Are university course-finders like e-commerce sites?

If so, why don’t they work like Amazon?
Universities “sell” valuable “products”

- A large proportion of university income accrues from student enrolments:
  - USA: Very large tuition fees
  - England: Up to £9,000 p.a. per student
  - Australia: CGS/HECS, FFP, PhD Completions
Your Program: Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice

Your Results:

Take a look at the results below to get a better estimate of the total cost and savings for your entire Bachelor's Degree program at Strayer University.

Estimated Direct Costs

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>$68,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees</td>
<td>$910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books &amp; Supplies</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Cost Paid to Strayer University $74,910

Based on how you answered the previous questions, it sounds like you're a first-time full-time undergraduate student. To get started answering financial questions, and to view your estimated financial aid and annual net price of attending Strayer, click "Continue to Net Price Calculator" below.
HE recruitment goals

 Goal: Reach enrolment targets
 Goal: Attract full-fee-paying students
 Goal: Attract strong students
 Goal: Fill less-popular courses*
 Goal: Attract strong research students

* My terminology: “Courses” is a generic term for any of Degrees, Majors, or Units.
Could student recruitment be run via an e-commerce site?

Obviously “yes” for For-Profit universities

Perhaps “indirectly” or “not quite yet” for most Australasian universities.

“Education and learning” may not sit comfortably with “flogging products”

Outsourced process based on ATAR scores: UAC, VTAC, QTAC, TISC, etc.

Fill limited places with best-scoring applicants

Fees may be too large for student credit cards. :-(

But can we learn from e-commerce sites anyway?

(Thinking about the prospective student’s experience.)
ebay demo

Driven by search more than navigation.

Clever query suggestions on site homepage

Very hard to get zero results

Smart ranking, well-presented results

Use of facets

Recommendations

Reviews

Shopping cart
40+ university customers and rising.
Ranking Summary:

The selected page, Science and Engineering Home, contains 558 total words, 300 of which are unique.

There are 1,255 fully matching pages for the query "petroleum":

You can also view Funnelback's cached copy, view the link information for the page; or view the result page from this query.

You can use this link to share this page with non-administrators.

Top Ranking Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Ranking caused by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Department of Petroleum Engineering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Curtin Courses Online Handbook 2013 Petroleum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Petroleum Engineering: Curtin University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At Funnelback, we’re working on a new offering which will directly tackle important business problems in the HE sector. (Like recruitment)

Funnelback Uni-fied Search
Funnelback Unified Search

- Funnelback search platform, **plus:**
- University specific modules (search-apps?)
Optimising the experience of students selecting courses and enrolling in them.

Improving the student experience. E.g. access to learning materials, parking, timetables, locating rooms and people, ...

Reducing enquiry handling load

Plagiarism detection

Day-to-day staff productivity

Promoting research & expertise.

Marketing activities, e.g. events and public lectures etc.
Demo of uni-fied search prototype at “FBU”

- Intelligent query suggestion on the front page. (Particularly important for mobile access.)
- Search history / course basket / facets / query blending
- Course recommender
- Smart university-oriented ranking
- Event search
- Staff directory look-up
- Search of video lectures by content

An enjoyable experience!
We'd really like a higher-ed partner
Is your university willing to:

A. Provide design input for Uni-fied Search?
B. Beta-test prototypes?
C. Consider licensing some Uni-Fied modules?

If so, please:

(1) Talk to me over lunch, or
(2) Talk to us on the Funnelback stand, or
(3) Email david.hawking@funnelback.com