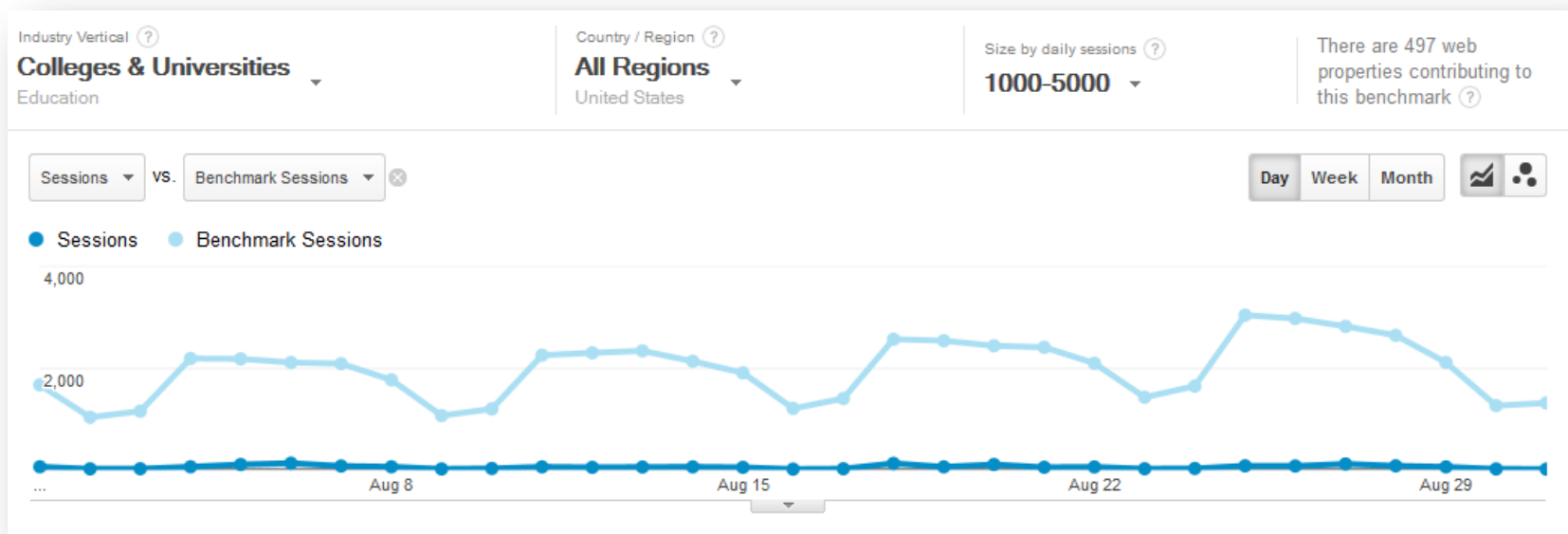




The Higher Ed Web Analytics Monthly Benchmarking Report

Google Analytics Benchmarking **August 2014** Data Compiled by Higher Ed Experts



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Background information

In 2010-2011 Higher Ed Experts ran a 1-year long project to collect benchmarking data for universities & colleges websites on 12 relevant metrics¹.

The goal of this research was to provide useful data and establish the habit of checking and using Google Analytics data for web teams working in institutions of higher education. According to our 2010 survey on the State of Web Analytics in Higher Education (n=399), 72% spent less than 2 hours per week on Analytics.

