Parents, Teens, and Online Privacy

Parents have a range of concerns about how their children's online activities might affect their privacy and many have taken steps to monitor their children and encourage online safety

Mary Madden
Research Associate, Pew Internet Project

Sandra Cortesi
Fellow, Director of the Youth and Media Project, Berkman Center for Internet & Society

Urs Gasser
Executive Director, Berkman Center for Internet & Society

Amanda Lenhart
Senior Researcher, Director of Teens and Technology Initiatives, Pew Internet Project

Maeve Duggan
Research Assistant, Pew Internet Project

Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project
1615 L St., NW – Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: 202-419-4500

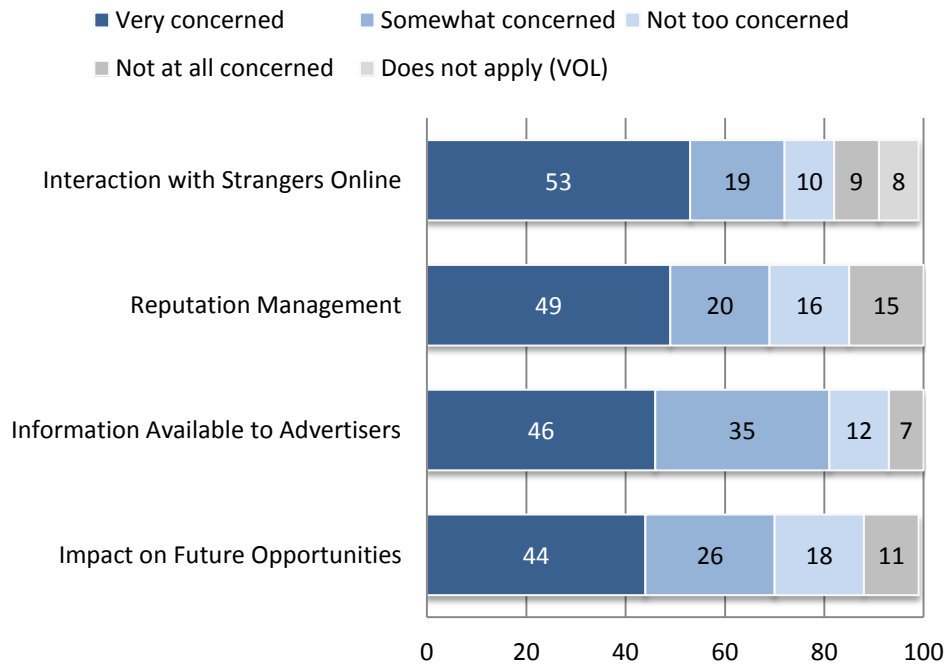http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Teens-and-Privacy.aspx

Summary of Findings

Most parents of teenagers are concerned about what their teenage children do online and how their behavior could be monitored by others. Some parents are taking steps to observe, discuss, and check up on their children's digital footprints. A new survey of 802 parents and their teens shows that:

- 81% of parents of online teens say they are concerned about <u>how much information advertisers can learn about their child's online behavior, with some</u> 46% being "very" concerned.
- 72% of parents of online teens are concerned about <u>how their child interacts online with people they do not know</u>, with some 53% of parents being "very" concerned.
- 69% of parents of online teens are concerned about <u>how their child's online activity might affect their future academic or employment opportunities, with</u> some 44% being "very" concerned about that.
- 69% of parents of online teens are concerned about <u>how their child manages his or her reputation online</u>, with some 49% being "very" concerned about that.

Parental Concern Over Child's Online Presence

% of parents with online teens who reported varying levels of concern for their child about...

Legend: ■ Very concerned ■ Somewhat concerned ■ Not too concerned ■ Not at all concerned ■ Does not apply (VOL)

Category	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	Does not apply (VOL)
Interaction with Strangers Online	53	19	10	9	8
Reputation Management	49	20	16	15	
Information Available to Advertisers	46	35	12	7	
Impact on Future Opportunities	44	26	18	11	

(Scale axis: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100)

Source: Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project Teens and Privacy Survey, July 26 – September 30, 2012. N=802 parents of 12-17 year olds, including an oversample of minority families. N=781 for parents of teen internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points for the total sample of parents and +/- 4.6 percentage points for parents of teen internet users.

Some of these expressions of concern are particularly acute for the parents of younger teens:

- 63% of parents of teens ages 12-13 say they are "very" concerned about their child's interactions with people they do not know online.
- 57% of parents of teens ages 12-13 say they are "very" concerned about how their child manages his or her reputation online.

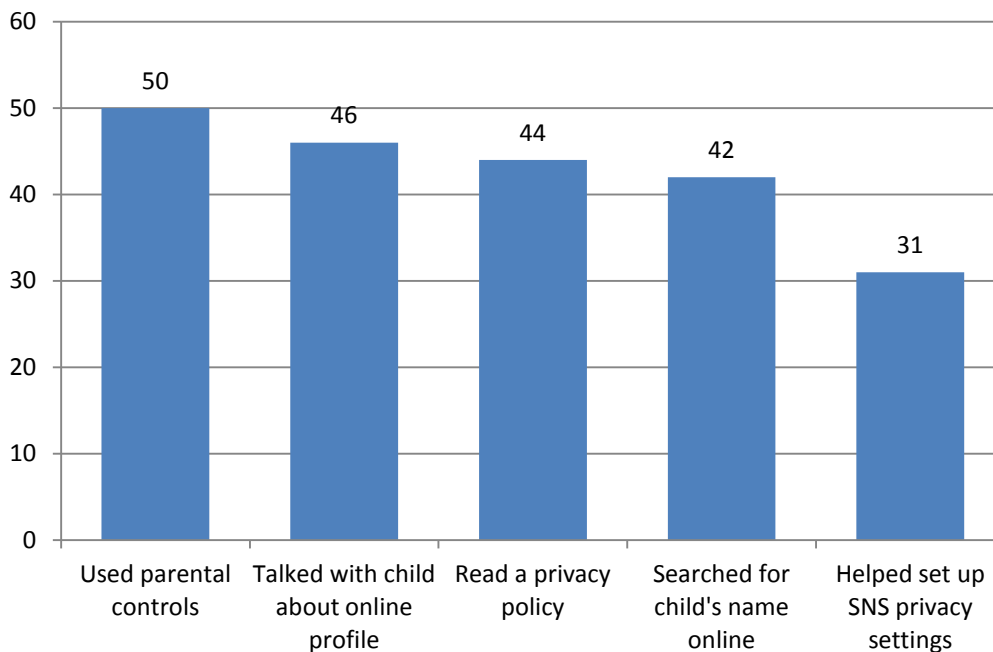A notable number of parents, especially parents of younger teens, are taking steps to act on these concerns:

- 59% of the parents of teen users of social networking sites (SNS) have talked with their child because they were concerned about something posted to their profile or account. (That translates to 46% of parents of all online teens.)
- 39% of the parents of teen users of SNS have helped their child set up privacy settings for a social networking site. (That translates to 31% of parents of all online teens.)

