

Trends & Tides

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Keeping you informed of current topics in youth and education research.

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A Changed World: September 11 And America's Youth

Harris Interactive has conducted a tracking poll among 8-18 year olds (via our YouthQuerySM omnibus service) since just after the events of 9/11. These events have awakened the consciousness of Generation Y, as our polls show that from July 2001 to September 2001 terrorism fears doubled. Worries subsided over the winter, but our latest polls show that terrorism fears have rebounded to be almost as prevalent as they were just after the 9/11 attacks.

Are you worried that terrorism will strike near you?	
July 2001	25%
September 2001	50%
October 2001	44%
November 2001	43%
December 2001	38%
January 2002	40%
February 2002	43%
March 2002	38%
April 2002	43%
July 2002	46%

Source: Harris Interactive YouthQuery

That said, terrorism is no longer seen as an immediate, day-to-day threat among America's youth. In November 2001, 46% of U.S. 8-18 year olds felt that there would be terrorist attacks in the U.S. in the next month, while in July 2002 just 24% felt so. Teens seem to be feeling a "general" sense of worry, as opposed to a direct threat to themselves.

Fears of terrorism should be placed in perspective. Terrorism ranks 6th out of 11 worries that we present in YouthPulse, our multi-client youth study. Currently, the most common worries are that the environment is becoming polluted, that there are too many people living in poverty, and that not all people have equal rights. Terrorism is ranked just below fears of AIDS spreading and worries about not being able to find a job in the future.

The shock of 9/11 caused young people to look to adults and leaders for explanation. Our respondents have consistently told us that their parents have done a much better job at explaining the events and helping them cope than their teachers, governmental leaders, or the media. If there is a silver lining in the tragic events of one year ago, it is that it stimulated a connection between parents and children, and our polls would suggest that parents have done an outstanding job of supporting their children over the past year.

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YOUTH & TEEN

Harris Heritage. Interactive Power.

Editorial: Our Take On It

by John Geraci

VP Youth & Education Research

9/11 was a shocking event for all of America, and represented perhaps the first true national trauma for the current generation. Generation Y has been remarkably free of distress – they have grown up during a long economic boom with very little instability. That has all changed in a year's time.

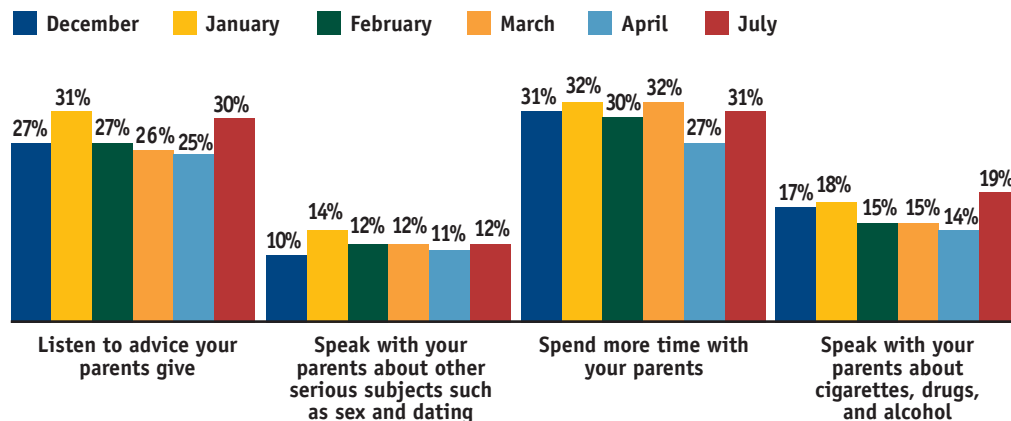
The question is, will history treat 9/11 as a defining moment for this generation? Has it changed their psyche forever? What are the implications of the past year to those who seek to reach youth in public policy, foundations, or marketing?

It is clearly too early to place a definitive historical perspective on the effects of 9/11 on Generation Y, especially since history is still being made. Our research findings so far do indicate that while awareness of terrorism and world events has grown, many attitudes and behaviors among young people have slipped back towards their pre-9/11 levels. Young people have heeded President Bush's advice to "live their lives" – they report to us that they have changed little about their consumer behavior since 9/11. Any softness in the youth market is more likely caused by the economic uncertainty over the past year than by fears of terrorism.

Our data do show some disturbing findings regarding how U.S. teachers handled 9/11. By their own admission, teachers moved on from discussing current events

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As a result of the war on terrorism, are you more likely to?



The chart above shows that current events have compelled significant percentages of young people to spend more time with parents and to listen to their advice. However, this has not translated into a desire to speak with parents more about serious subjects – such as sex or drugs/alcohol.

Note: A full research report on all of Harris Interactive's polling on terrorism and youth is available free of charge upon request, as well as transcripts for our recent digital town hall meetings regarding 9/11.

