

# Trends & Tudes<sup>SM</sup>

Keeping you informed of current topics in youth and education research.

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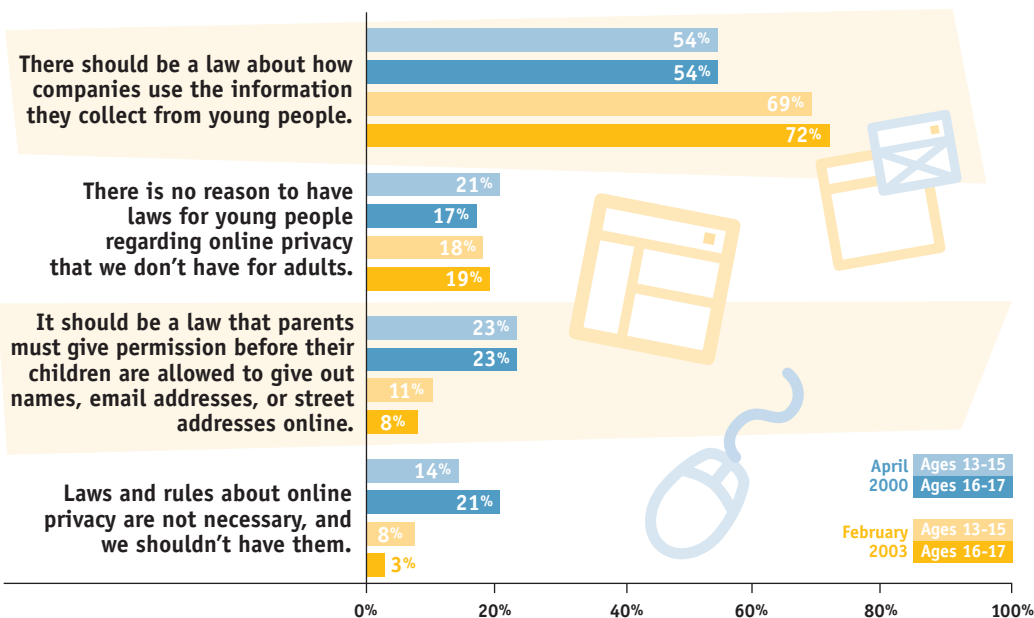
## Kids And Online Privacy

April 21 will mark the third anniversary of the implementation of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). This rule governs steps website operators must undertake to protect the privacy of children under the age of 13. It sets forth rules defining what information can be collected from children online, acceptable methods for obtaining parental consent, and steps website operators must take to allow parents access to the information that has been collected from their children.

COPPA’s consequences for the youth marketing industry and the experiences of tweens and teens on the Web are enormous. Just before COPPA went into effect, Harris Interactive began fielding in April 2000 a periodic tracking poll on children’s privacy issues from the perspective of tweens and teens. This month, we thought we would share how kids’ views towards online privacy have evolved in a “post-COPPA” world.

Teenagers (ages 13-17) are in agreement that there should be laws on how companies use information they collect from young people. The role of the Internet in teen’s lives has grown since COPPA went into effect, and the data clearly show that today’s teens are more in favor of regulation than teens were three years ago. Teens have consistently agreed with the driving forces of COPPA – that online privacy rules are necessary, that young people need specific protections online, and that parental permission should be required before divulging personal information online.

### Percent Agreeing With Statement



SOURCE: Harris Interactive

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## Editorial: Our Take On It

by **John Geraci**

Vice President,  
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In the mid-1980s, as I was entering business school, the dean of the school made a presentation to the incoming students during orientation. In it, he said that the school had recently decided against adding a course in business ethics. I remember him saying that business ethics were not something that could be taught, that ethics are a personal issue, debatable and that by not including a business ethics course in the curriculum, the school was allowing students an academic freedom to establish their own principles.

Two years later, my newly minted MBA in hand, I interviewed (unsuccessfully) at Xerox, Arthur Andersen, and a firm that was eventually bought by Global Crossing. Many of my classmates took positions at these companies, all of which have had their own ethical challenges recently. I believe my business school now requires a course in accounting ethics, as do many other schools, as a reaction to the recent accounting scandals. I recently reviewed their course requirements and didn't see any reference to broader business ethics courses.