In addition to such direct interventions, some parents are monitoring their children on family computers and in online searches:

- 50% of parents of online teens (not just the teens who use SNS) have used parental controls or other means of blocking, filtering, or monitoring their child's online activities—a number that has remained almost unchanged since last year.
- 42% of parents of online teens have searched for their child's name online to see what information is available about him or her.
- In addition to these activities, 44% of parents of online teens say they have taken the step of reading the privacy policies of websites or social networking sites that their child is using.

Parent Actions

% of parents of online teens who have done the following...

Source: Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project Teens and Privacy Survey, July 26 – September 30, 2012. N=802 parents of 12-17 year olds, including an oversample of minority families. N=781 for parents of teen internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points for the total sample of parents and +/- 4.6 percentage points for parents of teen internet users.

The survey also finds that a growing number of parents are becoming social media users themselves:

- 66% of all parents who have a child between the ages of 12-17, say they use a social networking site, up from 58% in 2011.
- There is great variation according to the parent's age; 82% of parents under age 40 say they use SNS, while only 61% of parents over age 40 use the sites.
- Mothers and fathers are equally likely to use SNS, but parents who are college-educated exhibit higher levels of engagement with social media.

While parents may forge connections with their teens on social media in order to passively observe them, many are also actively engaging with their children and making their presence known. Half (50%) of parents who use social media (and who also have teens who use the sites) say they have commented or responded directly to something that was posted to their child's profile or account. Mothers and fathers of children of all ages and across all demographic groups are equally as likely to engage with their child's profile in this way.

About the survey

These findings are based on a nationally representative phone survey of 802 parents and their 802 teens ages 12-17. It was conducted between July 26 and September 30, 2012. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. The margin of error for the full sample is ± 4.5 percentage points. In collaboration with the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard, this report also includes quotes gathered through a series of exploratory in-person focus group interviews about privacy and digital media, with a focus on social networking sites (in particular Facebook), conducted by the Berkman Center's Youth and Media Project between May and December 2011. The team conducted 16 focus group interviews with roughly 120 students.

Main Report

There is a growing policy discussion about how government should act in an environment in which personal information—about both children and adults—is widely collected, analyzed and shared as a new form of currency in the digital economy. Many details about the lives of online (and offline) Americans can be found using simple search queries and their traits and interests are often easily discovered through their social media posts and through the social networks they build. Unless they take specific measures to prevent certain information from being tracked, internet service providers track much of their online behavior and amass this information to deliver ads to them. Most of the free services available online involve a trade off: In return for being able to access services online for free, information is collected about users to deliver targeted advertising.[1]

In the U.S., websites that are collecting information about children under the age of 13 must comply with regulations established under the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. In effect since 2000, these rules have required website operators to obtain parental consent before gathering information about children under the age of 13 or giving them access to "interactive" features of the site that may allow them to share personal information with others. Some of the most popular web properties, such as Facebook, have opted to avoid the parental consent framework and instead forbid all children under the age of 13 from creating accounts. Yet, previous studies from the Pew Internet Project and other media scholars have suggested that many underage children continue to use social media, many lie about their age, and in some cases, parents are helping their children circumvent restrictions to gain access to the sites they wish to use.[2]

The Federal Trade Commission recently proposed changes to COPPA that would address some of the radical technological changes that have occurred since the law was first written. The proposed modifications include a new requirement that third-party advertisers and other "plug-ins" will have to comply with COPPA, and the definition of "personal information" has been expanded to include persistent identifiers such as cookies and location information that includes a street, city or town name. With respect to age, websites that cater to a mixed-age audience (such as Disney.com) will now be allowed to "screen" a user's age and only be required to provide COPPA protections for users age 13 and

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[1] Previous surveys from the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project have shown that a majority of American adult internet users disapprove of targeted advertising because they do not like having their online behavior tracked and analyzed. For full results, see "Search Engine Use 2012," available at: http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Search-Engine-Use-2012.aspx

[2] A 2011 Pew Internet Project survey found that 45% of 12-year-olds were users of social network sites and 44% of online teens admitted to lying about their age at one time or another so they could access a website or sign up for an online account. For full results, see "Teens, Kindness and Cruelty on Social Network Sites," available at: http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Teens-and-social-media.aspx A separate survey conducted by danah boyd et al. and reported in the November 2011 edition of First Monday found that the "vast majority of parents" whose children signed up for Facebook while underage "were involved in the process." Full article available at: http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3850/3075

under. However, sites that are directed at users under 13 will still have to treat all users as children.[3] Nearly 100 public comments have been filed in response to the FTC's latest proposed changes to COPPA—some of them critical of the burdens these changes may place on small businesses such as app developers, while others filed in support of the updates, noting that new definitions and clarifications help strengthen the law's original goal of helping to protect children's privacy online.[4] The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project does not take positions on policy issues, and as such, does not endorse or oppose any of these proposed changes.

Over several years, the Pew Internet Project talked to teens and their parents about issues related to privacy, identity, and information sharing. This summer and early fall, the Pew Internet Project conducted a nationally representative survey of parents and their teenage children that focused on some of these issues. The results from the parents section of the survey are reported here.

In collaboration with the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard, this report also includes quotes gathered through a series of exploratory in-person focus group interviews about privacy and digital media, with a focus on social networking sites (in particular Facebook), conducted by the Berkman Center's Youth and Media Project. Between May and December 2011, the team, led by the project's Director Sandra Cortesi, conducted 16 focus group interviews with roughly 120 students. The focus groups included youth in grades 6-12 from diverse schools and varying socio-economic backgrounds, including Boston, Cambridge, Brookline and New York. This report includes selected quotes from participants that illustrate various youth perspectives toward parent participation in social media spaces. Future reports issued by the Pew Internet Project and the Berkman Center will include extensive reporting of the teen responses to the national survey, as well as additional qualitative research results.

Parental Concerns and Actions

'Stranger danger' worries parents. But they are also anxious about the data advertisers are collecting about their children's online behavior and the broader impact that online activity might have on their child's reputation.