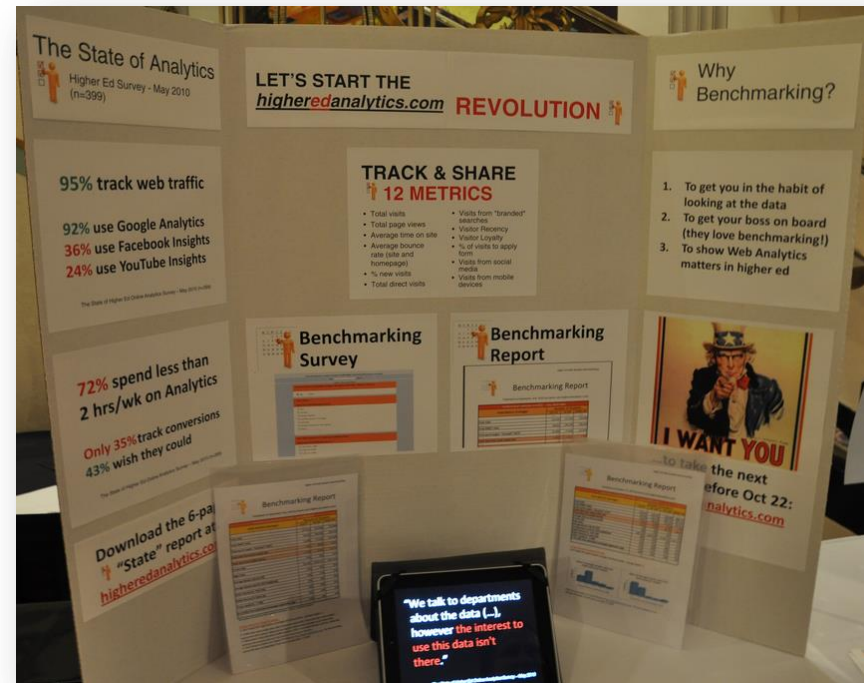
During the 2010-2011 Benchmarking Project, about 100 institutions self-reported their data for 12 common metrics via an online monthly survey. The data was then processed and compiled into a report breaking down metrics into 3 groups based on institution size (FTE students).

In September 2014 Google Analytics introduced a new set of 3 benchmarking reports (Channels, Devices & Location) for 1,600 industry verticals – including a vertical of its own for all Colleges & Universities web properties.

This new set of reports has thus enabled institutions to compare their data for a few metrics with benchmarked values from similar websites segmented by location (country or state) and by traffic size (7 different increasing ranges of average daily sessions – called “buckets”).

According to our 2012 Survey on the State of Web Analytics in Higher Education (n=344), 97% of universities and colleges use Google Analytics to track their web metrics. This high adoption rate confers to the new Google Analytics Benchmarking Reports even more relevance and value for higher education.

¹ <http://higheredanalytics.com/analytics/index.php/2010/10/12-metrics-explained/>



Why an industry-wide benchmarking report?

While the new Google Analytics Benchmarking Reports let website managers compare their website metrics to benchmarked averages using the criteria mentioned above (average daily sessions & location), they don't provide easy access to benchmarked data at the industry level across the 7 data buckets.

Yet, industry-wide benchmarked data for a vertical as homogenous as higher education can be very useful. While it might not be as actionable for the data analyst as the available segmented reports, it can help raise awareness by focusing the attention of decision-makers in higher education on the big picture with fewer data-points as well as some guidance. Moreover, the segmented buckets provided by Google Analytics Benchmarking Reports are not broken down by institution size – making an apple-to-apple comparison impossible.

With enough interest and participation from the higher ed web community, the Higher Ed Experts team hopes to gather enough data to come up with the missing piece to make this benchmarked data more relevant for marketers and communicators in higher education: a working formula to infer the size of an institution given the size of its web traffic, thus providing a more relevant and usable big picture for the benchmarked data provided by Google Analytics. See how you can help in this section: [“Let's find the missing piece of the higher education benchmarking puzzle!”](#)

