

# Gaming & Civic Engagement Survey of Teens/Parents

Final Topline

2/26/08

Data for November 1, 2007 – February 5, 2008

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

Sample:  $n = 1,102$  parents of 12-17 year-olds  
1,102 12-17 year-olds

Interviewing dates: 11.01.07 – 02.05.08

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on total parents [n=1,102]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on total teens [n=1,102]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on internet teens [n=1,033]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on teens who play games [n=1,064]

## PARENT INTERVIEW:

In this survey, we'd like to first briefly interview you, and then interview your [AGE]-year old [son/daughter]. This nationwide survey is being conducted by non-profit organizations to learn more about some important topics facing American families today. Your family's opinions are very important to us, and the survey only takes a few minutes.

**Q1a** Do you use the internet, at least occasionally?

**Q1b** Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?<sup>1</sup>

	TOTAL PARENTS		SEPT-NOV 2007 <sup>1</sup>	OCT/NOV 2006 <sup>ii</sup>	OCT/NOV 2004 <sup>iii</sup>	DEC 2000 <sup>iv</sup>
%	87	Yes	87	87	80	87
	13	No	13	13	20	13
	0	Don't know/Refused	0	0	0	0
	[n=1,102]		[n=700]	[n=935]	[n=1,100]	[n=754]

**Q2** As I read the following list of items, please tell me if you, personally, happen to have each one, or not. Do you have...[INSERT. ASK IN ORDER]?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED
a. A cell phone	88	12	*
b. A desktop or laptop computer	86	13	*

<sup>1</sup> Trend question prior to 2006 was "Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send and receive email?"

**Q3** Now I'd like to ask you about some activities that some people have done and some people have not done. (The first one is,/The next one is,) [INSERT ITEM. RANDOMIZE]...Have you done this in the past 12 months or not?

	YES, HAVE DONE THIS	(VOL) YES, BUT NOT IN LAST 12 MOS.	NO, HAVE NOT DONE THIS	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. I have volunteered in my community	61	6	33	0	0
b. I have done something to help raise money for a charitable cause	66	6	28	*	0
c. I have taken part in a peaceful protest, march, or demonstration	6	3	90	1	*
d. I stay informed on current events and politics	77	2	20	1	*

**Q4** Does your [AGE]-year old [son/daughter] ever play video games, whether on a computer... or on the internet... or on a game console like Xbox... or a handheld like a P-S-P or D-S... whether at home or elsewhere?

	TOTAL PARENTS	
%	89	Yes
	10	No
	1	Don't know/Refused

**Q5** When your child plays video games, how often do you [INSERT ITEM IN ORDER]... always, sometimes, rarely or never? Next, how often do you...?

Based on parents whose child plays video games [N=977]

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. Know which games your child is playing	56	34	6	4	*	*
b. Play the games with him/her	2	29	26	43	0	*
c. Check the ratings before he/she is allowed to play the game	55	17	8	19	1	*
d. Stop him/her from playing a game	9	37	23	31	1	*

There is no Q6.

**Q7a** Overall, would you say that playing video games has been a positive influence for your child, a negative influence, or haven't they had much effect one way or the other?

Based on parents whose child plays video games [N=977]

	TOTAL PARENTS	
%	19	Positive influence
	13	Negative influence
	62	No effect one way or the other
	5	Some positive, some negative/Depends on game (VOL)
	1	Don't know/Refused

**Q7b** Overall, would you say that playing video games is a positive influence for children around the age of your child, a negative influence, or don't they have much effect one way or the other?

Based on parents whose child does not play video games [N=125]

	TOTAL PARENTS	
%	3	Positive influence
	55	Negative influence
	25	No effect one way or the other
	10	Some positive, some negative/Depends on game (VOL)
	6	Don't know/Refused

(READ) Just a few more questions for statistical purposes only...

**MODEM** Does the computer you use at home connect to the Internet through a dial-up telephone line, or do you have some other type of connection, such as a DSL-enabled phone line, a cable TV modem, a wireless connection, or a T-1 or fiber optic connection?