Parents have consistent and relatively high-level concerns about a variety of problems their children face both online and offline. A 2011 Pew Internet & American Life Project survey found that 47% of parents were "very concerned" about their child's exposure to inappropriate content through the internet or cell phones. Likewise, the same study showed 45% of parents expressing high levels of concern about the way "teens in general treat each other online or on their cell phones." Of less concern was the worry that their child's internet or cell phone use was taking time away from face-to-
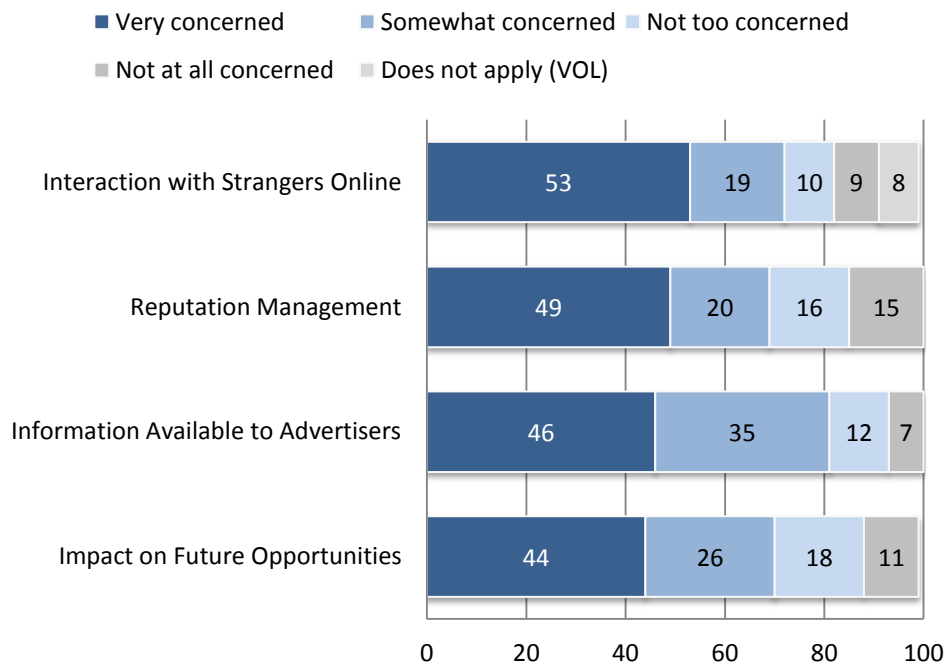
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[3] For full description of proposed changes, see "FTC Seeks Comments on Additional Proposed Revisions to Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule," available at: http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2012/08/coppa.shtm

[4] A full list of public comments in response to the proposed changes to COPPA is available at: http://ftc.gov/os/comments/copparulereview2012/index.shtm

face interactions with friends and family; just 31% said they were "very concerned" about this. Yet, the internet and cell phones are hardly the only—and perhaps not the primary concern—on parents' minds. For example, a recent analysis of the EU Kids Online survey noted that parental anxiety about internet-related risks tended to fall in the middle of the spectrum of concerns and did not outweigh other offline worries such as how their child was doing in school or the potential of physical harm due to a car accident.[5]

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0   20   40   60   80   100

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Strangers

Parental concerns about their child's interaction online with people they do not know are high. More than half of parents (53%) say they are "very concerned" about how their child interacts online with people they do not know, while another 19% say they are "somewhat concerned." Even higher levels of
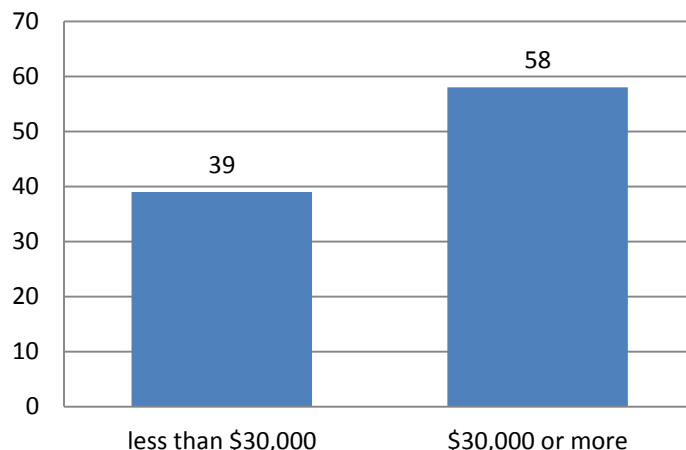
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[5] See Sonia Livingstone, et al, "Towards a better internet for children," available at: http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20III/Reports/EUKidsOnlinereportfortheCEOCoalition.pdf

concern about "stranger danger" online have been reported in similar studies when possible harm to the child is mentioned. [6]

Parental worries about online interaction with people their child does not know are fairly universal across various demographic groups, with a few notable exceptions.

Parents of younger teens (ages 12-13) express greater levels of concern about this issue when compared with parents of older teens (14-17); 63% of parents of younger teens say they are very concerned about interactions with people they do not know online vs. 48% of parents of older teens. And parents living in low-income households (earning less than $30,000 per year) express significantly *lower* levels of concern about their children's online interactions with people they do not know; just 39% say they are "very concerned" about this issue, compared with about six in ten parents in higher-earning households. Parents of teenage boys and girls express equal levels of concern about their child's interaction with people they do not know online.

Percent of parents with online teens who are "very concerned" about strangers online, by annual household income

Source: Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project Teens and Privacy Survey, July 26 – September 30, 2012. N=802 parents of 12-17 year olds, including an oversample of minority families. N=781 for parents of teen internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points for the total sample of parents and +/- 4.6 percentage points for parents of teen internet users.

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[6] A survey conducted by danah boyd et al. and reported in the November 2011 edition of *First Monday* found that 78% of parents of children ages 10-14 were extremely or very concerned that their child might meet a stranger online who intends to do them harm. In the same study, 1% of parents reported that one of their children had actually met a stranger online who intended harm. By comparison, 44% of parents surveyed said they were extremely or very concerned that information about their children might be used for the purposes of personalized marketing or targeted advertising. Full article available at:
http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3850/3075
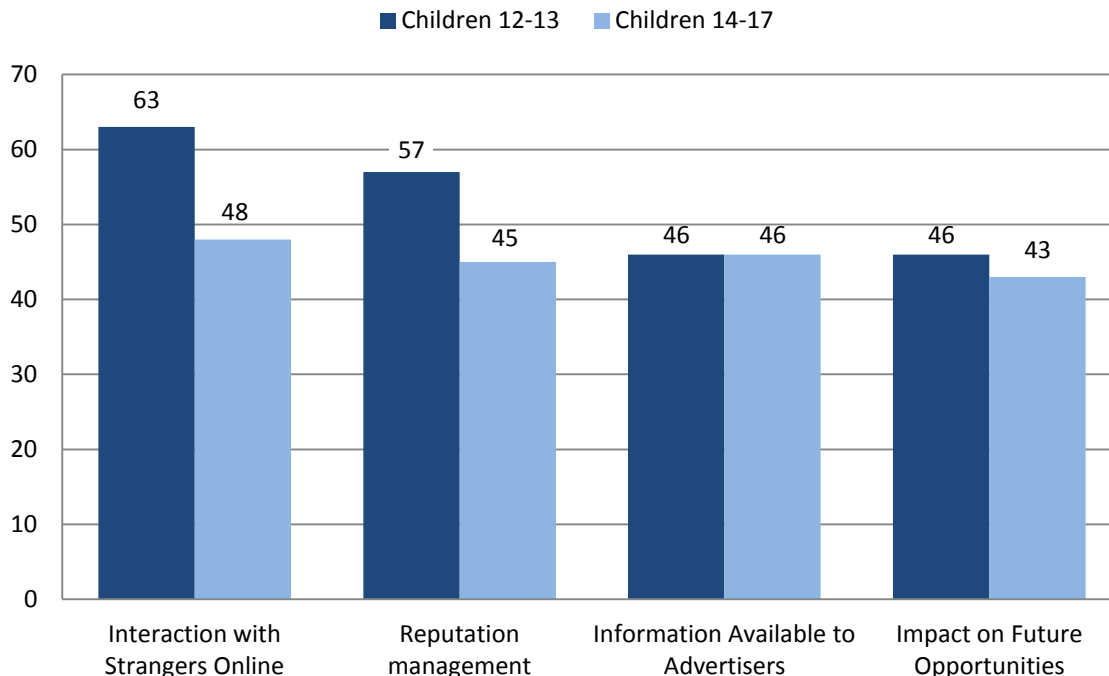
Advertiser practices

