

Press Contact:

Harris Interactive
Regina Corso
212-539-9600
rcorso@harrisinteractive.com

Witeck-Combs Communications
Bob Witeck
202-887-0500 x19
info@witeckcombs.com



Gay and Lesbian Adults Are More Likely and More Frequent Blog Readers

Social Networks, Blog Popularity Remain High for Gay Americans over Past Three Years

New York, N.Y. and Washington, D.C. – July 13, 2010 – As media trends accelerate towards citizen-journalism and blogger-created news content, a new national survey again validates that gay and lesbian adults online today are among the nation's most loyal and heaviest blog readers and social network users.

According to a recent national survey conducted online by Harris Interactive®, a majority of gay and lesbian adults are reading blogs. More than half (54%) of gay men and lesbian respondents report reading some type of blog, compared to only 40% of heterosexuals. This represents an incremental increase from March 2008 when 51% of gay and lesbian respondents reported reading some type of blog. A similar question was asked in November 2006 and at that time, only 32% of gay and lesbian adults reported reading blogs.

When it comes to the types of blogs popular with Americans, the survey also found 36% of gay and lesbian adults read news and current issue blogs, compared to 25% of heterosexual adults. A quarter (25%) of gay and lesbian adults also read entertainment and pop culture blogs, compared to 16% of heterosexuals. Considering the global and media attention focused on American politics and the Obama presidency, 22% of gay and lesbian adults also read political blogs, compared to just 14% of heterosexual adults. Confirming their sustained strong connection with travel news and opportunities, 16% of gay and lesbian respondents report reading travel blogs, compared to 8% of heterosexual respondents.

Not surprising, over one third (35%) of all lesbian and gay male adults report they read blogs specifically tailored for gay and lesbian news and interests. More than half (53%) of these readers also say they visit gay and lesbian blogs weekly, and one in five (19%) do so daily. Michael Rogers, veteran gay blogger and media activist reported that these findings mirror his experience: "My own work tells me gay men and lesbians have tremendous need and appetite for authentic gay news and information, and they want it fast. As director of the National Blogger and Citizen Journalist Initiative, I work with scores of bloggers to enhance skills, improve delivery and content and grow connections with a very receptive lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender audience across the U.S."

The new nationwide survey of 2,412 U.S. adults, (ages 18 and over), of whom 271 self identified as gay or lesbian (which includes an oversample of lesbian and gay adults), was conducted online between June 14 and 21, 2010, by Harris Interactive, a global market research and consulting firm, in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the LGBT market.

Apart from avidly reading blogs, gay and lesbian adults also are choosing to connect online through social networking sites more often than their heterosexual counterparts. A remarkable three-quarters (73%) of gay

and lesbian adults state they are members of Facebook, compared to 65% of heterosexual adults. Also, 32% of gay and lesbian respondents report being members of MySpace, compared to 22% of heterosexual respondents (albeit a shrinking number of both groups from past years). When it comes to the business-oriented social networking site, LinkedIn, 22% of gay and lesbian respondents report being members, while 16% of heterosexual adults state they are members. Finally, nearly 3 out of 10 (or 29%) gay men and lesbians report they are members of Twitter, while the same can be said of just 15% of heterosexual adults.

Significantly, 55% of gay men and lesbians say they visit social network sites at least once a day – but only 41% of heterosexual adults report that same frequency. Three out of ten gay men and women also say they visit sites several times a day, while only 17% of heterosexuals share that habit.

“Over this past decade, through many comparative measures – we see first-hand that online media consumption for gays and lesbians is strong and growing stronger,” said Bob Witeck, CEO of Witeck-Combs Communications. “A majority of LGBT households are hungrier than ever to stay well informed and to expand their social, professional and personal connections online. In today’s uncertain economy, and with companies and organizations competing for share of attention, it is clear that blogs and social networking sites have not only come of age for gay America – but in many ways have become the virtual, new gay community centers and marketplace.”

TABLE 1
BLOG READERSHIP
“What types of blogs do you read?”

Base: All adults

	Nov. 2006		March 2008		May 2009		June 2010	
	Gays and Lesbians	Hetero-sexuals	Gays and Lesbians	Hetero-sexuals	Gays and Lesbians	Hetero-sexuals	Gays and Lesbians	Hetero-sexuals
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Read Blogs (NET)	32	26	51	36	55	38	54	40
News/current issues blogs	12/9*	9/7	28	19	34	22	36	25
Personal blogs	17	12	31	15	32	17	28	19
Political blogs	12	8	23	14	28	14	22	14
Sports blogs	2	5	6	13	NA	NA	NA	NA
Entertainment/pop culture blogs	8/4*	6/3	26	11	25	15	25	16
Music blogs	5	4	14	6	11	7	16	6
Travel blogs	n/a	n/a	11	6	14	8	16	8
Gay and Lesbian blogs	19	-	30	-	30	-	35	-
I do not read any blogs	68	74	49	64	45	62	46	60

N/A indicates not asked; “-” indicates no response

* Please note, in 2006, news and current issues were asked separately as were entertainment and pop culture

TABLE 2
FREQUENCY OF VISITING BLOGS
“On average, how often do you visit the bogs you read?”

