



HOUSING THE **NEXT** GENERATION

2014 NAA STUDENT HOUSING
CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION



Technology and Your Leasing Staff

Learning What Works and What Doesn't

Dave Luciano, UX Designer, On-Site

Christine Richards, Senior VP & COO, EdR

How do you know your leasing solution works?



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**How do you know your
students are happy with
your leasing solution?**



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Agenda

- Introductions
- Current Tech Landscape
- What is User Experience?
- Application of UX Methodology to EdR's Online Leasing
 - What works?
 - What doesn't?



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ABOUT US



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Christine Richards

- Senior Vice President & COO
- Has served in many roles at EdR since 2001
 - Currently oversees the operations of EdR's housing portfolio and directs the management services division.
- Studied education at the University of Memphis



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Dave Luciano

- User Experience Designer
- At On-Site for a year and a half
 - In charge of injecting the user into our product design process.
- Studied human-computer interactions at Stanford University



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CURRENT TECH LANDSCAPE



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What technology is out there?



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80%

of teens 12-17 own a computer



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Pew Internet & American Life Project

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93%

of teens 12-17 can access a
computer



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What about mobile?



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83%

of teens 14-17 own a cellphone



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44%

of teens 14-17 own a *smartphone*



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22%

of teens 14-17 own a tablet



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26%

of teens *12-13* own a tablet
(may be more indicative of the future of tablets)



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Counter Intuitively...

- In a 2013 study on the college search process...
 - **82%** of respondents said they'd prefer to view a college website on a PC/laptop.
 - **68%** said they've viewed a college website on their mobile device.



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Is mobile not a concern for student housing?



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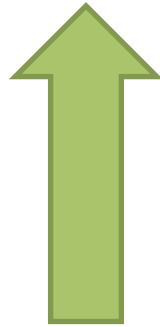
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On-Site's Renter Traffic, 2013



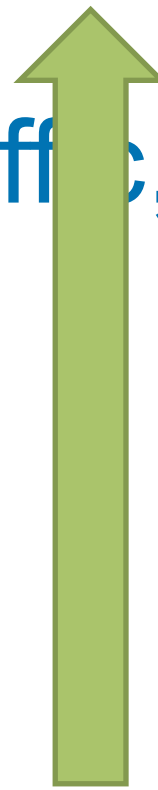
10%

Desktop



75%

Tablet



275%

Mobile



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How about those stats for undergrads?

- **90%** of undergrads own a laptop
- **42%** own a desktop (which is trending down)
- **72%** own a smartphone
- **26%** own a tablet



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What sites are popular?



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Top 5 Websites, US

Google™

facebook®

You Tube

YAHOO!

amazon.com



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The Landscape

- Students are using technology left and right.
 - And increasingly so. Your future renters are adopting at younger ages.
- Mobile is essential.
- Website experiences are reaching new levels of delight.
 - And your renters expect your site to match.



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**How do we get a leasing
solution that fits into
this technology trend
and delights students?**



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Answer: User Experience



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USER EXPERIENCE?



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Sooooo... User Experience?



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User Experience = UX

“User experience encompasses all aspects of the end-user’s interaction with the company, its services, and its products.”

