NOT JUST A STATISTIC

Measuring students' sense of belonging in higher education via informal online spaces during COVID-19

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What does sense of belonging mean to you?

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What does sense of belonging mean to you?

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TEAM iN4MAL

P ATRICK

BECCA

S ARAH

CONNECTION + BELONGING = PERSISTENCE

In higher education, students need:

- Self-efficacy
- Sense of belonging

(Tinto, 2017)

01.

PROBLEM

Building a Sense of Belonging (SoB) online is a difficult process

Let's talk about online spaces. Where do you belong online?

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What online communities are you a part of?

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SPACES TO BELONG

FORMAL

These spaces tend to be scheduled and regulated.

INFORMAL

These spaces may offer more responsive gathering.

(Black et al., 2020; Procentese et al., 2020)

02.

LITERATUR

TRADITIONAL vs ONLINE PERSISTENCE

NO DIFFERENCE

Traditional vs online

(Frydenberg, 2007)

10 - 20%

Lower persistence in traditional vs online

(Moody, 2004; Carr, 2000)

TINTO & PERSISTENCE

Model of Student Retention

Most cited and supported by empirical data

Persistence = Sense of Belonging + Self efficacy -

“Students who socially integrate into the campus **community** increase their commitment to the institution and are more likely to graduate.”

(Tinto, 1975)

TRADITIONAL vs ONLINE COMMUNITY BUILDING

DESIGN MATTERS

Traditional & online
formal environment

COLLABORATIVE, WARM SPACES

Higher persistence in
traditional & online

4 KEY ELEMENTS

McMillan and Chavis (1986)

MEMBERSHIP

Sharing a sense of personal relatedness

INFLUENCE

Sense of mattering

INTEGRATION & FULFILLMENT OF NEEDS

Sense that needs are met through resources in the community

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Sense that members will have and share similar experiences

BUILDING COMMUNITY IN PERSON

FORMAL

- DISCUSSION
- GROUP WORK
- COURSE DESIGN
- CLASSROOM DESIGN

INFORMAL

- CONVERSATION
- CAMPUS EVENTS
- CLUBS
- PEER SUPPORT

BUILDING COMMUNITY ONLINE

FORMAL

- KNOWLEDGE-SHARING
- ONLINE EVENTS
- COURSE DESIGN
- RESPONSIVE

INFORMAL

- SELF-DRIVEN NETWORKING
- ONLINE EVENTS

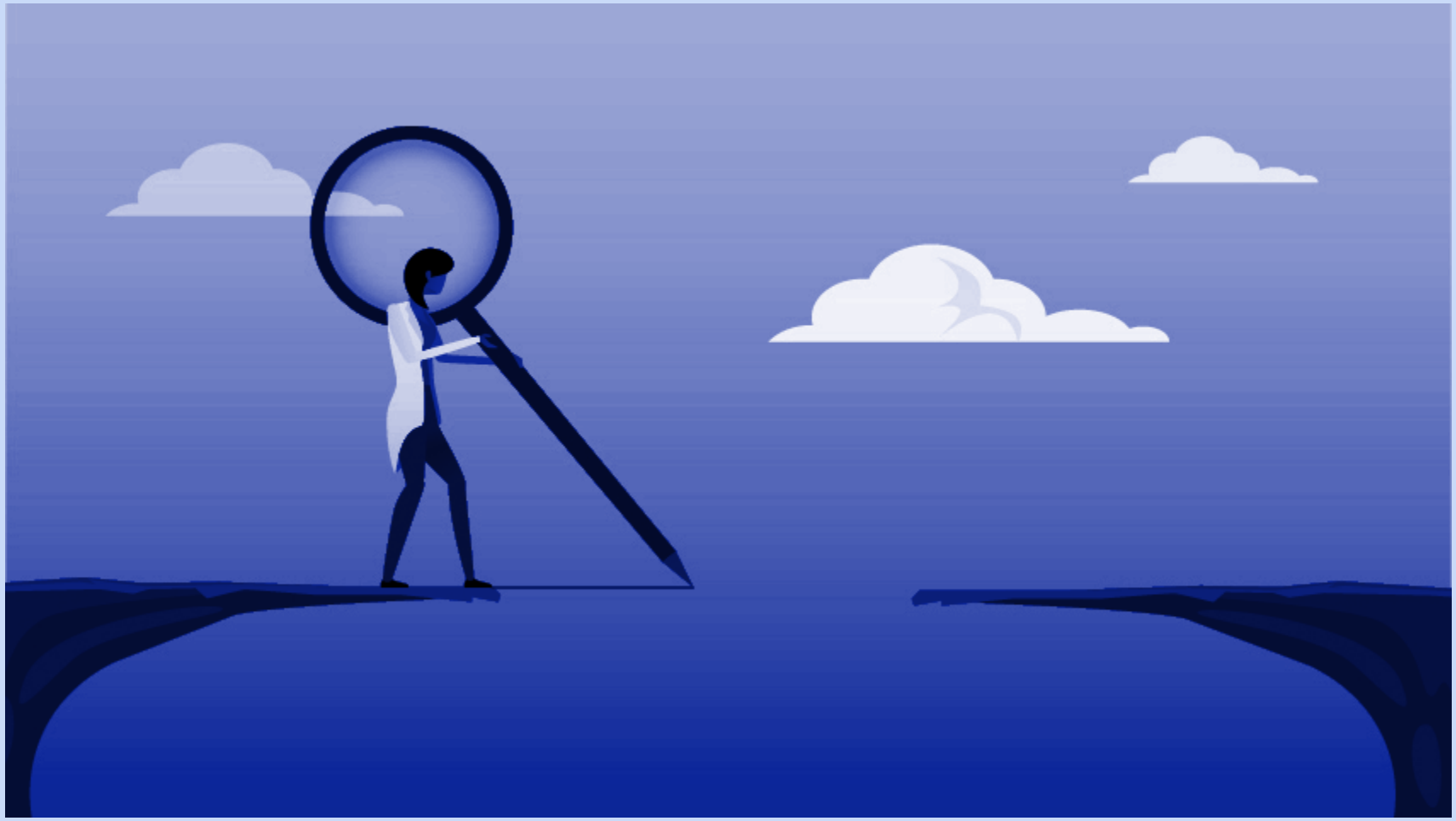
COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic severely curtailed opportunities for people to connect with others. Specifically, for students to connect with the campus community and impact their sense of belonging (Mooney & Becker, 2021).

0 3 .

THE GAP

Researching online
informal spaces



INFORMAL SPACES FACILITATED SoB (He, 2020)

- Gap: Research on **online** informal spaces SoB.

USE OF INFORMAL SPACES IN HIGHER ED (Scott et al., 2016; Chang-Tik & Goh, 2020)

- Gap: Research on using online informal spaces **to foster** SoB and community.

- Gap: Do online informal spaces promote student participation, discussions, and socialization among college students **during the COVID-19 pandemic** ?

INFORMAL SPACES CAN BE LEVERAGED

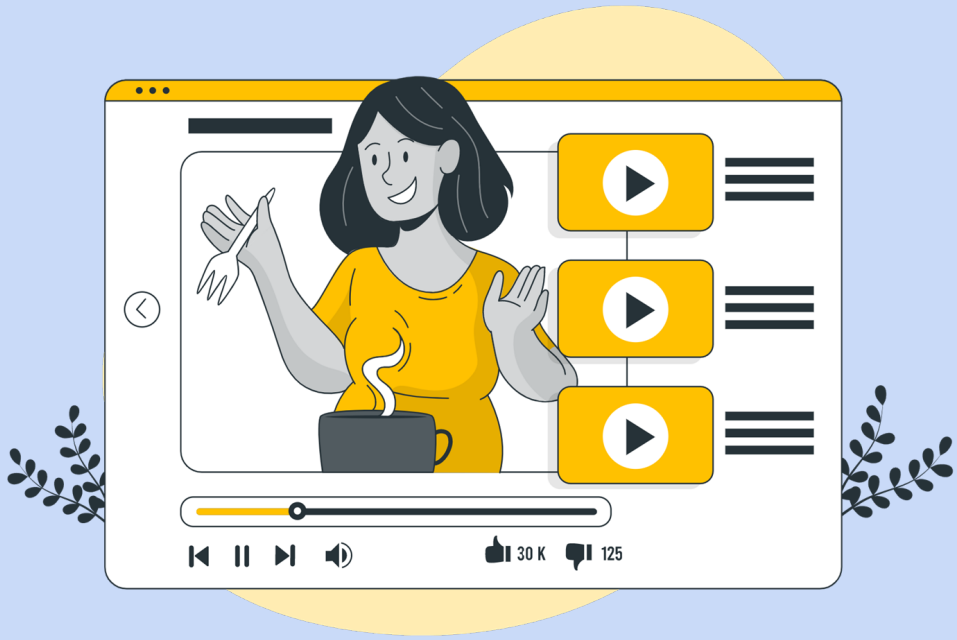
(Black et al., 2020; Sackey et al., 2015)

04.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to explore the utilization of online informal spaces to strengthen students' sense of belonging.

