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Actor Jared Padelecki is part of the "The U: Uncut" series, which has information on 50 colleges.

DVD takes students on tours of colleges

'Uncut' is latest entry in a growing category of resources that let students do the talking.

[Lisa Guernsey / New York Times](#)

Doug Imbruce was a freshman at Columbia when he was watching an MTV reality show and struck by an incongruity: On the screen were the smallest details about the lives of celebrities. So why, he wondered, had he not been able to get any inside information about students' lives when he was trying to choose a college the year before? Why had he felt so blind when making one of the biggest decisions of his life? "I could find out how many beers there were in Snoop Dogg's refrigerator," he says, "but I couldn't see what life was like on a typical Saturday night" at Columbia.

Imbruce, who graduated last May, has been working to right that wrong over the last two years. With help from actors at the WB Network (where he had an internship), he produced "The U: Uncut," a DVD series of behind-the-scenes tours of 50 popular colleges. Now on sale at [theu.com](#), the DVD's feature 10-minute MTV-style clips gleaned from four-

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Making the Cut

The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor is among 50 colleges featured in "The U: Uncut." The DVD offers a tour of the campus and other tidbits such as:
College tuition and enrollment figures.
A list of notable graduates, including former

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day visits and dozens of interviews at each campus.

"Uncut" is the latest entry in a growing category of college-search resources that let students do the talking about their own campuses. Web logs, online photo galleries and real-time chats with current students are the high-tech descendants of "insider" products like the College Prowler guidebooks and Collegiate Choice Walking Tours, which are basically amateur videotapes of student-led tours at 350 campuses, including shots of the touring crowd and students walking by.

Cliff Kramon, a co-founder of Collegiate Choice, says his customers want those reality visuals and pay close attention to the ethnic makeup of the student body or the way people style their hair.

But the new tools tell a richer tale.

Online chats, often scheduled on college Web sites near acceptance deadlines, give prospective students a chance to ask questions about academic competitiveness, the social climate on campus or the amount of drinking that goes on.

Blogs and photo galleries chronicle what it is like to be a freshman, day by day.

While colleges don't edit the blogs, they do hand-pick the students they want representing them. So don't expect a glimpse inside a student liquor cabinet.

Of course, nothing beats an actual overnight dormitory visit for a candid look. But today's generation, raised on reality TV and sifting through scores of colleges, is looking for an easier way to see real students in their habitat.

A list of notable graduates, including former President Gerald Ford, actor James Earl Jones and playwright Arthur Miller. Host Kristin Kreuk of the television show "Smallville" describes Ann Arbor as "one of the coolest college towns ever."

Source: www.theu.com

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