- Nielsen Norman Group

<http://www.nngroup.com/articles/definition-user-experience/>

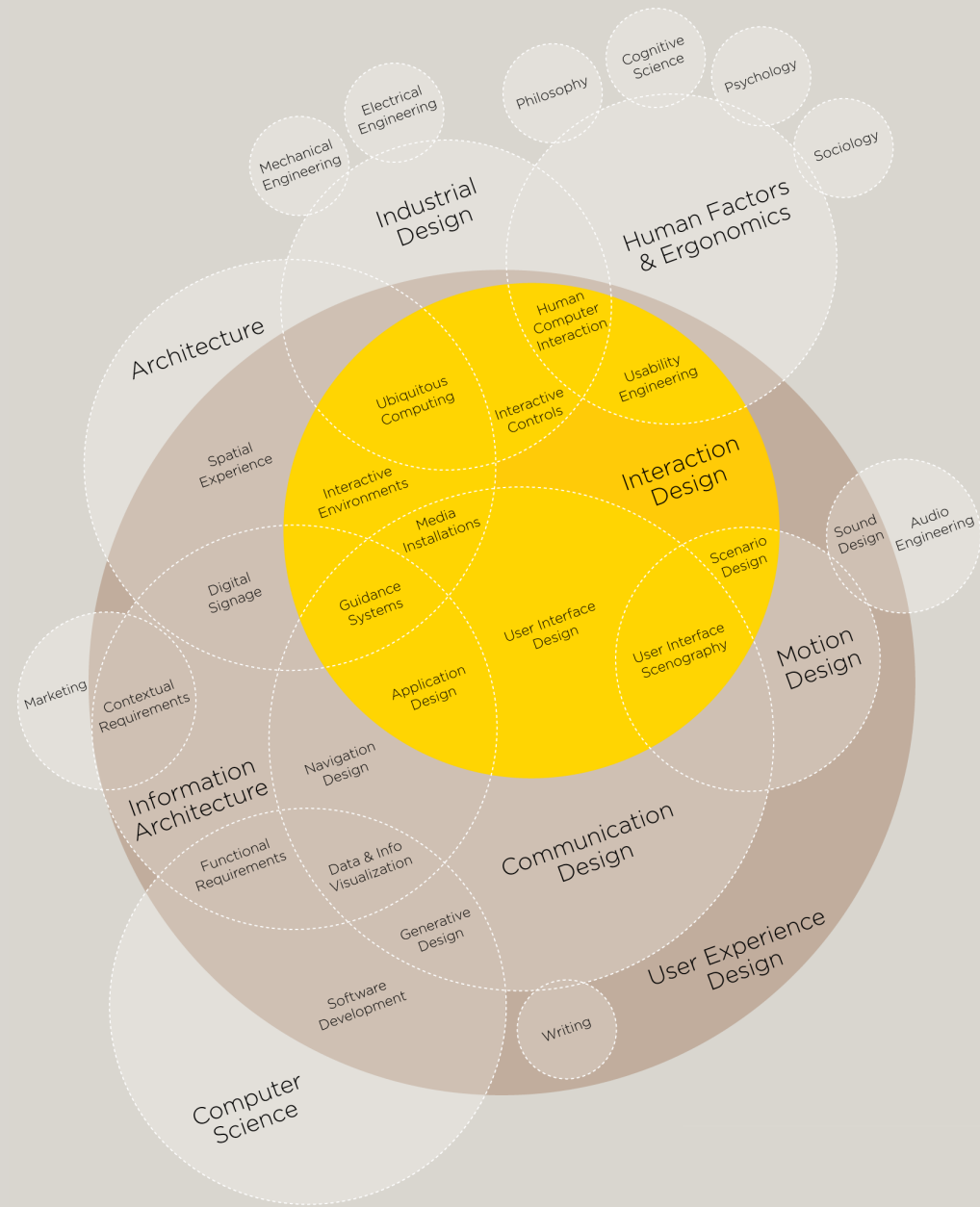


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How do we use these disciplines?



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Two Ways:



Applying Design
Research



User Testing



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Design Guidelines

- Guidelines backed up by research.
- Used by designers as a checklist to find places where their product can improve.



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Guideline Example

- “Recognition rather than recall.”
- Have your users select from a set of options, rather than make up their options.



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```
E:\>hpn
hpn: An HP-style command-line RPN calculator.
Version & build: 1.1.0-2013-08-21-2050-alpha
```

```
This program comes with absolutely no warranty:
For details type [w]. This is free software:
You are welcome to redistribute it.
Type [W] for complete terms & conditions.
Copyright (C) C.Kayne 2013, cckayne@gmail.com
```

```
[H] Commands help, [h] Operations help, [ESC] Exit
```

```
0~1*      0.0000
# calculate SQRT((2+3)*(4+5))+SQRT((6+7)*(8+9))
2~3+      5.0000
4~5+      9.0000
*          45.0000
Q~         6.7082
6~7+      13.0000
8~9+      17.0000
*          221.0000
Q~         14.8661
+          21.5743
```