	TOTAL PARENTS	
%	16	Dial-up telephone line
	71	High-speed
	35	DSL-enabled phone line
	26	Cable modem
	8	Wireless connection (either land-based or satellite)
	2	T-1 or fiber optic connection
	*	Other
	6	No computer at home (VOL)
	4	Computer at home not connected to internet (VOL)
	2	Don't know/Refused

[INTERVIEWER: IF PARENT ASKS WHO IS SPONSORING SURVEY, READ:  
This survey is sponsored by non-profit organizations, the Pew Internet and American Life Project, Mills College and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. [IF NEEDED: A report on this survey will be issued by the project in a few months and you will be able to find the results at its web site, which is [www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org) [w-w-w dot pew internet dot org].]

**TEEN INTERVIEW:**

WHEN CHILD IS ON THE PHONE, READ: Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am calling for Princeton Survey Research. We are conducting a short survey about things you do every day, from using the Internet to school activities and games. Your opinions are very important to us. Everything you say is completely confidential: we will not use your name in any way. And there are no right answers or wrong answers. Here's my first question...

**K1a** Do you use the internet, at least occasionally?

**K1b** Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?

	TOTAL TEENS		SEPT-NOV 2007	OCT/NOV 2006	OCT/NOV 2004 <sup>2</sup>
%	93	Yes	94	93	87
	7	No	6	7	13
	0	Don't know/Refused	0	0	*

**K2** Overall, how often do you use the internet — several times a day, about once a day, 3-5 days a week, 1-2 days a week, every few weeks, or less often?

Based on teen internet users

	TOTAL TEENS		SEPT-NOV 2007	OCT/NOV 2006	OCT/NOV 2004 <sup>3</sup>	DEC 2000
%	62	Daily	63	61	51	42
	35	Several times a day	35	34	24	n/a
	27	About once a day	28	27	27	n/a
	29	Weekly	26	28	35	45
	18	3-5 days a week	15	17	21	n/a
	11	1-2 days a week	11	11	13	n/a
	9	Net less often	10	10	14	13
	4	Every few weeks	5	5	8	n/a
	5	Less often	5	5	6	n/a
	1	Don't know/Refused	1	*	*	*
	[n=1,033]		[n=664]	[n=886]	[n=971]	[n=754]

<sup>2</sup> Trend question prior to 2006 was "Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send and receive email?"

<sup>3</sup> Trend question prior to 2006 was "Overall, how often do you go online?"

**K3** Do you ever use the internet...[INSERT IN ORDER]?

Based on teen internet users

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED
a From home			
Current teens [n=1,033]	89	11	*
Sept-Nov 2007 [n=664]	89	11	0
Oct/Nov 2006 [n=886]	89	11	0
Oct/Nov 2004 <sup>4</sup> [n=971]	87	13	0
Dec 2000 [n=754]	90	10	*
b From school			
Current teens	74	25	*
Sept-Nov 2007	77	23	*
Oct/Nov 2006	75	25	0
Oct/Nov 2004	78	22	0
Dec 2000	64	36	*
c From a library			
Current teens	48	52	*
Sept-Nov 2007	60	40	0
Oct/Nov 2006	50	50	0
Oct/Nov 2004	54	46	*
Dec 2000	36	64	*
d From someplace else I haven't mentioned			
Current teens	45	55	1
Sept-Nov 2007	7	92	1
Oct/Nov 2006	8	92	1
Oct/Nov 2004	4	96	*

**K4** We're interested in the kinds of things you do when you use the internet. Not everyone has done these things. Please just tell me whether you ever do each one, or not. Do you ever...(INSERT; ROTATE)?

Based on teen internet users [N=1,033]

	YES	NO, DO NOT	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED
a Go online to get news or information about current events or politics	63	36	*
b Go to web sites about movies, TV shows, music groups, or sports stars you are interested in	81	19	0
c Use an online social networking site like MySpace or Facebook	65	35	0

<sup>4</sup> Trend question prior to 2006 was "Do you ever go online..."

- K5** Now I'd like to ask you about some other activities that some people have done and some people have not. (The first one is,/The next one is,) [INSERT ITEM. ALWAYS ASK K5a FIRST. THEN RANDOMIZE]... Have you done this in last 12 months or not?

