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# Parents, Kids and the Internet Survey

Topline

June 2001

Princeton Survey Research Associates  
for the Pew Internet in American Life Project

Sample:  $n = 754$  Parents of a child who goes online, 754 Children ages 12-17 who go online  
Interviewing dates: 11.22.00 – 12.15.00  
Margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points for results based on the all parents/all children

**Note:** Some questions asked of respondents are not contained with in this questionnaire and are undergoing further analysis.

## Questions Q1 - Q19 based on Parents [N = 754]

**Q1** First..., Thinking about what it takes for young people to be successful in life, how important is it for young people to learn how to use the Internet — essential, important but not essential, not too important, or not at all important?

%	55	Essential
	40	Important but not essential
	3	Not too important
	1	Not at all important
	*	Don't know/Refused

**Q2** Do you, personally, use a computer at your workplace, at school, at home, or anywhere else, on at least an occasional basis?

%	91	Yes
	9	No
	0	Don't know/Refused

**Q3** Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send and receive email?

%	87	Yes
	13	No
	0	Don't know/Refused

**Questions Q4 - Q6 based on parents who go online [N = 654]**

**Q4** How often do you, personally, go online or use email — every day, a couple times a week, about once a week, or less often?

%	56	Every day
	22	A couple of times a week
	10	About once a week
	11	Less often
	*	Don't know/Refused

2

**Q5** When did you first start going online — was it within the last six months, a year ago, two or three years ago, or more than three years ago?

%	8	Within the last six months
	21	A year ago
	39	Two or three years ago
	33	More than three years ago
	0	Don't know/Refused

**Q6** How much would you miss going online if you could no longer do this — a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

%	44	A lot
	31	Some
	12	Not much
	13	Not at all
	0	Don't know/Refused

**Q7** Do you ever sit down together to use the Internet with your child / children , or don't you ever do that?

**Based on all parents [N = 754]**

%	68	Yes
	32	No
	*	Don't know/Refused

Q8 Now thinking about your own family, how much, if at all, has the Internet improved...(INSERT ITEM; ROTATE) — a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

Based on parents who go online [N = 654]

		A LOT	SOME	ONLY A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a	The way you plan weekend outings and family trips	11	24	23	42	*
b	The way you shop for birthday and holiday gifts	9	19	20	52	*
c	The way you spend time with your child/children	6	20	23	50	1
d	The way you care for your child's/children's health	6	12	16	65	*

3

Q9 Which is a bigger concern for you — what your children might see on television, or what they might see on the Internet, or doesn't either of these worry you very much?

Based on all parents [N = 754]

%	16	What your children might see on television
	38	What they might see on the Internet
	17	Neither
	29	Both
	*	Don't know/Refused

[NO QUESTION 10]

Q11 Next I have a few questions about the role of the Internet in the lives of your child/children and other young people you know...How much, if at all, do you think using the Internet...(READ; ROTATE ITEMS) — a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

		A LOT	SOME	ONLY A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a	Helps young people do better in school	45	42	9	3	1
b	Helps young people learn new things	59	33	6	1	*
c	Improves young people's relationships with their friends	13	36	24	25	2
d	Keeps young people from doing more important things	25	42	19	12	1
e	Leads young people to do dangerous or harmful things	11	34	29	22	4

Q12 Now I have a few questions about your [AGE]-year old [boy / girl] ...

Just thinking about [him/her] ...Overall, do you think email and the Internet have been a GOOD thing for your child, a BAD thing, or haven't they had much effect one way or the other?

%	55	Good thing
	6	Bad thing
	38	No effect one way or the other
	1	Don't know/Refused

Q13 Who do you think knows MORE about using the Internet — you, or your child/children ?