```
# from the HP-35 manual
```

```
[ RESET. ESC to EXIT ]
```

```
"I knew I was lying. 'No Silicon Heaven'?
```

```
Preposterous! Where would all the calculators go?"
```

```
--Kryten, Red Dwarf
```

```
E:\>^
```



Recycle Bin



- Getting Started
 - Windows Media Center
 - Calculator
 - Sticky Notes
 - Snipping Tool
 - Paint
 - Remote Desktop Connection
 - Magnifier
 - Solitaire
-
- All Programs

- user
- Documents
- Pictures
- Music
- Games
- Computer
- Control Panel
- Devices and Printers
- Default Programs
- Help and Support

Shut down

Search programs and files



3:29 PM
10/26/2009

Do you have any of the following items?

- Aquarium
- Waterbed
- Boat
- Motorhome
- Motorcycle



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Do you have any items that may damage your apartment or annoy your neighbors?

No, of course not!



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User Testing

- Putting actual designs in front of actual users to observe how they interact.
- You'll end up with hard evidence on how successful a design is—or isn't.
- You can iterate a design until you reach a success rate you're happy with.



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Types of User Testing



**Very Simple
Low Touch**

**Highly
Immersive**

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Click Testing

Guest Cards

Follow Up List All Guest Cards All Follow Up Types My Follow Ups

▼ **6 Today** September 9, 2013

Origin	Dupe?	Guests	Follow Up	Agent	Application
		Brandon Smith	by 12:00pm	You	
NEW		Christine Yu Daniel Yu	by 1:45pm	--	Start
		Marlon McCormack	@ 2:15pm	You	Start
		Jaime Bocanegra	@ 3:15pm	You	Start
		Joseph Dean	by 4:45pm	You	Start
		Mike Kenniston	@ 5:15pm	You	Start

▶ **9 Tomorrow** September 10, 2013

▶ **2 Thursday** September 11, 2013

▶ **4 Friday** September 12, 2013



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Five Second Tests

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FLOOR PLANS & RATES FEATURES & AMENITIES PHOTOS & MORE FORMS & INFO IN THE AREA CONTACT US

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With two historic properties across the street from the University of California, The Berk offers student housing of exceptional quality.
Open to undergraduates, The Berk provides a full menu of residential life programming that emphasizes physical, social, emotional and intellectual wellness.

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- Amazing Location!
- Fully Furnished
- Spacious Suites
- 24/7 Library
- Laundry Facilities

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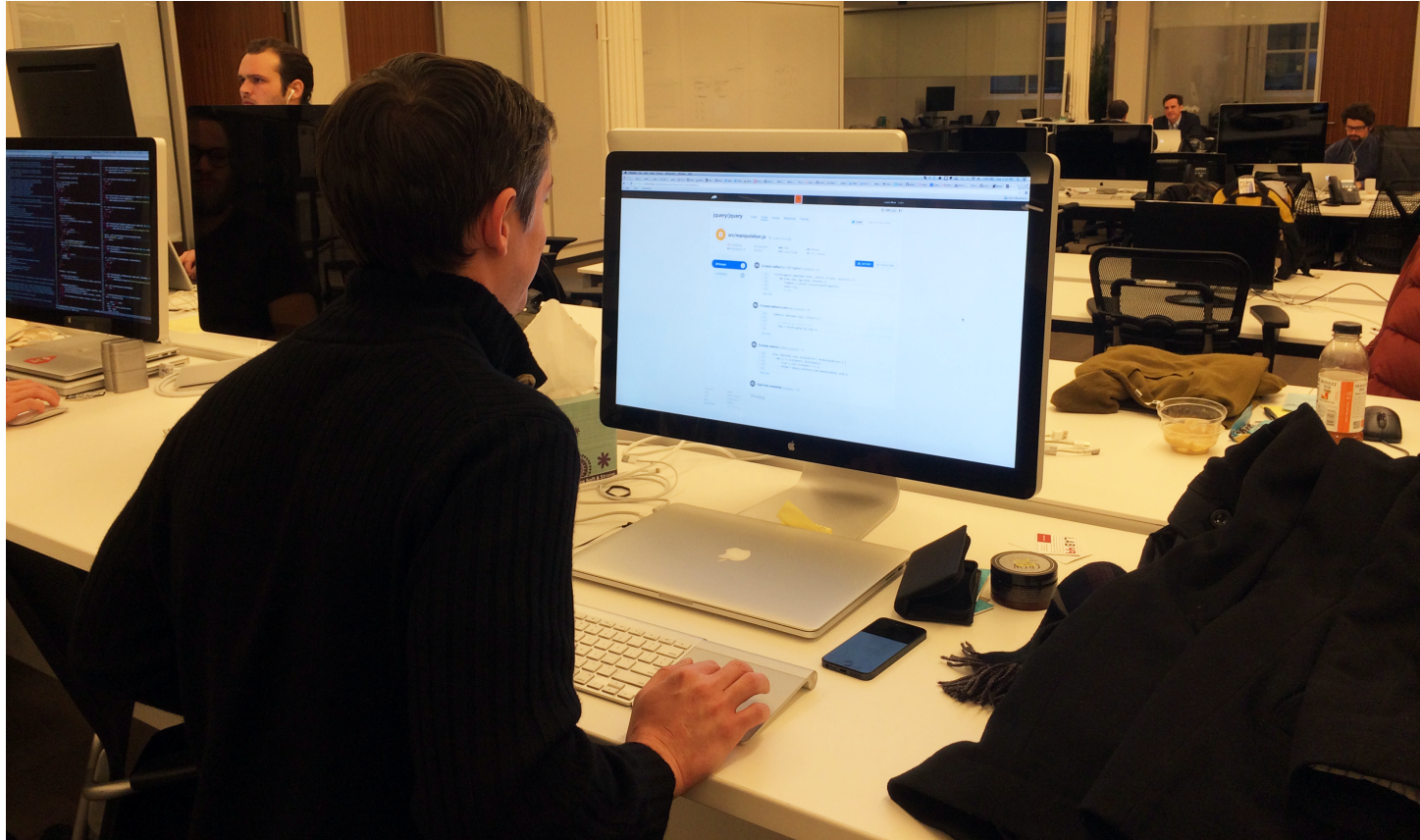


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Usability Testing



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Contextual Ethnography



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Why?

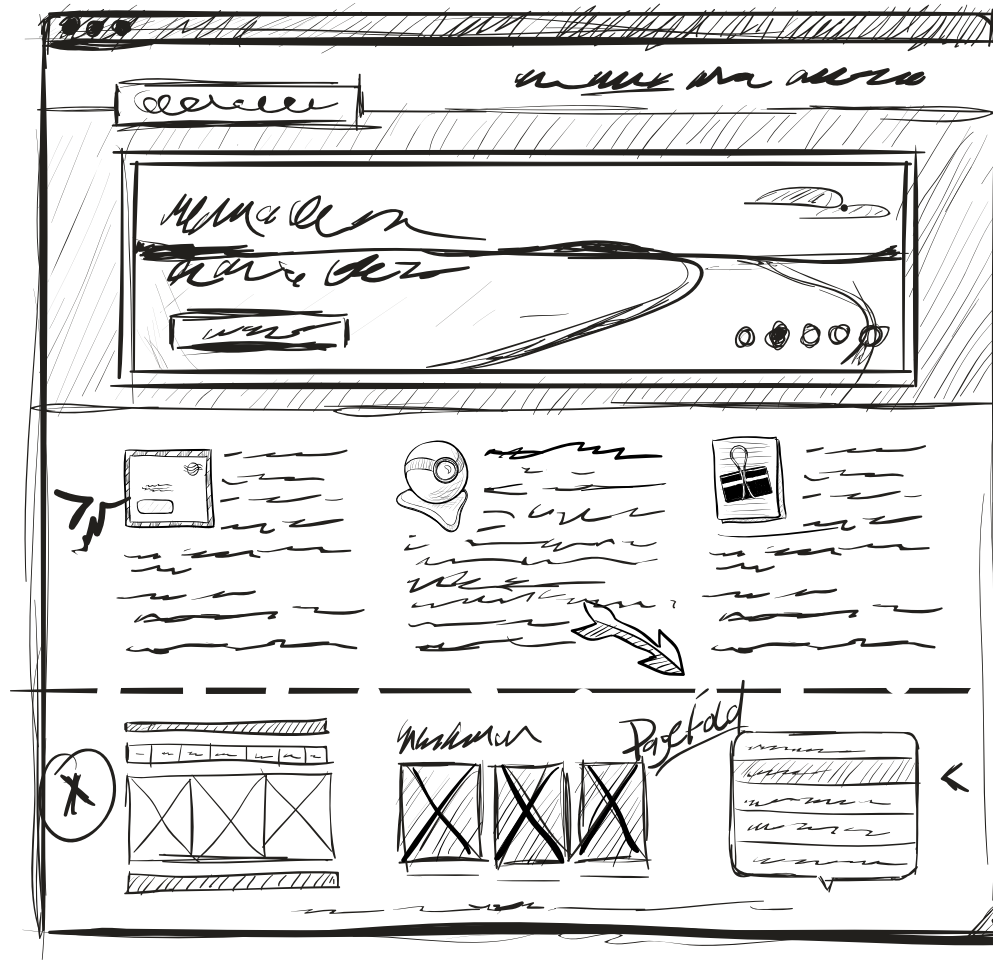


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Making products for the web is hard work.



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We all suffer from the Malkovich Bias.

The tendency to believe that everyone uses
the web like we do.

User Testing to the Rescue!

- User testing helps combat the Malkovich Bias.
- We get hard evidence for how users use your product.
- EdR has been at the forefront of applying user testing to their leasing process.



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A great experience must...



Delight users



Get out of the way



Improve the renting process



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APPLYING UX TO STUDENT HOUSING



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The Tour

- Met with:
 - Josh, the property manager at The Berk
 - Dawn Duckhorn, Property Support Manager
- Spent ~2.5 hours at the property.
- Got a thorough tour of the community, and spent time interviewing the staff.



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Rooftop BBQ's and views of the bay?



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Documents

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RENTAL CRITERIA