RQs



What types of **online informal spaces** do students use?

RQ1

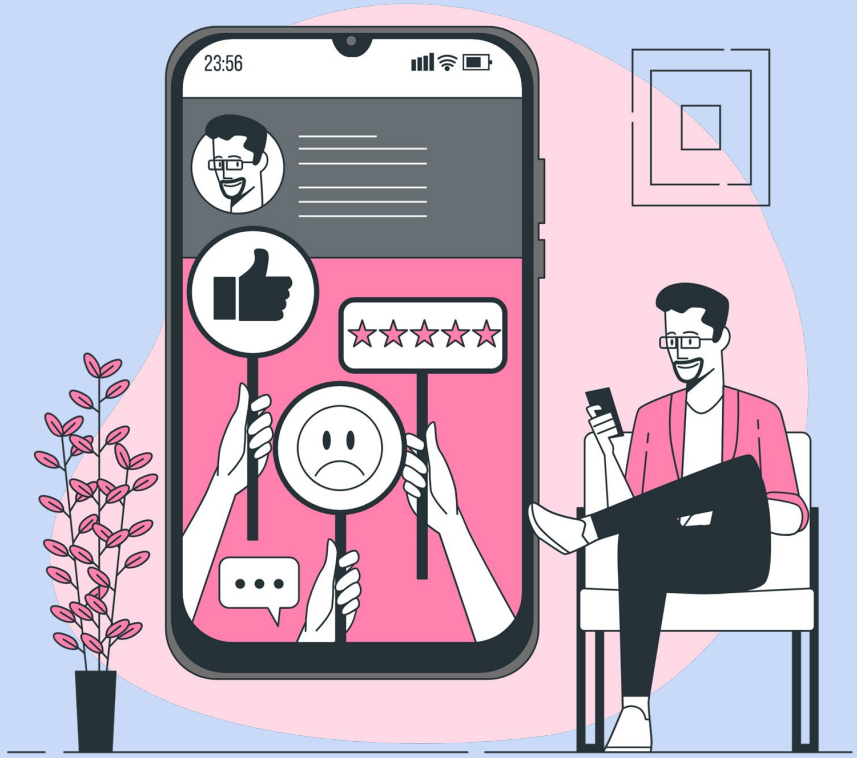
RQ2

A: How do students utilize informal spaces for **community building?**

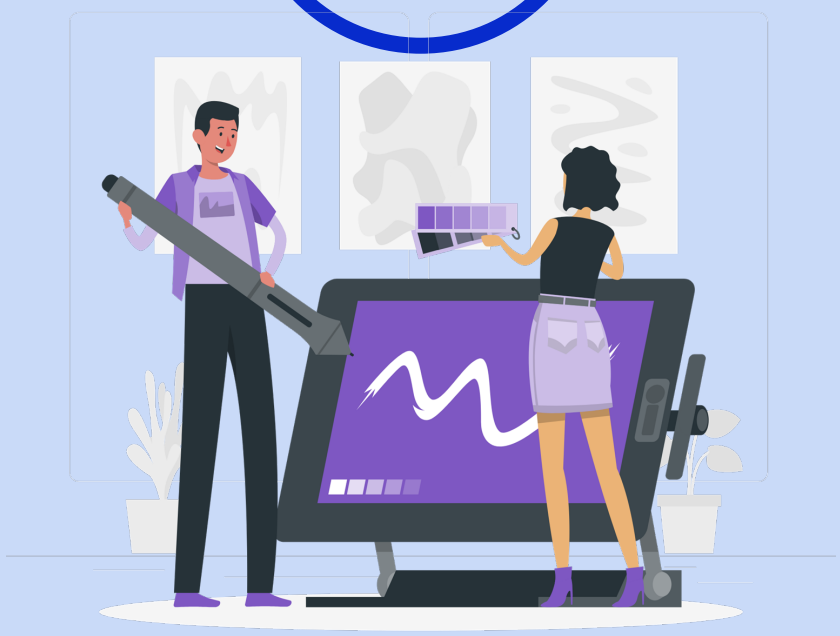
B: What are students' **sense of belonging** ?

RQs Cont.

What is the relationship between utilization of online informal spaces and students' **sense of belonging** ?



RQ3



RQ4

What is the **difference in levels** of sense of belonging in students **between various online informal spaces** ?

05.
METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

SUBJECTS

Undergraduate students at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM)

MATERIALS

Survey administered through Qualtrics and analyzed using PSPP

INSTRUMENTS

- Survey Part 1A: Online Social Support Scale
- Survey Part 1B: Operationalized student utilization of online spaces for community building (OSS).
- Survey Part 2: Sense of Belonging Scale

METHODOLOGY

PROCEDURES

1. E-mail and SM posts soliciting participation
2. Participants sign informed consent forms.
3. Two-week period: Survey collection
4. Statistical tests done: describe, analyze, correlation via PSPP
5. Results interpreted; conclusions drawn

VALIDITY & RELIABILITY

Coefficient alpha values of OSS and Sense of Belonging scales

CATEGORIES OF INFORMAL SPACES

- VIRTUAL WORLDS
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- VIDEO CONFERENCING
- FORUMS

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List social spaces you have used that fall into these categories.

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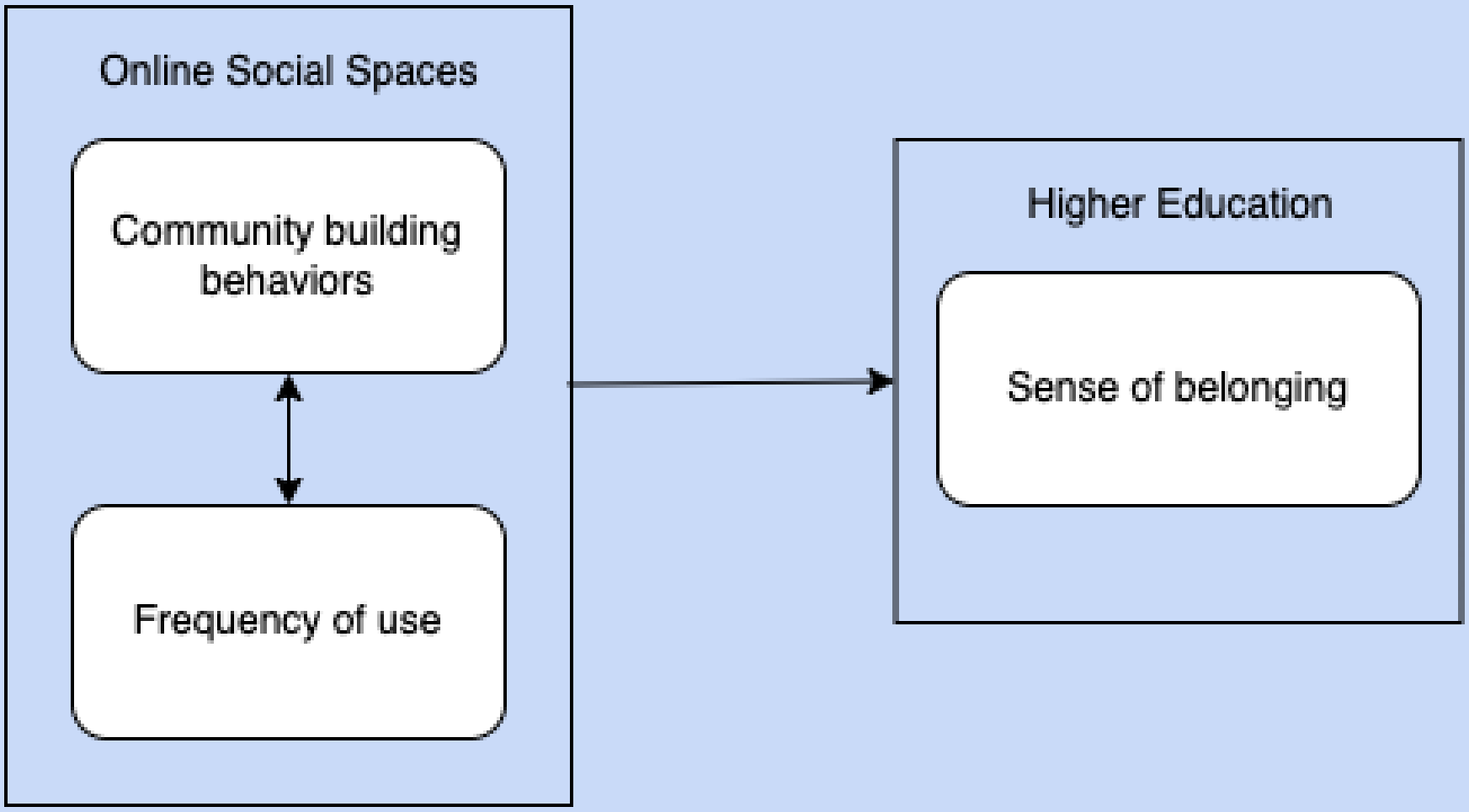
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