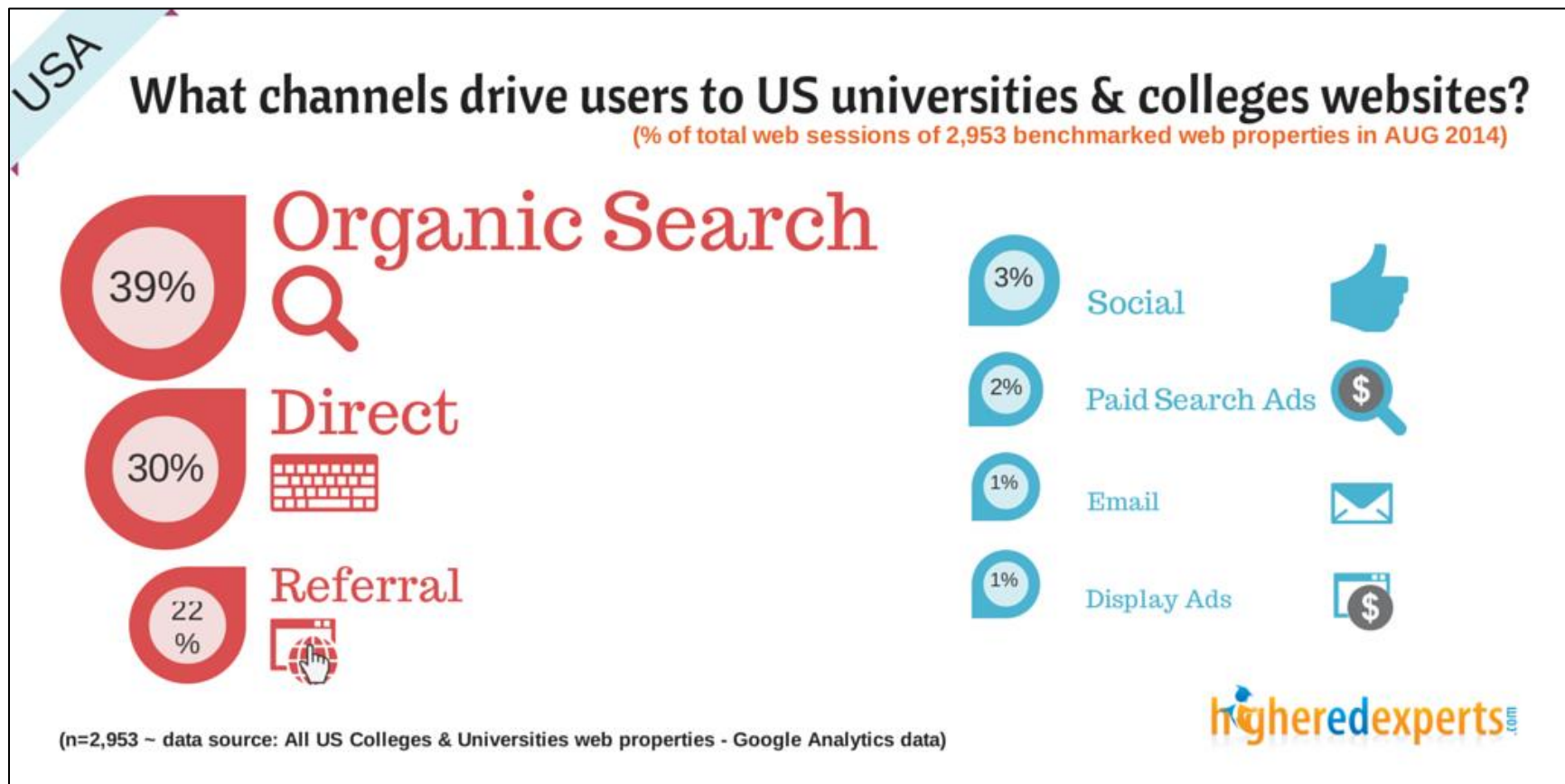
Report methodology

The data compiled for this monthly report was downloaded on September 25 & 26, 2014 from Google Analytics Benchmarking Reports.

