

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

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

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## Young People Speak Out on the State of the Union

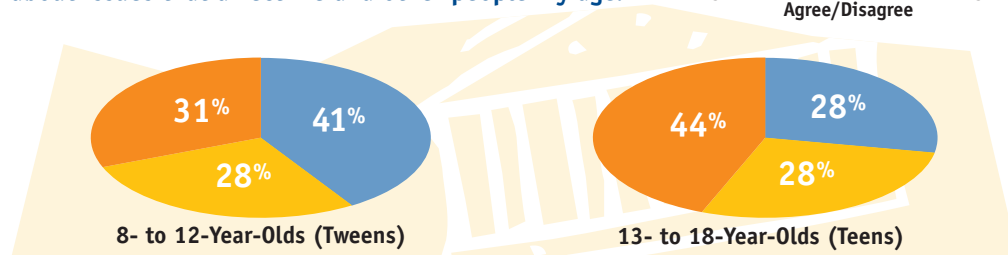
During the past year, we have asked the nation's youth about their views on several aspects of American government and the political process. As the Fourth of July approaches, we would like to share with you tweens' and teens' perspectives on democracy today.

### Do elected officials represent kids' needs?

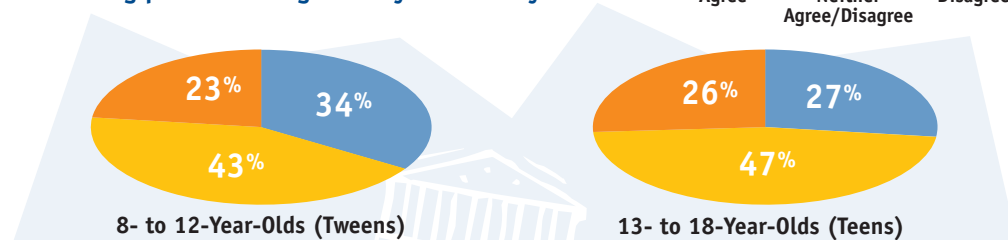
Young Americans are skeptical of their government representatives. Nearly four in ten 8- to 18-year-olds (38%) do not believe that elected officials care about issues that affect American young people. In contrast, one-third (34%) do believe that elected officials care about them and three in ten (28%) neither agree nor disagree with this statement. Additionally, one-quarter of young people (25%) do not believe that elected officials are making positive changes in their community. However, slightly more (30%) do believe that government officials are making a difference.

Perhaps not surprisingly, teens are more cynical about these matters than younger children. As for tweens, they are more likely than teens to believe that elected officials care about issues that affect people their age (41% vs. 28%) and they are also more likely to believe that elected officials are making positive changes in their community (34% vs. 27%).

Elected officials (like a mayor or congressperson) care about issues that affect me and other people my age.



Elected officials (like a mayor or congressperson) are making positive changes in my community.



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YOUTH AND EDUCATION

The Harris Poll<sup>®</sup> PEOPLE

Source: Harris Interactive YouthQuery<sup>SM</sup>, August, 2002

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## Editorial: Our Take On It

by **Dana Markow, Ph.D.**

Director, Youth and Education Research

Recently, much attention has been focused on the generation that entered adulthood during World War II – the “Greatest Generation.” This generation has been lauded for their contribution to American society, including their service during World War II and their subsequent civic involvement. Thinking about that generation – the grandparents or great-grandparents of Gen Y – makes me wonder what this current generation of young people will be known for? What are their views on civic involvement?

A foretelling of young people’s attitudes towards civic responsibility can perhaps be found by examining potential defining moments of their times. The events of September 11, 2001 will most likely shape teens’ views of the United States and the world. The war on terrorism, the War in Iraq and a continued downturn in the economy may also have long-term impact. Events such as these could potentially influence how young people define community involvement and the extent to which they engage in such activities – today and in the future.

We have some indication that Gen Y cares about civic issues, but that they define and address them on their own terms. A survey

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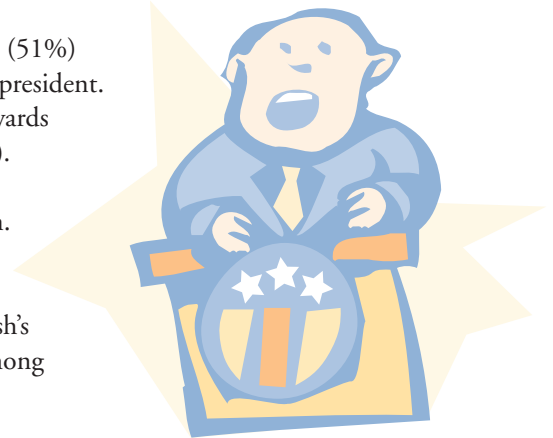
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We initially asked these questions of teens in July 2001 on behalf of Do Something, a non-profit organization that seeks to encourage young people’s involvement in their community. At that time, just as many teens believed that elected officials care about them (27%) as did teens one year later. Did the events of September 11, 2001 influence teens’ opinions of the government at all? During the subsequent months, we continued to ask teens whether they believed elected officials cared about issues that affect young people. In the immediate aftermath, teens were more likely to believe that elected officials care (37% in later September and October). However, this figure had fallen to the pre-September 11 level by the February following the attacks. So, September 11 caused an immediate increase in the trust placed in governmental leaders, but this increase quickly faded.

