

TRENDS & TUDES

Keeping you connected to today's youth audience

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EDITORIAL

Our Take On It



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As I sit down to write this column, spring has finally arrived in New York City. The sun is shining, trees and flowers are blossoming, and I find myself with a heightened awareness of nature and the environment. And while Earth Day is in April, Harris Interactive research has shown that the environment is a year-round issue for Gen Y. Many teens' and young adults' goals include being



surrounded by nature. The Harris Interactive YouthPulseSM 2007 found that four in ten 13-21 year olds (42%) would like to see a rainforest someday and one-quarter (23%)

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Social Networking Sites: Growing Use Among Tweens and Teens, but a Growing Threat As Well?

By Koby Oppenheim, Senior Research Associate, Youth and Education Research

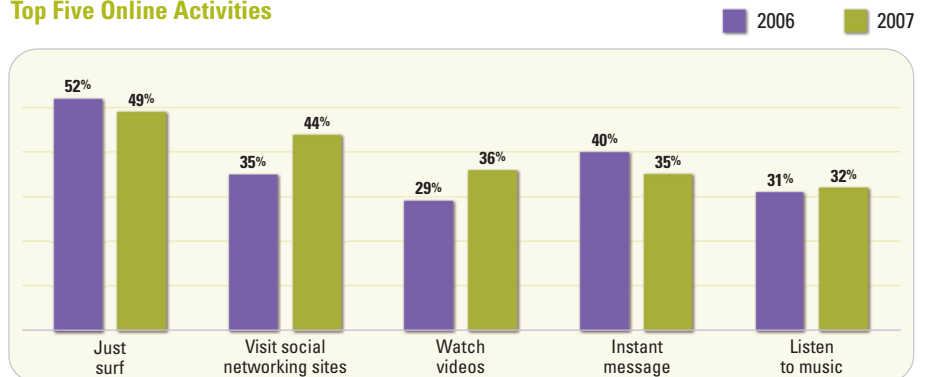
Will the next president have a Facebook profile? Social networking websites are assuming a new role – they're not just the place to meet, greet, post and poke, but are emerging as important content and media channels. Now more than ever, youth are putting their lives online – updating their status, tagging photos and posting videos on sites like MySpace, Facebook or Bebo. They are expanding the market of potential viewers and voters who can be accessed. In this edition of *Trends & Tudes*, we explore who these new users are and draw on recent research to investigate some of the risks often associated with online social networking.

Over four in 10 youth ages 8-21 report visiting a social networking site in the



past week (44%), according to the Harris Interactive YouthPulseSM 2007 study. This marks an increase from last year when a third of youth (35%) said they were doing so. This year, visiting social networking sites rose to the second most frequently mentioned activity youth performed online, overtaking Instant Messaging (2007: 35%; 2006: 40%) and approaching general Internet surfing (2007: 49%; 2006: 52%).

Top Five Online Activities



Source: Harris Interactive YouthPulseSM 2007 and Harris Interactive YouthPulseSM 2006 Q900. In the last week did you use the Internet to...?
Base: All Respondents (2007: n=2,348) (2006: n=2,213)

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would like to climb a mountain. Furthermore, Gen Y's fears for the future, as well as their hopes, focus on the environment. Six in ten 13-21 year olds (59%) worry that the environment



is getting more polluted. More teens and young adults have this concern than are worried about poverty (55%), equal rights (46%), AIDS (44%) or terrorism (39%). The same pattern of concern about the environment over other worries was even the same in 2002.

The question on my mind is how does and will this interest impact Gen Y's behaviors as consumers, as future employees and as citizens? For those who will be voting in their first presidential election in November, how will a candidate's environmental stand influence the Gen Y vote? The Harvard Institute of Politics' 13th Biannual Youth Survey on Politics and Public Service, conducted by Harris Interactive in Fall, 2007, found that 18-24 year olds' national concerns are the War in Iraq (37%) and health care (10%). The environment was in the next range of priorities, at 5%, similar to levels of concern about the economy, immigration and foreign policy.