Allen and O'Hara Education Services, Inc., supports the Fair Housing Act as amended, prohibiting discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap or familial status. All applicants and/or guarantors are subject to a criminal and/or credit check with approval through a third party applicant screening agency and follow the standards below to include, but not limited to:

We do not accept prospective residents currently on parole, probation and/or suspended sentence for any conviction, or who have been charged with, pled "guilty" or "no contest" to, and/or convicted of any felonies, certain misdemeanors, or any unlawful conduct involving a minor.



CITIZENS:
Complete a standard application form and lease agreement package.
Obtain an approved guarantor.

NON-CITIZENS:
Complete a standard application form and lease agreement package.
Obtain an approved guarantor.
Provide a passport.
I-20 verifying student status and proof of enrollment.

GUARANTORS:
The guarantor must be at least 25 years of age and preferably a family member.
The guarantor must reside in the United States.

DEPOSIT IN LIEU OF GUARANTOR:
Allen & O'Hara Education Services, Inc., will accept in lieu of guarantor requirements an additional refundable deposit equal to three (3) month's rent.

Please be advised that incomplete, inaccurate or falsified information will be grounds for dismissal. Any individual, who may constitute a direct threat to the health and safety of an individual, the community, or the property of others, will be denied.

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APPLICATION FOR STUDENT APARTMENT

Complete your application instantly online at www.TheBerkAtCal.com

CIRCLE DESIRED LOCATION: The Berk on College Suites The Berk on College Apartments The Berk on Arch
 CIRCLE DESIRED OCCUPANCY: Single Double Triple Quad
 CIRCLE DESIRED MOVE IN DATE: Fall Semester Spring Semester Summer Semester

PERSONAL INFORMATION
 First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____
 Home Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____ - _____
 Local Address: _____ Email: _____
 City: _____ State, ZIP: _____ Male _____ Female
 Home Address: _____ Social Security Number _____ - _____
 City: _____ State, ZIP: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

GENERAL INFORMATION
 College Enrollment: Yes ___ No ___ Full-time ___ Part-time ___ Expected Graduation Date: ____/____/____
 College Attending: _____ Classification at Time of Move in: Fr. Soph. Jr. Sr. Grad.
 High School Attended: _____ H.S. Graduation Date: ____/____/____
 Previous Housing: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION
 First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Relationship: _____
 Home Address: _____ Home Phone: (____) _____ - _____
 City: _____ State, ZIP: _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____ - _____
 Email: _____

CRIMINAL HISTORY
 Have you ever been convicted of and/or pled "guilty" or "no contest" to any felony regardless of whether such action resulted in jail or prison time served and/or deferred adjudication? Yes ___ No ___
 Have you ever been convicted of and/or pled "guilty" or "no contest" to any misdemeanor involving theft, burglary, pornography, physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual molestation and/or any unlawful conduct involving a minor, regardless of whether such activity resulted in jail or prison time served and/or deferred adjudication? Yes ___ No ___
 Are you currently on probation, parole, or suspended sentence for any conviction? Yes ___ No ___

The undersigned hereby offers to rent premises on terms and conditions described herein and upon acceptance of this application agrees to sign a rental or lease agreement and to pay all sums due, including required fees and or deposits. Application and Service fees are non-refundable. The undersigned warrants that the above-stated information is true and correct and authorizes verification of such information, including, but not limited to, credit and/or criminal check, verification of employment, and rental history.

_____/____/____ _____ _____ a.m. ____ p.m.
SIGNATURE **DATE** **TIME**
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The Office Calendar

- August → Move In's
- October → Renewals
- June → Move Out's
- July → Roommate Matching



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Even the mail pile...



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Takeaways