When asked about the information that advertisers can gather about their child's online behavior, parents' concern levels rival and sometimes even exceed worries about their child's interaction with people they do not know online. While 46% of parents said they were "very concerned" about how much information advertisers can learn about their child's online behavior, another 35% said they were "somewhat" concerned. Taken together, that represents 81% of all parents in our survey. By comparison, the combined levels of parental concern regarding their children's interactions with people they do not know amounts to 72% of all parents.

Parents of younger teens are more likely than those with older teens to express some level of concern about the issue of advertisers tracking their child's online behavior (87% vs. 77%). And parents in the lowest income households are less likely to express concern about advertisers when compared with those in middle-income households; 72% of parents earning less than $30,000 per year express some level of concern, compared with 87% of those with annual household incomes of $30,000 to just under $75,000 per year.

When looking more closely at those who express the highest degree of worry, again, African-American parents stand out; 62% say they are "very concerned" about the information advertisers can gather compared with 47% of white parents. Yet, when combining responses for those who are "very concerned" and "somewhat concerned," there are no significant differences between African-American and white parents; about eight in ten parents in both groups express some level of concern about the information advertisers can learn about their child's online behavior.

Parents of Younger Teens Worry More

% of parents with older online teens vs. younger online teens who were "very concerned" about...

Children 12-13 ■ Children 14-17

Source: Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project Teens and Privacy Survey, July 26 – September 30, 2012. N=802 parents of 12-17 year olds, including an oversample of minority families. N=781 for parents of teen internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points for the total sample of parents and +/- 4.6 percentage points for parents of teen internet users.

Reputation management

Reputation management is a complex affair for anyone online, and teenagers face especially daunting challenges as they navigate the rocky road of adolescent development and youthful blunders in an unforgiving digital environment. Parents are just as concerned about this aspect of online life as they are about "stranger danger." Some 49% of teens' parents said they were "very" concerned about how their child "manages their reputation online." Another 20% said they were "somewhat" concerned.

Academic and professional opportunities

More specifically, parents were also asked how concerned they were about the way their child's online activity "might affect their future academic or employment opportunities." Some 44% of parents said they were very concerned about these future implications, while 26% said they were somewhat concerned.

African-American parents of teenaged children are considerably more likely to express high levels of concern about the way their child's online activity might affect their future education or job opportunities; 59% said they were "very concerned" about this compared with 41% of white parents. Here again, parents living in lower-income households expressed lower levels of concern about this issue, but the same was true of those living in the highest-income households. Instead, those living in middle-income households (earning between $30,000 and $74,999 per year) are most likely to worry about the future implications of their child's online behavior.

Parents' use of social media grows

One of the major online places where parents and their teens encounter each other is on social networking sites. These are also places where there is concern about the way teens interact with others and where they share information about their lives.

In this survey, we find growing parental adoption of social networking sites (SNS) and growing conversation in families about what happens on those sites.

Among all parents who have a child between the ages of 12-17, 66% now say they use a social networking site, up from 58% in 2011.[7]

Mothers and fathers are equally likely to use social networking sites (69% vs. 63%), but there is great variation according to the parents' ages. For parents under 40, 82% say they use social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter, while only 61% of parents over age 40 use the sites. Parents who are college-educated also exhibit higher levels of engagement with social media; 74% of parents who are college grads use social networking sites, compared with 59% of those who have not attended college. In contrast, parents across all income groups are relatively consistent in their adoption of social media.

Teens have mixed feelings about being friends with their parents on Facebook.

Previous research from the Pew Internet Project has shown that when both parents and teens use social networking sites, the vast majority friend each other; in 2011, 80% of parent social media users whose children were also users of social media have friended their child on the sites.[8] However, Berkman's focus group discussions with teens revealed that they have mixed feelings about being friends with their parents on sites like Facebook.

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[7] In the 2011 report, "Teens, Kindness and Cruelty on Social Network Sites," we reported parental use of social networking sites as a percentage of parent internet users. According to the 2011 survey, 67% of online parents (or 58% of *all* parents) were users of social networking sites. Full report available at:
http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Teens-and-social-media.aspx
[8] For full results, see: http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Teens-and-social-media/Summary/Parents.aspx

Many teens have a positive attitude about being friends with their parents. Some youth are friends with their parents or their parents' friends on Facebook and don't seem concerned about their parents seeing their posts. In fact, some like being Facebook friends with their parents:

> *Female (age 13): "I actually really love being friends with my parents because we have like our own group on Facebook, so it's very good, like, to communicate. We don't have to send emails and things like that, just quick links I want to send them or fun things, pictures, things like that you can just send it there. They're so popular on Facebook, it's funny."*

> *Male (age 14): "My mom is [friends with me on Facebook]." Interviewer: "Is it because you like it or because you had to?" Male (age 14): "I like it."*

> *Male (age 14): "She [mom] has a Facebook and I wasn't one of those kids who were like who refuse to be friends with their parents, so I guess my mom felt like she had a connection with my Facebook page, being friends with me…."*

> *Male (age 14): "We don't have to worry much about what we put up, because what we put up we know that our family is going to see, so it's like if there's something that we don't want—I remember like my mom told me don't put anything you wouldn't want your grandparents to see or something."*

> *Female (age 13): "I'm also friends with some of my parents' friends. It's cool."*

At the same time, some youth seem to prefer not to friend their parents. They friend them only because it's expected of them:

> *Female (age 13): "My mom got a Facebook when I got a Facebook and she friended me so I guess kind of to keep an eye on me. I don't want to friend her but she like friended me."*

> *Female (age 16): "I got Facebook in the 8th grade, and my mom refused to let me have one unless I was her friend. Interviewer: "Are you still [friends with her]? Do you put in on restricted profile?" Female (age 16): No. If she even noticed, then she would say something. She made me tell her my password. But she doesn't go on and edit it or anything. Occasionally, like within the past how many years that I've had Facebook, there's only been two times that she said something like, maybe you should take that down or something like that."*

And some youth whose parents are not yet on Facebook seem to be grateful for that:

> *Female (age 13): "My parents don't have a Facebook. Thank God."*

Female (age 14): "The day my father gets on Facebook is the day I'll be out of Facebook."