As consumers, college students indicate that social responsibility does drive purchase decisions. Alloy Media + Marketing's 2006 College Explorer study conducted by Harris Interactive found that 33% of college students prefer brands

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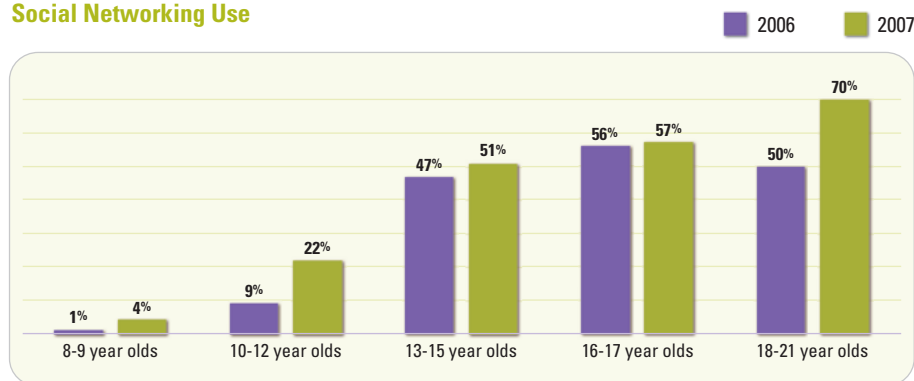
Social Networking Sites

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The newest users of social networking sites are on the edges of the age curve: both the youngest and oldest youth show distinct increases in usage of these sites. The percentage of 10-12 year olds reporting having used a social networking service more than doubled from 9% in

2006 to 22% in 2007. Among young adults ages 18-21, the percentage of youth using a social networking site rose by 20 points to 70% in 2007. By contrast, usage among 13-17 year olds increased modestly from 51% in 2006 to 53% in 2007.

Social Networking Use

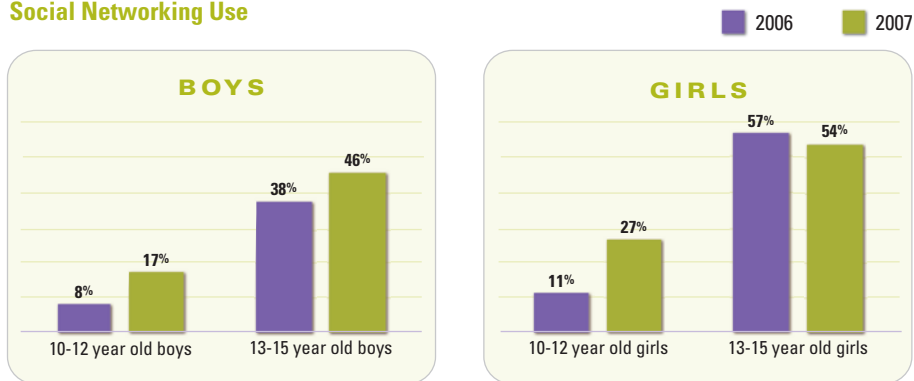


Source: Harris Interactive YouthPulseSM 2007 and Harris Interactive YouthPulseSM 2006 Q900. In the last week did you use the Internet to...?
 Base: 2007: Total n=2,348, 8-9 year olds n=473, 10-12 year olds n=480, 13-15 year olds n=407, 16-17 year olds n=336, 18-21 year olds n=652
 2006: Total n=2,213, 8-9 year olds n=437, 10-12 year olds n=440, 13-15 year olds n=442, 16-17 year olds n=370, 18-21 year olds n=524

Overall, girls say they visit social networking sites at a slightly higher rate than boys. Younger girls in particular are embracing social networking sites. Over the past year, the percentage of girls ages 10-12 who have visited a social network-

ing site has risen from 11% in 2006 to 27% in 2007. Although more boys ages 10-12 have started using these sites (8% in 2006 versus 17% in 2007), their numbers trail girls'.

Social Networking Use



Source: Harris Interactive YouthPulseSM 2007 and Harris Interactive YouthPulseSM 2006 Q900. In the last week did you use the Internet to...?
 Base: 2007: 10-12 year old boys n=241, 13-15 year old boys n=166, 10-12 year old girls n=239, 13-15 year old girls n=241
 2006: 10-12 year old boys n=220, 13-15 year old boys n=220, 10-12 year old girls n=220, 13-15 year old girls n=222

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that give back to the community, are environmentally safe, or that are connected to a cause. These socially responsible characteristics held greater sway than paying more for a brand with a great image (16%) or a preference for a brand used by celebrities (2%). A recent Harris Poll¹ found that 83% of Gen Y believes that organic foods are safer for the environment and this generation is more likely to buy organic foods regularly (10%).

But the story of this generation's environmental conscience is more nuanced than these findings indicate. While most Gen Y adults report that they separate and recycle materials such as aluminum, paper, plastic, glass, etc. in their home, fully thirty percent report that they do nothing related to recycling – a higher rate than either Gen X'ers (20%) or Baby Boomers (23%). When asked why they do not recycle, the most common reason was that they do not believe it makes an impact or difference (14%).