- Contextual ethnography helped us to better understand the leasing process from those on the frontlines.
- Being able to imagine yourself in the leasing office leads to better products, too.



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WEBSITES



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APPLY ONLINE

MAINTENANCE REQ.

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PHOTOS &
MORE

FORMS &
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Buzz:

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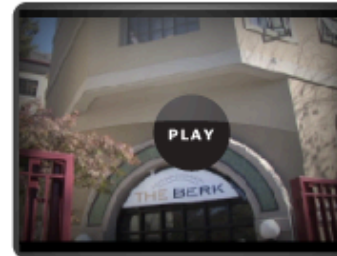
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With two historic properties across the street from the University of California, The Berk offers student housing of exceptional quality.

Open to undergraduates, The Berk provides a full menu of residential life programming that emphasizes physical, social, emotional and intellectual wellness.

FAVE FIVE

- Amazing Location!
- Fully Furnished
- Spacious Suites
- 24/7 Library
- Laundry Facilities



Check out a short video tour of The Berk!

EXPLORE OUR HOUSING OPTIONS



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Calls to Action

- It's what you want users to do when they get to your website.
- In this case, it's applying online.



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Calls to Action

- **Do:**
 - Make your CTA a dominant element on the page.
 - Let the CTA stand out on the page.
 - Clearly label your CTA.
- **Don't:**
 - Become a secondary element.
 - Blend in, especially with other colors of the design.
 - Use dubious labels.



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The Berk's CTA:

- It does *not* blend in with the rest of the page
 - Yellow is used sparingly in the design.
- It's clearly labeled with “Apply Online”.
- Is featured prominently in the top right, and is consistent among all pages.



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Shall we prove it?

- Click Test Scenario:
 - You're a student looking for an apartment, and you find a community you'd like to live at in the upcoming school year. Fill out a rental application.
- Remember: we're looking for that “Apply Online” button!



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Average Completion: 14 seconds

Success Rate: 85%

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Average Completion: 17 seconds (+3s)

Success Rate: 67% (-18%)

It's Your Life!

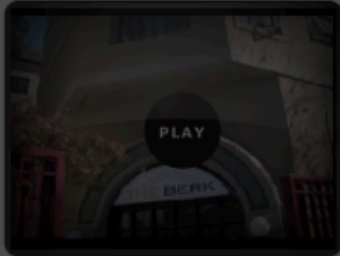
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Photography

- NN Group study:
 - “Some types of pictures are completely ignored. This is typically the case for big feel-good images that are purely decorative.”



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NN/g

Nielsen Norman Group

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Photography

- **Do:**
 - Include real photos of your property.
 - Show multiple areas: the outside, the rooms, the amenities.
 - Put the focus on your *product*.
- **Don't:**
 - Use stock photography. Students will be able to tell the difference.

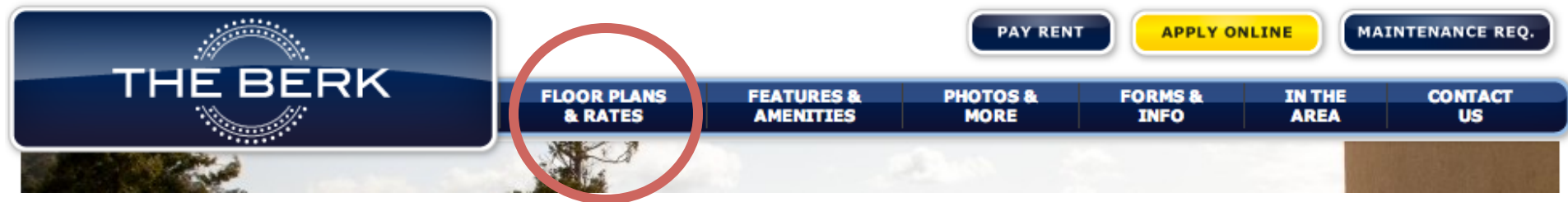


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What's behind the "Floor Plans & Rates" link?

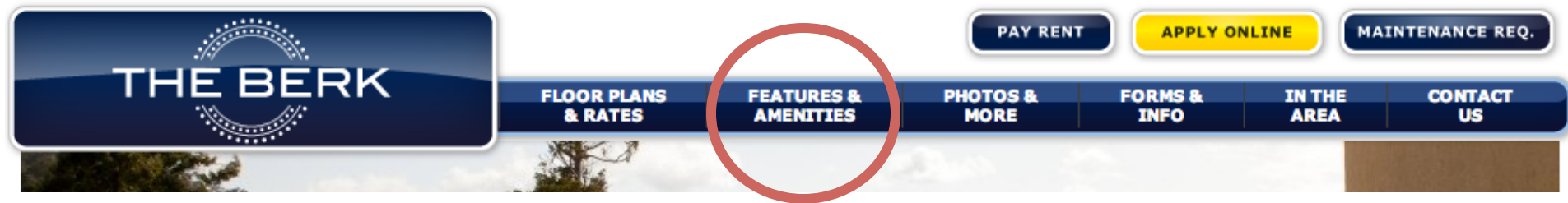


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What's behind the “Features & Amenities” link?



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Navigational Links

(And any labeled content, really)

- NN Group study:
 - “Should give people a strong indication of what will happen even before they click on the link.”
 - “Clever category names cause doubt and hinder site exploration.”

NN/g

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Navigational Links

(And any labeled content, really)

- **Do:**

- Clearly label your links.
- Be short, and concise with your language.

- **Don't:**

- Use vague terminology, like “Inspired Living” or “Luxury Living”.
- Use leasing industry jargon.



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THE BERK

PAY RENT

APPLY ONLINE

MAINTENANCE REQ.

FLOOR PLANS & RATES

FEATURES & AMENITIES

PHOTOS & MORE

FORMS & INFO

IN THE AREA

CONTACT US



It's Your Life!

With two historic properties across the street from the University of California, The Berk offers student housing of exceptional quality.