OSS Scale Utilization of Spaces (1A)

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Pretty Often 4 = A lot					
Facebook	0	1	2	3	4
Instagram	0	1	2	3	4
Twitter	0	1	2	3	4
SnapChat	0	1	2	3	4
Tumblr	0	1	2	3	4
Vine	0	1	2	3	4
YouTube	0	1	2	3	4
Pinterest	0	1	2	3	4
Reddit	0	1	2	3	4
YikYak	0	1	2	3	4
Kik	0	1	2	3	4
LinkedIn	0	1	2	3	4
GroupMe	0	1	2	3	4
WhatsApp	0	1	2	3	4
Google+	0	1	2	3	4
Whatsgoodly	0	1	2	3	4
Chat services	0	1	2	3	4
Email	0	1	2	3	4
Texting	0	1	2	3	4
Dating sites/apps (e.g., Tinder)	0	1	2	3	4

Engaging in Community Building Behaviors (1B)

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Pretty Often 4 = A lot

1.	People show that they care about me online.	0	1	2	3	4
2.	Online, people say or do things that make me feel good about myself.	0	1	2	3	4
3.	People encourage me when I'm online.	0	1	2	3	4
4.	People pay attention to me online.	0	1	2	3	4
5.	I get likes, favorites, upvotes, views, etc. online.	0	1	2	3	4
6.	I get positive comments online.	0	1	2	3	4
7.	When I'm online, people tell me they like the things I say or do.	0	1	2	3	4
8.	Online, people are interested in me as a person.	0	1	2	3	4
9.	People support me online.	0	1	2	3	4
10.	When I'm online, people make me feel good about myself.	0	1	2	3	4
11.	When I'm online, I talk or do things with other people.	0	1	2	3	4
12.	People spend time with me online.	0	1	2	3	4
13.	People hang out and do fun things with me online.	0	1	2	3	4
14.	Online, I belong to groups of people with similar interests.	0	1	2	3	4
15.	People talk with me online about things we have in common.	0	1	2	3	4
16.	Online, I connect with people who like the same things I do.	0	1	2	3	4
17.	I am part of groups online.	0	1	2	3	4

Sense of Belonging (2)

1. I feel comfortable asking a question in class.
2. I discuss course material with my classmates before or after class.
3. I feel comfortable volunteering ideas or opinions in class.
5. Speaking in class is easy because I feel comfortable.
6. Class sizes are so large I feel like a number.
7. I like knowing other people in my classes.
8. I wish I knew more students in my classes who I could call if I had a question.
9. If I have a question in class I usually ask it.

1. I feel comfortable asking a teacher for help if I do not understand course-related material.
2. I feel that a faculty member would not pass judgment on me if I told them about a problem I was having.
3. I feel comfortable discussing my academic program or career plans with a faculty member.
4. If I had a reason, I would feel comfortable seeking help from a faculty member outside of class time (i.e., during office hours, etc.).
5. I feel that faculty try to relate to students on their level.
6. I ask questions if I do not understand something.
7. I feel that faculty are cold and intimidating.
8. I feel comfortable seeking help from a teacher before or after class.
9. Most teachers do a very good job of explaining their objectives.

06.

DATA

COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

DATA COLLECTION

Surveying allows researchers to investigate relationships between students' community building practices in online informal spaces and sense of belonging in higher education (Ary et. al, 2019).

08.

CONCLUSION

Recap, Implications, & contributions

BRIEF RECAP

- Connection + Belonging = Persistence
- Formal and Informal Spaces
- Leveraging Informal Spaces for Learning

PROBLEM & GAP

- What about online spaces of learning?
- Are informal online spaces able to promote a sense of belonging, socialization and community during COVID-19?

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Observing student behaviours in chosen online informal places

IMPLICATIONS / CONTRIBUTIONS

- Extending to student retention and persistence
- Contribution to design of informal online spaces
- 5Cs of social media
  - Curation/Creation
  - Choice
  - Conversation
  - Collaboration
  - ***Community***

Mahalo!

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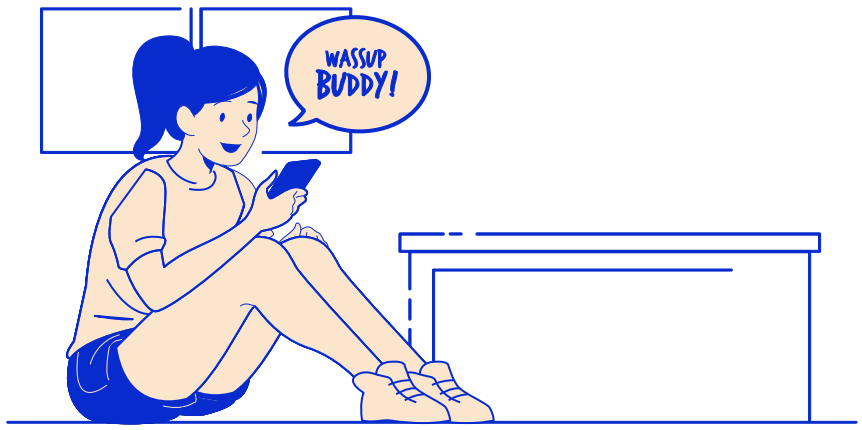

WASSUP
BUDDY!

LEARNING

Venus has a beautiful name and is the second planet from the Sun. It’s terribly hot, even hotter than Mercury

BUILDING COMMUNITY

ON PUBLISH			
SAME DAY AS POST			
DAY AFTER POST			
WEEK AFTER POST			
MONTH AFTER POST			

WHAT TONE ARE WE GOING TO USE?