These results call to mind two themes characterizing the current generation of teens and young adults – entitlement and empowerment. Gen Y is often described as being distinguished by a sense of entitlement. As evidenced by their concerns for national, global and environmental issues, a sense of entitlement in this context translates as an expectation that the world reduces pollution and betters the environment. However, the efforts that young people engage in to improve the environment need to be personally relevant and have an impact. As a generation that is growing up with social networking websites and flash mobs as a given, they have unprecedented power to reach, influence and mobilize people beyond the bounds of their immediate community – and on their own terms.

¹The Harris Poll® #97, October 8, 2007

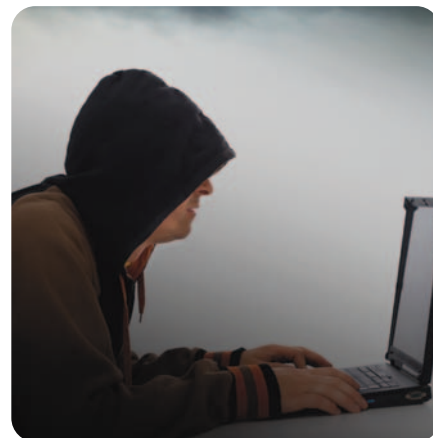
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Social Networking Sites

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The marked rise in usage among younger children is evidence of the growth in websites aimed at children under 13, for whom the Child Online Protection Act (COPPA) prohibits the online collection of personal information. For youth just above this threshold, those 13-15 years old, we saw their usage rate break 50% in 2007. Among this age group, boys are closing the gap with girls. The percentage of boys 13-15 years old using online social networks was 38% in 2006, lagging girls by nearly 20 points (57%). By contrast in 2007, boys were within eight points of girls (Boys: 46%; Girls: 54%).

Social networking sites have generated a lot of controversy over the past year as many fear that children visiting them are left vulnerable to harassment and sexual advances by peers and others. The rise in popularity of these websites coupled with the seamless integration of personal information and communication tools makes them the ideal medium for predators to reach young people. Websites like MySpace have been working with law enforcement and Attorney General offices across the country to address these threats on teenage users.



Michele L. Ybarra, MPH, Ph.D. of Internet Solutions for Kids (ISK) has investigated this issue as part of a larger study of media violence and seriously violent behavior among children and teenagers. The *Growing Up With Media Survey* is a nationally representative online study of 1,588 youth ages 10-15 and interviews parents and their children about online and offline behavior.

Harris Interactive conducted the survey on behalf of Internet Solutions for Kids. The study recruited parent-child pairs from the Harris Poll Online to participate in a longitudinal study that studies their behaviors, both online and off.

The *Growing Up With Media Survey* finds that one-third of youth (34%) ages 10-15 report that they have received rude or mean comments, threatening or aggressive comments or had rumors spread about them online at least once a week in the past 12 months. Fifteen percent say they were the target of unwanted sexual solicitation such as being asked to do something sexual like take their shirt off in front of a web camera, engage in sexual talk or share personal sexual information over the past year.¹ The latest study is good news for parents, Ybarra says. The majority of young people using the Internet are never harassed and never experience unwanted sexual solicitation.

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Social Networking Sites

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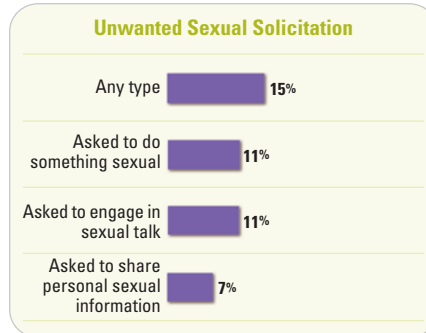
Contrary to popular belief, more youth reported experiencing harassment or unwanted sexual solicitation on websites or media other than online social networks. Among youth ages 10-15 who reported Internet harassment in the past year, over half (55%) reported that it occurred on instant messaging (IM). Half that number (28%) indicated the location of the harassment was on a social networking site. A similar picture emerges regarding unwanted sexual solicitation in the past 12 months. Instant messaging is mentioned by four in 10 targeted youth (43%), followed by chat rooms (32%) and social networking sites (27%). Girls were significantly more likely to report Internet harassment or unwanted sexual solicitation on social networking sites than on other websites.²

Youth on social networking sites were no more likely to be victims of harassment or unwanted solicitation than those visiting other websites. “Are victimizations happening in social networking sites? Yes,” Ybarra explains, “but they’re happening with greater frequency in instant messaging and chat rooms.” Adults also need to understand that for many youth, Ybarra advises, their online world is an extension of their offline world. “Young people experiencing problems online are often experiencing problems offline as well. We need to make sure that we are giving them the support and tools to healthfully navigate across all environments, both online and offline.”