The reason for not wanting to be friends with their parents on Facebook is not necessarily that they want to hide something from their parents:

Female (age 12): "It's not that you necessarily have anything to hide, it's just everyone's different around their family members than they are with their friends."

Female (age 13): "I know for some of my friends on Facebook, some of their family members are really obnoxious. Someone will change their status update to "going to the park" and then you'll see eighty family members saying, "Have fun at the park."

Yet, some teens who have friended their parents on Facebook restrict their parents' access to information or self-censor the content they post:

Interviewer: "How about on Facebook, are your family members your friends?"
Female (age 13): "They are but I have them blocked from my page, so they can't see my page or anything on it."

Male (age 14): "So it's like, now when they go online, they see info, and then it's like — they see, like, my likes and interests [...] but they don't see my posts, see my pictures…"

Interviewer: "Whatever the reason, the result is you post less stuff to Facebook."
Female (age 13): "Yeah." Interviewer: "And it's because in part you don't want people who are older looking at everything you're posting." Female (13): "My family members, yeah." Interviewer: "Is that true for other people?" Other youth (ages 12-13): "Yeah."

59% of the parents of teen social media users say they have talked with their child because they had concerns about something posted to their profile or account. And 39% have helped their child with privacy settings.

In our 2011 survey, we found that 87% of parents of online teens said they had talked with their teen about the things he or she had been doing online. Those discussions could have been positive, negative or neutral, and they could have referenced a wide array of online activity. In the latest survey, we wanted to ask more specifically about social media and the extent to which conversations were being prompted by concerns about something posted to the teen's profile or account.

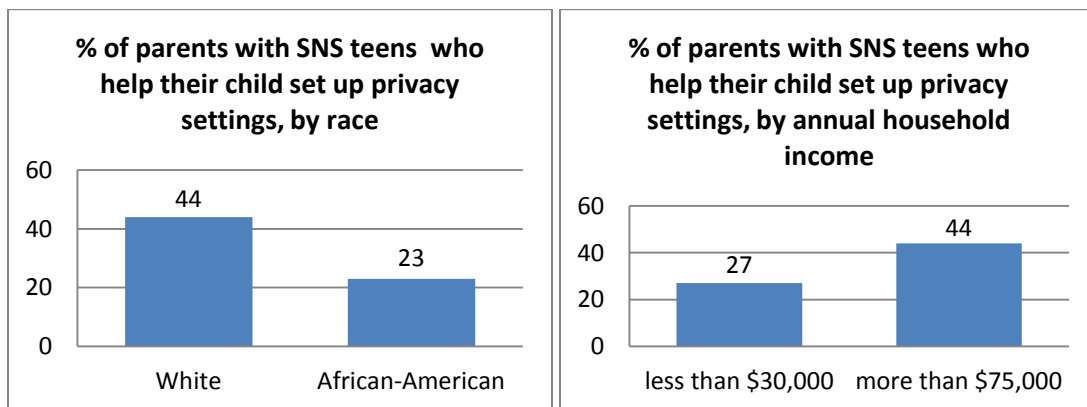It turns out that considerable numbers of parents have actively intervened in their child's social networking environment. Six in ten (59%) parents of teen social network users say they have talked with their teen because they had concerns about something that was posted to their child's profile or account. What is most striking about the findings for this question is the lack of variation across groups; these conversations prompted by concerns over social media content are equally prevalent among a wide array of parents from different backgrounds. Less surprising is the fact that parents who use social media themselves are more likely than non-users to have these conversations with their children (65% vs. 45%).

Another kind of intervention relates to privacy settings. Some 39% of parents who have a child that uses social network sites say they have helped their child set up privacy settings for their account. Parents of younger teens who use social media are far more engaged in helping with privacy settings; 49% of parents of younger teens have assisted with privacy settings for their child's account, compared with 35% of parents of older teens. Most of this variation is due to parents of 12-year-olds. There are no significant differences according to the gender of the child.

White parents are almost twice as likely as African-American parents to help their child set up privacy settings (44% vs. 23%). Parents living in the highest-income households (earning $75,000 or more per year) are more likely than those in the lowest-income households (earning less than $30,000 per year) to say that they have helped their child with privacy settings on a social network site (44% vs. 27%).

% of parents with SNS teens who help their child set up privacy settings, by race

White	African-American
44	23

% of parents with SNS teens who help their child set up privacy settings, by annual household income

less than $30,000	more than $75,000
27	44

Source: Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project Teens and Privacy Survey, July 26 – September 30, 2012. N=802 parents of 12-17 year olds, including an oversample of minority families. N=781 for parents of teen internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points for the total sample of parents and +/- 4.6 percentage points for parents of teen internet users.

Half of parents who are social media users have commented or responded directly to something posted on their child's social network profile.

Whether driven by concerns or a desire to show approval or support, 50% of parents who use social media (and also have teens who use the sites) say they have commented or responded directly to something that was posted to their child's profile or account. Mothers and fathers are equally likely to

engage with their child's profile in this way. Similarly, there are no clear variations by the age or gender of the child or across various socio-economic groups.

Half of parents of online teens say they use parental controls and other means of blocking, filtering or monitoring their child's behavior

In the latest survey, 50% of parents with online teens said they use parental controls or some other means of blocking, filtering or monitoring their child's online activity. That represents a statistically insignificant difference from the 54% who reported doing so in 2011. As we have noted in previous reports, overall, parents are more likely to favor less technical steps for monitoring their child's online behavior, such as checking to see what websites their child has visited or what information is available online about their child.[9]

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[9] See Part 4 of "Teens, Kindness and Cruelty on Social Network Sites," available at:
http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Teens-and-social-media/Part-4.aspx?view=all

Use of parental controls is much higher among white parents, those who have attended college, and those living in households earning more than $30,000 per year. All of these trends are consistent with the previous survey, except for a notable decrease in usage among African-American parents. In 2011, African-American parents were just as likely as white parents to say they use parental controls (61% vs. 58%). In the 2012 survey, they were half as likely to report use of these controls (31% vs. 59%).

Parents of younger teens (12-13) are considerably more likely than parents of older teens (14-17) to use technical tools like blocking, filtering and monitoring (61% vs. 45%). Parents of younger teen girls are among the most likely to employ parental controls; fully 65% do so. These variations according to the age of the child also represent a shift from the previous survey; in 2011, parents of younger and older teens were equally likely to use controls.

Looking at the parent's age, there are no notable differences in the likelihood that they will use parental controls. However, parents who are social media users are more likely than non-social media users to say they employ some form of parental controls (54% vs. 43%).