Venus has a beautiful name and is the second planet from the Sun. It’s terribly hot, even hotter than Mercury

BUDGET

2,000,000

Jupiter is a gas giant and the biggest planet

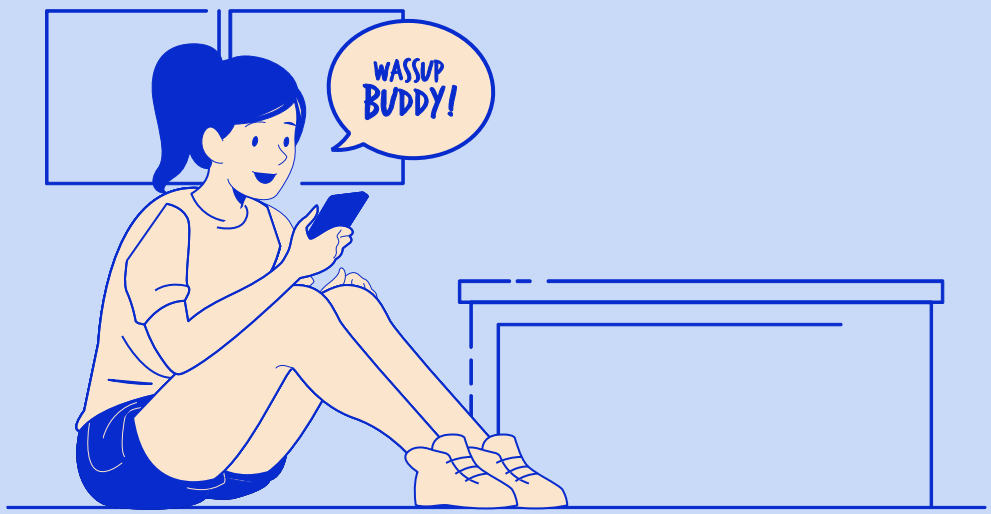
15,000

Saturn is a gas giant and has several rings

6,000

Neptune is the farthest planet from the Sun

ALTERNATIVE RESOURCES



150,000

Big numbers catch your audience’s attention

AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS

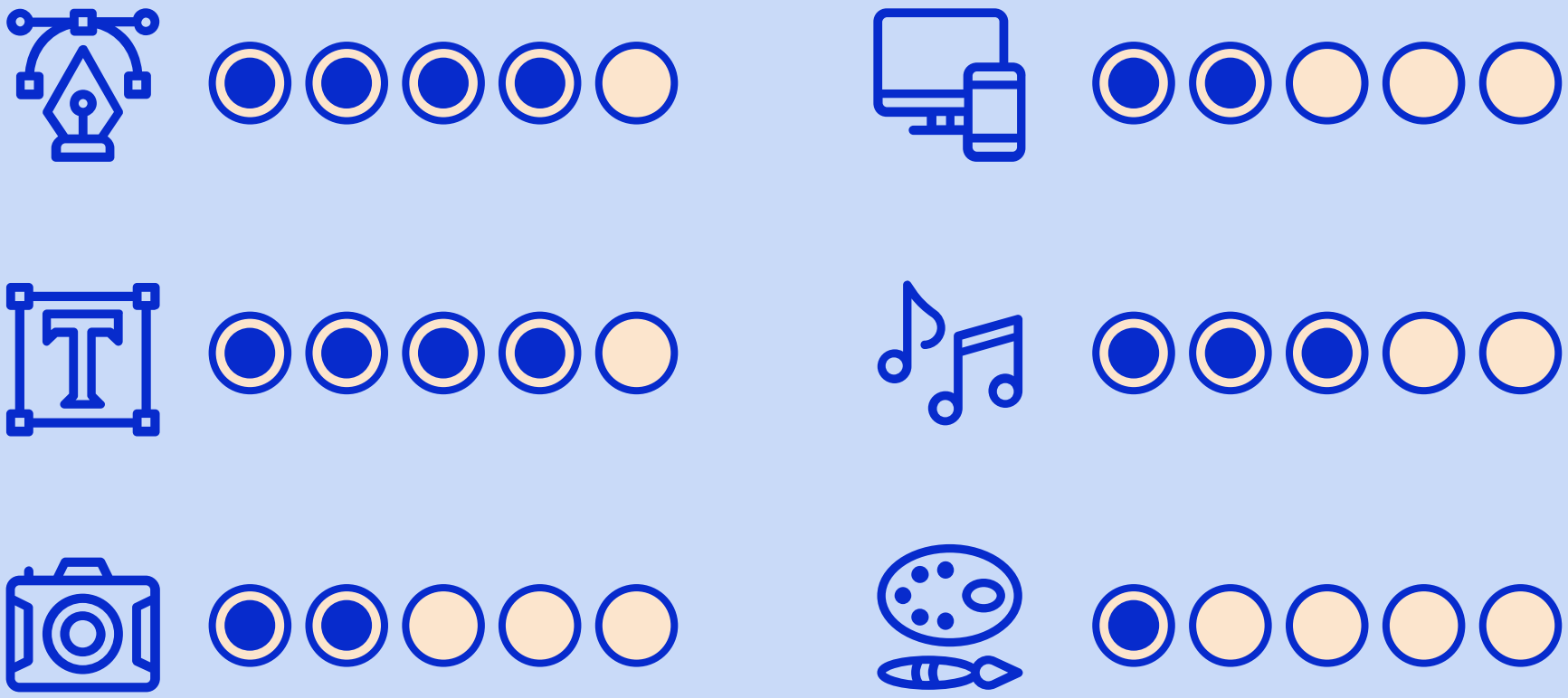
GENDER

60%

40%

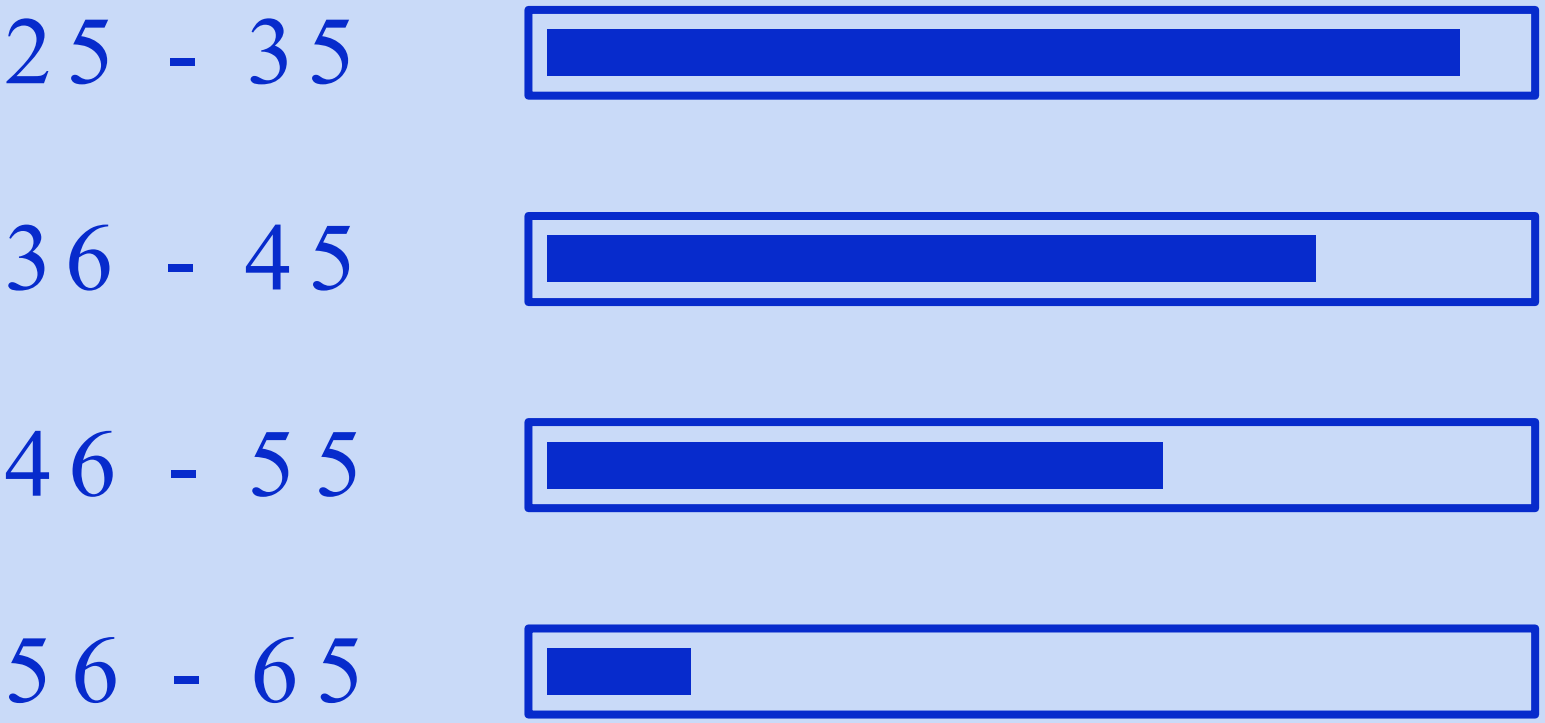
AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS

INTERESTS



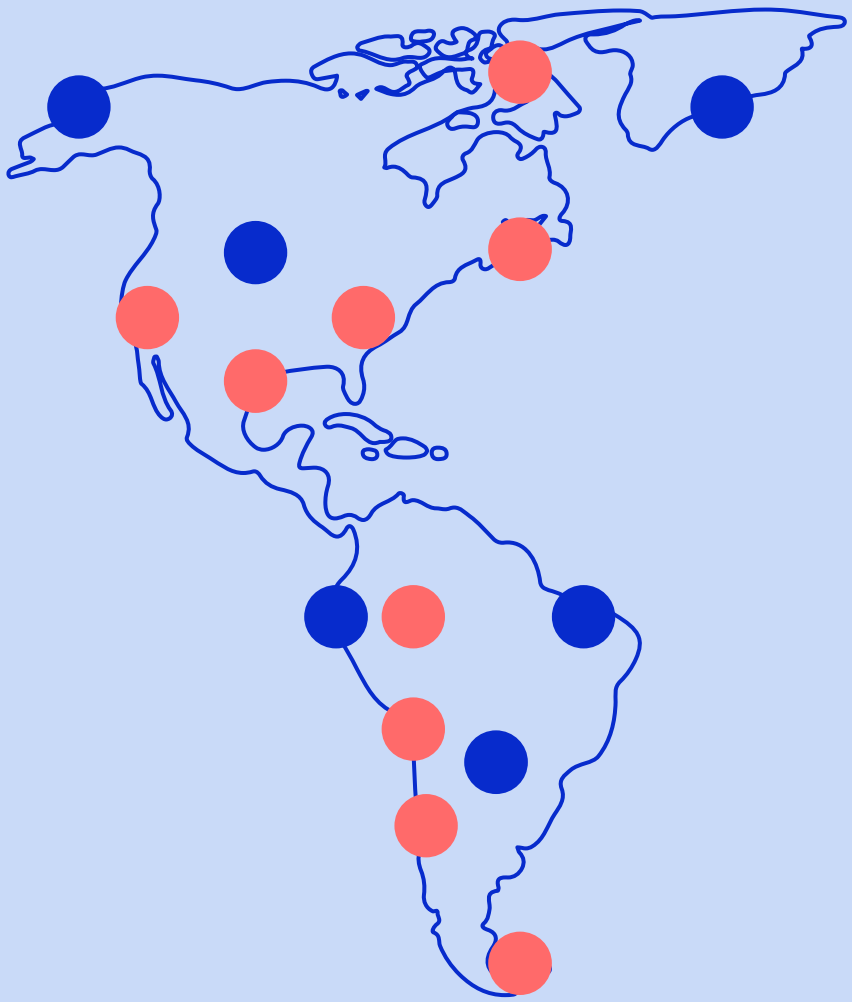
AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE



AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS

LOCATION



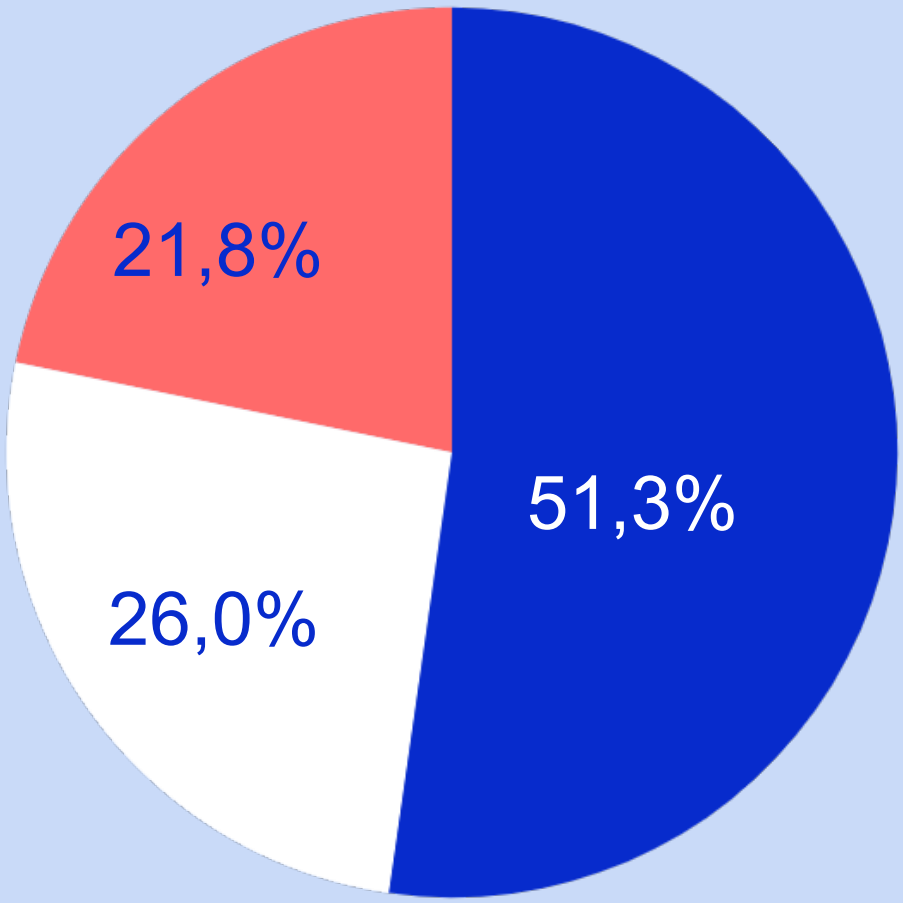
MERCURY

It’s the closest planet to the Sun

JUPITER

Jupiter is the biggest planet

CONTENT TO CREATE



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VENUS

Venus has a beautiful name

MERCURY

It’s the closest planet to the Sun

EARTH

It’s the third planet from the Sun

BUYER PERSONA

AGE: 25 - 35
GENDER: Female
STUDIES: Degree in Advertising
LOCATION: Madrid, España