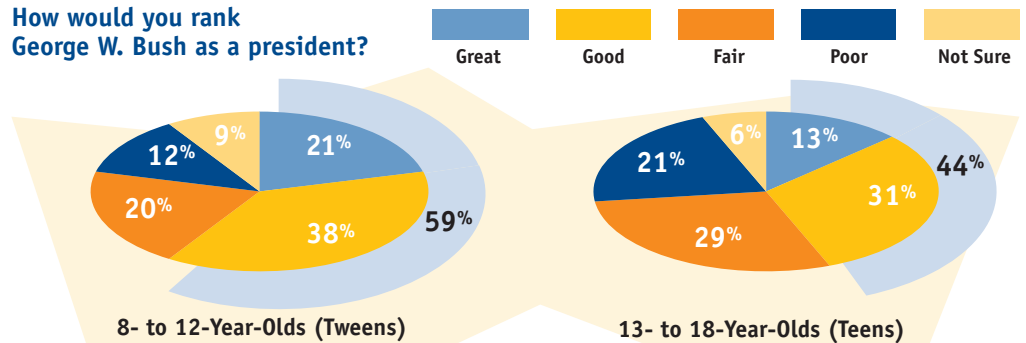
### What’s so great about being the president?

Do tweens and teens aspire to be president of the United States? According to the Harris Interactive YouthPulse<sup>SM</sup>, only two in ten (21%) of 8- to 21-year-olds would like to be president. More young people would like to be a millionaire (67%), be a TV or movie star (46%), be a famous musician or singer (44%), cure a disease (39%) or start a big company (34%).

In September 2002, half of young people (51%) rated George W. Bush as a great or good president. Tweens were more favorably disposed towards President Bush than teens (59% vs. 44%). Young people rated President Bush more favorably than they did President Clinton. Only four in ten youth (39%) rated the former president as great or good. Interestingly, in a reverse of President Bush’s ratings, President Clinton fared better among teens than tweens (44% vs. 33%).



### How would you rank George W. Bush as a president?



Source: Harris Interactive YouthQuery<sup>SM</sup>, August, 2002

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on civic engagement that Harris Interactive conducted on behalf of Do Something ([www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org)) in July 2001 revealed that the top issues that concern teens are drunk driving, depression and teen suicide, guns at school, improving schools, discrimination, violence in school and drugs. Two-thirds of teens reported that they were likely to get involved in the issues they viewed as important – getting involved with other people their age to help others, volunteering with an existing group and doing things online. However, they were least likely to say that they would call, write or visit an elected official to ask for help on the issue.

We then conducted a similar survey in August 2002. At that time, teens' top issues were similar to those of the previous year, including drunk driving, discrimination, guns at school, self-esteem and depression and teen suicide. In addition, three-quarters of teens (74%) felt that individual rights and freedoms were extremely or very important to them. Just one year after September 11, teens did not feel that those events had changed their attitudes toward civic engagement. Only one-quarter of teens (23%) reported that getting involved in their community was more important to them since September 11. Even fewer (18%) felt that participating in the political process was more important to them.

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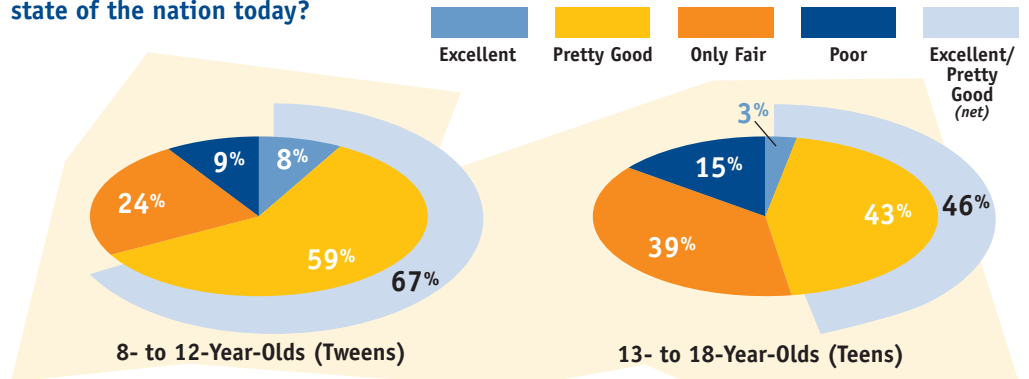
## Ask a Question...