%	28	Me/parent now being interviewed
	66	Child/children
	6	Both the same/no difference
	*	Don't know/Refused

Q14 How much, if at all, do you worry that someone your child doesn't know might find out who [he / she] is or try to contact [him / her] because they see [him / her] online — a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

%	25	A lot
	32	Some
	24	Only a little
	19	Not at all
	*	Don't know/Refused

Q15 How much, if at all, do you worry that your child will see or read things online that you don't want [him / her] to see or read — a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

%	27	A lot
	35	Some
	24	Only a little
	14	Not at all
	1	Don't know/Refused

**Q16** How much, if at all, do you worry that your child might get sent advertising or other types of commercial information because a company learns about **[him / her]** online — a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

%	26	A lot
	33	Some
	23	Only a little
	18	Not at all
	1	Don't know/Refused

5

**Q17** On another subject...Have you ever... ?

		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
<b>a</b>	Used email to communicate with your child's/children's teachers	28	72	*
<b>b</b>	Used email to communicate with the parents of your child's/children's friends	20	80	0
<b>c</b>	Checked to see what web sites your child/children had gone to, after he/she/they went online	61	39	*
<b>d</b>	Gotten into an argument with your child/children about using the Internet	40	60	0

**Q18** In your home, are there rules about when, and for how long, your child /children can go online, or not?

%	61	Yes
	39	No
	*	Don't know/Refused

**Q19** Now thinking about the computer or Internet account in your home...  
Do you have monitoring software or a filter that keeps people from going to some types of Internet web sites, or not?

%	38	Yes
	52	No
	3	Have AOL/America Online restricted account
	7	Don't know/Refused

Questions K2 - K34 based on Children, ages 12-17, who use the Internet [N = 754]

K2 How often do you go online, use email, or instant messaging — every day, a couple times a week, about once a week, or less often?

%	42	Every day
	33	A couple times a week
	12	About once a week
	13	Less often
	*	Don't know/Refused

6

K3 Where do you go online from? Do you ever go online... **[DO NOT ROTATE]** ?

		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a	At home	90	10	*
b	At school	64	36	*
c	At a library	36	64	*
d	At a friend's house	64	36	*
e	Someplace else, like work or an Internet cafe	8	92	*

K4 Where do you go online the MOST —**[READ CHOICES SELECTED IN K3a-e]** ?

Based on kids who go online from more than one location [N = 659]

%	83	At home
	11	At school
	1	At a library
	3	At a friend's house
	1	Someplace else, like work or an Internet cafe
	1	Don't know/Refused

K5 How old were you when you FIRST started using email and the Internet?

%	2	Seven or younger
	2	Eight
	5	Nine
	13	Ten
	15	Eleven
	21	Twelve
	18	Thirteen
	14	Fourteen
	8	Fifteen
	2	Sixteen
	*	Seventeen
	1	Don't know/Refused

7

K6 How much would you miss going online if you could no longer do this — a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

%	45	A lot
	31	Some
	18	Not much
	6	Not at all
	1	Don't know/Refused

K7 Now I have a few questions about the kinds of things YOU do when you go online. Not everyone has done these things. Please just tell me whether you ever do each one, or not.

		YES, DO THIS	NO, DO NOT	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a	Send or read email	92	8	*
b	Go to a chat room	55	45	*
c	Send "instant messages" to someone who is also online	74	26	*
d	Buy things online, such as books, clothing, or music	31	69	*
e	Look for health, dieting, or physical fitness information online	26	74	*
f	Look for sports scores or sports information online	47	53	*
g	Go online for no reason at all, just for fun or to pass the time	84	16	*
h	Play games online or download games	66	34	*
i	Go to web sites about movies, TV shows, music groups, or sports stars you are interested in	83	17	*
j	Go to web sites where people can trade or sell things	31	69	*
k	Listen to music online at a web site for a radio station, music store, or other music site	59	41	*
l	Download music files onto your computer so you can play them any time you want	53	46	*
m	Go online to get information about something that's hard to talk about with other people	18	82	*
n	Create or work on your own web page	24	76	*
o	Go to web page for clubs, groups, or sports teams that you are a member of	39	61	*
p	Go online to get news or information about current events	68	32	*
q	Go online to get information about things you might buy, or about new products	66	34	*
r	Go online to get information about your hobbies	69	31	*
s	Go to web sites and bulletin boards where you can write your opinions about things	38	62	*



κ8 Now I have a few questions about things you do online for SCHOOL....