Base: Read (specific) Blogs

	May 2009	June 2010
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	At Least Once a Week (NET)	At Least Once a Month (NET)	Less than Once a Month	At Least Once a Week (NET)	Daily	At Least Once a Month (NET)	Less than Once a Month
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Personal blogs							
Gays and Lesbians	53	33	13	42	20	52	6
Heterosexuals	52	34	14	61	24	28	11
News/Current Issues blogs							
Gays and Lesbians	72	17	11	71	24	28	2
Heterosexuals	59	31	9	58	25	30	12
Political blogs							
Gays and Lesbians	67	29	4	58	28	39	3
Heterosexuals	57	32	11	63	20	28	9
Entertainment/pop culture blogs							
Gays and Lesbians	55	34	11	46	29	51	2
Heterosexuals	57	30	14	51	16	36	13
Gay and Lesbian blogs							
Gays and Lesbians	58	29	12	53	19	34	12

Note: Data for *Music blogs*, *Travel blogs* are not included as sample size of those who read these blogs is too small

TABLE 3
MEMBER OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES
 “Are you a member of the following social networking sites?”
Percent saying “Yes”

Base: All adults

	May 2009					June 2010				
	Total	Gays and Lesbians Total	Gays	Lesbians	Heterosexuals	Total	Gays and Lesbians Total	Gays	Lesbians	Heterosexuals
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Facebook	47	55	50	65	46	65	73	74	70	65
MySpace	32	43	44	41	30	23	32	33	31	22
LinkedIn	13	23	23	23	13	16	22	24	18	16
Plaxo	6	9	11	4	6	3	8	8	8	3

TABLE 4
MEMBER OF TWITTER

Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question – what are you doing. Are you a member of Twitter?

Base: All Adults

	May 2009			June 2010		
	Total	Gays and Lesbians	Heterosexuals	Total	Gays and Lesbians	Heterosexuals
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	13	20	12	16	29	15
No	87	80	88	84	71	85

TABLE 5
FREQUENCY OF VISITING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

“Overall, in a typical month, how often do you visit these social networking sites?”

Base: Member of social networking site

	May 2009					June 2010				
	Total	Gays and Lesbians Total	Gays	Lesbians	Heterosexuals	Total	Gays and Lesbians Total	Gays	Lesbians	Heterosexuals
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
At least weekly (Net)	65	65	66	60	66	71	81	81	81	71
At least monthly (Net)	21	21	20	22	21	17	11	11	11	17
Less than once a month	14	15	14	17	14	12	8	8	8	12

TABLE 5A
FREQUENCY OF VISITING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES - DAILY

“Overall, in a typical month, how often do you visit these social networking sites?”

Base: Member of social networking site

	June 2010				
	Total	Gays and Lesbians Total	Gays	Lesbians	Heterosexuals
	%	%	%	%	%
Daily (Net)	42	55	52	63	41
Several times per day	18	29	28	31	17
At least once per day	24	27	24	32	24

TABLE 6
FEELINGS TOWARD ADVERTISING ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES
 “How do you feel towards advertisements found on social networking sites?”

Base: All adults

	May 2009		June 2010	
	Gays and Lesbians	Heterosexuals	Gays and Lesbians	Heterosexuals
	%	%	%	%
Positive (Net)	6	12	9	8
Neither Positive nor negative	63	57	46	56
Negative (Net)	31	31	45	37

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted the study online within the United States between June 14 and 21, 2010, among 2,412 adults (ages 18 and over), of whom 341 self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. We over-sampled gay men and lesbians in order to allow for more detailed analysis of these groups.

Figures for age, sex, race, education, region and income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. In addition, the results for the gay and lesbian sample were weighted separately based on profiles of the gay and lesbian population that Harris Interactive has compiled through many different online surveys. Propensity score weighting also was used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is one of the world’s leading custom market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for the Harris Poll and for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers expertise in a wide range of industries including healthcare, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Serving clients in over 215 countries and territories through our North American, European, and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us – and our clients – stay ahead of what’s next. For more information, please visit <http://www.harrisinteractive.com>.

About Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.

Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. is the nation's premier marketing communications and consulting firm, specializing in developing and implementing effective strategies reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With over 16 years experience in this unique market, Witeck-Combs Communications not only serves as a bridge between corporate America and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender consumers (LGBT), but also provides counsel to countless non-profit organizations that aim to educate the public on gay and lesbian issues or to better reach their LGBT membership.

In April 2003, American Demographics magazine identified Bob Witeck and Wes Combs as two of 25 experts over the last 25 years who have made significant contributions to the fields of demographics, market research, media and trendspotting for their path breaking work on the gay and lesbian market, and in 2006 Bob Witeck and Wes Combs co-authored **Business Inside Out: Capturing Millions of Brand Loyal Gay Consumers** (Kaplan Publishing), considered the first-ever book on marketing insights, practical tips and strategies targeting the LGBT market. They have appeared in worldwide media outlets including Fortune, CNBC, CNN, Reuters, Associated Press, Ad Age, New York Times and Washington Post. For more information visit www.witeckcombs.com.