BUYER PERSONA

JOB: Publicist

INCOME RANGE: $1500

MARITAL STATUS: Single

- Motivations
- Behavior
- Personality
- Interests

HOBBIES: Social media

15% **55%** **30%**

ANALYZING THE COMPETITION

MARS

Despite being red, Mars is a cold place full of iron

VENUS

Venus has a beautiful name and is the second planet

NEPTUNE

Neptune is the farthest planet from the Sun

KPI OVERVIEW

20,000

TOTAL LEADS

This month

110,000

NEW CUSTOMERS

This month

8,000

SALES-READY LEADS

This month

$ 13,000

NEW REVENUE

This month

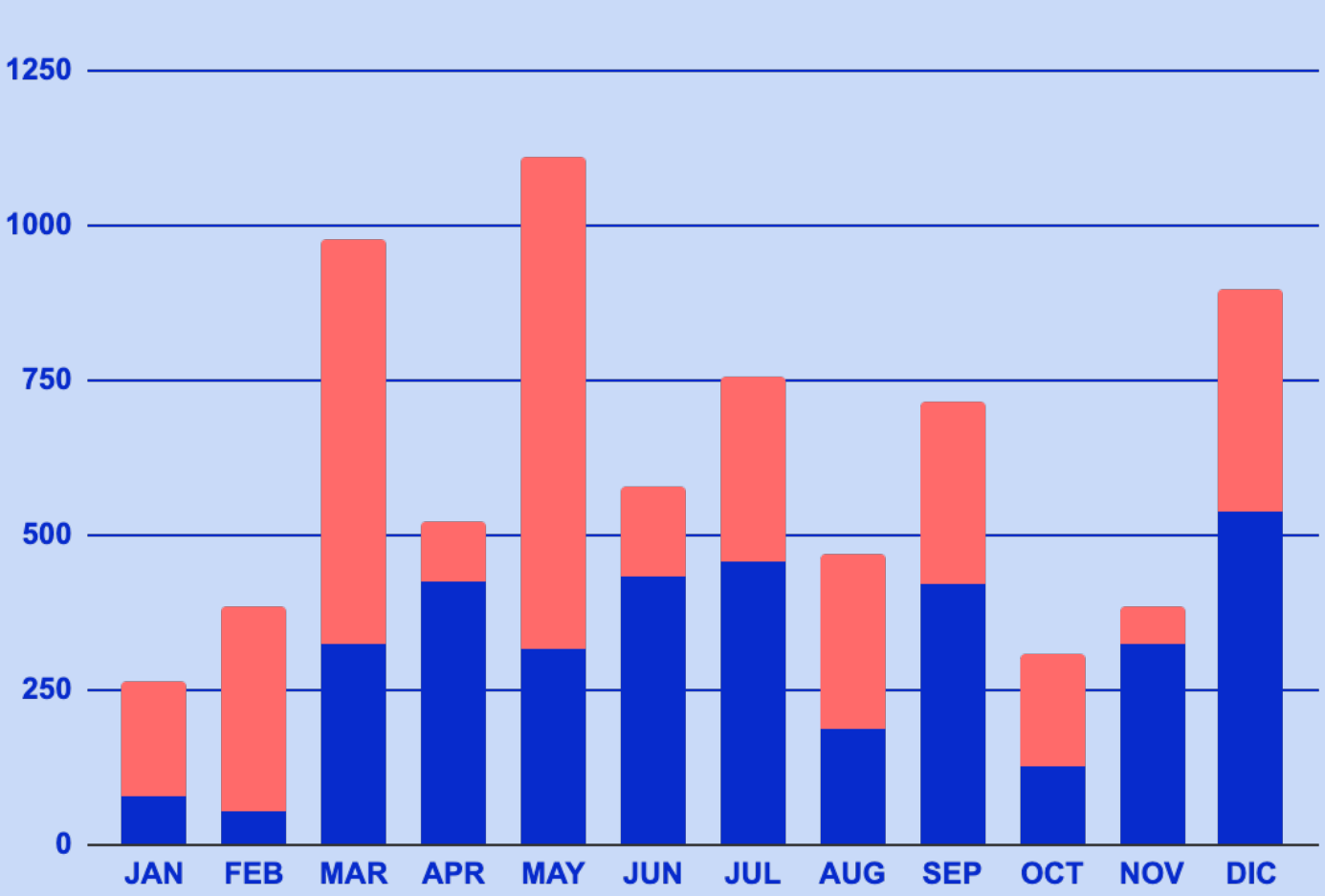
KPI OVERVIEW

- **MERCURY**

  It’s the closest planet to the Sun

- **JUPITER**

  Jupiter is the biggest planet



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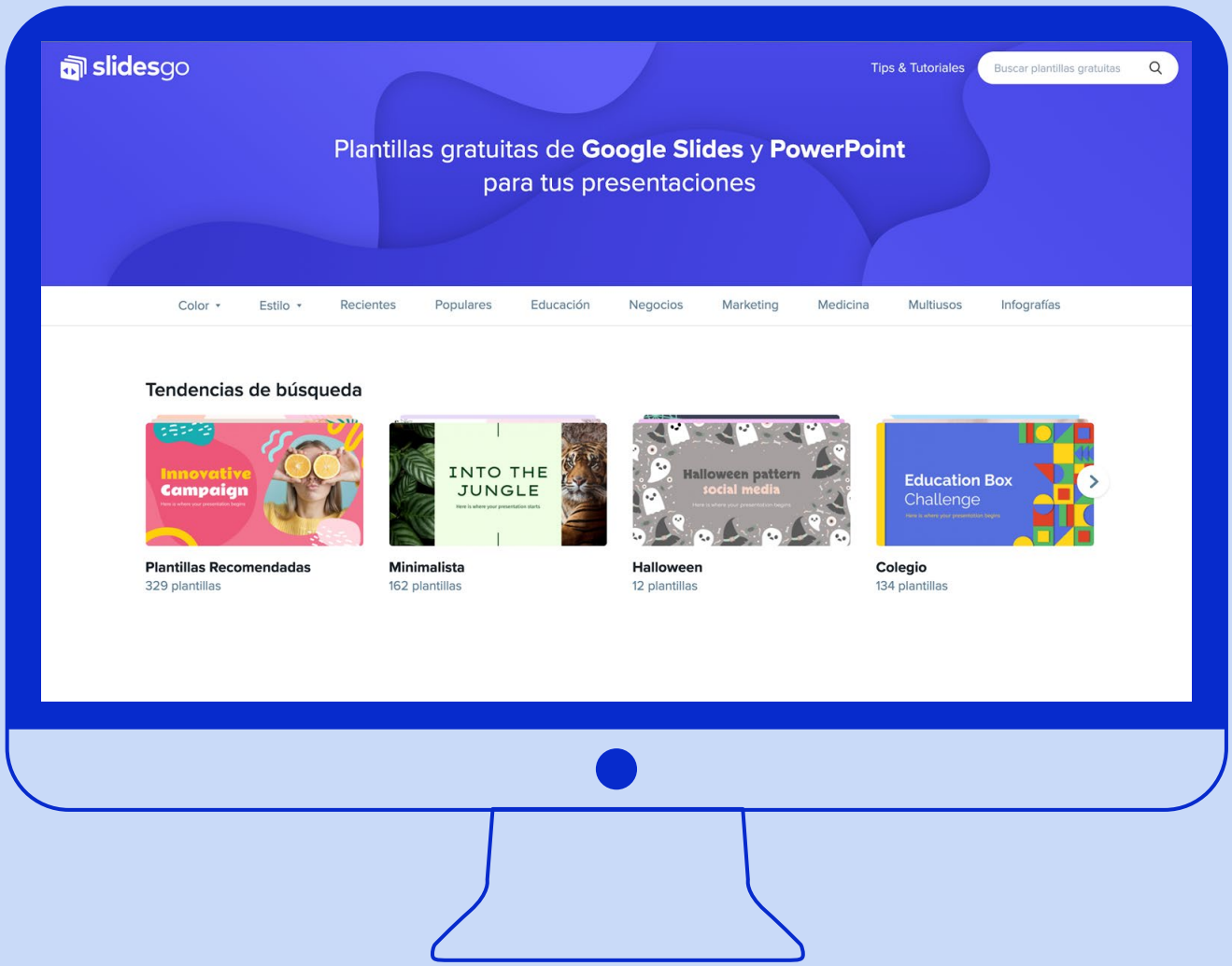

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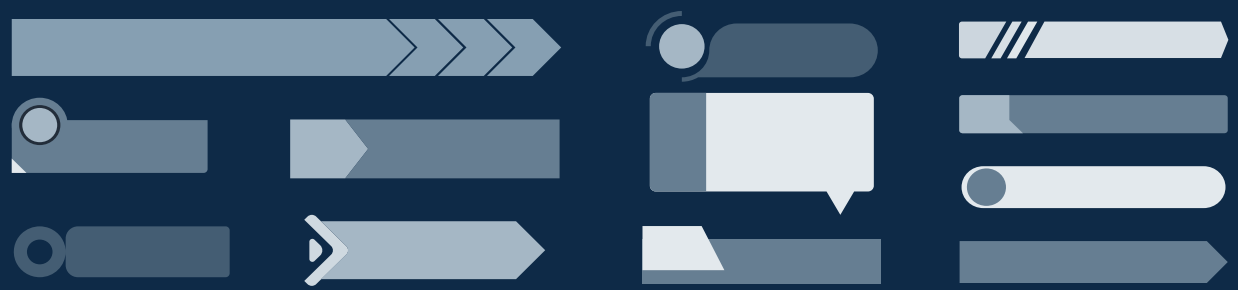