Four in ten parents of online teens have searched for their child's name online to see what information is available about them.

Some 42% of parents of online teens say they have searched for their child's name online to see what information is available about them. Previous surveys have indicated that a majority of parents have "checked to see what information is available online" about their child, but this could involve everything from viewing private websites associated with a child's school to checking Facebook profiles. Those who

Have you ever used parental controls or other means of blocking, filtering, or monitoring your child's online activities?

Parents with online teens (n=781)	50%
Men (n=277)	49
Women (n=504)	51
Age	
Under 40 (n=145)	54
40 or older (n=632)	48
Race	
White (n=535)	59*
African-American (n=113)	31
Annual Household Income	
<$30,000 (n=143)	35
$30,000-$49,999 (n=150)	52*
$50,000=$74,999 (n=108)	56*
$75,000+ (n=334)	56*
Education Level	
High school (n=183)	49
Some college (n=188)	58
College grad (n=360)	51
Child's Age	
Child 12-13 (n=238)	61*
Child 14-17 (n=543)	45
Parent SNS Status	
Use SNS (n=521)	54*
Do not use SNS (n=260)	43

Source: Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project Teens and Privacy Survey, July 26 – September 30, 2012. N=802 parents of 12-17 year olds, including an oversample of minority families. N=781 for parents of teen internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points for the total sample of parents and +/- 4.6 percentage points for parents of teen internet users. *Indicates a statistically significant difference between rows.

have gone so far as to type their child's name into a search engine to see what results may be available to a wider public represent a more modest segment of parents.[10]

Fathers and mothers are equally likely to have searched for their child's name online, as are parents of different ages. However, when it comes to the age of the child, the most notable shift happens at age 17, when most teens (and parents) are negotiating the college admissions process. Among parents with a 17-year-old child, 61% say they have searched for their child's name online to see what information is available about them.

Search for Child Online

% of parents with children at each age who search for their child's name online
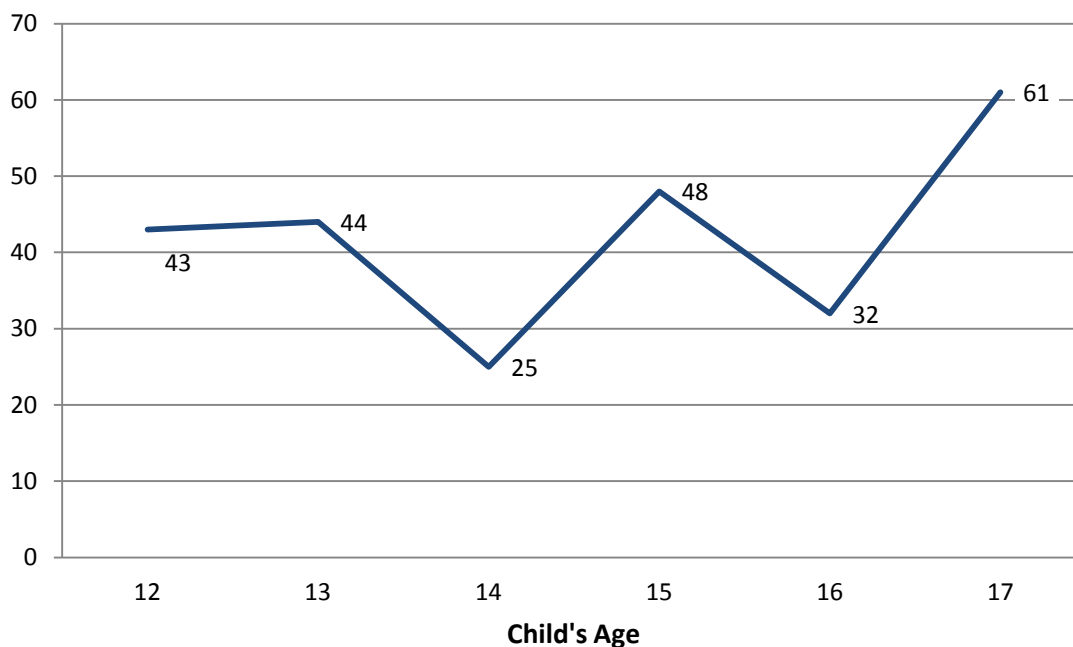

Child's Age

Source: Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project Teens and Privacy Survey, July 26 – September 30, 2012. N=802 parents of 12-17 year olds, including an oversample of minority families. N=781 for parents of teen internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points for the total sample of parents and +/- 4.6 percentage points for parents of teen internet users.

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[10] By comparison, previous surveys of all adults by the Pew Internet Project have found that about six in ten online adults say they have searched for their own name online. See, for instance: http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Reputation-Management.aspx

44% of parents of online teens say they have read a privacy policy for a website or social network their child was using

Almost half (44%) of parents of online teens say they have read a privacy policy for a site their child was using. Among parents of younger teens (ages 12-13), 46% say they have read a privacy policy for a site their child visited. Parents who have not attended college report lower levels of reading; just 33% of parents with a high school degree or less say they have read a policy for a site their child was using, compared with 53% of those with at least some college education. Parents who use social media themselves are also more likely than non-users to read privacy policies on the sites their children are using (51% vs. 31%). Parents who express some level of concern about how much information advertisers can learn about their child's behavior online are more likely than those who are "not at all" or "not too" concerned to read privacy policies (47% vs. 33%).

Have you ever read a privacy policy for a website or social networking site your child was using?

Parents with online teens (n=781)	44%
Men (n=277)	45
Women (n=504)	44
Age	
Under 40 (n=145)	44
40 or older (n=632)	45
Race	
White (n=535)	50
African-American (n=113)	38
Annual Household Income	
<$30,000 (n=143)	42
$30,000-$49,999 (n=150)	42
$50,000=$74,999 (n=108)	49
$75,000+ (n=334)	45
Education Level	
High school (n=183)	35
Some college (n=188)	55*
College grad (n=360)	52*
Child's Age	
Child 12-13 (n=238)	46
Child 14-17 (n=543)	44
Parent SNS Status	
Uses SNS (n=521)	51*
Does not use SNS (n=260)	31

Source: Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project Teens and Privacy Survey, July 26 – September 30, 2012. N=802 parents of 12-17 year olds, including an oversample of minority families. N=781 for parents of teen internet users. Interviews conducted in English & Spanish and on landline & cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points for the total sample of parents and +/- 4.6 percentage points for parents of teen internet users. *Indicates a statistically significant difference between rows.