Open to undergraduates, The Berk provides a full menu of residential life programming that emphasizes physical, social, emotional and intellectual wellness.

It's Your Life!

With two historic properties across the street from the University of California, The Berk offers housing of exceptional quality.

Open to undergraduates, The Berk provides a full menu of residential life programming that emphasizes physical, social, emotional and intellectual wellness.



2315 College Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704 | (510) 647-2328

Owned and Managed by EdR

- Laundry Facilities

Check out a short video tour of The Berk!

EXPLORE OUR HOUSING OPTIONS



2315 College Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704 | (510) 647-2328

Owned and Managed by EdR



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Tag Lines

- NN Group study:
 - “Include a tag line that explicitly summarizes what the site or company does.”
- At the Berk, we know:
 - What university is nearby.
 - Who the audience is (undergrads).
 - And that it’s more than just a roof over their head.

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Tag Lines

- **Do:**
 - Be very clear that this is an apartment community website.
 - Let the user know where the community is located and what the biggest “perk” of living there is.
- **Don't:**
 - Use *too* many words. Keep it short and sweet.
 - Use leasing industry jargon.



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What's nice about Google's homepage?

Google



Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky



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Clean, Simple Design

- NN Group study:
 - “Students often judge sites on how they look. But they usually prefer sites that look clean and simple rather than flashy and busy.”
- Simple designs with focus are trending on the web now, as well.



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NN/g

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Clean, Simple Design

- **Do:**

- Keep your design simple. Stick to a few colors and streamline the media.
- Make use of white space to put emphasis on the important things.

- **Don't:**

- Go crazy with flashiness.
- Put too much content on one page.



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Navigation is streamlined and simple.

PAY RENT

APPLY ONLINE

MAINTENANCE REQ.

THE BERK

FLOOR PLANS & RATES

FEATURES & AMENITIES

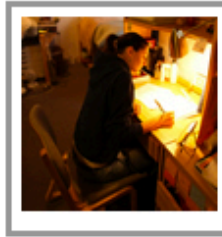
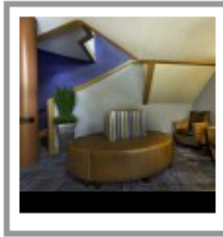
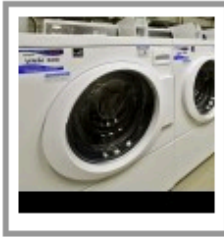
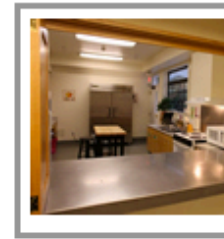
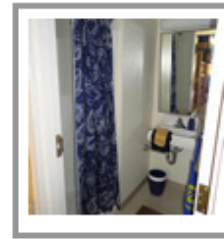
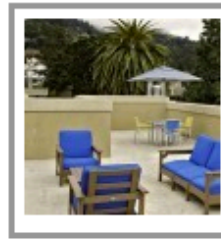
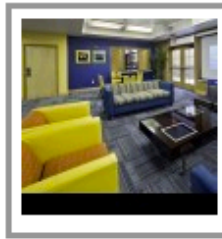
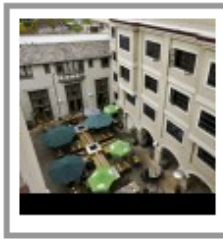
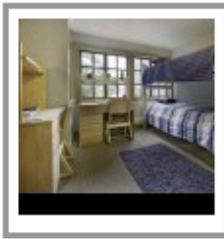
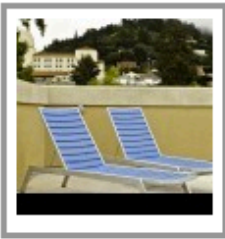
PHOTOS & MORE

FORMS & INFO

IN THE AREA

CONTACT US

The Berk on College



Focus on the photos!

Plenty of space to let them breathe—no crowding.

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THE ONLINE APPLICATION



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The Online Application

- What's the app flow?
 - Apply as a student for the floorplan you like.
 - Answer roommate matching questions.
 - Sign your lease online!
 - Invite your guarantor.
 - Have your guarantor sign their docs online.



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- 1 Apartment
- 2 Applicants
- 3 Payment
- 4 Documents

Which apartment would you like?

Minimum size:

* 1+ bedrooms ▾

DOUBLE

1 bed, 1 bath

Apartment	Rent	Deposit	Description	Available	Apply
WTN1DX2	<u>from \$1,079</u>	\$0	The Berk on Arch	08/22/2014	Apply

DOUBLE SUITE

1 bed, 1 bath


Apartment	Rent	Deposit	Description	Available	Apply
WTR1DX4	<u>from \$1,079</u>	\$0	The Berk on College	08/22/2014	Apply



The application on an iPad

- 1 Apartment
- 2 Applicants
- 3 Payment
- 4 Documents

Which apartment would you like?

Elements are becoming touch friendly

DOUBLE

1 bed, 1 bath

Apartment	Rent	Deposit	Description	Available	Apply
WTN1DX2	from <u>\$1,079</u>	\$0	The Berk on Arch	08/22/2014	Apply

DOUBLE SUITE

1 bed, 1 bath

Apartment	Rent	Deposit	Description	Available	Apply
WTR1DX4	from <u>\$1,079</u>	\$0	The Berk on College	08/22/2014	Apply



The application on a smartphone