	YES, HAVE DONE THIS	(VOL) YES, BUT NOT IN LAST 12 MOS.	NO, HAVE NOT DONE THIS	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a. I have volunteered in my community.	53	7	40	*	0
b. I have done something to help raise money for a charitable cause.	61	6	33	1	0
c. When there is an election taking place, I talk to people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates.	23	4	73	*	0
d. I stay informed on current events and politics.	56	3	40	1	*
e. I have taken part in a peaceful protest, march or demonstration.	9	3	88	*	0

- K6** As I read the following list of items, please tell me if you, personally, happen to have each one, or not. Do you have...(INSERT. ASK IN ORDER)?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED
a A cell phone			
Current Total teens [n=1,102]	71	29	0
Sept-Nov 2007 total teens [n=700]	71	29	0
Oct/Nov 2006 total teens [n=935]	63	37	0
Oct/Nov 2004 all teens [n=1,100]	45	55	0
b A desktop or laptop computer			
Current Total teens	60	40	0
Sept-Nov 2007 total teens	59	41	0
c An iPod or other MP3 player			
Current Total teens	74	26	*
d A game console like an Xbox, a Playstation or a Wii			
Current Total teens	77	23	0
e A portable gaming device like P-S-P, D-S or Gameboy			
Current Total teens	55	45	0

- K7** Thinking about all the different ways you socialize or communicate with friends...  
About how often do you (INSERT; ROTATE) – every day, several times a week, at least once a week, less than once a week, or never?

	EVERYDAY	SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK	AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK	LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK	NEVER	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED
<b>Items a-c based on Total teens</b>						
a Spend time with friends IN PERSON, doing social activities outside of school						
Current Total teens [n=1,102]	29	34	24	8	4	0
Sept-Nov 2007 total teens [n=700]	39	34	19	5	3	*
Oct/Nov 2006 total teens [n=935]	31	34	24	6	3	*
b Talk to friends on a landline or home telephone						
Current Total teens	32	22	19	15	12	*
Sept-Nov 2007 total teens	35	24	19	11	11	*
Oct/Nov 2006 total teens	39	21	19	12	8	*
c Send text messages to each other						
Current Total teens	38	7	8	5	41	0
Sept-Nov 2007 total teens	36	7	7	5	44	*
Oct/Nov 2006 total teens	27	9	8	7	49	*
<b>Item d based on teens who have a cell phone</b>						
d Talk to friends on your cell phone						
Current teens [n=803]	51	22	14	7	7	0
Sept-Nov 2007 teens [n=504]	50	22	14	9	5	*
Oct/Nov 2006 teens [n=618]	55	18	12	9	6	0
<b>Items e-f based on teen internet users</b>						
e Send instant messages to each other						
Current teens [n=1,033]	26	13	14	11	35	*
Sept-Nov 2007 teens [n=664]	31	14	14	9	31	*
Oct/Nov 2006 teens [n=886]	30	14	16	8	31	*
f Send email to each other						
Current teens	16	18	19	17	30	0
Sept-Nov 2007 teens	17	16	20	21	26	*
Oct/Nov 2006 teens	15	16	21	19	29	1
<b>Item g based on teens who use social networking sites</b>						
g Send messages through social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook						
Current teens [n=675]	42	23	21	9	4	*
Sept-Nov 2007 teens [n=434]	40	22	18	11	7	1
Oct/Nov 2006 teens [n=493]	41	23	18	10	8	*

- K8** Here are some statements. For each, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the statement. (The first statement is,/The next statement is,) [INSERT ITEM. RANDOMIZE]...Do you agree or disagree? Is that strongly agree/disagree?

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	(VOL) NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a Everyone should be involved in working with community organizations and the local government on issues that affect the community.	35	47	1	14	2	1	*
b I think it is important to get involved in improving my community.	49	46	*	4	*	*	*
c Being actively involved in national, state and local issues is my responsibility.	18	41	3	31	5	1	*
d I am interested in political issues.	16	35	2	37	8	2	*
e I can learn a lot from people with backgrounds and experiences that are different from mine.	57	39	*	3	*	1	0

On another topic...