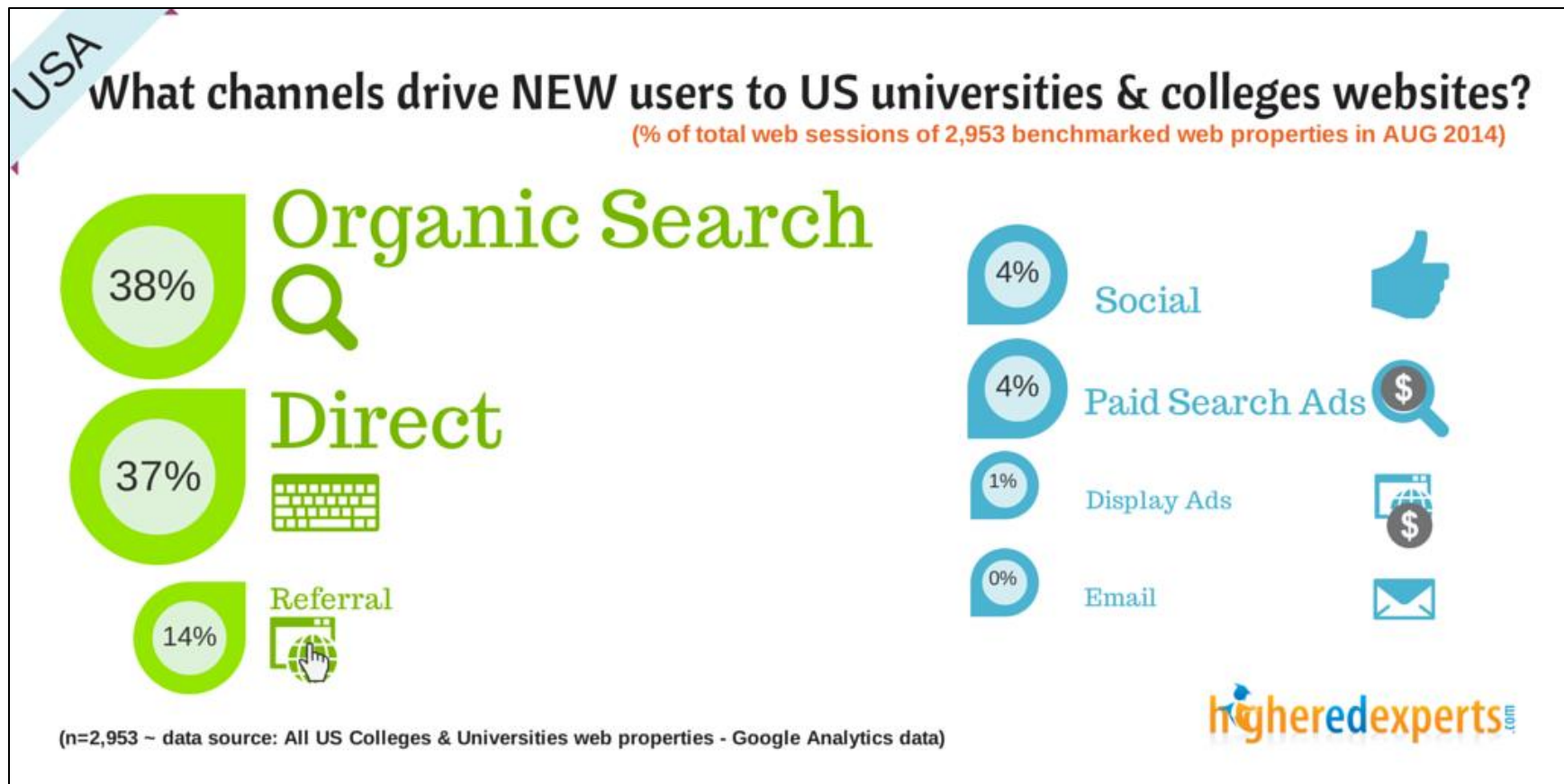
The compiled, scrubbed and analyzed data spans from **August 1st to August 31st, 2014** for the 7 GA buckets of the 5 following countries:

1. USA (2,953 benchmarked web properties)
2. Canada (1,620 benchmarked web properties)
3. UK (1,614 benchmarked web properties)
4. Australia (1,209 benchmarked web properties)
5. France (1,147 benchmarked web properties)