Thinking about the LAST big report you wrote for school, which did you use MOST....(READ; ROTATE ORDER) ?

%	24	Books and magazines from a library
	71	Sources you found on the Internet
	4	Both equally
	*	Neither/Other
	1	Don't know/Refused

9

κ9 Do you ever...(READ; ROTATE)?

		YES, DO THIS	NO, DO NOT	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a	Go online to do research for school assignments	94	6	*
e	Download Cliff Notes, Monarch Notes, or other study aids off the Internet	34	66	*

**[K9b-d and K10 snipped]**

κ11 How did you learn how to use email and the Internet — from a parent, from a brother or sister, from friends, in a class, or on your own? [ACCEPT UP TO 3 RESPONSES]

%	30	Parent
	10	Brother/sister
	23	Friends
	5	In a class
	40	On your own
	2	Someone else
	*	Other
	*	Don't know/Refused

K12 Do you ever sit down together to use the Internet with...(READ; ROTATE) , or don't you ever do that?

		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a	One or more friends	83	17	*
b	A brother or sister	52	48	*
c	Your mother or father	48	52	*

10

K13 Now thinking again about the way things are in your own home... Do your parents limit how much time you can spend...(READ; ROTATE) ?

		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a	Talking on the phone	47	53	*
b	Watching TV	40	60	*
c	Using email and the Internet	37	62	*
d	Playing computer games	35	64	1

K14-K15 based on kids who use email, instant messages, or chat rooms [N = 712]

K14 When you're not actually with your friends, what do you use MOST to communicate with them — the phone, email, instant messages, or going to chat rooms?

	71	By phone
%	8	With email
	19	With instant messages
	1	In the chat rooms
	1	None of the above
	0	Don't know/Refused

K15 Here are some other things some people do online. What about you?  
Have you ever...(READ; ROTATE) ?

		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a	Had someone give you fake information about themselves in an email or instant message	33	62	5
b	Used email or instant message to talk to someone you had never met before	50	50	*
c	Given your password to a friend or someone you know	22	78	0
d	Pretended to be a different person when you were emailing or instant messaging someone	24	76	0
e	Sent a prank email or an email "bomb"	6	94	*
f	Blocked instant message from a person you did not want to hear from	57	43	*

11

**K16-K22 based on kids who send instant messages [N = 560]**

K16 How often would you say you use instant messages to talk to people who are online at the same time — every day, a couple times a week, about once a week, or less often?

	35	Every day
%	34	A couple times a week
	13	About once a week
	17	Less often
	1	Never
	*	Don't know/Refused

K17 Would you say you use instant messages every time you go online, just some of the time, or only now and then?

	45	Every time you go online
%	31	Just some of the time
	23	Only now and then
	1	Don't know/Refused

**K18** On a normal day when you are sending instant messages to people, about how much time to you spend doing this — under a half-hour; between a half-hour and an hour; more than an hour; or more than two hours?

	32	Under a half-hour
%	46	Between a half-hour and an hour
	16	More than an hour
	5	More than two hours
	1	Don't know/Refused

**K19** And on a normal day when are sending instant messages to people, about how many people do you send messages to?

%	1	None
	25	One to two
	33	Three to four
	24	Five to nine
	12	Ten to fifteen
	4	More than fifteen
	1	Don't know/Refused

**[NO QUESTION 20]**

**K21** Not everyone uses instant messages the same way. What about you...?

Just thinking about what you've done when you INSTANT MESSAGE people... Have you ever used instant messages to...

		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
<b>a</b>	Keep in touch with friends who don't live nearby or who don't go to your school	90	10	*
<b>b</b>	Make plans with your friends	82	18	*
<b>c</b>	Ask someone to go out with you	17	82	1
<b>d</b>	Break up with someone	13	86	1
<b>e</b>	Play a trick on someone by pretending to be somebody different	26	73	1
<b>f</b>	Write something that you wouldn't say to somebody's face	37	62	1

κ22 Have you ever ignored instant messages from someone you don't like or are mad at?