Survey Questions

Teens and Privacy Management Survey 2012   Final Topline   10/9/2012

Data for July 26–September 30, 2012

Princeton Survey Research Associates International for
the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project

Sample: n= 802 parents of 12-17 year olds and 802 teens ages 12-17
Interviewing dates: 07.26.2012 – 09.30.2012

Margin of error is plus or minus 4.5 percentage points for results based on total parents [n=802]
Margin of error is plus or minus 4.5 percentage points for results based on total teens [n=802]
Margin of error is plus or minus 4.6 percentage points for results based on total teens [n=781]
Margin of error is plus or minus 4.6 percentage points for results based on teen internet users [n=778]
Margin of error is plus or minus 5.1 percentage points for results based on teen SNS or Twitter users [n=632]
Margin of error is plus or minus 5.3 percentage points for results based on teens with a Facebook account [n=588]
Margin of error is plus or minus 9.4 percentage points for results based on teens with a Twitter account [n=180]

PARENT INTERVIEW

Q1 Do you ever use a social networking site like Facebook or Twitter?[11]

	current Parents		July 2011[i]
%	66	Yes	58
	33	No	28
	*	Do not use the internet (VOL.)	13
	0	Don't know	*
	0	Refused	*

[READ TO ALL PARENTS:] And now I have some questions about your [AGE]-year old child…

Q3 Does your [AGE]-year old [INSERT: (boy) / (girl)] use the internet, either on a computer or a cell phone?[12]

	current Parents		July 2011	Nov 2007[ii]	Nov 2006[iii]	Nov 2004[iv]
%	96	Yes	93	85	80	80
	4	No	6	15	20	20
	0	Don't know	1	1	1	*
	0	Refused	*	--	--	--

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[11] July 2011 question wording was slightly different: "Do you ever use an online social networking website like LinkedIn or Facebook?" Trend was asked of parent internet users [N=717]. Trend results shown here are based on Total parents.
[12] November 2007 and earlier, trend question wording was: "Does this child ever use the Internet or go online to send and receive email?"

Q4 Does this child use a social networking site like Facebook or Twitter?[13]
Based on parents of teen internet users

	current Parents		July 2011	Nov 2006
%	78	Yes	75	49
	20	No	22	45
	2	Don't know	3	6
	0	Refused	*	0
	[n=781]		[n=759]	[n=790]

Q5 Still thinking about your child's use of technology... Have you ever [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Items A thru C: Based on parents of teen internet users				
a. Read a privacy policy for a website or social network site your child was using				
Current Parents [N=781]	44	55	1	*
b. Searched for your child's name online to see what information is available about them				
Current Parents	42	57	*	0
c. Used parental controls or other means of blocking, filtering or monitoring your child's online activities				
Current Parents	50	50	0	0
July 2011 [N=759]	54	45	1	0

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
Items D & E: Based on parents of teen SNS users				
d. Helped your child set up privacy settings for a social network site				
Current Parents [N=595]	39	60	*	0
e. Talked with your child because you were concerned about something posted to their profile or account				
Current Parents	59	41	*	*
Item F: Based on parent SNS users whose teen also uses SNS				

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[13] July 2011 question wording was: "Does this child use an online social network like Facebook or MySpace?"
November 2006 question wording was: "Do you happen to know if your child has a personal profile posted anywhere on the internet, like on a social networking site like MySpace or Facebook?"

f. Commented or responded directly to something posted on your child's social network profile or account

	VERY	SOMEWHAT	NOT TOO	NOT AT ALL
Current Parents [N=415]	50	50	0	0

Q6 In addition to the ways the internet and cell phones are useful for teens like yours, some parents have concerns about technology. For each of the following, please tell me how concerned, if at all, you are about these issues. (First,) what about… [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]?

[READ FOR FIRST ITEM, THEN AS NECESSARY: Are you very, somewhat, not too or not at all concerned?]

Based on parents of teen internet users [N=781]

	VERY	SOME-WHAT	NOT TOO	NOT AT ALL	(VOL.) DOESN'T APPLY	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. How your child manages their reputation online	49	20	16	15	n/a	*	*
b. How much information advertisers can learn about your child's online behavior	46	35	12	7	n/a	*	*
c. How your child interacts online with people they do not know	53	19	10	9	8	*	*
d. How your child's online activity might affect their future academic or employment opportunities	44	26	18	11	n/a	1	1

Methodology

2012 Teens and Privacy Management Survey

Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates International
for the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project

October 2012

SUMMARY

The 2012 Teens and Privacy Management Survey sponsored by the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project obtained telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 802 teens aged 12 to 17 years-old and their parents living in the United States. The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International. The interviews were done in English and Spanish by Princeton Data Source, LLC from July 26 to September 30, 2012. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ±4.5 percentage points.

Details on the design, execution and analysis of the survey are discussed below.

DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Sample Design

A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all teens and their parents in the United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to PSRAI specifications.

Both samples were disproportionately stratified to increase the incidence of African Americans and Latinos. The same stratification scheme was used for both sample frames and was based on the estimated incidence of minority groups at the county level. All counties in the United States were divided into ten strata based on the estimated proportion of African American and Latino populations. Strata with higher minority densities were oversampled relative to strata with lower densities. Phone numbers were drawn with equal probabilities within strata. The disproportionate sample design was accounted for in the weighting.

To supplement the fresh RDD sample, interviews were also completed among a sample of parents who recently participated in the PSRAI Weekly Omnibus survey. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the number of interviews completed by sample segment.

Table 1. Sample Segments

Segment	# of ints.
Fresh RDD landline	267
Fresh RDD cell	134
Callback landline	265
Callback cell	136

Contact Procedures

Interviews were conducted from July 26 to September 30, 2012. As many as 7 attempts were made to contact and interview a parent at every sampled landline telephone number and as many as five attempts were made to contact and interview a parent at every sampled cell number. After the parent interview, an additional 10 calls were made to interview an eligible teen. Sample was released for interviewing in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. Each telephone number received at least one daytime call in an attempt to complete an interview.

Contact procedures were slightly different for the landline and cell samples. For the landline samples, interviewers first determined if the household had any 12 to 17 year-old residents. Households with no teens were screened-out as ineligible. In eligible households, interviewers first conducted a short parent interview with either the father/male guardian or mother/female guardian. The short parent interview asked some basic household demographic questions as well as questions about a particular teen in the household (selected at random if more than one teen lived in the house.)

For the cell phone samples, interviews first made sure that respondents were in a safe place to talk and that they were speaking with an adult. Calls made to minors were screened-out as ineligible. If the person was not in a safe place to talk a callback was scheduled. Interviewers then asked if any 12 to 17 year-olds lived in their household. Cases where no teens lived in the household were screened-out as ineligible. If there was an age-eligible teen in the household, the interviewers asked if the person on the cell phone was a parent of the child. Those who were parents went on to complete the parent interview. Those who were not parents were screened-out as ineligible.

For all samples, after the parent interview was complete an interview was completed with the target child. Data was kept only if the child interview was completed.