As I thought about our theme of kids and online privacy for this month, I reflected on issues regarding the ethics of marketing and advertising to children. Marketing and advertising to youth are largely self-regulated in the United States. There are

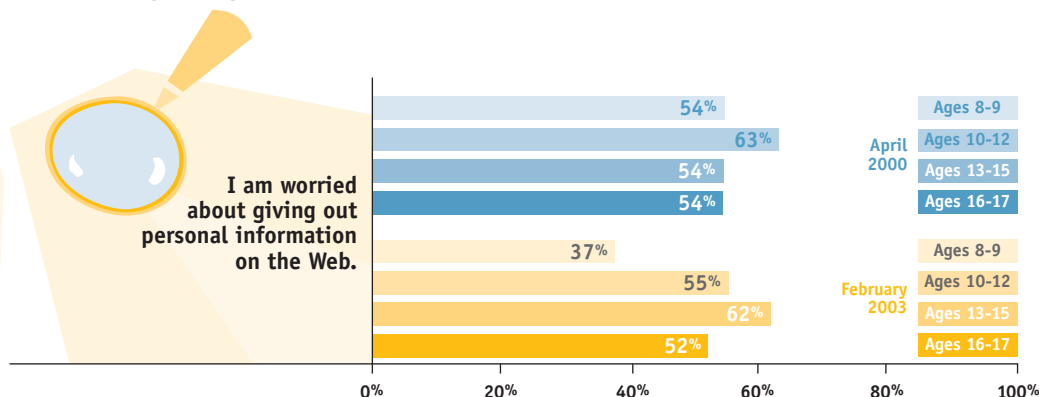
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It is perhaps not appropriate to attribute all changes in the perception of online safety among tweens and teens to COPPA as the Internet has changed dramatically in the past three years. Children have gained experience with the Internet, parents have become much more attuned to their role in an online world, and the Internet has become an integral part of American culture in a very short time frame.

Our studies show that the youngest respondents, under the age of 13, have become less fearful of providing their personal information online in the post-COPPA era but that many remain worried about giving out this information. Eight- to 12-year-olds are less likely to say they are worried about giving out personal information than teenagers. Our data also show that concerns about privacy being invaded online are more prevalent among older teens than tweens. (Note: COPPA does not apply to those 13 and older.)

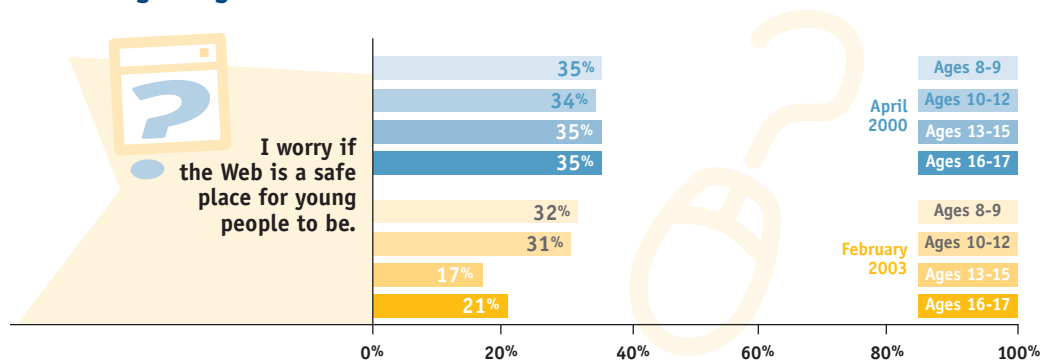
### Percent Agreeing With Statement



SOURCE: Harris Interactive

The Web has become a more comfortable place for teenagers. In April 2000, we found that about a third of tweens and teens were worried about the safety of the Web. In three year's time, this perception has persisted among tweens while teens have become significantly less fearful of the Web.

### Percent Agreeing With Statement



SOURCE: Harris Interactive

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few governmental restrictions or regulations in place. In many ways, the government has acted much as my business school has – they have left for us to decide the definition of what is ethical and what is not.

As you may know, Harris Interactive serves an eclectic group of youth-oriented clients. We work with foundations that study and publicize areas of great social concern, with school districts that seek to improve the educational experiences of students, with agencies that seek creative approaches to communicate and persuade, and with marketers who want to pursue new products for young consumers.

What has perplexed me is that I have yet to encounter a client organization that has developed a clear definition of its own ethical standards for youth marketing. In fact, I have noticed the opposite: Youth-oriented organizations avoid the subject.