step 1 of 8

Which apartment would you like?

Minimum Size



DOUBLE

Available units: 1



DOUBLE SUITE

Available units: 1



QUAD

Available units: 1



TRIPLE

Available units: 2



Everything has condensed

The design looks more "mobile" as well

Responsively Designed

- Leverages “responsive design”.
 - The design responds to the size of the device.
- NN Group:
 - “Installing a native or hybrid app is a hassle for users: They need to be really motivated to justify the effort.”

NN/g

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Responsively Designed

- **Do:**
 - Use responsive design for your prospect and applicant facing websites.
 - Benefit: it works for current devices, and any future devices that Silicon Valley dreams up.
- **Don't:**
 - Make applicants download an app to complete a one-time action, such as applying online.



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ants

3

Payment

4

Documents

ld you li

1+ bed

WTN1DX2

x

1 bed, 1 bath

Select your lease term and click on Continue.

	<i>Rental Period</i>	<i>Installments</i>	<i>Price</i>
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Fall 2014 8/22/2014 - 5/31/2015	10	\$1,079.00 per installment

Continue

[cancel](#)

079

29

00

00

Thank you for applying to **The Berk**.
This online process is secure and all submissions are encrypted for your protection. Please enter all requested information and click "**Continue....**"

Personal Information

First Name: * M.I.:

Last Name: * Suffix:

Social Security #: * [Use a different I.D.](#)

Date of Birth: *

Phone: *

Alternate Phone:

Email Address: *

Current Address

Country: *

Street Address: *

City, State: * ,

Zip Code: *

Application Summary	
Apartment:	WTN1DX2 (1b/1.0ba)
Move-In:	08/22/2014
Lease End Date:	05/31/2015
Rent:	\$1,079.00
Total Per Installment:	\$1,079.00

Uh-oh...

Current Address

Country: *

Street Address: *

City, State: * ,

Zip Code: * This zip code does not match the city and state. [See suggestions](#)

[back](#)

Save and Continue...



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Give Specific Error Messages

- NN Group:
 - “Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.”

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Give Specific Error Messages

- **Do:**
 - Report errors as they happen.
 - Be clear and concise with the error language.
 - Offer a potential solution.
- **Don't:**
 - Wait until the next page load to report errors (if possible).
 - Leave users hanging without a solution.



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Additional Questions

Gender: *

Roommate Gender Preference: *

I Smoke: *

I Drink: *

My Noise Level is Similar to: *

I Keep My Living Space: *

I Study: *

When it Comes to Sleep, I: *

I Have Friends Over: *

Class Standing: *

Major: *

Hobbies: *

Special Considerations:

Building/Floor Plan Requested:

Bedroom Requested:

Requested Roommates:

Item	Quantity	Total
Application Fee for The Berk	1	\$40.00

Accepted Cards:



Credit Card #:

Expiration Date:

Verification #: [What's this?](#)

Name on Card:

Billing Address:

City, State, Zip:

I hereby authorize The Berk and its agents to charge the above credit card a non-refundable fee of \$40.00, and I agree to pay all charges in accordance with the terms of my cardholder statement.

The undersigned hereby offers to rent premises on terms and conditions described herein and upon acceptance of this application agrees to sign a rental or lease agreement and to pay all sums due, including required fees and or deposits. Application and service fees are non-refundable. The undersigned warrants that the above stated information, including but not limited to, credit and/or criminal check, verification of employment, and rental history. I understand there are no limitations or restrictions regarding what may be discussed or revealed. I am aware that a credit history, eviction search and criminal background check will be done in conjunction with my application. I understand that I may have the right to make a written request within a reasonable period of time to receive additional, detailed information about the nature and scope of this investigation.

