

Model of Excellence

Great Schools.net

Company:

Business Model:

GreatSchools Inc.
San Francisco, CA 94105
www.greatschools.net

Mixed Models:
Licensed for Distribution

Business Model

The **Mixed Models: Licensed for Distribution** model generally involves the data publisher creating a database that is licensed to third parties for re-distribution, often on a free basis, with the third party generally using the content as a site attraction that can often be monetized through advertising.

Overview

The non-profit venture GreatSchools.net allows parents to learn about and compare any elementary, middle or high schools in the nation. Data, which are obtained from state education departments and the National Center for Education Statistics, are integrated and normalized. Users can look at basic school statistics, student and teacher demographics and test results.

What makes GreatSchools.net particularly interesting is that it rates all public and charter schools on a 1-10 scale, based on test scores. Further, there is a strong user-contributed content component, with parents encouraged to both comment on and rate the school. It's also possible to do side-by-side comparisons of schools, a great feature for those trying to choose between certain schools. Finally, school administrators are encouraged to provide supplemental school information. This adds richness to the dataset, and keeps the site from being a dry recitation of statistics.

The site is very valuable to parents moving into a new community (which is why it is licensed by some sites with a real estate focus), but also to parents with a choice of schools within their own communities. In addition to its site content, GreatSchools also offers a rich family of email newsletters: monthly updates about individual schools, grade-specific advice to parents to keep their children on-track in the classroom, and advice on more general educational and school-related topics.

The site currently attracts more than 33 million users annually, an estimated reach into 33% of the nation's K-12 households. The site provides co-branded education sites to third parties that include Yahoo!, MSN Encarta, DisneyFamily.com, Los Angeles Times and many others. In addition to its licensing activities, the site contains a limited amount of advertising, but as a non-profit also attracts foundation and individual donor support.