

College Students Surf Back to Campus on a Wave of Digital Connections

Study Shows "Moblearning"; Students are Wired from Dorm Room to Classroom

(New York, NY) September 5, 2006 – Earbuds, laptops, and cell phones are among the constants in the complex portrait of today's returning college class, heading back to campus with a record number of gadgets enabling perpetual mobile connectivity. These essential tools tether students to a sophisticated, wired campus, where connectedness extends from the dorm room to the classroom; and friends, professors, and troves of digital music are rarely out of touch.

Data released today from the 2006 Alloy College Explorer Study, powered by Harris Interactive, paints a definitive picture of modern college students tuned-in to digital communications throughout their day, and of a sophisticated college campus that has evolved to meet their needs for mobility and pervasive access to the networked world.

"Students have spoken and their technology choices tell us that mobility is among their highest priorities," commented Dana Markow, VP Youth and Education Research, Harris Interactive. Adding, "The study reveals students are spending a total of eleven hours of each day engaged with media¹ and are constantly on the go. A majority of students have a paid job in addition to being a student and traveling from class to class, and most own a car -- so accessing media "en route" or away from home is critical for them. One aspect of what the study shows is a very significant change in the way college students navigate their daily lives".

Goin' Mobile

This generation gives new meaning to "take it with you". Among the most telling statistics is the diminished role of desktop computers, down 13% this year while 50% of students will head back to class this year with a laptop. The 8% gain over the previous year is evidence of students' preference for mobility and the use of those wifi hotspots on campus to enjoy the nearly 3.5 hours of email, instant messaging, and web surfing they put in daily. Gains in cell phone ownership reveal a record number of students communicating through their mobile devices. An additional 1.3 million students now have cell phones² and are spending almost 20 minutes each day sending and receiving

¹ This figure represents a sum across media choices and does not account for time spent interacting with two or more media at the same time

² Calculation based on survey findings among 18-30 year old students projected to the universe of 12.9 million 18-30 year old college students as determined by the National Center for Education Statistics (2005)

text messages. The study also quantifies music mobility's huge role in college life. Of the 41% of students who own an MP3 player, 85% are "plugged in" to their portable MP3's daily.

Mobile Social Lives

The role of "friends" has evolved within the online world, empowered by the widespread adoption of social networking sites among students. Fully 85% of students who visit social networking sites use them to see what their friends are up to and 70% participate in SN-based message boards to communicate with friends. On average, 18-24 year old students are hanging out on these sites for 6.5 hours a week. Students claim to have an average of 111 friends across many profiles online, changing the definition of today's peer group and the way in which students connect with each other. And 61% of students on social networking sites say they are interacting with people they've never met in person.

"College students look to their friends above any other influence for guidance and approval. The increase in 'friend' access and the evolving definition of 'friend' affords peer networks greater import than ever," commented Samantha Skey, SVP, Strategic Marketing, Alloy Media + Marketing.

The Modern Digital Campus

Seemingly overnight, campuses nationwide have ramped up to meet student demand for mobility and networked interaction. Twenty nine percent (29%) of all schools provide blanket coverage, with 64% reporting such plans in the works³.

The evolution goes beyond hardware. Digital upgrades have changed the way students interact with their class work and communicate with professors. Rare are the scenes of students crowding around a grade sheet posted outside the classroom, because 72% now receive grades, as well as assignments, via the Web. Remember having to show up at your prof's office to turn in a paper? Not anymore, 71% of students use email. Even the institution of "office hours" has evolved, as 56% of students opt to email or even instant message their professors for help. The classroom lecture has gone digital as well, with a growing number of students utilizing their portable MP3 players to catch up by podcast.

³ The Campus Computing Project, The 2005 National Survey of Information Technology in US Higher Education



College Segment Phatter Than Ever

The college market (ages 18-30) continues to expand. Population is up 6%, marking the largest college class in history with over 17.4 million students headed to campus this year. Those students will bring an additional \$8B back to school, establishing the segment's record total spending power at \$182B. Discretionary spending is up 12% this year, rising to \$46B.

“While we’ve known that college students are aggressive adopters of digital communications and gadgets, this data sheds light on precisely how much time they spend online, and how they spend that time” said Skey. “The emerging picture tells us just how tuned-in students are, and where and when they’re connected to data, friends, and media. This type of insight has critical implications for marketers.”

Adding, "Traditional media platforms are less and less relevant to a consumer who's tuned-in nearly every free moment of their day. Gaining their attention and ultimately their loyalty, requires marketers to think about all the spaces that are relevant to the daily campus experience, and connect with them in meaningful ways both online and off for the most impact."

Methodology

This survey was conducted online by Harris Interactive on behalf of Alloy Media + Marketing among 1,793 adults (college students (full-time, part-time, 4-yr., 2-yr., aged 18 to 30) within the United States between April 14 and May 2, 2006. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, region and school status (full-time, part-time, 4-yr., 2-yr.) were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

With a pure probability sample of 1,793 adults one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 3 percentage points. However that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About Alloy Media + Marketing

Alloy Media + Marketing is one of the country's largest providers of nontraditional targeted media and promotional marketing programs connecting with 85% of the millennial audience (ages 5 - 29) daily. With large-scale networks, unique and exclusive media and promotional partnerships, and offices located in major markets across the country, Alloy Media + Marketing services over 1500 companies including half of the Fortune 200. Alloy Media + Marketing ranks fifth on the Advertising Age list of Top 100 Marketing Services Agencies and ranks among the World's Top 25 Ad Organizations.

Alloy Media + Marketing is part of Alloy, Inc. (**Nasdaq: ALOY**). For further information regarding Alloy Media + Marketing, please visit our web site at www.alloymarketing.com.



About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is the 12th largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world. The company provides research-driven insights and strategic advice to help its clients make more confident decisions which lead to measurable and enduring improvements in performance. Harris Interactive is widely known for *The Harris Poll*, one of the longest running, independent opinion polls and for pioneering online market research methods. The company has built what could conceivably be the world's largest panel of survey respondents, the Harris Poll Online. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its United States, Europe and Asia offices, its wholly-owned subsidiary Novatris in France and through a global network of independent market research firms. The service bureau, HISB, provides its market research industry clients with mixed-mode data collection, panel development services as well as syndicated and tracking research consultation. More information about Harris Interactive may be obtained at www.harrisinteractive.com. To become a member of the Harris Poll Online, visit <http://go.hpolsurveys.com/PR>.

Press Contacts:

Jodi Smith/ jsmith@alloymarketing.com
Alloy Media + Marketing 212-329-8359