By submitting this application, I hereby consent to the delivery of all notices or disclosures required by law via any medium so chosen by the community or On-Site.com, including but not limited to email or other electronic transmission. Notices shall be deemed received upon being sent.

Application Summary	
Fred Flintstone	✓
Apartment:	WTN1DX2 (1b/1.0ba)
Move-In:	08/22/2014
Lease End Date:	05/31/2015
Rent:	\$1,079.00
Total Per Installment:	\$1,079.00

Numbered Steps

- Being explicit about the number of steps involved in the application will give applicants peace of mind.
- Not knowing how much is left is aggravating.
 - Especially when filling out web forms online.



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Numbered Steps

- **Do:**
 - Be explicit about the # of steps.
 - Place the step indicator at the top of the page.
- **Don't:**
 - Use symbols or dots. This isn't as recognizable.
 - Place the progress indicator at the bottom of the page.



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Welcome Home!

Based on the information you provided, you are qualified to lease with us. Your approval will be finalized for move-in when our leasing staff confirms your information. We look forward to welcoming you home!

Below is your receipt for the non-refundable application fee, which was charged by On-Site.com for York University (DEMO). If you have any questions about the status of your application, please contact York University (DEMO) at (425) 555-1212.

[Sign Lease Documents](#)

Scroll through each page and click in the colored box above each signature or initials box to sign. This is a legally binding document.

York University (DEMO)

LEASE AGREEMENT

NOTE: PLEASE RETURN ALL THREE COPIES FOR OWNER SIGNATURE

Date: February 7, 2014	Apartment Community: York University (DEMO) (the "Community")		
Tenant Name: Freddy W. Mouse (herein "you" or "your")	Social Security No.: 999-99-****	Permanent Address: 123 Main Str. Mountain View, CA 94040	
Landlord/Owner: York University (DEMO) (the "Owner" or "us", "we" or "our" and any reference to us includes our Manager)	Owner's Address: 2825 Colby Ave Everett, WA 98203		
Property Manager: ("Manager")	Lease Term: September 1, 2013 ("Starting Date") to June 30, 2014 ("Ending Date")		

READ THIS LEASE CAREFULLY. THIS IS YOUR CONTRACT WITH US. THIS IS OUR ENTIRE AGREEMENT.
NO ORAL REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY US OR ANY OTHER PROMISES OUTSIDE OF THIS LEASE ARE BINDING UPON US.

- 1. LEASED PREMISES:** We agree to lease to you and you agree to lease from us, one furnished bedroom for your exclusive use (referred to herein as your "**Bedroom**") in a 1 bedroom apartment, and together with the other residents of the apartment, you have the joint right to use the common areas of the apartment, which are composed of those areas within the apartment to which you have access without going into another bedroom, including the living room, kitchen, a common bathroom, all of the associated appliances and furnishings, and where applicable, laundry facilities within the Apartment (the "**Common Areas**"). Your Bedroom, the other bedrooms in the apartment and the Common Areas are referred to

[close](#) ✕

Thank you! Please Invite Your Guarantor.

Thanks for signing your lease. The next step is to provide the contact information for the guarantor on your lease. This will send them an email invitation to complete their portion of the application and to sign a guarantee agreement for this lease.

First Name: *

Last Name: *

Email Address: *

[Send Invitation](#) [cancel](#)

One Sitting

- The online app allows students to complete everything they need in one sitting.
- Attention spans can run very low.
- Finishing all steps at once is one less reason to need to follow-up with the student to get a lease signed.



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One Sitting

- **Do:**
 - Allow for lease documents to be signed as soon as they're available.
 - Allow the guarantor to be added and invited to sign their portion.
- **Don't:**
 - Make the applicant pick up the phone to get information.



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**Do you know if your
students are happy with
your leasing solution?**



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HOUSING THE
NEXT
GENERATION

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Thank you!