### Why are business ethics such a taboo subject?

I have been to dozens of youth industry conferences and symposia and have yet to see one session that discusses the ethics of marketing to young people. On the other hand, I have seen those opposed to youth marketing picketing the conferences. I've met some wonderfully ethical and caring individuals in this industry whom I subsequently have seen vilified in books and articles. I myself will never forget the time when I was on a radio call-in show

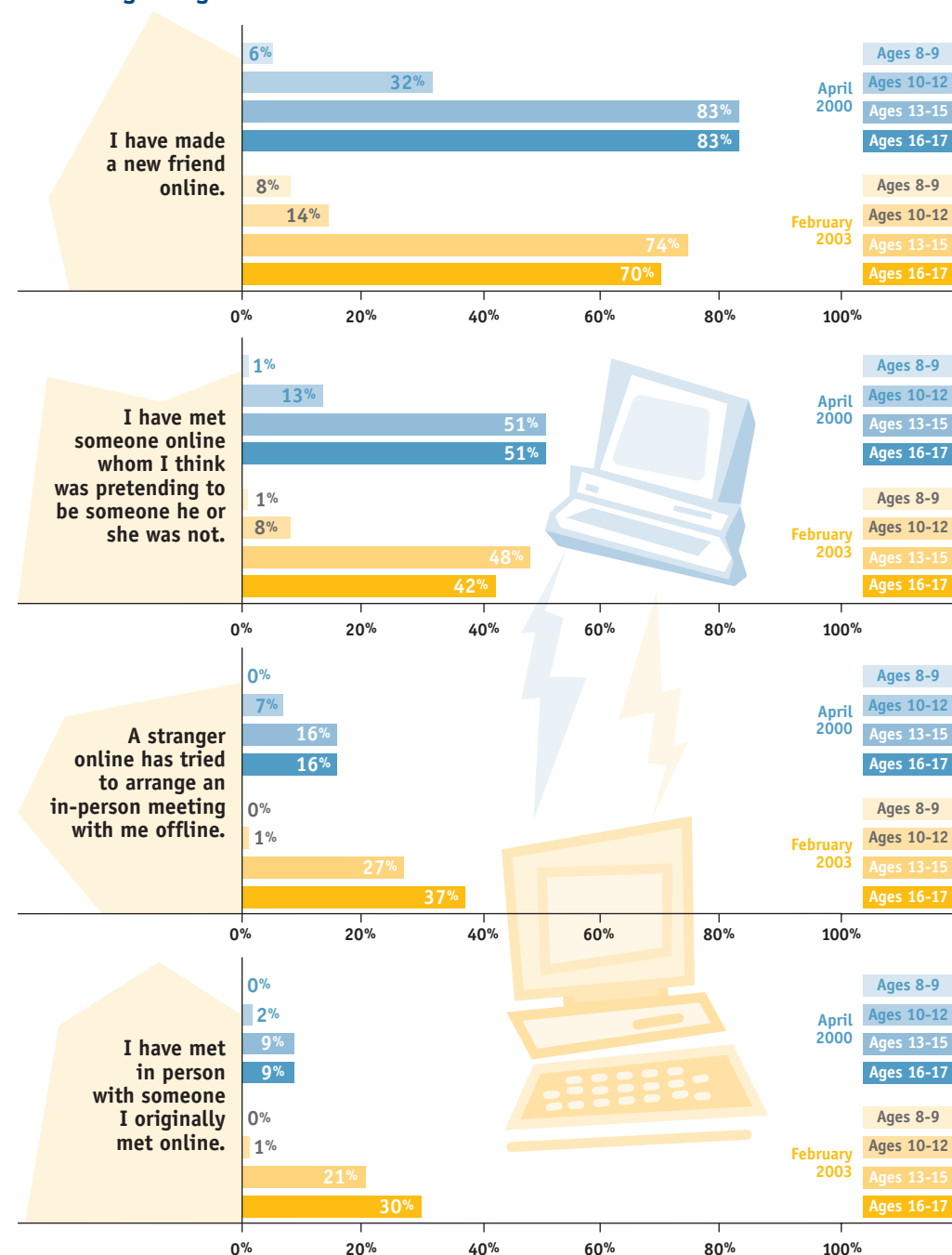
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We found a significant drop since 2000 in the proportion of young people who say they have met new friends online. We have also discovered a decrease in the percentage of young people who tell us they encounter people online who are pretending to be someone they are not.