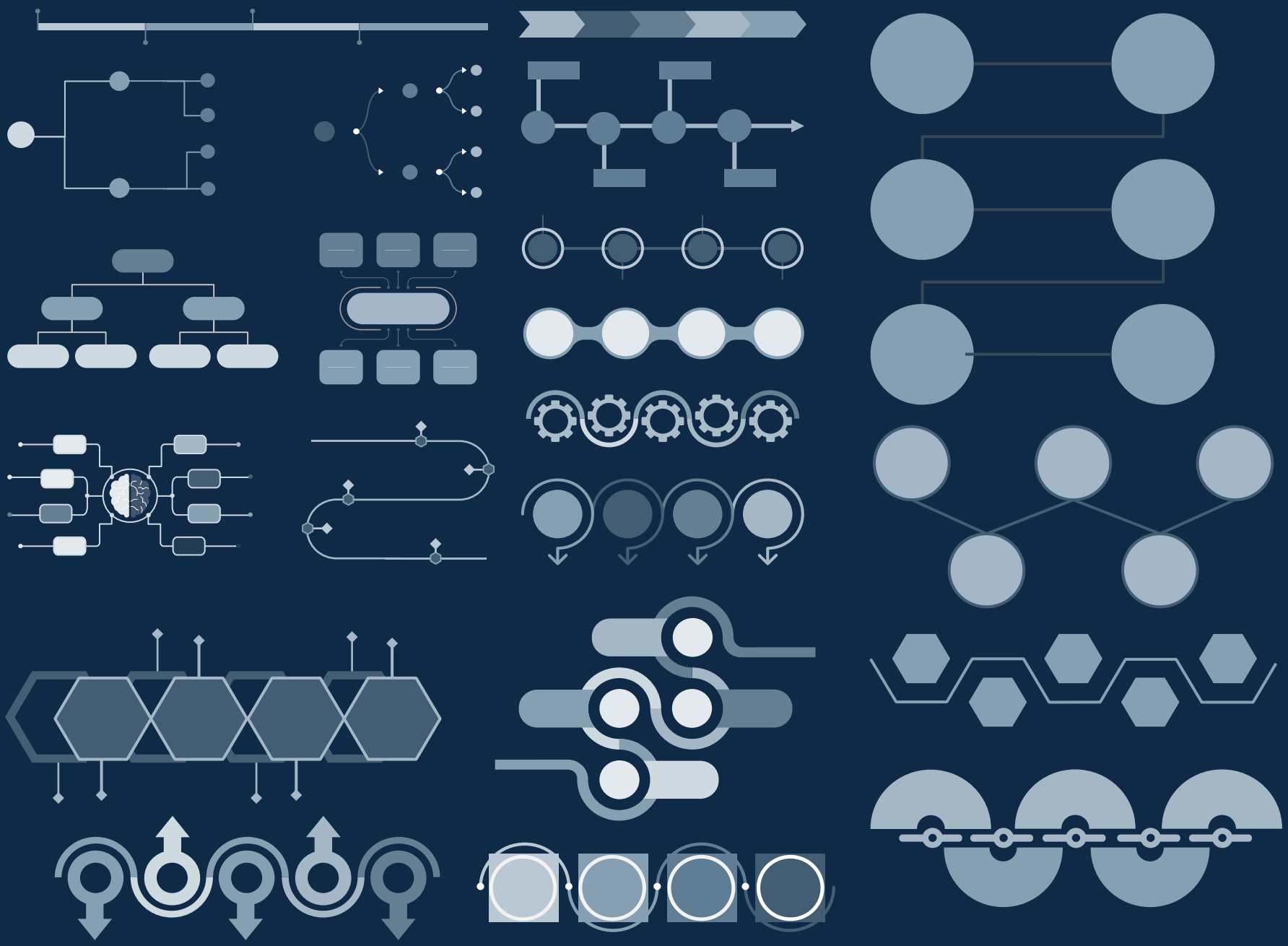

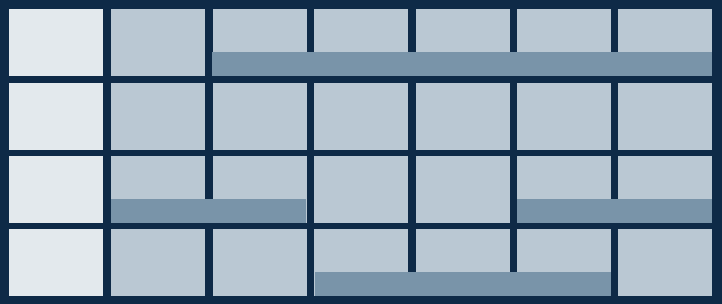

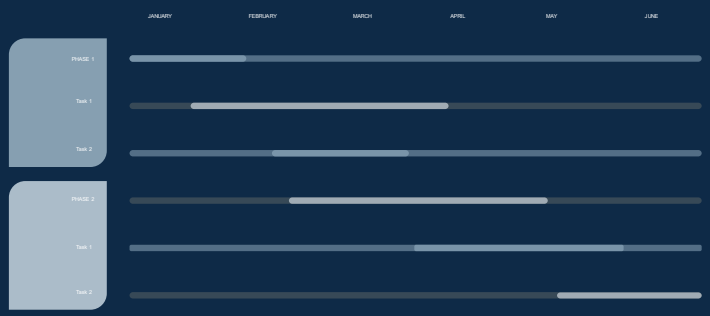
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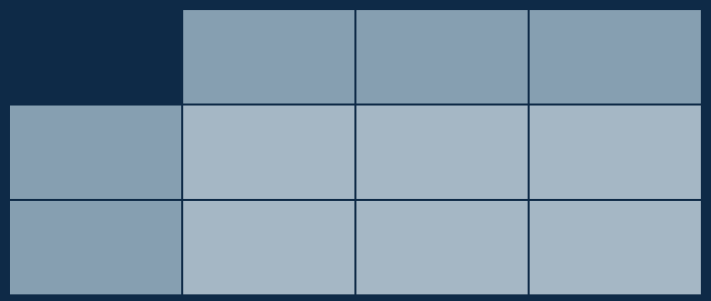
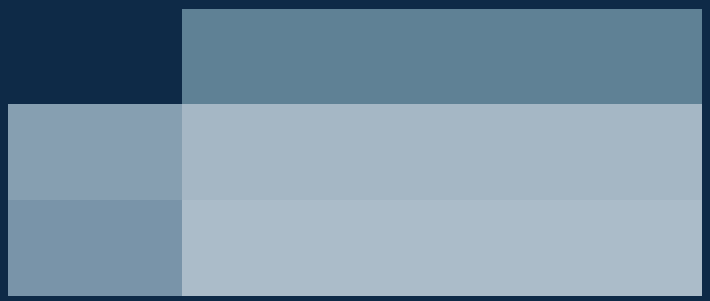
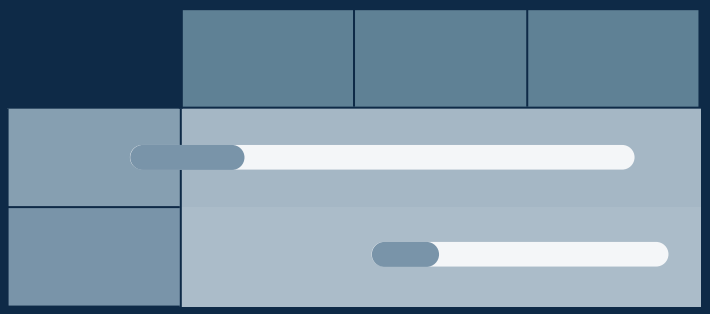
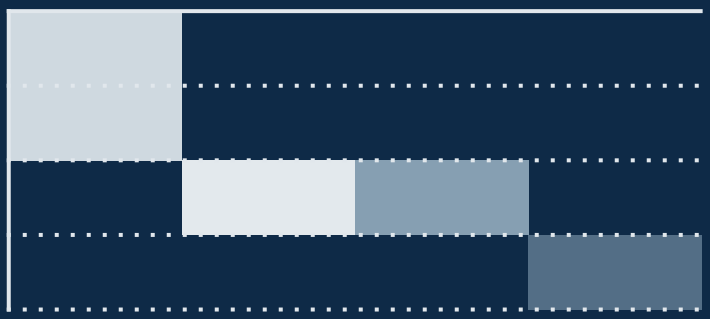
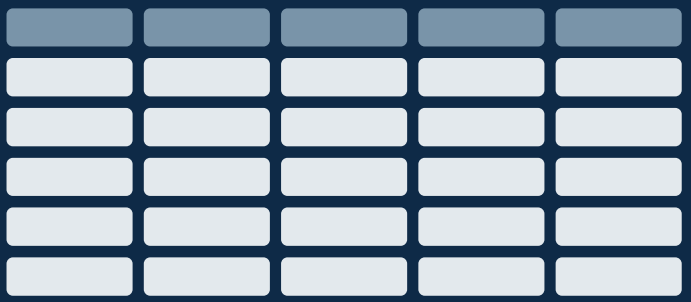
JUNE
PHASE 1
Task 1
Task 2
PHASE 2
Task 1
Task 2