Recent Research for Public Release

From time-to-time, the Harris Interactive youth team is fortunate enough to work with leading foundations and non-profit organizations, and we often are able to release the results of these studies publicly.

What Do Girls Want? To Get Together to Be Themselves Girls Inc. national survey reveals the value of girls' communities

Don't believe the recent media hype that says girls are mean to each other, nasty, or that they've lost their voice. Girls Incorporated bypassed the headlines and went straight to the source with a national survey to get the real scoop.

Girls tell a different story about their relationships with each other—and girls' communities.

According to *Choosing Community: Girls Get Together to Be Themselves*, a national survey conducted by Harris Interactive for Girls Inc., these valuable communities help girls move beyond gender stereotypes and are empowering settings that reinforce girls' sense of self and independence and allow them to explore a world of opportunities. Girls' communities are defined as physical or virtual spaces where girls gather around an idea, interest, issue or just to be with other girls.

Choosing Community reveals that although gender bias is a challenge for girls, they're confident in their abilities and optimistic about the future. When asked about the importance of these groups, 74 percent of girls polled said they would be more comfortable speaking their minds in same-sex environments. A large portion said they would be listened to (56 percent) and be leaders (52 percent).

Girls who participate in girls' communities are more likely to expect to attend college (81 percent), play sports, (52 percent) and feel very safe in school (63 percent) than girls who never joined these groups.

For more information about the survey and the Girls Inc. Girls Bill of Rights, visit www.girlsinc.org.

quickly, propelled by rigid curricular requirements and a renewed accountability for student performance on standardized tests. Our youth respondents gave educators a poor grade for their handling of 9/11, and teachers themselves have told us they felt hamstrung by a lack of information and time available to discuss these events. An incredible "teachable moment" may have passed us by. Let's hope that the anniversary of 9/11 will allow educators to re-connect students to world events.

The resiliency of Gen Y is very evident in our data, and we believe that their optimism about the future will continue to shine through. Terrorism, while in their minds, is not currently a top-level concern for them. But, that could all change very quickly.

Contact Us:

To discuss this newsletter or your upcoming research project, call **Larry Brown**, Manager, Client Development, 800.866.7655 x7135 or email lbrown@harrisinteractive.com

You received this newsletter because you provided your contact information to a member of our youth research team or to our sales team. If you would prefer to be taken off our distribution list, please send an email to HI_youth_research@harrisinteractive.com and write the word "Remove" in the subject line. If others in your organization would be interested in receiving our information, please have them forward their email address to HI_youth_research@harrisinteractive.com

Ask a Question...

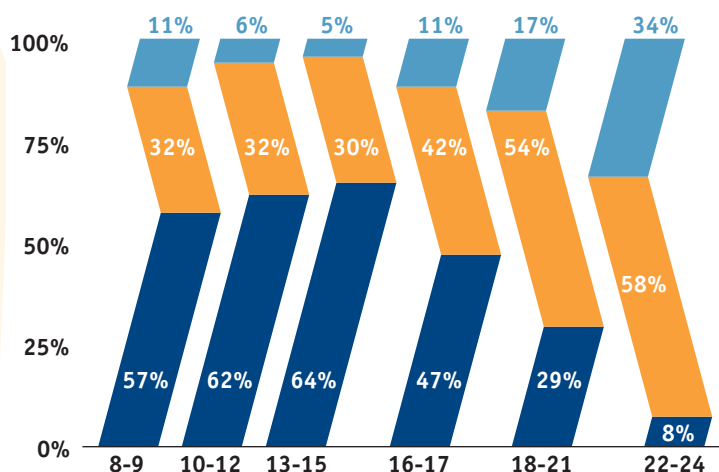
Have a burning question you would like to ask to kids and teens? Here's your chance to submit a free question into our upcoming YouthQuerySM youth omnibus. Just send us an email with your suggestion and we will pick one question each month and then publish the results in the next edition of this newsletter.

...Get an Answer

A recent Harris Interactive client submitted the following question...

If you could be any age, would you be...?

- Younger than you are now
- The same age as you are now
- Older than you are now



Base: 850+ 8-18 year olds

Teens Thoughts on 9/11

"The pledge of allegiance has melted from my tongue since I learned it when I began school, but I thought about the words again on September 11 – 'indivisible', not 'invincible.' And that is true. We are wounded but bonded together."

—17 Year Old Respondent to Harris Youth Poll

"I will never forget the morning my mom called me and told me to turn the t.v. on. As soon as I did all I could see was the airplane crashing into one of the towers! It was awful and I got the emptiest feeling inside knowing that the place was full of thousands of people. I was scared, upset and shocked all at once."

—16 Year Old Respondent to Harris Youth Poll

"The two front teeth of my city were knocked out. But we got back up swinging."

—15 Year Old Respondent to Harris Youth Poll