We are documenting a higher percentage of teens (but not tweens) who report that online strangers have tried to arrange in-person meetings with them. In total, almost one in four teens say they have met in person with someone they originally met online.

### Percent Agreeing With Statement



SOURCE: Harris Interactive

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and a parent on the phone asked, "How can you sleep at night knowing what you do for a living?"

I have discussed the issue in client presentations and have noticed audiences that avert their eyes and a palpable tension enters the room as I bring it up. I am confident that Harris Interactive has lost research pitches at times, because we seek to understand our client's orientation towards the issue of selling to children. I have learned it is bad business to bring it up.

The vast majority of youth marketers behave responsibly. Many are in the jobs they are in because they have a deep-rooted concern for kids, not because they want to take advantage of them. And, it has been proven time and again that unethical practices simply don't work. Critics ascribe cruel intentions to youth marketing that really are not there.

Most of us feel that kids and teens should have products and services that are geared towards them and which reflect what they need and want, that there has never been a better time to be a child, and that youth marketers have contributed greatly to the well being of children. Researching and listening to children so we can help make their lives more enjoyable, more fun, and more efficient is important. The move towards an increased marketing attention to children empowers them.

If the youth marketing industry continues to avoid the subject of youth marketing ethics we are inviting criticism and regulation. Young people merit

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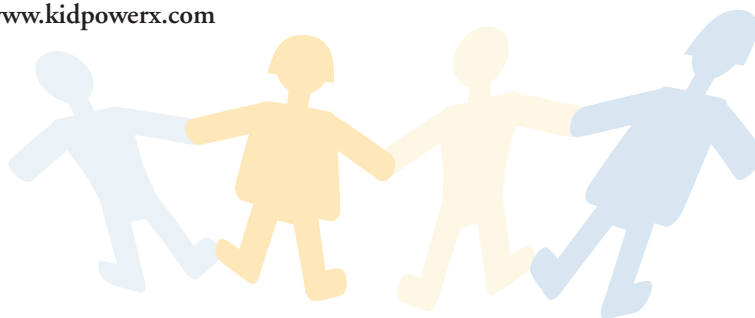
The increase in Internet "stranger danger" concerns may be partially explained by gaining experience online. Teenagers today have logged many more lifetime Internet hours than those surveyed three years ago. Still, most would agree that the number of teens who have had strangers approach them online is troubling.

More information on COPPA is available at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov).

Harris Interactive will continue to track online privacy issues periodically. An extensive PowerPoint presentation summarizing our data on these issues is available free of charge. Just contact us if you are interested.

## Come See Us At Kid Power!

Harris Interactive is proud to be a sponsor of **Kid Power 2003, May 6-9, in Orlando, Florida**. We will be leading a conference session on May 7. For more information on this event, go to [www.kidpowerx.com](http://www.kidpowerx.com)



## Recent Research for Public Release

From time to time, the Harris Interactive Youth Research team is fortunate to work with media, leading foundations and non-profit organizations, and we often are able to release the results of these studies publicly.

For this month, we can share with you some highlights of a recent poll we conducted among teens (ages 13 to 19) regarding Iraq. These data were collected February 12 to 18, 2003. Given the rapidly changing nature of these issues, more recent world events may have altered some of these views. We will continue to monitor teens' perspectives on these issues and report on key findings in future *Trends & Tudes*.

In general, boys are more certain in their opinions and support of a potential Iraq war than are girls:

- 50% of teen boys and 37% of teen girls say they have confidence that President Bush will make the right decisions regarding the use of the United States military to attack Iraq
- 53% of teen boys and 37% of teen girls feel that President Bush has convinced them that Saddam Hussein is sufficiently dangerous to justify military action against Iraq.

That said, about two-thirds of both boys and girls say that they believe President Bush wants a military attack on Iraq. They believe that the president doesn't seek to achieve his goals without attacking Iraq.

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respect and restraint: Our polls indicate that they want regulation to protect them. We need to listen to our critics, recognize that they have valid concerns, and respond appropriately.

I'd never purport to tell a client what is ethical and what is not. However, it is necessary to recognize that our industry plays an important role in the lives of children, and every organization and individual working within it should have a clear vision of its role.

My business school dean years ago never suggested that issues of ethics should not be discussed, debated and documented. In fact, he said the opposite. He only meant to say that individuals and organizations must determine what is ethical and what is not.