- K9** Do you ever use any of the following to play games, whether or not you personally have one? Do you use [INSERT ITEM] to play games?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED
a A game console like an Xbox, a Playstation or a Wii	86	14	0
b A portable gaming device like P-S-P, D-S or Gameboy	60	40	0
c A desktop or laptop computer	73	27	*
d A cell phone or handheld organizer	48	52	0

- K10** Do you ever play games ONLINE whether using a computer or a game console or other device?

<u>TOTAL TEENS</u>		
%	76	Yes
	24	No
	0	Don't know/Refused

- K11** Did you EVER at some point play computer games such as Bejeweled or The Sims or Solitaire... or ever play console games such as Guitar Hero or Super Mario Brothers... but do NOT play them now?

Based on teens who initially said they do not play games [N=39]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	72	Yes
	26	No
	2	Play these games now (VOL)
	0	Don't know
	0	Refused

- K12** Why did you stop playing games?

Based on teens who played games in the past but do not now [N=29]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	32	I just lost interest/not fun anymore
	16	Too busy/No time to play
	15	Waste of time/Had better things to do with my time
	9	Too much schoolwork/sports/after school activity/job
	3	I was spending too much time playing games
	0	No longer have access/console/computer
	0	My parents don't let me play games anymore
	0	It was too difficult/frustrating
	0	Too expensive
	0	Not safe/Had a bad experience
	0	I thought they were too violent
	0	Got girlfriend/boyfriend
	29	Other (SPECIFY)
	5	Don't know/Refused

Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.

- K13** What is the MAIN reason you don't play computer games or console games?

Based on teens who never played games [N=9]. There are too few cases to report.

**K14** What kinds of games do you play? Do you play [INSERT ITEM IN ORDER]?

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a Fighting games	49	51	*	0
b Puzzle games	72	28	0	0
c Action games	67	33	*	0
d First-Person Shooters	47	53	*	0
e Strategy games	59	40	*	0
f Simulation games	49	51	*	*
g Sports games	68	32	0	0
h Role-Playing Games	36	64	*	0
i Adventure games	66	34	*	*
j Racing games	74	26	0	0
k Rhythm games	61	39	0	0
l Survival Horror games	32	68	0	*

**K15** Do you visit virtual worlds such as Gaia, Second Life or Habbo Hotel?

	TOTAL TEENS	
%	10	Yes
	89	No
	*	Don't know
	0	Refused

**K16** Do you play Massive Multiplayer Online Games, such as World of Warcraft?

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	21	Yes
	79	No
	*	Don't know
	0	Refused

**K17** What are your current top three favorite games? (OPEN-END)

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	91	Gave response
	9	Don't know/Refused

- K18** About how often do you play games – several times a day, about once a day, 3-5 days a week, 1-2 days a week, every few weeks, or less often?

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	13	Several times a day
	18	About once a day
	21	3-5 days a week
	23	1-2 days a week
	15	Every few weeks
	10	Less often
	*	Never (VOL)
	0	Don't know/Refused

- K19** Thinking about yesterday, about how many hours would you say you spent playing games yesterday?

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	50	Did not play games yesterday
	24	1 hour
	13	2 hours
	6	3 hours
	4	4-5 hours
	2	6-9 hours
	1	10 hours or more
	*	Don't know/Refused

- K20** There are many different ways to play games. For the game you play most often, do you...[INSERT IN ORDER]?

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a Play the game with other people who are in the same room with you	65	35	*	*
b Play the game with people who are connected to you through the internet	27	73	*	0
c Play the game alone, by yourself	82	18	*	*

- K21** You said you play the game [with other people who are in the same room (OR) with people connected to you through the internet (OR) play alone]. Which way do you play MOST OFTEN?

Based on teens who play games in more than one way [N=628]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	42	Play with other people who are in the same room with you
	15	Play with people who are connected to you through the internet
	42	Play alone
	1	Don't know
	*	Refused

- K22** Thinking again about the game you play most often, do you play the game over the internet with people you ALREADY know in real life... or do you play the game with people you first met ONLINE?

Based on teens who play games online with others [N=282]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	47	Play games with people know in real life
	27	Play games with people first met online
	23	Play games with both (VOL)
	*	Depends (VOL)
	2	Don't know
	*	Refused

- K23** Do you usually play games as a part of a guild or other online group within the game?