WEIGHTING AND ANALYSIS

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to compensate for patterns of nonresponse and disproportionate sample designs that might bias survey estimates. This sample was weighted in three stages. The first stage of weighting corrected for the disproportionate RDD sample designs. For each stratum the variable WT1 was computed as the ratio of the size of the sample frame in the stratum divided by the amount of sample ordered in the stratum. For the callback samples, the weights from the original surveys was brought in and used as WT1.

The second stage of weighting involved correcting for different probabilities of selection based on respondents' phone use patterns. Respondents who have both a landline and a cell phone have a greater chance of being sampled than respondents with access to only one kind of phone. To correct for this we computed a variable called PUA (Phone Use Adjustment). The PUA was computed using the following formula where n1 is the number of respondents having only one kind of phone (landline or cell, but not both) and n2 is the number of respondents have both a landline and a cell phone.

$$PUA = \frac{2(n1 + n2)}{2n1 + n2} \; if \; respondent \; has \; only \; one \; kind \; of \; phone$$

$$PUA = \frac{(n1 + n2)}{2n1 + n2} \; if \; respondent \; has \; both \; kinds \; of \; phone$$

WT1 and PUA were then multiplied together to use as an input weight (WT2) for post-stratification raking

The interviewed sample was raked to match national parameters for both parent and child demographics. The parent demographics used for weighting were: sex; age; education; race; Hispanic origin; number of 12-17 year olds in household; number of adults in the household; phone use and region (U.S. Census definitions). The child demographics used for weighting were gender and age. The parameters came from a special analysis of the Census Bureau's 2011 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) that included all households in the United States. The phone use parameter was derived from recent PSRAI survey data.

Raking was accomplished using Sample Balancing, a special iterative sample weighting program that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using a statistical technique called the *Deming Algorithm*. Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the national population. Table 2 compares weighted and unweighted sample distributions to population parameters.

Table 2: Sample Demographics

	Parameter	Unweighted	Weighted
Census Region			
Northeast	17.8	13.8	17.1
Midwest	22.2	21.2	21.0
South	36.0	36.9	36.8
West	24.0	28.1	25.1
Parent's Sex			
Male	43.3	35.5	41.2
Female	56.7	64.5	58.8
Parent's Age			
LT 35	10.3	6.5	9.9
35-39	18.1	12.7	17.7
40-44	25.6	21.4	24.6
45-49	24.4	24.2	25.0
50-54	14.6	21.1	15.0
55+	7.1	14.2	7.8
Parent's Education			
Less than HS grad.	12.7	6.4	11.7
HS grad.	33.5	24.2	31.8
Some college	23.3	24.0	24.2
College grad.	30.5	45.4	32.2
Parent's Race/Ethnicity			
White~Hispanic	63.0	68.0	63.3
Black~Hispanic	11.2	15.3	12.0
Hispanic, native born	6.7	4.5	6.4
Hispanic, foreign born	12.5	7.0	11.8
Other~Hispanic	6.5	5.1	6.6
Parent's Phone Use			
Landline only	7.8	6.7	8.0
Dual Users	59.8	78.4	62.4
Cell Phone only	33.1	14.8	29.6
# of 12-17 Kids in HH			
One	70.2	64.5	69.0
Two	25.2	27.4	25.9
Three+	4.6	8.1	5.1
# of adults in HH			
One	10.5	13.0	11.5
Two	58.6	58.6	57.7
Three+	30.9	28.4	30.8

(Continued…)

Table 2: Sample Demographics (continued)

	Parameter	Unweighted	Weighted
Kid's Sex			
Male	51.3	50.5	51.0
Female	48.7	49.5	49.0
Kid's Age			
12	16.7	14.1	15.6
13	16.7	16.6	17.1
14	16.7	15.6	16.0
15	16.7	16.8	17.3
16	16.7	19.3	17.4
17	16.7	17.6	16.6

Effects of Sample Design on Statistical Inference

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. PSRAI calculates the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from systematic non-response. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.69.

PSRAI calculates the composite design effect for a sample of size *n*, with each case having a weight, w_i as:

$$deff = \frac{n \sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i^2}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i \right)^2} \qquad \text{formula 1}$$

In a wide range of situations, the adjusted *standard error* of a statistic should be calculated by multiplying the usual formula by the square root of the design effect ($\sqrt{deff}$). Thus, the formula for computing the 95% confidence interval around a percentage is:

$$\hat{p} \pm \left(\sqrt{deff} \times 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}} \right) \qquad \text{formula 2}$$

where $\hat{p}$ is the sample estimate and *n* is the unweighted number of sample cases in the group being considered.

The survey's *margin of error* is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample— the one around 50%. For example, the margin of error for the entire sample is ±4.5 percentage points. This means that in 95 out every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 4.5 percentage points away from their true values in the population. It is important to remember that sampling fluctuations are only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Other sources, such as respondent selection bias, questionnaire wording and reporting inaccuracy, may contribute additional error of greater or lesser magnitude.

Response Rate

Table 3 reports the disposition of all sampled callback telephone numbers ever dialed. The response rate is calculated according to American Association of Public Opinion Research standards.

Table 3:Sample Disposition

Landline Fresh RDD	Cell Fresh RDD	LL Callback	Cell Callback	
267	134	265	136	I=Completes
17	9	9	10	R=Refusal known to be eligible
11197	14226	501	448	UO_R=Refusal eligibility status unknown
4733	8666	56	63	NC=Non contact known working number
211	108	2	3	O=Other
54721	17757	126	98	OF=Business/computer/not working/child's cell phone
4960	1043	10	1	$UHUO_{NC}$=Non-contact - unknown household/unknown other
3383	3475	89	101	SO=Screenout
0.31	0.61	0.88	0.89	e1=(I+R+UO_R+NC+O+SO)/(I+R+UO_R+NC+O+SO+OF) - Assumed working rate of non-contacts
0.08	0.04	0.75	0.59	e2=(I+R)/(I+R+SO) - Assumed eligibility of unscreened contacts
16.1%	**12.4%**	**37.7%**	**30.2%**	**AAPOR RR3=I/[I+R+[e2*(UOR+NC+O)]+[e1*e2*UHUO_{NC}]]**

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[i] July 2011 trends based on the "Parents and Teens Digital Citizenship Survey," conducted April 19 – July 14, 2011 [n=799 parents of 12-17 year-olds, n=770 internet teens and 29 offline teens].

[ii] Nov 2007 trends based on the "Parents and Teens Survey on Writing," conducted September 19-November 16, 2007 [n=700 parents of 12-17 year-olds, n=664 internet teens and 36 offline teens].

[iii] Nov 2006 trends based on the "Parents and Teens 2006 Survey," conducted October 23-November 19, 2006 [n=935 parents of 12-17 year-olds, n=886 internet teens and 49 offline teens].

[iv] Nov 2004 trends based on the "Parents and Teens 2004 Survey," conducted October 26-November 28, 2004 [n=1,100 parents of 12-17 year-olds, n=971 online 12-17 year-olds and 129 12-17 year-olds who do not use the internet].