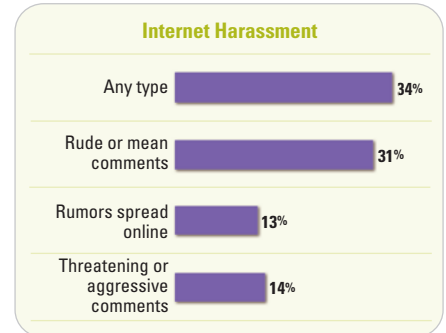


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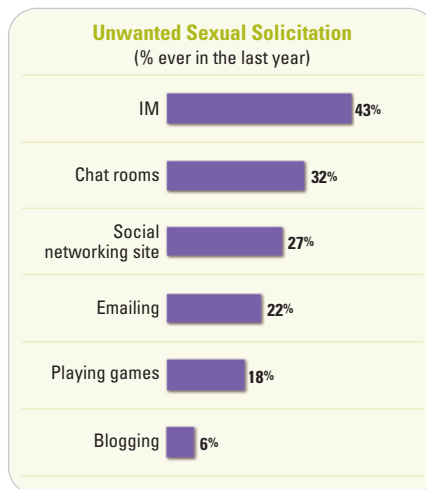
Internet Victimization



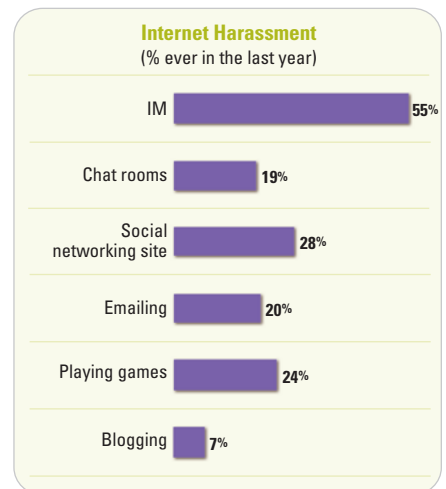
Source: Growing Up With Media Survey
Table 2. Internet Use and Victimization Characteristics
Base: n=1,588



Location of Internet Victimization



Source: Growing Up With Media Survey
Table 4. Location of Online Interpersonal Victimization
Unwanted Sexual Solicitation: Base: n=217; Internet harassment: Base: n=484



Questions about online safety and education are becoming increasingly prevalent and pressing as younger users both join social networking sites in greater numbers and these sites become more integrated into their lives. Effective safety and prevention efforts require that we understand how social networking site, and online technologies in general, fit into youths’ lives. Focusing on kids rather than on technology will ensure that we can make the most of what the online world offers .

Reference List

- Ybarra, Michele Y. & Kimberly J. Mitchell (2008). “How Risky Are Social Networking Sites? A Comparison of Places Online Where Youth Sexual Solicitation and Harassment Occurs,” *Pediatrics*, 121 (February), e350-357.
- Ibid.

What's New With Youth?

Order Your Copy of YouthPulseSM 2007

You need to know almost as much about the youth market as you would if they were all your own children. How they spend their time, how they spend their money, their hopes, fears and aspirations, and which parts of the kid experience are totally different today than they were a decade – or even a year – ago.

To learn more about YouthPulse or to purchase the 2007 study, contact us at **877.919.4765** or by email at **info@harrisinteractive.com**.

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This report highlights key insights into how technology impacts the lives today's youth in three geographic locations; Shanghai, Hong Kong and the U.S.; and offers information on hopes, dreams and fears, relationships with family, and technology and media usage. To receive a full copy of the report, contact us at **877.919.4765** or by email at **info@harrisinteractive.com**.

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Learn more about "The State of Science in America," a study by Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, conducted by Harris Interactive. Visit www.stateofscience.org for the full story.

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...Get an Answer

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 youth omnibus. Just send us an email (HI_youth_research@harrisinteractive.net) with your suggestion. We will pick one question each month and

then publish the results in the next issue of the newsletter. YouthQuery is your chance to ask one or a series of questions of 1,100 young consumers nationwide, and get accurate, projectable answers within days. To learn more about YouthQuery, contact us at 877.919.4765.

Team Spotlight

Robyn Bell

*Research Manager
Youth and Education Research*

Robyn Bell is one of the newest members of the Youth and Education team. Prior to joining the team at Harris, Robyn managed custom online research studies for media and entertainment clients. She also has experience conducting education-related program evaluations for the federal government and not-for-profit organizations and is thrilled to have the opportunity to once again work on education and youth studies. Robyn earned a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology from the University of Maryland and is a huge fan of the Terps. She loves cheering on her team any chance she gets.



Robyn supporting her favorite sports team.

For more information, please contact us at: **877.919.4765** or visit our website at **www.harrisinteractive.com**

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