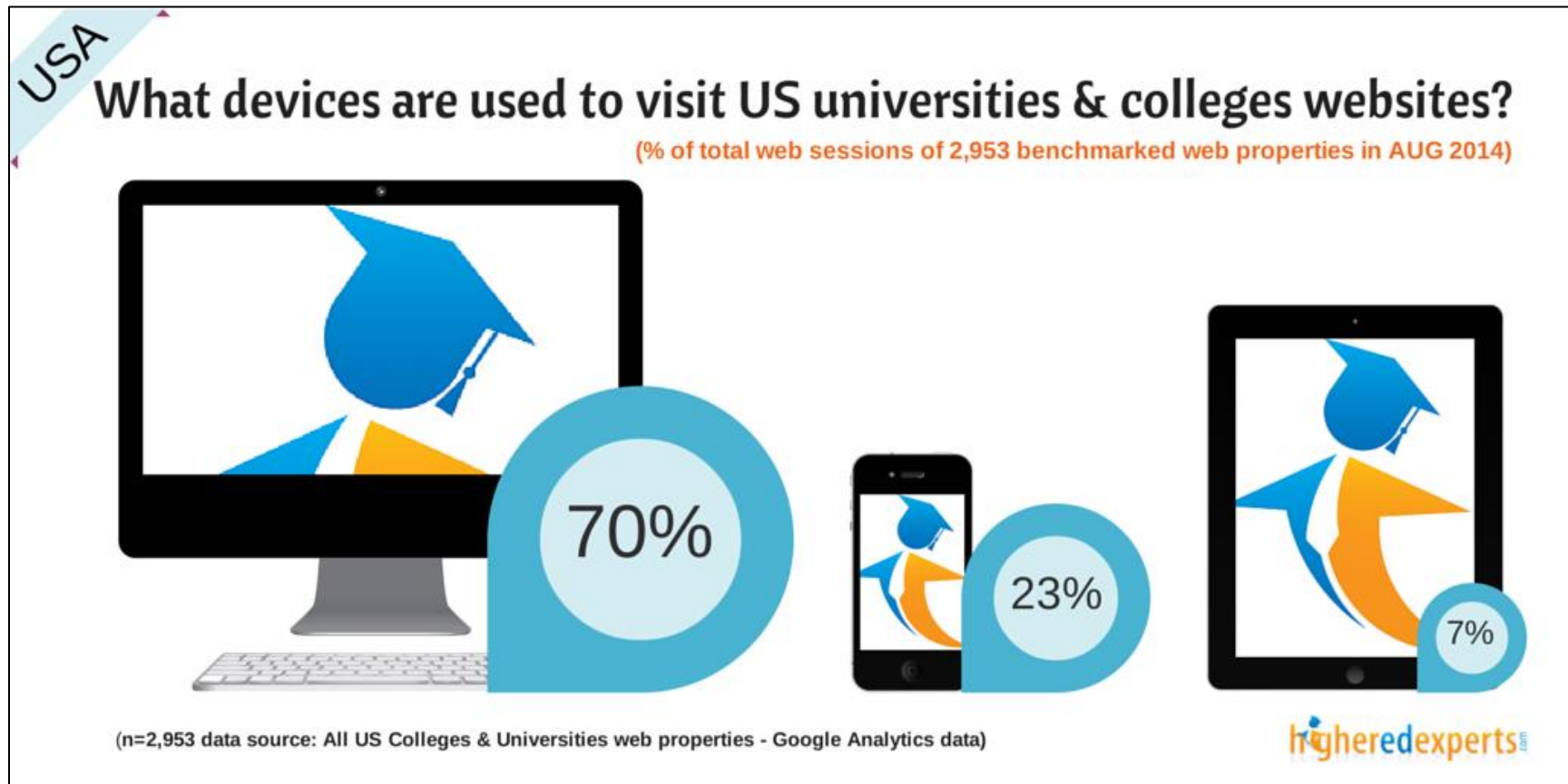
What channels drive visitors to US colleges & universities websites?



What channels drive NEW visitors to US colleges & universities websites?