%	64	Yes
	36	No
	1	Don't know/Refused

13

Now a few questions about the computer you use at home...

κ23 When you go online at home, do you use a computer in a private area like your room, or a computer in an open family area, like a living room, den, or study?

**Based on kids who go online at home [N = 680]**

%	27	Private area/own room
	70	Open family area (living room/den/study)
	2	Both (more than one computer)
	*	Depends –use laptop/portable computer
	*	Don't know/Refused

κ24 Do your parents, brothers, sisters, or other members of your family also use that computer?

**Based on kids who go online at home [N = 680]**

%	94	Yes
	6	No
	0	Don't know/Refused

κ25 Who do you think knows MORE about using the Internet — you, or your parents?

%	64	Me/child now being interviewed
	32	Parents/mother/father
	3	Both the same/no difference
	1	Don't know/Refused

A1 Now I have a few questions about the role of the Internet in your own life.

How much, if at all, does the Internet ... **(READ; ROTATE ITEMS)** — a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

	A LOT	SOME	ONLY A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a Help you find out what's cool in fashion or music	23	30	22	25	*
b Help you do your school work	47	31	15	7	*
c Improve your relationships with your friends	20	28	20	32	*
d Improve your relationship with your family	5	15	18	61	1
e Help you get information about things that are hard to talk about with other people	9	17	20	54	*
f Help you with your hobbies	22	30	24	25	*
g Help you make NEW friends	15	18	23	45	*
h Help you get the best prices on things you buy	15	22	19	43	1

14

K26 After you go online, do your parents ever check to see what web sites you went to, or don't they ever do that?

**Based on kids who go online at home [N = 680]**

%	27	Yes
	64	No
	10	Don't know/Refused

K27 How much, if at all, do you worry that someone you don't know might find out who you are or try to contact you because they see you online — a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

%	7	A lot
	16	Some
	25	Only a little
	52	Not at all
	1	Don't know/Refused

κ28 Here are a few more things that people sometimes do online. Not everyone has done these. Have you ever clicked on an advertisement you saw online?

%	54	Yes
	46	No
	*	Don't know/Refused

κ29 Have you ever said you were older than you are so you could get onto a web site?

%	15	Yes
	85	No
	*	Don't know/Refused

κ30 Have you ever gotten an email or instant message from a perfect stranger — that is, someone you'd never met before?

%	60	Yes
	40	No
	*	Don't know/Refused

κ31 Thinking just about yourself...How many email addresses or screen names do you use?

%	44	One
	25	Two
	10	Three
	21	Four or more
	0	Don't know/Refused

κ32 Are any of your email addresses or screen names SECRET names that you use when you don't want your friends to know you're online?

**Based on kids with more than one email address or screen name [N= 392]**

%	24	Yes
	76	No
	0	Don't know/Refused

A2 I have a few last questions about other young people you know. Thinking about kids today....

How much, if at all, do you think using the Internet..... **(READ; ROTATE ITEMS)** — a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

	A LOT	SOME	ONLY A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
a Keeps young people from doing more important things	25	37	26	11	1
b Leads young people to do dangerous or harmful things	10	24	37	28	1
c Takes away from the time young people spend with their friends	10	29	39	22	*
d Takes away from the time young people spend with their families	24	40	28	9	*

K33 Finally, just a few questions about you. How old are you?

%	14	Twelve
	17	Thirteen
	15	Fourteen
	20	Fifteen
	18	Sixteen
	16	Seventeen
	1	Eighteen
	*	Don't know/Refused

K34 What grade are you in at school?

%	4	Sixth
	15	Seventh
	17	Eighth
	16	Ninth
	19	Tenth
	18	Eleventh
	11	Twelfth
	0	Don't know/Refused