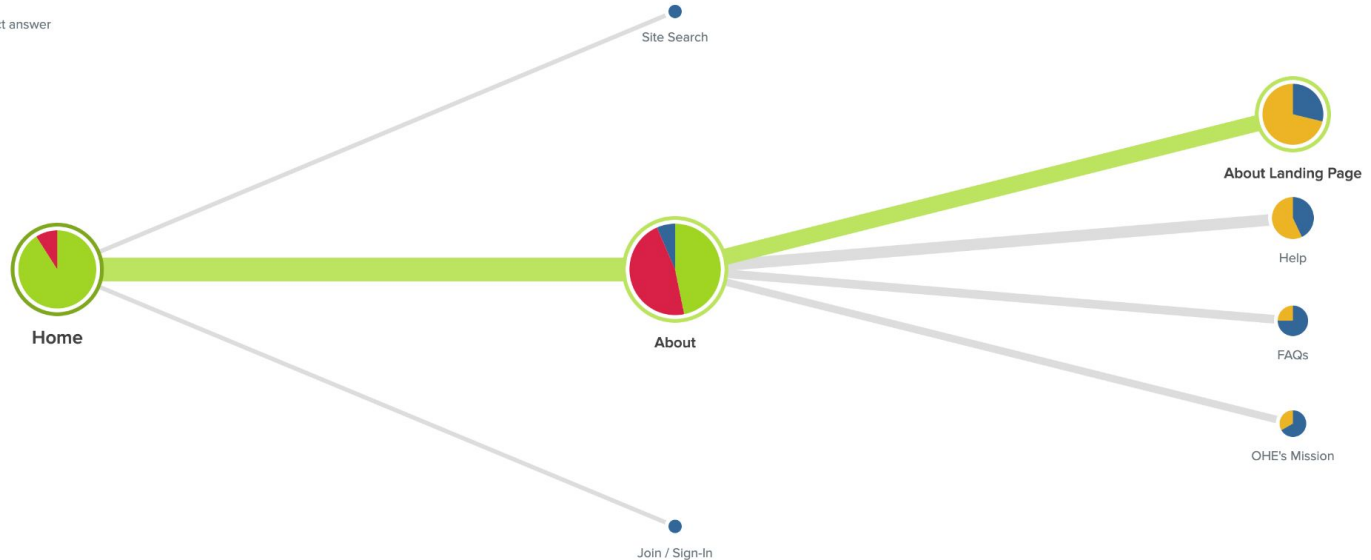
4. This is your first time on the website and you would like to find information about the website owner, the information provided, and how to contact the creators. Where would you go?

Pies

- Went down the right path
- Went down the wrong path
- Went back
- Nominated as correct answer
- Skipped question

Lines

- Root node
- Correct path
- Incorrect path





4. This is your first time on the website and you would like to find information about the website owner, the information provided, and how to contact the creators. Where would you go?

Findings:

- Almost everyone took the right first step, but they kept digging.
- In the full site experience, users may stop at the 'About' landing page as that would provide them with the information they're looking for

Analysis & Actions:

- In hindsight, we would've considered anything under 'About' correct
- We've since added 'Contact' to the main navigation menu