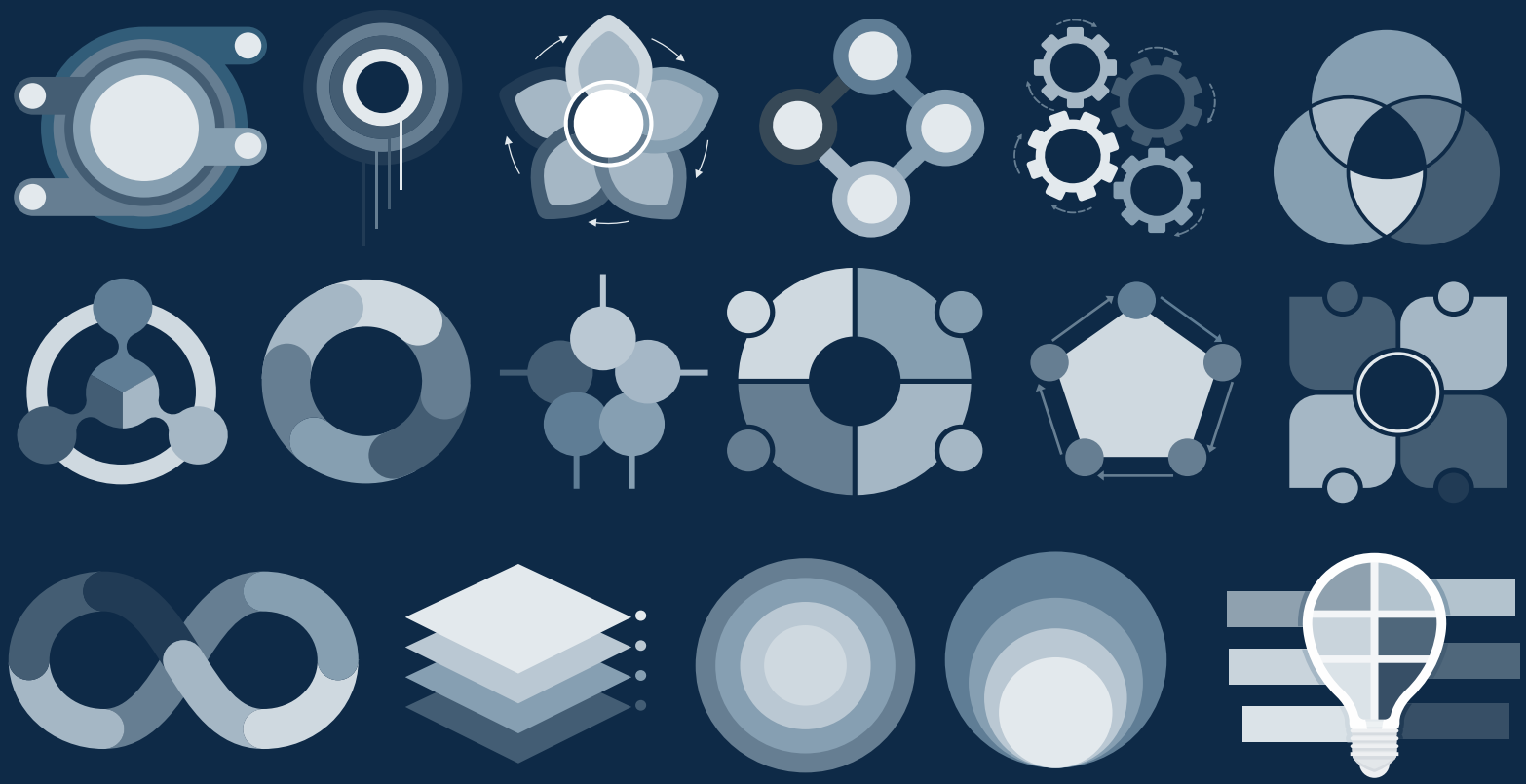












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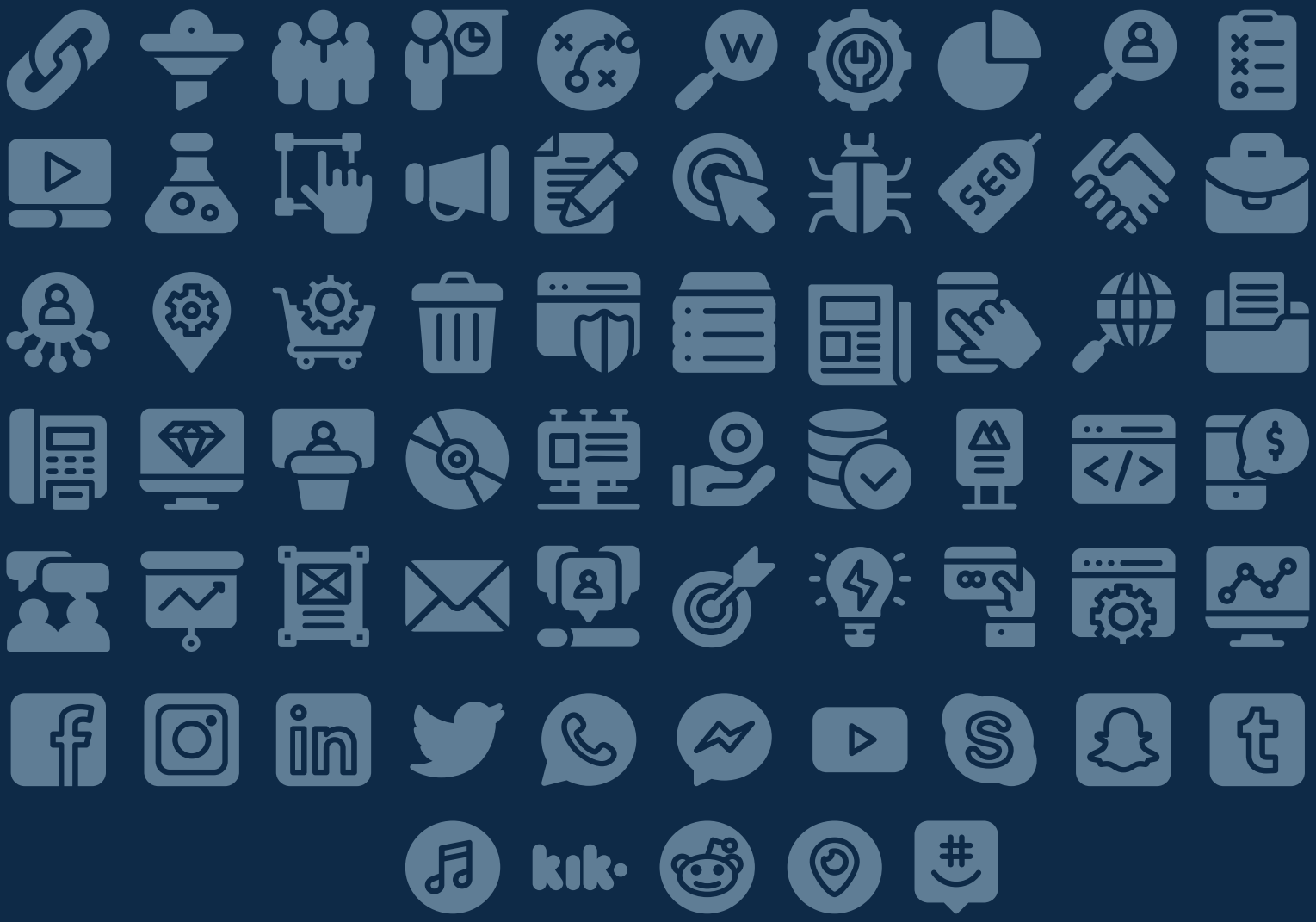

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