Have a burning question you would like to ask kids and teens? Here's your chance to submit a free question for our upcoming YouthQuery<sup>SM</sup> youth omnibus. Just send us an email with your suggestion. We will pick one question each month and then publish the results in the next issue of this newsletter.

### ...Get an answer

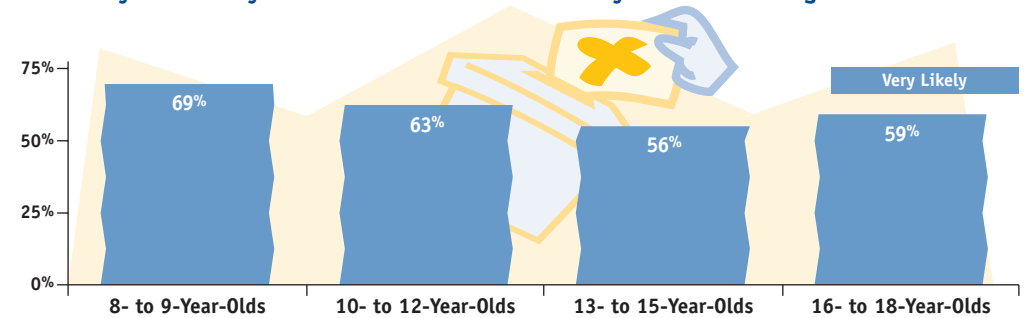
In honor of Independence Day, we asked the following questions:

**Thinking about everything going on in this country, how would you rate the state of the nation today?**



Source: Harris Interactive YouthQuery<sup>SM</sup>

## How likely is it that you will vote in elections when you are old enough?



Source: Harris Interactive YouthQuery<sup>SM</sup>

## Come See Us at Teen Power

Harris Interactive is proud to be a sponsor of Teen Power 2003, September 15-18, in Chicago. We will be leading a conference panel session on September 16 and John Geraci is the chairperson of the event. For more information on this event, go to [www.kidpowerx.com](http://www.kidpowerx.com)

## Come See Us at the AMA Symposium for the Marketing of Higher Education

Harris Interactive will be presenting "What Do Youth Marketers Know that Higher Education Marketers Should?" at the AMA Symposium for the Marketing of Higher Education on November 5 in Miami. For more information on this event, go to [www.marketingpower.com](http://www.marketingpower.com)

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Time will tell as to whether today's youth will become highly engaged in the American political process. Voter turnout among adults has seen a decline in recent years. But perhaps Gen Y will change that trend by redefining how their generation makes their voices heard in their community and in the nation.

### Contact Us:

To discuss this newsletter or speak to a qualified Youth Research representative, contact our Information Desk at **877.919.4765** or [info@harrisinteractive.com](mailto:info@harrisinteractive.com)

You received this newsletter, because you provided your contact information to a member of our youth research team. If others in your organization are interested in receiving our information, please have them forward their email addresses to [HI\\_youth\\_research@harrisinteractive.net](mailto:HI_youth_research@harrisinteractive.net). If you would prefer to be taken off our distribution list, please send an email to [HI\\_youth\\_research@harrisinteractive.net](mailto:HI_youth_research@harrisinteractive.net) and write the word "Remove" in the subject line.

## Yahoo! Summit Series: Born to Be Wired

On July 24th, Harris Interactive will be presenting the findings of the Born to Be Wired study of teen and young adult digital media consumption, which has been underwritten by Yahoo! and Carat Interactive. For more information on this event, go to [http://promotions.yahoo.com/btbw\\_2003#](http://promotions.yahoo.com/btbw_2003#)

## Recent Research for Public Release

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

### PC Gaining In Entertainment Value

The personal computer is overtaking the television, stereo and other home entertainment devices, now that digital content – MP3 music tracks, digital photos and digital video – has become mainstream, according to a survey conducted by Harris Interactive for Microsoft®.

The survey, which polled more than 2,000 computer users over age 13, found that the computer is redefining how people are entertaining themselves at home. The results revealed that 61 percent view the PC as more important than the home stereo while 43 percent see it as more important than the television.

"We were blown away with the number of people who are using the computer as their center of entertainment," said Hal Quinley, group president at Harris Interactive. "These results indicate people look to their computer as a TV, DVD player, stereo and CD player combined."

The survey is important for Microsoft, because it offers a glimpse into consumers' minds about not only what they're doing with the PC but what they'd like to do with it in the future.

Not surprisingly, teenagers (13 to 17) were more interested in using the PC for a whole-house experience than respondents 18 and older.

Among teenagers, 73 percent said they want to access music files on their PC from anywhere in the home, compared with 35 percent of the adult respondents. Likewise, 52 percent of teens are interested in having a home network to connect multiple devices in the home – such as televisions and stereos – to the PC, compared with 35 percent of the adults.

More information on this study is available at <http://www.bayarea.com/mld/mercurynews/business/5918852.htm>

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)