9. *You would like to know how to apply for college. Where would you go?*

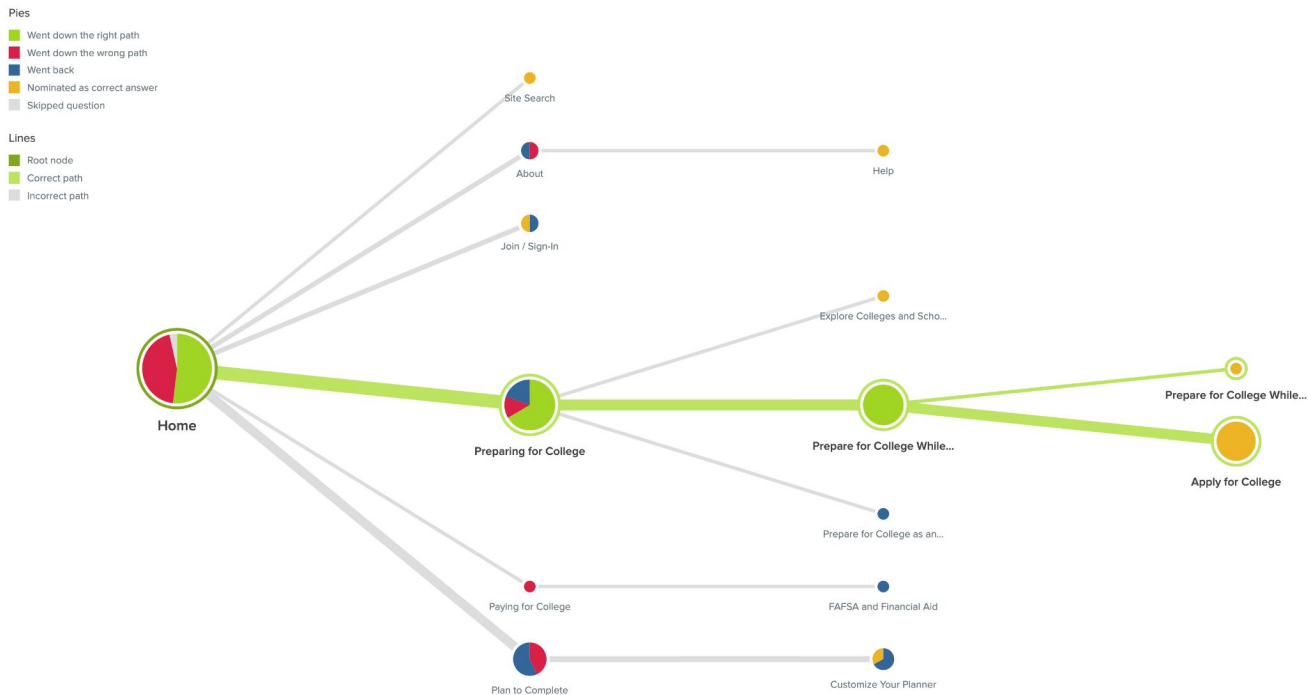
Findings:

- Most people took the right first step to 'Preparing for College'
- Many went to 'Plan to Complete,' which would include internal links for applications resources
- People may have been unsure what 'Plan to Complete' means

Analysis & Actions:

- Ensure that the 'Plan to Complete' space includes resources to help with the application process
- Consider rebranding 'Plan to Complete' to more clearly specify its purpose

10. You are a high school student who wants to take the next step in the college application process. Where would you go to learn about this process?





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Findings:

- Just like question 9, most people took the right first step to 'Preparing for College'
- Also like question 9, many people went to 'Plan to Complete'
- Further evidence indicating that people may have been unsure what 'Plan to Complete' means

Analysis & Actions:

- Ensure that the 'Plan to Complete' space includes resources to help with the application process
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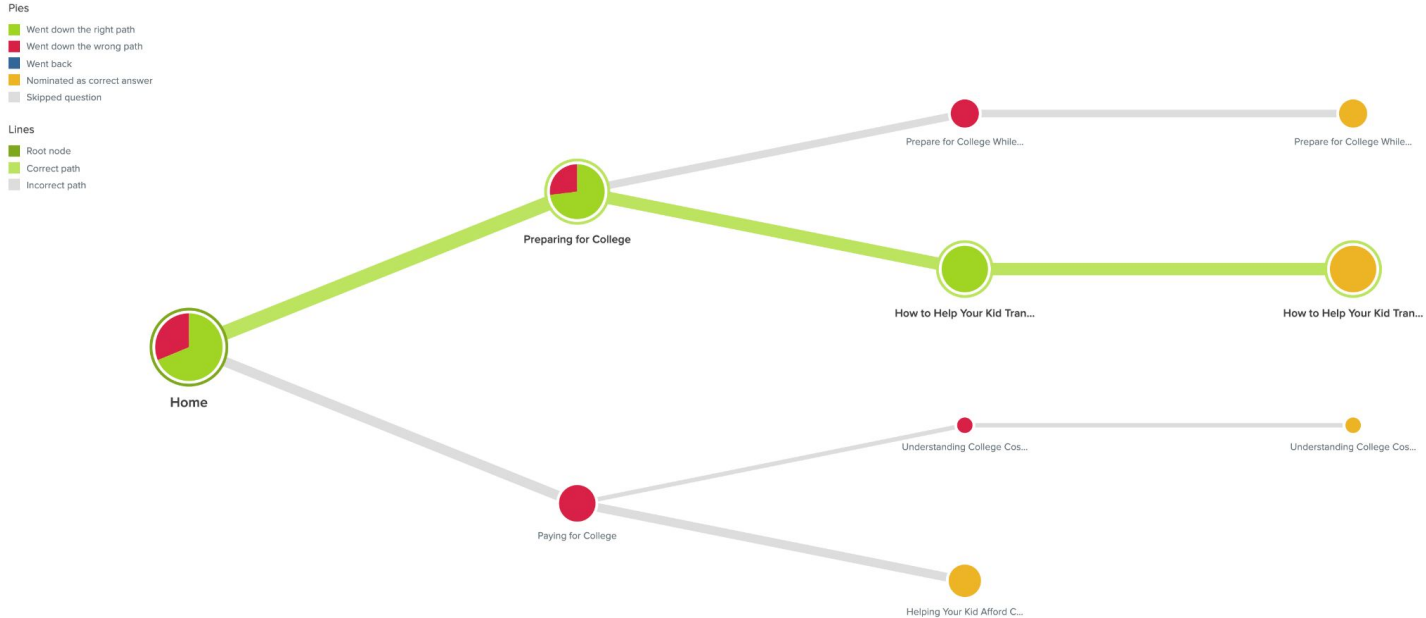
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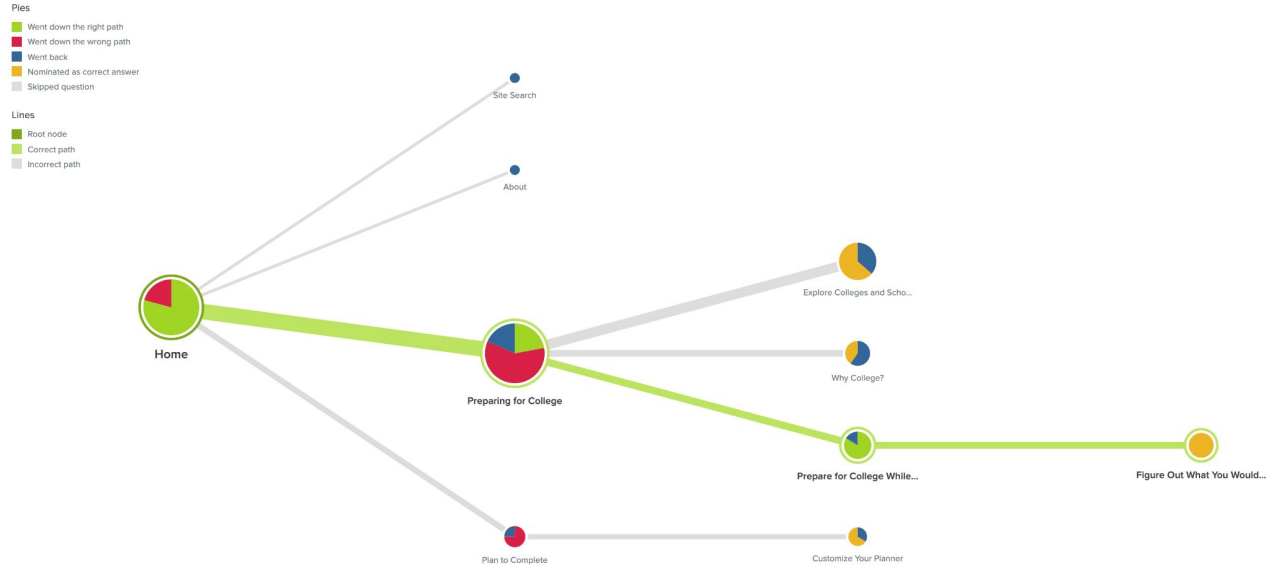
Findings:

- 69% of people still took the right first step
- Persona of a parent helping to prepare their child for college evoked financial concerns (understandably)
- The verb 'prepare' caught users' eyes, and many landed on pages with the word 'prepare' in the title

Analysis & Actions:

- No need for changes here

5. You are a student who would like to go to college but has not decided what to study yet. Where do you start?





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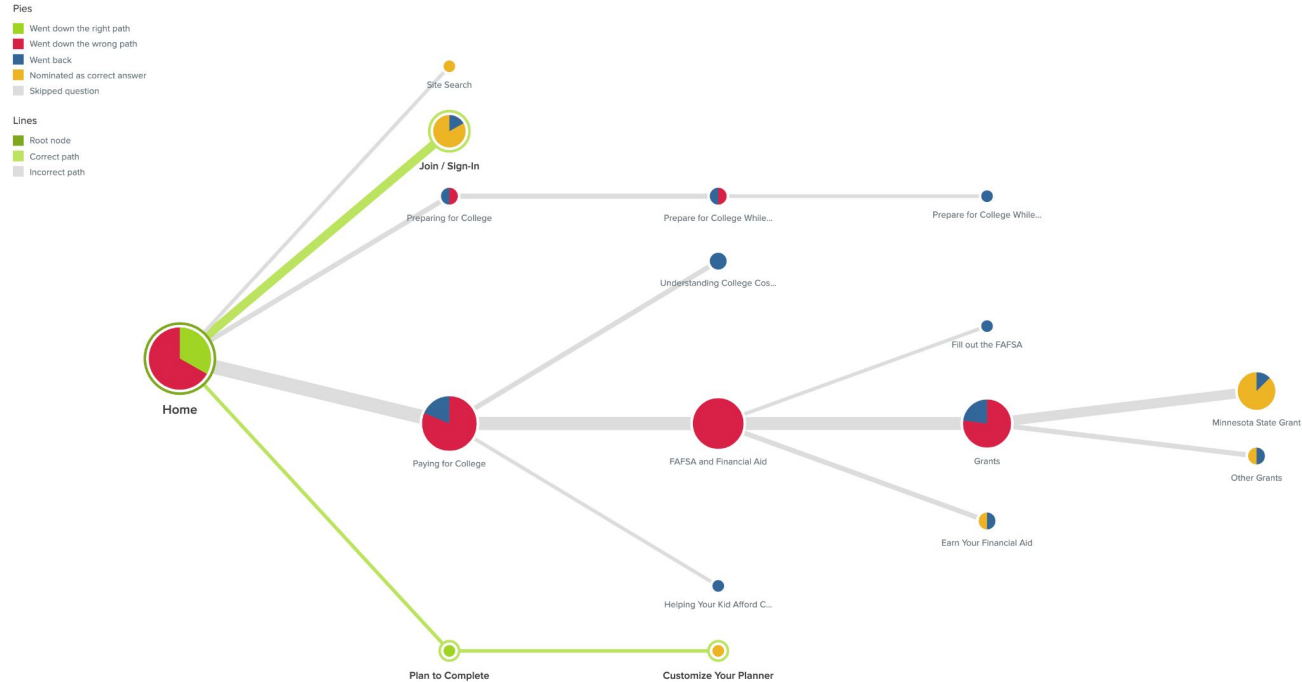
Findings:

- Most people took the right first step, but many of them went on to 'Explore Colleges and Schools'
- Some people went first to 'Plan to Complete,' again, indicating that they weren't sure what they might find there

Analysis & Actions:

- We want to encourage traffic to 'Explore Colleges and Schools,' so this is a positive destination for these visitors
- Consider rebranding 'Plan to Complete' to more clearly specify its purpose, and include resources for students unsure of what to study

8. You would like access to grants. How would you customize your profile?





8. *You would like access to grants. How would you customize your profile?*

Findings:

- Most people went down a path looking for financial aid and grant information
- Wording of the question and the emphasis on grants threw people off

Analysis & Actions:

- People found grant information very successfully!
- No need for changes, this was in hindsight a tricky question



Key Finding: 'Plan to Complete' was the most common incorrect first step that people took

What it means:

- People are unsure what 'Plan to Complete' means, and they look there for information on the application process and for guidance on areas of study

Recommendations:

- Re-brand 'Plan to Complete' to more clearly specify its purpose (a personalized planning tool)
- Make sure that it includes links to resources guiding the user on the journey of applying for college and figuring out what they want to study



Key Finding: 'Plan to Complete' was the most common incorrect first step that people took

Ideas for rebranding:

- Start your Journey here!
- Let us help you!
- Start here!
- Don't know where to start? Let us help!
-  is here to help!
- Plan your Journey
- Plan your Education