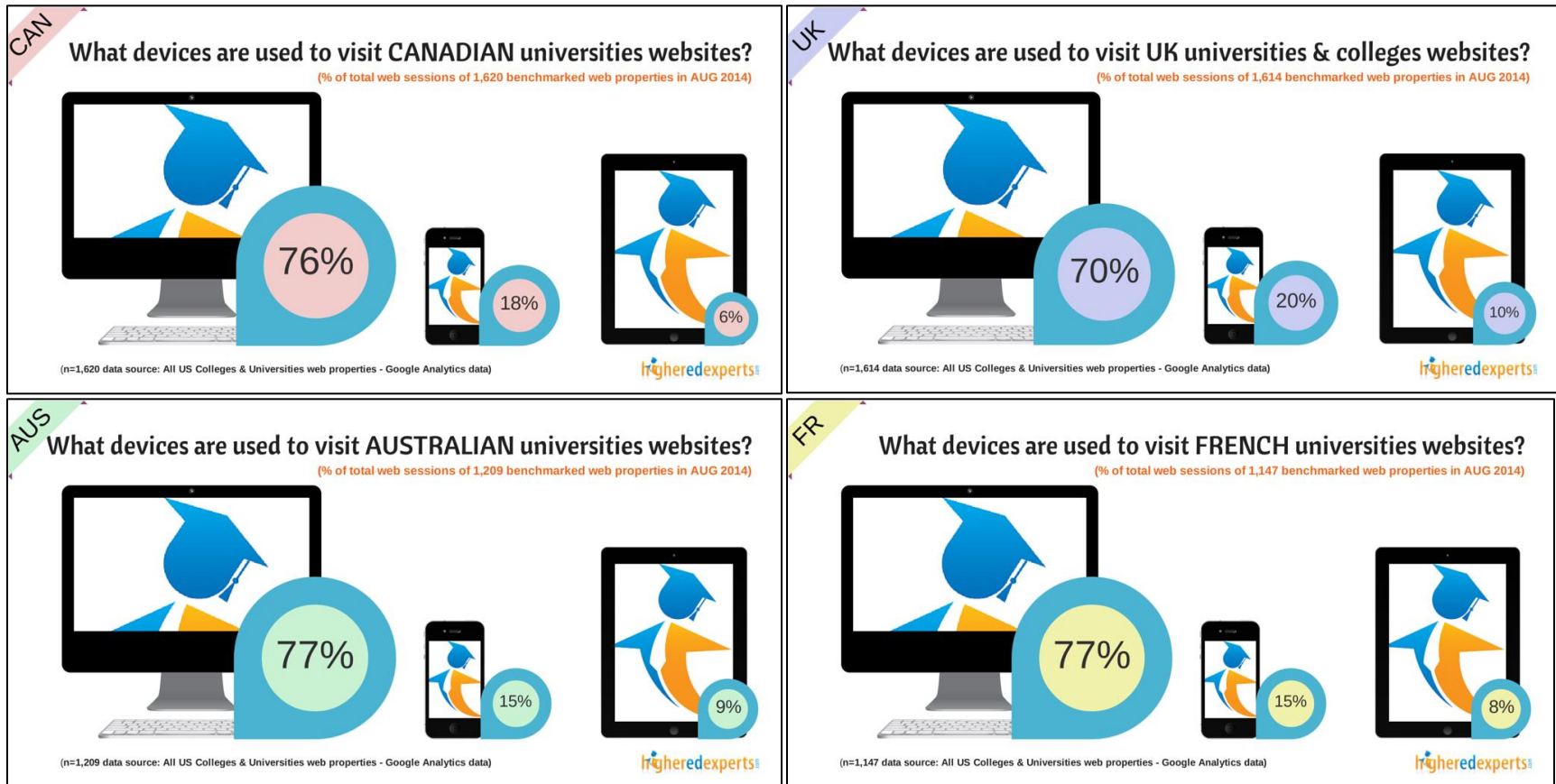


What devices are used to browse US colleges & universities websites?