Based on teens who play games online with others [N=282]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	43	Yes, play as part of guild or group
	54	No
	3	Don't know/Refused

- K24** Do you ever read or visit websites, reviews or discussion boards related to the games you play?

Based on teen internet users who play games [N=1,002]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	36	Yes
	64	No
	0	Don't know/Refused

**K25** Do you ever write or contribute to websites, reviews or discussion boards related to the games you play?

Based on teen internet users who play games [N=1,002]

	<u>CURRENT TEENS</u>	
%	12	Yes
	88	No
	*	Don't know/Refused

**K26** When you play computer and console games, do your parents [INSERT ITEM IN ORDER]?

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>DON'T KNOW</u>	<u>REFUSED</u>
a Know which games you are playing	88	11	*	*
b Play the games with you	34	65	*	*
c Talk to you about why you are allowed to play, or not allowed to play, certain games	56	44	*	*
d Stop you from playing certain games	53	47	*	0

**K27** Have you ever played a computer or console game at school as a part of a school assignment?

	<u>TOTAL TEENS</u>	
%	34	Yes
	65	No
	1	Don't know/Refused

**K28** And what was that game? (OPEN-END)

Based on teens who have played games at school as part of a school assignment [N=347]

	<u>CURRENT TEENS</u>	
%	72	Gave response
	28	Don't know/Refused

**K29** When you play computer or console games, how often do you [INSERT ITEM. ALWAYS ASK item K29a first. ROTATE.]... often, sometimes or never... or is that something that does not apply to the games you play?

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	OFTEN	SOME-TIMES	NEVER	DOESN'T APPLY	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
a Help or guide other players	21	38	19	22	1	*
b Play a game where you learn about a problem in society	7	33	52	8	1	0
c Play a game that explores a social issue you care about	8	29	54	8	1	0
d Play a game where you have to think about moral or ethical issues	12	36	44	7	1	*
e Play a game where you help make decisions about how a community, city or nation should be run	8	31	52	8	*	*
f Organize or manage game groups or guilds	7	21	65	7	1	*
g Use cheats or hack a game	9	28	59	3	*	*
h Use "mods" or other player-generated code that changes something in the game	8	20	66	4	1	*

**K30a** When you play computer or console games, how often do you see or hear people being mean and overly aggressive while playing... often, sometimes or never?

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	24	Often
	39	Sometimes
	36	Never
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**K30b** When players act this way, how often do you hear or see other players responding by asking them to stop... often, sometimes, or never?

Based on teens who see or hear others being mean or overly aggressive while playing games [N=679]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	23	Often
	50	Sometimes
	26	Never
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**K31a** When you play computer or console games, how often do you see or hear people being hateful, racist, or sexist while playing... often, sometimes or never?

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	16	Often
	33	Sometimes
	51	Never
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

**K31b** When players act this way, how often do you hear or see other players responding by asking them to stop... often, sometimes, or never?

Based on teens who see or hear others being hateful, racist or sexist while playing games [N=516]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	26	Often
	47	Sometimes
	27	Never
	0	Don't know
	*	Refused

**K32a** When you play computer or console games, how often do you see or hear people being generous or helpful while playing... often, sometimes or never?

Based on teens who play games [N=1,064]

	CURRENT TEENS	
%	27	Often
	51	Sometimes
	21	Never
	*	Don't know
	*	Refused

Those are all the questions I have for you. Thank you very much for your time. This survey is sponsored by non-profit organizations, the Pew Internet and American Life Project, Mills College and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. [IF NEEDED: A report on this survey will be issued by the project in a few months and you will be able to find the results at its web site, which is [www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org) [w-w-w dot pew internet dot org].]

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Sept-Nov 2007 trends based on the Pew Internet & American Life Project's "Teen/Parent 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]

<sup>ii</sup> Oct/Nov 2006 trends based on the Pew Internet & American Life Project's "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].

<sup>iii</sup> Oct/Nov 2004 trends based on the Pew Internet & American Life Project's "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].

<sup>iv</sup> Dec 2000 trends based on the Pew Internet & American Life Project's "Parents, Kids and the Internet Survey," conducted November 22-December 15, 2000 [n=754 parents of online 12-17 year-olds and 754 12-17 year-olds who go online].