

Angus Reid study shows American youth global Internet pacesetters

Over 80% of 12-to-24 year olds already online compared to 60% of adults

San Francisco, May 4, 2000 – Internet awareness and usage among youth is almost universal in some countries, with American teenagers and young adults leading the pack with 85% of 12-24 years olds online compared to 59% of the American adult population, results from the first phase of the Angus Reid Group's **Face Of The Web - Youth** survey shows.

The 10-country study also shows that although American youths remain global Internet trendsetters, Internet usage among 12 to 24 year-olds has almost reached American levels in Australia (82%) South Korea (78%) and the UK (72%). The majority of youth in Italy (55%) and Germany (51%) have gone online, with Spanish (45%) and French (41%) youths narrowing the gap. Youth in Japan (39%) trail the pack along with Argentina (27%) - the proportion of Japanese youth online being only slightly higher than the population at large, while Argentine youth are online at double the proportion of the population at large.

"What the findings show is that the next generation of adults in leading edge Internet countries will have been almost totally "wired" from their pre-teen years. We're still seeing American youth at the leading edge of Internet awareness and usage, but Australia, South Korea, and the European countries are closing in and gaining online presence," said Gus Schattenberg, a senior analyst with the Global Products Group at the Angus Reid Group. "The next generation of American Internet users has plenty of company from young people around the world, especially in parts of Europe and Asia where the younger generation is closing in on the early lead that Americans have enjoyed in Internet access."

Not only are a higher percentage of youths using the Internet more than adults in the 10 countries polled, but their level of Internet knowledge is higher across the board as well with the large majority of young Americans (76%) and Australians (79%) claiming to “already know a fair amount” about the Internet. In the UK, South Korea, Germany and Italy, the younger generation is also in front of the general population in their claimed familiarity with the Internet.

Among young Internet nonusers, Australians and South Koreans showed the most enthusiasm for getting online in the next year. The minority of American youth who are not yet regular Internet users show only lukewarm interest, with only 21% expecting to go online in the next year. Given the high level of Internet usage in the US already, the lack of interest to go online may be a sign that penetration is leveling off as it approaches nine out of ten young people. In the other countries surveyed, the percentages of nonusers expecting to go online in the next year were two to three times higher than in the US.

“We’re looking at the start of different Internet growth patterns around the world, as countries develop their own Internet cultures,” said Melanie Dowe, the internet technology practice leader with Angus Reid in San Francisco. “Young people are developing different Internet usage habits in different areas of the globe – kids who go online in Argentina are keen to download music, while South Korean kids love online chat rooms more than anybody else – it’s a brand new world out there, and with no telling in what direction a local Internet subculture is going take off, it’s a marketplace that needs constant watching.”

Methodology

The survey is part of the Angus Reid Group’s Face of the Web – Youth project that will survey Internet usage among 12-24 year olds on a global basis. These results come from the first round of interviews conducted among 3,300 respondents in Argentina, Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Spain, the UK and the USA in March.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone, except in Argentina and South Korea where in-person interviews were used. All samples were nationally representative, except in Argentina where coverage was limited to urban areas.

National samples each consisted of 300 12-24 year olds, except in the USA where 600 interviews were conducted. Results outside the USA are accurate within an error margin of no more than plus/minus 6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20; in the USA, the results are accurate within an error margin of no more than plus/minus 4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The remainder of the Face of the Web –Youth interviewing is now underway in six additional countries, including Canada, Taiwan, the Netherlands, Urban Brazil, Mexico, and China. The Face of the Web – Youth is the companion survey to the Angus Reid Group's annual Face of the Web survey that covers adult Internet awareness and usage in 34 countries across the world.

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