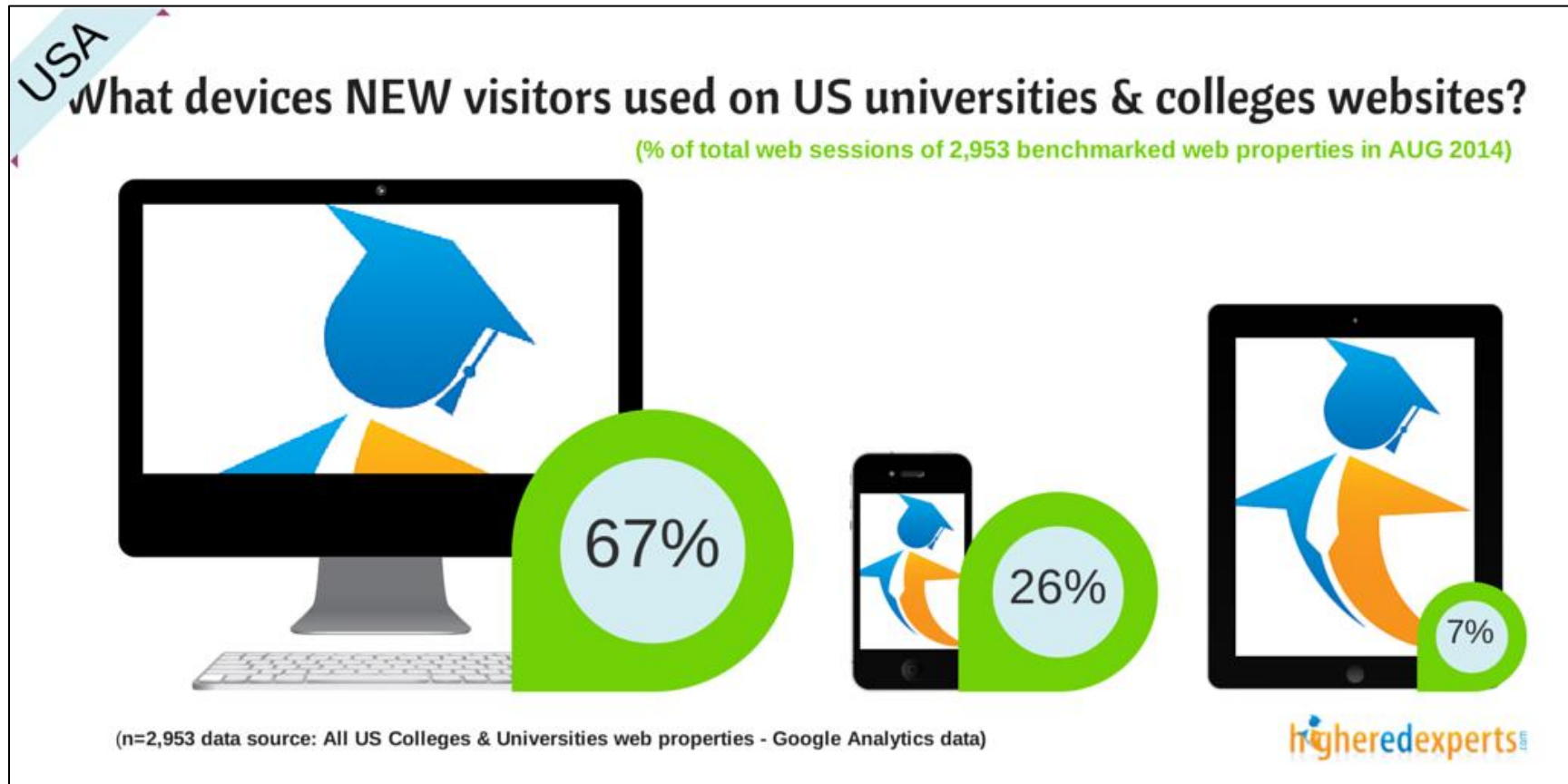


According to Higher Ed Experts 2013 survey on the State of the Mobile and Responsive Web in Higher Education (n=174), mobile phones were responsible for 9.3% of the total web traffic in 2012 and tablets for 3%.