## Contact Us:

To discuss this newsletter or your upcoming research project, call **Larry Brown**  
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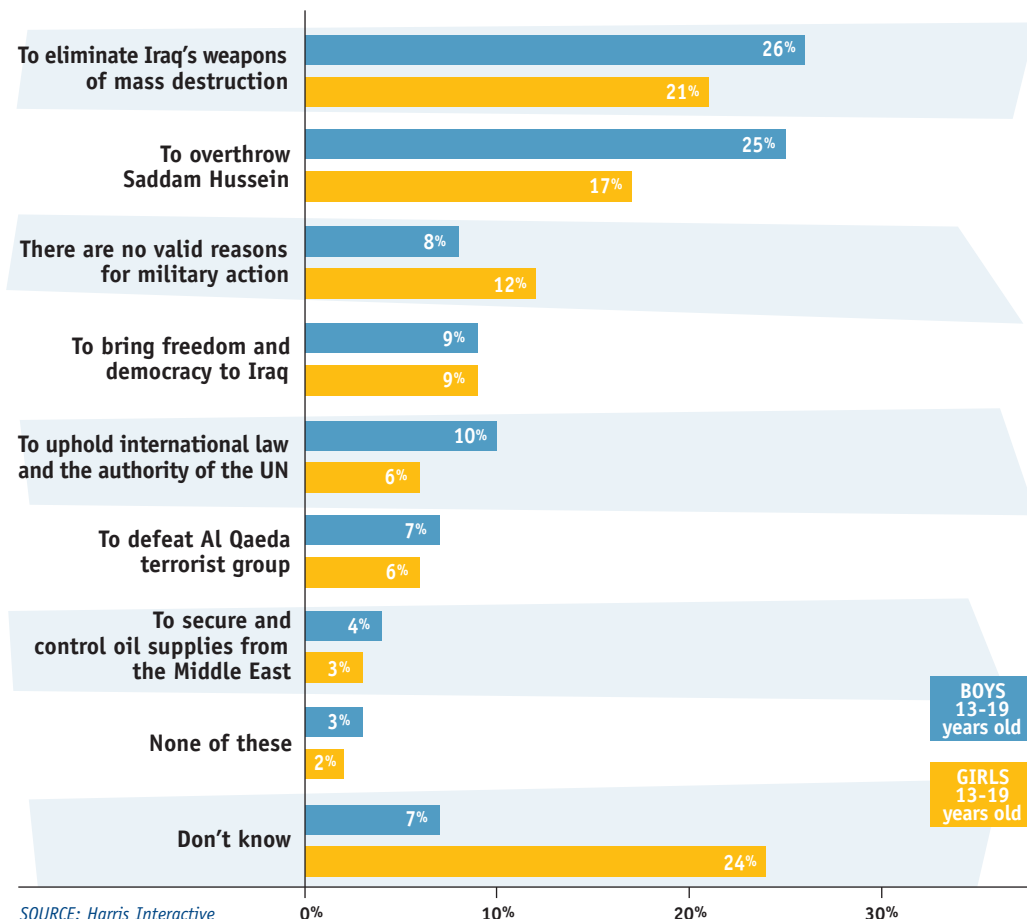
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As the chart below shows, eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and overthrowing Saddam Hussein are seen as the most valid reasons for attacking Iraq.

## Which One Of These Aims, If Any, Do You Personally Think Would Best Justify Military Action Against Iraq?



SOURCE: Harris Interactive

In total, 21% of teens say it will be possible to prevent Saddam Hussein from making or hiding weapons of mass destruction *without* an attack on Iraq while 51% feel an attack is *necessary* and 28% don't know. Forty-four percent of U.S. teens would oppose attacking Iraq if the United Nations (UN) does not vote to approve it while 34% would favor attacking Iraq without UN approval and 22% don't know. Finally, 69% of U.S. teens feel that there is at least some link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda.

In 1991, at the height of the first Gulf War, Louis Harris and Associates™ and Scholastic conducted a poll of 8- to 17- year-olds regarding their views of the war. Now that history is repeating itself, we are repeating this poll to show how youth support and concerns about an Iraq war may have changed in 12 years. Look for us to report on the results of this poll in an upcoming issue of *Trends & Tudes*.

To view previous issues of *Trends & Tudes*, please visit our website at [http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters\\_k12.asp](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_k12.asp)