Chapter 11
Benchmarking Competitiveness of Top 100 U.S. Universities

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ABSTRACT
This chapter presents a comprehensive benchmarking study of the top 100 U.S. universities. The methodologies used to come up with insights into the domain are Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) and information visualization. Various approaches to evaluating academic institutions have appeared in the literature, including a DEA literature dealing with the ranking of universities. This study contributes to this literature by the extensive incorporation of information visualization and subsequently the discovery of new insights. The main purpose of the study is to create an objective basis of assessment for the candidate students to use for university preferences. Meanwhile, the actionable insights obtained for the domain can guide university managers, as well as candidate students.

INTRODUCTION
University education is not only about learning theoretical or technical information on a particular profession, but it also comprises of gaining a different perspective on life and leads to human development. In today’s world, university education is not a privilege but rather almost a standard expectation for a successful professional career. Choosing a university and planning one’s future upon this decision is thus a significant decision. This chapter presents a detailed benchmarking analysis of the top 100 US universities, as would be viewed from a high school student’s perspective. The goal of our study is two-folds: Assisting students for their university selection as well as assisting university managers in improving their universities. Whichever the target audience, the results obtained in the study and the analysis performed can be packaged as an interactive decision support system (DSS) for the target audience.

Our study aims at offering an objective approach to assist prospective students in the in the complicated choice of a higher education institution and assist policy makers for their decision on institutional
Benchmarking is the process of comparing an organization’s business processes and performance with other organizations of its kind, to identify and implement improvements (Andersen & Jordan, 1998). Robert Camp (1989) developed a 12-stage approach for benchmarking, which consists of the following:

1. Select subject,
2. Define the process,
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