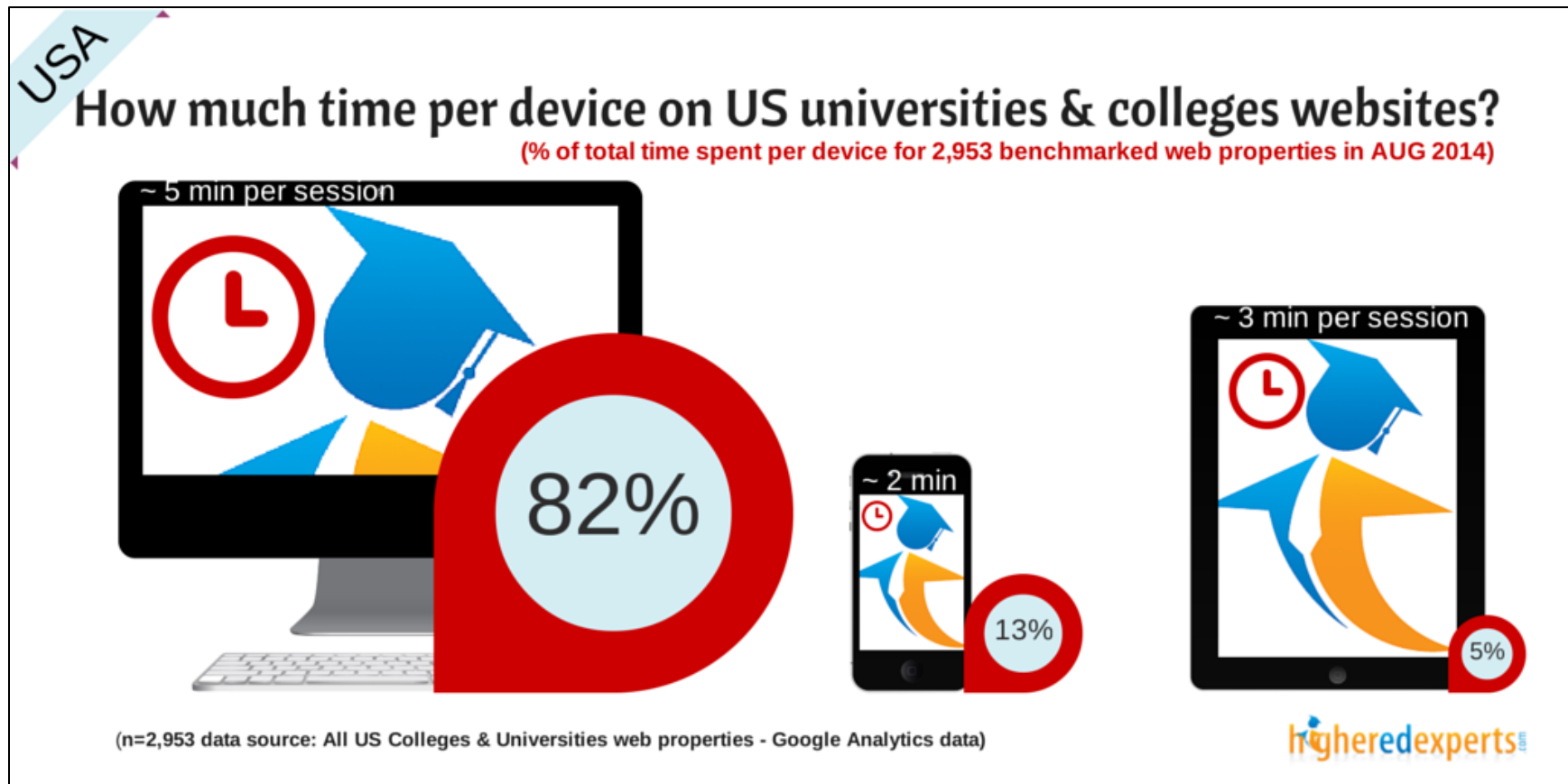
What's the device breakdown in Canada, the UK, Australia & France?



What devices are used by NEW visitors to browse US colleges & universities websites?



How engaged are visitors of US colleges & universities websites depending of the device they use?



How to access Benchmarking Reports in Google Analytics? [VIDEO]

Just follow this 4-minute screencast (<http://youtu.be/TPuRMBaE0jg>) to set and access your segmented benchmarking reports for your website.



Let's find the missing piece of the higher education benchmarking puzzle!

Help us by taking 1 minute to complete a 2-question online survey to report your:

- 1) **total number of monthly sessions for Sep 1st to Sep 30, 2014** (click on this Google Analytics Report link to easily retrieve the value <https://www.google.com/analytics/web/template?uid=83JN5qR5QiiKjvcnANPtVA>)
- 2) **institution size** (FTE student population).

Here's the link to this short online survey: <http://buff.ly/1DVdSzv>



Higher Ed Experts is a professional online school for people working in universities & colleges.

Founded in 2007 by Karine Joly, the school has offered live & on-demand online conferences since its launch as well as 4-week & 8-week instructor-led certificate online courses since 2011.

Higher Ed Experts professional certificate programs now count more than 500 alums in the US, Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, the Middle East, etc. - all digital marketing and communication professionals working in institutions of higher education.

As part of its mission, Higher Ed Experts has been authoring and publishing research reports on the use of Web Analytics in higher education since 2010.

Got questions?

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